

Great Controversy Series
Conform or Reform?
Chapter 13 - The Netherlands and Scandinavia
 Bible Sermon Study Notes: Cary Rodgers, Jr, pastor

After a highly anticipated meeting, Pope Francis appears to have left his mark on President Donald Trump.
 (CNN Article - Pope-Trump meeting agenda: Climate change, terrorism – May 24, 2017)
<http://www.cnn.com/2017/05/24/politics/trump-pope-francis-vatican-city/>

"Thank you. I won't forget what you said," Trump told Pope Francis, before leaving the Pope's private study after a half-hour private meeting.

Pope gave Trump a copy of his 2015 encyclical on the environment, "Laudato Si."

Donald J. Trump [Verified account @realDonaldTrump](#) [May 24](#)

Honor of a lifetime to meet His Holiness Pope Francis. I leave the Vatican more determined than ever to pursue PEACE in our world.

Is it time to conform or reform?

[Romans 12:1](#)

1 I beseech [invite – come near] you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a **living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service [worship].

In other words, God invites us all to come near to Him and because of HIS mercies we are able to present our total being (physically, mentally, and spiritually) as a living sacrifice that is holy and acceptable unto to God. This invitation from God is our reasonable service or worship to God.

Why is presenting yourself as a “living sacrifice” a “reasonable service”?

Reasonable (Greek)= logikos [log-ik-os'] rational (“logical”) - This is logic or reason based on the Word of God with leads to absolute truth!

Reasonable service is all about rendering true worship to the God of heaven who sent His son Jesus Christ to cleanse us TOTALLY from ALL SIN!

Isaiah 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Being totally cleansed from sin and having total victory over sin through the power of the blood of Jesus Christ by FAITH is true worship.

What is a living sacrifice without blemish that is holy and acceptable to God?

[Romans 6:1-13](#)

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness of his* resurrection:

- 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that **henceforth we should not serve sin.**
- 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.
- 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:
- 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.
- 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.
- 11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.
- 13 Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God.

In general, sacrifice means that you have to give up something of great value and receive nothing or something less value in return. What do we have to sacrifice? SIN, which is death! In exchange we receive eternal life through Jesus Christ! We are actually giving up something that has NO value and receive eternal life which is of great value. The one who sacrificed was Jesus!

In order to be a “living sacrifice” you MUST be DEAD to sin and alive through Christ by faith! We must place our sins the cross, or lay them on the altar and in exchange receive eternal life. This is a living sacrifice. This is true worship to the true God in heaven. We do not worship any other God that does not teach the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ which gives you and I TOTAL victory over sin! Any other teachings or religion that presents a Jesus with no victory over sin is a false christ. If they teach that Jesus is not divine with God of heaven is false. This the reason why the God of the Bible and the God of the Muslim Koran are NOT the same God. They don’t believe that Jesus is the son of God, but a notable prophet. Jesus is more than a notable prophet He is the means of your salvation through His blood.

What do you have to be detached from and have renewed into order to be a living sacrifice?

Romans 12:2

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Conformed (Greek) – *suschēmatisō* Thayer Definition:

1) to conform one’s self (i.e. one’s mind and character) to another’s pattern, (fashion one’s self according to)

ALL those in the last days who pattern their minds and habits after the world will worship the beast and his image and receive the mark of the beast! Those who pattern their mind after Hollywood, Netflix, Empire, American Idol... NBA, NFL... LeBron James... Jay Z and others...will be lost.

Transform (Greek) - *metamorphoō* Thayer Definition:

1) to change into another form, to transform, to transfigure

1a) Christ appearance was changed and was resplendent with divine brightness on the mount of transfiguration

Metamorphoo = metamorphosis is a total transformation of your thinking that is that takes the shape and image of Jesus and His character.

Renewing(Greek) *anakainōsis* Thayer Definition: 1) a renewal, renovation, complete change for the better

Transform = Reform

Thoughts>Feelings>Behavior>Habits>Character

A transformed mind is reformed through Jesus Christ is a NEW CHARACTER. Your decision are based on the Word and not your fleshy desires.

