Scott Hahn: The Man and the Myth

By Miles McKee

The Scott Hahn story, the tale of the Presbyterian minister who converted to Roman Catholicism makes for incredible reading, if you like fantasy and fiction. Mr. Hahn would have us believe that he is a true believer in search of truth. His story however actually sets forth the spiritual journey of a seemingly unteachable and stubborn man.

Mr. Hahn would have us believe that he encountered a series of unanswerable questions as a Presbyterian minister and thus was led to believe in the Church of Rome. He claims that God led him through much prayer and study, to join the Roman Church. He now embraces Mary as his spiritual mother and endorses prayers for the dead. He rejoices that he partakes of the actual flesh of the Savior in the Eucharist. He prays with beads and all the other Roman Catholic traditions which have no basis in Scripture.

According to Mr. Hahn, although he was not very religious while in High School he made a commitment and asked Jesus Christ into his heart. We may wonder, in light of later developments, just what kind of "Jesus Christ" it was that Mr. Hahn received into his heart. Of course, this speculation of 'asking Jesus into the heart' is standard fare nowadays for some of the evangelical community, but such a magic formula is a lie in face of biblical truth. True faith is trust in Christ Jesus' perfect life and sacrificial death on the cross, as the only way of salvation. Mr. Hahn implied that the making a commitment to Christ somehow secured his salvation.

Commitment, as a way of salvation, is humanistic and not biblical. Salvation is not a decision of man; it is a decision of God in the eternal council of the Godhead. The biblical concept of salvation is that by grace the believer is accepted in Christ. The whole theme of Ephesians Chapter 1 is summarized in verse 6, "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." The Apostle Paul showed exactly how the true believer is identified with the Lord Jesus Christ. God has provided Christ's righteousness to sinners who believe. (Romans 3:21-22) Thus, when one understands that the faithfulness of Christ is vicariously applied to the sinner by a one time gracious act of God alone, he realizes that Christ satisfied the law on his behalf. But alas, Mr. Hahn at no time was open to this truth that salvation is by Christ alone, by faith alone, as revealed by Scripture alone.

As one reads Hahn's story one has to wonder what kind of man he really was in those days: was he looking for reasons to be offended? He says Protestants changed their position on contraception. Even if this was the case for some Bible believing Christians, so what if they did? If changing one's position on such a matter is such a dreadful thing, why then did he join a religion that one day says we cannot eat meat on Friday, under pain of mortal sin and damnation, and later says we can. Talk about changing your position. One day Mass must be said in Latin; later Latin was out and English was in! So much for the Church of Rome being the place to find consistency!

The next major thing Hahn does is to join together with those who called into question the doctrine of Sola Fide (faith alone). Apparently, he claims to have discovered that Luther's conception of justification was very limited and restricted. It had lots of truth, but it, according to Hahn, also missed lots of truths. He then pursued his studies and discovered there was a family aspect of covenant and that the legal aspect of covenant was not really a major part of salvation. However the Scriptural truth shows that Jesus Christ bore our sins as a wrath offering, where our sins are legally imputed to Christ, and Christ's righteousness is legally credited to us. For example as the Apostle proclaimed, "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Where do we start with this man? He loves to pick and chose who he wants God to be. Of course God is a Father but God cannot abandon His holiness just to act like one. Of course He is love but He has wrath. He is the Just God who has settled the sin question in the gracious gift of His Son. How did Hahn miss this? Was his education and study of the Bible so deficient that he failed to notice this entirely? He then tells us that he discovered there were some very significant gaps in Luther and Calvin's teachings and thus concluded that Sola Fide, 'faith alone' was entirely wrong. After all, according to Mr. Hahn, the Bible never actually says, "faith alone". How strange it is that the Bible neither has a verse that says God is a trinity but doubtless Hahn believes in one triune God. He doubtless would argue that the Trinity, while not directly taught, is inferred and clearly discerned. How is it then that he allows for the Trinity but at the same time, by the same rules of Bible interpretation, disallows 'faith alone' as the way to salvation. We are justified through faith alone in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. He alone is the payment for our sins, thus freeing us from sin's penalty, and at the same time, God credits Christ's righteousness to us. "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:28) It is apparent that Mr. Hahn just will not abide biblical truth. His exegesis was shot and he ran to Papal Rome with is cap in hand, scholar he is not.

