A row has developed over recent comments made by a Democratic Unionist Party member, who called Pope Ratzinger the Antichrist on a radio programme, and said he would be doing his utmost to ensure a planned visit by the Supreme Pontiff to Northern Ireland does not go ahead as planned. Wallace Thompson, an advisor to Enterprise Minister Nigel Dodds, has stated he was against rosary beads being sold in Anglican St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin. Responding to callers questions on his remarks, he made clear his opposition to the Catholic teaching of transubstantiation, in which the eucharist and wine are said to become the physical flesh and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thompson said he was stating personal opinion, and that he was speaking in the capacity of secretary of the Evangelical Protestant Society.

Quote: *""The Pope is the Anti-christ... a lot of Protestants probably might not hold [that view] but it is still enshrined in the standards," he said. "It is a strong statement to make but in expressing those views I am not conflicting with the main teachings of the main churches."*

Unless you come from Europe, it can be quite difficult to understand the conflict that has gone on between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism over the years. The Roman Catholic Church has done much to suppress the Gospel and persecute God's people over the past 400 years. Many men devoted their lives to the translation of the Scriptures into our own language, and many of them often paid the ultimate price. If it wasn't for men like John Wycliffe and William Tyndale, many of us would never have had the opportunity to hear the Gospel and be saved. Many Christian communities fled mainland Europe due to persecution from the Roman Catholic Church. They settled in England, Ireland and some went as far as America. My own family name can be traced back to such a group, the Huguenots, who fled France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. But it isn't just the Roman Catholic Church that is to be blamed. The Church of England has also done much to suppress the Gospel and persecute God's people. At one time Christians could find themselves facing arrest and jail, if their gathering wasn't sanctioned by the official church. Today things are much different, at least in this country. We have laws that protect our freedom to worship, although there are those that would seek to do away with them. But the Gospel will be preached unto the ends of the earth, the Lord promised that.

When it comes to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, that the Pope is the representative of Jesus Christ on earth, there is no doubt that he is 'an' antichrist. For the word 'anti' can mean 'in place of', and as 'Vicar of Christ' he is claiming to stand in place of Christ. But the Scriptures teach us that we should call no man "Father", for we have one Father who is in Heaven (Matthew 23:9). And according to Scripture, Jesus Christ is the head of the body, the Church (Colossians 1:18). The Pope may also be 'antichrist', meaning

'opposed to Christ', for as representative of the Roman Catholic Church, he is accountable for how his denomination stands in relation to the person of Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches us that the "spirit of antichrist" is already in the world, and so it should be no surprise that we should have such churches that are operating against the will of God and the spread of the Gospel (1st John 4:3).

I do not believe the Pope is 'the' Antichrist, the individual mentioned in the Bible. But it is possible that the Vatican system may play a big part in end time prophecy, for many prophecy scholars see a direct link between the Roman Catholic Church, which rides the beast of Europe, and the harlot of Revelation 17. Many Catholics also believe that the 'last Pope' could be an 'anti-Pope', who will be inspired by Satan and will herald in the tribulation period. A Catholic Bishop who lived in my home town of Bangor, Bishop Malachy , is said to have prophesied that either this present Pope or the next could be the last Pope. Of the last Pope, Malachy said,
"In extreme persecution, the seat of the Holy Roman Church will be occupied by Peter the Roman, who will feed the sheep through many tribulations, at the term of which the city of seven hills will be destroyed, and the formidable Judge will judge his people. The End".
Revelation 17 prophesies of the destruction of the city of seven hills, on which the harlot sits. Rome has been known throughout history as the city which sits on seven hills.

The Bible states that this false religious system that will be judged by God is known as the "Mother of Harlots", Revelation 17:5. So we can see that this false religious system is the mother of other false religious systems. And unfortunately many of the churches which were formed following the reformation have done worse than the system they came out of. For they had light, but they have chosen to reject it, and are seeking once again to bring themselves into spiritual bondage. Which brings me to this next article. The largely Protestant World Council of Churches has said that by the middle of this century, they hope that all denominations will have communion with each other, healing a rift that has divided Christendom for some 400 years. Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia made the comments following a private audience with Pope Ratzinger, and is expected to join with the leaders of other denominations for an ecumenical prayer service.

Quote: *"Kobia said he hoped the churches would reach such unity by mid-century "that Christians everywhere, regardless of their confessional affiliations, can pray and worship together and feel welcome to share in the Lord's Table at every church." "By this example, the church can help humanity to overcome all divisions and people of the world be able to live together in peace and harmony regardless of their backgrounds and identities," he said. Benedict made no mention of Kobia's call during their meeting and*

stuck to his usual statement of hope that Christian unity "will be ever more fully realised in our time."

As we can see, the harlot's children are once again seeking to be reunited with their mother church. And I believe that through this reunification, God will be able to judge this whole satanic system. There is only one true Church. It's not the Roman Catholic Church. It's not the Church of England. It's not even my own church. The true Church is comprised of all those who have trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation. Trust in Him for salvation today.

Colossians 1:18
And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Source Irish News , Reuters , Wikipedia , Catholic Pages