



MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

A BIBLICAL ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS & SECULAR MEDIA

SPECIAL REPORT

ALL ECUMENICAL ROADS LEAD TO ROME

By Albert James Dager

There was a time when Evangelical Christianity took a strong stand for doctrinal truth. As recently as twenty years ago it would have been unthinkable that the vast majority of evangelical leaders would openly espouse unity with the papacy for the purpose of finding common ground. Today, under the excuse that Christianity must work to evangelize the world in order to eradicate evil and institute a moral and just society, sound doctrine is taking a back seat to political and social action. This has led to reticence within evangelical Christianity to separate itself from unrighteousness of the most deceptive kind. It is now not only fashionable, but desirable, that Christians of every persuasion work hand-in-hand with Roman Catholicism and even, in some cases, Mormonism, in order to accomplish what is perceived as a mandate from God to institute godliness within society.

What has brought us to this stage today? The answer lies in the ecumenical efforts of Roman Catholicism that have replaced its formerly aggressive condemnation of everything non-Catholic (even to the point of persecution and death for those whom it called heretics). Not only did such violence fail to bring about the perceived mandate of Romanism to conquer the world, it resulted in backlashes of resistance even in countries where Roman Catholicism held its greatest power. Having suffered setbacks in its political strength, which had given it the power of life and death over its subjects, the Catholic Church has had to resort to more subtle means of implementing its Counter-Reformation goals.

There are two basic reasons for Rome's ecumenical appeal: 1) to stop the proselytizing of Roman Catholics by evangelical Christians, in accor-



dance with Pope John Paul II's declaration of war against evangelicals decimating Catholic ranks in Catholic countries; 2) to bring as many ex-Catholics and non-Catholics as possible into the folds of the papacy's robes.

As the "Vicar of Christ," the pope is considered to be the head of everyone and everything that is called Christian.

According to Roman Catholic teaching Jesus is the head of the mystical Body of Christ, but the pope is the head of the visible Church (defined primarily as the Roman Catholic Church, but including all of Christianity). Papal authority is a major tenet of its ecumenical outreach. By whatever means the Catholic Church deems necessary, all must be brought under the primacy of the papal office.

That has been, and remains, the purpose of Roman Catholic ecumenism.

A HISTORY OF ROMAN CATHOLIC ECUMENISM

The ecumenical movement is Roman Catholic in origin. The only non-Catholic ecumenism is that of the World Council of Churches (WCC), which has devolved into an instrument of unity among liberal non-Catholic congregations. At this time, at least, the WCC's brand of ecumenism poses little attraction to evangelical Christians. This is due to its emphasis upon offensive ten-

ets such as recognition of homosexual clergy, homosexual marriages, feminism, and other things that evangelicals find incompatible with their biblical morality.

However, time will reveal that the social goals of Romanism and liberalism are not so incompatible.

Many people think that Vatican II was the beginning of Roman Catholic ecumenism. In truth, however, the ecumenical movement began with Roman Catholicism toward the end of the nineteenth century under Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903).

With the publication of *Unitatis Redintegratio*, an ecumenical decree from the Second Vatican Council in 1964, the work of all the popes since Leo XIII was codified as an official call to Catholics for an active role in their church's ecumenical outreach.

In his *History of Catholic Ecumenism*, Roman Catholic writer Eric Sammons states:

Throughout her history, the Catholic Church has steadfastly stressed the importance of Christian unity. Other non-Catholic believers have also affirmed the need for a united Christianity, but the concept of unity for a Catholic versus a non-Catholic is radically different. The Catholic Church teaches that Christ founded one visible Church upon the apostles, with Simon Peter as its head. Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) affirmed in *Mystici Corporis* this unchanging tenet of the Church:

"He [Christ] entrusted to the Prince of the Apostles [the pope] the visible government of the whole society which He had founded...for in virtue of the primacy Peter is none other than the Vicar of Christ, and therefore this Body has only one principal Head, namely Christ, who, continuing Himself to govern the Church in-

visibly and directly, rules it visibly through His personal representative on earth; so that now...that Church is built not only on Himself but also on Peter as on its visible foundation."

This description of the Church is at odds in varying ways with the beliefs of all other Christian bodies. Also, the official teaching of the Roman Church has always been that true unity can only be realized if all Christians are again united to the Roman Pontiff.¹

That such unity under the pope is the goal of Catholic ecumenism is clearly stated in the Vatican II documents:

Bishops should show affectionate consideration in their relations with the separated brethren and should urge the faithful also to exercise all kindness and charity in their regard, encouraging ecumenism as it is understood by the Church.²

The key phrase in this statement is "as it is understood by the Church." In Roman Catholic jargon "the Church" always means the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholic Church does not recognize the validity of any other assembly. It claims that Jesus instituted only one Church under the authority of Peter as the first "pope." All baptized Christians, regardless of denominational affiliation or genuineness of their professed faith, are considered members of the Catholic Church, albeit non-Catholic Christians are referred to as "separated brethren." Obviously, there is a specific Roman Catholic understanding to the term ecumenism. It is further revealed in the Vatican II documents:

The term "ecumenical movement" indicates the initiatives and activities encouraged and organized, according to the various needs of the Church and as opportunities offer, to promote Christian unity.³

To the papacy the purpose of ecumenism is to meet the needs of the Vatican's ecclesiastical system on the pretext of promoting Christian unity. But on what terms is unity to be realized?

This sacred Council urges the faithful to abstain from any frivolous or imprudent zeal, for these can cause harm to true progress toward unity. Their ecumenical activity cannot be other than fully and sincerely Catholic, that is, loyal to the truth we have received from the Apostles and the Fathers, and in harmony with the faith which the

Catholic Church has always professed, and at the same time tending toward that fullness in which our Lord wants his Body to grow in the course of time.⁴

Through the ecumenical movement the Roman Catholic Church is attempting to undo the Reformation and bring all Christians under the authority of the papacy. When it encourages "dialogue" with non-Catholic Christians the Catholic Church's position is intractable: there will be no unity without surrender to "Mother Church."

The Catholic Church has made the greatest strides in realizing its goals under the leadership of the present pope, John Paul II, who dedicated his papacy to the Virgin Mary. It should come as no surprise, then, that the Roman Catholic ecumenical movement is under the direction of Mary. On Sunday, January 21, 1996, Pope John Paul II invoked Mary as the "Mother of unity" to guide the Catholic Church in its ecumenical efforts:

May the Blessed Virgin, Mother of unity, make us feel the force of the Lord's voice repeating to his disciples: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock" (Rv 3:20), as the theme of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity appropriately recalls. The Lord Jesus is calling everyone to a courageous and profound review of life and urges us to deepen our ecumenical fervour and longing, as the third millennium swiftly approaches. May the Mother of Christ and of the Church obtain for all the baptized promptness and fidelity in responding to the Redeemer's ardent appeal.⁵

Are today's leaders within Christianity unaware of the real intent of Roman Catholic ecumenism? I would find that hard to believe in light of the documentation of Roman Catholic designs that have been published by the Vatican and by numerous warnings sounded by God's watchmen. The question is why, in view of this, they are willing to encourage those under their tutelage to engage in ecumenical dialogue with Roman Catholicism.

While many evangelical leaders a few decades ago may have held sympathies for Romanism, they were wise enough to keep silent about those sympathies lest they stir up opposition to their ministries.

It is no longer fashionable to keep silent. Now it is fashionable to state openly the belief that there is no in-

trinsic difference between Roman Catholic doctrine and that of evangelicalism. This is because the only doctrines focused upon by those in favor of spiritual unity of all Christendom are the so-called "essentials": the Trinity; the Deity of Christ; the Virgin Birth; the Bodily Resurrection of Jesus, and anything else where agreement is found.

