

Appendix A – Summary – English

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The 7-Step Reason to be Catholic, 2nd Ed.: Science, the Bible and History point to Catholicism

A Summary of Part I of this three-part book

Part II addresses scandal and dissent within Catholicism today.
Part III addresses key points of incompatibility with other faiths.

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- Prison ministry

Imprimatur: + *Most Rev. Joseph F. Martino, D.D., Hist. E.D.*
Bishop of Scranton
October 29, 2007

Nihil Obstat: *Father Charles P. Connor, Censor Librorum*
October 22, 2007

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CCC = *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd ed.***

From the book, ***The 7-Step Reason to be Catholic, 2nd Ed.:
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The 7-Step Reason to be Catholic

1. **Strong scientific evidence points to the Intelligent Design of the universe.**

At this writing in May, 2008 more than 600 scientists have challenged Darwinian Theory by signing this *Scientific Dissent from Darwinism* statement posted on the Discovery Institute Web site:

“We are skeptical of claims for the ability of random mutation and natural selection to account for the complexity of life. Careful examination of the evidence for Darwinian Theory should be encouraged.” <http://www.dissentfromdarwin.org/>

The Institute further states, ***“The list is growing and includes scientists from the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, Russian, Hungarian and Czech National Academies, as well as from universities such as Yale, Princeton, Stanford, MIT, UC Berkeley, UCLA, and others.”***

Science does not deny that God exists. The National Academy of Sciences states “Science can say nothing about the supernatural. Whether God exists or not is a question about which science is neutral” (*Teaching About Evolution and the Nature of Science; FAQ; © 1998*) http://search.nap.edu/reading_room/books/evolution98/evol5.html

The Catholic Church does not deny the possibility that scientists may some day conclude, beyond reasonable doubt, that evolution played some part in how we came to be. To do so convincingly, however, they will have to overcome the formidable challenges to macroevolution presented by Intelligent Design scientists like astrophysicist Hugh Ross, Ph.D. (astounding evidence of design, from atom to cosmos); biochemist Michael Behe, Ph.D. (cellular systems of *irreducible complexity*); and biologist Jonathan Wells, Ph.D. (Ten warning labels for biology textbooks). Wells has also refuted *exaptation*, the adapting of something for a use other than that for which it apparently evolved. An important Intelligent Design Web site is www.arn.org. Also see: www.doesgodexist.org/Charts/Evidence-ForDesignInTheUniverse.html

Can a marble statue wave?

“It [The Intelligent Design Movement] may well be the most important intellectual movement to occur in the last 200 years, if not the last half-millennium.” So wrote Benjamin D. Wiker **in his informative two-part article “Does Science Point to God?”** (Crisis, April 7, 2003; July 9, 2003).

Richard Dawkins, author of *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe Without Design* (© 1986), is one of the foremost opponents of Intelligent Design. In “Does Science Point to God?” Wiker has this to say about Dawkins’ understanding of probability: “Dawkins believes that anything can be explained by chance, even a miracle.”

Wiker then quotes from *The Blind Watchmaker* (pp. 159-160) Dawkins’ claim that ***the hand of a marble statue could actually wave***, if all the molecules of the marble hand were to simultaneously move in one direction and then in the opposite direction. Dawkins acknowledges that the odds against this far exceed what we can imagine, but insists on the *possibility* that in this way a marble statue could “wave.”

Dawkins may be on to something. Perhaps in a back issue of *Le Monde* we will find the headline, “Venus de Milo loses arms attempting to wave to tourists.” Or maybe not. Wiker’s two-part article may be read on the *Crisis* Web site:

www.crisismagazine.com/april2003/feature1.htm

www.crisismagazine.com/julaug2003/feature1.htm

Benjamin D. Wiker is a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute and the author of *Moral Darwinism: How We Became Hedonists*. He is a lecturer in theology and science at Franciscan University of Steubenville.

