

## CHAPTER 11

“Today we are going to have a story of intrigue and deception,” Mr. Dell smiled at his class. “I’m sure you will enjoy this tale from World War II.”

Aaron and Jeremy exchanged an interested look. Everyone listened intently as their teacher warmed up to his story.

“World War II had been going on far too long. Invasions, like the arms of a giant octopus, wound from Germany toward Russia, England, France and Italy. One long tentacle snaked its way toward Northern Africa. Germany had been building up a powerful air squadron in Libya and now she had her sights fixed on the crowded metropolis of Alexandria in Egypt.

“One dark night German flight commanders received their operation orders: Begin the submission of Alexandria. As bombers rumbled through the deep darkness the lead commander noticed something was wrong. He had been following a radio beam directed from their base in Libya which pinpointed the exact location of his target. Yet, as he peered below him, closer than they should be, he could make out faint lights. Glancing forward to where the radio beam directed him, the pilot saw nothing but blackness, yet just below his plane was a sprinkling of city lights along with pinpricks of illumination identifying Alexandria's protected harbor. Making a swift decision, the German commander banked the plane toward the lights and ordered the payload dropped. Moments later, the lumbering bomber began its return journey home.”

Taking a quick breath, Mr. Dell continued, “We can only imagine the reaction of the ‘Magic Gang’ as they celebrated their success. After plenty of back-slapping, laughter and congratulations the fourteen men of the allied ‘A Force’ reviewed the plans that led up to that night.”

“Whoa! I missed something,” interrupted Jay. “Who was the ‘Magic Gang’?”

“Yeah, what was going on?” questioned other students as they shook their heads trying to make sense out of their teacher's story.

“They,” chuckled Mr. Dell, “were a special group created by the allied army (made up of soldiers from Britain, Canada, the United States, Russia and other countries) to try and fool Hitler's men. Using lights to imitate a city and its harbor, they built a bogus lighthouse and other buildings then simulated anti-aircraft batteries which fired harmless thunderflashes. The men create the illusion of Alexandria about three miles west of the real city, while Alexandria sat in total darkness.”

“You mean they didn’t bomb Alexandria?” Aaron raised his eyebrows.

“They sure didn’t. The ‘Magic Gang's’ strategy worked very well and the Germany army learned an important lesson - never trust your enemy. Perhaps you have heard of a famous Chinese general, Sun Tzu, who said, ‘All Warfare is based on deception.’ He advised that when your army can attack, you must make it appear as though you are weak and can't attack. He taught that when you are near the enemy, you must make them believe that you are far away.

“Let's see what spiritual lessons we can draw from this story,” said Mr. Dell. “Any thoughts?”

Emily leaned forward. “We have a powerful enemy – a lot more sinister than Hitler. Jesus warned us to be careful that we aren't deceived by him.”

“Good analogy, Emily. Does anyone else have something to add?”

“Well, Satan is a lot more cunning than any ‘Magic Gang’ and we need to carefully obey God’s counsel so we won’t be tricked by him,” Cory interjected.

“That's right, Cory. Our story about the ‘Magic Gang’ is a good segue into our chapter for today. We will learn about a tricky plot dreamed up by Rome to undermine Celtic Christianity.

“Before we begin I have a few pictures to show you,” Mr. Dell took his remote and prepared to begin his slide show.

“Our story today showcases the history of Winfried, one of Rome's heroes also known in history as St. Boniface. This first picture is a wooden carving depicting the man that the Catholic Church now considers to be a saint.