Beyond these, it seems, evangelical Christianity has of late chosen to wink at other aberrant beliefs and practices of Romanism which nullify its claim of belief in salvation by grace alone, and to treat them as "inconsequential" to unity. These include, but are not limited to: papal infallibility; the immaculate conception of Mary (belief that she was conceived without sin); the mass (a literal sacrifice of Jesus performed by the priest); transubstantiation (belief that the wafer and the wine are changed into the real body and blood of Jesus through the incantations of a priest, and is to be worshiped with the same worship due God); the doctrine of purgatory (with indulgences accepted on behalf of the souls allegedly held there); baptismal regeneration for infants as well as for adults.

Among other things, the Reformation brought into the consciousness of many, two of the most important distinctions between Roman Catholic teaching and that of the Bible: salvation by grace through faith alone, and the sufficiency of Scripture (*sola Scriptura*) for imparting to the believer all that is necessary in belief and practice for salvation and for living in obedience to God.

Now we are hearing from both Catholic and non-Catholic leaders that the old differences are no longer valid; the Reformers' alarms, it turns out, were valid for their time, but the issues with which they were concerned no longer exist. Roman Catholic ecumenical "dialogue" has done its job.

RECENT AGREEMENTS

Through the clever manipulation of words, and the hiding of its true face, the papacy has convinced foolish and naïve leaders of non-Catholic Christians to accept its lies that the Reformation issues are no longer valid, and that it, too, believes in salvation through grace alone.

Evangelicals & Catholics Together

One of the greatest scandals to evangelical Christianity is Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT), initiated in

1994 by Chuck Colson, chairman of Prison Fellowship Ministries, and Catholic priest Richard John Neuhaus of the Institute on Religion and Public Life. The ECT document declares: "We together, evangelicals and Catholics, confess our sins against the unity that Christ intends for all his disciples."

The purpose of ECT is to present a united front against the evils of the world. It affirms that there is only one Church, and that all Christians are part of that one Church regardless of their religious affiliation. This is exactly what the Roman Catholic Church claims; the Catholic interpretation, however, is that the Catholic Church is the only true Church, and that all Christians are members of it through baptism, even as they are defined as "separated brethren." This interpretation was certainly not lost to the Roman Catholic participants and endorsers. (A list of Participants and Endorsers of ECT is found in the sidebar below.)

Eastern Orthodox/Catholic Unity

For some time now, there have been strong statements of the desire on the part of Eastern Orthodox churches to come back to Rome. There have even been concelebratory services involving Roman Catholic and Orthodox clergy. Even so, there are some holdouts among the Orthodox, although their numbers are waning.

This unity is among the most sought-after by the papacy. It laments its loss of power over so many within the eastern provinces of "Christendom."

Anglican/Catholic Unity

The Anglican Church, the most similar to Roman Catholicism in the West, has also stated its desire for unity with Rome. A brief historical summary on the unification process between Roman Catholicism and the Anglican Church is found in the Preface to their joint document, *The Gift of Authority*:

An earnest search for full visible unity between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church was initiated over thirty years ago by the historic meeting in Rome of Archbishop Michael Ramsey and Pope Paul VI. The Commission set up to prepare for the dialogue recognized, in its 1968 Malta Report, that one of the "urgent and important tasks" would be to examine the question of authority. In a sense, this question is at the heart of our sad divisions.

When *The Final Report of ARCIC* was published in 1981 half of it was devoted to the dialogue about authority in the Church, with two agreed statements and an elucidation. This was important groundwork, preparing the way for further convergence. The official responses, by the 1988 Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Communion and by the Catholic Church in 1991, encouraged the Commission to carry forward the "remarkable progress" that had been made. Accordingly ARCIC now offers this further agreed statement, *The Gift of Authority*.

That the Anglican Church is prepared to surrender its autonomy is evident in the following words from *The Gift of Authority*:

Universal Primacy: A Gift to be Shared

60. The Commission's work has resulted in sufficient agreement on universal primacy as a gift to be shared, for us to propose that such a primacy could be offered and re-

ceived even before our churches are in full communion. Both Roman Catholics and Anglicans look to this ministry being exercised in collegiality and synodality – a ministry of *servus servorum Dei* (Gregory the Great, cited in *Ut Unum Sint*, 88). We envisage a primacy that will even now help to uphold the legitimate diversity of traditions, strengthening and safeguarding them in fidelity to the Gospel. It will encourage the churches in their mission. This sort of primacy will already assist the Church on earth to be the authentic catholic koinonia in which unity does not curtail diversity, and diversity does not endanger but enhances unity. It will be an effective sign for all Christians as to how this gift of God builds up that unity for which Christ prayed.

61. Such a universal primate will exercise leadership in the world and also in both communions, addressing them in a prophetic way. He will promote the common good in ways that are not constrained by sectional in-

EVANGELICALS & CATHOLICS TOGETHER

PARTICIPANTS

Mr. Charles Colson, Prison Fellowship; Fr. Juan Diaz-Vilar, S.J., Catholic Hispanic Ministries; Fr. Avery Dulles, S.J., Fordham University; Bishop Francis George, OMI, Diocese of Yakima (Washington); Dr. Kent Hill, Eastern Nazarene College; Dr. Richard Land, Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention; Dr. Larry Lewis, Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention; Dr. Jesse Miranda, Assemblies of God; Msgr. William Murphy, Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Boston; Fr. Richard John Neuhaus, Institute on Religion and Public Life; Mr. Brian O'Connell, World Evangelical Fellowship; Mr. Herbert Schlossberg, Fieldstead Foundation; Archbishop Francis Stafford, Archdiocese of Denver; Mr. George Weigel, Ethics and Public Policy Center; Dr. John White, Geneva College and the National Association of Evangelicals.

ENDORSED BY:

Dr. William Abraham, Perkins School of Theology; Dr. Elizabeth Achtemeier, Union Theological Seminary (Virginia); Mr. William Bentley Ball, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Dr. Bill Bright, Campus Crusade for Christ; Professor Robert Destro, Catholic University of America; Fr. Augustine DiNoia, O.P., Dominican House of Studies; Fr. Joseph P. Fitzpatrick, S.J., Fordham University; Mr. Keith Fournier, American Center for Law and Justice; Bishop William Frey, Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry; Professor Mary Ann Glendon, Harvard Law School; Dr. Os Guinness, Trinity Forum; Dr. Nathan Hatch, University of Notre Dame; Dr. James Hitchcock, St. Louis University; Professor Peter Kreeft, Boston College; Fr. Matthew Lamb, Boston College; Mr. Ralph Martin, Renewal Ministries; Dr. Richard Mouw, Fuller Theological Seminary; Dr. Mark Noll, Wheaton College; Mr. Michael Novak, American Enterprise Institute; John Cardinal O'Connor, Archdiocese of New York; Dr. Thomas Oden, Drew University; Dr. James J. I. Packer, Regent College (British Columbia); Dr. Pat Robertson, Regent University; Dr. John Rodgers, Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry; Bishop Carlos A. Sevilla, S.J., Archdiocese of San Francisco.

terests, and offer a continuing and distinctive teaching ministry, particularly in addressing difficult theological and moral issues. A universal primacy of this style will welcome and protect theological enquiry and other forms of the search for truth, so that their results may enrich and strengthen both human wisdom and the Church's faith. Such a universal primacy might gather the churches in various ways for consultation and discussion.

62. An experience of universal primacy of this kind would confirm two particular conclusions we have reached:

- that Anglicans be open to and desire a recovery and re-reception under certain clear conditions of the exercise of universal primacy by the Bishop of Rome;
- that Roman Catholics be open to and desire a re-reception of the exercise of primacy by the Bishop of Rome and the offering of such a ministry to the whole Church of God.

What could be more clear than this as an example that the Anglican hierarchy is prepared to submit itself to the primacy of the pope? This has caused great alarm among the few discerning Anglicans who are accusing of treason those involved in this proposal.

There has also been ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Lutheran churches. And many Lutheran leaders are preparing to submit to the papacy as well.

Lutheran/Catholic Unity

The most glaring example of the Lutheran sellout is the accord reached in June, 1999, between the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation, the latter representing some 57 million Lutherans. This accord, Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, came on the heels of the 1997 Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, authored by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in which the ELCA decided that there really isn't any significant difference between its position and that of Roman Catholicism.

