

We will begin the fourth lecture on “Criticism of Modern Theology.”

<Added some parts from lecture 3 to this lecture>

/A serious problem in the church today is the ecumenical movement. /This is a wrong church unity movement.

/The ecumenical movement is a movement that aims to unite all Christian churches around the world. /Scholars say the “World Missionary Conference” held in Edinburgh in 1910 was the start of the modern ecumenical movement.

/In 1925 began the “Life and Work Movement,” a global movement that examined socio-political issues in terms of Christian principles. /In 1927 began the “Faith and Order Movement,” a global movement with an interest in the unity of the church.

/These two movements combined to form the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948. /In this way, the WCC started off with an interest in missions, social issues, and the unity of the church. /As of September 2008, 349 denominations were members of the WCC.

/The 1954 WCC Evanston Assembly said, “Our purpose is unity.” /The 1961 New Delhi Assembly declared, “The unity of the church is made visible in one fully committed fellowship.”

/The 1965 Nairobi Assembly said, “We long for one global fellowship and are fighting for it.” /The 1983 Vancouver Assembly declared, “The purpose of the ecumenical movement is to see visible unity in one holy, global, and apostolic church.”

/The WCC World Assembly statements reveal the WCC’s will to **“create one global church.”**

/The WCC and the ecumenical movement tolerate various existing theologies without criticizing them. This means they take on the **“position of theological inclusivism.”** This is the problem.

/Emilio Castro, former general secretary of the WCC, said, “There isn’t and never can be any official theology of the WCC. We must acknowledge theological diversity.”

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/A global organization called the World Council of Churches was founded in 1948. /Furthermore, each country has its own council called the National Council of Churches (NCC). We call this **organizational unity**.

/In the U.S.A., 9 denominations formed the “Churches Uniting in Christ.” /**Today, evangelicals are actively participating in the ecumenical movement.**

/In 1983, at the 6<sup>th</sup> WCC (World Council of Churches) Assembly, evangelicals said, “We felt the pressure to officially declare our decision to actively participate in all efforts made for the unity and renewal of the church.”

/Recently, the WCC has been kind to evangelicals. /In 1998, the 8<sup>th</sup> WCC Assembly appointed leaders of the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) as main speakers. /In recent times, the NCC of the U.S.A. has been meeting with Roman Catholics as well as with evangelicals.

/Is theological inclusivism the right thing? /Let me prove to you why theological inclusivism is wrong.

**/1. First, I will tell you that proper doctrine and proper theology are essential to Christianity.** / “Theology” is the systematic knowledge of the truths of God.

/The main content of theology, the systematic knowledge of the truths of God, does not change with the passing of each era. /Let us assume that within the church, there are different theologies that contradict each other.

/For example, one believes in the Bible while one denies the Bible, and one believes in the divine nature of Jesus Christ while one denies the divine nature of Jesus Christ. It is not right for us to tolerate these theologies that contradict each other.

**/2. I will tell you why unity, which says that “the church is one,” has doctrinal characteristics.** /The church is one. /We say this on the premise that the “church is spiritually one.”

/It is wrong for us to say that the church must visibly be one in a way that our eyes can see. /When we say that the “church is one,” we are saying that it is one in the truth.

/In John 17:11-21, Jesus says that the church is one when it is one in God and in his truth.

/Benjamin B. Warfield says, “The oneness of Christians of the New Testament is based on the common Christian faith of believers. Oneness in Christ cannot be built on being unfaithful to the truth in Christ.” /Furthermore, Martin Lloyd-Jones said, “There is no oneness apart from truth and doctrine.”

**/3. God commanded the church to preserve the gospel truth.**

/2 Thessalonians 2:15 says, “Stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.” /2 Timothy 1:13 says, “Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me.”

/Apostolic teachings, which the church has received, are included in the fundamental doctrines in which Protestant churches commonly believe. /Those doctrines form the foundation of the unity of churches of all nations.

/Thus “theological inclusivism,” which does not preserve the fundamental doctrines of Scripture, clearly goes against the will of God.

**/4. The church has the duty to reject heresy.** /Romans 16:17 says, “I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.”

