

Biblical Protest and Witness Await Pope's UK Visit

By Richard Bennett

The Pope's visit begins in Edinburgh on Thursday morning, September 16th, when upon arrival he will be received at Holyrood House by the Queen. The main route after his visit with the Queen is to be along Princes Street where a large number of people are expected to gather. An actor has been hired by the Catholic Church to play the part of John Knox in front of the pope-mobile as it proceeds along Princes Street. Here Knox must be presented falsely, for the real John Knox did not kowtow to any Roman Catholic prelate nor even greet such persons. Historically, by God's grace, the real John Knox helped to wipe Catholicism out of Scotland, where for 450 years it had been entrenched. The highest purpose of the great Reformer was that the Bible and the Gospel of grace should have free course in Scotland and across the world. By presenting Knox in pageantry, the Papacy is attempting to portray him as a visible herald of Scotland's impending return to the papal fold. Thus, like a conqueror, the Pontiff is to parade along Princes Street. Knox is being used as a sop to the ecumenists. The true Evangelicals, like Knox, are having none of it. Their preparations for the Pope's visit are most promising.

Evangelical Scotland Prepares

Many Evangelicals are planning to assemble at the north end of Princes Street in front of the Scottish Records Office where tables will be placed next to the Duke of Wellington monument. From these tables, Evangelicals will move among the crowds, witnessing as they go. They will be equipped with various items of Gospel literature including about 30,000 copies of the tract, "What Every Catholic Should Know" and more than 2,000 copies of the tract, "Are You Right with God?" They also plan to have available about 600 copies of the testimony booklet, "From Tradition to Truth: A Priest's Story." The witnessing is planned to begin between 8:00am and 9:00am, as crowds are expected to be arriving early. The Pope is expected to pass en route between 11:30am and 12:30pm.

After a time at Cardinal O'Brien's palace, the Pope will travel to Glasgow for an open-air Mass at Bellahouston Park in the evening. Some Evangelicals from Edinburgh, knowing that the motorway near Glasgow will be closed by the police in the late afternoon, are to leave the city before 2:00pm. The Pope is expected to be in Bellahouston Park between 5:00pm and 6:00pm, which has a maximum capacity of 220,000 people. The plan is to have at least 200 willing Christian evangelists there. The call is going out to Edinburgh, Glasgow, and other places, including Ireland, that more helpers are needed to reach many perishing souls with the Gospel of God's grace. An Evangelical leader that is organizing the witness and outreach has confirmed that the respective chief constables in Edinburgh and Glasgow are co-operative regarding the Evangelical proposals for both cities. The organizers have emphasized the importance of earnest and fervent prayer before and throughout the witnessing that is to take place during the papal visit. Their plans for prayer are to culminate in prayer meetings that have been arranged at Magdalen Chapel in Edinburgh on Wednesday evening, September 15th at 7:00pm, and at Anniesland Reformed Baptist Church, 4 Herschell Street, Anniesland, Glasgow, on the same Wednesday 15th at 7:00pm.

Evangelical England Prepares

In London, the Evangelical preparations are also gearing up. Fourteen UK Christian societies have organized outreaches to Catholics as well as peaceful protests during the proposed State visit. These groups, under the leadership of Christian Watch organization and The Protestant Truth Society, are scheduled to be at each event of the papal visit to give a Gospel witness. Like the Edinburgh outreach, these stalwarts are being equipped with our tracts, "Are You Right with God?" and "What Every Catholic Should Know." Both of these tracts have been specially published and printed in London by Christian Watch and The Protestant Truth Society. They will also have UK contact information, including an email address that has been created for the events. For the first time ever, the tract, "Are You Right with God?" has been published and posted online. It can be seen and downloaded at: <http://www.areyourightwithgod.com/>. The download and print options are given as well.

Besides these tracts, the testimony booklet, "From Tradition to Truth: A Priest's Story" will be distributed among the crowds, especially in English, with some in Spanish, and Polish. It is encouraging that these Christian societies have called on people and churches to take some vacation from work in order to witness at each event. Retired and unemployed Evangelicals are also being asked to help. It is heartening to know that some stalwarts are endeavoring to have DVDs made of the outreach, and to make efforts to be interviewed by secular media during the visit.