2 Corinthians 5:17

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

When you are IN CHRIST, you abiding in Christ and Christ abiding in you, you are no longer thinking like the world. Your thinking changes about what you watch or listen to; **how you spend your time; what you eat; where you work; what you wear; who you hang with; how you spend money, etc.** Every area of your life when you are IN CHRIST MUST have the mind and thinking of Christ! This is supernatural, it is the operation of the Spirit of God working in you both to WILL and to DO of His good pleasure! (Philippians 2:13)

What is the mind of Christ in which we MUST pattern our thinking after in order to have a transformed and renewed thinking?

Philippians 2:5-8

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Four key aspects of the Mind of Christ that we must possess in order to have a transformed and renewed thinking.

- 1) No reputation (do not care about the opinions of others, always want to please God)
- 2) Servant
- 3) Humble
- 4) Obedient

Matthew 11:29

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

(Show a picture of an oxen yoked with another.) A new ox is yoked with and an experienced ox so the new ox can learn from the experienced ox. You must YOKE UP with Christ daily in learn how he thinks, how he moves, where he goes so you can have His mind and rest in the TRUTH.

1 Peter 4:1

1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

Why must we have a transformed and renewed thinking?

Again, look at the last part of Roman 12:2 - "that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

In other words, you must "prove" or be tested that your transformation is genuine or is it a false transformation. The "FRUIT" of true transformation is good, acceptable and the perfect will of God. Your "fruit" is your character. Is it IDENTICAL to Jesus?

False Transformation / Reformation

False transformation maybe some outward improvements in life. False transformation is profession of Christ without renewing the mind in unison with the MIND of Christ. False transformation is still thinking and doing like the world with "perfume" called Christianity. False transformation sprays on the "perfume" to try to cover up sin and worldliness in the front of others. False transformation claims Jesus but still breaks the Sabbath!

False transformation claims Jesus but still breaks the commandments of God. False transformation claims Jesus, but still hooked to the entertainment of the world. False transformation is self-deceiving and leads to destruction.

CONFORM or REFORM – Protestant Reformers

Remember, to be a living sacrifice for Jesus we MUST have a transformed mind that is like the mind of Jesus Christ. Many of the reformers during the protestant reformation under papal suppression had to learn this first hand for themselves. When they discovered the truth of God's word for themselves they had to make a decision even in the midst of very strong papal opposition to be transformed by God's WORD of TRUTH or continue to conform to the errors of the papacy. All the protestant reformers that decided to be transformed by the power of God endure persecution and many were killed. As a result the light of God truth was able to shed its light to others so they to can be transformed by God's word.

Remember the lives and the testimonies of many of the protestant reformers that we have studied about so far in this Great Controversy series. They were a living sacrifice unto God. Their personal transformation brought about a great reformation through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Reformers or conformers? John Wycliffe, John Huss, Martin Luther, Princes of Germany, Ulrich Zwingli, Jacque Lefevre, William Feral, Louis de Berquin (ALL TRUE REFORMER)

What about the bishop of Meaux? Conformer! False transformation led to recantation!!

A Living Sacrifice & A Transformed Mind

Like the protestant reformers of the past, we as God's remnant NOW must be a living sacrifice and have a transformed mind like Christ in order to blow the trumpet of TRUTH in the these last days.

The Netherlands

Show map of Netherlands – Today, its eastern border is Germany and Belgium, the southern border. The North Sea is on the Netherlands northwest border. Dutch is the main official language

700 years before the Martin Luther's writings reached the Netherlands the seed of protest against the error of the papacy was planted by two bishops from the Netherlands who went visit the Rome. They saw the true character of the papacy first hand.

They concluded to the people of the Netherlands...

“You [papacy] set up yourself in the temple of God; instead of a pastor, you are become a wolf to the sheep; . . . you would make us believe you are a supreme bishop, but you rather behave like a tyrant. . . . Whereas you ought to be a servant of servants, as you call yourself, you endeavor to become a lord of lords. . . .” GC – 237

From century to century others continued the protest in the Netherlands

The Waldensian Bible was translated into Dutch

Very intense persecution, torture and murder was inflicted on the true reformers of the Netherlands by the papacy, but many stayed faithful to the TRUTH!

