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‘WHY THE BIG SOCIETY NEEDS THE BIBLE’ – Conservative Party Conference Report 2011

By Duncan Boyd

Protestant Truth Society, Church Society and Christian Watch together manned a stand for last year’s Conservative Party Conference in Manchester in October. The stand had the theme ‘Why the Big Society needs the Bible’ and we produced a booklet with that title and a range of articles on how the Bible had contributed to British national life over a wide variety of areas. This tied in well with the 400th anniversary of the publication of the authorised version of the Bible and we had a selection of useful books on our bookstall as well as a number of Bibles, some of which we gave away to interested enquirers.

Providentially, our stand was near the main Conservative Party stand and that meant that we were well placed to catch passing politicians and engage delegates in conversation. We aimed to take gospel opportunities as well as engage with legislators and were able to do both. A number of people were interested in talking about the gospel itself and I had a lengthy conversation with the Eurosceptic MEP Roger Helmer. He had a great respect for the authorised version of the Bible and the Protestant Christian faith as part of our country’s history – but did not believe it! Like many sympathetic unbelievers he could not see that he was a sinner who needed his creator’s forgiveness. We had an amicable conversation and parted on friendly terms. Gordon Warren of Church Society council did a sterling job distributing our booklet in large numbers and engaging people in conversation. Gordon had not been to conference before and made a very valuable contribution to the stand.

Fiona Bruce, the MP for Congleton in Cheshire, made a point of coming to talk to us and had a lengthy conversation about the sad decline of the Christian faith in Britain and the need to resist immoral legislation. Andrew Rosindell MP, who is a member of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, made a point of coming over to say how important he felt the Christian faith is to the British Constitution. A number of us went to the Conservative Christian Fellowship prayer breakfast where we had a chance to speak to David Burrows MP and meet the new head of the Fellowship – Colin Bloom. We also went to the CCF service at Manchester town hall. This was well attended but could have done with a rather more robust presentation of scripture and the gospel. It tended to emphasise Christian social work rather than evangelism or the need to resist unrighteous legislation.

We distributed a record 1800 booklets, which is a significantly higher number than the previous two conferences we attended. Both Oliver Letwin and Crispin Blunt, who are government ministers, were given copies of ‘Why the Big Society needs the Bible’ and Jeremy Brooks was able to engage both men in conversation about the importance of the Bible to national life. It would be fair to say that Oliver Letwin was happier to receive our material – Crispin Blunt has recently left his wife for a homosexual relationship and is one of the increasing number of our legislators who are keen to promote perversion.

Overall the stand went very well and we made a valuable Christian contribution to the conference. It is clear that a great many delegates and politicians are not in favour of the politically correct agenda so much loved by the present coalition government. We hope that what we did will have helped to strengthen them in their convictions. However, it was a great sadness to hear the Prime Minister give such unequivocal support to so-called ‘homosexual marriage’. It cast a pall over our

efforts, but all of us who were there resolved that we would do all that we could to resist this measure. We would urge our supporters to pray and to take what action they can to tell their elected representatives that they do not want this legislation. The Prime Minister's speech was a salutary reminder that we are in a spiritual war where Satan is wreaking havoc with the spiritual health of our nation. Scripture commands us to pray for 'all those that are in authority' (1 Timothy 2:2). Where we pray we must also have the courage to act.

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