Lee M. Spetner, author of *Not by Chance; Shattering the Modern Theory of Evolution* (© 1998), earned a Ph.D. in physics from M.I.T. in 1950 and from 1951 to 1970 was a member of the staff of the Applied Physics Laboratory of Johns Hopkins University.

In “The Watchmaker’s Blindness,” Chapter 6 of his book, Spetner notes that Dawkins is not alone in failing to make a convincing case for the spontaneous origin of life – an “army of research scientists” failed as well, he observed, though they have worked on the problem for the past generation (p. 166).

For a spirited exchange of scientific views on the B-cell hypermutation model, information content of proteins and more, see the Lee Spetner / Edward Max Dialogue: www.trueorigin.org/spetner2.asp

Intelligent Design: Other Informative Web Sites:

www.creationsafaris.com/crevnews.htm

www.arn.org/docs/insight499.htm

www.reasons.org/about/index.shtml?main

www.lassp.cornell.edu/sethna/KinkTunneling/KinkTunneling.html

www.origins.org/articles/ross_modgoliath.html
www.world-of-dawkins.com/Catalano/box/behe.htm#reviews
www.arn.org/behe/mb_response.htm
www.discovery.org/crsc/fellows/MichaelBehe
www.iconsofevolution.com
[http://ist-socrates.berkeley.edu:7521/projects/IB160/VDG/
Fall94/Wells/Wells.html](http://ist-socrates.berkeley.edu:7521/projects/IB160/VDG/Fall94/Wells/Wells.html)
www.nmsr.org/text.htm#preface
www.actionbioscience.org/evolution/nhmag.html
www.nationalreview.com/comment/comment-west121702.asp
www.nationalreview.com/comment/comment-winnick101802.asp
www.arn.org/wells/jwhome.htm

The Church teaches that "Every spiritual soul is created immediately by God The account of the fall in Genesis 3 uses figurative language, but affirms a primal event, a deed that took place at the beginning of the history of man" (CCC par. 366; 390).

In *Fundamentals of the Faith*, Peter Kreeft suggests skeptics pray as follows: "God, if you are really out there, please ... somehow ... let me know ... I want to know."

2. Other than I AM of the Old Testament, no other founder of a religion is comparable to Jesus.

True respect for others is important, regardless of what religion they practice. However, it is important that students and others become aware of this: *With the exception of Jews (and Christians) who speak of I AM of the Old Testament – the Messianic prophecies of which Jesus fulfilled – no authoritative spokesperson for any non-Christian religion claims that its founder or reformer is comparable to Jesus in the way he manifested the authority of the Creator – including his power over death.*

Other than I AM, of all founders of a religion Jesus Christ alone manifested the authority of the Creator; only Jesus did *all* of the following: (a) fulfilled the many Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament (*Y'shua*; Moishe Rosen); (b) proved by his works that he had the authority of the Creator; (c) acknowledged that he was God (Jn 20: 28-29); (d) died on the cross to redeem us and make possible our salvation; (e) rose from death on the third day, appeared to many, and ascended into heaven; (f) said he would judge us after death (Jn 5:22-23) and; (g) said no one comes to the Father except through him (Jn 14:6). <http://bible.gospelcom.net>

3. History affirms the Jesus of the Bible

Until about three decades ago, the historical reliability of the Gospels was widely accepted – including the *apostle-eyewitness* authorship of *Matthew* and *John*, which include the primary biblical / historical foundation of the Church and the Papacy: Mt 16:18-19, Mt 26:26-29, Mt 28:16-20 and Jn 21:15-17.

About two centuries ago, however, some scholars began an effort to cast doubt on the Gospels as reliable sources of historical truth about Jesus and his ministry.

These scholars virtually ignore the extrabiblical testimony of Early Church Fathers and other near-contemporaries of Jesus. They also ignore the compelling evidence for early-date Gospel authorship which so clearly points to the historical truth of the Gospels.

Instead, despite lack of evidence for their claim, these scholars continue to promote the idea that all four Gospels originated between A.D. 68 and 100 and that all are therefore historically doubtful.