This latest declaration by the Lutheran World Federation in conjunction with the Roman Catholic Church, both of whom claimed to reach agreement on the doctrine of salvation based on grace alone, was formally signed on Reformation Day, October 31, 1999. On that day in 1517, Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses on the door of the

Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany, challenging his Catholic brethren to discuss many issues, among which was the doctrine of justification. That this accord was signed on that particular day is a feather in the cap of the pope, and a slap in the face of all the martyrs who died under Romanism for their part in the Reformation.

The gist of this accord is that the understanding of justification held by those Catholic prelates and the Reformers of the time has changed. Well, if it's changed it isn't on the part of the Roman Catholic Church. At best, that church has developed a clever shrouding of its meaning in the words it uses today. Justification by grace through faith still means justification by the grace attained through the Roman Catholic sacramental system. It meant that in the 16th century and it means that now.

What is most striking about the accord between the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church is not that such a thing occurred; it has been expected for some time by those who are informed about the last days apostasy. What is most striking is that the major voices within evangelicalism, fully aware of that development, have had nothing to say in opposition to it. The silence on the part of the major Christian media—especially among evangelicals—is deafening. Few, if any, have taken a position opposing this accord.

Today's traitors to Christ who call themselves "evangelical" overlook the obvious errors attendant to that accord when presenting their proposals for unity before the sheep they wish to devour. By their silence they are also inferring that there is common ground between them and Roman Catholicism for belief in "salvation by grace alone." This will prove to be the greatest of deceptions in leading all of Christendom to accept the pope as the only viable head of Christianity.

ROMAN CATHOLIC GRACE

Regardless of what it would have us believe, the Roman Catholic Church has continued to maintain that grace is attained through the "good works" of the Roman Catholic sacramental system. While coming to outward agreement with the Lutherans on the issue of salvation by grace alone, the Roman Catholic Church has managed to hide within its dialogue with these people

(with their cooperation) the Roman Church's qualification of salvation by grace alone: that grace is resident within the Roman Church, and that it cannot be fully appropriated without that church's jurisdiction.

According to Roman Catholic teaching, grace is dispensed through the Roman Church's sacramental system. The seven sacraments of Romanism are: Baptism; Confirmation (ostensibly receiving the Holy Spirit through a bishop's pat on the face); Penance (through the confessional); the Eucharist ("Holy Communion"); Holy Orders (the priesthood); Marriage (but not for priests); Extreme Unction (the priestly blessing of the dying or dead). Add to these the practice of dispensing indulgences for the dead (in purgatory)—as well as for the living—through the saying of prayers to the "saints" as well as through monetary gifts to the Roman Catholic Church. Such indulgences also bestow grace according to Roman Catholic teaching. Catholics may buy masses, novenas, rosaries and other rituals practiced by the priests in order to hopefully alleviate the suffering of their departed loved ones in purgatory.

These "sacraments" are essential to the salvation and life of the Roman Catholic. Each bestows a measure of grace upon the participant. However, grace in the Roman Catholic Church is quantitative as well as qualitative; it possesses a diminishing quality. One must continually be involved in the sacraments—especially penance and the eucharist—in order to maintain the state of grace. Sin removes grace. Venial (small) sins remove a portion of grace which, should a person die without confessing them to a priest, will result in time spent in purgatory to remove the penalty for those sins. This, of course, is a denial of the sufficiency of Jesus Christ's atonement on the cross through the shedding of His blood for our sins.

Mortal (grievous) sins remove all grace and will send a person to hell for eternity should that person die without confessing those sins to a priest (or at least intending to confess them to a priest).

So this is what is really meant by Roman Catholic "grace." Yes, salvation is by grace alone, but that grace can be fully attained only through adherence to the Roman Catholic sacramental system.

ROMAN CATHOLIC SALVATION

Through Vatican II the papacy has "graciously" deigned to bestow upon its "separated brethren" (non-Catholic Christians) partial acceptance on the basis that they have a "measure of salvation," whatever that means:

Nevertheless, our separated brethren, whether considered as individuals or as Communities and Churches, are not blessed with that unity which Jesus Christ wished to bestow on all those who through Him were born again into one body, and with Him quickened to newness of life—that unity which the Holy Scriptures and the ancient Tradition of the Church proclaim. For it is only through Christ's Catholic Church, which is "the all-embracing means of salvation," that they can benefit fully from the means of salvation. We believe that Our Lord entrusted all the blessings of the New Covenant to the apostolic college [the College of Cardinals and the Pope] alone, of which Peter is the head, in order to establish the one Body of Christ on earth to which all should be fully incorporated who belong in any way to the people of God.⁶

This can only be understood within the context of Roman Catholic thinking: not being under the authority of the papacy, non-Catholic Christians cannot have a full measure of salvation. That is, they cannot enjoy the grace that comes through the sacramental system. Therefore, they cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (Roman Catholic dominion over the earth which should come in due time). However, they may enjoy the benevolence of the Kingdom of God as long as they do not oppose the primacy of the pope over Christendom. They may have a lesser role in the eternal Kingdom, but they cannot attain to the full stature as sons of God.

In other words, they will forever remain second class citizens within the Kingdom unless they convert to Roman Catholicism. In his ecumenical encyclical, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, Pope Paul VI urged all the Catholic faithful to use every charitable means to bring about reconciliation with the "separated brethren." The stated purpose is to bring them all under the rule of the Roman pontiff:

When such actions are undertaken prudently and patiently by the Catholic faithful, with the atten-

tive guidance of their bishops, they promote justice and truth, concord and collaboration, as well as the spirit of brotherly love and unity. This is the way that, when the obstacles to perfect ecclesiastical communion have been gradually overcome, all Christians will at last, in a common celebration of the Eucharist, be gathered into the one and only Church in that unity which Christ bestowed on His Church from the beginning. We believe that this unity 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.⁷

Thus, only within the Catholic Church can true unity be achieved. This means that all who would desire Christian unity as defined by the ecumenical movement must eventually surrender to the authority of the pope. This leads to the inevitable conclusion that they must all become Roman Catholics. In order for them to become Roman Catholics they must accept all the doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church as their means of salvation. This includes "a common celebration of the Eucharist," which entails belief that the priest can change the bread and wine into the literal body and blood of Jesus. Since He ostensibly resides within the wafer (without His blood; His blood is in the cup), the wafer is worthy of worship:

Given this perdurance of Christ's presence as long as the species remain [before they are eaten], it was only logical for the Church to worship the Blessed Sacrament as it would the person of Jesus himself. As a result, he is to be adored "in the holy sacrament of the Eucharist with the worship of latria, including the external worship." Concretely this means that the Blessed Sacrament is to be "honored with extraordinary festive celebrations" and "solemnly carried from place to place" and "is to be publicly exposed for the people's adoration."⁸

Says *Unitatis Redintegratio*:

There are two main principles governing the practice of such common worship: first, the bearing witness to the unity of the Church, and second, the sharing in the means of grace.

Bearing witness to the unity of the Church means confessing that true unity of the Christian faith resides un-

der the authority of the papal office and the College of Cardinals. Sharing the means of grace means partaking of the sacraments of the Catholic Church as the means to receive God's grace. This, alone, proves that the current claims of a common understanding of justification by faith are lies.

In his encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint* (That They May Be One), Pope John Paul II reaffirmed that ecumenical endeavors on the part of Roman Catholics must be in the spirit of *Unitatis Redintegratio*. Vatican II did not change anything as far as Roman Catholic doctrine and intent are concerned. It did, however, enlarge upon the ecumenical efforts of those who had gone before.

Whether all Christians convert to Roman Catholicism is not as important to the papacy as the pope fulfilling his role as Vicar of Christ (replacement of Jesus) on earth. This is to be accomplished by his being recognized by the world as the primary leader of Christianity, and as the spiritual head over all governments. This, Scripture indicates, is the role of the false prophet in the last days.