Westminster Hall, Westminster Abbey and Westminster Cathedral

On Friday September 17th at Parliament Square, the Pope will enter Westminster Hall. This area will be sealed off and not open to the public. After addressing Parliament, the Pope will go to Westminster Abbey where he will meet with Church of England's Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, and English Bishops. There Evangelicals have arranged for a protest and witnessing area. They will be joined by others who will have been witnessing and handing out tracts from late in the morning. There they will join the protest and continue to hand out tracts. Thus there will be a fixed Evangelical presence outside the Abbey witnessing, distributing literature and displaying Scripture banners, while rotating preachers proclaim the Word of truth. The message will be given that true Christians stand on the Bible alone and refuse to accept false manifestations of Christianity and false gospels. The clear Gospel message of grace will be given as the only remedy to such false gospels. At the same time, "mobile Christians" will be moving in small groups among the crowds in the vicinity of Parliament Square and Victoria Street and all streets leading off the square. These small groups will have intercommunicating mobile phone contact, in case overly zealous police or others attempt to prevent their Evangelical witness.

Then on Saturday morning, September 18th, the same mobile teams will evangelize around the Victoria train station and different coach stations looking for incoming 'pilgrims.' They will also evangelize around the access routes to the Catholic Westminster Cathedral for the papal Mass. Those witnessing will first meet at 7:00am in Westminster Baptist Church, 100 Horseferry Road, London. After a time of prayer and

preparations, they will begin witnessing at Westminster Cathedral, not far away at 42 Francis Street, at 8:15am.

Evangelizing at the Catholic Prayer Vigil and on Victoria Street

Later on Saturday at the Hyde Park Catholic prayer vigil, Evangelicals will be at hand to witness at the entrance and exits of the park. Evangelicals from Westminster Baptist Church will concentrate on Victoria Street, for the whole the papal visit. This thoroughfare has busy access points to mainline and metro Victoria train stations and is a prime location for evangelism. It is the very street where the focal point of London's Roman Catholicism, Westminster Cathedral, is located. Thus each day members of Westminster Baptist Church will do extensive witnessing. This is their 'home ground,' as they have throughout the year, a regular Saturday witness on Victoria Street. They are, however, especially energized to reach out to the Catholic pilgrims at these momentous events. They look to the Lord to see the fulfillment of what is proclaimed in Isaiah 55:11, "*My word...shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*" You are encouraged by the organizers to register your name on their support list at: www.popesukvisit.co.uk/support For those who wish to get more details, to register for a particular event or to get telephone contact numbers for Edinburgh, Glasgow or London, please check the Website: <http://www.popesukvisit.co.uk/events/>

Evangelical Protest Takes to Print

Further, Christian organizations led by The Protestant Truth Society are issuing a "Joint Protest against the 2010 Papal Visit." It is to be presented to the Queen and the Government. It will also be published in a leading national newspaper, *The Times*, which has agreed to carry the Protest as an advertisement. The text of the Protest follows:

Joint Protest Against the 2010 Papal Visit to the United Kingdom

Remembering Martin Luther's historic protest in 1517 against the errors of the Church of Rome, we the undersigned protest against the state visit of the Pope to the United Kingdom. The Pope claims to be the supreme head of the universal church and that all governments should be subject to him. There is only one head of the universal church and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. No man can claim that title. In the United Kingdom, the Queen is the Supreme Governor of the Church of England and is pledged to uphold the Church of Scotland. She is the head of state and, together with the British Parliament; we accept no other temporal authority. We reject the Pope's absurd pretensions to power over governments and churches. In particular, we reject his blasphemous claim to infallibility. God alone is infallible. We affirm that there is only one mediator between God and men – the man Christ Jesus. At Calvary, Jesus Christ died for the sins of His people. That sacrifice was made once for all and can never be repeated. Repentant sinners find forgiveness by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone. The Bible, the inspired Word of God, is our supreme rule and contains no shred of evidence for the false and idolatrous doctrines of the Roman Church. Thanking God for the great outburst of spiritual light that shone during the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century we declare: The Pope cannot mediate between man and God. Neither Mary nor the 'Saints' can make

intercession for us. Jesus Christ is our only advocate with God the Father. The so-called sacrifice of the mass is, as the Articles of the Church of England make plain, a ‘blasphemous fable’ and a ‘dangerous deceit’. God alone can absolve our sins and the confessional is a fraud. There is no biblical authority for the Roman doctrine of purgatory. There are only two possible destinations for men and women after death – heaven or hell. The papal visit is a betrayal of our Protestant Constitution and of the Gospel that sustains it. Christ promised, ‘*He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.*’ He alone is King of kings.