These scholars also make dubious assumptions in their use of the historical-critical method and make minimal use of Hebrew and Aramaic, contrary to the requirements of *Divino Afflante Spiritu*. They also virtually ignore recent scholarly studies that strongly indicate:

(a) early authorship of the *Gospel according to Matthew* in Hebrew or Aramaic;

(b) early authorship in Hebrew or Aramaic of the *Gospel according to Mark* (possibly by Peter himself);

(c) that the Greek of the *Gospel according to John* is the Greek of translation from a Hebrew or Aramaic original and;

(d) that the sources of the *Gospel according to Luke* were written in Hebrew or Aramaic; or that the entire *Gospel according to Luke* was translated from a Hebrew or Aramaic original except the introduction.

Fr. Jean Carmignac has shown that these early date / eyewitness conclusions cannot be refuted by attributing them to the author's attempt to imitate the Septuagint or to the influence of the author's native language.

Late-date conjecture notwithstanding, the evidence for early-date Gospel authorship is formidable and compelling. This evidence, as outlined in *The 7-Step Reason to be Catholic*, 2nd Ed., provides a rock-solid foundation for the faith in the biblical Jesus

held by Christians for the past 2,000 years.

- “Contemporary Catholic Biblical Scholarship: Certitudes or Hypotheses?;” Msgr. Michael J. Wrenn:
www.ewtn.com/library/SCRIPTUR/CERTHYPO.TXT
- “The Dates of the Gospels;” Fr. George H. Duggan:
www.catholic.net/rcc/Periodicals/Homiletic/May97/gospels.html
- *The Birth of the Synoptic Gospels*; Fr. J. Carmignac; © 1987 by Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago; (Franciscan Press, Quincy, IL) ISBN 0-8199-0887-8.
- *The Hebrew Christ*; Claude Tresmontant, © 1989 by Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago; (Franciscan Press, Quincy, IL), ISBN 0-8199-0876-2.

Carsten P. Thiede concluded that *during the 60s* the Gospels of Matthew and Mark had already been copied from scrolls onto codices [*Eyewitness to Jesus*, p. 16; © 1996, Thiede / d’Ancona; Doubleday (Random House, Inc.)].

Cardinal Ratzinger, in his 1988 Erasmus Lecture, was critical of liberal Catholic and Protestant biblical scholars alike. The Cardinal said that, in addition to their great achievements, they had “*brought forth great errors.*” He then stated that *texts must be viewed “in light of the total movement of history and in light of history’s central event, Jesus Christ”* (Origins).

Emphasis on authentic biblical / extra-biblical history is essential in Catholic education at all levels as well as in Catholic seminaries. Compromise of such history has been associated with heresy and scandal (See *Goodbye, Good Men*; © 2002, Michael S. Rose, Regnery).

In response to criticism of Early Church Fathers, Ven. John Henry Newman, while an Anglican priest, wrote as follows in *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845): “*History is not a creed or a catechism. It gives lessons rather than rules; still no one can mistake its general teaching in this matter, whether he accept it or stumble at it. Bold outlines and broad masses of colour rise out of the records of the past. They may be dim, they may be incomplete, but they are definite. And this one thing at least is certain; whatever history teaches, whatever it omits, whatever it exaggerates or extenuates, whatever it says or unsays, at least the Christianity of history is not Protestantism ... and Protestantism has ever felt it so.... To be deep in history is to cease to be a Protestant*” (Image Books © 1960).

www.newmanreader.org/works/development/introduction.html (Web site of Bob Elder). Newman became a Catholic – and an esteemed Cardinal. www.newadvent.org/fathers

4. Jesus founded, and protects from error, one Petrine Church.

God loves all his children, including our separated brethren (CCC par. 822), many of whom pray and practice their Christian faith with great fervor. But did Jesus not pray “*that all may be one*” (Jn 17:17-23) and say, “*there shall be one flock, one shepherd*” (Jn 10:16)?

