

Founts, Frauds and Forgeries of Religion

RELIGION EMPOWERS PEOPLE TO ACT IN THE NAME OF THEIR GODS AND TO COMMIT frauds, invasions, genocides and all manner of heinous acts against non-believers. Over the past three to four thousand years, many gods and religions have grown out of various cultures.

Christianity is just one in a long list of religions that have been conceived and worshiped by humankind. It is based on prior myths and superstitions and was not significant until Roman Emperor Constantine the Great made it the dominant religion of the Roman Empire in the 4th century CE.

This brief history will examine the roots of Christianity, how it has been concocted from a variety of sources, and why it has continued to evolve in the centuries since it was declared to be the official religion of Rome. –*Ed.*

Michael Paulkovich

Disparate Deities

From the Canaanite religion before 1200 BCE we have three important gods: El Elyon, Asherah, and Baal.

El Elyon, or “god Almighty” is father of all other gods.¹ And there are, apparently, so many gods. His wife Asherah is Mistress of the gods and sometimes identified as a Moon goddess, “Lady Who Traverses the Sea.”^{2,3} Baal is god of storms and fertility.^{4,5} All three Canaanite gods eventually made it to Hebrew scriptures, and thus to Christianity. Second Kings 23:4 in the Bible mentions both Baal and Asherah, with some versions translating Asherah to “the grove.” Asherah is revealed in the Bible in Deuteronomy 16, 1 Kings 15 & 16, 2 Kings 21, and 2 Chronicles 15, among others.

Baal shows up in Judges and 1 Kings, to name a few. References to El Shaddai are ubiquitous in the Bible, especially with the stories in Genesis 12, 17, 18 and 28.

It may be a surprise that the Bible mentions – *by name* – over 40 gods in not just the

Old, but several in the New Testament.⁶ How is Christianity considered monotheistic?

Caesar Augustus, Savior and Messiah

In 9 BCE during the reign of Augustus, a Provincial Assembly in Rome composed a resolution to honor him: the *Letter of the Proconsul to the Cities of Asia*. Augustus was the son of God in human form, bound to return to heaven upon his death.^{7,8}

Whereas the Providence... has brought our life to the peak of perfection in giving to us Augustus Caesar, whom It filled with virtue... sent to us and our descendants as a savior, has put an end to war and has set all things in order... having become visible... leaving to his successors no hope of surpassing him... a new era beginning from the date of his birth, and let his birthday mark the beginning of the new year.

Keywords: *perfection, virtue, welfare, savior, gospel* – not to mention the birthday of

the “god” Augustus marking the beginning of the new year. Thus the Romans had declared Augustus a Christ even before it was cool to be Christ.

All Roman Emperors were considered deities. Not much has changed: in the 20th century, Emperor Hirohito was revered by his subjects as god, demoted with recalcitrance to a slightly lower status of demigod after Japan’s 1945 defeat. The rulers – and the dear departed rulers – of North Korea are also deities: Kim Jong-il (dead), his father Kim Il-sung (long dead), and Kim Jong-un, the third and still living fraction of a Korean component of divine Trinity.

Christian Mythmaking And Malignant Mischief

In the late first or early second century, some unknown writer contrived a fanciful de-nouement to the crucifixion tale: a resurrection, inserting it into the Mark’s writing. It was then propagated by copyists throughout the centuries. The original Mark ended at 16:8 and the forged finale presents a whimsical myth of Jesus’ “resurrection.”^{9,10,11} This may seem obvious to the rational reader, but the resurrection of Jesus was not only pure fiction, it was not present in original Gospel of Mark (from which both Luke and Matthew copied). The *New Oxford Annotated Bible* states, “There was apparently no resurrection appearance in the original text of Mark that ended at [chapter] 16.”

