

# But the Bible does not say so...

Many 'unifying' forces today are false and deadly enemies of the Gospel of salvation. **Tony Pearce** says there can be no unity at the expense of truth



*Who was it who died in place of sinners? A Rome fireman hangs a garland on a statue of the 'Queen of Heaven' – aka 'Mother of God'*

As many as 1000 clergy may leave the Anglican Church and join the Roman Catholic Church, according to an article in *The Times* (21/10/09). They will have to be retrained and re-ordained, since Rome regards Anglican orders as 'absolutely null and utterly void'. On another front, the Church of England is set to lose one in ten of its paid clergy as the credit crunch and a massive hole in its pension fund have left it facing a financial crisis. At the same time, the numbers worshipping in the pews are declining.

With the Anglican Church in a state of decline, its troubles are piling up. There is division between liberals and conservatives over such issues as the ordination of women as bishops, and the acceptance of homosexual clergy. Its liberal clergy frequently deny basic articles of faith in the New Testament – the Virgin birth, the deity of the Lord Jesus, His atoning death on the cross and His resurrection.

The Queen, who is the Supreme Governor of the Church of England, is said to be 'appalled' at developments in the Church, as is Prince Charles (*Daily Telegraph* 3/10/09). She is said to have an 'affinity'

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with the Pope, who is expected to stay at Buckingham Palace when he makes only the second visit to England since Henry VIII broke with Rome and established the Church of England 500 years ago. The government wants to reform the 1701 Act of Settlement banning Catholics from succeeding to the throne. Since the monarch is always the Supreme Governor of the Church

of England, this would seriously affect the very nature of the church.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has admitted that the Pope's offer for disaffected Anglicans to convert to Rome has put him in an 'awkward position'. But after meeting the Pope at the Vatican, Dr Rowan Williams insisted that relations between the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches were back on track and that dialogue under the Council for Christian Unity would continue as usual. Dr Williams said that the Pope 'was extremely enthusiastic about the next stage in ecumenical dialogue'.

Non Catholics generally see ecumenism as all churches, including Roman Catholics, accepting one another as valid expressions of the Christian faith. However, John Paul II, the previous Pope, defined ecumenism as 'Seeking Christian unity ultimately in the one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.' (*Ut Unum Sint* – That they may be one). In other words, the aim of ecumenism from the

Catholic point of view is that the non Catholic churches accept the supremacy of the Catholic Church, the primacy of the Pope and Catholic doctrine. Dr Mark Miravalle, Professor of Theology and Mariology at the Franciscan University of Steubenville, quotes John Paul II as saying: 'For the Catholic ecumenism means to offer the faith with love and charity and with respect but with the hope that the recipient would say 'Yes' and become a member of the one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.'<sup>1</sup>

### Are we all one?

I was sent a leaflet announcing 'We are one!' inviting participation in 'Manchester's Walk of Christian Witness' from Salford Roman Catholic Cathedral to Manchester (Anglican) Cathedral. Taking part were 'Christians from across the nationalities and traditions' from Catholic to Pentecostal and the aim was 'to pray and praise as one and be seen as one.' Another meeting announces that 'God has made a way to heal our wounded, hurting society. ... His purposes are fulfilled when Christians of all traditions come together as the ONE Body of Christ.'

But are we all one? The fact is that if we believe the Gospel and the teaching of the Apostles in the New Testament we are not one with Rome or with liberal Anglicanism. There are major errors in Roman Catholic doctrine. Martyrs gave their lives in Britain and across Europe rather than submit to these errors. In the DVD *A Woman Rides the Beast*, Dave Hunt shows that there were more Christians put to death for their faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord by the Medieval Roman Catholic Church than by the Roman Empire.

