



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Many Orangemen swallow ecumenical lie at Maguiresbridge



The former bishop and some of his fellow Orangemen at the Maguiresbridge Twelfth

The Right Rev. Henry Richmond is a bit of an enigma. The seventy-year-old Church of England former Bishop has been an Orangeman for over 50 years and named his second son after King William. He retired as Bishop Repton to Oxford in 1998. Since then he has been working as an honorary assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Oxford. Yet he daily recites his prayers in Irish and one of his best friends is a Catholic Priest. His father was the master of the Orange Lodge in Wattlebridge, Co. Fermanagh, for some 24 years.

This year he interrupted his annual holiday to make the keynote speech at the Twelfth of July demonstration in Maguiresbridge, Co. Fermanagh. He spoke about the need for Protestants and Catholics to work together and about the commonalties shared by the two religions.

“Although the Roman Catholic Church feels obliged, for the sake of consistency, to express its traditional claims to authority in matters of faith and morals, it is increasingly willing to enter into dialogue about these claims. For example, if Martin Luther were alive today, he would rejoice that Lutherans and Roman Catholics have now signed an agreement on the meaning of the central Reformation doctrine, the heart of Luther’s original protest, the doctrine of justification by grace through faith.”

Response by a few

“Rubbish!” shouted one detractor from the field. That was an appropriate response. Sadly, all too many Orangemen failed to see that, otherwise they would not have remained so silent.

Another said afterwards that Bishop Richmond had “obviously been living away for a long time.”

What the former Bishop fails to note or perhaps wishes not to see, is that any agreements between the Church of Rome and erstwhile Protestant denominations have ever been on the basis of an acceptance of Rome’s teaching. The agreements reached have left the Church of Rome unchanged while the “Protestant” party to the agreement has repudiated the Reformation for the sake of agreement with Rome.

That is the essence of the ecumenical advances over which Dr. Richmond is so deliriously happy!

Another deceit

Dr. Richmond went on to say: “Non-Roman Catholic Churches should no longer assume that the Vatican denies all claim to the title of “Christian” to other styles of discipleship and worship.”



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“After two generations of talking together scripturally and theologically, both Roman Catholic and non-Roman Catholic Churches are now more aware than they have ever been of the nature and extent of what we have in common, and of those matters that separate us, which neither party is going to allow to be swept under the carpet. But once again, there is growing acceptance on both sides that the way to deal with these differences and divisions is not to ignore them or retreat from them, but to face them, openly and honestly, and to face them together.”

Here is where the former bishop shows his duplicity for he cannot be ignorant of the truth concerning just what Rome’s ecumenical activities amount to!

Quote

I quote from a little booklet I published some time ago entitled: *The Christian, Ecumenism and the Bible*. “Rome’s Decree on Ecumenism 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 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’



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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.

Imperial Grand Master of the Independent Orange Institution and DUP MLA for East Antrim, George Dawson said that Bishop Richmond's views were "silly, and heretical, nonsense".

He challenged the former Bishop to a public debate on his statements.

"I would very gladly meet with him," responded Bishop Richmond. "I would meet with him in the hope that we could have a reasoned discussion. I wouldn't want him to rant and rave at me! That's very strong language that he uses there. He says I'm heretical; that really is a bit much!"

It is understood that there are now plans that the two will meet "on air" in a BBC Sunday Sequence Show to be broadcast at the end of the marching season.