

The Trojan Horse of Ecumenism

The seedbed of the ecumenical movement can be seen in the events of the Tower of Babel where man in wilful ecumenical pride attempted to build a tower and contain the people in one place against God's wish to spread and multiply. However, the roots of the modern ecumenical movement can be clearly traced to 1910 when 1,355 Evangelical Christians gathered together at a missionary conference in Edinburgh. The idea was to take the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the world. However, thereafter it became clear that there were two camps within the movement. The first longed to preach the unadulterated grace of God to lost tribes. The second group increasingly thought in terms of world peace and brotherhood. By the 1980's, with the influence of the *World Council of Churches (WCC)*, there was an unmistakable emphasis on political and social issues and a distaste for bold biblical evangelism including preaching on sin.

The word 'ecumenical' means: '*representing the whole Christian world; seeking world-wide unity*'. This word comes from the Greek '*oikoumenikos*' meaning '*of the inhabited earth*', (*Aust. Oxford Dictionary*). Two opposing points need to be stressed here. Firstly, the word 'ecumenical' by definition has to do with an *earthly* thing, ('*of the inhabited earth*'). In contrast, the Biblical word for 'church' is '*Ekklesia*' meaning '*called out ones*' - ie. called *out of* the world and *from* earthly things. Ecumenism is a man made *worldly* thing. In contrast, the true '*Ekklesia*' is a called out group of a *heavenly* nature. The difference cannot be understated. In opposition to the '*Ekklesia*' the modern ecumenical movement is increasingly worldly and *inclusive*. It therefore must by nature accept the broad road to include *many* rather than *few*. This is why the WCC accepts any church that 'professes Christianity', regardless of whether they accept the Bible as the Word of God or whether they accept homosexuality, liberal theologies, modernism, humanism, etc.

The WCC up until the latter part of this century was considered by most Evangelical and Fundamental churches to be apostate and even to be the work of the Antichrist in building the prophesied end-time church to come. Yet today, one by one, denominations and evangelical leaders are accepting the ecumenical movement and the WCC!

A look at the history will show the *apostasy* of the ecumenical movement and the *key players*:

1947: First world Pentecostal Conference. David Du Plessis was introduced. *This Pentecostal conference advanced the idea of worldwide unity*. In previous years church leaders in general strongly opposed the new Pentecostal doctrines. However, by the 1950's the barriers had been steadily broken down as Charismatism infiltrated mainline churches.

1950's: The *Latter Rain* teachings began to take root when false prophet William Branham brought this heresy to the USA under a new name: '*The Manifest Sons of God*'. It penetrated the *Assemblies of God* before they finally rejected it as heresy.

The *Full Gospel Business Mens Fellowship International* also hosted a World Convention of Pentecostals in Orlando, Florida, where they agreed to '*putting aside...little doctrinal points*'. Catholic keynote speaker was Father James Bertalucci, who once said: '*When the sleeping giant of Rome comes alive, watch out world...especially in a day and age where we can co-operate and collaborate in winning the world for Jesus Christ*'.

1960: Episcopal (Anglican) Dennis Bennet experienced the Charismatic gift of the 'Baptism in the Holy Spirit and tongues'. This experience spread quickly throughout Episcopalian, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist and Lutheran denominations.

1966: The Pope accepted the 'Charismatic renewal' in the Catholic Church. Father Edward O'Connor wrote in his book ('*The Pentecostal Movement*'): '*The new Pentecostal fire has likewise leaped from person to person, and thus has gone across the country*'. The common experience uniting Catholics and Protestants was *unknown tongues*. This caused many to accept each other as 'brothers and sisters in Christ'.

1970's: Dr. Billy Graham received the Catholic International Franciscan award for '*his contribution to true ecumenism*'.

Kathryn Kulman and other leaders began to meet with the Pope. Crusades and conferences continued with Catholic and Protestant speakers joining hands.

1973: Bill Bright promoted '*Key 73 Evangelism*' in which Catholics, ecumenists and Evangelicals were brought together as one. Dr. Billy Graham in this *crusade* recommended Roman Catholic literature including a biography of the Pope touted as a '*classic devotion*', (this included Saint worship, Marian devotion, sacraments, etc.).

1976: David Du Plessis received the *Pax Christi* award by the Catholic Church.

1977: The *Kansas City Charismatic Conference* was held. This ecumenical conference featured Pentecostals, Charismatics, Catholics, Assemblies of God, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Southern Baptists and others. For the first time several streams of Pentecostals including Catholic Pentecostals were brought together.

1979: On live TV Billy Graham publicly welcomed the Pope to America and praised him as a great '*spiritual leader*'.

1980's: 15,000 participate in the first *March For Jesus* in the UK. These marches became a catalyst in breaking down doctrinal barriers between Catholic and Protestant.

The *Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN)* saw Paul Crouch teaching *Latter Rain* heresies as well as promoting ecumenism and Charismatic faith healers.

1986: Jay Gary introduces the idea of reaching the world by 2000, which included Roman Catholic participation. Many denominations worked to set up an AD 2000 committee.

1986-88: *Coalition on Revival Congress* (1986); *North American Congress on the Holy Spirit* (1987). Roman Catholic Father Tom Forrest was one of the main speakers. A booklet was distributed with plans that included Catholics evangelising the world by 2000. In 1988 Bill Bright planned '*New Life 2000*' which brought together major denominations and para-church groups to reach the world by 2000.

1990: Ecumenical *Promise Keepers* began.

1991: Billy Graham praises the *World Council of Churches*.

1994: *Catholics & Evangelicals Together* document was signed by Roman Catholics and several leading evangelical leaders. This document stated that Roman Catholicism is 'Christian' and agreed not to evangelise each other but to work together.

