



Report from the UK

The last seven days have been both challenging and eye-opening. It has been 10 years since I was in the country of England. A lot has changed since my last visit. For the last seven days, we have conducted a conference at Bethel Free Baptist Church in Birmingham, England. Never have I seen a sweeter or more dedicated group of people who love their Lord dearly. When I first visited this church in 1990, there were twelve attending and were meeting in a small back room behind the main auditorium (an auditorium that would seat approximately 1000). Today, there is a thriving group of believers who are not plagued with much of the non-essential baggage that hampers many of us in the United States.

Most of the week has focused on evangelism emphasis and training. Many decisions have been made including about thirty who surrendered to full-time ministry in the concluding service. Each evening, we have been at the church till almost 11:00pm, singing, sharing testimonies and fellowshiping, with no one eager to go home. That is a dramatic difference from many churches in America.

One incredible blessing has been the passion of the young people for their Savior. The missionary's home has been deluged with twenty-something youth who just want to "hang around" with you. We've laughed and cried together all week. It has also been a personal blessing to see one lady, whom the missionary and I counseled for hours during past trips, doing wonderful in her walk with God. In past conversations with her, it was obvious that she struggled with depression and doctrinal confusion, as well as with a husband who was far from the Lord. This trip, I saw her sitting with her husband, now a vibrant Christian, who yielded to serve God in the ministry today. The hours of investment in the lives of people is more than worth it!!

Every time I have come to England, I have been hesitant to return to the States. The needs in this spiritually desolate country are overwhelming. Two (2%) percent of the British population attend any church. Most of that is the Church of England, which preaches no gospel message. The hardness on the part of most of the youth here is obvious. However, here in the middle of much godliness is an oasis of believers that is refreshing to the soul. This is truly a New Testament church. There are believers here from every economic station as well as numerous nationalities. All of them enter and leave with embraces of affection for each other,

There is much we could learn from our brethren in this country. I will return home in a few days, forever changed by my experience here. May God stir us to greater love for the brethren and more aggressive evangelism of our blessed nation.

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