Clearly, the Bible indicates that Jesus founded only One Church, and Jesus: (a) *founded his Church on Peter alone* (Mt 16:18, Lk 6:46-49); (b) *gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven to Peter alone* (Mt 16:19); (c) *said “Feed my lambs.... Tend my sheep.... Feed my sheep” to Peter alone* (Jn 21:15-17); (d) *provided for papal and apostolic succession* (Isa 22:22), in which the key indicates authority transferable to a successor and; (e) *protects his Church from doctrinal error* (CCC par. 888-892).

www.ewtn.com/library/scriptur/POPE.TXT (Scott Hahn).

When Jesus said, “Thou art Peter and upon this Rock I will build my Church” (Mt 16:18), he would have spoken in *Aramaic*, his native language. In Aramaic, the *only* meaning this statement can have is the Catholic interpretation. On this, linguistic scholars of all faiths are in virtually unanimous agreement.

***In the full light of history, to be a true
“Bible Christian” is to be Catholic.***

5. After giving Peter primacy, Jesus commissioned the Apostles to make disciples of all nations

Having given primacy to Peter, the risen Jesus commissioned the eleven apostles (all but Judas Iscariot): “Go, therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit ... and teach them all I have commanded you” (Mt 28:18-20).

Do the important differences between Catholic and non-Catholic teaching mean *different gospels* are preached? Note Paul’s words on this (Gal 1:6-9).

6. The Pope and Catholic bishops – successors of Peter and the apostles – continue to make disciples of all nations

Those apostles and, with Peter's approval, Matthias and Paul, followed this directive of the risen Jesus. Through the solemn “laying on of hands” through the ages, their successors – the Pope and Catholic bishops of today – continue to carry out this mandate of Jesus. “The sole Church of Christ ... subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him.” (CCC par. 816).

7. There is no biblical escape clause to reject the one Church founded by Jesus

Protestant minister Marcus Grodi was haunted by a dilemma: “*Each Sunday I would stand in my pulpit and interpret Scripture for my flock, knowing that within a fifteen-mile radius of my church there were dozens of other Protestant pastors – all of whom believed that the Bible alone is the sole authority for doctrine and practice – but each was teaching something different from what I was teaching.*” Especially troubling for Grodi was the knowledge that “***Every Protestant minister I knew had a different set of criteria that he listed as ‘necessary’ for salvation.***” After much reading, particularly of the Early Church Fathers and Karl Keating’s *Catholicism and Fundamentalism*, Grodi realized that “*the Protestant answer to church renewal was, of all things, unscriptural,*” and that “*the single most important issue was authority*” (*Surprised by Truth*; pp. 38-51). Grodi and his wife Marilyn became Catholic. He founded the Coming Home Network www.chnetwork.org (800 664-5110) and hosts *The Journey Home* weekly call-in program on EWTN.

With the foreknowledge that Peter would deny him three times and abandon him at Calvary, Jesus gave Peter primacy among the apostles as noted in 4 a, b and c above. Jesus promised to be with the One Church he founded always; not even the Gates of hell would prevail against it.

Certainly, through the Bible, Jesus would have let us know if he intended the divided Christianity of today, with its more than 33,000 denominations and its *many contradictory teachings on matters on which one’s very salvation may well depend*. And yet the most careful search of the Bible reveals nothing other than this:

Other than those led by Peter, nowhere in the Bible does Jesus authorize anyone to “make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:18-20) and the Bible includes no “escape clause” by which Jesus authorizes anyone to reject Peter or his successors to form, or join, a different Church. The exorcist in Mk 9:38 did not preach a “contrary gospel.” Nor do “two or three” embrace such a gospel if truly gathered in his name (Mt 18:20, Mt 7:21-23). Paul has ominous words for those who

preach a “gospel” contrary to that of Christ (*Gal* 1:6-9). In Proverbs we are told we must not rely on our own insight (or understanding) (*Prov* 3:5) and Peter warned against *private interpretation* of Scripture (*2 Pet* 3:16) which has led to the proliferation of non-Catholic Christian denominations we see today.

