Polemics as a Religious Phenomenon: A Roman Catholic and an Emic-Etic Approach to a Religious Polemic

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Abstract
Society today manifests a plurality of religious traditions. The interest of this paper is in the negative effect of this religious phenomenon, sometimes violent, through religious polemics and how this can be contained. The paper presents and analyzes a religious polemical material against the Roman Catholic Church. A summary of the polemic is first given. Then a possible response of the Roman Catholic Church is provided. Finally, discussing an academic perspective of an *emic-etic* approach, the paper suggests that this may be a better method of addressing religious polemics. The article thus attempts to provide an academic methodology towards 'Interfaith-Inter-religious Dialogue' in a pluralist society.

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INTRODUCTION
Bauman (1998) notes that the bane of postmodernity is freedom to choose from a myriad of alternatives that ultimately lead to fundamentalism. To him, fundamentalism is a postmodern form of religion. It promises to liberate its converts from the agonies of choice by choosing for them and thus sparing them the dread of risk-taking.

A characteristic of fundamentalist postmodern religion thus is plurality of religious traditions, each competing against the other to win and retain converts. A strategy these religions use to do this is by religious polemics. Polemic is a strong statement of opinion, especially a negative opinion, which one uses to advance one's point of view (Wehmeier, 2005, p. 1121). Religious polemics would therefore be an attitude, skill and practice of making a strong negative statement or opinion of a religious nature aimed at discrediting the belief patterns of a religious tradition other than one's own. Any religion would therefore respond, often polemically too, to such attacks. Some of these attacks may turn violent. It is therefore necessary to find an appropriate methodology to deal with polemics in a civilized society.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY
In general terms, polemics has been understood in this paper as the art or practice of arguing passionately and strongly for or against something. Nevertheless, the author has limited himself to a particular article arguing against the basic doctrines of the Catholic Church. As such, this study aims only at providing a framework of identifying a polemic and how best the church can respond to it. Possibly,

within the postmodern era, there are other indirect arguments rendered against the Christian (or church) doctrine that have not been considered here. As such, further research could also extend to such areas in future studies on polemics.

DISCUSSION
The Polemical Article: A review of its Key Accusations of Roman Catholicism
Under what it refers to as subtitle, the author claims that the article is excerpted from a speech at Friendship Baptist Church in Warwick, Rhode Island, Tuesday evening, November 9, 1999, entitled *The False Prophet: He Has Been Selected*. Apart from this information, one can not provide precise bibliographical and biographical data from the article. The article is not paged. It uses parenthetical method of citation and photographs as illustrations. It provides scriptural quotations but does not acknowledge which version of the Bible it uses.

Contents
With no clear introduction and conclusion, the following subheadings can be identified from the article: *You Are Now on the Cutting Edge*; *Human Sacrifice*; *The Pure Heart and Soul of Witchcraft*; *Practical Fruits*; *Symbols That Prove I Really Did Establish Magic Witchcraft in the Traditional Roman Catholic Church* and *Time for Black Magic Witchcraft*.

Summary Notes on the Article
The article argues that the Roman Catholic Church has been practicing witchcraft through the words and symbols it uses, especially in the Mass and the 'Twisted Cross' used by the Popes. The two popes,

John Paul II and Paul VI practice Black Magic Satanism, while the Traditional Roman Catholic Church is 'practice of powerful White Magic Satanism.' The article uses the book of Daniel (from the Holy Bible) to explain spiritual warfare where there is a fight between Satan/demon and God/angels. It argues that the demon uses key leaders of the USA and the Roman Catholic Church in this spiritual warfare. The demon first used White Magic Witchcraft disguised as Christianity; then gradually introduced Black Magic.

