



*The signing of a joint declaration by the Pope and the Lutherans in 2016, image by theguardian.com*



# OF RETURNING TO ROME!

Prabhudas Koshy

Most Protestant churches of our time are vehemently pursuing the ecumenical course of compromise, which is tantamount to betrayal of Reformation doctrines. Such precious biblical doctrines which in time past had had the blessed effect of causing the separation of the Protestants from the corrupt Roman Catholic Church. Almost all the mainline Protestant churches – Presbyterian, Reformed, Methodist, Anglican or Baptist – have been sparing no effort in finding ways and means to seek common ground with the Catholics. In so doing, they dilute the truth for which the Reformers had separated themselves from the Catholics – all for the sake of so-called Christian unity.

## **Christian Unity At All Costs?**

Since the Second Vatican Council meeting (Vatican II) in the 1960's, Catholic leaders have changed tack in their treatment of Protestants. The latter are now termed

as “separated brethren”, no more labelled as apostates. Many Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians have hailed the Council's irenic treatment of Protestants as an open door to reunion. Many on both sides went so far as to regard it as Rome's “reformation”. Vatican II has provided an unparalleled impetus for fervent dialogue between Catholics and Protestants, as well as with other religions. Every major Protestant denomination now has its own official commissions and conferences with Rome, and these ecumenical exchanges have doubtless initiated and egged Protestants on an inexorable journey back to Catholicism.

More recently, a joint movement, known as the ECT (Evangelicals and Catholics Together), made statements that gave vent to the overriding priority of unity over adherence to Scriptural truth. The underlying message on both camps seems to be that both have the same mission – “As

Christ is one, so the Christian mission is one. Legitimate diversity, however, should not be confused with existing divisions between Christians that obscure the one Christ and hinder the one mission. There is a necessary connection between the visible unity of Christians and the mission of the one Christ.” Any regard for the precious doctrine of biblical separation is blatantly brushed aside by the ECT calling upon both Evangelicals and Catholics to “confess [their] sins against the unity that Christ intends for all his disciples”.

While we agree that there must be unity of Christians, that unity ought to be a unity in the truth of His Word. The Word of God prohibits any unity with falsehood; in fact, it teaches us to separate ourselves from those who teach doctrines and practices that are contrary to God’s truth. Scripture commands: “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Romans 16:17-18). How much clearer can God’s Word be!

### **The Roman Catholic Church Has Not Changed!**

Dear Christian readers, let us not forget that the mission of the Roman Church has not changed a tad. Its mission has always been to bring all men and women into communion with the pope and the sacerdotal system of the Church (Mass), which the Reformers had assiduously and conscientiously exposed and resisted through their faithful preaching of the Word. The Reformers rightly thought

of the mission of Rome to be downright sacrilegious and unbiblical, even willing to put their lives on the line in denouncing its doctrinal declension and corrupt practices. Alas, the erroneous practice of Mass and other teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, which the Reformers had refuted as unbiblical, are still being upheld by the Church. Even as Rome pursues ecumenical union with the Protestants, it has no intention to recant nor to repent of its false doctrines, as evidently highlighted by the following quote from the *Unitatis Redintegratio* (i.e. “Decree on Ecumenism”) of Rome’s Vatican II:

“Furthermore, in ecumenical dialogue, Catholic theologians, standing fast by the teaching of the church, yet searching together with severed brethren into the divine mysteries, should do so with love for the truth, with charity, and with humility. When comparing doctrines with one another, they should remember that in Catholic doctrine there exists an order or ‘hierarchy’ of truths, since they vary in their relation to the foundation of the Christian faith. Thus the way will be opened whereby this kind of ‘fraternal rivalry’ will incite all to a deeper realization and a clearer expression of the unfathomable riches of Christ” (para 11c, 21 November 1964). In other words, the Catholics, in accommodating the “severed brethren” (a reference to the Protestants) into their fold, have categorically declared that they will not budge an inch when it comes to the traditional teachings and dogmas of the Church, which are known to be counter-Scriptural.

In this regard, the Roman Catholic Church remains an idolatrous church. Nothing has changed since the 25th session of the Council of Trent, where

it was decreed that the images of Christ and the Virgin Mary, and of other saints were to be retained in the churches, and that honour and veneration were to be given to them. The Catholic Church continues to proclaim the Marian dogmas,

the Christian religion, as laid down by Scripture. Oh, do not be deceived! When we realise from church history how the Roman Catholic Church had suppressed God's Word from God's people, resulting in the Dark Ages of Christianity, we should

**When we realise from church history how the Roman Catholic Church had suppressed God's Word from God's people, resulting in the Dark Ages of Christianity, we should steel our resolve never to return to Rome.**

including her exaltation as "queen of heaven", "mother of the church", etc. It also promotes Mary as a "mediatrix" (i.e. one who mediates for sinners), and thus making her a distributor of the graces of the redemption, and principal intercessor to Jesus Christ. What blasphemy!

### **Let Those Who Preach Another Gospel Be Accursed!**

Dear brethren, we maintain that Christ forbids unity with anyone who preaches any other gospel than the one that was delivered by our Lord and His apostles with great clarity in His Word. Galatians 1:8 cautions us: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." The mission of the true church is to spread the unadulterated Gospel of Christ, preach the Word correctly and rightly administer the sacraments.

The effort to return to the Catholic fold is nothing but apostasy. It is a liberal Protestantism that seeks ecumenical union with Catholics. The efforts of the ecumenical Protestants are a deliberate, premeditated, studied departure from

steel our resolve never to return to Rome. It makes no sense for evangelicals to yearn for Rome again; the ECT movement ought to be viewed as something ungodly and a snare. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6:14). The true church that had been liberated from the chains of papal dominance would surely avoid being in bondage again!

Dear saints of God, we can never be on the negotiation table to facilitate a merger with Rome. We are at variance with the Roman Church for her doctrines corrupt the truths of the Bible. All those who love the Word of God sincerely will say together with the apostle Paul, "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth" (2 Corinthians 13:8). Let us resist the subversive seduction of ecumenism and stand firm in the great doctrines of the Bible, which honour our Lord Jesus Christ. "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness" (2 Peter 3:17).