

# SPECIAL MESSAGE TO PASTORS IN LONDON AND THE BRITISH ISLES

from Samuel M. Smith, Director, Followers of Jesus Christ Ministries  
A PLEA for A Return to Genuine Biblical Christianity

Brothers, I read in magazines, newspapers and hear on the television news that the people of once God-fearing England and the British Isles are fast turning from the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Many are becoming agnostic, others outright athiest while others are seeking answers in various Eastern religions, seemingly the more violent the better. Brothers, if you know your Bible, you know that ought not to be.

Why are other religions taking England and the British Isles by storm while the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ is being cast aside?

Can we take a look at the Church in England over the past two hundred years? How would you say the overall status of the church compares today to the church in Jerusalem in say, 50 AD? How about even in the mid Sixteenth or Eighteenth Century when John Knox preached in Scotland and the Wesley brothers preached throughout England? Is there a difference? What is that difference?

Let me ask you, dear pastor friend, do you pray daily in faith believing that your prayers will be both heard by Almighty God and answered by Him; sometimes miraculously and sometimes through the vehicle of human help? Do you REALLY believe that the Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of that Almighty God, or did your seminary or Bible college teach you that it is just a good book to read, but don't get too serious about it? Why are you even in the ministry? Are you there because you truly want to see people's lives totally changed for the better by the power of God, or because it is a job that usually pays well and doesn't require a lot of physical labor?

In the early years of the church of Jesus Christ, people brought the sick and laid them in the streets where only the shadow of the preacher – Simon Peter – would fall across them as he passed and they were healed. When is the last time you were so closely in touch with God that people were healed when YOUR shadow passed over them?

James writes, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." (*James 5:13-15*).

My dear Pastor friend, when is the last time a sick

person came to YOUR church to be prayed for for healing? When is the last time someone whom the doctors said was beyond hope came to your church expecting to receive a miracle? When is the last time a drug addict still stoned out of his or her mind wandered into your church, seemingly by chance and left a totally changed New Creature in Christ Jesus with their old ways and nature miraculously taken away and a new life that gets high in the Holy Spirit in its place?

For what purpose did our Lord Jesus Christ establish His church? And would you honestly say that the church you pastor is fulfilling that purpose?

Jesus said, "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses," (*Matthew 10:7-9*).

I read in International Christian Concern that a Pakistani minister actually came FROM Pakistan TO England in 1994 as a MISSIONARY! What a change! Years ago, England and the United States were sending missionaries TO Pakistan and Up Way Publications International is still printing and publishing Total Gospel literature in Pakistan.

But in recent months, Rev. Nobel Samuel who has been involved in Radio and TV ministies since 2002. was teaching about the Deity of Jesus Christ, explaining that Jesus is the Son of God. He received angry telephone calls demansing why he said Jesus was the Son of God. Up to that point, I was admiring the boldness and zeal of the good pastor, but then he is quoted as telling one of these callers, "I told the person that this is my belief and it is not necessary for him to believe the way I believe." I could have wept! Pastor Nobel just shot down whatever good teaching he had done concerning the lordship and deity of Jesus Christ and lowered Him to the level of Mohammad or Buddha or Confucius. If the Muslim caller does not HAVE TO BELIEVE in Jesus Christ as Savior, Lord and God, then Jesus is no more than just another founder of a religion. Pastor Nobel's preaching then is in vain, if he really believes that the Muslim does not ABSOLUTELY Believe in Jesus!

Later three Muslim men followed, then passed pastor Nobel's car and blocked him in as he was on the way to his radio broadcast and physically attacked him. Beating him about the head and stealing his Bible and

his laptop computer. The London police excused the attack because maybe he had offended them by what he had said and because he was a Pakistani wearing a cross. Authorities seemed reluctant to do anything that might offend the growing Muslim population.

And such attacks are increasing. Why has the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ become so powerless? Why is it that people disregard the church and when asked on the street, often say they feel it is outdated and irrelevant?

Then stop and think. Why is your Christian religion any better or more correct and true than, say, Buddhism or Hinduism or Muslim? What can Christianity do for the person who comes to you as pastor and has problems in his or her life that the other religions cannot do? Remember Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh. For every miracle they performed by the power of God, the magicians at first were able to duplicate or seem to. But then God went a step beyond what the magicians could do.

If you really BELIEVE what the Bible says in the setting and context of how it says it, there should be signs and miracles following your ministry, not to your glory or honor nor to prove you are more spiritual than the next preacher, but for the glory and honor of our Lord and Savior. You do NOT need to seek after nor pray for the signs, but as you go about your daily tasks you see a need and by the power of the Holy Spirit, you fill it.

Peter and John were just going into the Temple to pray when they passed, perhaps for the hundredth time, the man lame from birth at the Gate Beautiful. The Holy Spirit already resident in Peter said to stop and minister and Peter and John stopped. We don't know how many times Jesus, Himself, may have passed that man and never stopped to heal him. Many folks live most of their lives handicapped because they think there is no way out. But this time was different. There is no telling who had talked with the man about the healing power of Jesus or even of miracles still happening in Jesus' name by the hands of the Apostles. In any case, Peter and John were just going about their regular practice when something about the man caused Peter and John to stop. "Alms," the man cries out in his thousand times a day manner, expecting to receive something from them. "And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, 'Look on us.'"