Some major false doctrines of Roman Catholicism have been added over the centuries to the teaching of the New Testament and take away the truth of the Gospel message. We consider only four of them here:<sup>2</sup>

### The Mass

According to the Roman Catholic Church the bread and the wine are changed literally into the body and blood of Jesus, who is sacrificed continually through the Mass. Article 267 of the Catechism says: 'The bread and the wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ by the power of God, to whom nothing is impossible or difficult.' Article 278 says: 'The Holy Mass is one and the same Sacrifice with that of the Cross, inasmuch as Christ who offered himself, a bleeding victim on the Cross to his heavenly Father, continues to offer himself in an unbloody manner on the altar through the ministry of his priests.' This doctrine known



*Not even a bullet-proof donkey in sight and twelve 'minders' instead of disciples – but who will tell the clamouring crowd the truth?*

as transubstantiation was defined by Pope Innocent III in 1215.

But the Bible teaches that Christ's sacrifice was complete and final and can never be repeated. Communion or the Lord's Supper is the *remembrance* of that sacrifice:

*Jesus took bread and gave thanks and broke it and gave it to them, saying 'This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.' (Luke 22.19) (See also 1 Corinthians 11.23-26.)*

The book of Hebrews tells us that, unlike the many sacrifices offered by the high priest, the Lord Jesus made a once and for all time sacrifice for sin:

*Now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. (Hebrews 9.24-28)*

### Mariolatry

The Roman Catholic Church elevates Mary to the status of 'mother of God' (Catechism, Article 167) and 'Queen of Heaven' (Article 168a). Although the Catechism does not say she should be worshipped and seen as a mediator along with Jesus Christ, this is the result of this teaching, which can be seen by the size of the images of the Madonna in many Catholic Churches. Article 117 says: 'All mankind has contracted the guilt and stain of original sin, except The Blessed Virgin and her Divine Son.'

This is the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary which was proclaimed by Pope Pius IX in 1854. Pope Pius IX then stated that if anyone rejects this dogma he has 'suffered shipwreck in the faith... and that furthermore by his own action he incurs the penalties established by Law.' In other words, you are damned and will be excommunicated if you question this doctrine.

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*Good works are the result of our faith, but they do not save us*

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On 1st November 1950, Pius XII defined the Assumption of Mary to be a dogma of faith: 'We pronounce, declare and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma that the immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul to heavenly glory.'

This means that Mary was a virgin throughout her life, after the birth of the Lord Jesus and was taken supernaturally into heaven at the end of her life.

There is currently a campaign within the Catholic Church calling on the Pope to proclaim Mary 'Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix and

Advocate' as a dogma of the church. The Bible teaches that the Lord Jesus is the only mediator between God and humanity (John 14.6; 1 Timothy 2.5).

Mary was in fact a faithful Jewish woman called Miriam who played a vital role in bringing Jesus into the world through the miracle of the virgin birth. There is not a word in the New Testament suggesting she was sinless or had a different nature from other people. After giving birth to Jesus, she had other children in the natural way with Joseph after the supernatural conception and birth of the Lord Jesus:

*Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brothers, James and Joseph and Simeon and Judas? And his sisters are they not all with us? (Matthew 13.55-6)*

By this count, Mary had at least seven children after she brought forth her first-born Son, Jesus (Matthew 1.25). Catholic teaching tries to explain this away by saying they were cousins or that Joseph was a widower and these were children by a previous wife, but this does not make sense of the text. Mary was born in the normal way, was saved by her faith as are all believers in the Lord Jesus, and died in the normal way.

### **Papal infallibility**

The Catechism says: 'When I say that the Pope is infallible, I mean that the Pope cannot err when, as Shepherd and Teacher of all Christians, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals, to be held by the whole church' (Article 93). The Catechism goes on to say that 'the Church cannot err in what she teaches as to faith or morals, for she is our infallible guide in both... The task of interpreting the Word of God authentically has been entrusted solely to the Magisterium of the Church, that is, to the Pope and to the bishops in communion with him.' (Article 100).

