

‘Rev’ Liz Hughes and ‘Elder’ Alf McCreary: “Blind leaders of the blind”?

In the opening 11 verses of **Matthew 15** the Lord had shown his contempt for Pharisaic man-made traditions which had over many years, as He said directly to the Pharisees in **verse 6**, **“made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition”**.

We then read in **verses 12-14** **“Then came his disciples and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. Let them alone, they are blind leaders of the blind, both shall fall into the ditch”**.

False teachers are in the words of the Lord to be regarded as spiritually **“blind leaders”** and sadly, those who unquestioningly follow them, are also deemed spiritually to be **“the blind”**.

In **2 Corinthians 4:3-4** Paul wrote of people who spiritually speaking are not privy to the truth of the Gospel and who sadly are **“lost”** – Paul wrote **“But if our gospel be hidden, it is hidden from them that are lost, In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them”**.

And where does the Lord say these people will end up? Tragically in **“the ditch”** – according to Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament words – **‘Ditch: any kind of deep hole or pit’**. As the Lord is talking of spiritual matters I don’t think I need to spell out in any great detail that the word **‘ditch’** is employed by Him here as a euphemism for a hellish eternal reality. In **‘The Gospel of Matthew: Volume 1’** by **James Montgomery Boice** (who for many years before his death was the senior minister of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia), we read on page 284 –

‘Jesus calls the Pharisees and teachers of the law “blind leaders” (v 14). They were aspiring to lead others but the outcome was that both those who were leading and those who were following would fall into a pit. I do not think Jesus meant only a pit in the ground. He was probably referring to that bottomless pit in which there is an eternal darkness and a weeping and gnashing of teeth’ (Matthew 25:30).

In recent weeks, an article by the Religious affairs correspondent of the Belfast Telegraph, **Alf McCreary** and a **‘Thought for the Day’** broadcast on Radio Ulster’s **‘Good Morning Ulster’** by the **‘Rev’ Liz Hughes** have served to pose the question – are they **“Blind leaders of the blind”**?

By way of a little background, the **'Rev' Liz Hughes** is the minister of Whitehouse Presbyterian Church near Belfast and **"Elder' Alf McCreary** is one of her elders. I have on a number of occasions in the past 'put pen to paper' to challenge the published views of Mr. McCreary and you can access these articles on

http://www.takeheed.net/Assorted_Articles/Contemporary/saved_mc.htm
http://www.takeheed.net/Assorted_Articles/Contemporary/McCreary_cross.htm
http://www.takeheed.net/Assorted_Articles/Contemporary/McCrearyQueenDalaiLama.htm

I want first to comment upon the article written by **'Elder' Alf McCreary** and published in the Belfast Telegraph of Saturday 28 September 2013. Mr. McCreary began his article as follows –

'I went voluntarily to St Patrick's (A Roman Catholic chapel near the centre of Belfast) partly to atone for the insults which my alleged co-religionists had committed to that church in the name of alleged Protestantism by playing sectarian party tunes during some of the Loyal Order demonstrations earlier this year'.

Straight-off let me say that sadly, many of those who take part in the marches organised by the professing Protestant Loyal Orders, have no connection with historic biblical Protestantism as they clearly have no living relationship with and faith in the only Saviour of sinners, the Lord Jesus Christ. The cause of His Gospel is in my view not helped by outward displays and means such as marching, banner carrying etc. and accompanying behaviour that is inconsistent with any claim to be a Christian.

The true Gospel message of **The Cross** is itself an **"offence"** (**Galatians 5:11**) - that is, to the mind of the 'natural', unregenerate man or woman, a message that says that their soul's salvation can only be secured by faith alone in what Christ alone has done and not through any input on their part will offend them. As Christians we are to preach that message whether the 'prevailing winds' are favourable or not – as Paul says in **2 Timothy 4:2** **"Preach the word; be diligent in season (and) out of season"**. Pastor John MacArthur in his Study Bible writes –

'The faithful preacher must proclaim the Word when it is popular and/or convenient and when it is not; when it seems suitable to do so and when it seems not. The dictates of popular culture, tradition, reputation, acceptance, or esteem in the community (or in the church) must never alter the true preacher's commitment to proclaim God's Word.'

Despite the **"offence"** that the gospel will be when preached to many we must be careful not to add any other unnecessary **'offence'** by way of conduct or behaviour. So, wherever any such additional and unnecessary **'offence'** is caused by any who claim to be either proclaiming, celebrating or defending true Biblical Christianity, then such action is rightly to be condemned.