The writer of the article puts him/herself in the place of Satan and in the first person pronoun shows how he/she would move the Church into witchcraft by making the following changes:

1. Create worship that violates, is contemptuous and disgraces Jesus Christ by sacrificing him daily in the Mass and on the crucifix, and especially the 'Twisted Cross'
2. Attack the all perfect sacrifice for sins which Jesus' death accomplished by making salvation a 'matter of Faith plus Works'
3. Attack the sufficiency of the Bible by introducing Extra-Biblical writings called the Traditions of the Church or the Traditions of the Fathers, consequently replacing the True Word of God and effectively preventing individuals from reading the Bible by themselves
4. Adding Pagan doctrines which have been dressed up in Christian garb such as: Praying to the dead and worshipping idols made in their images; Make the Virgin Mary into a God-like figure; Give the Pope both Religious and Political Power; Worship of Relics; Fasting on Fridays and observance of Lent; Celibacy of Priests; Praying the Rosary; Sale of Indulgence; Proclamation of Purgatory; Inventions of Scapula, Medals, and Edible Religious Stamps, and Infallibility of the Pope.

The article claims that because human sacrifice is needed by Satan in witchcraft, this could be achieved effectively through Transubstantiation. This is where the priest turns the wafer into the body and the wine into the blood of Christ. These are consumed as when pagans eat the sacrificial human body. According to the article, consecration is the soul and heart of witchcraft. This is where the priest like the witch or wizard controls the Deity by invoking the Deity to accomplish what he, the priest, wants through the different types of Masses. It further claims that to counter the threat of the Black Magic Satanist who would have sabotaged his activities in the Roman Catholic Church, Satan instigated the inquisition. This is where the Pope killed his enemies.

The article notes that true to the fact that symbols are 'important to the practice of any kind of Satanism', all the above claims have symbols that prove the establishment of White Magic Witchcraft in the Roman Catholic Church. The Pope Christianized pagan symbols for these purpose. They are: the 8-Fold Path to Enlightenment with the circle in the middle representing the female vulva, and the obelisk from Egypt which represents the male phallus. These symbols are found in St. Peter's Basilica, the heart of Roman Catholicism. They represent the Great Sex Act. The article finally arrives at its climax, moving the Roman Catholic Church into Black Magic Satanism, the religion of Antichrist and of the False Prophet. This, the articles claims, was done in the choice of Pope Paul VI and John Paul II who used the Twisted Cross, the symbol of the Antichrist, which every Catholic bows to without knowing.

Evaluation and Significance of the Article
The Polemical Nature of Religious Expressions
The article is an excellent piece of polemics against Roman Catholicism, especially the Mass and Papacy of Paul VI and John Paul II. For the interest of this paper, it also has implications for Interfaith and Interreligious Dialogue. To understand these issues an analysis of the nature of religious expressions is useful.

Religion is expressed in beliefs and practices. Wach (1958, p. 27-145), in his book *The Comparative Study of Religions*, published posthumously, identifies three broad forms of religious expressions: in thought, in action and in fellowship. Among the ways in which religion is expressed in thought is orally and or in writing. The highest form of such expression is the sacred writings/scripture. Religious thought which manifest religious doctrines, creed and faith statements would be presented in prayers, chants, songs/hymns, creed, myths, symbols, art (sculptor and painting) as well as theological arguments or discourses. The cult is the first and central act of religion. In different forms of worship or adoration and service, the cult is the practical expression of religious experience. Sacraments, sacrifices, ritual practices and acts of charity are important aspects of worship or adoration. Fellowship on the other hand involves a group of believers who identify themselves as belonging to a particular religion. It is an assembly or communion of believers. Christians and the Church would then be those who believe in Jesus Christ, with their sacred scripture being the Bible.

The polemic under discussion would be an example of religious expression in thought. The author of the polemic finds fault with how the Roman Catholic Church expresses its religion in word and symbol. To him/her, it is satanic in nature. In so doing the author also expresses his/her religious belief in that he/she

dissociates him/herself from such expression. This religious expression has a quality of being propagandistic and polemical in character. This is where because of a religious experience, one has a strong urge to not only share, but also attract and invite others to see and hear as one has seen and heard (Wach, 1958, p. 60). Polemics are strong statements of opinion, especially negative opinion. In this case, religious opinion about the religious beliefs and practices of another religious tradition which is contrary to ones religious tradition are viewed to be false. They are consequently discredited. It is an example of the view or perspective of an 'outsider' who does not in any way want to understand or appreciate the view of the 'insider'. The 'outsider' is completely detached from what is observed. One is foreign to the other's religious expression. In the process, one completely ignores the concept of relevance, purpose or meaning of the other (Pike, 1967, p. 37).