For each of us, life on earth will one day end. ***Except for that of Jesus (and I AM), the tomb of every founder / reformer of a religion is occupied, or will be,*** as someone has said. Do we close our eyes rather than prayerfully seek the Church to which Jesus calls us?

Doesn't it make sense to belong to the One Church founded by Jesus, knowing that ***Jesus himself will judge us at death, affirming our ultimate choice of heaven or hell based not on the decisions we might then wish we had made, but on the decisions we actually made during our life on earth?*** (See CCC par. 1033; 1020-1050).

The false idea that God's *everlasting love* for us (e.g., *Is* 54:8) guarantees our salvation is widely believed. But the clear teaching of the Church is that God's love for us is no guarantee of our eternal salvation. (CCC par. 1035).

The *fullness* of the means of salvation – i.e., all seven sacraments including the EUCHARIST, “without which you shall not have life in you (*Jn* 6:53-59),” as well as the spiritual leadership of the successor of Peter – is found only in the Catholic Church.

Consider what something less than this “fullness” can mean today. Depending on whom one chooses to follow as a Christian, it can mean the condoning of sexual relations outside a valid marriage, euthanasia and induced abortion, for example; matters that can result in the loss of one's eternal salvation.

The great importance of becoming and remaining Catholic is explained in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd Ed. (par. 846-848) and in the *Companion to the CCC* (par. 847).

“Observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do,” said Jesus in regard to those who sat “on Moses' seat (*Mt* 23:2-3). Surely this applies to any in the Church whose scandalous behavior mocks their preaching. Not all popes proved personally worthy of the office. But, as with Judas Iscariot, Jesus did not suppress the free will of Peter, other apostles, or their successor popes / bishops. But no pope has destroyed the fabric of ***doctrine*** of the One Church to which the Father, in the name of Jesus, sent the Holy Spirit (*Jn* 14:26; *Acts* 2:1-4).

In *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, Pope John Paul II states that

the Documents of Vatican II are to be interpreted using the authoritative Catechism of the Catholic Church: "The Catechism was also indispensable in order that all the richness of the teaching of the Church following the Second Vatican Council could be preserved in a new synthesis and be given a new direction. Without the Catechism of the universal Church this would not have been accomplished" (p. 164; Knopf; © 1994). CCC Search Engine:
www.scborromeo.org/ccs.htm

When asked to consider another religion . . .

The first question you might ask is: **"Who was the founder of your faith, or the first to promote or reform it?"** If that person *was not* Jesus, ask:

(a) **"What signs did he (she) manifest to show that he had the authority of the Creator, and how do those signs compare with those of Jesus?"** Other than for **I AM** of the Old Testament, the Messianic prophecies of which Jesus fulfilled, *no authoritative apologist for any other religion claims that their founder manifested signs comparable to those of Jesus*. See Step 2, (a) through (g) above and "Other Religions." In the Old Testament Hebrew, God is *Elohim* (masculine plural, meaning "the strong ones") implying plurality, not *Eloah*, the singular form. Similarly in Gen 1:26, "Let *us* make man in *our* image."

(b) **"Did your founder / reformer indicate or acknowledge that he / she was God, as Jesus did?"** (Jn 20:28-29). Even if some others may have made this claim, *their tombs are all occupied, or will be*, as someone has said. "Wonder workers" are found in all cultures, but history could never remain silent about another like Jesus.

(c) And finally, ask: **"Does it make sense, really, to follow someone other than Jesus, the ONLY ONE who manifested the power to keep, in the hereafter, the promises he made to us?"**

If the founder was Jesus, note Steps 3 to 7 above. Then ask:

(a) **"What is the pillar and bulwark of the truth?"** Paul's answer is not "Scripture," but "the Church of the living God" (1 Tim 3:15).

(b) **"On whom did Jesus found his Church?"** On Peter alone (Step 4). Jesus differentiated between the "foundation" (Himself), and the "Rock" on which the foundation is laid (Lk 6:48-49, and Mt 7:24-27). Refer to Step 3 to affirm the historical authenticity of the Gospels.

