

Tony Blair: Whose 'poodle' is he now?

During his last years in office as British Prime Minister, Tony Blair was often characterised in the media and by the press as being President Bush's 'poodle' because of his slavish support of the American-led war against Iraq.

On the BBC website http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/2721513.stm part of the article there, dated 3rd February 2003, reads as follows

'He did not say so out loud - but Tony Blair wanted his backbenchers to believe he spent last weekend once again using his influence on George Bush not to rush into war....Some of his rebel backbenchers appeared to believe it and were reassured. Liberal Democrat leader Charles Kennedy, amongst others, was not so sure...Mr Kennedy, who likes to think he is speaking for the majority of the electorate on this issue, was touching on the jibe which falls readily to so many lips. **"Tony Blair is no more than George Bush's poodle."** It is a jibe that stings the prime minister and which he is desperate to nail. But he is fighting an uphill battle.

The opening lines of a Daily Mail article, dated 22nd July 2006, on http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/news.html?in_article_id=397106&in_page_id=1770 read as follows

'No one knows for sure if George W. Bush regards Tony Blair as his poodle - but he certainly addresses him as one. The Mail on Sunday can reveal that the President has greeted him with a cry of "Blair!" and told him: "You're my boy."

On a rather more irreverent website [<http://www.endthiswar.org/bushpoodle.htm>] there is a section devoted to 'Bush's poodle' and it includes the following under 'Bush's mean ole poodle'



Just hours after Tony Blair stood down as British Prime Minister on 27th June 2007 the following was reported on the BBC website http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/6244358.stm

'Tony Blair is to become a Middle East envoy working on behalf of the US, Russia, the UN and the EU. The announcement came just hours after he stood down as UK prime minister and shortly before it was announced he was to quit as a member of parliament...Mr Blair replaces the Quartet's previous envoy, former World Bank president James Wolfensohn who last year resigned in frustration at the lack of progress...Mr Blair's appointment comes at a time of heightened tension in the region'.

As he embarks on this daunting task of attempting to bring peace to the Middle East, will Tony Blair bring fresh, unbiased thinking to this role? In the months that have unfolded following his appointment the answer to that question has become quite evident and it is – **'No'**.

It has become crystal clear that Tony Blair is pursuing and promoting the aims and objectives of The Vatican. Prior to his standing down as British Prime Minister it was widely speculated that Tony Blair would, once he left office, convert to Roman Catholicism, the faith of his wife, Cherie. Whilst in office he regularly accompanied her to Mass and **one of the last engagements he undertook, as Prime Minister, was to visit Pope Benedict XVI in Rome.** This is how the Roman Catholic Zenit news agency reported his visit of 5th June 2007 – just 3 weeks before he resigned as prime Minister –



VATICAN CITY, JUNE 5, 2006 (Zenit.org).

The role of religion, **dialogue with Islam** and aid to Africa were among the issues addressed during Benedict XVI's audience with British Prime Minister Tony Blair. The "cordial" meeting, as it was later described by Vatican spokesman Joaquín Navarro Valls, was held Saturday morning in the Pope's private library and lasted about 35 minutes. According to a note issued by Navarro Valls, **the principal subject of the meeting was "the role of religion in politics and society."** In particular, "attention was given to the contribution that the shared values of religion can make to dialogue, especially with moderate Islam, and above all in the areas of solidarity and peace," according to the Vatican statement. This was the first meeting between Blair, an Anglican, and Benedict XVI since his election to the papacy. The prime minister arrived in the Vatican accompanied by his wife Cherie and their children. Cherie Blair, a Catholic, had been received in a private audience by the Pope on April 28.

A report in the Guardian [see <http://www.buzzle.com/editorials/4-8-2005-68266.asp>] on the funeral of Benedict's predecessor, Pope John Paul II stated –

'The prime minister, Tony Blair, arrived in the sun-filled square along with his wife, Cherie. They were joined by the heads of state from more than 80 countries, including leaders as diverse as the US president, George Bush, and the Iranian president, Mohammad Khatami. Prince Charles is attending the funeral in place of the Queen'.