[www.creditonparishchurch.org.uk/StBoniface.html](http://www.creditonparishchurch.org.uk/StBoniface.html)

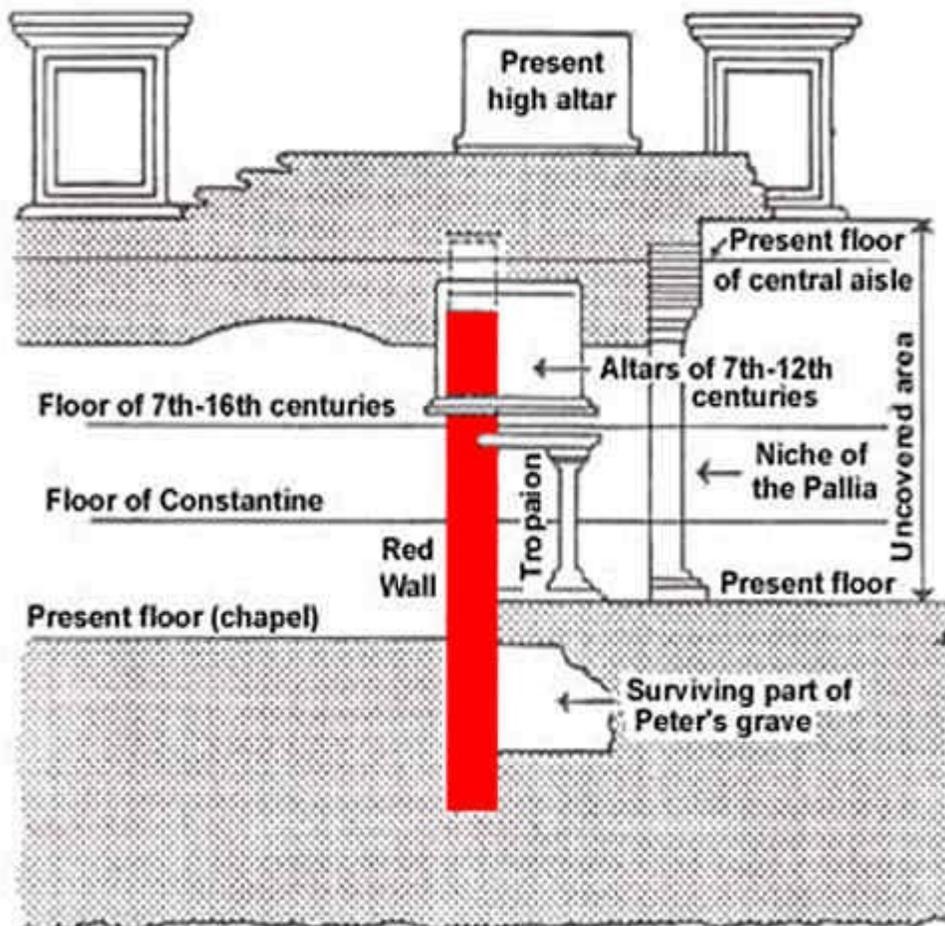
“While reading about Winfried we will learn about the traditional site of the Apostle Peter's tomb. As some of you know, before any Roman Catholic Cathedral can be dedicated there must be human remains buried in the building – usually in or under the altar. Roman tradition says that Saint Peter's grave is directly below this elaborate high altar at the heart of St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican.



[http://4.bp.blogspot.com/\\_CijcaA9yq58/SwIUhhP5P1I/AAAAAAAAELQ/tXUyvcvQpLG0/s1600/Baldacchino-Nave.jpg](http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_CijcaA9yq58/SwIUhhP5P1I/AAAAAAAAELQ/tXUyvcvQpLG0/s1600/Baldacchino-Nave.jpg)

