



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Challenge to Dr Paisley on his claim that Sinn Fein has repented

The following letter was submitted to the *Belfast Telegraph* for publication in its opinion column on March 30th, 2010.

Dear Sir:

Having listened to a recent radio interview of Dr Ian Paisley by the BBC's John Humphreys, in which the former First Minister asserted that Sinn Fein had "repented" of their deeds, and that "there is such a thing as forgiveness" I wish to make the following comments. First of all, there has been no repentance by Sinn Fein - including the Deputy First Minister - of their support for the murderous IRA campaign. At various Republican commemorations, even very recently, Sinn Fein spokesmen continue to defend the "armed struggle" and eulogise the "proud volunteers", some of whom were killed on so-called "active service". Martin McGuinness was the guest speaker at one such event in the last few weeks, where he spoke favourably of the "active service" of the 3 terrorists shot dead by security forces, 25 years ago, before being able to carry out an attack on innocent victims. Anyone listening to such Sinn Fein statements can have no doubt about their continuing support for the role played by the IRA during "the Troubles". Mr McGuinness himself has often gone on record expressing his pride at being an IRA volunteer, whilst defending his own role in those times. Only God and the Deputy First Minister himself - along with his murderous cohorts - could tell exactly what his role was in those times. But where is the repentance? When did it take place?

Secondly, Mr Paisley talked of "praying" with Martin McGuinness. That is commendable. However, did the First Minister then encourage him to repent of his support for - and involvement in - the IRA campaign? They could have spent a long time praying over that matter! If Mr McGuinness had so prayed, in true repentance, it would have been accompanied by action. That is, vital information about those various terrorist activities to which he was privy he would surely have given to the authorities. And since, according to Mr Paisley, Sinn Fein now supports the police Mr McGuinness would have no difficulty giving the information. Would that not be evidence of his repentance? It is a strange repentance indeed that is not accompanied by what the Bible calls "works meet for repentance" - one shows his repentance by his actions.

Thirdly, as a minister of Christ Dr Paisley knows what the Bible says about "repentance" and "forgiveness". That gospel which is devoid of repentance is not the gospel at all. If he were to tell sinners that they could be saved without repenting of their sins he would be preaching a false message. If a sinner were to defend his past actions, and refuse to condemn his sins, could he be really considered as having repented? If he were to ask God to forgive his transgressions, while maintaining that those things he had done were justifiable, would God forgive him? Of course not. There is another question in this context that Mr Humphreys might have asked Dr Paisley. If Sinn Fein, and Martin McGuinness in particular, have truly repented, why would you not shake his hand in public? The nonsense about "having a work-in, not a love-in" is a red herring. What was to hinder such a simple act of friendship as a hand-shake. After all, Bertie Ahern was granted such a courtesy - and



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countless others - why not "the Deputy"? Is it because Dr Paisley does not really believe that the "Shinners" have truly repented? Or is it because he knows Mr McGuinness and his friends have not been forgiven either by God or by many of the good folks in Ulster?

Yours Faithfully,
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