/Titus 3:10 says, “As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him.” /Jude verse 3 says, “I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.” /As we have just seen, the Bible teaches us to reject all heretics.

/Then who are the heretics of today? /As I have said before, liberal theology is heretical. / Liberal theology denies Christianity’s supernatural facts and the Bible’s absolute authority. They deny Christ’s divine nature, his atonement, his bodily resurrection, and his second coming.

/Therefore, to tolerate theological inclusivism, which does not reject liberal theology, is to tolerate heresy. /This is the problem with the ecumenical movement.

/Another cult is the cult of Roman Catholicism. /However, the ecumenical movement pushes for unity with liberal theology and Roman Catholicism. This is wrong.

/In a situation of the apostasy of churches, unity that disregards doctrinal purity is unacceptable. /The church must not tolerate heretics under the name of unity.

/2 Corinthians 6:14-15 says, “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?”

/Calvin said, “But as soon as falsehood breaks into the citadel of religion and the sum of necessary doctrine is overturned... surely the death of the church follows... if that doctrine is destroyed, how can the Church continue to stand?”

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**/The Roman Catholic Church is not the true church.** I will talk about this matter.

/Willem Vissert Hooft, the first general secretary of the WCC, said that the WCC shares a very active cooperative relationship with the Roman Catholic Church. He said, “We repeatedly say that the churches of the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church are all part of one ecumenical movement.”

/Emilio Castro, former WCC general secretary said, “Currently, the WCC has a very optimistic relationship with the Roman Catholic Church, and we have friendly relations

in every way.” /Up until 1959, the Roman Catholic Church was pessimistic about the ecumenical movement.

/However, because of the efforts of Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI, the Roman Catholic Church became active in the unity movement. /The 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council, which began in 1962, became a special turning point.

/The Roman Catholic Church had not yet become a member of the WCC, nor did it desire membership, but it actively participated in their activities. /After 1968, 10-15 Roman Catholic theologians participated in the WCC’s “Faith and Order Commission” as full members.

/The Roman Catholic Church regularly attended the WCC’s main conferences and served as lecturer by writing WCC programs. /26 of the 120 members participating in the 1993 WCC “Faith and Order Commission” were Roman Catholics.

/Furthermore, in August 1997, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) declared, “The divisive battle with the Roman Catholic Church that has continued for numerous centuries has come to an end, and the past condemnations of the WCC no longer apply.”

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/Let me tell you about several problems with the Roman Catholic Church.

**/First, the problem of the Pope’s authority.** /The Roman Catholic Church views, in addition to the Bible, the authority of the church, the authority of tradition, and the authority of the Pope as being equal.

/They believe that the Pope is someone who succeeds the Apostle Peter. /Moreover, the 1870 Vatican Council came to the resolution that the Pope of Rome is infallible when he declares doctrine and ethics. /This is the doctrine of papal infallibility.

/This doctrine is still in place today. /The 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council emphasized in 1964 that “the Pope is the successor to Peter, the vicar of Christ, and the visible head of the entire church. All faithful believers must firmly believe in the doctrine that the Pope is the head and the doctrine of the infallibility of his teachings.”

/However, there is no biblical evidence of the Roman Catholic Pope’s authority and infallibility. Furthermore, they have the most contradicting belief concerning the doctrine of the absolute and final authority of the Bible, which is the most fundamental doctrine of all Christian doctrines.

/The Bible must be the basis of the Christian faith. /The Bible is the final authority. /It is wrong to treat the Pope and the Bible as equals. /Also, the doctrine of papal infallibility contradicts what actually happened in history.

/The Popes contradict each other in their statements. /Gregory I (590-604) said, "Whoever claims to be "Bishop of the entire world" is the antichrist." /However, every Pope that came after him claimed to be "Bishop of the entire world."

/Pope Sixtus V encouraged people to read the Bible. /However, Pius VII and other Popes condemned reading the Bible. /Are they not contradicting one another? /Additionally, there have been some very immoral Popes.