After resigning as Prime Minister in June 2007 there was a brief 'honeymoon period' before predictions about an imminent conversion to Roman Catholicism once more began to appear in print. On the **AOL news** section for Friday, 9th November 2007 it was reported – **'Tony Blair is to convert to Roman Catholicism within weeks, it has been claimed. The former prime minister, whose wife Cherie and four children are Catholic, has long been expected to join the church after quitting Downing Street. According to The Tablet, a Catholic magazine, he is to be received into the church shortly by Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, the Archbishop of Westminster'**.

A similar report also appeared in the **Daily Mail** of the same date but also included **'Tony Blair is preparing to convert to Roman Catholicism within weeks...Mr Blair has received instruction from 2 priests, RAF chaplain, John Walsh and Father Mark O'Toole, the cardinal's secretary. A candidate for reception into the Catholic Church is usually received by their parish priest. The cardinal's involvement, as Archbishop of Westminster, would suggest Mr Blair's process of conversion began while he was in Downing Street'**.

In addition to the priestly names mentioned, other 'spiritual' influences have also been brought to bear upon Tony Blair. On **8th December 2007** the **Irish Times** carried an article titled **'The Converter'** and it began with these words **'If Tony Blair becomes a Catholic this month, he will be the latest high-profile convert to have Father Michael Seed as his spiritual adviser. Ben Quinn meets the "Scarlet Pimpernel" priest in Westminster Cathedral'**. Other extracts from the article read as follows –

'While no serving British Prime Minister has ever been a Catholic, the nearest thing was Blair's attendance, with his Catholic wife and children. At Masses said at Downing Street by Father Michael Seed. When that highly symbolic conversion eventually takes place – and most commentators think it will – the special role of the London-based priest with an Irish connection [according to the article he was given up for adoption by a 16-year-old Irish girl, Marie, 6 months after his birth in Manchester in 1957...Father Seed later found himself living briefly in Cork while studying for the priesthood] will be remembered along with that of a small coterie of other clergy. "We call him the Scarlet Pimpernel" chuckles one of the nuns who helps to run the beating heart of British Catholicism, Westminster Cathedral, as I wait to meet the 50-year-old Franciscan friar and unofficial Catholic chaplain to the House of Commons... The tag...is a world away from his role as ecumenical adviser to the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor.

Still, Father Seed's "string of celebrity scalps"...is impressive. The Conservative MPs John Gummer and Ann Widdecombe are among those he prepared to become Catholics and he is reported to have converted the former MP, Alan Clark [he of the infamous 'Diaries'] on his deathbed...the list of famous names who have contributed to his books...includes Hillary Clinton, the Duchess of Kent [a Royal convert to Roman Catholicism] Jilly Cooper, Sean Connery, John le Carre´ and the Dalai Lama...Unsurprisingly Father Seed remains tight-lipped on the subject of Blair...Father Seed laughs fondly as he recounts how [Ann] Widdecombe was received into the church. "She is known as 'the Popessa' he says affectionately. "When she became a Catholic she added things to the ceremony. You are only meant to say one sentence...But Ann then went on to say more, such as she believes in the Magisterium, the teachings of the Pope and all his successors.'

Clearly this Roman Catholic priest has been spectacularly successful in sowing 'the seeds' of Roman Catholicism in the corridors of political power at Westminster.

The predicted conversion of Tony Blair to Roman Catholicism officially occurred on Friday evening, 2^{1st} December 2007. This was how the **AOL news** section reported the event on Sunday 23rd December –

'Tony Blair has converted to Roman Catholicism, the former PM's official spokesman has confirmed. Mr Blair was received into the Catholic Church by the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, in the chapel of the Archbishop's House in Westminster on Friday night. Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor said: "I am very glad to welcome Tony Blair into the Catholic Church. For a long time he has been a regular worshipper at Mass with his family and in recent months he has been following a programme of formation to prepare for his reception into full communion." Monsignor Mark O'Toole, the cardinal's private secretary, led Mr Blair through his period of spiritual preparation before Friday night's ceremony. The cardinal added: "My prayers are with him, his wife and family at this joyful moment in their journey of faith together." The move comes after years of speculation that Mr Blair, whose wife Cherie and four children are Catholic, would convert from Anglicanism after he resigned from Number 10 in June.'