Witnessing at Birmingham

Christian outreach is also planned for Birmingham on the final day of the visit. This outreach may be on ploughed and fertile soil, as festering scandals appear to be brewing there. On Sunday, September 19th, the Pope is carded to beatify John Henry Newman in Birmingham. *The Independent Catholic News* proudly announced on its Website,

“...on Sunday 19 September 2010 the Beatification of this holy pastoral parish priest will take place during a Mass celebrated by Pope Benedict XVI in beautiful Cofton Park in Birmingham adjacent to the Oratory Retreat at Rednal as it is known. It was here that Cardinal Newman found a place of quiet and retreat for work and reflection. The Mass is scheduled to start at 10am and last approximately two hours and be attended by 70,000 or more pilgrims from many countries throughout the world.”¹

Catholic participants at the Oratory, however, are deeply upset. Damian Thompson writes in the *UK Telegraph*,

“Parishioners of the Birmingham Oratory have written an open letter to the Oratorian priest acting as the Vatican’s delegate to the Congregation, asking about the fate of two priests and a brother who – though not accused or suspected of any sexual impropriety – were mysteriously sent into exile in May. This is a complex business, but it strikes me that the Birmingham Oratory really needs to display some transparency now, rather than let the matter fester until Pope Benedict XVI visits them in September.”²

Thus, a strange matter surrounds the final scene of the Pope’s schedule, as possible shocking scandals appear to be surfacing near the site of Newman’s grave in Birmingham. Indeed, throughout Europe, the UK and Ireland, Catholic clerical sexual scandals have been a serious issue with which Pope Benedict XVI has not dealt to their satisfaction in any appreciable way – not when he was Cardinal Ratzinger, and not now. This issue has become more heated as his pontificate has proceeded.

Secular Sources Involved in the Fray

Even the BBC has arranged for a documentary to be shown about the Catholic clerical abuse scandals to coincide with the papal visit to the UK. It is to be called “Benedict: Trials of a Pope” and is to feature what the BBC calls “the real Joseph Ratzinger.” As the UK *Guardian* newspaper reports,

¹ <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=16378> 8/7/10

² <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/damianthompson/100048643/papal-visit> 8/4/10

“Film-maker Mark Dowd is to travel to Pope Benedict XVI’s homeland of Bavaria and the programme includes a rare interview with his brother, Georg Ratzinger, who reveals how he has been affected by the abuse scandals. The hour-long BBC2 documentary also looks at how the Catholic Church has tried to ‘fashion a positive message about Pope Benedict by training up an army of young religious spin doctors called Catholic Voices.’³

Those preparing to witness in the UK had not really expected London’s *Sunday Times* to present Catholicism in its historical context in a piece that was not inherently favorable to Catholicism. However, English secular historian David Starkey wrote just such a piece called “The Pope wants his church back.”⁴ Writing in October of last year regarding an historic papal announcement, Starkey noted,

“The Vatican’s announcement last week [Oct. 20, 2009] that it would welcome back disaffected Anglicans after centuries of schism was a calculated move to coincide with the 500th anniversary of Henry VIII’s accession.... What better moment to indicate that it believes the English Reformation, which was irrevocably set in motion during Henry’s reign, can – and should – be reversed?

“...the anniversary of Henry’s coronation day, June 24, [was] an occasion that the Vatican had chosen to mark with the publication of an extraordinary facsimile from its archives, of the petition of the English nobility to Rome, as part of Henry’s effort to gain an annulment of his marriage to his Catholic first wife, Catherine of Aragon, in order to marry Anne Boleyn.... Everyone was aware of the significance of producing such a document at that particular moment...it highlighted the Vatican’s sense of history, its feeling of unfinished business, the notion that, as Europe’s oldest political institution, it needed to settle its score with Europe’s second-oldest political institution: the British monarchy.