In the second century, in attempt to square the embarrassing triangle of goofy gossellian origin, Christian father Ignatius modified Bible polytheism around 110 CE with a “trinity” explanation: the three prime deities of the faith – Father, Son, and enigmatic Holy Ghost – are separate yet one. Another myth is thus synthesized as fact. Yet somehow supernatural

and demigodic “angels” and “demons” are presented as independent segments of metaphysical realm – as well as the 40 or so named gods in the Bible: Ashtoreth, Tammuz, Diana, Jupiter, Nehushtan, Remphan, Chemosh, Nisroch, Molech, Rahab, and so on.

In 144 CE, Christian father Marcion of Pontus claimed the Gospel of Luke was corrupted, including Jesus being a Hebrew. An ardent Christian, Marcion maintained that Jesus had no childhood, was zapped to earth full-grown, and

never crucified. The views of Marcion are explained by Tertullian in *Against Marcion*, 1.15.¹²

We also read Justin Martyr around 155 CE in his *First Apology* admitting the Christ story was “nothing different from what [Romans] believe” regarding sons of Jupiter. Christians had a brand-new son of god, better than all the previous ones – and, as always, of mandatory virgin mother.

Some 150 years later Constantine the Great would don the Purple. Lauded today as the “first Christian emperor” he was in fact a life-long sun-worshiper. Constantine hedged his bets with Christianity, baptized 337 CE essentially on his deathbed: Blaise Pascal would have been proud. During Constantine’s time, many deities were believed to be the one son of God, sent to Earth to save us. If you have seen the Religion segment of the movie *Zeitgeist* and decided it’s bullshit, believe me it is not, and the *Catholic Encyclopedia (CE1907)* provides support, including this gem:¹³

But it was especially in the western part of the empire that the veneration of Mithras predominated. Would it not be possible to gather all the different nationalities around his altars? Could not *Sol Deus Invictus* [“invincible sun-god”], to whom even Constantine dedicated his coins for a long time, or *Sol Mithras Deus Invictus*, venerated by Diocletian

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and Galerius, become the supreme god of the empire?

Its article on Mithraism is surprisingly honest about Jesus' similarity to earlier Mithra (or Mithras), admitting Mithra's December 25th birth date, as well as "... similarity between Mithra and Christ struck even early observers, such as Justin, Tertullian, and other Fathers, and in recent times has been urged to prove that Christianity is but an adaptation of Mithraism... Mithra is called a mediator; and so is Christ... Mithraism had a Eucharist..." and more.¹⁴

Among many sun-gods and sons-of-god – Attis, Dionysus, Prometheus, Horus, Hercules, Mithras, Sandan, Buddha and Krishna to name a few – Constantine chose the Christ character despite the schizophrenic, violent and even racist¹⁵ nature of Jesus recorded in the Gospels.¹⁶

We discover further mythmaking in the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 as Christian leaders updated rituals of communion (derived from ancient Egyptian and Mithraic liturgies),^{17,18,19} appropriating the term "transubstantiation" (magical changing of one substance into another) for this antiquarian superstition, reborn in the Jesus myths. Christians are taught to believe wine and bread supernaturally transform into body and blood of Jesus. Then they eat and drink it, exactly like primitive cannibalism and ancient blood rituals.²⁰

In 1486, Heinrich Kramer and Jakob Sprenger wrote *Malleus Maleficarum*, a handbook for witch-hunters. They prefixed their superstitious fantasy with papal bull *Summis desiderantes affectibus*, signifying the Church's approval of witch killing. Pope Innocent VIII wrote:

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...many persons of both sexes... have abandoned themselves to devils, incubi and succubi, and by their incantations, spells, conjurations... [witches] have slain infants yet in the mother's womb...

As a result of such noxious offerings as well as credulous biblical warrants (e.g., Exodus 22:18, *Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live*), Christians would murder millions of innocent men, women and children declared to be "witches." Not merely *hundreds*, not *thousands*

as I have seen so many Christian apologists claim – but *millions*.²¹

Christian Forgeries

Early in the fourth century some underhanded Jesus advocate counterfeited letters supposedly originating from first century King Abgar and sent to Jesus; from Jesus to Abgar; and Abgar to Emperor Tiberius. These forgeries claimed Jesus had "healing powers." The first phony dispatch claimed to be from "Abgar Ouchama to Jesus, the Good Physician Who has appeared in the country of Jerusalem." Eusebius would report on these forgeries in *Ecclesiastical History* 1.12 as if valid.

