



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Baptist Association covers up ecumenism



Back row (L - R) Rev. David Stanfield, Pastor Leslie Hutchinson, Mrs Marisine Stanfield, Pastor Billy Colville, Pastor Angus Campbell. Front row. Canon Gerry McCrory PP, Pastor Gordon McDade, Rev. Alan Meara.

Following the welcoming of a priest to the installation of a new pastor in Ballynahinch Baptist church, as reported in the last issue of "The Burning Bush" and on our website, a letter from the President of the Association of Baptist Churches in Ireland, Mr. S B Weir, has been sent to all Baptist pastors in an attempt to quell the unease that many Baptists feel about the growing involvement of some congregations in ecumenism. The letter makes sad reading.

In the letter, it is acknowledged that "a number of churches and individuals have expressed concern at the apparent 'ecumenical' involvement of the Association implied by the photograph." The photograph referred to is one that appeared in the "Down Recorder" newspaper of 9th October and in which the new pastor, Gordon McDade and the Association Secretary, Pastor Billy Colville, appear in company with the local parish priest. The letter goes on to say that Pastor Colville was unaware of the presence of the priest in the group when the picture was taken, having been called from his place in the congregation just five minutes before the start of the service.

Community Relations

It also states that the priest was invited "as a gesture of good community relations." If he had been invited in order that he might hear the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved and delivered from the deceptions of Rome then there would be little grounds for complaint. As it was, he was accepted in the service as a fellow-labourer in the Kingdom of God. His presence indicated that nothing was going to be said that would contradict anything he believed and stood for. Canon McCrory is no stranger in Ballynahinch Baptist church. He was present at the farewell for the last pastor and was even invited to address the get-together after the service! denial The letter denies that the induction service was "ecumenical in any way." It goes on to say: "Indeed the only people who took part were Baptists apart from the local Presbyterian minister, an evangelical, who brought greetings. The Secretary had checked who would be participating in the service before attending. The service was quite clear as to the gospel of grace." Sad to say, this last quotation is an exercise in jesuitical craft.

First of all, if Pastor Colville felt it necessary to check on who would be taking part in the induction of a fellow pastor it indicates that he was at least aware that there was the possibility of something "untoward" taking place during the service. It is therefore strange that he did not ask who was the person in distinctive 'priestly' garb, sitting beside the new



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pastor for the photograph!

Again, it is deceitful to speak of the Presbyterian minister who took part in the service without mentioning the fact that the minister was a woman! This can be viewed only as an attempt to conceal the endorsement given to the ordination of women by her participation in this induction service.

Moreover, it is entirely wrong to describe Mrs. Marisine Stanfield as an evangelical. She is a supporter of the ecumenical "Evangelicals and Catholics Together in Ireland" movement which has received much support from Cardinal Daly and she is one of the signatories to its statement.

Unity

Furthermore, it is reported in the "Down Recorder" that in her greetings to the congregation on behalf of the local churches, which included the Roman Catholic church, Mrs. Stansfield "expressed the hope that the unity and co-operation within the churches of the town would continue." The local newspaper also reported that Pastor McDade, in his address, said he desired "to see the kingdom of God being extended through the efforts of the churches in the town working together."

Surely it must be acknowledged that this was a thorough-going ecumenical service. Couple this with the involvement of some Baptist congregations with the "Alpha Course" and the "Power to Change" campaign and you have a very disturbing picture of a very definite downward trend within some Baptist churches. There are many Baptists very disturbed and grieved over these trends and we pray that the Lord will give them the victory over those who have "crept in unawares," Jude, verse 4. One Baptist pastor told me that the trend had its beginnings in the movement to provide special meetings and gatherings to "cater for the youth." One innovation led to another until the desire to "be like all the nations," 1 Samuel 8:20, had fully developed.

Warning

There is a warning in this for the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster. There are those among us who feel that something "different" must be provided for the young. Such a desire may be well-intentioned but a little thought will expose the dangers inherent in such a notion. Anything that is "different" from the norm of that worship which should mark every service in our churches, cannot be of God. It will lead on to departure and the beginnings of apostasy.

Small Beginnings

Much harm and destruction may come from such small beginnings. "Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour. . . ." Ecclesiastes 10:1. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," Galatians 5:9. "Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" James 3:5.