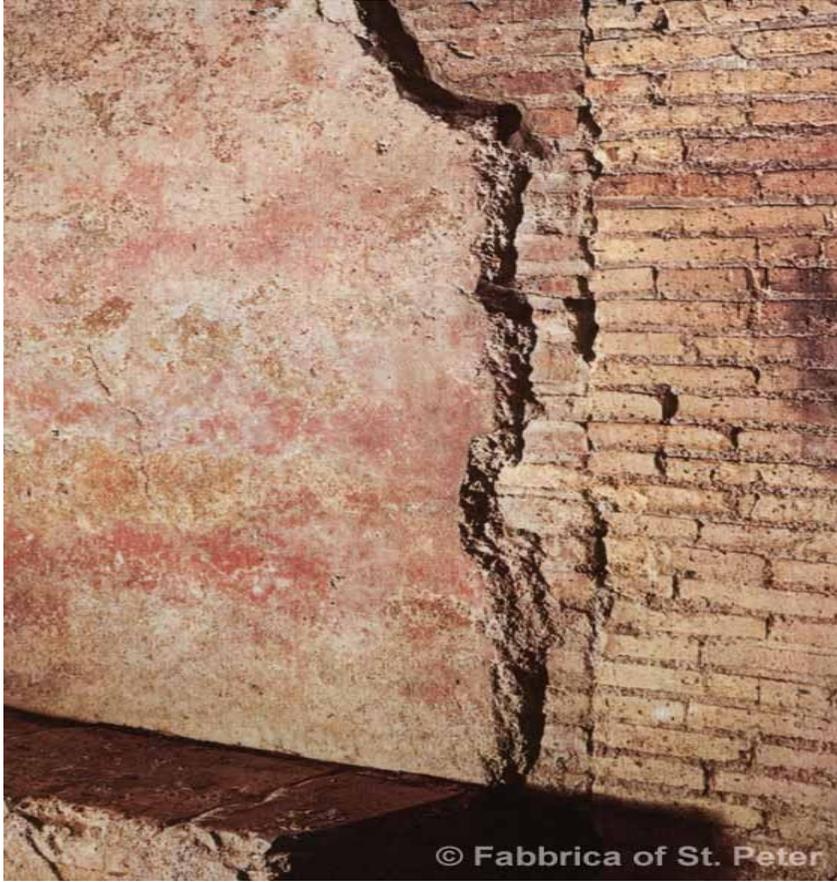
“Perhaps this map will help you to visualize the traditional site of Peter's tomb in relation to the high altar I just showed you. Notice the famous 'Red Wall' - so called because of the red plaster which used to cover the bricks. Originally this whole area was an ancient pagan burial site and the 'Red Wall' seems to have been a boundary for the various tombs. In this cut-out you can see that there were two structures that claim the title “St. Peter's” – a new one and an old one. The first St. Peter's was constructed in the fourth century by Emperor Constantine over what he believed to be the tomb of Peter.

“In the fifteenth century the Old St. Peter's was falling apart so it was decided to pull it down and rebuild it. For the next 120 years popes, architects and craftsmen planned and constructed the beautiful new building we today call St. Peter's Basilica. Notice the change in levels between the Old St. Peter's and the New St. Peter's.



<http://www.saintpetersbasilica.org/Necropolis/Pic/RedWall2dg.jpg>

“Take a close look at this next picture. Roman Catholic tradition says that this is the closed-in entrance to Peter's final resting place. Notice the red tint to the plaster that still covers the brick. If you look closely at the picture, you'll notice a concrete bench which stands in front of the wall. This area of the 'Red Wall' had unusual significance in the life of Winfried as we will find out in today's story.



<http://www.saintpetersbasilica.org/Necropolis/Pic/scavi-tombR-wRedW-mb.jpg>

“Our final picture depicts the crowning of Charlemagne. It was in AD 800 that the Roman Pontiff crowned Charlemagne as head of all the Holy Roman Empire.



[http://www.uncp.edu/home/rwb/charlemagne\\_coronation.jpg](http://www.uncp.edu/home/rwb/charlemagne_coronation.jpg)

“And now ... on to our story about Winfried and ...

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## ROME'S DESIGNS TO COUNTER CELTIC CHRISTIANITY

With the true gospel flooding into France, Germany and other European countries you may be certain that Satan was concerned. When Columbanus and his Celtic missionaries arrived in France they found much of Europe in ignorance and disorganization. Homes were unclean and most people lived in fear, poverty and hunger. However, after studying under Ireland's dedicated missionaries well-trained students went back to their towns and villages with skills needed to create a comfortable life for themselves. They also took along a missionary spirit that eagerly sought to introduce Biblical truth to their family and neighbors. Soon the countryside was dotted with clean, prosperous farms filled with healthy domesticated animals and well-maintained gardens and orchards.

When persecution forced Columbanus to move from France, the work was carried forward by his faithful students and fellow missionaries. They used their broad education and acquired skills to build up towns, schools and libraries throughout the countryside. They encouraged believers to copy Scripture and share them with those who would cherish and obey God's Word.