Due to these texts, today termed *Abgar Forgeries* – as well as various Bible myths – ancient yet solid scientific advances that Greeks had made were nullified. Christians would for centuries be convinced "demons" and "sin" cause illness. Millions were left to suffer and die because "physicians" of the Middle Ages practiced ritual healing procedures and exorcisms proffered by their revered Jesus.

In this way, the "Jesus of Nazareth" character caused the death of millions upon millions



"The Burning of the Library at Alexandria in 391 AD" [Illustration from 'Hutchinsons History of the Nations,' c.1910 (litho) from The Stapleton Collection]

because of his superstitious ignorance regarding health and medicine.

In 391 CE, Emperor Theodosius declared Christianity the only legal religion of the vast Roman Empire, an edict that would virtually ruin all philosophical and technological progress of the West. The Church went on to dupe and strong-arm occidental citizens century after century, gaining vast wealth and power and converting or killing millions of non-Christians in its heaven-sent mission of peace and glory.

In the fourth century CE, the Church forged the *Apostolic Canons*, a "collection of ancient ecclesiastical decrees..." as the *Catholic Encyclopedia* admits, "concerning the government and discipline of the Church... they claim to be the very legislation of the Apostles themselves... their claim to genuine Apostolic origin is quite false and untenable..."

In fact this Christian hoax was perpetrated sometime after the year 341 CE.²²

In the first century BCE, almost a million books had been collected at the ancient Alexandrian Library. It was the center of scholarship and knowledge of the Occident,

unintentionally burned down around 48 BCE. After relocating to the neighboring Serapeum, scribes began recovering anew, copying every scroll or book they came across to rebuild their repository. Some 200,000 volumes were then gifted by Mark Anthony as a favor to Cleopatra in 41 BCE.²³ In 391 CE after the Christian cult was made mandatory and totalitarian, clerics attacked the library, toppling statues and burning every text they found. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* states "much havoc was wrought among its treasures when Bishop Theophilus made his attack upon pagan worship at Alexandria..."²⁴ Theophilus had a church erected on the destroyed library.²⁵ This majestic library, born again at the Serapeum only to be destroyed by Christians, housed hundreds of thousands of books, likely including evidence of the manufactured and bogus origins of their religion.

Of course, centuries of Christian oppression and censorship would follow. The brilliant and beautiful head Alexandrian librarian, mathematician, and philosopher Hypatia continued teaching well after her Library's de-

struction.²⁶ In 415, pope of Alexandria Cyril declared Hypatia a “sorceress” able to cast magic spells.²⁷ Fanatic Christian monks tracked down this legendary, enchanting philosopher when she was about 60. They stripped her naked, dragged her through stony streets, and tortured her by skinning her alive.²⁸ Christian leaders then chopped her body to pieces and burned it. All this to make sure, it would seem, that not only was she merely dead, but really most sincerely dead.

The Church today recognizes Cyril as a saint.

Consider next the “Symmachian Forgeries.” These mendacious texts granted bishops criminal impunity for all time to follow, endorsed by Pope Symmachus (498-514). The clergy were thus given eternal Get Out of Jail Free cards. The fantastic claims in the documents – for instance Constantine being cured of leprosy (which he never had) by Christian baptism – were “entirely legendary” as the *Catholic Encyclopedia* admits.²⁹

Around 751 CE, Christian leaders forged a letter claiming it was written by “St. Peter” himself, alleging it was a heaven-sent mandate addressed from long-dead Peter to eighth century King Pepin. This forgery of childlike foundation reads:³⁰

Peter, elected Apostle by Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God.

I, Peter... received from the Divine Might the mission of enlightening the whole world... by God’s order their sins are cleansed in this world and they shall enter stainless into everlasting life... And I, on the day of Judgment, shall prepare for you a splendid dwelling place in the Kingdom of God...

– Signed, Peter, Prince of the Apostles.