He then goes on to make the classic Papal error of confusing faith with the fruit of faith, and is now on a headlong gallop to apostasy from biblical faith. He, at least, is astute enough to know that if one rejects Sola Fide, 'faith alone' one has rejected biblical faith. The next thing Hahn, the modern day Don Quixote does is to accept a pastorate in Virginia. On arrival at his new charge he began to spread the glad tidings of covenant (as understood by him). In doing so, he went to work correcting the church's misunderstanding of covenant as a contract, and began showing them that covenant means family. Earlier in his quest there actually was a time he agreed that legal justification was part of salvation but that it just did not go far enough. Now he has entirely dropped the legal aspect. By this stage he has rejected Sola Fide (by faith alone) and legal justification. He already is a Roman Catholic in heart and affection yet is still prepared to deceive and mislead his listeners into thinking he is a Protestant. A thousand points for guile; zero for integrity. Of course another possibility exists which Mr. Hahn is not

mentioning, and that is that this church had already lost the Gospel and accepted a fellow blind man to lead and guide them.

He then suggested to the church that they ought to have communion as a family meal. He tells us that he even used the word Eucharist." Mr. Hahn, as top of his class, would have of course known that the word 'Eucharist' means 'thanksgiving'. This is not an objectionable concept. However, Mr. Hahn would also have known that Eucharist means something entirely different to the Church of Rome. Rome teaches that 'the Eucharist is the Sacrament of the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ under the appearance of bread and wine'. It seems he is herding his people rapidly towards the Papal idea of the Eucharist. He infers that the introduction of the word Eucharist was something of a clandestine act—if he was merely using it to mean thanksgiving then there would be nothing underhanded about introducing this terminology. Mr. Hahn then suggests, "Maybe we ought to celebrate being God's covenant-family by communion each week." However, Mr. Hahn misses the point of communion. Communion, though a communal meal, is never seen in Scripture as a celebration of family. It is a remembrance of Christ and the cross. So the Lord Christ Jesus declared, "This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." (I Corinthians 11:25) However since Hahn, by this stage, is well on the way to throwing out the authority of the Scriptures, we ought not to be surprised that he wasn't bothered by a lack of Biblical authority for his actions.

We can only imagine that Mr. Hahn must have felt a great deal of frustration at these weekly communion services as he was not endued with the power to command the bread and wine to become the actual body and blood of Christ. That power was a secret reserved only for the Pope's priests. They alone have the ability to call God off his throne and transform Him into a wafer and cup of wine! The Catholic priest, John O'Brien, documented Rome's thoughts on this matter by writing: "While the Blessed Virgin was the human agency by which Christ became incarnate a single time, the priest brings Christ down from heaven, and renders Him present on our altar as the eternal Victim for the sins of man—not once, but a thousand times! The priest speaks and lo! Christ, the eternal and omnipotent God, bows his head in humble obedience to the priest's command." (O'Brien, The Faith of Millions: Our Sunday Visitor, 1963, 1974, p. 256). Mr. Hahn then suggested that at their meetings, instead of the sermon, the focal point should be Eucharist. This man is bound and determined to implement his agenda. He is already in Rome's camp, yet he continues to try to persuade us that he was fighting his conversion to Rome all the way. By the way, preaching should be the heart of the worship service. It is God's chosen method of advancing His cause and strengthening His family for we read, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save those that believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21).

The next thing we encounter is Mr. Hahn teaching at a Protestant Seminary. Here he almost takes the mask off as he begins to teach baptismal regeneration. He says, the "disciples went about baptizing. I taught that being born again is a covenant act, a sacrament, a covenant renewal involving

baptism". Imagine dragging poor unsuspecting infants into a ritual and later telling them the ritual saved them. Coercion at its best! But coercion is Papal Rome's field of expertise. He at this stage has rejected Sola Fide, 'faith alone', and has, to all intents and purposes, adopted the Roman Catholic view of the Lord's Table and has embraced baptismal regeneration. Yet all the while he is being paid to uphold Protestant truth at a Protestant seminary. Again, a thousand points for guile, zero points for integrity! Why did he not just get honest and join the Papal communion at that stage? Mr. Hahn would have us believe that he is a noble soul who all the while is wrestling with these great and weighty issues. Reading what he wrote we see that his mind is already made up; he just wants to make himself look good in his reader's eyes.

