



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

A SPECIAL ARTICLE



Dr. Harry Uprichard,
the new moderator of the PCI.

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) took a very definite step out of the will of God in 1926 when it voted to uphold the teaching of Professor J E Davey by 707 to 83. Davey denied that Christ was omnipotent and omniscient; he denied the efficacy of Christ's blood; the substitutionary role of Christ as the Redeemer of His elect; he denied the miracle of the dividing of the Jordan; he alleged that there were discrepancies in the Bible. When such heresy was highlighted by some students sitting under his teaching, the PCI exonerated Davey and endorsed his errors. By a strange coincidence, this took place in the year IRK Paisley was born!

In 1948, the PCI was one of the founding churches of the WCC. That was another step downward on the road of apostasy. In 1953, Prof. Davey was elected Moderator of the PCI. Since then the apostasy of the PCI has become ever more obvious and the compromise of the evangelicals within it has become ever more reprehensible.

Since the days of Davey's moderatorship, it seems that a system or arrangement exists within the PCI whereby they alternate the office of Moderator between the liberal and the evangelical wings of the church. For a Christian to actively partake in such an unscriptural arrangement is to be condemned.

The present moderator, an evangelical, has made loud claims of putting the Word of God above all other things. He has called the year of his moderatorship a "Back to the Bible" campaign. If that is so, then the first matter that he will address is his fellowship with and endorsement of the haters of God within the PCI!

Have there been any signs of him commencing his crusade yet? He had an opportunity to rebuke the last moderator, Dr. Ken Newell, for his sell-out of the gospel when he invited the head of the Roman Catholic church in Ireland to his installation, but he did not. He was silent. Newell was not so silent in his final address as moderator. The new moderator gave an interview to the Presbyterian Herald. In it he speaks approvingly of the cooperation that exists between the PCI and the RCC. In an article in the "Belfast Newsletter" of June 7th, he expressed gratitude for the support that was given him. "Dr. Uprichard, recognising differences within the Presbyterian Church, said he was delighted his election had widespread support across the whole Church." "That support has included those who perhaps would not share my own particular theological emphases." In the Presbyterian Herald, Dr. Uprichard said: ". . . it is good within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to belong to a 'broad church' where we can agree to disagree over differences but hold to unified agenda in terms of a biblical evangelical understanding of the gospel founded on and agreeable to the Word of God and consistent with our subordinate standards." This is deceitful and jesuitical language. Dr. Uprichard claims that it is good to belong to a 'broad church'! That church to which he so happily belongs is so broad that it can accommodate those who embrace



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Romanism as a Christian body, despite the contrary being taught in the Bible and set forth in the Confession he signed and swore to uphold. This is not faithfulness but betrayal of the Saviour and His Word. Is this action in keeping with the Bible's witness? Can this be part of a "Back to the Bible crusade"? I do not think so. The Bible's injunction is : "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them," Ephesians 5:11. Despite his claim that he is leading a "Back to the Bible" campaign, he very decidedly is leading his people on the road that the PCI has long been on — away from the Bible and from God.

I. THE PEOPLE OF GOD MAY HELP THE UNGODLY

There is no doubt that Jehoshaphat was a true believer. 17:3-9 indicates this.

Under him the land enjoyed peace. Verse 10.

Under him the nation flourished. Vs 12-19. And yet he is charged by God with helping the ungodly, and loving them that hate the LORD. It is not enough to say that Dr. Uprichard is a saved man. That is no answer to the charge that he is acting contrary to God's Word. Jehoshaphat shows us that.