Roman Catholic Response to Religious Polemics
The polemical nature of religious expression has implications that result to various effects. An extreme and negative consequence of polemics is that it plants seeds of discord between religious traditions. This sometimes leads to conflict between them. Faced with religious polemics, the religious tradition under attack often responds as it feels its credibility is challenged. The following responses can be identified from the Roman Catholic Church to polemics against it: Silence; Condemnation; Apologetics, and Interfaith Dialogue.

❖ **Silence**
Faced with onslaught as the case under discussion, the Roman Catholic Church may decide to ignore what is being said about its religious expression. Silence here becomes a form of indifference or even apathy, a *laissez-faire* approach. This is where there is a don't-care attitude on the part of the religious tradition being attacked. It behaves as if nothing has been said about it. It continues with its religious beliefs and practices in complete disregard to the negative accusation levelled against it. This approach is captured clearly in this explanation of what *laissez-faire* is about: "Far from imposing our views, we say, we will not even propagate or commend them. We shall leave other people alone to mind their own business, as we devoutly hope they will leave us alone to mind ours" (Stott & Wyatt, 2006, p. 48). The approach may be appealing in that it has a tolerant spirit in it. Tolerance shows respect and acceptance of religious minorities who are also legally protected (Stott & Wyatt, 2006, p. 48).

Tolerance, however, can be deceptive and catastrophic. Intellectual tolerance especially is. This is where opinions known to be false or even actions known to be evil are tolerated. An example of such approach is the failure of the German churches to speak out against the Nazis' mistreatment of the Jews. Through their silence the churches were complicit to the German anti-Semitic ideology, where attempts were even made to theologize 'the intrinsic value of the Aryan *Volk*' (Gutteridge, 1976, p. 48, 128, 181, 268, 304). Silence therefore would not be a good approach in the face of polemics. What the Roman Catholic Church should do is to point out the falsehood in the view that it practices black-magic Satanism in its religious expression.

❖ **Condemnation**
While silence advocates a detached approach where nothing is said and done, condemnation would go to the extreme of countering the accusations with the use of words or actions, or even both. Condemnation is a form of imposition. It is an approach where one uses force to react to a challenge. In this case faced with accusations of practicing Satanic magic in its religious beliefs and practices, the Roman Catholic Church may use the crusading attempt to coerce people even through legislation, to accept their way of practicing religion. Thus the contrary way advocated by any other person or party is condemned. Paradoxically this approach is found in those Christians who have zeal for God. They care deeply about God's revealed truth and will. And so their desire to impose their perceived will of God even by force may be understandable (Stott & Wyatt, 2006, p. 47).

In the history of the Roman Catholic Church, this approach was used in the 13th century during the Inquisition when the Church set up a special tribunal to combat heresy.

> Suspected heretics were first hunted out, then invited to confess, and then, if they refused brought to trial. ... Impenitent heretics were punished by excommunication or confiscation of goods, or were handed over to the State to be burned alive (Stott & Wyatt, 2006, p. 47).

Heretics, persons who held contrary teachings from that of the Church were anathematized. Communion with the Church was severed. This meant complete exclusion from the Church with implications that one lost social status even in secular society. It was a painful experience. Condemnation, especially in the form imposition, which one is eventually declared a heretic, had internal inconsistencies to what is Christian in relating to other persons. A faith which holds that freedom of each and every one is God-given, ought not to impose belief. People cannot be forced to believe what they do not believe. It is unrealistic to force Christian convictions (Stott & Wyatt, 2006: p. 48). Probably it is with this understanding that Vatican Council II avoided completely the words: heresy and heretics (Rahner,

1975, p. 605). In spite of this, Canon Law under 'Part II: Penalties for Particular Offences; Title 1: Offences Against Religion and the Unity of the Church' provides for canonical sanctions for heretics. Canon 1369 in particular legislates that:

> A person is to be punished with a just penalty, who, at a public event or assembly, or in a published writing, or by otherwise using the means of social communication, utters blasphemy, … or rails at or excites hatred of or contempt for religion or the Church (The Canon Law Society Trust, 1983, p. 243).

