



## The Burning Bush - Online article archive

### "A FABULOUS IDEA - IF YOU FORGET THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE AND THE 39 ARTICLES!!"



'Father' Pat McHugh (left) and Rev Neal Phair conducting a joint carol service

The following are extracts from a BBC news story appearing on Saturday 23rd December.

*"It is not unusual for the congregations of St Maeldoid's Church of Ireland, Castleblayney (Co. Monaghan), and their next door neighbours, St Mary's Catholic Church, to get together for a carol service at Christmas.*

*But this year's community carol singing has a special significance to both churches.*

*It comes slap bang in the middle of a year-long agreement which has seen the Catholics of St Mary's move en masse into St Maeldoid's. St Mary's is undergoing extensive repairs, including a new roof, and the small Protestant congregation next door, with only 35 parishioners, was delighted to be able to help out.*

*Rev Neal Phair, rector of St Maeldoid's, said everyone had jumped at the chance to reach out to their Catholic neighbours. Everyone thought it was a fabulous idea. When we did up our church in the early '90s, St Mary's congregation and the people of Castleblayney were very good to us so we were delighted to return the favour."*

*"His counterpart in St Mary's is Fr Pat McHugh. He said the move from St Mary's to St Maeldoid's has been seamless. So much so, that he can see a time when a permanent version of this sort of arrangement becomes the norm. "Not in this generation perhaps, but I predict that in future generations people will ask, indeed some people are already asking, do we really need two buildings?" he said."*

It sounds so "Christmassy!!" And of course that is what it just is! A story that is too sweet to be wholesome or true. As the "Christmas" story is a myth with its roots in paganism so with this display of inter-church mingling. It is false, as false as "Santa"!

The Apostle Paul, in describing 'charity' or 'Christian love', says of it that it: "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth," 1 Corinthians 13:6.

The two religious denominations pictured in this wonderful "hug-in" are being anything but truthful about each other!

#### **Roman Catholic teaching**

The Roman Catholic Church has in its official and binding doctrinal statements its true opinion of its Protestant neighbours.

In the Canons of the Council of Trent is the following statements (among many like abominations):

**CANON VII.** If any one saith, that all works done before Justification, in whatsoever way they be done, are truly sins, or merit the hatred of God; or that the more earnestly one strives to dispose himself for grace, the more grievously he sins: let him be anathema.

**CANON XII.** If any one saith, that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ's sake; or, that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified; let him be anathema.

**CANON XIV.** If any one saith, that man is truly absolved from his sins and justified, because that he assuredly believed himself absolved and justified; or, that no one is truly justified but he who believes him-



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self justified; and that, by this faith alone, absolution and justification are effected; let him be anathema.

This is a hearty condemnation to eternal damnation pronounced upon any that proclaim the doctrine of 'Justification by Faith Alone'.

This curse rests on all who believe this doctrine and have preached it. That includes the Saviour, the apostles and all the prophets who preceded them!

Here is the Bible's declaration of this truth.

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law," Romans 3:28.

"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness," Romans 4:5.

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified," Galatians 2:16.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast," Ephesians 2:8-9.

"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," 2 Timothy 1:9.

This is but a brief selection of texts setting forth this blessed truth.

### **Central Doctrine of the Reformation**

This was a central doctrine of the Protestant Reformation. As such it appears prominently and clearly in the doctrinal statements which were issued at that time by many groups of believers. That included the Anglican Communion of which the Church of Ireland is a part.

The historic creed of the Anglican Communion is the 39 Articles of Religion. In them is found a very clear statement on justification by faith and the error of Rome's teaching.

#### **XI. Of the Justification of Man.**

We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only, is a most wholesome Doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification.

#### **XII. Of Good Works.**

Albeit that Good Works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith insomuch that by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit.

These words in the light of Rome's curse issued against any that believe them, classifies the actions in Castleblaney as gross hypocrisy! The Church of Ireland flock and especially their 'shepherd' are especially guilty of hypocrisy, though I am sure that ignorance of what the Bible teaches on this vital subject along with a blindness toward their own doctrinal standards, play a large part in this.

For the Roman Catholic parish, we must see that there is less of hypocrisy and more of guile at work.



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## Article

Some years ago I wrote an article entitled: The Christian, Ecumenism and the Bible.

It was an examination of the outworkings of Rome's "Decree on Ecumenism" issued by Pope Paul VI in 1965, following the Second Vatican Council. Christians may still find the tract useful in their battle against the increasing advances of ecumenism today.

Here is what I said regarding Rome's use of Ecumenism.

### 'Little by Little'

The Decree goes on to explain how that efforts are being made today to obtain that unity. 'Today, in many parts of the world, under the inspiring grace of the Holy Spirit, many efforts are being made in prayer, word and action to attain that fullness of unity which Jesus Christ desires. The sacred Council exhorts, therefore, all Catholic faithful to recognise the signs of the times and to take an active and intelligent part in the work of ecumenism,' chapter 1, paragraph 4.

