

Papal Trip Ignites Hate-Mongers

The following is a sample of the all-out attack on Pope Benedict XVI and the Catholic Church prior to the pope's visit to the U.K. All quotes appear in original form:

Bernard Wynne, a spokesman for Catholic Voices for Reform, *Telegraph*, 9/8/2010:

"The church, I think, is deeply misogynist and we have to change that."

"There is a whole series of issues ... about the equality of women, but also there is also an issue of sexual orientation and how in fairness to what the church suggests, one could only say that it is intolerant of people of a different sexual orientation."

British Humanist Association website:

"The BHA, working with other members of the Protest the Pope campaign, is using the state visit of the Pope to the UK to highlight some key objections to the negative effects that the policies and practices of the Vatican and the Holy See have on human rights; including restricting access to contraception and abortion and failing to endorse equality for gay people. Through our organisation of Relief-0-Matic, the BHA is taking the opportunity of the Pope's state visit to promote the humanist values of human rights and equality that are opposed internationally by the Vatican, reinforced by the power it gains in posing as a state."

Andrew Copson, British Humanist Association Chief Executive website:

"The Protest the Pope campaign is calling on the British

government to disassociate itself from the Pope's intolerant teachings on issues such as women's rights, gay equality and the use of condoms to prevent the spread of HIV. On these and many other issues, Benedict is out of step with the majority of British people, including most Catholics."

"The Pope's attitude to lesbian and gay people is just one of the many stances that the Vatican State holds which are damaging to human dignity and human rights. Its opinions on AIDS, condom use and abortion have far reaching and devastating effects on the lives and human rights of millions more people."

"In many counties around the world, the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals are effectively negated because of the pressure that the Catholic Church puts on governments. The head of the Vatican State should not be afforded the honour of a state visit and it is this message which we will be highlighting at London Pride."

Naomi Phillips, British Humanist Association Head of Public Affairs website:

"The numerous, costly and exclusive religious activities that the Pope will undertake in September are completely illegitimate for a State visit, and one that the British people are being asked to pay for. The Pope is either making an official State visit, in which case the Vatican and the Holy See should be scrutinised on their damaging doctrines, or he is making a private, pastoral visit to proselytise. They cannot have it both ways."

Pepper Harow, Protest the Pope:

"We really think that we got the message across that the Pope is not welcome on a State visit. His outspoken state policies on homosexuality, condoms, education and abortion, as well as the child abuse scandal, continue to affect the rights of millions of individuals across the world and mean that he

should not be given the honour of a State visit.”

Atheism UK website:

“This is yet another example of hypocrisy of the church. What we have here is an institution that claims moral superiority and preaches respect for life. That it is able to abandon its own teachings when it suits them is deplorable and dishonest. It seems the church does not care what crimes it commits, just so long as they do not get caught. It’s clear that the Catholic Church places the survival of the Institution above the welfare of ordinary men, women and children.”

“We do not wish to see a man who calls himself ‘God’s Vicar on Earth’ and is thereby purely deluded, coming to this country and spreading his poisonous and demonstrable false doctrine to the people of this country, not to mention that he is implicated in the cover up of child rape and that he is making British taxpayers pay for the privilege in these financially troubled times.”

Peter Tatchell, *Telegraph* 9/8/2010:

“The Pope’s condemnation of sex abuse by clergy will never be taken seriously until he agrees to pass to the police in countries around world the evidence the Vatican has compiled on child molesting priests, bishops and cardinals. Keeping these files secret is wrong and collusion with criminal acts.”

“Benedict XVI put the interests and image of the church before the welfare of children and young people. He is unfit to remain as Pope. He should resign.”

Richard Dawkins, *New Humanist Magazine*:

“Go home to your tinpot Mussolini-concocted principality, and don’t come back.”

Sinead O’Connor, *The Guardian* 9/5/2010:

“‘Catholic’ has become a word associated with negativity, with abuse, with violence, but the essence of Catholicism is beautiful. The fact is, tragically, it’s been brought into disrepute by the people running it.”

“Benedict is in no position to call himself Christ’s representative. The pope should stand down, the Vatican should stand down, not only because of the cover-up, they’re incredibly arrogant, they’re anti-Christian. They don’t have the remotest relationship with God.”

Geoffrey Robertson, *The Guardian* 9/7/2010:

“Canon law has been allowed to trump criminal law in countries throughout the world. This is a very serious matter, the pope through his pretensions to statehood refuses to acknowledge that child sex abuse is a serious crime as well as a sin.”

“The Catholic church must abandon canon law as a punishment for priests who commit crimes.”

Derek Lennard, The Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association:

“No-one in the LGBT community needs a lesson on morality from a religious organisation that’s presided over the disgraceful abuse of children and young adults – not to mention the alleged cover-up that followed.”

Humanist Society of Scotland:

“There are particular grounds in Northern Ireland for opposition to the visit. First of all, there is strong evidence that Pope Benedict was complicit in the cover-up of the abuse of children throughout the island by continuing to insist that accusations of paedophilia within the priesthood should be treated by the Church’s own exclusive jurisdiction. Secondly, the Pope’s insistence that the Catholic Church maintains its own schools is prolonging segregated education, which is detrimental to the future of peace.”