For those who have once been Roman Catholics and have separated themselves from papal authority, there is no hope of even second-class citizenship. We are anathema—condemned for eternity because we have apostatized from the Faith. This means that any who would remain in good standing within the Kingdom of God must separate themselves from ex-Catholics and consider us worthy of death as heretics, just as was the case in earlier centuries of Roman Catholic rule.

Regardless of the benevolent face of Romanism today (especially in predominantly Protestant countries), the fact remains that it considers itself the only true Church established by Jesus Christ, and led by the only true successors to the apostles, the College of Cardinals, and the only true successors to Peter as the head of the apostles, the popes. And there is no getting away from the fact that the Roman Catholic Church defines unity as agreement on Roman Catholic dogma and practice under the authority of the pope. The present pope, John Paul II, affirms this in his encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*:

In indicating the Catholic principles of ecumenism, the Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* recalls above all the teaching on the Church set forth

in the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* in its chapter on the People of God. At the same time, it takes into account everything affirmed in the Council's Declaration on Religious Freedom *Dignitatis Humanae*.⁹

The teaching on the Catholic Church in *Lumen Gentium*, promulgated by Pope Paul VI on November 21, 1964, is extensive. Relative to the subject of ecumenism, and pertinent to the statement above by John Paul II, is the following:

They are fully incorporated in the society of the Church who, possessing the Spirit of Christ accept her entire system and all the means of salvation given to her, and are united with her as part of her visible bodily structure and through her with Christ, who rules her through the Supreme Pontiff and the bishops. The bonds which bind men to the Church in a visible way are profession of faith, the sacraments, and ecclesiastical government and communion. (Emphasis added)¹⁰

In other words, the Roman Catholic definition of unity is incorporation into the society of the Roman Church. Incorporation into the Roman Church means acceptance of "her entire system and all means of salvation given to her." The "means of salvation" are the sacraments.

Additionally, incorporation means to be "united with her as part of her bodily structure...through the Supreme Pontiff and the bishops."

So Roman Catholic understanding of "grace" and "salvation" are a far cry from that of Scripture and of the Reformers. As imperfect as they were, those Reformers injected a breath of fresh air into the musty, corrupt system to which they once adhered.

None of these facts about Roman Catholic "grace" and "salvation" are hidden. Ecumenical non-Catholic leaders are fully aware of them. It is only a matter of time before a compromised Christianity surrenders to the pope.

THE TRUE FACE OF ROMANISM

Let's not mince words here. The Roman Catholic Church is the greatest spiritual deception on earth; at its core it remains a murderer not only of body but of soul. And it alone, above all other institutions, fits the biblical prophecies regarding the last-days whore of Babylon.

I state this in spite of my love for my Catholic family and for the priests and nuns who gave me a good education through the Roman Catholic school system. For the record, my experience of growing up within Romanism was nothing but positive. I can honestly say that I did not leave the Roman Catholic Church because of discontent with the people. I was a devout Catholic, grateful to God for allowing me to be a member of what I honestly believed to be the only true Church. No priest ever abused me; no nun ever treated me with anything but kindness. These are dedicated people who honestly believe they are serving God through the best means possible—the religious life of Romanism.

No, I left the Roman Catholic Church when the Holy Spirit opened my eyes to its errors, through the Scriptures.

And I make a distinction between individual Catholics—including priests and nuns—and the system itself. While the system is vile and paganistic, fraught with serious spiritual error and the doctrines of demons, many if not most of the people in the system are, by human standards, good; they are desirous of pleasing God. They make many personal sacrifices, and have demonstrated much kindness to others, even ex-Catholics like me. My friends and family still love me, as I them. And many of them would come to my defense in any argument that would suggest that I am lost because I have abandoned the "only true church." Even as I write about the evils of their religious institution they have not refused to love me.

That's not to say that the deceived hierarchy of the system would treat me kindly. But I have suffered more grief, rejection and abuse by non-Catholic religious leaders since leaving Roman Catholicism. There is little tolerance among non-Catholic religious leaders as well as Catholic clergy for those who would dare expose error in their systems of belief.

We cannot fault the Roman Catholic Church as the only apostate deception. Most Christian institutions, including Protestant denominations, have gone the way of apostasy while affirming belief in biblical truth.

FALSE UNITY VS TRUE UNITY

Belief in biblical truth alone is insufficient to prove one's faithfulness to Jesus Christ. As James states, "the

devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19).

This only proves that God's grace is not found within institutions. It is found only in the person of Jesus Christ, and is bestowed upon all who come to Him in faith, surrendering their lives in obedience to His commands which are found only in His written Word.

True unity in the Holy Spirit will not be attained through and among institutions. It already exists among all true individual believers in Jesus Christ.

SIGNS OF APOSTASY

Institutions are often founded by men of good intent—even true believers. But in time all institutions, being the products of men, tend toward apostasy. Today most Christian institutions are at one of several stages of apostasy. Those stages are as follows:

Apathy

This is the first stage that leads to apostasy. Apathy arises when one becomes comfortable in that in which one believes. He has the truth and he knows it. He is unconcerned about error that may be creeping in among those with whom he fellowships. Error, he believes, is no match for truth, so why worry about it?

The apathetic Christian refuses to remove himself from those who will not remove themselves from spiritual error. Confrontation is not an option—and separation even less so.

Admiration

The apathetic Christian sees those with whom he fellowships following paths of error. But he still respects those caught in the errors. They appear to him to be benevolent, kind people. They do good works; they openly profess love for Jesus; they even seem to work signs and wonders. If God is with them in these things (as it seems He is), then how can anyone oppose them for what they believe? In fact, they seem so godly—even mystical—in the practice of their particular form of Christianity.

Dialogue

Since God is "obviously" with these people, it should be evident that they have something to share with us. Perhaps they might be open to hear from us as well. Dialogue would be a good way to find out what they have to offer in helping us better understand their

position. And maybe some of that good religious fervor will rub off on us.

Compromise

Well, it seems that they don't want to give up those erroneous beliefs. What do we do? We want to accept them into fellowship for all the good qualities they bring to our community. Should we shun them? That would be unloving. And they are so loving, how can we be unloving toward them? Let's agree to disagree, and just not make an issue of those things upon which we cannot reach agreement.

Acceptance

Since we have come to agree to disagree, we should not withhold fellowship from these loving, kind people. We must accept them into fellowship and, even if it means we appear to agree with them when we don't, we should join in their fellowship as well. Acceptance is evidence that we love one another. And, after all, isn't love the most important of the Lord's commandments?

Promotion

You know, after fellowshiping with these people, we have come to understand that God is not a respecter of persons. They love Him and He loves them. We should no longer withhold support for them. We should let others know that they can be blessed as members of their religious communities. We can encourage those among them to stay there and evangelize others into their community. That way we can further exhibit unity in Christ to the world. And, together, we can win the world for Christ.

What seems to elude the thinking of those who would send people into the Catholic Church is the fact that no obedient Catholic would send anyone into a non-Catholic church. That would be counter-productive to the Catholic Church's stated mission!

Why should ecumenical cooperation be so one-sided? Why is it okay for non-Catholics to help Catholics proselytize, but it isn't okay for Catholics to help non-Catholics proselytize?

Don't be misled by the Catholic clergy at non-Catholic evangelistic crusades; they're there to make sure that no Catholics are inadvertently led into non-Catholic churches. Because of the quisling leaders of those crusades, there is an agreement that all who come forward must be asked to which

church they belong. Catholics must be herded over to the Catholic representatives for "conversion."

Assimilation

Eventually, those who have gone as far as promotion of the apostasy will feel the need to join it. There will be no reason not to join it, particularly if the leaders of the apostasy allow diversity of opinion on "minor" differences. In the case of Roman Catholicism, it is a common practice in Catholic countries to allow the people to assimilate their cultural and religious traditions into their Roman Catholic practice. In some churches in South America voodoo rituals are performed in front of the Catholic altar under the priests' approving eye. Certainly it would be acceptable to the Catholic hierarchy for assimilated non-Catholic Christians to hold onto their traditions.

z z z

At the very least, every Christian leader and organization that does not warn of the great apostasy from the true Faith toward Romanism is guilty of apathy. This does not mean that they must harp on the issue, or make it a vendetta. But in view of the great strides toward success made by the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation movement, any solid believer must state just where he stands on the issue. More than that, he must sound a warning for the sake of those who might be beguiled into the ecumenical trap.

