



## The Burning Bush—Online article archive

### New Moderator prepared to partake in Romish Worship



Dr. Russell Birney

The next Moderator of the ecumenical Irish Presbyterian Church will be Dr Russell Birney (61), minister of High Kirk Presbyterian Church in Ballymena. Dr Birney was nominated by 17 out of the 21 Presbyteries throughout Ireland which recently voted for a new Moderator. He will take up office on 10th June. Following his election, Dr Birney, who comes from Lisnaskea in Co. Fermanagh, said, "I'm moved and humbled that the Church has put its trust in me in this way." He described himself as an "empowered evangelical who seeks to proclaim God's Word faithfully giving full scope to the Holy Spirit." He claims that "this, in turn, encourages greater freedom in worship and practical Christian living and presents many ministry opportunities."

In an article in The Belfast Telegraph of 6th February, Dr. Birney is quoted as seeking "good relations" with all churches. The article continues: "The Moderator-elect of the Presbyterian Church, Dr Russell Birney, has expressed his willingness to meet with Dr Sean Brady, the Catholic Archbishop of Armagh, and with other Protestant church leaders during his year of office, and also to take part in relevant inter-church initiatives." He said, "I very much want to pursue good relations with all the other churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, and I would be happy to become involved in joint worship provided we can get an agreed order of service."

#### Oath

It is clear that Dr. Birney is prepared to accept the Roman Catholic institution as Christian. Irrespective of the "order of service" that may be drawn up for an act of joint worship, Dr. Birney will be entering into fellowship with a priest who teaches a way of salvation that is utterly at variance with the teaching of the Word of God which Dr. Birney has sworn to uphold.

#### Joint Worship

Any joint worship with the Roman Catholic church is contrary to the oath Dr. Birney swore at his ordination when he declared that he believed the Westminster Confession of Faith and its statements on Romanism. In chapter 25, paragraph 6, the Confessions states: "There is no other head of the Church, but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor can the Pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof; but is that Antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself, in the Church. against Christ and all that is called God."

#### Charismatic

The terms he uses identify him as a charismatic, who, despite his professed allegiance to God's Word, will contradict it and claim the "leading of the Holy Spirit" when he does so. Such have been the tactics of the neo-evangelical camp. But they do not stand up to scrutiny. The Holy Spirit will never lead His people to act contrary to His own Word. Orthodox



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Presbyterian teaching regarding Romanism is Bible-based, and the position adopted by our forefathers and expressed in the Confession is according to the Scriptures. In defying the teaching of the Confession, Dr. Birney is denying the teaching of the Word of God.

### **Betrayal**

Those evangelicals who cling to the broken stick of Irish Presbyterianism, doubtless, will herald the Moderator-elect as a champion of orthodoxy. But they are set for disappointment yet again for his own words indicate he is no such thing. He clearly stands ready to betray the cause of Christ, as have done all those professing evangelicals who put that honour that comes from men and which accompanies high office, before the honour of bearing reproach for the Lord.