The papacy watched this well-organized church with fear. The pastors of the Celtic Church far outnumbered those of the Roman Church and the priests feared losing their influence with the common people. The Roman leaders began to conspire how they could limit the influence of the godly Celtic pastors. Thus began an earnest warfare between the two churches.

Some authors have likened the great battle between Christ and Satan, good and evil, to a movie or play. While the onlooking universe watches, God's heroes play their part courageously just as the antagonists bravely and obediently carry out their leader's orders. Onto the stage of that drama between the Celtic Church and the Roman Church came Winfried, better known in history as Boniface (AD 725).

Boniface was given a tremendous, almost impossible task by the pope. He was assigned to bring the widespread Celtic Church into submission to the papacy. History reveals that Rome chose her defender well. A native Englishman, Boniface thoroughly hated the Celtic Church and proved himself a strong leader in opposing truth in Germany.

Just like a script from a movie thriller, tradition says that the pope took Boniface, alone, to the venerated site of St. Peter's tomb. If that ceremony resembled ones taking place today, Boniface was ordered to lie face down with his arms outstretched on the cold stone pavement. There amid the shadow of the so-called "Red Wall" Boniface repeated the first recorded oath promising loyalty to the pope. Swearing he would work unflinchingly for the demise of the Irish missionaries, he pledged his entire life to his church.

Recognizing the importance of his mission, we can almost imagine Boniface's voice trembling just a little as he promised, "I will abide in the unity of the Catholic faith, and I will in no manner agree with anything contrary to the unity of the Catholic church. ... Whenever I find that the conduct of the presiding officers of churches contradicts the ancient decrees and ordinances of the fathers, I will have no fellowship or connection with them; but, on the contrary, if I can hinder them, I will hinder them; and if not, report them faithfully to the pope" (*Truth Triumphant* 201).

True to his word, Boniface immediately went to work to eliminate the influence of the Celtic leaders. He used many different methods to undermine those presenting biblical truth. Some Celtic leaders were condemned as heretics while others were exiled by kings enforcing the pope's commands. Pastors were imprisoned for speaking out against "saint" worship and numerous traditions found in the writings of Church Fathers such as Jerome, Augustine or Gregory.

Many citizens were afraid to speak against such injustices, yet not all the common people were intimidated by Rome's displays of strength. In some places Celtic parishioners stood up against the bullying of Boniface and demanded justice for their imprisoned pastors. In most cases their petitions were heard and the faithful ministers were set free to continue preaching and teaching the people.

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"It would be wonderful if religious bullying had ended with Boniface," commented Mr. Dell as he placed the book on his desk. "But even today godly men and women are still being subjected to name-calling, intimidation and sometimes even physical persecution in an effort to silence their voices. There are horrific stories told about Christians who suffered incredible persecutions under communism and fascism.

"One man that left a deep impression on me was Richard Wurmbrand – a Jewish Christian. His book, *Tortured for Christ*, tells of his conversion experience and the fourteen years of persecutions he endured in Romanian prisons under the communist regime. Pastor Wurmbrand and his wife, Sabina, gave the world a living example of the transforming power of the gospel in their lives."

Standing up, Mr. Dell went to his filing cabinet and brought out a folder. After a moment he returned to his desk with a piece of paper. "Here, let me read you, in their own words, the Wurmbrand's reaction when they came face-to-face with the murderer of Sabina's entire family:

When Rumania entered the war on Germany's side, a pogrom began in which many thousands of Jews were killed or deported. At Iasi alone 11,000 were massacred in a day. My wife, who shares my Protestant faith, is also of Jewish origin. We lived in Bucharest, from which the Jews were not deported, but her parents, one of her brothers, three sisters and other relatives who lived in Bucovine were taken to Transmistria, a wild border province which the Rumanians had captured from Russia. Jews who were not murdered at the end of this journey were left to starve, and there Sabina's family died.

I had to break this news. She recovered herself and said, 'I will not weep. You are entitled to a happy wife, and Mihai to a happy mother, and our Church to a servant with courage.' If she shed tears in private I do not know, but from that day I never saw Sabina weep again.