Who's Left?

Christian leaders in general are headed toward acknowledging the pope as the single most important leader in Christianity—the one to whom all Christendom should look for leadership against the evils of the world. Who else can muster the loyalty of one-fifth of the world's population—over one billion Roman Catholics worldwide? Now that the Eastern Orthodox, Anglican and Lutheran churches have expressed a desire for unity with Rome, there are few professed Christians remaining, mostly among American fundamentalists and Pentecostals.

But the fundamentalists are being persuaded by leaders such as Billy Graham to accept Roman Catholicism as worthy of joint efforts for evangelization. Pentecostals, because of the charismatic movement among mainline churches and Roman Catholicism, are being led to Rome through various

voices that appear on the Trinity Broadcasting Network, and are featured in charismatic magazines such as Charisma. The few relatively discerning Christians from both sides are trusting such "watchdog" organizations as Christian Research Institute to keep them informed of deceptions. However, even some of these—in particular CRI—while offering some excellent resource material on other cults and occult forces, are found compromising on Roman Catholicism.

The reasons for such compromise are varied. Some honestly believe that Roman Catholicism poses no threat to the purity of the Faith; some harbor guilt feelings under the pressure to be "loving" toward all professing Christians; some are intimidated by the need to maintain their public ministry through the Christian media. The latter are fully aware that, were they to take a strong stand against Roman Catholic deception, they would be cut off from their ability to air their programs. They are either censored by the media outlets through which they speak, or they censor themselves in order to avoid the unpleasantness of confrontation.

Roman Catholicism wields tremendous power within the financial world, and that includes the media. Those who would dare speak publicly and honestly about Roman Catholic deceptions are subjected to accusations of hate mongering not only by Roman Catholic apologists, but by many non-Catholic religious people as well.

It has come to the point today where only a few small voices, who self-publish apart from the mainstream Christian media, are able to speak honestly about the Roman Catholic issue. And the time may come soon when those few small voices are cut off by government and accused of "hate crimes" for daring to confront error with the truth of God's Word.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

What has brought non-Catholic Christianity to the brink of absorption into the papal system? How could centuries of Reformation influence be so easily dismissed? There are three primary movements outside the Roman Catholic Church that have contributed most to ecumenism within the past three or four decades. These are: 1) the Charismatic Movement; 2) the World Christian Movement; 3) The Christian Youth Culture.

The Charismatic Movement

The charismatic movement has been most instrumental in swaying Christians from a solid biblical foundation for judgment of truth to a feelings-oriented, experiential religious paradigm. The deception came about because of the perception that the Holy Spirit began to manifest Himself through the gift of tongues within the mainline churches. What had been claimed by Pentecostalism as evidence of its validity became the unifying factor between formerly Fundamentalist congregations and Pentecostal congregations. It mattered not at all that, just as in most Pentecostal meetings "tongues" was manifested in unscriptural ways, the same took place within the mainline churches. Pastors began attending conferences on the Holy Spirit, returning to their pulpits with stunning news and a renewed vigor. All of a sudden they were "on fire" for Jesus, and they wanted their congregations to catch that fire. The solemn, "dead" assembly was transformed into a lively, jump and shout, feel-good praise-a-thon. Scripture began to be consulted less; prayers to the Holy Spirit to fill the people with "fire" took its place.

Is the charismatic movement of God? As we take a brief look at its history, let us not forget the words of Jesus:

Ye shall know them by their fruits.

Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. (Matt 7:16-20)

Called "the New Pentecost" by Donald Gee in the late 50s, the charismatic movement refers primarily to all manifestations of Pentecostal-type Christianity that in some way is different from classical Pentecostalism in affiliation and/or doctrine.¹¹

The roots of the charismatic movement in North America go back more than a decade before Dennis Bennett's public announcement to his Episcopal congregation at St. Mark's, Van Nuys, California, in 1964, that he spoke in other tongues. This is commonly believed to be the beginning of the move-

ment. Yet in the late 1940s, "healing evangelists," such as William Branham, Oral Roberts, Gordon Lindsay, and T.L. Osborn, were instrumental in spreading what they called "Spirit-baptized" Christianity beyond explicitly Pentecostal boundaries. Their ministries produced a following of "Spirit-baptized" believers who could not all be classified as Pentecostal.¹²

The Pentecostal outreach beyond explicitly Pentecostal boundaries was first expressed organizationally in the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (FGBMFI), founded by Demos Shakarian. FGBMFI provided a platform for the "healing evangelists" to address men who were influential within the business community. In this manner, as a "lay" organization, its outreach extended beyond Pentecostalism into the mainline churches, including the Roman Catholic Church. This result was largely attributable to David du Plessis.¹³

In 1949, du Plessis established contacts with major leaders within the mainline churches through his visits to the World Council of Churches offices in New York. His work among them increased throughout the 1950s. He reported that "God was pouring out his Spirit on Christians of the 'denominational churches' in many lands."¹⁴

Influential leaders within the mainline churches who promoted the charismatic movement were Harald Bredeesen, then a young Lutheran Minister, Tommy Tyson, then pastor of a United Methodist church in North Carolina, and Agnes Sanford, whose occult techniques of "inner healing" became popular within the charismatic movement.¹⁵ (See our special report, Inner Healing.) Sanford had an influence upon Dennis Bennett and his wife Rita, who began to practice Sanford's visualization and meditation techniques within their ministries.

Another milieu through which many "mainline" Christians became involved in the charismatic movement was Camps Farthest Out (CFO) founded by Glenn Clark in 1930.¹⁶ Camps Farthest Out became embroiled in scandals due to its extreme shepherding practices and aberrant theology.

A publication that gave much impetus to the charismatic movement was Christian Life, whose editor, Robert Walker, claimed to be baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues around 1952. As a voice

to the mainline churches, Christian Life published articles suggesting that non-Pentecostal Christianity was missing out on the power of God because it was lacking in the baptism in the Holy Spirit.¹⁷

Without a doubt, the events that brought the movement into the public consciousness was the experience of Dennis Bennett in 1960. Coming under fire of the Episcopal bishop of Los Angeles, Bennett resigned at St. Marks in Van Nuys. A member of St. Marks, Jean Stone, contacted Newsweek and Time, which respectively ran stories under the headlines, "Rector and a Rumpus" (July 4), and "Speaking in Tongues" (August 15). Through these stories the focus on glossalalia in the mainline churches reached the religious presses.¹⁸

By the early 1960s people in virtually every major Protestant denomination were exhibiting glossalalia. The movement made its first inroads among the American Baptists through Harold Jackson of Arcata, California, who gave a message entitled "The Ministry of the Charismatic Church" at the 1963 denominational convention.¹⁹

The largest expression of the charismatic movement was found in the Episcopal Church through the influence of Dennis Bennett, Agnes Sanford and Jean Stone (whose publication, Trinity, became a major proponent of the movement along with the FGBMFI's Voice magazine.²⁰

An independent organization that had a major impact on the American charismatic movement was Christian Growth Ministries (CGM), and its New Wine magazine, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The main teachers for CGM were Bob Mumford, Derek Prince, Charles Simpson and Don Basham. These, along with a fifth, Ern Baxter, would become known as "The Fort Lauderdale Five," whose destructive methods of shepherding destroyed many young Christians' spiritual lives.

CGM's influence among some charismatic groups became strained because of these problems. The key concepts in contention were authority, submission, shepherding, and discipleship. The CGM team saw these as scriptural principles, much needed to combat Protestant individualism and charismatic free-lancing. The abuses that came from them is well-known.

The spread of the charismatic movement into Roman Catholicism was the

impetus for today's ecumenical spirit among non-Catholic Christians. The development of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, and at Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, gave the movement among Catholics a cohesiveness that it lacked previously.²¹ These Catholics had been greatly influenced by the decrees of the Second Vatican Council, and were ready to enter into dialogue with non-Catholics on the basis of a shared experience—speaking in tongues.

