

I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH OR THE GREATEST CONFLICT OF KINGDOMS

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By Guy Kassongo

Introduction

Our God is a God of separation and there is a big difference between separation and sectarian division. It is possible to trace the biblical principle of separation right back to the beginning of the creation. Thus, we can read about the separation of dry land from waters, the separation of light from darkness, etc.

Also, throughout the Bible, the principle of separation will extend itself to the notion of good and evil. Subsequently, the Lord expressly commanded His people to separate themselves from pagan practices, to live a holy life and to demonstrate God's character in their daily life. Spiritually speaking, this principle of separation will reflect the clear distinction between godly and holy deeds versus the ungodly deeds of darkness.

Our message today is to be understood in the context of the end time bible prophecy, with regard to the current state of things both in the world and in the Church.

There is a deadly battle for men's soul that is raging since the fall of Adam and Eve.

Main Scripture: Genesis 3.1-6; 14-15; Galatians 4.4 Matthew 16.18

[- Seed of the woman: Jesus and His followers, Numbers 21.9, John 3.14, Romans 16.20 & Colossians 2.14-15

The word 'church' (*ekklesia* in Greek) means 'called out'. The closest words in Hebrew are *edah*, *mowed* and *qahal*. These are translated as assembly or congregation.

We will try and share the following points about the Church:

- What is the Church (its birth, its mission and purpose)
- How does the Church survive
- How does the Church fulfil its mission
- What is the biblical winning strategy
- Who are the enemies of the Church and their deceiving forces / strategies
- The final victory of the Lamb of God and His Church
- The journey of the lost soul and the journey of the redeemed soul (The glorious destiny of the Church).

What is the Church?

In the Bible, we have at least 4 definitions. The Church is:

- The Body of Christ with many members – Rom 12.4-5; Col 1.18; Acts 9.4-5
- The Household of God – Eph 2.19 [i.e. family life where God is the Father and we are His Children, John 1.12)
- The House of God – 1 Tim 3.15
- The Pillar and the Ground of the truth – 1 Tim 3.15; (see John 18.37 and John 14.6)
- The Bride – 2 Cor 11.2-3; Eph 5.24-25

-According to the Lord's declaration in Mathew 16.18, the Church came to reality at the day of Pentecost through the ministry of the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. Those who repented from their sins were baptized and committed their lives to the Lord Jesus formed the first Christian community, called the Church. In fact, as many as received Jesus Christ in their heart, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.

We read in the book of the Acts 2.41, that those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about 3,000 souls were added to them. In verse 47, we read 'And the Lord added to the Church daily those who were being saved'. Therefore, the Church is made up of people who have been redeemed by the innocent blood of Jesus Christ.

- The mission of the Church is to make disciples, to baptize them and mostly important, to teach them to observe all things that He has commanded. **Read Mathew 28.19-20 and Acts 26.17-18**

How does the Church survive?

The Church exists and survives through people who believe in the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. In the book of Jude, verse 3, this is called the *Faith which once for all delivered to the saints*.

Nowadays, it would be most appropriate to call for a *survival* rather than marketing a delusion so-called *revival*.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Jude 3 what follows:

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

In fact, each generation of Christians will always build up on the previous generation's work. This is what Paul seems to suggest in 1 Corinthians 3.10.

Thus, the solid inheritance of the biblical based Christian faith has always been passed on to the future generations through faithful men and women, who have received, understood and then faithfully preached the saving gospel of Jesus Christ, without a need for any mixture of any kind.

How does the Church fulfil its mission?

To fulfil its mission, the Lord has granted His Body, the Church, with different spiritual gifts and ministries.

While fulfilling its mission, the church should work to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ. Thus, Christians should no longer be just children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting (see Ephesians 4.11-14).

The Church should work to the unity of faith and to more knowledge of Christ. The unity of Faith is well different from promoting ecumenism or any kind of religious syncretism; this is a kind of the Tower of Babel that aimed to unite the entire world in rebellion to God. The ecumenism is a system that is trying and unites all faiths and religions under the apparent umbrella of peace and tolerance. In fact, none of the people involved in promoting ecumenism is prepared to promote the biblical claim of the Lord Jesus, as being the only name by which people might be saved. Since different have contradictory claims as to the way people might be saved, they cannot all possibly be true.

What is the winning strategy for the Church?

