
Subject: Norway, Christchurch and Fire.

Dear Saints

At the beginning of this year, two news reports struck, and greatly encouraged me:

1. Bible Sales in Norway:

Norway is a Scandinavian country with a population of almost 5 million. Although 91% of the population claim to be Christian, only 8% are evangelical Christians. The rest are mainly Roman Catholic.

A new translation of the Bible into modern Norwegian was recently published.

And since Roman Catholics aren't known to be ardent Bible readers, the publishers were astonished when the first printed quantity of the new Bible (about 25 000) sold out in one day! Even in the harsh northern European winter, people slept on pavements outside of bookstores to make sure they get their copy! A new circulation of the Bible was immediately ordered. Still, the publishers didn't expect such an overwhelming response.

Apparently, even the evangelical churches in Norway aren't exactly what one would call "on fire". On the contrary: most seem to be rather dead.

So what happened here?

Could we be witnessing an "Elijah under the broom tree" phenomenon?

*He [Elijah] came to a broom tree, sat down under it and **prayed that he might die**. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors ... I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."*

*The LORD said to him, ... "Yet I reserve **seven thousand in Israel**--all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him."*

(1 Kings 19:4;10;18)

Elijah was under the obvious impression that God's Kingdom in Israel was dead. It seemed like Israel was very much doing his own thing - on his own terms. People didn't regard the Almighty at all. They sinned against Him, and completely ignored and forgot Him.

But there was a remnant of 7000 that Elijah was not aware of. Seven thousand!

How could Elijah not have been aware of their existence - Elijah the prophet of God, who was able to see unseen things? Elijah, who'd had numerous words of supernatural knowledge before?

Similarly, despite thorough investigative methods, church statisticians today are obviously unaware of a rather lively remnant in Norway. Christians who are so anxious to read their new Bibles that they sleep on pavements in bitter cold!

Why did they escape the investigative net of the statisticians?

I think I know.

They didn't register with the government as a church. They don't make tax deductions for "Christian" expenses. They don't open bank accounts. They don't build edifices to gather in. They don't organize church bazaars or apply for government funding of their charity projects. They're nowhere on any authority's "list".

There's a God in heaven - who builds His own church.

I have a hunch they belong to House Churches.

2. Open Air Church Service in Christchurch, New Zealand.

After we've reported on the spiritual significance of several earthquakes shaking the only city in the world known as "Christ Church" last year, a new powerful quake shook that city early this year.

News reports particularly mentioned that inhabitants became so anxious that one congregation held its church service in open air for fear that their building might fall on them!

Could God be shaking his people out of their buildings - where we should have gone already long ago? Is this prophetic?

Yours in Christ

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