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THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT POWER TO CHANGE



In 1994 a document was published in America entitled ***Evangelicals and Catholics together***. It was a statement that set forth how Evangelical Christians and the Roman Catholic Church could work together in Evangelism. Many leading American evangelicals signed that paper, among them Bill Bright. Bill Bright is the founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, and is noted as a man who received a \$1 million prize for progress in religion. While a professing evangelical, Bill Bright is an ecumenist who has lent his support to ecumenical ventures. It is out of this religious background, that the “Power to Change” initiative has come. It was first used in Canada in the late 1990’s and was brought (according to its official website) to Ireland after three businessmen went to Canada, heard about its success and were challenged to bring it back to N. Ireland. On their return they shared their thoughts with a group of businessmen from the Republic of Ireland with a view of making “Power to Change” an all Ireland initiative. Two committees were established and as a result “Power to Change” has spread throughout both parts of this island. It relies heavily on an intensive advertising campaign and has gained the support of local churches, of differing denominations. Our grave concerns centre on three main areas.

‘POWER TO CHANGE’ IS THOROUGHLY ECUMENICAL

Power to change has been endorsed by leading ecumenical churchmen.

The December issue of the Roman Catholic paper, “Alive” carried a half-page coloured advert that contained a joint message of support from four leading churchmen (Archbishop Sean Brady, Archbishop Robin Eames, Rev. Harold Good of the Methodist Church and Rt. Rev. Dr. Alastair Dunlop, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church). It read, “We are happy to endorse Power to Change as a potentially significant North/ South initiative for evangelisation and reconciliation at this critical time in our country and in our world. Power to Change will facilitate local congregations to share the good news with all the people of this island, who all matter to God.”

Power to change facilitates seasons of united prayer, including prayers with Roman Catholics.

One leading figure in “Power to Change” has reportedly said, that the “Supporters of and participants in the initiative would together clock up ‘one million hours of prayer for Ireland.”

Power to change has received support of various denominations.

Official documentation lists some of the churches that are to take part in this program. The list includes Roman Catholics, Methodists, Anglicans, Presbyterians and Baptists.

Power to change literature contains testimonies from practising Roman Catholics and professing Protestants.

Power to change organisers unashamedly label the initiative as being ecumenical



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In an article for the “Irish Catholic” Newspaper of 10th January 2002, reporter David Quinn said, ‘More than 50 Catholic parishes north and south of the border have so far signed on to the Power to Change evangelisation programme, first reported in The Irish Catholic last year. The programme which will run in tandem with a million pound advertising campaign starting at the beginning of Lent is intended to tell people of the power of Jesus and the Holy Spirit to change their lives for the better! Individual churches can take advantage of the advertising campaign by running programmes telling people about the core message of the Gospel. The campaign is multi-denominational and Power to Change organisers hope 1,000 Catholic Parishes and Protestant congregations will have signed up to it by the time it is underway. According to co-ordinator Paddy Monaghan, 169 Churches of all denominations both North and South have declared a commitment to the campaign and made a contribution to it of £100.’

The power to change program is unashamedly an ecumenical one. The whole structure of this initiative is built on the foundation of evangelicals and Catholics working together in evangelism. It holds that the Roman Catholic Church is another branch of the Christian church and that there is no essential difference between Roman Catholic teaching and the truth of God’s word. Ecumenism presents Romanism as an evangelical system. This is unscriptural.

True Biblical Christianity not only holds to the verbal inspiration and absolute infallibility of Scripture but also to the truth that the Bible is our sole rule of faith and practice i.e. The authority of Scripture. (1 Timothy 3:16; Isaiah 8:20) Romanism on the other hand speaks of the unanimous consent of the fathers. It adds tradition and the statements of a sinful pope.

True Biblical Christianity looks to Christ as the Head of the Church c/f Colossians 1:18. Romanism claims the pope is the head of the church.

True Biblical Christianity worships God alone (Exodus 20:3-6). Romanism worships Mary and the saints.

True Biblical Christianity teaches that salvation is a personal saving union with God through Jesus Christ as the only mediator (Ephesians 2:8, 9 & 1 Timothy 2:5). Romanism points to the priest and claims he stands between God and men.

True Biblical Christianity believes that forgiveness of sin is of God alone (Mark 2:7 & Ephesians 1:7). Romanism has made her confessional boxes and encourages sinners to confess to sinners.

These differences are so fundamental that no true evangelical should have fellowship with Rome. Yet the “Power to Change” initiative is built on this very foundation. This is unscriptural. How has it happened? Due to the emergence of what is called ‘New Evangelicalism’ which involves an attitude of infiltration, toleration and co-operation with Rome. It places no emphasis on the doctrinal differences. This ecumenism lies at the heart of “Power to Change”, and other similar courses (e.g Alpha) The ecumenical movement in whatever form is unscriptural.