“In the midst of fagots and torture the believers continued to multiply, steadfastly declaring that the Bible is the only infallible authority in religion, and that "no man should be coerced to believe, but should be won by preaching." GC - 238

Menno Simons

Menno Simons (1496 – January, 31 1561) born in Witmarsum, Friesland (Netherlands)

Trained as a devote Roman Catholic and later became an ordained priest.

Originally believed that reading the Bible was heresy! He tried to avoid it at all cost, but the Holy spirit continued to press Menno heart

Read the New Testament translation of Martin Luther's

Accepted the reformation, but still continued his studies of the scripture.

He witnessed a reformed beheaded by the papacy for getting re-baptized. This sparked his personal study that the Bible does not teach infant baptism. He exposed this error of the papacy. Faith and repentance is required before someone is baptized.

Like Luther, Menno Simons, had to fight through the fanatic false reformation that was throughout the Netherlands and Germany that caused violence and civil unrest. The fanatics hated Rome and the true reformation of Luther and Simon.

Menno Simons became an Anabaptist (means Re-baptism) minister who taught against infant baptism, but they did not understand baptism by immersion at the time.

For twenty-five years, Simon with his wife and children traveled throughout the Netherlands and northern Germany teaching the transformation power of Jesus and the true reformed faith and exposing the errors of the papacy!

Those who followed the teachings of Menno Simons became known as the "Mennonites". They are still a fellowship of believers among the Anabaptist today. Approximately 2 million worldwide.

Note: Many Amish today are Mennonites, but Mennonites in general are not Amish. Amish are a group of Mennonites (Anabaptist) who followed the teachings of Jakob Amman.

Netherland's Great Persecution

In the 16th century Charles V the Papal Roman king over Germany and Netherlands inflicted one of greatest persecution in the Netherlands. Mennonites and Anabaptist among the scores of Protestants who were killed.

Many Mennonites suffer much from persecution because they were confused and associated with the fanatical Munsterites.

The book the Martyrs Mirror published in 1660 by Thieleman J. van Braght documents the stories and testimonies of some of the protestants who were murdered by the papacy in the Netherlands. The full title of the book is ***The Bloody Theater or Martyrs Mirror of the Defenseless Christians who baptized only upon confession of faith, and who suffered and died for the testimony of Jesus, their Saviour, from the time of Christ to the year A.D. 1660.***

"Next to the Bible, the Martyrs Mirror has historically been held as the most significant and prominent place in Amish and Mennonite homes." - Wikipedia

"To read the Bible, to hear or preach it, or even to speak concerning it, was to incur the penalty of death by the stake. To pray to God in secret, to refrain from bowing to an image, or to sing a psalm, was also punishable with

death. Even those who should abjure their errors were condemned, if men, to die by the sword; if women, to be buried alive. Thousands perished under the reign of Charles and of Philip II.” - GC 239

“At one time a whole family was brought before the inquisitors, charged with remaining away from mass and worshiping at home. On his examination as to their practices in secret the youngest son answered: "We fall on our knees, and pray that God may enlighten our minds and pardon our sins; we pray for our sovereign, that his reign may be prosperous and his life happy; we pray for our magistrates, that God may preserve them."--Wylie, b. 18, ch. 6. Some of the judges were deeply moved, yet the father and one of his sons were condemned to the stake.” GC – 240

“The rage of the persecutors was equaled by the faith of the martyrs. Not only men but delicate women and young maidens displayed unflinching courage. "Wives would take their stand by their husband's stake, and while he was enduring the fire they would whisper words of solace, or sing psalms to cheer him." "Young maidens would lie down in their living grave as if they were entering into their chamber of nightly sleep; or go forth to the scaffold and the fire, dressed in their best apparel, as if they were going to their marriage." GC - 240

Their blood was seed that spread the protestant reformation further.

Later the Netherlands was freed from the shackles of papal Rome by King William III as known as William of Orange who became a strong advocate of the Protestant Reformation.