That paragraph continues: 'Such actions, when they are carried out by the Catholic faithful with prudent patience and under the attentive guidance of their bishops, promote justice and truth, concord and collaboration, as well as the spirit of brotherly love and unity. The result will be that, little by little, as the obstacles to perfect ecclesiastical communion are overcome, all Christians will be gathered, in a common celebration of the Eucharist, into the unity of the one and only Church, which Christ bestowed on His Church from the beginning. This unity, we believe, subsists in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose, and we hope that it will continue to increase until the end of time. Unity, for the Roman Catholic, already exists as something which his church can never lose and, therefore, for other Christians to enjoy it they must simply return to the one and only Church, the Roman Catholic Church!'

Under ecumenism, the Romanist is to work for the 'little by little' return of the Protestant separated brethren. While Protestant ecumenists (excuse the contradiction, please) urge their people to be ready for the death of their church, Rome urges her people to look for and strive toward the return of the separated brethren to the true fold. This is the reason why Protestants are prepared to accept compromise after compromise, sellout after sellout within the unity movement. They have been taught that such a course is the will of God.

A document from the fifth assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1975 urged delegates to work for unity by quoting the following words from Lukas Vischer in *What Kind of Unity?* Our preparation for unity must therefore include reflection about true identity. The churches must be so permeated by prayer for unity that surrender and rediscovery of this true identity becomes part of the rhythm of their life (emphasis ours). Here in Ulster, surrender has become a daily routine. It is seen in the political and religious realm. At every level there has been a retreating from the views and ideals and standards that sprang from the rediscovery of God's Word at the Reformation. Surrender has become acceptable to those whose slogan was — NO SURRENDER! This Culture of Surrender has its roots in ecumenism. It is watered and fed daily by the propaganda machine of ecumenical christendom.

### Anglicans and Rome

For some two decades now, Anglicans and Roman Catholics have been conducting discussions on unity under the auspices of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission. The Church of Ireland has been closely involved in the procedures. It has even had one of its bishops, H. R. McAadoo, hold the position of co-chairman.

During this time of discussions, the First Commission met to discuss the matter of the 39 Articles (the doctrinal basis of Anglicanism) and the Eucharist, Ministry and Authority. The Second Commission dealt with the matter of Justification. They have reached agreement upon a number of important issues. These



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include agreement upon the pope becoming head of a reunited church. In 1987, in the first agreed statement of the Second Commission, it was stated clearly what the aim of the talks was. The purpose of our dialogue is the restoration of full ecclesial communion between us. The route toward restored communion that is being followed is the one mapped out by the Second Vatican Council. I will refer to only one of the agreements worked out by these talks, the one dealing with that most central of all doctrines, the death of Christ and how a sinner avails himself of its blessings. Rome teaches that it is through participation in the Eucharist. The person eating the bread and drinking the wine, after the priest has pronounced the words of consecration, is actually eating Christ's flesh and drinking His blood. Thus he partakes of eternal life.

This teaching was utterly rejected by the Reformers as a blasphemous fable and a dangerous deceit (Articles 28 and 31 of the Church of England and the Church of Ireland). Anglican theologians have changed their views according to the agreements they entered into through the International Commission. They now agree that: Through the prayer of thanksgiving, a word of faith addressed to the Father, the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ by the action of the Holy Spirit, so that in communion we eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood, The Final Report, page 16.

Thus, that which was once repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, Article 28, becomes an agreed doctrine. That which was once a blasphemous fable and a dangerous deceit, Article 31, has become the Truth of God in the new ecumenical church. Here then is the dying that ecumenists speak of and here is the little by little process that Rome speaks of! It is a dying of the candle of truth in the United Kingdom and it is a return, little by little, to the slavery and degradation of black popery from which God, in mercy, delivered our forefathers. Here in Ulster, we have seen death at work. The Gospel light has almost died out in the Methodist Church. It has likewise almost died out in the Presbyterian Church. In the Church of Ireland, you would find it very difficult to uncover a dozen ministers who really know the Lord. There is spiritual death in the land. Spiritual death has spawned terrorism. It is a direct consequence of the rejecting of God and His Word by an ecumenically led generation. And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, Leviticus 26:15-16.

### An Old Story

In Castleblaney, the Protestant congregation hypocritically flouts the Bible and their own doctrinal statements in the 39 Articles as they accommodate the blasphemous saying of the Mass within their property while the Roman Catholic congregation is merely carrying out the sly and deceitful policy of their church. The aim of it all is: 'little by little, as the obstacles to perfect ecclesiastical communion are overcome, all Christians will be gathered, in a common celebration of the Eucharist, into the unity of the one and only Church, which Christ bestowed on His Church from the beginning. This unity, we believe, subsists in the Catholic Church . . . .'

Thus, the true of the story in Castleblaney is the foolish Church of Ireland flies responding to the serenades of the wily Roman Catholic spider and entering his web . . . with the inevitable consequences!

That is Ecumenism at work!

Ivan Foster.

23rd December 2017.