The Roman Catholic Zenit new agency made a brief reference to Mr Blair's conversion on Monday 24th December 2007 -

Holy See Welcomes Blair's Decision to Convert
VATICAN CITY, DEC. 23, 2007 (Zenit.org).-

'Tony Blair's decision to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church has been welcomed "with respect" by the Holy See, according to a Vatican spokesman. Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi... This is "good news that we welcome with respect," he said. "Catholics are glad to welcome into their community those who, through a serious and reflective journey, convert to Catholicism"... For his part, Archbishop Rowan Williams, the leader of the Anglican Communion, to which Blair had belonged, wished the convert every good in his spiritual journey.'

Having 'slipped the lead' of being known as '**Bush's poodle**' by resigning as British Prime Minister Mr Blair appears now to have transferred his loyalties to a new master.

No longer is he '**the President's poodle**' – he appears to be content now to be '**the Pope's poodle**'. On what grounds do I affix this appellation to Mr Blair? The following are extracts from an article by the Christian Post.

**Blair Holds Closed-Door Talks with
Religious Leaders to Combat Extremism**

By

Daniel Blake

Christian Post Correspondent

Monday 22nd October 2007

'LONDON – Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair has held closed meetings with a number of religious leaders to lay down plans for an international interfaith foundation designed to combat religious extremism. The foundation is being set up with the hope that it will help ease tensions between the world's major religions and help them to overcome common misunderstandings and misconceptions held against one another. Reports about the new initiative came as Blair prepared to speak to some of America's leading Roman Catholic bishops in New York – an event that has reignited rumours of his impending conversion from Anglicanism to Catholicism. "The tragedy is that Christians, Jews and Muslims are all Abrahamic religions," Blair has said. "We regard ourselves as children of Abraham but we have fought for so long." Blair's advisers have also recently held talks with the office of Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor, head of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, and representatives of the Archbishop of Canterbury, spiritual head of the worldwide Anglican Communion. The Muslim Council of Britain has also given its full support to the initiative.'

So, in what was virtually his first public pronouncement following his appointment as **'a Middle East envoy working on behalf of the US, Russia, the UN and the EU'** does Tony Blair come up with some new and original thinking on the problems of the Middle East – in a word - **'no'**. He has simply parroted the thinking of his new spiritual masters housed in The Vatican.

Where did this focus on the **'Abrahamic faiths/religions'** first find expression in modern times? On the website of the BNET research centre we find some very interesting information published **'Winter 2003'** on this link http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2751/is_74/ai_112411725

'The end is near. Before long, the College of Cardinals will have to elect a successor to Pope John Paul II. His will be a tough act to follow....Arguably, John Paul II has so far played a pivotal role in preventing the current conflict between radical Islamists and the West from degenerating into a global fracas between Islam and Christianity more generally. One of his pontificate's accomplishments has been the maintenance of relatively harmonious relations with most Muslim nations and moderate Islamic thinkers without jeopardizing Israel's existence. This topic merits a separate study; suffice it for now to point to a few remarkable events...It was John Paul II who introduced the concept of the "Abrahamic religions" as a family of faiths, sometimes courting the accusation that he blurred the uniqueness of Christ, truth incarnate. However, all major Christian denominations acknowledge the presence of elements--if not the fullness--of revealed truth in other religions, particularly in Islam. The underlying principle here is the Christian dictum, "God never leaves himself without witness", meaning in the present context that He has left His traces in other faiths as well. How the next pope handles this issue can be of vast geopolitical consequence.'

So, credit for this expression is given to the late John Paul II and the writer made reference to the importance of how his successor would deal with this issue. Let's see how Pope Benedict XVI has 'handled this issue'.

In December 2006 the current Pope made what turned out to be a rather controversial 4-day visit to Turkey. On an Islamic Internet Newspaper called **'Pakistan Link'** the Editorial of 15 December 2006 that can be viewed on <http://www.pakistanlink.com/Editor/12152006.htm> included the following -

'The pontiff, who returned on Friday from a four-day visit to Turkey that included an unscheduled stopover at Istanbul's Blue Mosque, discussed his trip during his weekly audience at the Vatican...The Pope described his visit to the mosque as "a gesture that was not initially planned but that turned out to have great significance. During a few minutes of reflection in that place of worship I turned to the only God of Heaven and earth," Benedict said. "May all believers see themselves as his creatures and bear witness of true brotherhood"... The Pope's visit and observations should prompt the moderate-majority among the Muslims and the Christians to be seized of their responsibility – to be conscious of religious affinities and to shun age-old animosities... Viewed in the same vein, the visit of the late Pope John Paul to the Ommayad Mosque in Damascus on May 6, 2001, was an event of singular importance. He was the first Pope to set foot on a mosque and his message on the momentous day was truly befitting for the occasion. The Pope's 2001 initiative could not have been better timed and gave a boost to the inter-faith dialogue that had been bringing Christians, Muslims and other believers closer, particularly in the United States. **Indeed, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism are three Abrahamic religions whose followers have a lot in common and they ought to work for a common cause rather than be launched on a collision course.'**