The development of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal was greatly enhanced by the coming together of Steven Clark, Ralph Martin, Gerry Rauch and Jim Cavnar to form the Word of God community in Ann Arbor. Clark and Martin had been working together on the staff of the Cursillo movement—a lay apologetic movement for Roman Catholicism.²² It was from the Word of God community that Promise Keepers founder Bill McCartney came, spreading his ecumenical fervor to many churches.

After forming the Word of God movement, Clark and Martin met with the leaders of CGM to form a secret group called "the Council." The purpose of the Council was to coordinate efforts between the Word of God community and Christian Growth Ministries to convert the world through ecumenical cooperation in a tightly controlled spiritual environment.²³

The Council was formed to offer support and advice to major charismatic leaders. For example, Derek Prince was authorized to produce a curriculum for Morris Cerullo and to work on the board of one of Cerullo's institutes.²⁴

During a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1977, the Council began to enter into relationship with Leon Joseph Cardinal Suenens. At their June 1 meeting at St. Catherine's Monastery in Mt. Sinai, Israel, Clark and Martin informed the Council that Cardinal Suenens wanted to enter into a covenantal relationship with them. The Council decided that they should relate to the Cardinal in some "significant manner," and that they should work with him and his people as "one module."²⁵

It was largely the Council's work that put together the historic Kansas City Conference in 1977 and, subsequently, the Washington for Jesus Conference in 1980, with the desire to demonstrate unity in the Holy Spirit in

an ecumenical environment, without regard to doctrine. At Washington for Jesus, Catholic priests told the participants that the departed saints were among them, and were blessing them for their participation. (For more detailed information on the Council and the history of this deception, see Albert James Dager's book, *Vengeance Is Ours: The Church in Dominion*.)

The Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements speaks glowingly of the ecumenical achievements of the charismatic movement or charismatic renewal (CR):

This 1977 Conference on CR in the Christian Churches at Kansas City concluded this formative period of American CR. In many ways Kansas City summed up the achievements and advances of the previous decade. It brought together in one demonstration more than 50,000 charismatic faith leaders and people from virtually all strands of the movement: denominational CR leaders, independent teachers, both discipling and antiscipling, Messianic Jews, and a few Pentecostal leaders. Its format recognized both the distinctiveness of each grouping (the morning sessions were arranged according to church membership) and the overall unity of this work of the Spirit (all met together for plenary sessions each evening in the Arrowhead stadium). The conference reflected the confident forward surge of CR and provided many memorable vignettes of God's power to transcend human expectations—of Cardinal Suenens of Belgium seated alongside Thomas F. Zimmerman of the AG; of the first major impact on CR of the Messianic Jews with their chant and the footwashing at their symposium; of the joint witness to reconciliation by Bill Burnett, white archbishop from South Africa, and James Forbes, a black Pentecostal preacher.

Participants in Kansas City (July 1977) experienced the conference as an outstanding ecumenical event. It strongly reinforced people's sense of CR as a remarkable work of God intentionally spanning all the churches and with an evident power to transcend inherited patterns of division. It gave signs of a new maturity and depth, as in the prophecies that summoned Christians, particularly church leaders and pastors, to repentance for attachment to their own pri-

orities, and to "mourn... weep...for the broken body of my Son."...

Some of the Kansas City ecumenical enthusiasm was manifest in the Jesus rallies held on Pentecost Sunday for a number of years. The first rally, "Jesus '78," in Meadowlands, New Jersey was the brainchild of Dan Malachuk, a Pentecostal who was strongly supported by Catholic Fr. Jim Ferry. This rally drew 55,000 people. In the following years, Jesus rallies were held in many U.S. cities, reaching more than one hundred in 1980. They were intended to be manifestations of Christian unity in praise and witness, animated by, but not restricted to, charismatic Christians. In many places, the Jesus rallies were the largest and most representative Christian gatherings ever held, and they did much to impart a sense of the grass-roots ecumenical thrust of CR.²⁶

These statements from a pro-charismatic publication say more about the aberrant fruit of the charismatic movement than anything its opponents could devise.

Virtually every leader within the charismatic movement has given his or her blessing to the ecumenical deception spawned by the Roman Catholic Church. The basis for their support has been this: since (to their reasoning) the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon the Catholic Church through the evidence of speaking in tongues (as they understand it), then the Catholic Church enjoys God's favor. If God favors the Roman Catholic Church, then it would be a sin to resist that church's overtures for unity.

The impetus for unity with the papacy, then, is not God's Word, which clearly condemns much of what Romanism stands for in both doctrine and practice, but a mystical experience which can easily be counterfeited by Satan.

Regardless of where one may stand on the gifts of the Spirit, many Pentecostals would agree that most of what has been touted as the gift of tongues, as well as other alleged manifestations of the Holy Spirit, are really just human flesh glorying in itself. God is still at work, but so is man and so is Satan. Experiences are not to be our basis for judgment of what is of God.

This is not to cast aspersion upon every person involved in the charismatic movement; there are many who truly love the Lord and desire to live according to His Word. It is primarily

the leadership of the movement that is corrupting the way of many and leading their flocks toward being fleeced by the Roman Catholic Church.

Meditation & Contemplative Prayer

A significant product of the charismatic movement, and one which has given great impetus to the influence of Roman Catholicism among non-Catholic Christians is a sub-movement which I call the Meditative and Contemplative Prayer Movement (MCPM). This movement utilizes psychological integrationism, inner healing techniques and Roman Catholic contemplative prayer techniques to effect mystical experiences among its adherents. A major player in the MCPM is Richard Foster, founder of *Renovaré* (ren-o-var'-ay), Latin meaning "to make new spiritually." *Renovaré*, and other similar groups, utilize the writings of an eclectic mix of religious traditions, including those of Roman Catholic mystics. (See our special report, *Renovaré: Taking Leave of One's Senses for an in-depth look at the MCPM.*)

The mystical character of the charismatic movement has equipped it as the most perfect deception to meld non-Catholic, mystically-minded people into the Roman Catholic agenda for dominion over all of Christianity. The charismatic movement is without a doubt the greatest force behind the acceptance of Roman Catholic ecumenism by non-Catholic Christians from many branches of denominationalism. Considering the ungodly fruit of the charismatic movement, one must conclude that the root of this tree is corrupt. And we understand the fruit within the context of Jesus' warning:

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew,

and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine. (Matthew 7:20-28)

The fruits of which Jesus spoke are not good works, or signs and wonders, as attested by His description of false teachers who claim to do all sorts of wondrous things in His name. These can easily be duplicated by the ungodly—even by the satanic. The fruit of which Jesus spoke are false teachings. Good fruit is adherence to His Word—truth. Or, to put it in terms that are eschewed by many within the charismatic movement, Sound Doctrine.

The World Christian Movement

The brain-child of Ralph D. Winter, founder of the U.S. Center for World Mission, the World Christian Movement has been instrumental in bringing together ecumenical elements from virtually all major Christian religions and denominations, spanning Pentecostal, charismatic, fundamentalist and Roman Catholic differences on the basis of shared interest in evangelization of the world. The concept of evangelization is different from that of evangelism which is the preaching of the Gospel to the lost. Evangelization is the "Christianizing" of all the world's people groups by means of a work that combines social and political action as equal elements with the Gospel. Evangelism, a legitimate implementing of the Great Commission, is the preaching of the Gospel with the intent to save individual souls. In some cases evangelism is utilized in evangelization, but it is not always pure in the sense that evangelization recognizes the gospels of diverse religious groups—Roman Catholic, Orthodox, etc.—as equal within the evangelization process. This is exactly the definition of evangelization held by the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue:

Evangelizing mission, or more simply evangelization, refers to the mission of the Church in its totality. In the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* the term evangelization is taken in different ways. It

means "to bring the Good News into all areas of humanity, and through its impact, to transform that humanity from within, making it new" (EN 18). Thus, through evangelization the Church "seeks to convert solely through the divine power of the Message she proclaims, both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, their ways of life, and the actual milieu in which they live" (EN 18). The Church accomplishes her evangelizing mission through a variety of activities. Hence there is a broad concept of evangelization. Yet in the same document, evangelization is also taken more specifically to mean "the clear and unambiguous proclamation of the Lord Jesus" (EN 22). The Exhortation states that "this proclamation - kerygma, preaching or catechesis - occupies such an important place in evangelization that it has often become synonymous with it; and yet it is only one aspect of evangelization" (EN 22). In this document the term evangelizing mission is used for evangelization in its broad sense, while the more specific understanding is expressed by the term proclamation.²⁷

This Dialogue and Proclamation merely restates the position held by Roman Catholicism for centuries—that the mandate given by Jesus Christ to His "only true Church" is nothing less than the governance of society, to be effected through the conversion of the world to membership within the Church. This dominionist mandate is essentially the foundation for the dominionist position held by today's Christian Reconstruction Movement.