- To obey and fulfil the Great Commission stated in Matthew 28.19-20 and be involved in the work of evangelism
- To abide with the Lord Jesus Who is the true Vine and without Whom we can do nothing, according to John 15.4-5
- To steadfastly practise the four pillars of the daily life of the Church: apostles teaching (or Doctrine), Fellowship, Breaking of bread and Prayers.
- To recognize and respect all the diverse ministries, as stated in Ephesians 4.11- Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers.

In fact, in the New Testament, it seems that, in reality, there is only one ministry that is expressed in various ways, according to God's calling, that is the Ministry of the Word (see Acts 6.4). In Acts 20.24, the Apostle Paul speaks of the ministry which he received from the Lord Jesus, *to testify to the Gospel of the grace of God*.

- To let the Holy Spirit guide and enlighten the Church. We read in Acts 9.31 that the Churches walked in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied. The French Louis Segond Version of the Bible says: The Church was edifying itself and walked in the fear of the Lord, and it was growing through the assistance of the Holy Spirit. This means that the Church was edifying itself through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Surely, the Church did not need any of the following things that are ruling the Church today:

- No pagan's practices
- No professional marketing techniques
- No New Age materials and techniques
- No so-called "Christian Yoga" or Alpha Course
- No Purpose Driven Life teaching
- No Psychology or Positive / Negative thinking or self-esteem teaching
- No Human Potential or Psychic abilities stimulation
- No so-called "Christian Rock Music"
- No Secular Humanism ideas

The saving Gospel of Jesus Christ was preached and the Holy Spirit was convicting the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement. The Lord told Moses that all things ought to be made according the pattern

shown him on the mountain, according to Hebrews 8.5. In the like manner, the Church needs to walk according to the Lord's will, clear expressed in the New Testament. Since the Lord is the Builder of His own Church, we should seek to do everything according to His will, in the guidance and the power of the Holy Spirit, Who is qualified to help put God's word into practice.

Who are the enemies of the Church and their deceiving forces / strategies?

Reading: Genesis 3.14-15, Numbers 21.9, John 3.14-15, Galatians 4.4, Colossians 2.15 and Romans 16.20

All the enemies of the Church can be found within the following categories:

- Sin (all ungodly things) – Demonically inspired human philosophies – the False Prophet and the Antichrist (whose spirit has already infiltrated the Church of the living God, according to the work of Satan, with all power, signs and lying wonders and with all unrighteous deception). – Demons and unclean spirits – Devil
- Death and Hades.

Reading: Matthew 24.4-5

The Lord has commanded us to be holy because He is Holy. Sin and fleshy deeds are among our most dangerous enemies. Regarding the spirit of the False Prophet and the Antichrist, we have a special warning in the Scripture above. In fact, the Lord foretold that there would many false prophets and people who claim to be Christ. The Bible calls them *false christs*!

- The spirit of the False Prophet and the antichrist: the false christs

Christ (from Greek), simply means the Anointed One. In Luke 4.18, the Lord introduced Himself as the Christ (Anointed One), in fulfilment of the prophecy in Isaiah 61. Also, in Luke 3.16, we read that the Lord Jesus is the One who will baptise the believers with the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 1.21, the Apostle Paul recognises that the Lord Himself had anointed him. According to 1 John 2.20, we have an anointing from the Holy One (see also 1 John 2.20-27).

However, there is one exception in the New Testament. In fact, in the local church, the elders are allowed to pray over the sick persons, while anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord but it is the prayer of faith that will save the sick, and the Lord is the One raising the sick up.

If Christ is the Anointed One and therefore the only one qualified to anoint others, any person claiming to have the ability to perform the same would actually be claiming to be the Christ. It would be redundant to say that this is what is actually happening in the Church, especially through many of the so-called TV *Christian Channels*. Those publicising their ability to anoint others are actually claiming to be the Christ; because they are not qualified to be the Christ, they can only be *false christs*, driven by spirit of the *False Prophet* and the *Antichrist*. In 1 John 4.1, the Bible warns what follows: Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirit, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. The ultimate purpose of all false, fake, counterfeit and lying signs and wonders and so-called miracles is to prepare the entire world to embrace and worship the Antichrist who is still to come. Thus, there is a direct link between lying signs and wonders, the False Prophet and the Antichrist.

Reading: Revelation 13.1-2 (about the Antichrist) and 11-18 (about the False Prophet having the appearance of a lamb but speaking like a dragon)

Also, they are demonically inspired human philosophies (or human wisdom).