(c) "To whom did Jesus give the keys of the kingdom of heaven?" To Peter alone (Mt 16:19). Luther affirmed this Catholic position long after his excommunication, but denied the papal authority of Peter's successors. Calvin, attempting to duplicate "the keys," *misquoted Jesus in Luke*. Show how Isaiah 22:22 and Mt 28:20 indicate apostolic / papal succession.

(d) Ignatius – Bishop of Antioch, martyr and hearer of John the apostle – described the *Eucharist* as "*the flesh of Christ ... the medicine of immortality.*"

(e) Note that there is no biblical "Escape Clause" to reject the One Church Jesus founded and promised to be with always. Against it, even the gates of hell will not prevail. By encouraging a Catholic to leave that Church, or discouraging anyone from joining it, is that person not attempting to "prevail against it" (Mt 16:18)?

Next, I suggest that you and your well-meaning non-Catholic friend explore together the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd Ed. Using the index, you can quickly find the answer to virtually any question about what the Church teaches. Extensive footnotes provide the biblical basis for these teachings. <http://bible.gospelcom.net>

Old Testament / New Testament, or Koran?

God made a *covenant* with Abraham (as with Adam, Noah, Moses and David – preceding the New Covenant of Jesus (Mt 26:26-28)) and promised to establish it with Isaac (Gen 17:21). Although God made no *covenant* with Ishmael, he was conceived after Sarai (Sarah) gave Hagar to Abraham "as a wife" (Gen: 16:3). God named Ishmael ("God hears") (Gen 16:11), blessed him (Gen 17:20) and promised to make him a great nation (Gen 17:2).

Isaac and Ishmael went their separate ways, but their bond as sons of Abraham endured. When Abraham died, at age 175, together these half brothers buried him next to his wife Sarah (Gen 25:7-10). ***True descendants of Abraham / Isaac – and of Abraham / Ishmael – strive to come together in peace as sons and daughters of a common father.***

About 2,400 years later, in about A.D. 610, Muhammad began to dictate *The Koran (Q'uran)* – messages he believed came from Allah through an angel. It is said that the ancestry of Muhammad can be traced to Ishmael through Kedar, his second son (Gen 25:13). Today there are more than 70 separate Islamic denominations.

Several suras of the Koran appear to refer favorably to the Bible, Jews and Christians, e.g.: Allah sent Jesus and gave him the Gospel in which there is light and guidance (5:46); Muslims are to forgive the People of the Book (Christians / Jews) who attempt to convert them (2:109); Jesus was a prophet (2:86, 136) with whom Allah made a covenant (33:7). Muslims honor Jesus as a prophet.

In contrast to the Koran, however, are the following biblical words and acts of Jesus: (a) turned water into wine (forbidden; sura 5:90) at the wedding feast (Jn 2:1-11); (b) said of a cup of wine “Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood (forbidden; 5:3) of the covenant ...” (Mt 26:27); (c) warned his followers not to follow future desert prophets (a veiled reference to Muhammad?) (Mt 24:24-26); (d) said, “I and the Father are one” (Jn 10:30) and “Before Abraham was, I AM” (Jn 8:58), implying equality with the Father / Allah; (e) replying to Thomas, Jesus acknowledged that he was God (Jn 20:28-29) and; (f) unique in world history, Jesus manifested the power and authority of the Creator (Step 2).

The following suras cause Catholics and other Christians to reject the Koran as Divine revelation: (a) *Jesus was not God and not the Son of God* (4:171); (b) *Jesus was just one of several prophets preceding Muhammad, The Prophet* (4:163, 2:136) and; (c) *Jesus was not crucified* (4:157-159).