Mr. McCreary then went on to write –

'I also went to St Patrick's to show solidarity with a group of Protestant and Catholic clergy who have been holding joint communion services in several churches to acknowledge what they have in common as Christians... the one sad note for me, and the other Protestants was the fact that we could not share in the Catholic Communion, due to Vatican teaching; whereas the main reformed churches welcome all-comers, including Catholics to their communion table'.

From this we learn firstly that **'joint communion services'** are not always that **'due to Vatican teaching'**). This **'line of demarcation'** was clearly spelt out in a booklet issued back in 1998 called **'One Bread; One Body'**. It was produced by the **'Catholic Bishops' Conferences of England & Wales, Ireland and Scotland'**. Let me give a few quotes from it –

'We hope it will help all Catholics to a greater understanding of the Mass, and of the Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament... At the end of this document we present our general norms on sacramental sharing between Catholics and other Christians in our countries... We look forward to that day when all obstacles to full visible communion are overcome and all Christians can celebrate the Eucharist together' (Foreword page 5)... **An understanding of the Eucharist is essential therefore to the search for Christian unity. There can be no full unity among Christians that does not embrace unity in the Eucharist** (page 7)... **Our first purpose... is to reaffirm and to share with others our Catholic faith in the mystery of the Eucharist... the making present of Christ's saving death and resurrection, the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament... It is right to expect that anyone who receives Holy Communion in the Catholic Church should manifest Catholic faith in the Eucharist** (pages 10-11)... **We can preserve intact our faith... only by insisting on a change in the inner reality of the bread and wine... Christ's body and blood become really present and are really given** (page 33)... **The fundamental principle which underlies our norms is that "the Eucharist is properly the sacrament of those who are in full communion with the Church"** (page 75 & Referenced to 'Catechism of the Catholic Church' paragraph 1395).'

Mr. McCreary needs to realise that the **'Vatican Teaching'** on this issue is **'set in stone'** – as Richard Bennett wrote in his examination of the **'Cardinal Ratzinger/late Pope Benedict-inspired'** document **'Dominus Iesus'** – **"Rome is, in her own words, 'semper eadem', always the same"**. Rome's view of other professing Christians like Mr. McCreary and Mrs. Hughes is also spelt out clearly as Richard explains in his article when he wrote – **"The Roman Catholic Church boldly proclaims, as she did during the Inquisition, "On the other hand, the ecclesial communities which have not preserved the valid Episcopate and the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic mystery, are not Churches in the proper sense"..."** Richard's response to the **'DI'** document can be viewed on http://www.the-highway.com/Bennett_dominus.html

Dare I also say that this **'Vatican Teaching'** is **'drenched in blood'** for in times past they have not held back from murdering those Christians who refused to accept Rome's teaching of **"the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament"**.

In my March 2005 **'News from the Front'** in a short closing article I wrote this –

The Christ-honouring, Bible-believing **Bishop J C Ryle** wrote "it is as certain that the **Romish Church** burned our **English Reformers** as it is that **William the Conqueror** won the **Battle of Hastings**. Truth is truth, however long it may be neglected...The principal reason why they were burned was because they refused one of the peculiar doctrines of the **Romish Church**...the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the consecrated elements of bread and wine".

Rome's tactics may have changed since then but her heretical teachings have not!
Mr. McCreary then noted –

'However, the Protestants at the St Patrick's service received a blessing, if they indicated to do so and the service was characterised by a great common respect and warmth'.

Firstly, no true Christian should ever attend a Mass; and secondly they would never receive any so-called **'blessing'** from any priest of Rome. The wonderful **Psalm 1** makes that very plain when we read **"Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful"**. For any true believer to attend a Mass would be to do the very things that would prevent him from receiving any true spiritual **'blessing'**.

Then what about Mr. McCreary's claim that **'the main reformed churches welcome all-comers, including Catholics to their communion table'**? I have attended **'communion'** in many **'reformed churches'** and overwhelmingly verses from **1 Corinthians 11** are read and referred to as **'The Institution of the Lord's Supper'** as written by the Apostle Paul. In all cases it is made clear that participation is not restricted to the **'communicant members'** of the host church but virtually always a **'caveat'** is given that any visitors who might wish to participate should have a true faith in and living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and should be **'walking in fellowship with Him'** otherwise there would be severe consequences for them as outlined in **verses 27-29**. Also, in **'reformed churches'**, it is normally made abundantly clear that **'communion'** is simply an act of **'remembrance'** of the sacrifice of Calvary and not an actual **'perpetuation'** of that sacrifice at Calvary (as Rome claims) that was fully, finally and forever finished on the Cross.