/If we look at the history of Popes, we find many shameful things. /The way Popes sought after worldly political power or material wealth differs from the way of the Lord. /Therefore, the Pope cannot be the true head of the church nor can he be an infallible leader.

**/Second, the doctrine of Mary.** /The Roman Catholic Church claims that Mary ascended to heaven after the Immaculate Conception. /The Roman Catholic Church teaches believers to pray to Mary.

/It also gives Mary inappropriate titles. /They call her the "Queen of all Creation." /They also call her the "Queen of Heaven and Earth."

/The 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council called Mary "Advocate," "Helper," "Benefactress," and "Mediatrice." /Cardinal Alphonse said, "Sinners are forgiven only through Mary. Whoever does not rely on Mary fails and is abandoned."

/This is heresy. /We need to worship and pray only to the God in three Persons, as the Bible clearly teaches. /Jesus Christ is our only Savior and Mediator. /Mary herself is but a sinner who needs to be saved by Jesus.

/The Bible does not lift Mary up in any special way. /Rather, it is the opposite. /Therefore, the Roman Catholic Church's doctrine of Mary is unbiblical and idolatrous. /The Roman Catholic Church, which serves Mary, is a religion of idolatry. /It is not Christianity.

**/Third, the doctrine of justification.** /Justification is central to the Christian gospel. /However, the Roman Catholic Church denies the truth that says that "we are justified through faith in Jesus Christ." /The 1563 Council of Trent said, "If anyone says he is officially justified through Christ, let him be accursed."

/Because the Roman Catholic Church denies justification, it teaches its believers that the atonement for sin must happen. /The Roman Catholic Church says people must do good deeds for the atonement for sins. It says that because sin still remains, people go to purgatory.

/However, this is different from the Bible's truth. /The Bible teaches the complete atoning work of Jesus Christ. /The Bible also teaches us that we sinners, through faith in Jesus Christ, are forgiven of our sins and are made righteous.

/Romans 3:21-22 says, “But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction:”

/This is the gospel. /Romans 4:5 says, “And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.”

/The believer receives complete forgiveness of sins and complete justification. /That is why Romans 8:1 says, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

/Justification as taught by the Roman Catholic Church is a distortion of the gospel. It is a different gospel. /The Apostle Paul warned that those who teach a different gospel will be cursed.

**/Fourth is the doctrine of communion.** /The Roman Catholic Church calls it “Mass.” /The Roman Catholic Church calls Mass the atonement sacrifice. /They say that Christ actually dies at that place whenever the priest offers Mass.

/The 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council said, “Mass is a continuation of the sacrifice of the cross.” /It also said, “Mass is completely identical to the sacrifice of the cross; it is the most complete sacrifice of the New Testament.”

/However, this Roman Catholic doctrine distorts the truth of the atoning work of Christ that was done once and for all. /On the cross, the Lord said that it is finished (John 19:30). /This means that Christ fulfilled everything that was needed for salvation.

/Calvin said, “The word condemns the despicable thing called Mass.” /The book of Hebrews emphasizes that the Lord Jesus Christ’s death on the cross fulfilled the atonement for sins once and for all.

/Hebrews 10:18 says, “Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.”

/When we look at the four doctrines of Roman Catholicism, we find that the Roman Catholic Church teaches unbiblical heresies. /Therefore, the Roman Catholic Church is not the true church.

/For this reason, the 16<sup>th</sup> century religious reformers called the Roman Catholic Church the antichrist, an idolatrous group. /Luther called the papal system demonic.

/Calvin also called the Catholic Pope the antichrist. /Roman Catholicism’s basic doctrines have not changed, and they are clearly unbiblical and anti-Christian.

/Thus, the ecumenical movement's friendly relationship with the Roman Catholic Church and its inclusive attitude casts aside the precious heritage of the religious reformation. It is also a plain violation of the biblical principle of fellowship.

/The Bible clearly teaches us to reject doctrinal errors. The Roman Catholic Church has doctrinal errors and is a cult. /Then it is appropriate for us to cease to have fellowship with the Roman Catholic Church.

/This concludes the fourth lecture on "Criticism of Modern Theology."