

## **HIS CHURCH OUT OF THE CHURCHES**

The church is not a literal building or edifice displaying the ingenuity of the architect or the builder, neither is it a wooden or mud hut meant to be a temporary shelter until finances improve. It is not a group of people identifiable by a trade name/mark. It is not a group of people who gather under a human leader who gives them rules and regulations to follow and programmes to execute in his interest. It is not a group of people brought together for financial gain, rivalry or the desire to make a name, build an empire and gain affluence, recognition and importance. It is neither a denomination with branches under it nor a corporation; not a limited liability company. It is not a group that can be recognized by what they wear or what they do not wear.

If the church were any of the above, it would mean that there are as many churches as there are groups or denominations. Is Christ divided! (I Corinthians 1:13) Then, too, the term "my church", "our church", "St. So and So Church" or "the church of So and So" would be in order.

WHAT THEN IS THE CHURCH? Until Matthew 16:18, the word "CHURCH" is not found in the Bible. The word and what it stood for came through the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He is the first begotten of the dead, the Alpha and Omega, our Saviour who washed us from our sins in His blood and made us Priests and Kings unto God and His Father (Rev. 1:5-6). He declared that He would build "HIS CHURCH". He came to build and to establish it. The church therefore is HIS. The church is a spiritual building made up of living stones of which Jesus Christ Himself is the chief corner stone (Ephesians 2:20).

The church is a people; a people for His Name (Acts 15:14). Paul calls it "church of the first born who are written in heaven..." It is made up of all TRUE believers of the church age. It is the body of Christ, for He is Head over it - through His Spirit (Ephesians 2:21-22). It is one flesh with the Lord and therefore she is His bride (Ephesians 5:31-32). She is also God's house.

The church is so important to God that He has committed His purpose to her. It is by and through the church that He will unveil and carry out His plans concerning the nations. The church is God's representative on earth. As salt of the earth, she should give flavour to the earth. As light, she should manifest by her life and teaching the principles of truth received from God for the blessing of humanity. The brightness of her character should reveal the evil deeds of men. She is to declare openly that which was done in darkness. The position of the church on earth is that of an ambassador (Philippians 3:20). An ambassador does only the will of his home government. God has vested on the church the authority to rule the nations. This assignment can only be carried out by the church that serves His purpose, making full appropriation of the blessing of Christ's death and resurrection. In the same manner, she is to die to the world and the world to her. The completed and glorious church shall share in God's throne of all majesty and splendour.

Before our Lord's ascension, He told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they receive power. Thereafter they began to gather in an upper room in Jerusalem (Acts 1:13-14) and continued in one accord in prayer and supplication. At the descent of the Holy Spirit, on the day of pentecost, Peter preached his famous sermon and the Bible recorded that about three thousand people were added unto them. In Acts 2:47, this group of people were referred to as the church, so the church is a people. This presupposes that the church existed before Acts 2:42. It would be in order to say that the church started with the one hundred and twenty people who met from time to time in that upper room in Jerusalem.

The people gathered together in one accord under the headship of the Lord to further his plans and purpose - that His kingdom may come and His will done on earth and that all He had spoken may be fulfilled. Jesus Christ, our Lord was the Leader, Founder and President of that early church, for indeed, He founded the church. The early church was minded to prepare a body for the Divine Head to dwell. God's purpose was that Christ would be all in all, in and through the church. She was determined to show forth God's glory and not to advertise herself or her interests. Her only interest was God's will and purpose. This is what the church was at the beginning and what it should be for all time. Remember what the Lord told Peter in John 21:18.

In John 17, Jesus was praying for the church. He said, these people of His were in the world but not of the world. The church should not be swallowed up by the glamour, honour and treasure of the world. Jesus in His intercessory prayer said, He desired that they be ONE - with one another (John 17:22; Romans 12:5), with Him and the Father - this speaks of

unity! A divided church therefore cannot be working in Christ's interest and so cannot be HIS BODY. The church began with these humble men and women who met in the upper room, knit together by God's interest and purpose and with a deep love for the Lord. They had no programme of their own but what the Lord directed through His Spirit.