Non-Catholic elements within the World Christian Movement have agreed that evangelization of Catholics is to be left to the Catholic Church. (See *The World Christian Movement* [Sword Publishers]—an exhaustive study on the ecumenical character of many missions organizations, and their influence upon the missions programs of a vast number of churches.) The overall purpose is to establish Christianity as the dominating spiritual force in the nations, with the eventual goal of achieving a moral and just society. This is called dominion theology, and was first embraced by Roman Catholicism from its inception. In truth, the agenda of the WCM is precisely that of Roman Catholicism.

The Christian Youth Culture

The movers and shakers of ecumenism understand the impact upon future generations today's youth will have. For this reason many organizations have focused their efforts on campus ministries. Many missions programs recruit youth for their agendas rather than rely upon mature, elder-quality members of their congregations. Young people are more pliable, naïve and ill-equipped to question the goals and strategies of their leaders; they are easily led into mystical experiences and visions of grandeur in working for the Kingdom of God. Youthful idealism lends itself to the designs—whether for good or for evil—of religious leaders.

Ungrounded in sound doctrine, motivated by challenging activities and "relevant" ministry, and inspired by soulful music that breaks down spiritual inhibitions and opens the door to susceptibility, youth are the cannon fodder for the World Christian Movement and Roman Catholic ecumenism.

When Pope John Paul II visited St. Louis during his latest tour of the U.S., his address to 19,000 youth at Kiel Center drew rave reviews from TBN's Paul Crouch, Jr., who covered the event for his father's network. The musicians who played at the event included Audio Adrenaline, Jennifer Knapp, The Ws, dc Talk, the Supertones and Rebecca St. James, all ostensibly "evangelicals." Said The Ws' James Carter, "This pope really speaks to the youth."

Organizations such as Youth With A Mission (YWAM), Campus Crusade for Christ, TeenMania, Maranatha Campus Ministries and others are experienced at leading young people down the path of their ecumenical, dominionist agendas. YWAM and Campus Crusade for Christ have both been involved in aiding Roman Catholic evangelism in Poland.

Campus Crusade for Christ

Campus Crusade for Christ has been for some time actively supporting and aiding the Catholic Church in its evangelistic outreach. (Understand that Roman Catholic evangelism is not evangelism for faith in Jesus Christ, but evangelism for joining the Catholic Church. If Jesus can be used for that purpose all the better.)

In an article that appeared on the RELay Initiative web site, Peter Hocken, a Catholic priest, addressed the question in his title, "Catholic and Protestant Evangelization in Europe, Is Coopera-

tion Possible?" Speaking of the hostile attitude of youth toward religion at the time of the Communist downfall in Eastern Europe, Hocken stated:

However what was unimaginable is now happening. The change from hostility everywhere to the first stages of cooperation has three dimensions: (1) Catholics have begun to recognize the work of the Holy Spirit in Evangelicals and Pentecostals, recognizing that they can learn from them. (2) Evangelicals have begun to accept Catholics as authentic Christians and to have a vision for helping the renewal of the Catholic Church. (3) Groups and communities of young Catholics are emerging who want to be part of the Catholic Church, while retaining what they have learned from Evangelicals and Pentecostals concerning evangelism and conversion.

Hocken sees three major factors for this change: the Second Vatican Council, the Charismatic Renewal, and the modern Youth Culture. He credits Oasis and its affiliation with Campus Crusade for Christ for much of the progress of the Catholic Church in Poland:

From the Catholic side: Rather surprisingly, the biggest step towards a more cooperative approach to Evangelicals and Pentecostals came from the Communist bloc and from one of its staunchest Catholic countries, from Poland. The pioneer was Fr Franciszek Blacknicki, the founder of the Oasis movement, later and still known as the Light-Life movement. Fr Blacknicki saw that the Catholic Church had something to learn from the Evangelicals in regard to evangelisation: he saw that they had an expertise and a tried method of winning young people to Christ and of training new converts in evangelism. Accordingly, around 1973 or 1974, Fr Blacknicki approached a major Evangelical movement, Campus Crusade for Christ, and reached an agreement with them about collaboration in Poland. Campus Crusade would devote their work in Poland to training the young people in the Oasis movement in evangelism, and they would not undertake other work in Poland. This was a very bold step in a country without much background in ecumenical relations. The member of the Polish hierarchy who encouraged Fr Blacknicki and helped to overcome the opposition or hesitation of other Catholics was Cardinal Wojtyla of Krakow [Now Pope John Paul II].

Campus Crusade for Christ has taken the road of compromise that many fearful of Catholicism have taken.

Youth With A Mission (YWAM)

Youth With A Mission has long been a champion of ecumenism. It is not mere coincidence that in the same article that names Campus Crusade for Christ as a major factor in Catholic evangelism, YWAM is also named:

On the Protestant side: Just as such a collaboration involved a re-thinking on the Catholic side, so did it on the Protestant. Campus Crusade took a big risk in deciding to collaborate with the Catholic Church. Evangelical agencies that take such a step risk alienating their supporters and losing much of their financial support. However, over the last 20 years the Protestant movement that has done most to re-think its policy and practice as far as Catholics are concerned is Youth With A Mission (YWAM). Here again Poland was the place that sparked off the re-thinking. Bruce Clewett, national director of YWAM in Austria, had responsibility for outreach into Poland. He began to question whether the traditional Evangelical methods made sense in a country with a strongly Catholic tradition and culture. He asked himself whether it was wise to try to pull young people they evangelized out of the Catholic Church and their national culture into marginal groups who were like outposts of the American or British Evangelicalism. Clewett wrestled in conscience with this problem for a period, and finally concluded that he ought to work in YWAM to help the Catholic Church evangelize young Catholics and aid them to coming to a living evangelistic faith within the Catholic community.

Evidently what Clewett forgot is the biblical truth that the Body of Christ, by all accounts, is a "marginal group." It is never in the majority. And it certainly is not found as a viable part of any religious organization, least of all Roman Catholicism. At what point do professing "Evangelicals" decide that God's truth is of greater importance than the "good work" of evangelism into a false religious system.

Hocken makes an incredible statement about the collaborative efforts of Campus Crusade and YWAM and their resultant youth-oriented Catholic communities:

These communities have come into being in a number of different ways, but generally they reflect a combination of the following factors: an element of being impacted by Evangelical Charismatic or Pentecostal evangelism, ministry and teaching; an awareness of being Catholic but of lacking Catholic formation, a desire to remain Catholic but in a way that is not narrow and exclusive; a love for the Scriptures and a concern that any formation be biblically based.

Biblically based? How? The Catholic Church is not biblically based. While it "encourages" Bible study, that study must be under the auspices of a Catholic priest, and how he interprets the Scriptures. Catholics may not separate biblical truth from the teaching authority (Magisterium) of the Catholic Church and its peculiar traditions. History has amply demonstrated that when the Catholic Church's tradition or desired beliefs conflict with Scripture, Scripture is bent, ignored or twisted beyond recognition to conform to the Catholic Church's desired position.

