



News Release

13 September 2010
12 noon, for immediate release.

State Visit of Pope - a betrayal

In the United Kingdom, our Protestant Constitution has served us well and continues to do so. It acknowledges the authority and standards of the Bible as God's true and inspired Word for the good of our nation.

The Church of England, as our established, national church, is founded on what is taught in the Bible and as loyal members of the Church of England who rejoice in that teaching; we oppose the forthcoming visit of Pope Benedict XVI and the status being accorded to him.

We recognise that on various moral issues, the Pope has not capitulated to the pressures of humanism and secularism. However, the historic doctrinal and other conflicts between the Church of England and the Church of Rome have created divisions which remain as deep and as unbridgeable as ever.

For instance, the Pope claims complete authority over all churches and governments. There is no justification for such claims since they are contrary to the Bible. The Church of England long ago repudiated these claims in its Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, which, under English law, constitute its doctrinal basis. In particular, Article XXXVII states "the Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this Realm of England". The Lord Jesus Christ alone is the infallible head of the universal Christian church, not the Pope. All governments are ultimately accountable to Him alone, not to the Pope.

Our nation decisively rejected the Papacy's claims to authority in the Sixteenth Century and has resisted them ever since. It should not endorse those claims now by welcoming Pope Benedict XVI, either as a head of state asserting authority over all other states, or as supreme head of the universal church.

A further ongoing conflict between the Church of Rome and the Church of England relates to the nature of eternal salvation from sin. It is the established teaching of the Church of England, in accordance with the Bible, that all men and women are sinners in God's eyes and can only be reconciled to God by God's grace alone, through faith alone, in the Lord Jesus Christ alone. As a result, neither the Pope nor any other priest, can procure salvation or act as mediator between God and mankind. However, the Church of Rome continues to reject the Church of England's historic biblical position and since the Council of Trent, has declared anyone subscribing to it to be anathema. In its ongoing rejection of the biblical gospel of salvation, the Church of Rome wrongly continues to lead men and women into placing their trust in the works and sacraments of the church, or in their own works or merits. Salvation from sin is not to be found that way; rather, it is to be found when men and women place their trust in the finished saving work of Christ alone, who

bore the punishment for sin in his death on the Cross, substituting Himself for sinners and securing the salvation of all who put their trust in Him.

Welcoming Pope Benedict XVI on a state visit is therefore a betrayal of our Protestant Constitution and of the true and good news of salvation in Christ alone, as revealed in the Bible. He, not the Pope, is Lord of lords, King of kings and the one true Saviour.

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Church Society exists to uphold biblical teaching and to promote and defend the character of the Church of England as a reformed and national Church. For further information visit www.churchsociety.org