

The Spirit of '88

Spirit of '88 was launched at the beginning of 1988 with the aim of reminding both church and nation of the importance of our Christian heritage, and to commemorate the great events of 1538, 1588, 1688 and many other anniversaries, in order to:

- Spread the true message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Declare the evangelical faith, enshrined in our constitution.
- Bring back the Bible as the focus of family life and as the source of spiritual and moral values.
- Remind both church and nation of the courage and sacrifice of those who were martyred because of their refusal to compromise the gospel.

To familiarise you, the visitor, to the nature of our work, we have included the following sample bulletins, originally published during the period from February 1988 to January 1991.

- FAITH, FREEDOM and the FUTURE
- FAITH AND FREEDOMS UNDER THREAT
- STANDING ON FIRM FOUNDATIONS
- EVANGELISM AND BIBLICAL SEPARATION

“Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.” **Jeremiah 6:16**

During the short period of time in which Spirit of '88 has sought to point back to the stirring events of earlier centuries and to remember the courage of those who fought the good fight of faith in this land, we have witnessed the abandoning of this noble legacy through the swift advance of spurious ecumenism.

In 1988, the year of the great centenaries of our Christian heritage, the Bishops of the worldwide Anglican Church voted overwhelmingly to turn away from our Protestant faith when they endorsed the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) Agreed Statements. In doing so they yielded the very same Scriptural principles or 'Stand or Fall Doctrines' that so many of our forbears believed worth dying for.

Events are moving rapidly as we approach the end of the century and millennium. The Swanwick Conference in 1987 had brought in the Roman Catholic Church, which was said to have moved 'from co-operation to commitment' and launched the Inter-Church Process. This formally came into being as 'Churches Together' in September of 1990, the 450th anniversary year of the founding of Ignatius Loyola's

Society of Jesus. Seen in broad historical terms, the Counter Reformation, begun by the Jesuit Order at the Council of Trent in the middle of the sixteenth century has now been completed; the Reformation has effectively been abandoned by the visible Church in Britain and is widely represented as a tragic mistake.

Churches Together in England (CTE) was launched in St. George's Cathedral, symbolizing, as one journal described it, the Church of Rome's 'senior partnership' in the new venture. Four months later, on Epiphany Sunday in January 1991, the Decade of Evangelism and the Decade of Evangelization were launched together, the one Anglican, the other Roman Catholic, but scarcely designed to be distinguishable. The idea and initiative for the Decade came from Catholic Renewal leader, Franciscan Fr. Tom Forrest with his vision, shared by the Pope, of half the world's population to be presented as converts to Christ for His 2000th birthday.

The nation's first fully ecumenical church at Milton Keynes was formally opened in March 1992 with a service at which, for the first time since the seventeenth century, Her Majesty the Queen was preached to publicly by a Roman Catholic Cardinal. The Sovereign's Coronation Oath 'to maintain to the utmost of her power the Protestant Reformed religion established by law' is clearly compromised by all that is happening. With the royal family's endorsement of inter-faith as well as inter-church worship, there is a total, unquestioning, departure from the hallowed principles that were bequeathed to us by way of our priceless Christian heritage. These things are reflected politically by the seemingly almost careless weakening of our Parliamentary sovereignty by the massive majority Commons vote to endorse the Maastricht Treaty.

A new passion for pilgrimages and the revival of mediaeval shrines as places to bury religious differences offers perhaps the clearest sign of the rapid departure from the Reformation and New Testament Christianity. "Flee from idolatry" wrote the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians [1 Corinthians 10:14]. In the Old Testament, God speaks again and again through all of the Prophets of His aversion to syncretistic and idolatrous worship. In the seventh century B.C., King Josiah, "who turned to the Lord with all of his heart", put away the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might perform the words of the law." [2 Kings 23:25 & 24].

A similar destruction of idolatry was accomplished by the Reformers in England in the sixteenth century. Yet dozens of shrines destroyed at the Reformation have now been brought back to life; and worship or veneration are offered at these 'Holy places', with their Saints and relics, images and statues, 'Holy water' and 'miracle cures.' Christians, many of them from Protestant denominations, are flocking once more in vast numbers 'to rediscover their pre-Reformation roots' in these places, guided by the new spirit of ecumenism. The annual Walsingham Pilgrimage, often

led by an Archbishop or Bishop of the Church of England, includes the processing of a statue of the Virgin Mary, adoration of the 'blessed sacrament', blessing with 'holy water' and the veneration and kissing of a 'relic of the true cross.' On Saturday October 19th 1991, for the first time since the Protestant Reformation, a statue of the Virgin Mary was processed through the streets of London.

Scripture makes clear that there is no halfway house available for the Body of Christ. Departure from sound doctrine, and liberal churchmanship have inevitably led to compromise with Roman Catholicism, which in turn has left open the door for inter-faith syncretism. Today, more than at any other time since the Reformation, there is a need for men and women of faith to stand up and be counted.

We believe that in these times of confusion and compromise it is important that churches and Christian organizations make clear where they stand in terms of a doctrinal basis of faith.

Our ministry is primarily that of the watchman seeking to awake the sleeping church and galvanize Christians to act – to learn from Church History, to discern and confront the spiritual enemy and contend earnestly for the faith. People need to know about our (common) Christian heritage and history, why the martyrs chose to die, the many conspiracies of Rome to remove the British throne and re-establish Papal rule and her continuing attempts to undermine our Protestant Constitution.

We would also very much appreciate your prayers for this venture.

Michael De Semlyen