The Bible speaks of the Church as a body of people who meet in any location, hence we have such terms as 'the church in Antioch, Jerusalem, Corinth, Ephesus etc' It is the church of Jesus Christ, located where God's people gathered and met to further God's purpose. It has no other identity. Paul spoke of "the church in thy house" (Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2...) "the church in their house" (I Corinthians 16:19). These early brethren were satisfied to meet in homes owing allegiance to no leader but Jesus Christ. They were not ruled by human laws or doctrine. The brethren from the church in one location were welcome and gladly received in any other location. Brethren were at home wherever the church met and had the liberty to share the pure undiluted word of God. They all had the same Master and worked towards the same goal, as no brother and sister was a stranger in the midst of the brethren. These should be the qualities of the church today.

Brethren, when we meet again, we will continue with the topic: "THE CHURCH IN BONDAGE" so, until then, we covet your prayers, stay blessed in Him who alone is the only rightful husband of the church (the Bridegroom of the Bride).

JESUS IS LORD! Your Brother - ['Segun Ogunfile.](#)

My Beloved Brethren,

"....And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter and upon this ROCK(revelation of Jesus as the Christ of God) I will BUILD(make) 'MY CHURCH' and the GATES(wiles, wisdom & craftiness) of HELL(and Satan) shall not prevail against it....." (Matthew 16:18)

We welcome you once again to this 'HIS VOICE THROUGH THE WEB'. Today, we continue from where we stopped at our last meeting. We do encourage you once again to feel ABSOLUTELY FREE TO PASS IT ON (FORWARD) TO OTHERS:

THE CHURCH IN BONDAGE: The church of Jesus Christ started as one body with one Lord and one purpose. Besides the propagation of the Gospel, it was eager to see God's kingdom established and Christ revealed in her. Gradually, for what the Bible calls filthy lucre and inordinate ambition,

people began to deviate from the first century setting. Men became lovers of themselves, serving their own belly and began to introduce their own doctrine in place of the doctrine of Christ. They began to desire to make a name for themselves and built with "bricks" instead of "stones", See Gen. 11:1-9. People began to build empires and kingdoms for themselves in the name of the Lord.

This trend has continued down the centuries and has grown worse with time. People set aside Christ's purpose and instituted their own laws and doctrines in the church. They gained applause and recognition while giving their own interpretation to the word of God to favour their selfish acts.

They sit on Christ's seat receiving honour and worship from their followers. The owner of the church has been locked out - Rev. 3:20. God's people are milked and skinned by the herdsmen who answer the name of shepherds - Ezek. 34:2-10. The people of God are made to serve the creature rather than the Creator.

There is a hierarchy of authority but our Lord is not given a place. Rather than hear from the Holy Spirit, the church now hears from heads of denominations and their aides. Each of the so called "churches" is locked up in a cubicle and identified by a special name with the word "church" attached. No other "church" can take on the name by which another is registered. They are all doing their own thing and trying to outdo one another. "They eat their own bread, wear their own apparel and answer His name" - Isa. 4:1. Dare to worship with so and so church and face discipline, they warn their followers.

The church of Christ has been sold out and has become a vassal. She is stooping under the whims and caprices of mere men, and is being ruled by the wisdom of men, which is earthly, sensual and devilish - James 3:15-17. The people of God are forbidden by their pastors from eating the bread of life (God's Word) outside their denomination. These same leaders cannot speak the pure word because their deeds will be exposed (Dan. 2:22). They must "beef up" the word for their own comfort and to meet their needs. Besides, the people must be kept in darkness. There is now a thick covering of ignorance over the people.