I want now to comment upon the **'Thought for the Day'** broadcast by **'Rev' Liz Hughes**. Firstly, you can listen to what she said by going to this link <http://youtu.be/5Cb2qmUEFc>

You will note that Mrs Hughes, using winsome language and tone, also expressed her regret (using a reference to **'Catholic Church Law'**) that at neither of the Mass celebrations that she attended (totally separate incidentally from the one Mr. McCreary attended) were she, or any of the other Presbyterians from her church who with her, able to receive 'communion'.

Then in her talk Mrs Hughes spoke in rapturous terms concerning aspects of the service at which her Roman Catholic friend (along with 4 other married men with children) was installed as a deacon – interesting that she chose to include a reference to these men being 'married with children' in contrast to the unscriptural celibate priests that Rome insists upon for her equally unscriptural Priesthood.

She spoke of the length of the 'mega-service', of the beauty of the Cathedral, of the use of Latin, of the 'fabulous' clergy outfits and the awe-inspiring music which often mirrored that used in Presbyterian churches. As I listened to this 'foolhardy wonderment' and 'delusional awe' I thought of a portion that Richard Bennett wrote in his testimony booklet **'From Tradition to Truth'** – Richard wrote –

The Turning Point

One day, a woman challenged me (the only Christian ever to challenge me in all my 22 years as a priest), "You Roman Catholics have a form of godliness, but you deny its power." Those words bothered me for some time because the lights, banners, folk music, guitars, and drums were dear to me. Probably no priest on the whole island of Trinidad had as colorful robes, banners, and vestments as I had... In October 1985, God's grace was greater than the lie that I was trying to live. I went to Barbados to pray over the compromise that I was forcing myself to live. I felt truly trapped. The Word of God is absolute indeed. I ought to obey it alone; yet, to the very same God, I had vowed obedience to the supreme authority of the Catholic Church. In Barbados I read a book in which was explained the Biblical meaning of Church as "the fellowship of believers." In the New Testament there is no hint of a hierarchy; "Clergy" lording it over the "laity" is unknown. Rather, it is as the Lord Himself declared "...one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren" (Matthew 23:8). Now to see and to understand the meaning of church as "fellowship" left me free to let go of the Roman Catholic Church as supreme authority and depend on Jesus Christ as Lord. It began to dawn on me that in Biblical terms, the Bishops I knew in the Catholic Church were not Biblical believers. They were for the most part pious men taken up with devotion to Mary and the Rosary and loyal to Rome, but not one had any idea of the finished work of salvation, that Christ's work is done, that salvation is personal and complete. They all preached penance for sin, human suffering, religious deeds, "the way of man" rather than the Gospel of grace.

Richards' testimony booklet **'From Tradition to Truth'** can be read online by going to http://www.bereanbeacon.org/testimonies/Former_Priests/Richard_Bennett.pdf

Mrs Hughes then referred to **'many important elements that Catholics and Presbyterians would share'** and spoke of shared attitudes like **'love for Jesus Christ'** and **'reverence for scripture'**. The problem is of course that, with a correct knowledge and understanding of Roman Catholicism, Christians know that the Roman Catholic **'Jesus Christ'** is not the **'Jesus Christ'** of the Bible. Christians also understand that **'scripture'**, as in **The Bible**, has no equal such as Roman Catholic **'sacred tradition'** that undermines the Bible's unique authoritative role.

Mrs Hughes and Mr. McCreary fail to recognise that the very thing that the Lord railed against in **Matthew 15:6**, where religious leaders of His day had “**made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition**”, is the very same problem that God has today with Roman Catholicism and sadly, that will have the most serious of eternal consequences for those ensnared by the Roman Catholic religion.

Mrs Hughes then went on to describe a measure of discomfort that she felt as the names of many Roman Catholic ‘**saints**’ were read out in the course of a lengthy prayer and how the intercession of these ‘**saints**’ was invoked. However, she then apparently sought to find ‘**common ground**’ with Rome in their sanctioning of prayers to their ‘**saints**’ and apparently she solved her dilemma by explaining that, in her understanding, this equated to what her own ‘tradition’ take from **Hebrews chapter 11 and Hebrews 12:1-2**.

