

# The Vatican's Call For Unity

By Evangelist Mike Gendron

Since the dawn of the new millennium, we have been witnessing the greatest push toward ecumenical unity the world has ever seen. Under the banner of AD 2000, all professing Christians are urged to join hands in a unified effort to fulfill the Great Commission. This ecumenical movement has captured the hearts of many professing Christians.

However, the mandate for all Christians to overlook their differences and unite for the purpose of evangelizing the world is not biblically based. It completely ignores the fact that Roman Catholic, Orthodox and many Protestant churches preach another gospel that denies the sufficiency of Jesus Christ. The success of this unity effort is to seek common ground. The guiding principle is to "tolerate everyone's beliefs as long as they love Jesus." What they do not understand is this: if they all loved the Lord Jesus as He is revealed in the Scriptures, they would not tolerate another gospel. The Jesus of the Bible brings division (Matt. 10:32-39). He separates those who deny Him and His finished work of redemption from those He saves by grace through faith. He divides those who are "in Christ" from those who merely profess Christ but do not believe His word (Matt. 7:21-23; John 12:48).

Ecumenical evangelism has provided fertile ground for rebuilding the religious tower of Babel. False teachers, false apostles and false Christs who proclaim a compromised gospel are influencing multitudes. Many more, who lack discernment, are being persuaded by highly visible evangelicals to join the unity bandwagon. It comes as no surprise that the Vatican is the driving force behind this ecumenical movement. Throughout history, the Roman Catholic Church has sought to bring all religions under the power and influence of the papacy. No longer able to openly force people to submit to its popes under the threat of death and persecution, the Vatican has changed its strategy to win the world. Since the close of the Second Vatican Council in 1965, the Roman Catholic Church is wearing a new mask of seduction for "separated brethren." She is now urging all Protestants, whom she once called "heretics," to come back home to the "one true church."

Tragically, many pulpits are incredibly silent about the dangers of the compromised gospel of ecumenical evangelism. Paul's admonition to another church in another time appears to be ignored by many church leaders today. "I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough" (2 Cor. 11:3-4). There are also numerous scriptural warnings for believers to remain separate from unbelievers.

Jesus and His disciples never tolerated ecumenical evangelism. Time after time zealous religious leaders, with their own agendas for building the kingdom, were strongly rebuked. They all had one thing in common, a refusal to submit to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and His word.

- Jesus opposed and condemned the religious leaders of His chosen people for blocking the way to the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 23:13).
- Paul did not unite with the Judaizers who loved Jesus but wanted to add only one

requirement to the Gospel of grace (Gal. 1:6-9).

- Jude refused to unify with those who crept into the church unaware to pervert the grace of God (Jude 4).
- John did not seek to establish unity with those “who went out from us because they were never really of us” (1 John 2:19).
- Peter never joined hands with the false teachers who had forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam (2 Pet. 2:15).
- The writer to the Hebrews did not seek unity with those who ignored such a great salvation (Hebrews 2:3).

In light of these “cloud of witnesses set before us” one must wonder how evangelicals are so easily seduced by the Vatican’s push for ecumenical unity. Surely they are not ignorant of many additional requirements Rome has added to the gospel of salvation. Surely they are not ignorant of the 100 anathemas the Roman Catholic Church uses to condemn those who do not believe their false gospel! How can Christians join hands with a church that condemns them? Could they be so easily persuaded by the Catholic Church’s worldly influence, incredible wealth, one billion followers and a leader that is so loved by the world?

How are Christians to protect themselves in the midst of the religious deception so prevalent in the world today? The Bible exhorts us to search the Word of God for wisdom, understanding, and discernment (Prov. 2). We are to test every teaching. “Examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good” (1 Thes. 5:21). We are warned not to believe every spirit because many false prophets have gone out into the world. It is only by God’s Word that we can discern the Spirit of Truth from the spirit of error (1 John 4:1,6).

We are to be like the Bereans who examined the Scriptures daily to verify the truthfulness of the Apostle Paul’s teachings (Acts 17:11). If the one who wrote over half the New Testament was tested, it stands to reason everyone’s teaching must be examined in the light of God’s Holy Word.

What are we to do with the false teachers within Christendom? We are to expose their false teachings and refrain from participating in their endeavors (Eph. 5:6, 11). With gentleness, we are to correct those who are in error in hopes that God may grant them repentance leading to the truth (2 Tim. 2:25). Those who “profess to know God but by their deeds they deny Him” must be exposed and silenced so others will not be deceived (Titus 1:9-16). We are commanded to separate from those who persist in false teaching (Rom. 16:17; Titus 3:10). For some, this may mean finding another church. For others, it may mean withholding support from ministries that continue to compromise the Gospel. The apostles warned us that if we do not separate from false teachers we could be disqualified for service (2 Tim. 2:20), become identified with them and their error (2 John 10-11), and risk being partakers of their fate (Jude vv. 11-13).

As end time deception increases and more people are led into apostasy, we must contend fervently for the faith that was once delivered to the saints (Jude v. 3). As more Christian leaders seek the approval of men rather than the approval of God, the way of truth will become more narrow and less traveled. Those who remain on it will face persecution for refusing to compromise the Gospel (2 Tim. 2:12). They will be accused of being intolerant, unloving and narrow minded.

As the ecumenical movement grows in popularity within the church, maintaining doctrinal purity will be an unpopular position to pursue. Yet it is indeed what we are called to do!

By pointing out false doctrine and practices, we will be good servants of Christ Jesus as we are nourished by His word and sound doctrine (1 Tim. 4:6). Upholding truth can and will be divisive within the church, but division is not always bad. Sometimes it is necessary to show which ones are approved of God (1 Cor. 11:19). When we “know doctrine” we will “know division” but when there is “no doctrine” there will be “no division.”

Often times those who contend for the purity of the Gospel are criticized for quibbling over things that don't appear to be significant. However, contenders for the faith realize that the most dangerous lie is the lie which most closely resembles the truth. Conversely, ecumenists consider anything that appears close to the truth as an opportunity for unity. Thus they embrace the false gospel of Roman Catholicism because it is the cleverest and best of all Christian counterfeits.

The church today is suffering from a lack of discernment because many of its leaders are teaching partial truths and tolerating doctrinal error. Paul rebuked those who put up with this in the first century church. In these days of apostasy, the church needs Christians who will boldly and courageously proclaim the whole counsel of God and expose as error everything that opposes it. Christians need to seek God for the grace, power, discernment and courage to be contenders for the faith.