



# The Burning Bush - Online article archive

## The DUP's Pathway of Departure and Decline

### From the defying of the fourth commandment to the disregarding of the Sixth Commandment

By Rev Ivan Foster

**"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil," Ecclesiastes 12:14, KJV.**

**"But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment," Matthew 12:36, KJV.**

There have been many foreshadowings of the day spoken of in these verses, the day when the words of men shall be brought forth to be judged according to God's righteousness, no matter how secretly those words were spoken or what efforts were made to conceal them by those that uttered them.

Day and daily, the sitting of the Courts of Justice in our cities witness the secrets of men being brought forth into the light. The words so secretly uttered became the means of convicting those who sought to cover their evil schemes and the authors of their just punishment.

Here in Ulster, at the end of each year, there is a releasing of papers and documents relating to virtually every realm of life in the Province thirty years ago. Previously classified and hidden from public scrutiny, the documents provide substance for feverish perusal by journalists seeking to uncover some of the secrets of the past.

There is always something of interest to be found.

One of the items released this year was a document which revealed the rise within the DUP, in the early 1980s, of a desire to rid itself of the views which were fundamental to the party when it was commenced some ten years earlier.

In a report from the Belfast Newsletter, 29th Dec 2012, reproduced on the right, there are disclosed the anti-Bible views which some at the heart of the DUP harboured. They felt that the influence of the Free Presbyterian Church, from whose ranks many of the grass roots supporters and also a substantial core of the elected representatives came, was costing the DUP votes amongst the more secular elements of Ulster's society.

Sammy Wilson, son of the late Pastor Sandy Wilson, an old-fashioned Pentecostal pastor and one time Superintendent of the Elim Movement in Ireland, was at the heart of this pressure group. Though no mention is made of Peter Robinson, it is nevertheless fair to include him amongst such opponents of Sabbatarian views. Sammy Wilson did nothing without Peter Robinson's approval, though Robinson usually kept his head well below the parapet until all possible flak arising from any comments Sammy may have made would be over.

There was an attempt to "secularise" the position of the DUP with regards the opening of public houses on the Lord's Day on the part of the leadership of the DUP Executive in 1985 by introducing a "local option" clause in the DUP manifesto, whereby local councils could individually decide whether or not to open public houses on the Lord's Day.



Sammy Wilson thought support for Sunday closing would damage DUP

CURRENT Finance Minister Sammy Wilson told Government officials in 1982 that he hoped the Free Presbyterian influence on the DUP was waning because it brought no votes, according to previously classified government files.

A fresh-faced Mr Wilson, then aged 27 and an economics teacher at Grosvenor Grammar School, gave a confidential briefing on his party's thinking to the NIO's political affairs section.

An account of the lunch meeting says that Mr Wilson told officials that the Free Presbyterian influence on the DUP – leader Ian Paisley was the Free Presbyterian moderator, and many DUP representatives were members of the church – damaged support for the party.

Mr Wilson, now the MP and MLA for East Antrim, cited the issue of Free Presbyterian support for closing shops on Sunday as a particular problem for the party. Mr Wilson's current DUP Executive colleague Nelson McCausland previously headed up the Lord's Day Observance Society, which campaigned for Sunday closing.

A record of the meeting, released by the Public Record Office, states: "Wilson observed wryly that although the DUP had not gained absolute control of Castlereagh Council, they would be lying low on the question of closing the leisure centre on Sundays, at least until the Assembly is elected."

The briefing also revealed that the DUP was open to a meaningful role for nationalists at Stormont but was anxious to make it appear that there was no power-sharing. The NIO memo of the meeting said: "The question was not whether concessions should be made to the minority but when and how much."

Mr Wilson said that the DUP was considering backing a small unionist Stormont cabinet in charge of strategic issues to sit above departmental committees which would continue to be drawn from all parties represented in the Assembly and have responsibility for departments. The memo said: "This arrangement would enable unionists to say that there was no power-sharing in the cabinet while at the same time allowing nationalists a meaningful role."

The document said that Mr Wilson had no sympathy for the sectarian bias that affected many of his colleagues. His ability and concern for social and economic issues seem to have compensated for any damage which his relatively moderate approach to divisive issues could have caused to his prospects within the DUP, it said.

The then Belfast councillor told the NIO: "In private DUP leaders accepted the need for flexibility if devolution was to be achieved." Dr Paisley was conscious of the need to keep his "powder dry" before the Assembly election since the UUP was trying to suggest that he was likely to be duped into power-sharing.



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The response of the delegates was decisive. Even though Dr. Paisley argued for the proposal it was rejected on the basis that man had not the right to amend the law of God in order to curry favour with an ungodly electorate. It was quite a stormy meeting with Dr. Paisley demanding a recount and requiring each delegate to leave his chair and go and stand against one of the walls of Lisburn Orange Hall where the meeting took place, according to whether they were an 'aye' or a 'no'! The 'noes' still won the day and local option did not feature in the 1985 DUP local government manifesto.

However, it was not long until this was changed. Castlereagh District Council, Peter Robinson's domain, defied the Word of God and opened the Dundonald Ice Bowl on the Sabbath Day, chiefly because professing Christians on the council refused to take a stand for the Saviour and His day.

It is a short step from defying the fourth commandment to the disregarding of the sixth commandment. That step was taken by the DUP when it entered into a league with the party of murder and terror, Sinn Fein, in the Spring of 2007. The DUP became partners with Sinn Fein in order to obtain power in Stormont. That is where an ungodly lust for political power will take you.

Where the path that the DUP is firmly wedded to will ultimately take them is foreshadowed in the lives of those who embarked on a similar pilgrimage of folly. When we have an ambition to obtain power at any price, invariably the price that is ultimately paid is very high indeed.

This the DUP and all who support their sinful recklessness will discover to their cost.