The Roman Catholic Church therefore still has canonical provisions that can be used to punish those who while retaining the name of a Christian "… denies or doubts a truth which ought to be accepted by virtue of divine or Catholic faith" (Rahner, 1975, p. 604). Application of canonical sanctions, however, is not a common feature today. What is increasing being used is apologetics.

❖ **Apologetics**

Apologetics, is "… a skilful presentation of the reasonableness, truth, and ultimate value of Christian faith" (Ekstrom, 2005, p. 39). From Greek *apologia*, to speak in defence of something or someone, a Christian 'apology', would be a form of persuasion by argument where one reasons with others holding contrary views. The appeal here is to use both nature and scripture in rational arguments. The beauty of this approach is that it is rooted in the Biblical vision of God about humanity. It is a view that God made human beings to be responsible, endowing them with conscience to discern between alternatives and freedom to choose between them. God's moral law is indeed written in the hearts of human beings (Romans 2:14-15). Thus human conscience must be treated with utmost respect. Consequently, it must not be crushed through imposition and condemnation, but educated through apologetics (Stott & Wyatt, 2006, p. 50-60). Without claiming that the truth of Christianity is demonstrable by logical and scientific methods, apologetics shows that it is possible by these means that the acceptance of this truth is in accordance with the demand of reason (Livingstone, 2005, p. 29). This basically leads to the definition of theology, *fides quaerens intellectum,* faith seeking understanding (Rahner, 1975, p. 509).

Apologetics is as old as Christianity. The 2nd century apologists such as Justin the Martyr, Tatian, Tertullian among others presented the case of Christianity to non-Christians. "They had to contend with both pagan philosophy and the general outlook which it influenced and specifically Jewish objections" (Livingstone, 2005, p. 29). It was only later that they began to defend orthodox teaching against those who dissented from it. They carefully drafted defences of the Christian religion (Ekstrom, 1995, p. 39). The Church has had many apologists along its history. One recent great apologist worthy mentioning is Cardinal John Henry Newman who converted form Anglicanism to Catholicism. After his conversion and having met several accusations within and outside the Church he wrote *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, an apologetic masterpiece to this day (Ekstrom, 1995, p. 39).

Being "… the defence of Christian faith on intellectual grounds" (Livingstone, 2005, p. 29), apologetics could be the best approach to use in not only defending ones faith and religious practices; but also proposing them in a non-antagonist setting. It is used to present and teach faith in hostile as well as non-hostile environment. The Roman Catholic Church considers apologetics the function of its fundamental theology. A contemporary apologist thus:

> … is one skilled and wise in clarifying matters that pertain to foundational Christian doctrines and those things that God has revealed through Christian faith and tradition. The Church acknowledges today that methods of presentation and persuasive arguments on the value of Catholic Christianity must be adapted effectively to the needs, language, and customs of peoples and cultures in order to be intelligible to modern audiences. It also recognizes that contemporary Christian apologists must draw upon the writings and resources from various fields of human study in their efforts to fully present ideas about validity of Christian faith for the world today (Ekstrom, 1995, p. 39).

In this regard, instead of using the provisions of Canon Law and condemnation to tackle those with divergent views, the Church is more inclined to use apologetics. This is why the formation and training of future priests, who are actually apologists in their own right, is done in special institutions called seminaries. This training as well as ongoing formation after ordination into the priesthood is academically rigorous. To boost the apologetic quest of the Roman Catholic Church are the numerous Pontifical Universities and Institutes of Higher Learning spread all over the world. This is notwithstanding the numerous conferences and publications in forms of periodicals, journals and books. Of particular relevance is a special corpus of official documents or gazette of Papal office or Vatican. These documents which provide the official position of the Roman Catholic Church on any issue are collected under the name *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* (AAS), The Acts of the Apostolic See (Livingstone, 2005, p. 5). The use of apologetics in the Roman Catholic Church often does not bring about complete understanding of its religious doctrines and practices.