Superstitious Christians of the times believed this phony penny from heaven: Saint Peter composed it while tending the pearly gates, to arbitrate political and financial transactions on Earth!

“When [Pope] Stephen II performed the ceremony of anointing Pepin and his son at St. Denis,” admits the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, St.

Peter was “mystical giver of the secular power” – 700 years after Peter’s death.³¹

Sometime between 750 and 850 CE the “Donation of Constantine” was written. It was, as the *Catholic Encyclopedia* admits, “a forged document of Emperor Constantine the Great, by which large privileges and rich possessions were conferred on the pope and the Roman Church... addressed by Constantine to Sylvester I (314-35)...” The *Catholic Encyclopedia* affirms “this document is without doubt a forgery... As early as the 15th century its falsity was known and demonstrated... its genuineness was yet occasionally defended, and the document still further used as authentic...”.³² The phony text was inserted into the False Decretals (discussed below) and upon “the end of the ninth century and during the tenth, extracts from the false decretals begin to be included in canon law collections.”³³

In 756, King Pepin granted jurisdiction over Rome and surrounding areas to the pope, creating the Papal States, a swath of central and northern Italy subsequently controlled by Church authority (*CE1907* vol. 5, 777-778). Christian soldiers seized Rome in the eighth century after the Donation of Constantine was inflicted and incorporated into the False Decretals (*CE1907* vol. 5, 119), and most of Italy came under Church control and possession. The city of Rome itself would not be returned to the Italian people until the 19th century (*CE1907* vol. 8, 234). “Not until 20 September, 1870, was Rome taken from the popes and made the actual capital of the Kingdom of Italy” (*CE1907* vol. 13, 169). For over 900 years Christians perpetrated obscurantism: the so-called papal letters were filthy forgeries; “Nevertheless the official edition of the ‘Corpus Juris,’ in 1580, upheld the genuineness of the false decretals” (*CE1907* vol. 5, 773-780).

In 1440, Lorenzo Valla proved the Donation of Constantine had been falsified. Yet for centuries the Church continued using the document as if authentic (*CE1907* vol. 5, 119; and vol. 12, 768). Finally in 1870 the “Donation” was quashed and many territories that were stolen by the Church were restored to a united Italy.

One thousand years after Catholic authorities illegally and illegitimately and violently annexed half of Italy, some was finally restored to secular sovereignty, to descendants of those from whom it was stolen long before.

Christian Frauds

Frauds differ from forgeries: a fraud requires no fabrication of a coin, or document, or painting, but simply intentional deceit – a feat at which the Church would become quite skilled.

Early in the 13th century, Pope Innocent III ordered a genocidal attack against the entire region of Languedoc France. This pious pope portrayed the peaceful Cathars as witches, cannibals, desecrating the cross and having “sexual orgies.”^{34, 35, 36} Playing the putrid witch-card, the Church murdered over a million innocent Cathars over a period of 35 years – men, women, children. Catharist writings have recently been discovered proving the falseness of claims that Cathars were Manichaean heretics: lies made up by inquisitors. Cathars were nonviolent and pious Christians.³⁷ The Christian colossus annexed much of the beautiful south of France – some for the Church itself, some for French nobles. The *Palais de la Berbie* (constructed 1228) and Catholic fortress *Sainte Cécile* (1282) are two examples that remain.

The Vatican similarly indicted German Stedingers in 1233: “The devil appears to them in different shapes,” wrote Pope Gregory IX, “sometimes as a goose or a duck...”. Gregory commanded a crusade against the peaceful Christian Stedingers. Either defending themselves or after lost battles or burned alive, some 30,000 were eradicated by Christian

Some Christian Frauds and Forgeries over the Centuries:

- Abgar Forgeries (4th century)
- Apostolic Canons (400 CE)
- Hypatia the “witch” (415 CE)
- Symmachian Forgeries (6th century)
- St. Peter Forgery (c. 751)
- Donation of Constantine (8th century)
- False Decretals (8th century)
- Extermination of the Cathar “witches” (13th century)
- Murder of the Stedinger “devils” (1233)
- Immaculate Conception “revealed by God” (1854)
- Lateran Treaty (1929)
- The Papacy’s AIDS Frauds (2005 onward)

forces (*CEI907* vol. 14, 283-284).