II. THE ACTION OF JEHOSHAPHAT WHICH CAUSED OFFENCE TO GOD

1. He formed an affinity with Ahab. The word affinity refers to the marriage between Jehoshaphat's son and Ahab's daughter. That is what the PCI is doing. It is pursuing better relations with the RCC. Back in 1973, a report appeared in the "Newry Reporter" of a sermon preached by the local Church of Ireland cleric, Canon Graham, in Warrenpoint RC chapel, at the "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity." He stated that the local churches were engaged in a "walking out" together, a period of ecclesiastical courtship. For some nine years, under the chairmanship of the Roman Catholic priest, Canon Hugh Esler, Methodist, Church of Ireland and Presbyterian ministers had been meeting for "study and discussion." As a result, says Canon Graham, "we've now come to know each other and to trust one another." This courtship started in 1964. This was at a time when so many PCI ministers were trumpeting that there was no Romeward trend. In 1968, Ballymena PCI minister, Rev Robert Daghish, said at an Orange service in his church: "It is a damned lie that there is a Romeward trend in Protestant churches." In 1966, Dr. Alfred Martin, the Moderator of the PCI, said that the World Council of Churches was 100% Protestant. He propounded the lie in the face of the fact that Russian and Eastern Orthodox churches were in membership of the WCC! In 1963, the PCI General Assembly stood for two minutes in silent tribute to Pope John 23rd, who had just died. Every elder and minister who did that had sworn at their ordination that they believed that the man they were honouring was "that Antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ, and all that is called God." WCF Chapter XXV, 6. The record of the PCI's increasingly close relationship with Rome is to be found in the records of her statements and actions in the intervening years up until now. The last moderator's record indicates how far the PCI has come. He invited the head of the Roman Catholic church in Ireland to his installation in June 2004. (See our photo gallery for pictures of the FPC protest.) Archbishop Sean Brady was welcomed by the General Assembly and the likes of Dr. Uprichard never said one word from then until now to protest against this iniquitous act. The embracing of Archbishop



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Brady as a fellow Christian marks the final overthrow of the Westminster Confession of Faith within the PCI and the high water mark of its apostasy so far. Like Jehoshaphat, the PCI has changed direction. He started his reign by strengthening his kingdom against Ahab and his kingdom of Israel, 2 Chronicles 17:1. But he sinfully abandoned that stance and forged an alliance with his enemies, 18:1-2. This was the beginning of his folly.

2. He spoke of and treated Ahab, contrary to mind of God. "And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him," 1 Kings 16:30-31. That is God's view of Ahab and it was Jehoshaphat's view of him at the first. But he formed a new view. "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war," 2 Chronicles 18:3. The PCI has a new attitude toward Romanism and it may be seen in the joint-worship and the joint statements that have occurred over the years. Jehoshaphat was seduced by Ahab's show of esteem. The word "persuaded," in 18:2 means "allured". That is the campaign that the RCC has been engaged in through its various ecumenical involvements with the PCI over the years. Rome's *Decree on Ecumenism*, which was issued in 1964 ([read it for yourself](#) on the Vatican's website) makes very clear what it is she wishes to achieve through the ecumenical meetings and gatherings in which she becomes involved. The Roman Catholic has a simple goal. The Protestant enters ecumenical talks and discussions with, what he terms, an open mind. He claims that he is willing to be led by the Holy Spirit. The Romanist has a clear target. As far as he is concerned he knows where the Holy Spirit is leading him. He is working to a plan. The so-called Protestant is not. The Romanist is under guidance, the guidance of the Decree on Ecumenism. The Protestant has no map, no rudder, no star, no compass. He threw all those overboard when he renounced the Holy Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice and also rejected the Creeds and Confessions of the Reformation. Had he not renounced the Scriptures, he could not have engaged in dialogue with Rome in the first place, since such would be in contravention of the Bible's teaching.