What results is that from time to time one hears of cases of excommunication and censures especially of Catholic theologians, bishops or priests who hold divergent views from those of the official Church. For those that hold different confessions or faiths and religious traditions, the Roman Catholic Church while continuing to use apologetics, has another strategy, Ecumenical or Interconfessional-Interfaith-Interreligious Dialogue.

❖ Interfaith Dialogue

The 'Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary Of Current English' defines dialogue as "… a formal discussion between two groups … especially when they are trying to solve a problem, end a disagreement …" (Wehmeier, 2005, p. 403). From this definition 'Interfaith-Interconfessional-Interreligious Dialogue' would mean a discussion between two or more different religious groups over an issue with an aim of resolving disagreement over it. At the heart of this dialogue is an amicable solution that would result to some benefit to the groups involved. In this respect, Gerald O'Collins' and Edward G. Farrugia's definition is more fitting. Dialogue is defined as: "Courteous discussion between individuals who hold different beliefs with a view to reaching or at least drawing closer to a consensus" (O'Collins & Farrugia, 2000, p. 63). They provide more insight by differentiating between what they call 'Inter-religious or Interfaith Dialogue' and 'Ecumenical or Interconfessional Dialogue'. Dialogue with non-Christian religions is what is referred to as 'Inter-religious or Interfaith Dialogue', while "…dialogue between Rome and other Christian Churches has been called ecumenical or interconfessional" (O'Collins & Farrugia, 2000, p. 63).

In 1964, Pope Paul VI instituted a special department of the Roman Curia for relations with the people of other religions. Known at first as the "Secretariat for Non Christians", in 1988 it was renamed the "Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue" (PCID). The PCID is the central office of the Catholic Church for the promotion of interreligious dialogues in accordance with the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, in particular the declaration "Nostra Aetate". It has the following responsibilities: 1) to promote mutual understanding, respect and collaboration between Catholics and the followers of others religious traditions; 2) to encourage the study of religions; and 3) to promote the formation of persons dedicated to dialogue. Vatican Council II therefore marks the turning point in the Roman Catholic Church's relationship to other religions. *Nostra aetate*, The Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, notes clearly that the Church:

> Ever aware of her duty to foster unity and charity among individuals, and even among nations, she reflects at the outset on what men have in common and what tends to promote fellowship among them. All men form but one community. … Men look to their different religions for an answer to the unsolved riddles of human existence (Flannery, 1995, p. 653).

The document mentions Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism and 'other religions' in a positive light. Noting in particular the 'quarrels and dissension' between Christians and Muslims, the Council "… pleads with all to forget the past, and urges that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding; for the benefit of all men, let them together preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values" (Flannery, 1995, p. 654).

Various other documents of Vatican Council II address the issue of dialogue in relation to non-Catholic faiths. *Unitatis redintegratio*, The Degree on Ecumenism, encourages Catholics to have dialogue with other Christians. Specific guidelines are given for the Churches of the East (UR 14 -18) and the Protestant Churches (UR 19 – 23). Consequent to these, are Declarations on various issues on dialogue such as mixed marriages, celebration of the Eucharist and Higher Education. A specific Degree *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, is provided for the Catholic Eastern Churches (Flannery, 1995, p. 398-505). *Ad gentes divinitus*, Degree on the Church's Missionary Activity, reminds Catholics to nourish the spirit of ecumenism among neophytes. It also observes that the Catholic faithful wherever they are, proclaim Christ to non-Christians through word and deed (Flannery, 1995, p. 729-730).. Later, 'Guidelines on Religious Relations with Jews' was issued by the 'Committee for Religious Relations with the Jews'. The issues the committee provided for included on liturgy, teaching and education, and joint social action (Flannery, 1995, p. 653-662).