Protestant Reformation in Scandinavia

Scandinavia is a region of northern Europeans that includes Denmark, Norway, and Sweden

This region was open to the protestant reformation without much papal interference

Scandinavian students who went to school in Wittenburg shared the reformation with their country

Luther's publications were spread throughout the region.

Many people were unshackled from the superstitions and errors of Papal Rome.

Han Tausen "the Reformer of Denmark"

(1494 – 11 November 1561) – born in Denmark

Joined the Catholic monastery as monk and show great intellectual promise for the papacy

Papacy offered to pay for his university education of a school of his choice except Wittenburg, Germany

Went to school in Cologne, Germany where he became dissatisfied with teachings of the papacy and also began reading the teachings of Martin Luther. He accepted the reformed faith.

Even though he lost his financial university support from his monastery, he went to Wittenburg, Germany in 1523. He met Luther and studied with him for over a year and a half.

He returned to his monastery life and secretly taught the other monks there the reformed faith. Many of them accepted and taught it themselves to others.

As a result, Tausen was placed behind bars under strict supervision at another monastery but continued to teach the reformed faith. Several monks accepted the reformed faith there also! Later he later was totally kicked out of the monastery.

Many churches and places throughout Denmark was opened to Tausen to extend the protestant reformation.

The Petri Brothers of Sweden

The protestant reformation caught fire in Sweden led by the Petri Brothers, Olaf and Laurentius Petri

They studied under Martin Luther and Melanchthon in Wittenburg, Germany and brought the protestant reformation to Sweden.

They were greatly opposed by the papacy and those who did not accept the reformed faith.

Olaf Petri was often assailed by the mob, and upon several occasions barely escaped with his life.

Olaf was able to defend his faith before the king and before the leaders of Sweden

"My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me" (John 7:16); and Paul declared that should he preach any other gospel than that which he had received, he would be accursed (Galatians 1:8). "How, then," said the Reformer, "shall others presume to enact dogmas at their pleasure, and impose them as things necessary to salvation?"--Wylie, b. 10, ch. 4. He showed that the decrees of the church are of no authority when in opposition to the commands of God, and maintained the great Protestant principle that "the Bible and the Bible only" is the rule of faith and practice." - GC 243

The king of Sweden accepted the Protestant faith

Olaf translated the NT into the Swedish language and later at the desire of the king Olaf and his brother Laurentius translated the entire Bible.

As a result, Papal Rome lost it grip on Sweden and it became a protestant reformation stronghold.

Thirty Years' War

A hundred years later Sweden's strength of being freed from Papal oppression was very influential during the end of the Thirty Years' War in Central Europe between 1618 and 1648.

Over eight million people died in this war!

Papal Rome Empire fiercely wanted to keep its empire from crumbling as a result of the protestant reformation and other political factors in nations were fighting for their independent.

"All Northern Europe seemed about to be brought again under the tyranny of Rome. It was the armies of Sweden that enabled Germany to turn the tide of popish success, to win toleration for the Protestants,-- Calvinists as well as Lutherans,--and to restore liberty of conscience to those countries that had accepted the Reformation." - GC 244

Darkness into his marvelous light

The protestant reformation is a church history lesson of how God brought people out of deep darkness of apostasy to His great and marvelous light. It was not overnight, but it was steady and got brighter and brighter and each year rolled on. The brighter it got the harder it was for Papal Rome to stop it!

At each step of truth during the protestant reformation each reformer grew in truth. They detached themselves from papacy, they no longer conformed to their errors or doctrines. They did not form any alliances in any with papal Rome. They view an alliance with papal Rome as apostasy!

Modern “Protestants” Image of the Beast!

Today a great majority “protestants” have joined an alliance with the papacy, the beast of Revelation 13. Pope Francis along with many protestant churches around the world have declared the protestant reformation is over!

On the 500 year anniversary of Martin Luther’s nailing of the 95 theses on the church door in Wittenburg, on October 31, 2017, the papacy will join in the festivities with other protestants to officially declare that the protestant reformation is DEAD!

Even the Seventh-day Adventist corp world church as made an alliance with the papacy!

Example of this at work in the latest news in Russia – reformation to conformation!