the decree

What does the Decree on Ecumenism say? It says that the Ecumenical movement is fostered by the grace of the Holy Spirit. The Decree is a setting before all Catholics guidelines, helps and methods, by which they too can respond to the grace of this divine call. It teaches Roman Catholics that they must ever remember that Protestants are a lesser form of Christian! Our separated brethren, whether considered as individuals or as Communities and Churches, are not blessed with that unity which Jesus Christ wished to bestow on all those to whom He has given new birth into one body, and whom He has quickened to newness of life — that unity which the Holy Scriptures and the ancient Tradition of the Church proclaim. For it is through Christ's Catholic Church alone, which is the all-embracing means of salvation, that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained. It was to the apostolic college alone, of which Peter is the head, that we believe that our Lord entrusted all the blessings of the New Covenant, in order to establish on earth the one Body of Christ into which all those should be fully incorporated who belong in any way to the people of God, chapter 1, paragraph 3. This is clearly saying that in Rome alone may the fullness of



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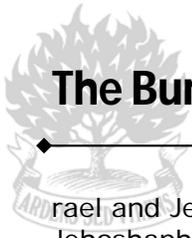
salvation be obtained and, furthermore, to her alone have been entrusted the blessings of the New Covenant by which unity in Christ may be established.

'little by little'

The Decree goes on to explain how that efforts are being made today to obtain that unity. Today, in many parts of the world, under the inspiring grace of the Holy Spirit, many efforts are being made in prayer, word and action to attain that fullness of unity which Jesus Christ desires. The sacred Council exhorts, therefore, all Catholic faithful to recognize the signs of the times and to take an active and intelligent part in the work of ecumenism, chapter 1, paragraph 4. That paragraph continues: Such actions, when they are carried out by the Catholic faithful with prudent patience and under the attentive guidance of their bishops, promote justice and truth, concord and collaboration, as well as the spirit of brotherly love and unity. The result will be that, little by little, as the obstacles to perfect ecclesiastical communion are overcome, all Christians will be gathered, in a common celebration of the Eucharist, into the unity of the one and only Church, which Christ bestowed on His Church from the beginning. This unity, we believe, subsists in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose, and we hope that it will continue to increase until the end of time. Unity, for the Roman Catholic, already exists as something which his church can never lose and, therefore, for other Christians to enjoy it they must simply return to the one and only Church, the Roman Catholic Church! Under ecumenism, the Romanist is to work for the little by little return of the Protestant separated brethren. This was Ahab's tactic on Jehoshaphat and it worked! It has also worked for the RCC on the PCI.

He threw in his lot with Ahab. 18:2-3. Dr. Uprichard is happy to work with Rome on moral and social issues. He will find it hard to stop there! The last moderator, Ken Newell, is open about his fellowship and worship with Rome. He advertises the fact on a website run by Clonard Monastery, Belfast. This may be viewed at (www.clonard.com/clonfitz.htm). The fact that this man was voted into the office of moderator by twelve presbyteries of the PCI (five of which voted for Dr. Uprichard this year!) indicates that his views on the RCC being a fellow Christian church is shared by a majority within the PCI or, at the very least, his views are not deemed offensive enough, sufficiently unscriptural to bar him from that office or to even challenge or question.

Conscience troubled Jehoshaphat as he was engaged in this sinful action. "And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to day," 2 Chronicles 18:4. "But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might enquire of him? And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, by whom we may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he never prophesied good unto me, but always evil: the same is Micaiah the son of Imla. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so," 2 Chronicles 18:6-7. This latter statement is all that Jehoshaphat could muster as a protest. Ahab slanders the prophet of God but all Jehoshaphat could say was, "Let not the king say so." It may be seen that the pricking of his conscience was weakening. "Then the king of Israel said, Take ye Micaiah, and carry him back to Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; and say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I return in peace. And Micaiah said, If thou certainly return in peace, then hath not the LORD spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, all ye people. So the king of Is-



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rael and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramothgilead," 2 Chronicles 18:25-28. Jehoshaphat paid no heed to the plain word of God spoken by Micaiah and he voiced no protest at the imprisoning of the man of God. This is what happens to those who remain in the place of disobedience and rebellion. Their sin troubles them less and less and they find it easier to excuse it and justify it! How different Jehoshaphat was in 17:6! "And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the LORD: moreover he took away the high places and groves out of Judah." There was no placating sin then nor any fellowship with idolaters. But now the Word of God carried less and less authority for Jehoshaphat. That is what is seen today in the PCI.

