

Article reprinted from *Cross†Way* Issue Winter 2010 No. 115

(C)opyright Church Society; material may be used for non-profit purposes provided that the source is acknowledged and the text is not altered.

CONSERVATIVE PARTY CONFERENCE REPORT

By David Phillips

In October Church Society ran a stand at the Conservative Party Conference with Protestant Truth Society and Christian Watch. Five of us were present to man the stand and we found it a worthwhile and positive enterprise. Many of the other stands had been present at the conferences of the other two main parties but this would have required significantly more commitment and time and we had decided in advance to target our resources.

The primary purpose was to hand out literature. “Why broken Britain needs Christian values” had been written specifically for the event and we may well republish it in a slightly more general format. We handed out somewhere between 1,600 and 1,700 copies to the delegates, including many Cabinet members, MPs and prospective parliamentary candidates (who seemed the keenest to talk). Many people were willing to stop and talk about issues and this led to some lively discussions on the subject of the booklet and other matters too.

Our booklet was clear and direct and we were not surprised to receive some criticism. A few did not like what we had written about Islam, others were surprised to find that we were definitely Protestant and of course some secularists didn’t like the idea of Christian values at all.

We had originally planned to run a fringe meeting as well but as we were all pretty exhausted by the end of the few days I for one was glad that we had restricted our efforts this time. We did however attend several other fringe meetings run by others which was a good way of speaking with MPs to give them our booklet but also to ask pertinent questions.

As someone who is not party politically orientated I was interested to see how these things operate from the inside. I ran a fringe meeting in Blackpool a few years ago but that was outside the conference itself. In Manchester many of the delegates seemed concerned about the extent to which the programme was being stage managed to avoid divisions appearing before the General Election. It will also show you how out of touch I am that I was surprised to discover that delegates no longer vote on issues. The only glimpse I got of David Cameron, apart from on the television screens, was when he walked past me at Piccadilly station as I was waiting for the train home.

Articles in the booklet:

Introduction & Conclusion : Jeremy Brooks

Civil Liberties and Free Speech : Gordon Murray

The British Constitution and the European Union : Duncan Boyd

Marriage and the Family : Norman Wells

Abortion and the Sanctity of Life : Steven Foster

Islam and Britain Today : Duncan Boyd

Crime and the Community : Mark Mullins

David Phillips is General Secretary of Church Society.