



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

The Pope's empty apology



Pope John Paul II has been, above all, the Pope of ecumenical unity. His extensive world travels have been done in the name of Christian unity. The chief goal of his papacy has been to promote the ecumenical unity defined by the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s. The Council, in its "Decree on Ecumenism", stated the object of that activity: "The results will be that, little by little, as the obstacles to perfect ecclesiastical communion are overcome, all Christians will be gathered together in a common celebration of the Eucharist, into the unity of the one and only church--this unity, we believe, subsists in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose."

Rome still claims to be the one true church of Jesus Christ and it has no intention of giving this claim up. Its goal in ecumenical relations is to bring all of the "separated brethren" into its fold. John Paul II has pursued this goal with great vigour and has been extremely successful. Under John Paul II's direction, ecumenical dialogue has entangled and ensnared most denominations, including the Presbyterians, Methodists, Anglicans and Salvation Army and some Baptists in Ireland and has resulted in astounding success.

Lutherans have agreed with Rome over the doctrine of justification. An Anglican commission has stated that the papacy is a gift to the churches. Evangelical leaders in America have called for Evangelicals and Roman Catholics to work together as brethren for the common aim of unity under Rome. Under John Paul II's direction, Roman Catholics have infiltrated every sphere of ecumenical activity throughout the world. They work hand in hand with the Bible Societies at every level. They hold leadership positions in local and regional clergy associations and in national church councils. Pope John Paul II has also given close direction to the Catholic "renewal" movement and its far-reaching ecumenical alliances with Charismatics and Pentecostals.

Now, at the end of his life and papacy, John Paul II is leaving a final legacy to the cause of ecclesiastical unity, by attempting to remove a stubborn barrier to the same -- Rome's vicious centuries-long persecution against all who refused to accept her authority and doctrines. On March 7, the Vatican Press Office released a document entitled "Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past." On March 12, the Pope presided over a ceremony called "The Day of Pardon" in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Central to the Pope's apology was the sentence, "We are asking pardon for the divisions among Christians, for the use of violence that some have committed in the service of truth, and for attitudes of mistrust and hostility assumed toward followers of other religions." It is clear that whatever the Pope is referring to are actions taken in the service of truth. The method may have been wrong but the objective was not. No change here! vague and meaningless This may have the appearance of a genuine apology from Rome for some but it is not. In reality, it is a mere façade. There is nothing of real substance to these "apologies." Even by the Catholic Church's own standards for confession of sin, these apologies are without



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

substance. The Catholic sacrament of Confession requires that the sins be stated specifically. That there is no specificity whatsoever to the papal "apology" is even admitted in the document "Memory and Reconciliation." Note the following plain statement: "The purpose of the text is, therefore, not to examine particular historical cases but rather to clarify the presuppositions that ground repentance for past faults." The press even noted the generality of the Pope's words. The Associated Press report for March 13, entitled "Pope Seeks Pardon for Catholics," observed the lack of specificity, noting that the Pope "spoke mostly in general terms, not mentioning the Holocaust, the Inquisition or Crusades by name and listing few specific groups." Significantly, Roman Catholic commentators clearly show us the degree of sincerity there is in the Pope's words. A BBC report on the subject read as follows: "Father Bernardo Cervellera of the Catholic news agency Fides, told the BBC that the Pope would be distinguishing between the church and its flawed members. 'The Pope has done a very good job in convincing all the people in the Vatican and the church that to ask for forgiveness doesn't touch the holiness of the church,' Father Cervellera said."

The Pope has not confessed the heinous crimes committed by Popery during the 600-year 'Holy Inquisition' against those who simply believed and practised the Word of God, which was instigated formally by Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) and was conducted mercilessly by the popes who succeeded him, century after century, until finally Rome was no longer politically capable of sustaining it in the late 1700s. The Inquisition, set up in the name of Christ, resulted in the torment and murder of millions of Christ's own humble servants, whose only crime was a rejection of Catholic heresy and a commitment to follow the

Bible as their sole authority for faith and practice. The Inquisition covered much of Europe and other parts of the world in a darkness of unspeakable fear which lasted for more than six centuries. The Inquisition was not a 'mistake'. It was the official policy of the Roman Catholic 'Church' for centuries. No Pope has ever admitted this. John Paul II has not confessed the Inquisition; he has not labelled his fellow popes the murderers they were.

The Pope has not confessed the sin of usurpation of Christ's position in the Church. This usurpation is found, among other ways, in the claims of the Catholic papacy and priesthood which usurp offices and titles which Jesus Christ and God the Father and the Holy Spirit alone can possess. The Pope claims to be the Head of the church, the Vicar of Christ, the Holy Father, to be a priest ordained after the order of Melchisedec, to be able to forgive sin, to possess a treasury of grace which the pope and his priests can dispense through the sacraments.

The Pope has not confessed the sins of the outlandish claims of priesthood. These include such claims as that the Roman priests can turn the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper into the very Christ, that they can accomplish the release of souls from a mythical purgatory, and that Mary is the immaculate Queen of Heaven

What would the Pope have to do if he were really to repent of the sins of his organisation? Repentance means a change of mind which results in a change of action. When the Corinthians repented, the Apostle Paul said that he could SEE their repentance in the great change which occurred in their lives. *For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire,*



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter , (2 Corinthians 7:10,11). This is not what we see in the Pope's alleged repentance.

When anyone now protests that Rome has bloody hands and a wicked heart and points to history as evidence, the ecumenists can smile knowingly and claim that Rome has apologized for all of that. This brilliant ecumenical manoeuvre also helps keep Catholics within the fold by appearing to rob Bible-believing Protestants of a significant charge against Rome.

But God has not been deceived by the Pope's chicanery. His sins, and those of his predecessors and of those who will yet follow his pernicious ways will one day come before God for judgment. *And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her* , Revelation 18:4-8.