Some time later our landlord, a good Christian, told me sadly of a man who was staying in the house while on leave from the front. 'I knew him before the war,' he said, 'but he's changed completely. He has become a brute who likes to boast of how he volunteered to exterminate Jews in Transmistria and killed hundreds with his own hands.'

I was deeply distressed and I decided to pass the night in prayer. To avoid disturbing Sabina, who was unwell and who would have wished to join in my vigil in spite of that, I went upstairs after supper to the landlord's flat to pray with him.

Lounging in an armchair was a giant of a man whom the landlord introduced as Borila, the killer of Jews from Transmistria. When he rose he was even taller than I, and there seemed to be about him an aura of horror that was like a smell of blood. Soon he was telling us of his adventures in the war and of the Jews he had slaughtered.

'It is a frightening story,' I said, 'but I do not fear for the Jews - God will compensate them for what they have suffered. I ask myself with anguish what will happen to the murderers when they stand before God's judgment.'

An ugly scene was prevented by the landlord who said that we were both guests in his house, and turned the talk into more neutral channels. The murderer proved to be not only a murderer. Nobody

is only one thing. He was a pleasant talker, and eventually it came out that he had a great love of music.

He mentioned that while serving in the Ukraine he had been captivated by the songs there. 'I wish I could hear them again,' he said.

I knew some of these old songs. I thought to myself, looking at Borila, 'The fish has entered my net!'

'If you'd like to hear some of them,' I told him, 'come to my flat - I'm no pianist, but I can play a few Ukranian melodies.'

The landlord, his wife and daughter accompanied us. My wife was in bed. She was used to my playing softly at night and did not wake up. I played the folk-songs, which were alive with feeling, and I could see that Borila was deeply moved. I remembered how, when King Saul was afflicted by an evil spirit, the boy David had played the harp before him.

I stopped and turned to Borila. 'I've something very important to say to you,' I told him.

'Please speak,' he said.

'If you look through that curtain you can see someone asleep in the next room. It's my wife, Sabina. Her parents, her sisters and her twelve-year-old brother have been killed with the rest of the family. You told me that you had killed hundreds of Jews near Golta, and that is where they were taken.' Looking into his eyes, I added, 'You yourself don't know who you have shot, so we can safely assume that you are the murderer of her family.'

He jumped up, his eyes blazing, looking as if he were about to strangle me.

I held up my hand and said, 'Now - let's try an experiment. I shall wake my wife and tell her who you are, and what you have done. I can tell you what will happen. My wife will not speak one word of reproach! She'll embrace you as if you were her brother. She'll bring you supper, the best things she has in the house.

'Now, if Sabina, who is a sinner like us all, can forgive and love like this, imagine how Jesus, who is perfect Love, can forgive and love you! Only return to Him - and everything you have done will be forgiven!'

Borila was not heartless: within, he was consumed by guilt and misery at what he had done, and he had shaken his brutal talk at us as a crab its claws. One tap at his weak spot, and his defenses crumbled. The music had already moved his heart, and now came - instead of the attack he expected - words of forgiveness. His reaction was amazing. He jumped up and tore at his collar with both hands, so that his shirt was rent apart. 'Oh God, what shall I do, what shall I do?' he cried. He put his head in his hands and sobbed noisily as he rocked himself back and forth. 'I'm a murderer, I'm soaked in blood, what shall I do?' Tears ran down his cheeks.

I cried, 'In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I command this devil of hatred to go out of your soul!'

Borila fell on his knees trembling, and we began to pray out aloud. He knew no prayers; he simply asked again and again for forgiveness and said that he hoped and knew it would be granted. We were on our knees together for some time; then we stood up and embraced each other, and I said, 'I promised to make an experiment. I shall keep my word.'

I went into the other room and found my wife still sleeping calmly. She was very weak and exhausted at that time. I woke her gently and said, 'There is a man here whom you must meet. We believe he has murdered your family, but he has repented, and now he is our brother.

