

'HOPE 2008' and their 'ecumenical-friendly' Basis of Faith

In my recent article on this **HOPE 2008** initiative that can be viewed on this link -

http://www.takeheed.info/Assorted_Articles/Ecumenism/celebration-of-hope.pdf

I identified the ecumenical support by the UK Roman Catholic hierarchy and also the UK participation at Roman Catholic parish level. This is how the local [Northern Ireland] website for **HOPE 2008** phrased it - **Key leaders from a range of denominations have already voiced their support for this initiative** Rome is always very careful about what she lends her support to when it comes to the matter of the **Basis of Faith** of any initiative. It must of course conform to her understanding of the Gospel of Salvation.

It was enlightening therefore to view the **Basis of Faith** posted on the local [Northern Ireland] **HOPE 2008** website and of course locally the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association link to this initiative, through the participation of Franklin Graham, is a major factor.

Knowing the ecumenical involvement with Rome in Billy Graham crusades over many decades now it therefore comes as no surprise to see a **Basis of Faith** that Rome is able to 'sign up' to.

Not only is Rome able to 'sign up' to this document but clearly the 'penal-substitution' denying **Steve Chalke** has been able to 'sign up' to it as he was of course the 'launch speaker' in Coventry. Shortly we shall see why he could in conscience do so.

This **Basis of Faith** can be viewed on

http://www.celebrationofhope.co.uk/images/COH_Basis_of_Faith.pdf

It is made up of **11 statements** and I want to highlight some of these sections to show how they are very cleverly worded to allow the participation of both Rome and Steve Chalke.

Statement 3 reads - 'We believe in the divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Old and New Testament Scriptures which are the written Word of God - fully trustworthy for faith and conduct'.

Rome in her **Catechism** [Paragraph 97] states '**Sacred Tradition AND Sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God**'.

HOPE 2008, by identifying the Old and New Testament Scriptures as being '**the written Word of God**' has opened the door for there being scope for an '**oral Word of God**' such as Roman Catholic '**Tradition**' and so Rome can live quite comfortably with **Statement 3**.

Statement 6 reads - 'We believe in the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross: dying in our place, paying the price of sin and defeating evil, and so reconciling us with God'.

Please note that in this statement the atoning work of Christ on the cross is nowhere described as being a **'finished'** work because Rome of course teaches that through the sacramental ministry of her priests the atoning work of Christ is perpetuated on her altars in 'The Sacrifice of The Mass'. On the basis of this omission Rome can live quite comfortably with **Statement 6**.

Please note also that the atoning work of Christ is nowhere described as being a **'propitiatory'** work – a work that appeases or turns away the just wrath of a Holy God against sin. On the basis of this omission **Steve Chalke** can live quite comfortably with **Statement 6**.

Statement 7 reads – ***'We believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ, the first fruits of our resurrection, his ascension to the Father and his reign and mediation as the only Saviour of the world'***.

Firstly I would point out that the small 'h' in 'his' when referring to Christ is how it appears in this **Basis of Faith** – normally Christians would capitalise the 'H' when referring to our blessed Saviour.

This statement refers to Christ's ***'mediation as the only Saviour of the world'*** - it does not refer to Him being **"the one mediator between God and men"** [1 Timothy 2:5]. By this very subtle wording and phraseology Rome's false claim in her **Catechism** [Paragraph 969] that **'The Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress and MEDIATRIX'** has not been either challenged or repudiated. On the basis of this wording Rome can live quite comfortably with **Statement 7**.

Statement 8 reads – ***'We believe in the justification of sinners solely by the grace of God through faith in Christ'***.

Please note that this statement omits to include one of the great **Reformation 'solas'** by not wording the statement to read ***'through faith ALONE in Christ'***. . On the basis of this omission Rome can live quite comfortably with **Statement 8** as it accommodates her requirement for 'works done in faith' to contribute to a sinner's justification.

Statement 9 reads – ***'We believe in the ministry of God the Holy Spirit who leads us to repentance, unites us with Christ through new birth, empowers our discipleship and enables our witness'***.

I personally believe in the light of God's Word that the order and content of this statement should have read ***'believe in the ministry of God the Holy Spirit who, unites us with Christ through new birth, grants us saving faith in the finished work of Christ, leads us to repentance towards God, enables our discipleship and empowers our witness'***. Such a wording, particularly with regard to the expression ***'saving faith in the finished work of Christ'*** would of course pose insurmountable problems for Rome.

Statement 10 reads – ***'We believe in the Church, the body of Christ both local and universal, the priesthood of all believers – given life by the Spirit and endowed with the Spirit's gifts to worship God and proclaim the gospel, promoting justice and love'***.

