

J I PACKER – ‘Double-Minded’ and ‘Unstable’

From time to time over many years now I have had occasion to issue warnings about the gospel-compromising actions and words of **J I Packer** who is regarded by many as a ‘stalwart’ proponent of Evangelicalism and the Reformed Faith position.

These links will take you to items I have written about him

<http://www.takeheed.info/j-i-packer-and-mother-teresa/>

<http://www.takeheed.info/news-from-the-front-march-2000/>

(Scroll down to article on Charles Colson & J I Packer)

<http://www.takeheed.info/news-from-the-front-march-1999/>

(Scroll down to article on 'Papal Poison')

<http://www.takeheed.info/news-from-the-front-june-1999/>

(Scroll quite far to the article on 'Ravenging Wolves')

Perhaps the greatest ‘shock waves were felt **when he endorsed the 1994 "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission for the Third Millennium"** document. Not only did he endorse it but when challenged as to how he could have come to endorse it he wrote a defence of what he had done. **My own assessment was that Mr Packer had totally betrayed what he claimed to believe about core matters such as 'justification'**. There is a good assessment of this matter and Mr Packer's role in it by Iain Murray and you can view it on

http://churchsociety.org/docs/churchman/110/Cman_110_3_Murray.pdf

Not only did Mr Packer sign this ‘ECT’ Document but as I said he later, when challenged, wrote an article defending his decision to do so. John MacArthur was less than impressed by what Mr Packer did and wrote as you can read on

<http://www.gty.org/resources/sermons/GTY54/irreconcilable-differences-catholics-evangelicals-and-the-new-quest-for-unity-parts-13>

Here is an excerpt from John MacArthur's comments -

"It (Roman Catholicism) is a false religion, it is another religion. When you throw your arms around that you...you literally have to undo any doctrinal distinction. And in fact, ECT doesn't just do that implicitly, they do it explicitly. In the document, in effect they say, we have to accept all baptized Roman Catholics as brothers and sisters in Christ. **And in an article that followed that up in Christianity Today, J.I. Packer said, "We should acknowledge as brothers and sisters in Christ anyone who lives to the highest ideals of their communion."** **My response to that is the opposite.** I maybe could fellowship with a bad Roman Catholic, that is one who rejected the system but was still in the church and came to know Christ. But one who holds the highest ideals of Roman Catholicism, on what grounds do I have spiritual unity?"

Mr Packer's signing of 'ECT' went on to have less than helpful ramifications in other parts of the world including here in Ireland. I make mention of this in an interview I gave that was recorded on video in Texas (at the second 'Ex Catholics for Christ Conference') in 1999. You can see this interview on this link –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXe3ugzfiLY>

the relevant portion (Question 7) runs from 17.25 to 19.10.

I also wrote a short article about Mr Packer's visit to Ireland to promote the Irish version of 'ECT' and you can access that on

<http://www.takeheed.info/evangelicals-and-catholics-together-in-ireland/>

Towards the end of that article I wrote

On reflection one scripture sums up Mr Packer's performance "a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways" James 1:8

As you will see by the title of this article I have not deviated from that assessment and in fact I have become even more convinced that it applies 'perfectly' to Mr Packer where this whole issue of '**Evangelicals and Catholics Together**' is concerned.

My good friend and fellow-contender, **Rob Zins** has spoken/written extensively about the damage done by **J I Packer** to the cause of the gospel through his support of 'ECT'. Two helpful resources on this are -

A video-recorded talk that Rob gave located on

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvdKHU9r4yw>

A book by Rob called '**On the Edge of Apostasy**' available on

<http://www.cwrc-rz.org/store.html>

My reason for penning this new article now is that I came across an audio recording in my office of a discussion that took place on Radio Ulster back on 2nd August 1998. It featured **Dr Packer**, **'Father' Pat Collins** and **Rev. Robert McCollum**. The context was that J I Packer had come over from America to share a public platform at 4 meetings to promote a booklet entitled –

'Evangelicals and Catholics Together in Ireland'

The intrinsic ecumenical compromise contained in this document is spelt out clearly on the front cover where we read this –

'A call to Christians in Ireland, Protestant, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, New Church, to build friendships as disciples of Jesus Christ, that we may more clearly witness to Him, our only Saviour and Lord.'

This is a clear statement of mutual recognition of each other as being fellow **Christians** and **Disciples** able to jointly **witness**.