‘POWER TO CHANGE’ IS DOCTRINALLY ERRONEOUS

There are numerous references in scripture regarding the importance of sound doctrine e.g (Ephesians 4:4; 1 Timothy 1:3; 1 Timothy 4:6). However the leaders of this initiative are very ready to dispense with any reference to doctrine. Basil Good, Chairman of the “Power to Change” Republic of Ireland Committee said during an RTE interview, “Power to change would not interfere in the area of doctrine but would leave that entirely to the discretion of the ‘participating churches.” The doctrinal error of “Power to Change” is seen in at least two distinct areas.

The doctrine of Salvation.



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The official “Power to Change” website states, “Letting God change you into the person He created you to be is the most significant decision you can ever make. It’s not enough to just agree intellectually that Jesus is the Son of God and that he died on the cross for our sins, we need to make a personal commitment. We make that commitment when we turn to God, say we’re sorry for our past sin, trust him to come into our life and ask him to make us into the people he wants us to be. It’s about faith. And it’s an act of your will. If you’re ready to take that step, a talk with God is all it takes.” A sample prayer follows which includes the words, ‘I accept the fact that you are the only one who can give me the power to change.’ These are very serious issues. Salvation is not an act of man, it is an act of God’s great grace whereby he regenerates the soul by the power of the Holy Spirit c/f John 3:1-7; Ephesians 2:8, 9 & Jonah 2:9. Salvation is not something that simply involves a little talk with God. There must be genuine faith and repentance and these are gifts from God. Salvation is not a commitment; it is a conversion to Christ. Salvation does not rest on man’s work but on the finished work of Christ on the cross. Salvation is a miraculous work of God whereby a soul dead in sins is quickened and brought to life in and through Jesus Christ. It is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. That is not the message of “Power to Change”. The doctrine of salvation which it presents is another gospel and therefore no gospel at all c/f Galatians 1:8.

The doctrine of Separation.

The Bible is clear that there is to be a distinct difference in the life of a Christian. Believers are ‘new creatures in Christ, old things are passed away and all things become new.’ Connected to that and flowing from that is the doctrine of separation c/f Revelation 18:4, & 2 Corinthians 6:17 This teaching is an important part of Christian living. There is to be separation from spiritual apostasy and false teaching. However “Power to Change” encourages individuals to remain within systems of religion that are opposed to Biblical Christianity. One man whose testimony is included in the “Power to Change” literature is quoted in another publication as saying, “While most of my friends started attending various fellowships and subsequently left the Catholic church, I sensed a strong call to remain. I started attending a charismatic meeting in the Quaker Meeting House. It was a very exciting time to be a young Christian as, week after week, the building was packed with over 700 people of all denominations, including spirit filled priests and nuns who gathered to praise God and receive teaching.” At the end the writer adds, “While still in the Catholic church, God has sent Christians from many denominations to enrich and support my relationship with him.” Although this position is contrary to the Word of God, it is prevalent throughout “Power to Change.” In the handbook the advice is given to those who do not own a Bible, “If you don’t already have a Bible, you can get one from your local bookshop. The New Living Translation Bible uses modern English, or ask a priest or minister or Christian friend.” This a denial of the Biblical doctrine of separation. No person should ever be instructed, encouraged or led to believe that God would have them stay in a system that is anti-Christian, such as the Roman Catholic Church.

THE PROMOTION OF ‘POWER TO CHANGE’ IS HIGHLY QUESTIONABLE.

It is difficult to obtain concrete facts on how this scheme has been and is being promoted. It is undoubtedly presented in a manner which suggests that a large number of Protestant churches are involved with the program. However despite this assertion, the list of participating churches in Northern Ireland has been withdrawn from the web site. Furthermore, one individual has counted the churches listed and has discovered that this figure does not concur with the figure organisers boast of. There is a distinct impression, in all of this, that the details are being withheld in order to suggest that “Power to Change” has a very widespread support. The facts do not seem to bear this out. Furthermore the promotion of the CD-Rom and booklet has come in for criticism regarding the terms that are being used to describe this offer. It is termed a ‘gift’ yet an advert carried in the Belfast Telegraph asked would-be participants for £5.00 to cover the materials used. This hardly constitutes a ‘gift’ Other issues are emerging concerning the pro-



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motion of discounted Bibles and no doubt in coming weeks more details will be available.

(This leaflet has been prepared and published by the Government and Morals Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster. It is not intended to be an extensive examination of Power to Change, but is designed to present some of our grave concerns, as information has been made available to us).