Richard Bennett, who in God’s providence has been in Ireland to speak at meetings and testify of how God saved him out of the darkness of Roman Catholicism, was, like me, totally aghast at her linkage of the Roman Catholic practice of invoking Rome’s ‘**saints**’ to pray for and intercede for ‘the faithful’ here on earth (“**the prayer invited those ‘saints’ to pray for us**”) with what we read in the book of Hebrews. There is absolutely no correlation between God recording the examples of men and women of ‘faith’ in the book of **Hebrews** and the Roman Catholic occultic practice of attempting to communicate with the dead – otherwise known as ‘**necromancy**’.

Mrs Hughes claimed that those named in **Hebrews 11** are, according to the opening verses of **Hebrews 12**, “**urging us on**”, giving a clear impression that they, as ‘spectators’, can see how we are progressing as we “**run the race**”. If that is what she meant, and it certainly sounded like it, let me quote Pastor John McArthur’s Study Bible notes for **Hebrews 12:1** –

“**“WITNESSES”** – The deceased people of chapter 11 give witness to the value and blessing of living by faith. **Motivation for running “the race” is not in the possibility of receiving praise from “observing” heavenly saints.** Rather the runner is inspired by the godly examples those saints set during their lives. **The great crowd are not comprised of spectators but rather are ones whose past life of faith encourages others to live that way.”**

The ‘heroes of faith’ listed by God in the book of Hebrews were, as genuine believers, true ‘**Saints**’ of God whereas the lengthy list of names read out at the Mass that Mrs Hughes attended were only ‘**saints**’ because the Vatican had designated them to be so. Every true Christian is a ‘**Saint**’ of God and the claim by the Vatican to be able to make ‘**saints**’ is quite simply a diabolical lie. Some years ago I arranged for my good friend and brother in Christ, Rob Zins, to go to London to take part in a TV debate on this very subject of ‘**Saints**’ and ‘**Stigmata**’. Despite being heavily outnumbered Rob gave a very good biblical defence of the Christian position on these issues and you can watch that half-hour debate by going to these links <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiooPLellw> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IXQI2YqUps>

I mentioned that Richard Bennett was in Ireland and it was a great joy for Margaret and I to hear him speak and then to have him to our house for lunch last Sunday where, apart from sharing our thoughts on the **'Thought For The Day'** broadcast which I played for him, we also reminisced about past visits here by Richards under the auspices of **'Take Heed'** and also joint ministry that we had undertaken on several occasions in America. On Facebook I gave details of the **'Thought For The Day'** by **Liz Hughes** and coupled it with details of Richard's speaking itinerary and one former Roman Catholic lady posted the following in response –

'There is a powerful delusion in the mass. Many are being deceived by it. I once was deceived by it; but The Lord delivered me out of it. So glad Richard Bennett is there "for such a time as this". When the Lord was leading me out of the church of Rome into the Light of His Truth in His Word, I mustered up the courage to google "former priests" on the internet. I then waited to see if I would be struck dead for having such a thought. I wasn't and so I proceeded. I discovered Richard Bennett's testimony. It really encouraged me. I could not contact him for a couple of weeks because of the emotional turmoil I was going through. He was a huge help to me. It's amazing to me how so many can hear his testimony and really begin to think; but something prevents them from leaving Rome. I know the pull it has as I was once there. I pray that many will be reached through Richard's preaching this week. I was delivered from a Marian apparition cult'.

In contrast to **Mr. McCreary** and **Mrs Hughes** declaring Roman Catholics to be fellow Christians, **Richard Bennett** has, for many years, been seeking to witness to such people for he knows, from first-hand experience as a Dominican priest, but now gloriously converted and saved, just how spiritually **'lost'** these often sincere but sadly deceived Roman Catholic people are. The reality also is this, that the likes of **Mr McCreary** and **Mrs Hughes**, **"by their fruits"** (**Matthew 7:16&20**) are evidently just as spiritually **'lost'** and deceived, they appear to fit the description of being **"blind leaders of the blind"** (**Matthew 15:14**) and so they too are in great need of God's **"so great salvation"** (**Hebrews 2:3**). They clearly long to be able to participate fully in a Roman Catholic Mass which in truth is the greatest spiritual **'weapon of Mass destruction'** imaginable. It just doesn't seem to dawn upon their understanding that in a Christian church 'communion' is celebrated at a **TABLE** whereas in a Roman Catholic chapel Roman Catholic 'communion' is celebrated at an **ALTAR** – complete with 'bone relics'. (There is a cavity in Roman Catholic altars, where the Mass is performed, to house a 'relic' from a dead **'saint/martyr'**. Here is an extract from the service of **CONSECRATION OF A FIXED ALTAR** as outlined on the **Catholic Encyclopaedia** website **'When the relics have been carried to the church, the consecrator anoints with holy chrism, at the four corners, the sepulchre of the altar, in which the relics are to be enclosed, thereby sanctifying the cavity in which the venerated remains of the martyrs are to rest, and then reverently places therein the case containing the relics and incenses them'**.

