

Warning for the Church Today

General William Booth (1829-1912), the founder of the Salvation Army. Before it was known as the Salvation Army, his organization was originally named Christian Revival Society. This unique preacher had a burning passion to see true revival come to his generation.

God gave General Booth a prophetic dream that would become a clear and sobering warning. His vision included six parts still relevant to us today—maybe even more so than when he preached them. His revelations have proven to be extremely accurate.

As the 20th century began, Booth was asked by someone what he saw as the greatest dangers for the next hundred years. Below are what he identified as the chief dangers which would confront the coming century.

1. Politics (government) Without God

General Booth saw that there would be a day when civil government in the Western world would no longer have the fear of God. I thank God for the founding of this nation. We do still have “In God We Trust” on our currency.

But the question for us now is: What god do we really trust in anymore? Is it the one, true God? Is it the Creator of heaven and earth? Or is it one of the many false gods worshipped in America? Which god are we really trusting in? After all, they removed prayer from public schools in 1962.

If they had their way, some people right now would remove “In God We Trust” from our currency. They are already starting to do it. When will God judge America? Perhaps He already is. Perhaps it has already begun yet we are too blind to see it. Where is the real power of the Word of God in America today? The true power is lacking.

2. Heaven Without Hell

I challenge anyone to name a preacher today, at least in the media world, who will still preach a message on hell. It's difficult to come up with one. In fact, we have countless preachers who go out of their way not to even mention hell. Consider these Scriptures and what God says about those who deceive others: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18).

"Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience" (Eph. 5:6).

We desperately need men of the cross and men of the Word who still call themselves "preachers of the gospel" and will be bold enough to say there is still a heaven to gain and a hell to shun.

3. Salvation Without Repentance

If you were to ask Christians today to repent, many would wonder, "Repent? What does that mean?"

Forgiveness from sin without repentance from sin is the popular message of the day. John the Baptist said it this way in Matthew 3:7-8: "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore, bear fruit in keeping with repentance" (NASB).

The spirit of John the Baptist and the spirit of Elijah are coming again, which must precede the return of Jesus Christ. The message of these two prophets and the message today will still be to repent and flee the wrath to come. What we hear today from a totally self-absorbed, consumer church is "fix my problems" and "it's not my fault." We want forgiveness, but we don't want to repent.

4. Salvation Without Regeneration

General Booth predicted that we would see increasing numbers of people claiming to have salvation yet not having truly become new creatures in Christ.

The preaching of “You must be born again” must be discovered in our gospel message. Clarity on these points is even more crucial today because we live in an hour when a counterfeit “New Age gospel” is preached on every corner. We’re told we can be “saved” without getting bogged down in boring, old-fashioned, stuffy doctrine. And the idea of being “saved” without going overboard with a lot of Bible language, doctrine and ultimately truth tickles the ears of many.

Most preachers today couldn’t even biblically define regeneration, much less actually preach it boldly in their pulpits on Sunday mornings! In my very own city, one of the largest churches here decided not long ago that they shouldn’t even “bother” wasting their precious service time (which is only 59 minutes long—with a guarantee) to partake of Holy Communion anymore. The church has stopped receiving communion entirely in Sunday services in this large church.

We have salvation without real regeneration.

5. Religion Without the Holy Spirit

Few have understood as well as General Booth that religious conformity is quite different from genuine conversion brought by the Holy Spirit.

Second Timothy 3:5 says that in the last days we will face an epidemic of those, “Having a form of godliness but denying its power.”

Jude sounded a similar warning: In the last days, there will be an increase of those who are “devoid of the spirit” (Jude 18-19, NASB).

Years ago a great man of God said, “If the Holy Spirit left the planet tonight at midnight, tomorrow morning 99 percent of church activity, church programs and Christian ministry would go on untouched.”

Too often we “do” church out of soul-centered hype, leading in the flesh. It’s done merely by carnal manipulation. I am convinced that the so-called church in America will simply show up for a good show and not even really know or be able to discern if it is the Holy Spirit or not. It’s a good show, so we go and watch as spectators. But it might not be the Holy Spirit.

6. Christianity Without Christ

General Booth foresaw the rise of a form of pseudo-Christians, characterized as those who are “denying the Master who bought them” (2 Pet. 2:1, KJV). The bedrock of our message must always be the centrality of the person of Jesus Christ.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:23, “We preach Christ crucified,” (NIV) and in verse 18: “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

Why do we have such a powerless church today? Oh, we put on a good show and stir up a lot of soul-centered hype, which may result in large offerings. But there is little to no power of the Holy Spirit. Why? Because we do not preach the cross. We do not preach Christ crucified.

Church, *The cross is our power*. A strong delusion that all religions need to simply “coexist”—that no matter what you believe, we can all still “get along”—is infiltrating the church today. It may sound good and “spiritual,” but it’s not scriptural.

May you who have “ears to hear” truly hear this timely prophetic warning.