"And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

"Then Peter said, 'Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.' And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God: And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him." (*Acts 3:4-10*). Now visualize the scene. What would have happened if the beggar had resisted when Peter reached down to lift him up. "Hey, man! Put me down! I *can't* walk!" Would he have been healed? No. But Peter was sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and that the man was finally ready for his miracle. And because the man was well-known, his healing brought the opportunity to preach and 5,000 more souls were added to the church as a result of it.

Another example was Paul and Silas on their way from the household of Lydia where they were establishing the First Church of Jesus Christ in Philippi to wherever they were going to stay. A demon possessed soothsaying or fortune telling young woman slave has sensed by the demonic powers that Paul and Silas are "Servants of the Most High God." Following them and shouting this out after them, finally irritates Paul enough that he turns and with the Holy Spirit power that is in him, he casts the demon out of her. Thereafter she can no longer tell fortunes and her owners go to the city magistrates and have Paul and Silas beaten and thrown into prison. There, with backs torn and bloody from the Roman cat-o-nine whip, we know they sang praises to God and at midnight and He sent a Holy Spirit spectacular — an earthquake that loosed all their bindings and set them free. True, they stayed there and waited for the jailer to come and release them officially and from that, they were able to tell him the Plan of Salvation that we know they had been preaching ever since the day of Pentecost, the plan found in Acts 2:38, when the first ever people to believe and feel the "pricked heart" conviction of the Holy Spirit asked "What Must we do?" And for the first time after the New Covenant was actually in place, because of the death of the Testator, the Plan of Salvation was given.

Oh, I know that most churches use only part of Acts 16:31 as the Plan of Salvation, but as a skilled writer, Luke does not say the words that Paul and Silas spoke to the jailer, but simply says, (v. 32) "And they spake

unto him the word of the Lord,” because he would demonstrate in action the word they had spoken to him when he reported that the Jailer and his whole household was baptized the same hour. No waiting for a convenient time of a formal ceremony. In every case where you have any details of New Testament conversions, water baptism is always mentioned as done and several places it is specified “in the name of the Lord,” or in the name of Jesus Christ. Paul explains this in Romans 6:1-6, Galatians 3:27 and Colossians 2:12 and gives the result of that in 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Now, my pastor friend, you can

choose to debate me and use all kinds of reasoning to try to explain away the simple truths I have just shared, but if you will adhere to the only sensible rule for Bible study, asking who is speaking to whom and under what circumstance, then using each verse as it was clearly intended to be used, understanding it as the Holy Spirit through the original human author intended and as the first readers or hearers would have understood, the conclusion becomes inescapable.

The whole point of this message is that if the church will return to the same gospel the Apostles first preached and taught and will pray and trust the Lord as sincerely and honestly as the Apostles did, you WILL begin to be amazed to find that signs are FOLLOWING you and people are being added to the church you pastor. Many people misquote the verse that says, “A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas....” (*Matthew 16:3-5*). in an effort to prove that signs and wonders are not to be sought after. To that degree, they are right, but the point is that if you are walking with God, full of His Holy Spirit you do not need to SEEK the signs, but they WILL FOLLOW you! “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” (*Acts 4:13*). Peter and Jhn were not seeking the signs, but the signs pointed to their relationship with Jesus.

My friend, if you are sincere in wanting to live for Jesus and see others truly born again and their lives transformed, please heed my words. There has never been a day in all history when the POWER of the Holy Spirit is more needed to be manifested in the lives of true preachers of the Gospel. Satan knows his time is limited before God calls everything to a screeching halt and he will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit.

“...Be not faithless, but believing.” (*John 20:27*).

That is why the Up Way Guarantee has stood without serious challenge since 1976! When I point out, “OK, who is speaking to whom here?” And then, “what has just happened or is happening when the writer wrote or the speaker spoke?” “How do you think the first readers of this verse would have understood it?” And by the time just those few questions have been answered, the challenger usually admits they have been misunderstanding the verse or passage. If not, I have more questions and those in error soon see that if they are honest, they must admit they or their organization have been teaching error.

I say that — not because I am a great Bible teacher or scholar — but because when YOU really want to know the truth, it is there to be found. The late Gilbert N. Olson served as an Evangelical United Brethren missionary in one of the West African countries for well over twenty years. Seldom did he have contact with other “learned scholars” who might have influenced his thinking. But he was a sincere man determined to know God’s word and teach it faithfully. By the time the EUB church organization merged with the United Methodist organization, he had reached, solely through prayer and sincere Bible study, most of the same conclusions I have just spelled out. As a result, he was unable to remain with the United Methodists and began to fellowship in Apostolic Pentecostal circles where he wrote many proofs of the genuine Plan of Salvation and the Godhead and continued to preach and teach in the Philippines and Mexico.

YOU, too can and SHOULD have signs FOLLOWING your ministry. Not to prove to anyone that you are any more spiritual than anyone else, but to show to the unbelieving world that Christianity — following Jesus faithfully — IS different from any other religion. There is real POWER as a servant of the Creator of the Universe.

— S. M. S