In a Christian church we **'remember a sacrifice'** whereas in a Roman Catholic chapel they claim to **'perpetuate a sacrifice'** and the difference (**'a great gulf fixed'**) is as great as the difference between heaven and hell.

Liz Hughes and Alf McCreary are either truly ignorant of or deceitfully choosing to ignore what Rome claims is happening when one of her priests celebrates Mass; for instance, look at this quote from

Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma by Ludwig Ott (pp 412-413): The Sacrifice of the Mass is not merely a sacrifice of praise but also a sacrifice of expiation and impetration... As a propitiatory sacrifice the Sacrifice of the Mass effects the remission of sins and the punishment for sins...

And then these quotes from the Catholic Catechism –

Paragraph 1375: It is by the *conversion* of the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood that Christ becomes present in this sacrament...

Paragraph 1376: ... This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called *transubstantiation*.

In May 2012 Rob Zins, in debate with Roman Catholic priest, Patrick McCafferty, addressed both these claims and you can see what Rob said on these links –

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izCR7Z_2Dew

(First 22 minutes)

And

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7aIJayuhisE>

(From 9 minutes through to 23 minutes)

I think it is worth noting at this stage the validity of God's prohibition against women being 'ministers', 'pastors' or 'elders' – Paul wrote to the believers in Corinth (**2 Corinthians 11:4**) that he feared that they would be deceived into believing in '**another Jesus**' through receiving '**another gospel**' by the power of '**another spirit**'. He prefaced his concerns with these words "**But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his craftiness, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ**" (verse 3).

By becoming a 'minister' Mrs Hughes has clearly been "**beguiled**" into seeking this office and her thoughts on attending Mass twice show she has fallen foul of the concerns expressed by Paul in verse 4. Mr. McCreary continues regularly to publicly champion the cause for women 'ministers' and as already noted Mrs Hughes is in fact his 'minister'.

On our ministry YouTube site there is a very good debate on this issue of '**Women Ministers**' where Rev Brian Bradley sets out clearly what the Bible teaches on this issue. You can view this debate on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvUTnMFZFak>

I have mentioned my dear brother in the Lord, Richard Bennett, quite a number of times in this article and I would like to finish with another quote from his testimony booklet '**From Tradition to Truth**'. This is what Richard wrote –

The Reason Why I Share

I share these truths with you now so that you can know God's way of salvation. Our basic problem as Catholics was that personal worth and dignity was ingrained into us. We believed that we could respond to the help God gives us to be right in His sight. This presupposition that many of us have carried for years is aptly defined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) #2021, "Grace is the help God gives us to respond to our vocation of becoming his adopted sons...."

With that mindset, we were unknowingly holding to a teaching that the Bible continually condemns. Such a definition of grace is man's careful fabrication, for the Bible consistently declares that the believer's right standing with God is "without works" (Romans 4:6), "without the deeds of the Law" (Romans 3:28), "not of works" (Ephesians 2:9), "It is the gift of God," (Ephesians 2:8).

To attempt to make the believer's response part of his salvation and to look upon grace as "a help" is to flatly deny Biblical truth, "...if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace..." (Romans 11:6).

The simple Biblical message is that "the gift of righteousness" in Christ Jesus is a gift, resting on His all-sufficient sacrifice on the cross, "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:17).

Richard has in the portion I have highlighted in red identified much of what is wrong in supposed 'Evangelical Thinking' today and of course such thinking runs through the Alpha Course which the Church of Rome warmly endorses and embraces.

Not surprisingly, Mrs. Hughes is currently jointly running an Alpha Course and her ministerial colleague in that venture is the Rev. John Dickinson whose own disturbing '**Thought For The Day**' I analyzed recently in my article on http://www.takeheed.net/Take_Heed_2013/Current_Concerns/John_Dickinson_Islam.pdf

In closing I wish respectfully and compassionately to say this – if anyone reading this article is a follower of and a supporter of the 'theological thinking' of **Liz Hughes** and **Alf McCreary** then let me simply direct you to the words of the Lord Himself as recorded in **Matthew 24:4** "**Take heed that no man (or woman) deceive you**".

Cecil Andrews – 'Take Heed' Ministries' 15 October 2013

I mentioned that Richard Bennett had lunch with us on Sunday past so by way of a little 'PS' here is photo of he and I outside our home in Ballynahinch.