This is the document that Mr Packer and 'Father' Collins jointly promoted at 4 public meetings, two in Belfast and two in Dublin, and I attended three of them, in the company on occasions of Christian friends who were saved out of Roman Catholicism – they like me were VERY saddened, disappointed and disturbed by the presence and contributions of Mr Packer, as they made known to him.

As well as this **'ECT Ireland'** document their public promotion of it also coincided with the publication of a book called –

'Adventures in Reconciliation': 29 Catholic Testimonies

In the Radio Ulster discussion reference is made to both the **'ECT Ireland'** document and the **'Adventures in Reconciliation'** book. At this point let me give the link to the Radio Ulster discussion. It can be heard on

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtBaehZZHmk>

At a conference held in Bensalem Baptist Church in Bensalem PA, USA, in June 2000 I gave a talk entitled –

'The Myth of Evangelicals and Catholics Together in Ireland'

And you can watch video of that talk on these two links

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNRRmQgfVmk>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1U5tEUR1uQ>

In relation to the book '**Adventures in Reconciliation: 29 Catholic Testimonies**' I wrote a short article about it at that time and you can read what I wrote on this link –

<http://www.takeheed.info/a-christian-response-by-cecil-andrews-to-adventures-in-reconciliation-29-catholic-testimonies/>

I concluded my article with these words

'it is clear that Christians should have no fellowship with the contributors to this book and should pray for their liberation from Roman darkness'.

and I fully stand by those words today.

By way of conclusion let me just make a few points about the Radio Ulster discussion

1. **Mr Packer's** naïveté is quite frankly staggering. He wants the initiative to be seen as just local people engaging in good social action BUT he refers to them as '**individual Christians**' and speaks of '**co-operation in evangelism**' so for him Roman Catholics are Christians even though he claims allegiance and identity with historic Evangelicalism. He claims '**Orthodox Christian Affiliation**' but practices '**Unscriptural Yoking with Unbelievers**' – clear grounds for being classed as '**double-minded**' and '**unstable**'.
2. '**Father**' **Collins** refers to those who express doubt concerning his being '**saved/born-again**' etc. Well, in the book '**Adventures in Reconciliation: 29 Catholic Testimonies**' we read this from his '**testimony**' – '**In 1974 I was invited to attend a Charismatic Conference in Benburb Priory... Rev Cecil Kerr, a Church of Ireland minister from the Christian Renewal Centre in Rostrevor, Co Down gave an inspiring talk about Jesus as our way of peace... We had a brief chat and arranged to meet privately. When we did I told Cecil that I was looking for a new awareness of God in my life... he began to pray for me, firstly in English, then in tongues. Suddenly and effortlessly I too began to pray fluently in tongues. I had been baptised in the Spirit... Since then I have come to a number of conclusions about Baptism in the Spirit... from a Catholic point of view Baptism in the Spirit is integral to the sacraments of initiation and normative for all Christians... as Cardinal Suenens has suggested, whereas one received the Holy Spirit in a sacramental way in baptism-confirmation one received it in an experiential way as a result of Baptism in the Spirit**'. This illustrates that '**Father**' **Collins** is relying on Roman Catholic sacramentalism and Charismatic experiential error for his '**regeneration**' so grounds for doubting and rejecting his claim to being '**saved/born-again**' are well founded. Notice too his promotion of the insidious, ecumenical, gospel-destroying '**ALPHA**' course.

3. **Rev Robert McCollum** was gracious but firm in highlighting the insurmountable doctrinal problems that faithful evangelicals have in countenancing any notion of '**Evangelicals and Catholics Together in Ireland**' and did extremely well when he identified the 'blurring of distinctives' by Mr Packer's call for joint 'Christian' social action.

Mr Packer very much built his 'evangelical' reputation by writing '**Knowing God**': It is one thing to write about '**Knowing God**', it is quite a different matter to live out a faithful life '**Knowing God**' and for me, Mr Packer has regularly failed in this latter aspect because of his many high-profile excursions into ecumenical gospel-compromise.

Cecil Andrews – 'Take Heed' Ministries – 24 October 2016

APPENDIX

There is an interesting article that gives information on the background to what caused **Martin Lloyd-Jones** to eventually break fellowship with both **J I Packer** and **John Stott** because of their willingness to engage in unbiblical ecumenism with Roman Catholicism. The article can be accessed on

<https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/evangelical-history/2016/10/18/50-years-ago-today-the-split-between-john-stott-and-martyn-lloyd-jones/>