

THE GREAT COMPULSION TO BE ONE

In that remarkable benediction Prayer to His ministry, Jesus prayed for His followers "that they *may be one*; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us:" John 17:21. Today Christian churches have adopted this "oneness" as an idealistic modern operandi – but intriguingly, for vastly different reasons than Jesus proposed.

The "unity" concept began with Pope Benedict XV (1914-1922) when he proposed that instead of the word "heretic" for apostate individuals like Protestants, they now were to be called "separated brethren." This was formally adopted as church policy at Vatican II. The Roman Catholic Church's motive was then and continues to be acquisition of power and control over other religions and, eventually, civil governments.[1] The Protestant response has evolved from rejection and disdain to tolerance, and recently, to active engagement in unity efforts. Their motives are based on an ever increasing but paralyzing sentimentalism: "say nice things," "follow love to all – II Corinthians 8:24," "Jesus prayed that we would be one."

We were warned in 1896, "A blind zeal under false religious theories is the most violent and merciless [form of religious fervor]."[2] The Catholic Church, much to the delight of the Protestants, keeps pressing the unity issue over resolving social ills and moral decadence. On May 25, 1995, Pope John Paul II wrote a far ranging encyclical called, "That They May Be One." Though clearly seeking harmony within the Roman Catholic Church, it brought high praise and support from the non-Catholic world as a major ecumenical document.

Since the late 1980's, the Vatican has been calling for increasing numbers of world religious conferences. These have been so successful that a similar effort to unite the world's religions by the United Nations has taken a back seat to these papal efforts. Then, in a unique twist in 1997, the World Conference on Religion and Peace was called for by both the Vatican and the U.N. in Australia. This led W. B. Howard of the Protestant Endtime Ministries (not related to this magazine) to note in his "Dispatch" magazine, "The One World Church is Here." [3]

Shortly thereafter the pope called a meeting in Spain of one thousand political heads from many countries to discuss how a unified religious movement could lead to world peace. The evangelical magazine, *Midnight Call* recently headlined, "Vatican becomes Key to World Unity." "Ecumenism" is a buzz word within the Christian world. Cardinal Frances Arinze is the Vatican designee (full time) to promote unity among the churches to bring back the "separated brethren." [4]

Recently, Cardinal Walter Casper, president of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, said, "The Pope stressed that full Christian union 'does not involve absorption or fusion, but respects the legitimate differences among traditions.'" [5] Two months before he encouraged Catholic bishops around the world to "foster a healthy ecumenism."

Headline after headline reports on dialogue efforts between denominations as "finding common ground." Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said in September 2002, "This land was promised only to the Jews, the pope told me." [6]

September 3, 2002, the pope called 400 representatives of various faiths to Palermo, Sicily to develop an "Appeal for Peace." Their motto: "Dialogue transforms the stranger into a friend."^[7]

The incredible moves underway by religious elements, combined with political forces, is bringing together (even of non-Christian faiths) the religious world. The Bible explicitly states that the vortex of all this ecumenical activity will be the control of the world by the papacy – "and the world wondered after the beast" (Revelation 13:3), "power was given him over *all* kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (Revelation 13:7). Ten kings of the beast's ten horns (representing the whole world) "will receive power as kings one hour *with* the beast" (Revelation 17:12). "Babylon ... made *all* nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (Revelation 14:8).

A global focus is rapidly developing around common values between religions and giving moral influence to governments. The papacy is being seen as the central leader in this effort. Some see this as a "New World Order" emerging. That is more of a secular term related to large financially backed organizations and the U.N. That is not what is Biblically foretold. It is a unified religious elements influencing civil government. The "New World Order" has other connotations tied with it that can detract from a prophetic focus. Specific events foretold thousands of years ago are coming to pass.

In October the Christian Coalition met for its Annual national meeting in Washington, D.C. Revitalized after several years of decline, its new president Roberta Combs said the organization has now a new slogan: "Faith with Action." This organization has a growing number of Congressional leaders on its committees. They have the best equipped and largest lobbying team in Coalition history.^[8] There is growing evidence that part of their agenda will soon bring Adventists into conflict. Strange alliances are being formed between this organization, political action groups and the Catholic Church.

"Protestants have tampered with and patronized popery; they have made compromises and concessions which papists themselves are surprised to see and fail to understand....

"In the movements now in progress in the United States to secure for the institutions and usages of the church the support of the state, Protestants are following in the steps of papists. Nay, more, they are opening the door for the papacy to regain in Protestant America the supremacy which she has lost in the Old World....

"Let the principle once be established in the United States that the church may employ or control the power of the state; that religious observances may be enforced by secular laws; in short, that the authority of church and state is to dominate the conscience, and the triumph of Rome in this country is assured."^[9]

We have been warned: "Protestants of the United States [note this country] will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf ..."^[10] The "separated brethren" now are "on their way home." Protestants are seeking to influence the political machinery of Washington at a frenzied pace. All that remains is an excuse to unite legislatively and identify a "cause" to unite around. Growing evidence would suggest that "cause" has been identified. All we now need is an "excuse" to rally around religious legislative efforts.

Soon we will understand what Jesus meant when He said: "Ye shall be hated of all nations [globally] for my name's sake." Matthew 24:9, Mark 13:13, Luke 21:17.

Watch – study – be alert for the "excuse" and "the cause."

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References:

- [1] Barrett, E. Boyd; Rome Stoops to Conquer, (1935).
- [2] Special Testimonies for Ministers and Workers, p. 50.
- [3] www.dispatch.cth.com.au/articles_D/wrp_report1.htm
- [4] Midnight Call, August 2002, p. 39.
- [5] The Catholic World Report, Nov. 2002.
- [6] Jerusalem Post, Sept. 22, 2002.
- [7] Zenit.org, Sept. 3, 2002.
- [8] Christian Coalition Bulletin, Nov. 2002.
- [9] The Great Controversy, pp. 566, 573, 581.
- [10] *Ibid.*, p. 588.