She came out in her dressing-gown and put out her arms to embrace him: then both began to weep and to kiss each other again and again. I have never seen bride and bridegroom kiss with such love and passion and purity as this murderer and the survivor among his victims. Then, as I foretold, Sabina went to the kitchen to bring him food.

Several of the students wiped their eyes as Mr. Dell finished the narrative. "I can't imagine going through something like that," Cory said, her voice husky with emotion. "I certainly need more of God's love in my life."

"We need to keep the words of Jesus ever before us," Mr. Dell remarked. "Let's take a moment and look up Matthew 5:44 - 48. Carrie, would you read that for us, please?"

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate

you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect..”

“How very true. Thank you, Carrie. Christ knew what it was like to be lied about, to be harassed by spies, and finally killed by those who had the spirit of Satan. Yet He loved. Those who truly love God will show to the on-looking universe the difference between those with the spirit of Jesus and those who have Satan's spirit.”

Tapping his forehead as though suddenly remembering something, Mr. Dell said, “Oh, before I forget, there is a DVD I brought to class. I'm sure you will enjoy *The Printing*, a video made by Bob Jones University. It tells the story of Yakov Mikhailev who was tortured for printing underground Bibles in the Soviet Union. If you would like to see it, I have two copies on the book shelf for you to borrow.”

Mr. Dell found his place in the Bible book and continued reading where he had left off:

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It often appeared that truth and error were on a see-saw. Sometimes one side seemed to gain the victory, then the other side showed greater strength. However, on Christmas Day in AD 800, the city of Rome witnessed a startling spectacle. You will remember that Justinian in AD 538 proclaimed the pope the “The Head of all the Holy Churches.” Now the world saw the pope place an imperial crown on the head of the new emperor, Charlemagne, and proclaimed him the head of the whole Roman Empire. That coronation had deep significance because it began the legal union of church and state that was to last for almost a thousand years. History shows that it was through the mighty army of Charlemagne that the papacy gained complete control over all the churches throughout Europe.

The Dark Ages deepened from AD 800 to 1100. Ignorance and superstition blanketed the light that had been shed by Scripture and scholastic learning. People again lived in poverty and most did not know how to read or even how to write their own name. Pious church members lived in constant fear of angering the priests and intimidated monarchs bowed to the papacy's demands rather than risk losing their throne. During that time of darkness many who loved God's Word were chased off their lands, thrown in prison or killed. Yet those heroes of the cross unwaveringly upheld truth. Their steadfastness stands as a legacy and encouragement to all who choose to remain faithful to the Lord's commands.

Looking back at the godly lives of Patrick, Columba and Aiden we see what God can accomplish with individuals who are totally dedicated to Him. When the Reformation, like a refreshing shower, broke over Europe in the 1500s many of the seeds planted with the tears of pious Christian believers were harvested in joy as multitudes were set free through accepting God's Word. The enemies of truth could not erase the powerful influences of God's heroes. Their names are recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life and they rest in the ground awaiting the sound of the trumpet at Jesus' Second Coming.

The challenge of these courageous men and women now passes to this generation. Before Jesus returns Satan will again attempt a worldwide union of church and state. Protestant leaders will ask the government to make laws enforcing religious laws – specifically a national Sunday law. Such laws will take away an individual's freedom of religion and will cause God's faithful followers to be thrown into prison and persecuted for worshiping on Saturday, the seventh-day Sabbath. Will we prove as faithful as those bygone heroes of the cross? Will we “stand for right though the heavens fall”?

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“Let’s ask God to keep each of us faithful,” said Mr. Dell as he put the bookmark into the book. “Each day I pray that we allow the Holy Spirit to change our characters so we can fully reflect the image of Jesus. Let us strive to be ready to meet Jesus when He comes very soon.”

“Amen,” responded the class as they prepared to close their class with prayer.

B.G. Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant: The Church in the Wilderness* (Teach Services, Brushton, New York, 1994) Chapter 14

Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Pacific Press Publishing Association, Nampa, ID, 1971) Chapter 25

<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/milreview/decept.magic.pdf>

“The Printing” from Bob Jones University (<http://www.amazon.com/Printing-Bob-Jones-University/dp/B00019V88Q>)