You will note that I have underlined what has been 'tacked on' to the phrase ***'proclaim the gospel'*** namely ***'promoting justice and love'***. The purpose of 'proclaiming the gospel' is not to 'promote justice and love' [a social 'gospel' that Rome and

liberal/apostate/emerging churches are keen to advocate] but the purpose of 'proclaiming the gospel' is to see lost sinners receiving gracious **'salvation'** from God as many scriptures indicate such as **Romans 1:16** and **1st Corinthians 1:17-18**. On the basis of this inclusion Rome can live quite comfortably with **Statement 10**.

On the local website a number of **HOPE 2008** Information Seminars are detailed to take place in the following churches –

Mon 15th Oct	8.00pm	Carnmoney	Carnmoney Pres
Tues 16th Oct	2.30pm	Lisburn	Lisburn Cathedral
Tues 16th Oct	8.00pm	Carrickfergus	Woodlands Pres
Wed 17th Oct	10.30am	Belfast	Knock Pres
Wed 17th Oct	2.30pm	Belfast	Willowfield Parish
Thurs 18th Oct	10.30am	Bangor	Bangor Elim
Thurs 18th Oct	8.00pm	Belfast	Newtownbreda Baptist
Mon 22nd Oct	8.00pm	Lurgan	Lurgan Methodist
Tues 23rd Oct	10.30am	Ballymena	Wellington St Pres
Tues 23rd Oct	8.00pm	Ballynahinch	Ballynahinch Pres
Wed 24th Oct	10.30am	Finaghy	Lowe Memorial Pres

As I looked at this list I was struck by the number of churches listed that have facilitated the likes of **Alpha Courses, 40 Days of Purpose, Willow Creek programmes** and of course the much-heralded but ultimately the ecumenical damp squib of **'Power to Change'**.

Regularly these churches give over the **'oversight'** role to men and organisations that quite simply are not **"faithful men who shall be able to teach others"** [2 Timothy 2:2].

They regularly abdicate the role entrusted to them and as detailed in **Acts 20:28** where Paul reminded the elders of the church at Ephesus of how they were to **"Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood"**.

Evangelism is meant to happen very much on a one-to-one basis and for that to happen God's flock need to be fed and instructed by those entrusted with the task of feeding and instructing them in their local church. These large initiatives, where **"sound doctrine"** is at a premium and **'social cohesion'** is very much to the fore are sidetracking the main issue at the heart of the Mission of Christ namely that **"Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners"** [1 Timothy 1:15].

This 'side-tracking' is well illustrated by this statement on the local **HOPE 2008** website –

Churches across NI in recent years have faced up to the challenge of community engagement and recent surveys have shown that the vast majority of youth and children's work in the country is done by churches. Add to that programmes for senior citizens, parenting classes, lunch clubs and a host of other initiatives and there's no doubt that church has taken seriously the role of being salt and light.

For Christians to be 'salt' and 'light' it means that they are 'engaging sin' head on – it does not mean that they are up to their necks in social activity. Please don't misunderstand me – I believe there is a role for Christians to be active in social ventures but the PRIMARY role of the church is to proclaim the gospel and not to feed the hungry. Once these lines of demarcation get intertwined then the salt loses its saltiness and other temporal issues and concerns block the light of truth out.

In my earlier article, I noted the involvement of **Evangelical Alliance** through their General director, **Joel Edwards** being listed as a member of the **HOPE 2008 Board of reference**. Locally here the Northern Ireland 'branch' of Evangelical Alliance has been to the fore in the planning of some of these liberal, pseudo evangelical events [such as Kingdom Come in early 2006]. Their input to **HOPE 2008** is identified on the local [Northern Ireland] website where the main article encouraging support for **HOPE 2008** is signed off by

Stephen Cave
National Director Evangelical Alliance
Vice-chair Celebration of Hope

In closing I want to repeat something that I quoted in my earlier article –

Loraine Boettner wrote under a sub-heading of '**The Church in Politics**' –

'She must not allow herself to be used as a pressure group for the securing of certain rights and temporal benefits for men, nor to pressure the state for reform measures even though such reforms may be needed and desirable from the Christian viewpoint. Christians as individuals are indeed to work for whatever reforms may be needed but the Church is not to do so in her corporate capacity. Such action on the part of the Church almost invariably will detract from her primary mission of the proclamation of The Gospel and ministering to the spiritual needs of men and will tend to give people a wrong conception as to what her mission really is'.

This article is about the '**ecumenical friendly**' **Basis of Faith of HOPE 2008** and this quotation by the late Mr Boettner is from his classic book called '**Roman Catholicism**'. Truly "**he being dead yet speaketh**" [**Hebrews 11:4**].

The devil is quite happy to let the professing 'Church' try to 'Christianise' the world. His feathers only get ruffled when Christians try to 'evangelise' the world. Somehow I don't think he'll be losing too much sleep over this upcoming **HOPE 2008**.

Cecil Andrews – 'Take Heed' Ministries – 3rd October 2008