The Bible tells us that only God is infallible and that all human individuals and institutions are tainted by sin and liable to error:

*For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3.23).*

The sole authority for fixing Christian doctrine is the Bible, not fallible human beings. In fact the Catholic Church has a long history of misinterpreting the Bible, forbidding ordinary people to read it and opposing its translation and distribution to the laity. In 1229 the Council of Toulouse, Canon 14 stated: 'We prohibit also that the laity should be permitted to have the books of the Old or New Testament.'

When people read the Bible for themselves they soon realise that there is a huge gulf between what the Lord Jesus and the

Apostles taught and what the Catholic Church has taught them.

The hierarchy of priests going up to the Pope as 'Vicar of Christ' on earth entirely conflicts with the concept Jesus taught the disciples about spiritual authority. Jesus told us not to call any man 'Father' (Papa / Pope):

*'But you, do not be called Rabbi; for one is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for one is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for one is your Teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.'* (Matthew 23.8-11)

### **Justification by works**

Article 135 of the Catholic Catechism says, 'Faith alone will not save us without good works.' The Bible teaches we are saved by faith in the work of Jesus Christ dying as a sacrifice for our sins. Good works are the result of our faith, but they do not save us:

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*it does matter what  
we believe*

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*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2.8-10)*

### **Where is this heading?**

Most Christians in the UK are ignorant of the errors of Catholic doctrine and are not really bothered about them either. They say, 'Let's get together to save the world and not worry about what we actually believe and teach.' But the Bible shows us that it does matter what we believe and that only the Lord Jesus coming again in power and glory can save the world. Therefore we should be true to Him even if we are a minority in society and in the professing church.

In the last days there will be a one-world religious system which will be allied to the one-world government of Antichrist but will eventually be destroyed by him (Revelation 17). As we see the growing apostasy of the visible churches, the Lord is calling for a faithful remnant who will 'contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints' (Jude 3) which is given to us in the New Testament by the Apostles. As we get

nearer to the Lord's return we should expect to see a growing hostility to this remnant by both secular and religious powers.

Examples of this happening are shown in an article by Roger Oakland entitled 'Evangelicals and Catholics Together and the Rejection of End Time Christians'. One example of this is Bishop Mark Hanson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. He called for 'Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican and Lutheran churches to come together to combat a fundamentalist reading of Scripture' and create a 'ministry of reconciliation,' that will 'result of Christ breaking down the dividing walls reconciling the whole creation to God's self.' Hanson says that those who believe in a biblical end times and a literal Bible interpretation are counterproductive to, and holding back the cause of, Christ – which he suggests is to unite all of creation and produce a planetary utopia.

On the other hand Sir Isaac Newton, the famous scientist who lived from 1643-1727, was a Bible-believing Christian. He wrote: 'About the time of the end, a body of men will be raised up who will turn their attention to the Prophecies and insist upon their literal interpretation in the midst of much clamour and opposition'.

As the world heads for disaster many people are going to be looking for an answer which makes sense. This answer will not be to join up with the false church of Rome or the liberal ecumenical movement, but to 'repent and believe the Gospel for the Kingdom of God is at hand'.

In the end, the centre of the faith in the Lord will not be Canterbury or Rome, but Jerusalem, when the Messiah returns to stand on the Mount of Olives and set up the Millennial Kingdom. He will reign from restored Jerusalem and bring real peace to the world:

*For out of Zion will go forth the Law and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations and rebuke many people. They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation~ neither shall they learn war any more. (Isaiah 2.3-4).*

*This article is adapted for Sword from Tony Pearce's fuller text. See our website at [www.swordpdp.com](http://www.swordpdp.com) or phone the office 0844 414 0618 for a paper copy*

- 1 <http://mefeedia.com/entry/video-dr-mark-miravalle-coredeptrix-mediatrix-advocate-14-the-fruit-of-the-dogma/10335710/>
- 2 The full text includes Biblical comparison with Baptismal regeneration, the use of images, celibacy and the priesthood, confessionalism and Purgatory