In July 2016, Russia’s new anti-terrorism laws, which restrict Christians from evangelizing outside of their churches, went into effect.

June 28, 2016 “Adventists Observe Day of Prayer as Russia Moves to Limit Missionary Activity

An Adventist leader also appeals to the Russian president to reject the legislation.” Andrew McChesney

News Editor – *Adventist Review* <http://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/story4134-adventists-pray-for-russia-not-to-restrict-missionary-activity>

“Seventh-day Adventist believers across Russia were observing a day of fasting and prayer on Tuesday over proposed legislation that would severely restrict missionary activity in the country by, among other things, banning religious gatherings in homes and requiring people who wish to share their faith online or through religious literature to first secure proper documents.”

July 8, 2016 - “Adventists Hold High-Level Moscow Talks About Law Restricting Missionary Work” - Andrew McChesney News Editor – *Adventist Review* <http://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/story4182-adventists-hold-high-level-moscow-talks-about-law-restricting-missionaries>

“Ganoune Diop, director of the public affairs and religious liberty department for the Adventist world church, discussed the legislation with leaders from the lower house of parliament, known as the State Duma, and the advisory Russian Public Chamber during a visit to Moscow this week.”

July 22, 2016 - “Adventist Church Ready to Assist Members After Russia Limits Evangelism But the Euro-Asia Division hopes that new law will not be used against church members.” Andrew McChesney News Editor – *Adventist Review* <http://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/story4210-adventist-church-ready-to-assist-members-after-russia-limits-evangelism>

“Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders in Russia expressed hope that a restrictive law that came into force this week would not be used against the evangelistic work of Adventists but said they were ready to assist church members accused of violating it.”

*Ganoune Diop, sixth right, posing with **Oleg Goncharov**, seventh right, and directors of the public affairs and religious liberty departments of various church entities within the Euro-Asia Division during their meetings in Moscow this week*

Fast Forward 2017

April 22, 2017 “Pacifist Jehovah’s Witnesses now banned in Russia as “extremists”

<https://aleteia.org/2017/04/22/pacifist-jehovahs-witnesses-now-banned-in-russia-as-extremists/>

“Russia’s Supreme Court on Thursday accepted a request from the justice ministry that the Jehovah’s Witnesses be considered an extremist group and ordered its national headquarters in St. Petersburg and all 395 local churches closed. It banned all their activity immediately, and ordered their property seized by the state.”

Daria Kirjanov-Mueller, who teaches Russian at the University of New Haven in Connecticut says “Jehovah’s Witnesses are not the only ones affected, she said. The law applies also to Mormons and Seventh Day Adventists, for example.

She said that the Orthodox in the south of Russia are generally very religious and see groups such as 7th-Day Adventists as competition.”

May 2017 SDA corp church in Russia through its “high level” talks shows that it has totally conformed to the papacy and the orthodox church in Russia.

May 12, 2017 “Adventist Leaders in Russia Address Fake News on Church Status

“Information from unofficial sources is not consistent with reality,” they state. By: *Adventist Review* Staff & Euro-Asia Division <http://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/story-adventist-leaders-in-russia-address-fake-news-on-church-status>

“In light of the information that has been published on the Internet on the plans for placing a ban on the activity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Russia, we officially communicate that any such information from unofficial sources is not consistent with reality.

In recent years, the Church has built, in the spirit of mutual respect, constructive dialogue with state authorities that allows for opening new possibilities to use the resources of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for meeting the needs of society. Indeed, the program “Family Health, Nation’s Health,” aimed at preventing lifestyle-related diseases, is being implemented thanks to a public grant under an ordinance of the President of the Russian Federation. It is something that attests to the fact that state authorities have in high regard the Adventist Church's participation in public life.

In view of this, we again solemnly declare that there is no reason to believe that any justified or sensible reason exists for restricting or banning the activity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Russian Federation.

M. F. Kaminsky, President of the Euro-Asia Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

O. Y. Goncharov, Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Director, Euro-Asia Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and Member of the Advisory Council for Cooperation with Religious Associations Under the President of the Russian Federation

This again is an example of compromise that leads to conforming to the world.