We can read in Colossians 2.8 what follows: Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

In this category, it would be worth to mention at least three of the most oppressing enemies of the Church. These are: Secular Humanism, New Age Movement and Yoga.

- Demonically inspired human philosophies

- Secular Humanism

From the Council of Secular Humanism's web site, in the Secular Humanism Declaration issued in 1980, Humanism is defined as being a method for explanation and discovery of rational principles. It places trust in human intelligence rather than divine guidance. Thus, by definition, secular humanism is in direct conflict with the Bible, and openly opposes the

Christian Faith. To the contrary, in the book of Jeremiah 17.5, the Bible states what follows: ***Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord.***

Also, the secular humanism declaration is clearly against these religious activists who not only are responsible for much of the terror and violence in the world but stand in the way of solution to the world's most serious problems. Furthermore, the Declaration says that the first principle of democratic secular humanism is its commitment to free inquiry that tolerate diversity of opinion and respects the right of individuals to express their beliefs, however unpopular they may be, without social or legal prohibition of fear of sanctions; in free inquiry, truth is more likely to be discovered if the opportunity exists for the free exchange of opposing opinion; yet in the first paragraph, of the Declaration, we read "it (secular humanism) is opposed to all varieties of belief that seek supernatural sanction for their values... we are opposed to absolutist morality, yet we maintain that objective standards emerge, and ethical values and principles may be discovered in course of ethical deliberation. In its section concerning Ethic based critical intelligence, it says 'nor do we believe that any one church should impose its views of moral virtue and sin, sexual conduct, marriage, divorce, birth control, or abortion, or legislate them for the rest of the society. Secular humanists also support the belief in evolution.

In the Christian parents' web site that exposes secular humanism for what it really is, we can find the following statement: 'Humanism appeals to many Christians because they wrongly associate it with the good Samaritan in the gospel of Christ, so they don't mind lending their strength of money and voice to support it. The problem is that humanism is a word used mostly by atheists to mask their denial of God so Christians won't see them for what they are'.

-The New Age Movement

This is a huge network of spiritually motivated organisations, using political and economic efforts to create a world government and get people ready to embrace the coming reign of the antichrist. The plan very carefully ways in which they could infiltrate and influence the community with their New Age ideas and activities. Generally speaking, this is done in the name of peace and unity. In the surface, it all sounds very humanitarian.

The religion of the New Age, simply put, is pantheism – the belief that God is the sum total of all that exists. According to pantheists, there is no personal God; instead their concept of God consists of what they refer to as a god-force (or life-force). They teach that this energy, or god-force, flows through all living things – plants, animals- and human beings. Since this god-force flows through all of us, they rationalise, we must therefore be gods or at least, part of God.

Because of this belief, most pantheists will automatically support the concept of one-world government since global unity is essential to the proper flow of the god-force. Humanity will then, presumably move to a higher level of existence. The result will be that all human will suddenly receive mystical powers to do what they could never do before. A New Age of enlightenment, a New World Order –will be born.

Pantheism also teaches that we will never die, and therefore, we must face no personal judgement by God. We just keep coming back in different life forms (reincarnation) – an acceptable concept to pantheists since they believe that we are all "one with nature" any way.

It is amazing that man has fallen for these deceptive teachings since pantheism is clearly based on the two oldest lies of Satan – the same lies that tripped up Adam and Eve. The serpent drew the first couple into sin by promising them that if they ate of the forbidden fruit, 1) they would never die, and 2) they would become like God.

The belief that there is no accountability to a personal God is the main appeal of pantheism. According to Gary Kah, in his best seller book *En Route to Global Occupation*, Pantheism originated in the ancient city of Babylon in Mesopotamia and from there spread rapidly in all directions to cover the face of the earth. Hinduism is one of the off-shoots of the original Babylonian pantheism and Buddhism is one of the off-shoots of Hinduism. In modern language, being a New Ager, a mystic, or occultist all means the same thing. However, there is a specific warning against these practices in the book of Deuteronomy 18.9-12.

- Yoga

In his well documented book, *Yoga and the Body of Christ*, Dave Hunt has clearly shown sufficient reasons why Christians should not be engaged in practising yoga. In fact, yoga was developed to escape this 'unreal' world of time and sense and to teach the Hindu heaven, or to return to the 'void' of the Buddhist.