All the time the foolish king was being used to further Ahab's plans. "And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and will go to the battle; but put thou on thy robes. So the king of Israel disguised himself; and they went to the battle," 18:29. Ahab doubtless planned to see Jehoshaphat killed in battle and so take over Judah. His daughter was married to the heir to the throne of Judah so he, Jehoram, was safely in Ahab's pocket. What a blindness was upon Jehoshaphat! What a fool he displays himself to be in verses 29-31. How easily duped is the man who has forfeited God's blessing by his compromise and sin!

Yet even in the midst of such folly, God's mercy was seen. 18:30-32. God spared Jehoshaphat for he truly was a child of His. Despite Ahab's scheming, God's judgment still overtook him, 18:33.

III. THE CONSEQUENCES OF JEHOSHAPHAT'S ACTIONS

Jehoshaphat had been guilty of a want of love to the Lord. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," 1 John 2:15.

He had displayed a lack of loyalty to the Lord. Ahab was God's enemy and yet he helped him. "And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD?"

He had displayed a lack of logic, "Shouldest thou help . . . ?" Helping those whose sole aim in life is the destruction of all the Christian holds precious is the height of madness. In consequence:

Jehoshaphat himself suffered. " . . . wrath upon thee from before the LORD." Trouble was never far from his door from that day on as a study of God's Word shows.

Jehoshaphat suffered in his family. "Now when Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself, and slew all his brethren with the sword, and divers also of the princes of Israel. Jehoram was thirty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem," 2 Chronicles 21:4-5. Here was the fruit of forming an affinity with the house of Ahab. His son learned the murderous ways of that wicked family. The slaughter did not end there. "And the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah (Jehoshaphat's grandson) his youngest son king in his stead: for the band of men that came with the Arabians to the camp had slain all the eldest. So Ahaziah the son of Je-



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horam king of Judah reigned," 2 Chronicles 22:1. The sword fell upon his grandchildren as well. But the slaughter was not yet over! "And it came to pass, that, when Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab, and found the princes of Judah, and the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah, that ministered to Ahaziah, he slew them. And he sought Ahaziah: and they caught him, (for he was hid in Samaria,) and brought him to Jehu: and when they had slain him, they buried him: because, said they, he is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart. So the house of Ahaziah had no power to keep still the kingdom. But when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah," 2 Chronicles 22:8-10. By the wonderful providence and mercy of God, one royal son escaped the slaughter. "But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons that were slain, and put him and his nurse in a bedchamber. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of king Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest, (for she was the sister of Ahaziah,) hid him from Athaliah, so that she slew him not," 2 Chronicles 22:11. This sole survivor of the slaughter went on to be king. If we give a little thought to what the consequences would have been, had Joash also been murdered, you will see that there would never have been salvation for lost sinners. Christ came of the royal house of Judah. The wiping out of that line in the days of Athaliah would have effectively frustrated God's propose to save sinners though His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The lesson that must be learned is that rebellion amongst God's people endangers the work of salvation and threatens the light of the gospel. This consideration ought to be enough to stop Christian men playing the fool and, for the sake of office and standing, maintaining their links with the PCI.

The whole nation suffered as a result of Jehoshaphat's folly. "It came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle," 2 Chronicles 20:1. There will be no peace, no tranquillity, no prosperity where dalliance with the devil's crowd is indulged. This is always the outcome of disobedience and defiance and departure from God's Word. Presbyterians need to repent, separate from the apostasy and obey God. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Ephesians 5:11. Indeed, there is a need for God's people everywhere to repent of such things as offend Him that we may know revival once more in this land.

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land," 2 Chronicles 7:14.