“The Pope trying to hook the Anglican flock is nothing new, of course. In the late 16th century, terror tactics used by Catholics to bully the new Protestant nation back to where it belonged were very similar to the plotting of extreme Islam: the Spanish Armada, the Gunpowder Plot, assassination attempts. But their machinations were futile....”

Although Starkey does not recognize the hand of the Lord in the affairs of men through His Gospel and His Written Word, yet he concisely summarizes the outward differences that Catholicism and Evangelicalism made on northern Europe and the United Kingdom in particular when he writes,

“England, and later the United Kingdom, would never have risen to such great power in the 18th and 19th centuries had it still been a Catholic country. The Reformation was ultimately ‘a good thing’: the making of a nation. Protestant concerns – the power of the written word, logic, argument, austerity, work – propelled countries such as the Netherlands, Scotland, northern Germany, America, and of course us, to modernity and the industrial revolution.... Here was the cradle of industrialization:

³ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2010/aug/03/bbc-papal-visit> 8/7/2010

⁴ David Starkey *The Sunday Times*, October 25, 2009 on-line accessed: 8/7/10
<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/article6888806.ece>

out of it rose manufactured cotton and trains that ran on time, and the Protestant work ethic was the iron rod that drove it. Catholicism, by contrast, was an economic catastrophe from the 16th century onwards. The archetypical Catholic countries – Italy and Spain – went into a half millennium of sleep, dulled by the Catholic sensibilities of leisure, romance, sensuality, smells and bells....”

Actually, by the early 19th century, the Papacy had developed a new plan of attack that targeted the Bible-believing English through the institution of the Church of England. The Papacy instigated a calculated scheme within the Church of England by which it was to be made to look as much like the Roman Catholic Church as possible.⁵ And it was John Henry Newman, to be beatified by the Pope on September 19th, who led the Oxford Movement that carried out the covert and sustained onslaught. The plan was by craft and, at times, outright devious deeds to replace teaching the great doctrinal truths of the Bible and the Thirty Nine Articles with teaching that emphasized outward appearance and rituals. This is the primary strategy by which the Papacy has divided, and has now nearly conquered the Church of England. This particular tactic has required nearly two centuries to bring forth its wicked fruit. But as Starkey notes, the Romanizing change is not only clearly visible on the Church of England but also on the population,

“During the 20th century the ritual and ceremonial aspect of the faith flourished: the church evolved into a national fest of English respectability, church on Sundays, prayers during assembly. The courtly display at the coronation of Elizabeth II was the defining moment of this English kind of Shinto.

“and then, disaster.... Instead of [the Church of England] being a national institution, it degenerated into a disunited collection of quarrelling Christian sects, Anglo-Catholic versus Protestant fundamentalists, women-haters versus gay-haters. And Britain had changed, too. Out had gone the Protestant stiff upper lip. In had come ‘Dianification’: the advent of mass emotion, outpourings of hysteria. The Strictly Come Dancing generation is all smells and bells in a soft, fluffy, Blairite world, a world that is superficially, as the Blairs themselves demonstrate, sympathetic towards Catholicism....

“Today the [Anglican] Church is a shadow of what it used to be, rotten from within. Once, the Archbishop of Canterbury was as important as the prime minister. That’s not the case today. Instead, in Canterbury they sell an archiepiscopal teddy bear – although the bear isn’t quite as fuzzy as Archbishop Rowan Williams himself.”

Last year’s announcement by the Vatican, that it would now receive into full communion whole Anglican communities “while enabling them to maintain the liturgical and spiritual unique distinctives of their tradition”⁶ demonstrates the effectiveness of the papal scheme stealthily set in motion in 1844. Now Pope Benedict XVI is to arrive in Edinburgh Glasgow, London, and Birmingham, to attempt conquest of the British Monarchy, the British Parliament, and the United Kingdom. Starkey’s conclusion in his column last year sounded the alarm regarding the Pope’s survey of his desired prize.