Thus, yoga is at the center of Eastern religions and mysticism. In January 1979, at the World Congress of Hinduism in India, attended by about 60,000 delegates from around the world, a speaker declared, 'Our mission in the west has been crowned with fantastic success. Hinduism is becoming the dominant world religion, and the end of Christianity has come near'.

Hinduism and Buddhism, both of which advocate similar yoga practices, infiltrate western society, government and even public schools as science, while Christianity is banned as a religion. Most westerners imagine that Hatha Yoga (often called physical yoga) has nothing to do with Hinduism or spirituality. If yoga was purely physical, why has it been handed down from 'spiritual masters' known as yogis? Why is authentic Hatha Yoga always associated with spiritual meditation aimed at self-realization?

Yoga was introduced by Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita (the sacred book in Hinduism) as the sure to Hindu heaven. Many ancient texts warn that Hatha Yoga is a dangerous tool. One can be possessed by a Hindu deity (actual demon). All the ancient texts confirm one another in explaining that yoga was developed as a means of realizing ones 's own godhood (remember the biggest lie: you will be like God). This is the purpose of all physical positions, breathing and stretching exercises, and meditation.

Swami Vivekananda came to the 1893 First World Parliament of Religions. As a result, he opened the west to yoga. The following statement was his message:

Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divine within ... Ye are ... holy and perfect beings. Ye are divinities on earth. Sinners? It is a sin to call a man so. Come up, O Lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep [...] Ye are not bodies; matter is your servant.... Lay yourselves open to these thoughts and not to weakening and paralyzing ones. We now have a westernised Hinduism and Yoga is at the center of it.

Kundalini Yoga was brought to the West by Yogi Barjan. He first publicly taught kundalini yoga in the West in 1968. He announced he has come to the West 'to create teachers, not to gain students'. Yogi Barjan founded the 3 HO Organization. The 3 HO are Healthy, Happy, Holy Organization. This is a non profit organisation and United Nations non governmental organization, dedicated to sharing the teachings of kundalini yoga.

Yogi Bajan died in October the 6th 2004 because of complications due to heart failure. On April 5 and 6, 2005, respectively, the US House and Senate passed a joint resolution praising this Sikh leader for his 'teachings ...about Sikhism and yoga...' Yoga is at the very heart of Hinduism.

On August 1, 2007 we read in the Third Sector the Salvation Army had banned yoga at its Head Quarter in London, due to *irreconcilable differences between yoga and Christianity*. The article said that '*For many people, yoga is simply a system of physical exercise, but it is also an ancient spiritual discipline and there are some irreconcilable theological differences between the spiritual dimension of yoga and Christianity.*'

Emma Nolan, the coordinator of the Yoga in Daily Life Association reacted to this decision by saying that '*this decision was based on a common misunderstanding about yoga. Yoga is about the whole person. We have Muslims, Christians and Jews coming to our classes. According to her, the Christians don't see a conflict – it enhances their faith*'.

The final victory of the Lamb of God and His Church

The final victory will be over our enemies. These are: sin, false prophets and antichrist, devil, death and Hades.

Reading: Revelation 20.10-15.

- **The journey for the lost soul:** one birth and two deaths

- Death (physical body in the grave) - Hades (spirit and soul) - Hell (body and soul) -- Mark 9.43-47

- **The journey for the redeemed soul:** two births and only one death (or the rapture)
 - Death (physical body in the grave) or Rapture (body transformed and taken away with the Lord)
 - Paradise (soul & spirit) - Heaven (soul & spirit in incorruptible body)
 - Coming back on the earth to reign with the Lord - New Heavens & new Earth - New Jerusalem

The New Jerusalem is also called the Bride, the Lamb's wife. According to 1 Peter 2.5, we are living stones. In Ephesians 2.19-22 we read: 'Now therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Thus, we are both tools and materials in the building of the New Jerusalem. Let us remain faithful to the Lord until this final union with Him. In love with our Bridegroom and longing to see Him face to face, let us hold the things of earth lightly and live for eternity. Let us please Him alone, not following men or organizations, by faith allowing our Head to nourish, sustain and direct us and to live His life through us to His glory. As the light of the world, The Bible commands us to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. In our generation, we are responsible for passing the Apostolic Faith on to the next generation.

He did say: I will build My Church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it!

To be continued...

Any question?

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