

Editorial

It is almost two thousand years now since Jesus said "I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it." Over the centuries Satan and all his forces have tried to prove Jesus wrong but without success. Jesus has not operated in a vacuum to maintain His church but has used His own people operating in the power of the Holy Spirit and remaining true to the Scriptures. Commitment to the Scriptures and the empowering work of the Holy Spirit remain the keys to the survival of the Christian church in Africa.

One of Satan's methods in his attempt to overcome the church has been persecution of Christians. Thanks to God that when this has happened, the Church has been strengthened rather than weakened. Even now African Christians glorify God for what He is doing with the Church in Uganda. A second method that Satan has used on the African continent is the seeming success of other religions, especially Islam. Speaking of one of the African countries, a key church leader said: "Islam is becoming the religion of the people." While the Christian church in Africa remains assured that even this force will not overcome the church of Christ, some questions need to be dealt with such as, What really attracts the African people to Islam? The church also needs to lay great emphasis on God's anointing and raising up of Jesus as a proof to His being the only Saviour. In addition to other religions, cults have prevailed, which have not only confused many but gotten many followers. The series on cults presented in this journal should serve as a beginning to the Christian's understanding of the different cults that are gaining momentum on the continent and how to deal with them.

Satan has not only attacked from without but also from within. Increasingly materialism has become a tool of the devil in attacking the Christian church in Africa. For sure Africa needs beautiful and well equipped church buildings. In this endeavor, however, there has arisen a spirit of carelessness as to the source of funds for some of their construction. There have been cases where other religious groups have given donations to the church in the name of cooperation. Another question the Christian church needs to deal with is Could slackness in the purity of the source of church funds be a tactic of the Devil in his attempt to overcome the church? Thanks to God for such ministries on the continent as the Theological Advisory Group (ministry limited to Africa Inland Church Kenya at present) which seeks ways and means of awakening the spiritual consciousness of the church.

From the theological angle, both the lack of contextualization and the dangers of syncretism need to be seen as real threats to the African Church. The African is increasingly asking the question, How does it relate to me and my situation? The Christian church needs not only to preach the Gospel handed down to it but also to demonstrate in word and deed how the Gospel relates to the Africans' "now problems" not limited to eternal benefits. This is why this journal, both in past and current issues, has repeatedly addressed itself to the challenge of contextualizing the unchanging message to the African situation.

The cry concerning the dangers of syncretism is not new. The threat is, however, a live matter. Thanks to God not only for the constant upgrading of Bible Schools and Colleges but also for the founding of seminaries on the continent, such as Bangui Evangelical School of Theology, Nairobi Evangelical School of Theology, and Nairobi International School of Theology. The challenge is not only to train more men and women but also to train them in sound doctrine. These men and women will then ground believers in sound doctrine, giving the Devil no chance to overcome in this area.

Yes, Africa remains a rich ground for the growth of the church. Let us pray and do our best so that the big church will be a mature church and although threatened, never overcome by Satan and his forces.

Contributors to this Issue

Articles

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Book Reviews

Haddon W. Robinson, Biblical Preaching --- Ralph E. Partelow

Emefie Ikenga Metuh, God and Man in African Religion --- Stephen Sesi

John R. W. Stott, The Cross of Christ --- Keith Ferdinando