Keith Porteous Wood, executive director of the National Secular Society, *The Irish Post*, 9/8/2010:

“This anti-Catholicism of which Adamus complains is shared by most British Catholics, sickened by their church hierarchy’s dogma driven policies on contraception, homosexuality and even abortion. That is why Mass attendance here has halved in just 20 years and why only a quarter of Catholics agree with the official line on abortion – and fewer still on homosexuality and contraception.”

Cristina Odone, *Sunday Telegraph* 9/5/2010:

“These are different times. Catholics have watched in horror as, almost daily and almost in every country, broken men and women have come forth to tell of their ordeal at the hands of abusive priests.”

Julie Burchill, *Independent* 9/8/2010:

“How broad-minded this country is, when we consider that the British taxpayer will shortly be shelling out millions of pounds to protect a former member of the Hitler Youth who believes Anglicans will burn in Hell when the Pope visits this country next week – Just after we commemorate the beginning of the Nazi Blitz on this country! Tolerant or WHAT!”

“The behaviour of the Church during the Second World War, and to the Jews generally, was vile – and REALLY makes me wonder if it wouldn’t have been possible to pick a Pope who HADN’T been in the Hitler Youth? Closer to home, let alone legions of child-raping holy men, only last week a leading light in the Catholic Church defended its role in moving a priest believed to be involved in three bombings which killed nine people, including Catholics, in the village of Claudy, Co Londonderry, in 1972. The youngest was an eight-year-old girl: ‘suffer little children,’ indeed.”

“Being a Catholic means always having to say you’re sorry –

but also being guaranteed that you'll be forgiven to go on and do all the vile things you've done ad nauseum."

The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland , *New Scotsman* 6/10/2010:

"A statement said they find it 'offensive that this visit results from an invitation to the Pope as Head of State, giving him that recognition and pretended legitimacy which he claims in opposition to the principles of the Reformation.'"

"It adds: 'We deny that he is the head of the Christian Church or that he has any civil power which should receive recognition by any State, particularly one which has renounced his pretended jurisdiction.'"

"Describing the Papacy as 'deceitful and unrighteous,' the Free Presbyterians highlighted recent global exposure of child abuse by Roman Catholic clergy, and suggest the Pope has connived in a cover-up."

***The Independent*, 4/2/2010:**

"The Pope, to put it baldly, is now too embattled and too damaged by the worldwide revelations of abuse and cover-up to be able to come to this country without controversy, protests and distaste."

"This is not simply a matter of the specific charges brought against him for complicity in a cover-up of child abuse in Germany and Wisconsin when Archbishop of Munich and then head of the relevant Vatican department. The papal office can claim that he was not directly responsible for the German case and that he had not, as reported, actually stopped the proceedings against the Wisconsin priest."

"But that is to relegate the crimes to the area of professional misconduct rather than criminal acts. The problem for Pope Benedict – or Joseph Ratzinger as he then was – is

that he has always been a bureaucrat of the church and seen its problems in terms of institutional discipline.”

Reverend Ian Paisley, Sky News 9/9/2010:

“When the Roman Catholic people are torn asunder because of this matter that the Pope has in many ways closed an eye to, it is time for the Protestant people also to support them.”

National Secular Society Website:

“You can show your disapproval of Ratzinger by protesting against the legal bans that the Vatican has fought for on abortion and stem cell research. And also for his obdurate, and breathtakingly irresponsible, opposition to contraception. It fuels a population growth that is unsustainable. Women in poverty-stricken circumstances in countries with dwindling resources are doomed to have large families that they cannot support and who frequently starve. And his using all means, even dishonest ones, to prevent condom use causing untold numbers to die unnecessarily of AIDS because the only known barrier against the disease, condoms, is denied to them.”

“Gay people from around the country will also be coming to put two fingers up to Benedict’s constant defamation and insults. He calls gay relationships – however loving and committed they may be – ‘intrinsically disordered’ and ‘morally evil’. He even says that sympathising with gay people who are being persecuted is a sin. Make no mistake, the Vatican has declared war on gay people and this is the time to start the fightback.”

“Ratzinger is, without doubt, guilty of enabling this culture of secrecy and betrayal to continue throughout the thirty years he has been at the top of the Vatican hierarchy both as a Cardinal and as Pope. He has done little to correct it because he still considers that the reputation of the church is more important than the future lives of children who are mercilessly abused, indeed raped, by his priests.”

Terry Sanderson, president of the National Secular Society:

“I cannot believe that we are lauding the head of an organisation that not only insults and denigrates homosexuals, tries to restrict the rights of women by banning contraception and abortion, but deliberately lies about the effectiveness of condoms in the fight against AIDS. This invitation is a rebuke to all those Britons who are incensed by the horrific revelations that are emerging daily about the Vatican’s activities. The Government should be sharply criticising rather than welcoming this man.”

“We are not going to try to arrest the pope, but we do want him to know that his teachings are profoundly inhumane and damaging to so many people.”

“Protest the Pope started as a protest about the cost of this visit, but others have joined that have different issues with Ratzinger – women who want to take their rightful place in the churches life, priests who want to see an end to the celibacy rules, gay people who are – when they are indentified – driven from the seminaries and the priesthood.”