Clearly, one must choose: Bible or Koran? – Jesus or Muhammad? One’s eternal salvation may well depend on making the right choice and living accordingly. Why? Because Jesus said unequivocally that he would be our ultimate judge and said no one comes to the Father except through him (See *Baptism*; CCC par. 1213-1284). By what standard will Jesus judge us? *To gain eternal life, Jesus said we must keep the commandments (Mt 19:16-17; 22:36-39). We must love all, including our enemies. God will forgive us only if we forgive others (Mt 5:43-44, 6:15); and we must forgive “from the heart” (Mt 18: 35). How will Jesus judge those who engage in violence toward innocent Jews, Christians, Muslims and others? Within Islam as well, such acts have been condemned. Although they saw Palestine as a separate case, The Organization of Islamic Conferences declared, “We unequivocally condemn acts of international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations ...” (#7; Kuala Lumpur, 1-3 April, 2002). www.oic-oci.org.*

The Indonesia-based Liberal Islam Network, www.islamlib.com promotes inter-religious brotherhood, including non-discrimination on the basis of religion, ethnicity, social status, political status and gender.

Of special interest in regard to world peace is “The Theological Basis of Inter-Religious Brotherhood,” an on-line article by Budhy Munawar-Rachman. The Republic of Indonesia has a Muslim population of about 200 million; more Muslims than any other country in the world.

Do earliest copies of the Koran support Christianity?

In 1972, the oldest known copies of the Koran were found in Yemen. **Careful philological (source language) study of these early manuscripts convinced some scholars that *The Koran, as recited by Muhammad, supported Christianity, and even encouraged participation in the “eucharistic commemoration.”* They also conclude that, instead of “dark, wide-eyed (maidens),” Muhammad would have recited that “white grapes” or “white raisins” are among the fruits of heaven.**

These are among the findings documented in the book, *Die syro-aramaeische Lesart des Koran (The Syro-Aramaic Reading of the Koran)* by “Christoph Luxenberg,” a pseudonym. It was published in German in 2000 by Das Arabische Buch and will soon be published in English. A scholarly review acclaiming this book, in English, is posted on the “Hugoye” Web site below. The July 28, 2003 issue of *Newsweek*, which included an article about this book, was banned in Pakistan.

Quite the opposite of doubting the Koran, which the Koran forbids, Luxenberg and other philologists are confident that their studies clarify it, providing a more accurate account of the Koran as it was first recited by Muhammad himself. Done in good faith, It would seem that Muslims would consider such an endeavor pleasing to Allah and to all Muslims sincerely seeking truth.

One scholar observed that a new translation of the Koran based on these findings (approved and made known worldwide by authoritative Islamic spokespersons), could result in greater Islamic tolerance of Christianity and Judaism based on a new awareness of Islam’s close ties to both religions. Dare we imagine what this could mean in terms of religious freedom, prosperity and world peace? Further information on this subject can be found on the following Web sites:

www.theatlantic.com/issues/99jan/koran.htm;

www.corkscrew-balloon.com/02/03/1bkk/04b.html

<http://bethmardutho.cua.edu/hugoye> > Volume Index > Volume 6 Number 1 > Book Reviews; Christoph Luxenberg

<http://answering-islam.org.uk/Gilchrist/Jam/chap2.html>

Hear “Catholic Answers Live” on your computer:
<http://www.catholic.com/radio/calive.asp>

Questions? EWTN, www.ewtn.com/vexperts/search.asp. Catholic Answers: www.catholic.com (619 387-7200). Jimmy Akin, CA staff apologist, has his own excellent Web page: Nazareth Resources Library, www.cin.org/users/james. Or call Catholics United for the Faith toll free: **1 800 – MY FAITH** or www.cuf.org. The following Web sites are also highly recommended: Patrick Madrid, www.surprisedbytruth.com; Steve Ray, www.catholic-convert.com; John Martignoni, www.biblechristiansociety.com; Pope John Paul II Society of Evangelists, www.pjpiisoe.org/index.htm; The National Catholic Bioethics Center, www.ncbcenter.org and Dave Armstrong, www.biblicalcatholic.com. The Bible Gateway Web site is a very helpful biblical resource: <http://bible.gospelcom.net>.

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