It is not hard to see the connection between Pentecostalism, Roman Catholicism and shared experiences. The acceptance

of Roman Catholicism is the trade mark of the ecumenical movement. This 20th century revolution did not originate with Roman Catholicism which boasts 'it changes not', but rather from the Evangelical church!

For Christians to overlook serious differences and unite for the purpose of evangelizing the world defies the doctrine of separation and many Scriptures. It ignores the fact that Roman Catholic (and some Protestant churches) preach 'another gospel' that denies fundamental and non negotiable truths concerning such doctrines as the atonement. For example the Roman Catholic religion teaches a *continuing sacrifice* of Jesus on their altars in complete opposition to the Protestant church and Scripture, (Heb.6:6; 9:25,26; 10:11,12,18; Jn.19:30). If we love the Lord Jesus and the truth of Scripture, how can we tolerate 'another gospel'?

Some base the ecumenical argument for unity on John 17:11 '**...that they may be one, as we are**'. However, they fail to read on - verse 17 qualifies that *this unity must be in truth: 'Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth'*. The word 'sanctify' refers to *separation*. The separation here is from the evil of the world (vs.14) and it comes about through *truth!* Yet many of the ecumenical players are diametrically opposed to each other in what is truth and where it is found! John 17 also speaks of the difference between the world and the saints: '**...the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world... (vs.14)... They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world**', (vs.16). Yet by definition and practice the ecumenical movement is arguably of the world. Vs.21 also shows true unity to be the same kind of unity Jesus has with the Father: '**That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee...**' What kind of unity is this that Jesus has with the Father? It is not a unity of hypocrisy or love, but a *unity of agreement and truth!*

It comes as no surprise that the Vatican is subtly the driving force behind this ecumenical movement. Throughout history, the Roman Catholic Church has sought to bring all religions under the power and influence of the papacy. No longer able to openly force people to submit to its popes under the threat of death and persecution, the Vatican has changed its strategy to win the world. Since the close of the Vatican II Council in 1965, the Roman Catholic Church now carefully calls those outside it's fold '*separated brethren*'. She now urges all Protestants, whom she once called 'heretics', to come back home to the 'one true church'.

Tragically, many pulpits are silent on the dangers of the compromised gospel of ecumenical evangelism. Yet Paul said: '**But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him**', (2Cor.11:3-4). There are also numerous scriptural warnings for believers to remain separate from unbelievers (2Cor.6:14-17); and from believers who do not follow sound doctrine, (1Cor.5:9-14; Rom.16:17; Tit.3:10). The apostles warned that if we do not separate from false teachers we become identified with them and their error (2Jn.10,11) and risk partaking of their fate, (Jude 11-13).

Jesus and His disciples never tolerated ecumenical evangelism. They opposed the religious leaders of the day, (Matt.23:13). They did not unite with those who wanted to add the requirements of the law to grace, (Gal. 1:6-9; Jude 4).

In light of the Reformers, the martyrs who were burned by the Roman Catholic church, and great leaders such as Spurgeon and JC Ryle who opposed the same ecumenical thinking, how is it that Evangelicals are now so easily seduced by Roman Catholicism and the ecumenical cry for unity? Are they really ignorant of the 100 curses that Rome has put upon Protestants for teaching such things as the imputed righteousness of Christ (Rom.4) or grace through faith alone, (Eph.2)? *How can Christians join hands with a religion that condemns them!*

As the promised end time deception increases, more people will be led into apostasy. This is one reason why we are commanded to '**earnestly contend for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints**', (Jude 3). As more Christian leaders seek an ecumenical love rather than sound doctrine, the way of truth becomes more narrow and less travelled. It is not a popular stand.

One writer sums up the ecumenical movement well: '*Ecumenism is seeking to bring together all sectors of Christendom on the basis we should love one another irrespective of doctrine. To achieve this unity it shows itself willing to accept or tolerate all the false doctrines of Christendom. One Protestant church leader congratulated 3000 attendees at the National Conference of Catholics 'because', he said, 'You take the Gospel so seriously'. When asked 'Do you believe in ecumenism and co-operative evangelism?', he replied, 'I certainly do, and most of our ministers would agree with me'. Sadly this is the case.*

Time magazine (June/97) reported a strong push within the Catholic Religion for the present Pope to declare Mary Co-redemptrix with Christ...[thus] Christ is not the only way of salvation; Mary is equal saviour. How can we fellowship with those who espouse such a doctrine? This is heresy!

But what of the strange teachings of Pentecostal/Charismatic preachers such as Hinn, Copeland, Hagin, etc. Kenneth Copeland is on record to have said, 'Any born again believer could have died for the sins of the world. Jesus was only the first born again believer. I [Copeland] could do exactly the same thing'.

How is it possible to have fellowship with these extremes within the Church today? What happened to the Reformation? Attempts to bring churches of all persuasions together without respect for fundamental doctrines of God's Word can only lead to the formation of the apostate one world Church described in the Bible as 'Mystery Babylon the great, Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth', (Rev.17:5).

...A 1999 report says that in Brazil 57% of the Roman Catholic religion is Pentecostal/Charismatic. While I recognise that there are many embracing this movement today who may well be born again believers, nevertheless, it would seem to me that this one factor over all others could well be that which unites all elements of Christendom in the final apostate one-world-church.

As we see things developing all around us, let us watch for the soon return of the Lord Jesus', (Max Barnett, Herald of Hope article, June/2000)

The ecumenical movement which is rapidly bringing churches together has all the hall marks of love but it lacks *truth*. Many that have joined it have now forsaken the essentials of salvation and the authority of Scripture.

Ecumenical love has sacrificed Biblical truth on the altar of church unity.

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