Pope Pius IX dispensed papal bull *in-effabilis deus* in 1854 declaring Mary’s own conception (that is, the pregnancy of her mother, Jesus’ maternal grandmother) “preserved free from all stain of original sin” of Adam and Eve. The papacy claimed this *immaculate conception* was “revealed by God” to the pope. I kind of doubt it.

In 1929, the Lateran Treaty between Mussolini and the

Papacy established Vatican City as a sovereign nation belonging to the Catholic Church. This multi-billion dollar citadel of Christianity exists today in sovereignty solely due to an agreement between a corrupt dictatorship and a crooked Church perennially in search of theocratic and political and financial advantage.

In 2005, the papacy declared AIDS a tragedy that “cannot be overcome through the distribution of condoms, which even aggravates the problems,” and the Church continued its deceitful and destructive dealings in 2009 exclaiming “we say no to condoms!”³⁹

Conclusion

Christianity is founded on prior myths, superstitions and lies, perpetrated via power-grabs and many more lies. This ancient superstition flourishes as a holy and infallible and (oddly) revered Ministry of Love to this day.

The Christian belief system was a paltry and insignificant cult founded late in the first century, then 300 years later – still paltry and insignificant – thrust upon people of the Empire as sacred law with papal and imperial sanction, death being the penalty for apostasy.

The time to call out religion and its mendacities has long passed. Religion is not simply neutral and harmless superstition. Religion empowers people to act in the name of their god – and history proves they are thus capable of perpetual frauds and even genocide in the name of their god. As Steven Weinberg said, “With or without religion, you would have good people doing good things and evil people doing evil things. But for good people to do evil things, that takes religion.”•

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| 1. Note that <i>Encyclopedia Biblica</i> indicates “Shaddai” in Gen 43:14 is “a Redactor’s interpolation” - vol. II, 3326. | 20. Refer also to Canon I, “Exposition of the Catholic Faith and of the dogma of Transubstantiation,” <i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i> vol. 9, 18. |
| 2. Jordan, 30-31. | 21. See Paulkovich, 123ff. |
| 3. Walker, 66 | 22. <i>CE1907</i> vol. 3, 279-280; and vol. 1, 637. |
| 4. Guiley, 22. | 23. <i>CE1907</i> vol. 1, 303. |
| 5. Jordan, 41-42. | 24. <i>CE1907</i> vol. 9, 228. |
| 6. Paulkovich, 263ff. | 25. <i>CE1907</i> vol. 14, 625. |
| 7. Cartlidge, 5. | 26. Dzielska, 103. |
| 8. Perriman, 106. | 27. Watts, 198 |
| 9. Peabody 2002. | 28. Scholasticus, 7.15. |
| 10. Ehrman, 65-69. | 29. <i>CE1907</i> vol. 14, 370-371. |
| 11. Coogan, <i>New Oxford Annotated Bible</i> , NT:90-91. | 30. Coulange 295. |
| 12. See also Dungan, 43. | 31. <i>CE1907</i> vol. 11, 663. |
| 13. <i>CE1907</i> vol. 4, 298. | 32. <i>CE1907</i> vol. 5, 118-119. |
| 14. <i>CE1907</i> vol. 10, 402-404. | 33. <i>CE1907</i> vol. 5, 777-778. |
| 15. e.g. Mt 10:5-6, Mt 15:22-24, 2 John 1:10. | 34. Gardner, 176-8.. |
| 16. See also Paulkovich, 245ff. | 35. Victor, Jeffrey S., passim. |
| 17. Godwin, 28. | 36. Russell, Jeffrey Burton, 128 and passim. |
| 18. Vermaseren, 104. | 37. Le Pointe. |
| 19. See also Gasquet, 84-86. | 38. Mackay, 474. |
| | 39. Goldacre. |
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