“But perhaps they [those sympathetic towards Catholicism] have not tasted the hard edge of the faith. They have not encountered its magisterium, the power to impose

⁵ Walter Walsh, *The Secret History of the Oxford Movement*, Fourth Ed. 1898 p. 263 and elsewhere.

⁶ http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=34677 8/25/10

doctrine at will, papal infallibility. Up till now, Rome has been handling Anglicanism with the velvet glove. Traditionally, however, it has a very iron hand. Pope Benedict XVI was the ‘panzer cardinal’, the gritty enforcer behind the friendly public face of John Paul II. As Pope, he’s turned into a teddy bear – but it would serve the Anglican high order well to remember that this particular teddy bear is not fuzzy around the edges. Eventually, the noose will tighten.”

The Scottish and English Bible-believing stalwarts understand very clearly what they are facing. This is not a new battle; rather, it has deep historical roots.

The Historical Biblical Significance

The papal visit to the UK and the energetic Evangelical response show that both sides understand the present occasion to be an historically significant one. To prepare for the calling of His people from the Catholic Church at the time of the Reformation, the Sovereign Lord used Luther, Calvin, Knox, and many others to bring about witnessing across Europe. As a result, there was a true biblical regeneration of souls by the Holy Spirit. All down through church history, at different times of revivals, the Lord has used the Gospel of grace for the salvation of many. It is now very possible that the Lord will use the witnessing and the thousands of tracts that will have been given out to bring about salvation of many by His Gospel of grace. The upcoming events in the UK are already having a distinct influence in energizing evangelical life and witness in Britain and Scotland. Change appears to have already begun at the household of God!

Consequently, Evangelicals in the UK and across the world are praying for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit at this historic time. Specifically, the need is expressed for the Lord God’s unsurpassed grace and power to again work mightily in the UK even as these believers’ arch-enemy in the age-old form of the Pope comes to herald his victory over them and their biblical faith. The spiritual “Battle of Britain” has been enjoined. “*Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered!*”⁷ So goes up the cry of and for the believers in the UK.

There is a distinctive biblical basis for the confidence of believers to expect the Lord to move in the present battle. It is the will of God the Father that Jesus Christ as their Mediator should have all power in heaven and in the affairs of men on earth.⁸ Thus, He is at the present time the Mediator of believers in the affairs of His spiritual kingdom in the UK. Jesus Christ is the Lord of all graces for His people. It pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell in Him⁹ so that He may impart “*grace for grace*” to believers to keep them continually equipped for the situations they face.¹⁰ Thus the UK evangelists can have confidence that their work to spread the Gospel of grace will not be in vain. Rather, the Lord Himself will bring fruitfulness in His own time. With them we can confidently pray that with planned witnessing and manifold tract distribution, the events about to unfold might bring about an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that will turn the

⁷ Psalm 68:1

⁸ Matthew 28:18

⁹ “*For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*” Colossians 2:9

¹⁰ “*of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.*” John 1:16

hearts of many unto Him. *“He [The Holy Spirit] will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”*¹¹ The Spirit works powerfully, and with evident results. When a person is brought to truly mourn his sin, to groan under the burden of his own corruption, to long for Christ Jesus, and to cry to God the Father to rescue him from his helpless state, then he knows that the Spirit of the living God has moved him. Pray then to the Sovereign Lord that true Christian life may be forged out of these events about to take place. As the Bible says, *“Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”*¹²

The purpose and design of God from all eternity was that grace should come to sinful man in and through Christ Jesus. Emphatically, grace in its most proper and genuine sense is free, as the Scripture says, *“being justified freely by His grace.”*¹³ Then, finally, grace is sovereign – because God bestows it upon whom He pleases. The reign of sin and false religion is overcome by the reign of God’s grace, as the Scripture says, *“even so might grace reign!”*¹⁴ The abundance of grace far surpasses the evils of sin. Once sinners believe on Christ Jesus as their only surety before the All Holy God, they will find themselves not only freed from their sins, but made to *“reign in life.”* *“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.”*¹⁵ ♦

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<http://www.sermonaudio.com/go/212>

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¹¹ John 16:8

¹² Romans 5:20

¹³ Romans 3:24

¹⁴ Romans 5:21

¹⁵ Romans 5:17