The church, in the first century (its beginning) dared to attempt to turn the world right side up (although the Jews of that day saw it the other way round). - Acts 17:6. Right now, the church is turned upside down by men who serve their belly, speaking lies in hypocrisy and having their conscience seared with hot iron - I Tim. 4:2. The church has been turned

upside down by men who bear all sorts of abominable names so that their evil deeds might be hidden.

The leader/founder/president can now speak of "my church", my congregation", "my members" because he seats over God's church and takes the place of her Lord and Husband (II Thess. 2:4). In this regard, the church can be called a harlot in the words of prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Hosea. She has sold herself to another who has violated her and put her in bondage. Isa. 1:21; Jer. 2:20; Ezek. 23:25; Hos.2:5 etc

The road to harlotry was created when the church of Jesus Christ set aside the divine order and arrangements and structured itself like a human organization. The effort of men to organize themselves as in the days of Nimrod gave birth to Babel and today, it gives birth to Babylon (which means, 'CONFUSION'). Babylon, in New Testament prophetic writings, is the name assigned to a church system who through unfaithfulness has given herself to the spirit of this world that is under the control of Satan. Babylon is only a counterfeit of the Body and Bride of Christ. Read Gen.11 for the fate that befell Babel. The present day confusion will be visited upon with such severe judgements. What operates in these systems is nothing but confusion as the Author of peace and order has been locked out - Rev. 3:20; I Cor. 14:33; Heb. 5:9

The call is going out now for men to deliver themselves from this confusion and flee the wrath to come. Jesus said, "whoever is not for us is against us." Can you afford to kick against the pricks? Heed the call and come out of her (Babylon) - Rev. 18:4 and stand in the liberty (Gal. 5:1). Note very well the following:

1. There is an emerging new order of things among God's people in many nations as Spirit-filled believers have begun to break free from the stranglehold of Babylon.
2. The sound of the trumpet, the voice of the Son of God, is right now gathering out of the denominations all those who have ears to "hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches."
3. The Psalmist foresaw this great move of the Spirit - Psa. 50:5 (see also Mal. 3:16-18).
4. God is bringing those who heed the call to Himself and to His saving purpose. He is teaching these ones to consecrate themselves wholly unto Him.

THE GLORIOUS CHURCH: Those who heed the call and seek the word of truth shall make up the glorious church - the church of His purpose. The church is God's organisation and Jesus is the leader through the Holy Spirit (John 16:7, 13). The days are at hand when the church shall fulfill God's purpose as His representative on earth. She will acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Head over her. The glorious and completed church will come to the point of unity of faith all true believers will have one faith, one Lord and one church in the fullness of time.

Today, among the churches, man's trumpet gives uncertain sound because of the diversity of voices, doctrines and denominations. Just so God is, in our day, raising up humble men and women who, with a passion for His glory, are proclaiming a restoration of Truth, its Way, its Life. True believers will hunger for and gather where God's present truth is revealed. The church will, as it were, return to Eden and the son of God will take his rightful place over His own as Lord, Husband and Shepherd - I Peter 2:25. The church will grow into maturity and function effectively in the ministerial offices - Eph. 4:11-13 and come into the measure and stature of the fulness of Christ. He shall then reign over His church which purchased with His own blood to present her perfect unto Himself. The church will be glorious because God's glory will cover her; God's presence shall be in her and holiness shall be her inner clothing - Eph. 5:27. Romans 8:19 says the world is earnestly waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. These mature sons will be offsprings of the restored, fully nourished, and completed church that will reveal the Lord Christ to the nations. Then, the world shall experience an unprecedented display of power and authority by the Holy Spirit through these sons of God. Amen! It will indeed be a glorious and beautiful church - Isa. 60:1-4. The knowledge of the glory of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Amen and Amen!

Beloved Brethren, this is the light in the evening time trumpeting God's final call, so PASS IT ON.

Until next time when God brings us your way, we do earnestly covet your prayers. Stay blessed in Him.

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