



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Presbyterian minister takes priest Alex Reid to task



Rev. Stephen Dickinson (Left)

The following letter appeared in the Belfast Newsletter of 21st October 2005. It is from Rev Stephen Dickinson of Glenarm Presbyterian Church in Co. Antrim.

"In a Province that is so used to scenes of hatred, sectarianism and bitterness on its streets, it was certainly something different to see those scenes played out in a Church Hall not by hooded terrorists, or republican thugs, or by an angry mob of youths but by a Roman Catholic priest. Fr Reid must make it very clear now: is he the bitter, sectarian, anti-Protestant cleric he appeared to be on our television screens or is he a genuine peacemaker? What is the real Fr Reid -a peacemaker or a troublemaker? Judging by the outrageous comments he made the latter seems more likely to be true! Does Fr Reid's stoney-faced demeanour on TV hide a deep-rooted anti-Protestant hatred, that is kept so well covered up, only released when he loses his temper? This is the second time that a high profile Roman Catholic figure has likened the Protestants'

treatment of Roman Catholics to the Nazis' treatment of the Jews and what therefore are Protestants to make of this? Is it just a phrase that comes to mind when people lose their temper, or say things in a clumsy way, or is it evidence of a much greater, deeper problem? This is something that needs to be clarified: are we dealing with clumsy speakers, or Protestant haters? The comments he made were scandalous and certainly will make many Protestants wonder about his involvement in the recent act of whatever, that supposedly happened somewhere, involving something, carried out by somebody! Perhaps Fr Reid needs to consider decommissioning the weapons of hatred and sectarianism that are hidden in the bunker of a man's heart, launched with devastating effect from the human tongue, hitting their target with tremendous force and causing injuries, injuries that might never be able to be healed. Anyone can lose their temper, but where did the comments come from that then flowed out of Fr Reid's mouth? The scripture says — 'out of the heart the mouth speaks — therefore does this not indicate that the heart of Fr Reid's problem is the problem of his heart? Victims of IRA terrorism, like Willie Frazer and his family, as well as all the others have more than enough pain and hurt to seek to come to terms with, without a Roman Catholic Church leader putting the boot in, and making their pain even worse! Surely this incident confirms again that Dr Paisley's stance is absolutely correct in taking his time to assess the whole situation."

COMMENT — We unhesitatingly and ungrudgingly offer our congratulations to Rev. Dickinson for having the courage to write such a letter. I am sure that he will agree that he was not exactly knocked down in the rush by fellow-ministers of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to mount such a bold attack upon the deceiver Reid. As a Free Presbyterian minister, I must offer a comment or two on the letter.



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I think that it must surely cause Rev. Dickinson some perplexity of soul to note that the incident that he refers to took place in a Presbyterian Church Hall and that of his past moderator, Dr. Ken Newell! When property belonging to his own denomination is used as a base for such an attack upon Protestants it surely must be time to examine his relationship with the PCI! Again, it has to be noted that Rev. Dickinson refers to priest Reid as "Fr" Reid. He is not alone in this for news reports, if they are accurate, have politicians who profess faith in Christ likewise referring to the priest in this unscriptural manner.

Rebuked

Protestants have long rebuked Roman Catholics for calling their priests "Father" and have quoted the Saviour's words in Matthew 23:9 as a basis for such rebukes. That verse reads: "And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven," Matthew 23:9. Does it not indicate an alarming defiance of the Saviour's very plain words and that only to be polite when speaking of one who is purveyor of Romish nonsense?

Version

One final comment. Rev. Dickinson quotes from a translation of the Holy Scripture other than the Authorised Version when he refers to the verse in Matthew 12:34. "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," Matthew 12:34.

His use of such another version is but evidence that you "cannot live in Rome and fight with the pope"!