What kind of "Catholic evangelization" will result in leading anyone into the pure truth of God's inspired Word?

For example, here is how Hocken feels the Catholic Church can teach about Mary and the Eucharist:

Incorporating into Catholic formation the positive elements in Evangelical teaching methods. This applies particularly to its biblical rootedness and to the orientation to daily Christian living. Thus we need to develop a model of Catholic formation that introduces Catholic distinctives in ways that are Christocentric and biblically based. These groups are generally wanting to learn. They are often avid for teaching. But their Evangelical input will make it very difficult for them to receive teaching, e.g. about Mary and the Eucharist, that is not presented in a way that demonstrates its biblical basis [from the Catholic way of looking at it]. Their teaching, like much of the charismatic renewal, is very much ordered towards lived-out discipleship. They are not accustomed to "theoretical" teaching that is not presented in terms of how to live as a Christian. Some unfortunate results have often followed when the Catholic teaching did not meet them at their point of need.

The "unfortunate results" include, no doubt, Catholics leaving Romanism in response to the Gospel. This may lead to a genuine walk with Christ Jesus in accordance with His Word. This would not do for the Catholic Church.

Hocken also suggests developing a form of baptism that includes immersion but which does not deny the "validity of infant baptism."

I suppose we're to assume that immersion is the exception rather than the norm for scriptural baptism.

Let us not be naive. Roman Catholic evangelization means one thing: indoctrination into the Catholic Church. It does not mean a personal relationship with Jesus apart from Roman Catholic authority. As we've seen, those who reject the Catholic gospel are anathema, and faith in Jesus alone cannot save them.

CONCLUSION

Are we being alarmists, overstating the seriousness of the current trend toward unity under the papacy? Sure, some would say, there are a few people and organizations that may not be holding a hard line against Romanism, but aren't the majority of evangelical leaders still faithful to biblical truth?

It is one thing to speak biblical truth; it is another thing to expose error that is negating that truth. One may preach 100% truth every time one speaks. But if he willfully neglects warning the brethren of danger where he sees it he is not being faithful to the ministry to which he claims to be called.

It isn't necessary that one continually harangue about a particular deception. But every honest minister of truth must at some stage in his ministry take a public stand against serious error that threatens the purity of the faith among his constituents. To leave them defenseless is to be complicit with the wolves devouring them.

When Jesus claimed to be the good shepherd, He stated some things that should give us all pause:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the

sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. (John 10:1-5)

This parable of the good shepherd is disconcerting. Jesus said that His sheep follow Him because they know His voice. They will not follow a stranger, but will flee from him.

When we see the vast number of professing Christians following after false shepherds, what conclusion can we make? If they were true believers in Jesus Christ they would follow Him alone; they would not attach to their faith in Him conditions imposed by other shepherds. Only Jesus' sheep know His voice—His Word as revealed in the Scriptures. This can only mean that those who are following other shepherds, relying upon their religious traditions, authority and unbiblical as well as extra-biblical practices for right standing with God, are not Jesus' sheep.

I realize how hard these words seem; when this truth struck me I was shaken. According to Jesus' words those whom He knows also know Him; they will flee from false teachers. Those who cling to false teachers, then, do not know Jesus, and He does not know them. How serious are the words of Paul:

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? (2 Cor 13:5)

Jesus reiterated this truth as recorded in John 10:14:

I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

Yet with this sobering pronouncement we must be careful not to judge individual hearts. We have all followed other shepherds at some time in our lives. No one is born into the fold; we all enter from the outside when Jesus calls us.

It's true that the vast majority of humanity will not follow the truth. And that goes for the vast majority of those who profess to be Christians. We never know which of them will be brought into the fold. Only Jesus knows who His sheep are.

But there is another lesson in the parable—one which is just as sobering as the one just stated. And it is more relevant to the issue with which we are dealing.

Jesus continued with His warning against false shepherds with these words:

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. (John 10:11-13)

The hireling shepherds do not love the sheep above their own lives; they will flee when danger approaches. In practical terms that relate to the churches today, there are many hireling shepherds who see the ecumenical danger to their flocks. Some are leading their flocks into the teeth of that danger. Others are not leading them into it, but they are not attempting to prevent them from going that way either. They know the danger of speaking against the deception. It could cost them their ministry. And they love their position more than they do those under their care.

Yes, they are excellent Bible teachers. Their hermeneutic is sound, they can exegete the Word flawlessly. They have great deliverance and can convince many of the truth as far as they speak it. But they are too cowardly to take a stand against popular deceptions. I am not only speaking of the ecumenical deception, but of so many that plague Christianity today. The truth is that many people sitting before the pulpits of sound teachers are still affected and infected by the Christian media that disseminate every wind of doctrine. Yet these teachers seem to think that good Bible teaching is all they need.

Good Bible teaching does not equate to adequate ministry. The Bible is all we need for instruction in doctrine and practice. But learning Scripture is a life-long task. And fifty-two Sunday sermons a year are inadequate for fully equipping the saints. It is up to each individual to study to show himself approved of God. Sadly, most professing Christians do not study the Word sufficiently. They rely upon Sunday sermons to provide them with the knowledge they need. And while Sunday sermons may provide some understanding, they do not always instill discernment.

Discernment comes through knowledge of, and obedience to, the Word of God. In those areas where we lack instruction we lack discernment. False teachings are not easily recognized when couched in biblical terms and accompanied by proof texts. And false teachers are not easily recognized when they appear in the righteous garb of religious rhetoric.

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)

Regardless of how much Christians say they love God's Word, the fact remains that they trust their pastors and teachers to not only instruct them in God's Word, but to protect them from false teachings. As misplaced as this trust may be, it is only natural that students trust their mentors. However, failure on the part of the mentors does not excuse the students. We are all exhorted by God's Word to test what we are taught:

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1)

The test that John gives is that true prophets confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. That was all that was needed in John's day, because no false prophet would confess Jesus Christ as the incarnate Word of God. Now, 2,000 years later, we are faced with tremendous deceptions, many of them coming in the name of Jesus, and confessing sound doctrine along with damnable heresies. Today, more than ever, we must be on guard for wolves in sheep's clothing.

The failure on the part of so many pastors and teachers to warn their constituents of these dangers leaves those constituents at the mercy of those wolves. And the greatest deception with which we must cope today is the ecumenical road that is leading what we call Christianity back to Rome.

Yet, again, there are few if any well-known voices in the Christian media warning of the apostatizing back toward Rome. Rather, there seems to be approval of such unity.v

NOTES

1. Eric Sammons, History of Catholic Ecumenism from Pope Leo XIII to Pope John XXIII, 1994, www.sammons.alabanza.com/ecumenism.html.
2. Vatican II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, Austin Flannery, O.P., ed., (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Co., 1975), p. 573.
3. Ibid., p. 457.
4. Ibid., p. 470.
5. Pope John Paul II, "Vatican II Called Catholics to Active Role in Ecumenism," Catholic Information Network, www.cin.org/jp960121.html.
6. Pope Paul VI, Unitatis Redintegratio, November 21, 1964.
7. Ibid.
8. Council of Trent - Canons 1 & 3, The Catholic Catechism, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc.), p. 463.
9. Pope John Paul II, Ut Unum Sint.
10. Pope Paul VI, Lumen Gentium.
11. Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), sv. "Charismatic Movement".
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Albert James Dager, Vengeance Is Ours: The Church in Dominion, (Redmond, WA: Sword Publishers, 1990), p. 78.
24. Minutes from Meeting of the Council, January 3-7, 1977, p. 2.
25. Minutes from Meeting of the Council, May/June, 1977, pp. 2-3.
26. Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, op. cit.
27. Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, Dialogue and Proclamation, Reflection And Orientations On Interreligious Dialogue And the Proclamation Of The Gospel Of Jesus Christ. (Rome, May, 1991).



Media Spotlight

P.O. BOX 290 - REDMOND, WA 98073-0290

Copyright © May 2002, Media Spotlight

PO Box 640

Sequim, WA 98382-4310

www.mediaspotlight.org

Additional copies available upon request