Gaudium et spes, The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, is an interesting document as it encourages Catholics to dialogue with the world at large. The first sentence of the document is among the most profound ecclesiastical declaration of the entire Vatican Council II. It captures the nucleus of what dialogue should ideally be, 'deep solidarity with the whole human race and its history':

> The joy and hope, the grief and aguish of the men of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men, of men who, united in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, press onwards towards the kingdom of the Father and bearers of a

message of salvation intended for all men. That is why Christians cherish a feeling of deep solidarity with the human race and its history (Flannery, 1995, p. 794).

In line with the spirit of *Gaudium et spes*, the Secretariat for Unbelievers document, *Humanae Personae Dgnitatem*, On Dialogue with Unbelievers, provides a deep and clear understanding of what dialogue is. It handles the difficult and complex aspects of dialogue with those that one holds a totally different thought and belief pattern, an aspect that in fact blocks dialogue (Flannery, 1995, p. 880-891). Here, dialogue is defined as: "…any form of getting together and communication between persons, groups or communities, in a spirit of sincerity, reverence for persons, and a certain trust, in order to achieve either greater grasp of truth or more human relationships" (Flannery, 1995, p. 882). Vatican Council II, therefore understood dialogue, whether of ecumenical or interreligious or with unbelievers or even with the entire world as being part of its central mission.

From the above presentation one notes that, finding itself in a position of conflict with persons who hold different views and even attacking it, the Roman Catholic Church may resort to some form of silence, condemnation, apologetics or dialogue with its opponents. These approaches by the Church can be supplemented by academic approaches. One such academic approach is 'the *Emic-Etic* Approach'.

Emic-Etic Approach to Religious Polemics

The terms *etic* and *emic* were first coined by Kenneth Pike, a linguistic anthropologist, in the 1950s. It is also associated with Marvin Harris, a cultural anthropologist who in distinguishing between the two terminologies applied them as a paradigm in cultural materialism. Pike derived the terms *emics* and *etics* from *phonemics* and *phonetics*. He noted that just as there are two perspectives in the study of a language sounds system, there are also two perspectives that can be employed in the study of a cultural system (Pike, 1957, p. 1). It is therefore possible to take the point of view of the 'insider' and the 'outsider.'
According to Pike an *emic* perspective:

> …focuses on the intrinsic cultural distinctions that are meaningful to the members of a given society … in the same way that phonemic analysis focuses on the intrinsic phonological distinctions that are meaningful to speakers of a given language … . The native members of a culture are the sole judges of the validity of an emic description, just as the native speakers of a language are the sole judges of the accuracy of a phonemic identification (Lett, 1996, p. 382).

This is an 'insider' view of reality. It is the view of one who belongs to the local scene. Consequently, one interprets reality through the lenses of one's categories of experience. Relevance, meaning and purpose of reality to the participant, is essential in this perspective (Pike, 1957, p. 2). On the other hand an *etic* or 'outsider' perspective:

> … relies upon the extrinsic concepts and categories that have meaning for scientific observers … in the same way that phonetic analysis relies upon the extrinsic concepts and categories that are meaningful to linguistic analysts … . Scientists are the sole judges of the validity of an etic account, just as linguists are the sole judges of the accuracy of a phonetic transcription (Lett, 1996, p. 382).

Thus, the 'outsider' is detached from what is observed. One is foreign to the environment.

Emic knowledge is therefore in accord with perceptions and understanding of the insider's culture. Such knowledge is validated through consensus with the native informants who must agree that the knowledge acquired and possessed matches the perception of their culture or way of life (Lett, 1996, p. 383). From our concern, this means that an *emic* approach or perspective will give precedence to what Roman Catholics understand about the Mass, the Papacy and the symbols they use in expressing their religious doctrines and practices. From this perspective, the polemical article lacks merit. The overwhelming majority of Catholics, the insiders, who revere the Mass, the Papacy and the Roman Catholic symbols mean that those forms of religious expression are authentic, genuine and truthful from an *emic* point of view.