He then addresses his "discovery" of John Chapter 6 where Jesus says we must eat his flesh and drink his blood. This is so tired that it is almost laughable. No Protestant scholarship existed to help him through this. According to Mr. Hahn, Jesus advocated cannibalism and that is why the people got offended! Mr. Hahn should have studied the exact words of John chapter six. The teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself confirms the spiritual union of Himself with the believer and not to labor, "for the meat which perishes" but rather "for that meat which endures unto everlasting life" (John 6:27). When the Jews asked what they were to do that they might partake of "the bread of life", Christ answered, "This is the work of God, that you believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:29). The whole theme of John Chapter Six is believing on Him the Christ as the true means of allaying spiritual hunger and slaking spiritual thirst. Jesus says, "I am the bread of life: he that comes to me shall never hunger; and he that believes on me shall never thirst." (John 6:35). The Lord's words "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed" (John 6:55) show how serious is the command to believe on Him. The Lord Himself has commanded worship "in spirit and in truth" It is the absurd to suggest that he might have been advocating physical eating of flesh and drinking of blood. The clear principle of interpretation that He gives of His own words are, "It is the spirit that quickens the flesh profits nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). He is the true food of the mind not of the stomach, of the heart and of faith, not of the mouth.

Mr. Hahn seems bound and determined to believe the full batch of Papal absurdities. No one can reach him at this stage but it gets worse. He now becomes convinced of the Real Presence and tells us that, "All of the early Church fathers without exception took Jesus' words at face value and believed and taught the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. I was scared…" He fails to mention that the earliest proponent of the theory was a Benedictine monk named Paschasius Radbert who published a treatise, "Concerning the Body and Blood of Christ" in the year 831. Papal Rome did not adopt the Real Presence error until the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, and that it was not finally sanctioned until the Council of Trent in 1551. For the Roman Catholic, the 'Real Presence' error is vital to swallow. For them, the Mass is fundamental and necessary for salvation because they believe the wafer and wine become the actual body and blood of the Savior.

Roman Catholics must hold to the Real Presence because it helps establish the lie that the Roman Catholic Church is the only true church. Accordingly, we need her for salvation because only her priests have the power to turn the bread and wine into the body and blood of our Lord. We are thus left in dependence, not on Christ alone but on the Pope of Rome and his appointed deputies.

The Apostle Peter proclaimed the truth, "[Christ] Himself bore our sins in His body upon the cross" (1 Peter 2:24). He must be believed in as one's righteous substitute – no ritual can save a sinner.

For Rome, the Mass is a true, propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead. Once a person accepts this teaching, they have denied that Christ has finished His work at Calvary. The unique oneness of Christ's sacrifice is in this very fact, that it was one offering once made. The concept "once" is deemed so important that it is asserted seven times by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. The perfection of Christ's sacrifice is contrasted with the repeated daily sacrifices of the Old Testament. This word 'once' also highlights the truth of the excellence of Christ's sacrifice. For example, the Apostle Paul teaches, "For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." (Romans 6:10) The Apostle Peter likewise declares, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (I Peter 3:18) The same truth is taught in the book of Hebrews five times with the conclusion, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." (Hebrews 9:28) The majestic truth is found in the Lord's declaration from the Cross, "It is finished." (John 19:30) Mr. Hahn never seems to have grasped that the work indeed is finished!

The next thing Mr. Hahn encounters is a dispute concerning "Sola Scriptura" – the fact the Scripture alone is the basis for truth. A student, however, challenged him and he found himself unable to defend it from the Scriptures. He then concluded that the Bible nowhere teaches Sola Scriptura. Can we take this man seriously? He claims to never have had to face a challenge about Scripture alone being the basis for truth.

