

## An Interview with Bp. Fabian Bruskewitz on the Reformation, published in the Southern Nebraska Register.

refute that slogan. Then too, today many modern Protestants simply reject the Bible as nothing but a collection of myths, fictional tales, and ancient falsehoods.

**Q. Why is Luther's "sola Scriptura" a mistake?**

**A.** When our Savior founded His Catholic Church (Matthew 16:13-20) as the "pillar and ground of truth" (1 Timothy 3:15), He left no instructions to distribute Bibles. His command was to teach (Matthew 28:20), to make disciples, and to baptize. It would have made no sense to have the Apostles passing out Bibles for many reasons: First, at that time there were no Bibles. The New Testament writings had not yet been compiled and authenticated. This was done for the first time in the 4th century by the Bishops of the Catholic Church. Second, the majority of the human race was (and still is) illiterate. Third, until paper came into common usage in the 13th century and until Gutenberg, (a Catholic, by the way), invented printing with moveable type in the 15th century, books were very rare and very expensive and only accessible to a few people.

**Q. Are modern Protestants really that far removed from the Reformation?**

**A.** Many are. The religious controversies and bitter polemics over the centuries, along with human prejudices, misinformation, historical misrepresentations, and normal human bigotry have contributed to many never having the opportunity to obtain an objective and true understanding of the rupture of Christianity that occurred in Europe 500 years ago.

**Q. Is there any truth in Protestantism?**

**A.** First, let me repeat that there actually is no such thing as "Protestantism." What is called Protestantism is only a col-

lection of thousands of churches, denominations, religions, sects, and cults. which are contradicting each other. Second, yes certainly, there is some truth in nearly all of these groupings. However, this is like asserting that rat poison has a great deal of nourishing food in it, without saying that there are other seriously negative elements there too.

**Q. Did anything good come from the Protestant Reformation?**

**A.** The Catholic Counter-Reformation, especially the Ecumenical Council of Trent, enabled the Catholic Church to adjust her discipline for the better and to proclaim the truths of the true faith with greater clarity and precision. Many new religious orders and some great saints arose in the Church also at that time by the arrangement of God's loving Providence.

**Q. Can Christianity ever be united once more in one body of believers?**

**A.** Humanly speaking this seems nearly impossible. However, the almighty power of God makes all things possible (Matthew 19:26).

**Q. How should Catholics observe the 500th anniversary of the beginning of Protestantism?**

**A.** Prayer is most important. We should pray as Jesus did the night before He died. "...that they all may be one, even as You, Father, are one in Me and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:21). We should study our Catholic Faith regularly and read and meditate on the words of Sacred Scripture, as well as being extremely familiar with such books as *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

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**Q. How would you describe the Reformation itself?**

**A.** I would first say that the very word seems to be flawed and inaccurate, since nothing was "reformed." Basically what happened was that large numbers of people left the Catholic Church and formed and invented numerous new man-made churches, denominations, religions, sects, and cults, which continue even to this day to multiply in number, making chaos of what had been once a generally traditionally unified Christianity.

**Q. What is the effect of that chaos?**

**A.** In the Western World, religion in general has fallen out of favor in large part because of the divisions in Christianity, which are viewed as appalling and embarrassing. Christianity is often held in disdain by the wider secular world. Also, centuries of scandalous Christian disunity, with the accompanied history of quarrels and wars, frequently form a serious impediment to the ability to present to our modern world the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Meanwhile non-Christian religions are currently advancing.

**Q. What were the conditions that enabled the Protestant movement to take hold?**

**A.** There are many factors that made this happen. There are library shelves filled with books about the origins of the so-called Protestant Reformation. Some secular matters were involved, such as the rise of nationalism in 16th century Europe, economic injustice and turmoil, the evolution of modern European languages, etc. Although the Catholic Church was guaranteed to maintain divine revelation

perfectly intact in her doctrines by Jesus Himself (Matthew 28:20; John 14:16-17; 26; 16:7-30; etc.), the sins, faults, and many human failings on the part of some Catholics at that era provided the tinder for the flames of the religious revolt to make some headway. However, as someone pointed out, when one has a cinder in his eye, it really does not cure the problem by pulling out the eye.

**Q. How was Christianity shattered?**

**A.** There is a current estimate, which I think is a good one, which claims that there are more than 30,000 various Protestant religions, churches, denominations, sects, and cults in our world today. They are in disagreement with each other, and basically agree only on one thing, namely, that they are not Catholic. Lutheranism itself now is divided into various churches and denominations, which seriously disagree among themselves and contradict each other. In Wittenberg, the German city where Martin Luther had invented his new religion, starting in October of 1517, the overwhelming majority of the people now living there are atheists. Lutherans are only a tiny minority there.

**Q. Don't Protestant Churches also agree on "sola Scriptura"?**

**A.** That slogan ("The Bible alone"), a sort of battle-cry of Luther and some of his first followers did not work out, since there were (and are) almost as many contradictory interpretations of the Bible as there were (and are) Protestant leaders and preachers (Zwingli, Calvin, Mary Baker Eddy, Jimmy Swaggert, Billy Graham, etc.). Also, the words found in the Bible itself clearly and plainly contradict and