Etic knowledge on the other hand are accounts, descriptions and analyses expressed in terms of conceptual schemes and categories that are regarded as meaningful and appropriate by the community of scientific observers. Such has to be in accord with epistemological principles that are strictly scientific, that is, they are, precise, logical, comprehensive, replicable, falsifiable and observer independent. This knowledge is validated through logical and empirical analysis (Lett, 1996, p. 383). It has nothing to do and need not agree with the subjects being studied. In the polemics of religion, the application of *etic* approach is problematic on two counts. This is because this approach presupposes strict scientific objectivity. Yet religious or faith statements can not be subjected to this methodology given the nature of such statements. Firstly, religion has a non-rational sphere. They do not subscribe to the principles of verifiability and falsifiability (Momen, 1999, p. 66). Religious data can only be expressed in terms of probability rather than certainty. It involves the use of evaluative

criteria that are not deducible from facts presented (Momen, 1999, p. 66). Our case of analysis shows this. Whether the Mass or the Pope is an antichrist cannot be scientifically verified or falsified. The truth or falsehood of such statements depends entirely on who says what. This leads to the second difficulty; that is while the *etic* approach presupposes strict objectivity, religious expressions and statements can never be strictly objective. They are also subjective in nature. Indeed, in the sphere of interpreting religious facts two scholars seldom agree to interpret the same facts in the same way (Momen, 1999, p. 66).

Because of these difficulties, one should not apply the two concepts separately one from the other. Though sometimes in religion, such as Christianity and Islam, an *etic* trend is manifested with attempts to Christianize or Islamize the world. Whereas it can be argued that these attempts has brought the marked benefits of civilisation such as advances of science and technology; there are dangers too. The good of other civilizations are trampled causing strife among people. A more appropriate approach therefore, is to apply both of these techniques when analyzing human society. Pike advocated this approach:

> It is my contention that both views must be brought to the fore if any event is to be well understood. The student can get a far deeper appreciation of the universe of his researches, not by a 'happy medium' attempt to strike a balance of description which somehow lies between the two, but by consciously approaching a topic from these two directions. Each approach may give a result so like the other that to the uninitiated they appear to be the same. … Behaviour studied simultaneously through these two approaches is seen in a much more exciting depth of understanding (Pike, 1957, p. 2-3).

From this understanding, the goal of research would be to acquire both emic and etic knowledge. While each has a specific aspect to offer, *emic* and *etic* type of knowledge complement each other. *Emic* knowledge is essential for intuitive and empathetic understanding of a culture a people. It is also a valuable source of inspiration for *etic* hypothesis. *Etic* knowledge on its part is necessary for cross-cultural comparison. It thus assures runaway subjectivity by bringing in objectivity (see Lett, 1996, p. 382-383). The writer of the polemic article should therefore be aware of the *emic-etic* approach to the acquisition of knowledge about the way of life of other people. In so doing he/she will endeavour to find out what the Roman Catholics believe in when they attend Mass, revere their popes and use symbols in their religious expressions. On the other hand, Roman Catholics should be aware that non-Roman Catholics understand differently those religious practices, especially when the Roman Catholic Mass, papacy and religious symbols seem similar to those of white-black magic and Satanism. Thus, the *emic-etic* approach can be used to resolve polemical issues between different religious traditions.

CONCLUSION
The author of the polemical article under discussion is out to discredit the Roman Catholic Church and its religious practices. The article's polemical character is excellent. This notwithstanding, the Roman Catholic Church faced with such onslaught on its religious practices may respond variously. The paper identifies silence, condemnation, apologetics and dialogue as possible approaches the Church would take. While recommending apologetics and dialogue as more fruitful approaches in issues of disagreement in religious beliefs and practices, the paper also presents an *emic-etic* approach as being of particular value.

Tracing the terms *emic* and *etic* to Kenneth L. Pike, a linguist who derived from the study of phonemics and phonetics, the paper has attempted to give an understanding of the terms in social sciences. Religion falls under this category of sciences. The terminologies can be used as a methodology of study when used in respect to the nature of knowledge. Although *emic* approach is about the 'insider' subjective view and *etic* approach is about the 'outsider' objective view, the approaches complement each other. Adherents of different religious traditions need an *emic-etic* approach to help them understand each other for a functional society.

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