The Lord Jesus Christ, in His great high priestly prayer, declared clearly the truth of God's Word. He said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." God's Word not only contains the truth but is Truth itself. This is consistent with the declarations throughout the Old Testament in which the Holy Spirit continually proclaimed that the revelation from God is truth. The Lord Himself identified truth with the Written Word. There is no source other than written Scripture alone, to which the statement, "thy word is truth", can apply. That source alone—the Scripture—is the believer's standard of truth.

He proclaimed that, “scripture cannot be broken.” John 3:35. Scott Hahn has rejected the plain truth. There are none so blind as they who will not see. Of course, **anyone wishing to throw off the restraints of the Word would of a necessity reject Sola Scriptura**. This is why Rome refuses the authority of the Scripture because with its shackles gone she can promote her death doctrines of the Mass, Mary the Mediatrix, prayers for the dead and such things as indulgences.

The rest of his story is more of the same! He talks about how Dr. John Gerstner failed to move him. Professor Gerstner is now dead and cannot give us his side of the story. But you know the old adage, “A man with an argument is no match for a man with an experience.” When one rejects the Scripture then his “experience” becomes the measure by which all things are judged. He thus becomes both unreachable and unteachable.

It was obvious to all that Mr. Hahn had stubbornly purposed to head for Rome. Even his students told him as much. Yet Mr. Hahn claims to have remained oblivious to that which was perfectly obvious to others. When he finally comes to ‘Rome Sweet Home’ he tells us about many practices he is now involved with. We do not need to go into them because all of Rome’s traditions have been thoroughly exposed by the Scriptures.

However we can learn from this tale of woe that doctrinal error never travels alone. Embrace one false doctrine and others will necessarily follow. Throw out the fact that Scripture alone is the basis for truth and you will eventually the scriptural truth of salvation by faith alone. Throw out by bible alone as the basis for truth, and you will ultimately throw out Christ alone as your hope.

Now Mr. Hahn hopes to be saved by the Pope and his church. ‘The Holy Father’ claims to be ‘the Vicar of Christ’ . He professes to impart Christ by Masses and the Holy Spirit by Sacraments. He claims to fortify the faithful with crucifixes, rosaries, statues, holy water and saints. He alleges that he can shorten the sufferings of souls in purgatory by indulgences. He professes to mediate between God and man; to hold the keys of heaven and hell; to forbid marriage to his priests, and to control lust and sexual scandals by the rule of celibacy. Although the Pope claims to be Christ’s substitute, he is a very poor substitute for Christ Jesus the Lord!

Imagine trading a High Priest who has the power of an endless life for a mere mortal who will go to his grave like all before him. Mr. Hahn has turned his back on Christ Jesus and His Gospel. He is lost from the fold of those who trust in Christ alone for their salvation. He labors diligently to take away as many people to the papal system of the Catholic Church for their hope of salvation as he can persuade. No doubt he is enjoying a modicum of celebrity status among the Pope’s servants.

Though Hahn claims he “asked Jesus Christ into his heart” when he was a teenager, he never really understood who Christ is, or what biblical salvation is. He has now has accepted the delusion that the rituals of the Catholic

Church can do that saving work for him. He now tries to get others to join him in those vain rituals. The Lord said to those Pharisees, “if you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sins.” Like the Pharisees, many present-day Catholics look to the Pope. And likewise, today as with the Pharisees, if anyone continues to recognize the Pope as “Holy Father,” he is in fact denying the true Father and the Son.”(1 John 2:22) He who persists in his sin will likewise die in his sins. The Lord Christ Jesus died in place of the true believer. His life and finished sacrifice alone are the ransom for the believer. “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” This was the price demanded by the All Holy God in order that His justice might be satisfied in the forgiveness of sins. As a result of this payment the true believer on Christ Jesus alone is freed from sin and Satan. “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)

SOURCE: Miles McKee Ministries – www.milesmckee.com

More information about Scott Hahn:
Scott Hahn’s Route Into Apostacy
Scott Hahn’s Route Into Roman Catholic Apostasy – audio version of the article
Scott Hahn – A Brilliant Apologist?
Scott Hahn was and may still be a member of Catholic secret society Opus Dei. He wrote book about it.
