



Ecumenicalism is it of God? (b)

(2) Those who are against visible unity – (discuss their arguments)

A) Unity is to be sort by Christians, BUT not at the expense of Truth! One of the important realities of the Christian faith is that Jesus is the Word of God and that Word is Truth. Christians who hold this view declare that we must hold onto the True Gospel of Jesus and keep the Scripture as the final authority on matters pertaining to faith and practice. What is expressed as a concern of the ecumenical movement is that unity is encouraged at the expense of truth. For anything that has the potential to divide us must be swept under the carpet for the sake of ecumenical dialogue. What is stated clearly is that the ecumenical movement downplays the importance of truth and doctrine for the sake of unity. Jude 3 is the rallying call to those who believe that the ecumenical movement has compromised the true Gospel and become so wide in belief as to be heretical. **Read Jude 3 – 4, 1 Timothy 6 v 3 – 6**

B) When Jesus prayed for unity it was in the context of truth – All the way through the life of Jesus, we see that our Saviour defines real love for Him as obeying what He has commanded. When He prays that His people will be one, He does so in the context of the church being united by Truth that has been entrusted to it by Himself. Any other unity other than that based upon Jesus and His Words is a false unity that will ultimately compromise the true Gospel. **Read John 17 v 6, 8, 14, 17, 19**

C) The bible teaches that God's people should separate themselves from those who are in falsehood and error. – Those who oppose the ecumenical movement argue that many of the churches that are pushing this unity agenda are those who are in serious error when it comes to both their beliefs and practice. As a result of this they expound the view that the clear teaching of Scripture is that true believers should have nothing to do with those who willingly walk in biblical and doctrine compromise and error.

Passages that are pointed to, to support this view are :- **Read Romans 16 v 17 – 18, 2 Corinthians 6 v 14 – 18, Ch 11 v 1 – 4, Galatians 1 v 8 – 9, Colossians 2 v 6 – 8, 2 Thessalonians 3 v 6, 1 Timothy 1 v 3, Titus 1 v 10 – 14, 2 Peter 2 v 1 – 3, 2 John 7 – 11**

D) The current ecumenical movement has more to do with a one world unity of religion (as is prophesied in the last days) rather than the call of God for His people to unite at any cost!!

Those who see the erosion of truth and morality in the church, alongside of its obvious lack of power and its desire to offer the hand of fellowship to other religions, declare that this is the real establishment of all religions joining together regardless of doctrinal integrity into one visible belief system.

Read Quote “ *What is referred to as Ecumenism, is Satan's plea to the religions today to lay down your differences and unite under the banner of love! We are increasingly being called to lay down truth and walk in error and compromise in what is in every sense a manmade contrived appearance of unity.*”

Alongside of the World Council of Churches, the Roman Catholic church has been heavily pushing ecumenism through a department called “ Pontifical Council on Ecumenism.” This is a statement from this department for Ecumenism:- “ *The goal of Catholic ecumenism is to restore unity to the separated traditions by bringing them within the unity of the Roman Catholic Church!*” The aims of this department of the Catholic church are threefold:-

1) Removal of the obstacles to perfect ecclesiastical communion. **2)** A promoting of a single worship in the communion celebration of the Eucharist. **3)** A re-gathering or reintegration of “all Christians” into the One and Only church. (That being the church of Rome.)

The historical doctrine of the Catholic church is that there is no salvation outside of the Catholic church and as the One True church it has been given to humanity for the salvation of humanity. Yet throughout its history even confirmed recently, the Catholic church holds onto doctrines that are heretical and can be enforced by capital punishment. Some doctrines that this promoter of a united church under Rome holds:-

a) Roman Catholic Church is the One True Church, **b)** Mary is the Mother of the church, **c)** Papal infallibility **d)** Prayers on behalf of the dead, **e)** The veneration of angels and dead saints and the use of images. **f)** Exaltation of Mary as both the Mother of God, “ God bearer” **g)** doctrine of purgatory, **h)** prayers offered to Mary, dead saints and angels **i)** transubstantiation **j)** sale of indulgences **k)** seven sacraments of salvation **l)** confession of sins to priests **m)** immaculate conception of Mary as well as Christ. (1854) **n)** Priests and Bishops are the representatives of God on earth, justly therefore, they are called not only angels, but god's holding as they do the place of authority of God on earth. (catechism of Trent) That her doctrines and traditions carry equal weight as the bible in matters of faith and practice **o)** That her dogmas and doctrines although they can be clarified , enlarged or restated can never be abolished, contradicted or altered. It is a simple fact that every doctrine and dogma that the Catholic church has held it still holds today. What alarmed evangelical theologians for the past 400 years remains the same, exactly as it was written and in full force today.

Quote by Dr. Boether a specialist of ecumenism and the Roman Catholic Church – “ The constitution of the Catholic Church makes it abundantly clear that Rome has no intentions of revising any of her basic doctrines, but only updating her methods and techniques for more efficient administration and to present a more attractive appearance. This is designed to make it easier for the Eastern Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant churches to return to her fold.” Her purpose is not union but absorption!”

Discuss – How important do you think Truth is to this debate?

What do you think are the challenges and possibilities Christian unity?

How far should we be willing to pay a cost to see this happen?