In the same article, some remarks of the President whose 'poodle' Tony Blair was labelled, George W Bush are also quoted – these remarks were made at one of the 'Iftar parties' given for Muslim leaders in America to mark the end of Ramadan

'In one of his Iftar parties address at the White House, President Bush rightly remarked: "Islam is a religion that brings hope and comfort to more than a billion people around the world. It has made brothers and sisters of every race. It has given birth to a rich culture of learning and literature and science. Tonight we honour the traditions of a great faith by hosting this Iftar at the White House...We see in Islam a religion that traces its origins back to God's call on Abraham"... Muslims, Christians, Jews and followers of other faiths, have to act in unison** to arrest the current decline of civilization so as to make the world a more liveable place.. Let's be seized of our religious affinities and spurn unwarranted animosities.'**

This spurious common '**Abrahamic**' identity is being pushed in both secular and spiritual situations. The Pope and The President are clearly 'singing from the same hymn-sheet' and both have a willing 'poodle' in Tony Blair.

Faithful believers need to be alerted to the fact that other so-called 'evangelical' leaders are following the same 'sell-out' line in an attempt to find common 'faith-ground' between the monotheistic religions, in particular Islam and Christianity.

In response to a letter issued in October 2007 by leading Muslim clerics, so-called 'evangelical' Christians responded with their own letter inviting 'inter-faith dialogue' on the common basis of 'love for God and love for neighbour' – as if that were the central tenet of Christianity rather than "**repent and believe the gospel**" [Mark 1:15].

This issue has been aired by the Christian Post on this link –

http://www.christianpost.com/article/20071123/30194_Christian_Leaders_Invite_Muslims_to_Love_God_Neighbors_Together.htm

The Christian Post article starts with these words – **‘Christian leaders across denominational lines responded to the unprecedented open letter signed last month by 138 representative Muslim leaders with their own letter, calling on the two Abrahamic faiths to love God and neighbours together.’**

If you go to the link you will see that it is possible to either post a comment or indicate with a ‘thumbs up’ or a ‘thumbs down’ your agreement or disagreement with comments already posted. Bearing this in mind you might wish to pay special attention to a number of comments by a certain **‘takeheed’** contributor.

I want to draw special attention to a number of the so-called prominent ‘evangelicals’ who like Tony Blair are in effect part of the ‘presidential and papal pack of poodles’ responsible for this ‘sell-out’ of the gospel in the name of ‘peace’ and ‘expediency’. They are **Rick Warren, Bill Hybels, Robert Schuller, Brian McLaren, Jim Wallis, David [Paul] Yonggi Cho, Richard Mouw** and very sadly **John Stott**.

The Apostle Paul never shunned any opportunity to declare the uniqueness of Christ and His gospel, even when entering into multi-faith situations such as those in Corinth - “I declared not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified” [1st Corinthians 2:2] and in Athens - “Ye men of Athens I perceive that in all things ye are very religious...God who made the world and all things...dwelleth not in temples made with hands...now commandeth all men everywhere to repent because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained concerning which he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead” [Acts 17:22, 24, 30-31]. That is the witness of a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ – an example to follow!

The world of ‘professing Christianity’ is in a very sad state – one only has to read the so-called ‘Christmas’ messages of people like Pope Benedict XVI, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Cormac Murphy O’Connor and the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams to see that – no wonder there’s a (very questionable) claim for global warming when you add all the ‘hot air’ these human prelates are emitting to the divine control of solar activity.

The addition of Tony Blair to the ranks of Roman Catholicism has increased by one the number of those making up the ‘papal pack of poodles’ and many will view him as ‘the leader of the pack’ – perhaps I can close with a scripture quote, taken somewhat out of context, but rather apt in the circumstances – **“Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers” [Philippians 3:2]**

Cecil Andrews – Take Heed’ Ministries – 27 December 2007