

**~Other Speakers S-Z: K.P. Yohannan:**

Almost daily we are exposed by television, radio or newspapers to disasters, famines and much human suffering around the world. And added to this, we are reminded frequently of the millions who die daily without ever hearing the Gospel of Christ.

But as followers of Christ, we know that we can't just "walk away and forget it." Therefore, many of us get personally involved or give to various causes, ministries and organizations.

But as a Christian, have you ever examined yourself and honestly answered the question, "Why do I give, pray or get involved in this or that activity for the kingdom of God?" Is it because the cause presented is so urgent or desperate? Is it because of some internal guilt feeling? Or is it because you are so overpowered by compassion or pity?

All these reactions are normal human responses; but according to the Bible, they are not good enough reasons to give to the Lord!

Then, of course, there is one more reason that probably motivates more believers to do good works than any of the above. This "reason" is that we are told that God is in terrible trouble and we need to help Him out!

The appeal usually goes something like this:

"Things" are going to crumble . . . Christian media programs will have to go off the air . . . building projects will be shut down . . . social programs can no longer be continued . . . souls will go to hell, if you don't give now.

This is actually an appeal to our unbelief. And worst of all, we are reminded that if these things happen, God's glory will be gone, and the devil will win "unless, of course, we come to the rescue!

Now, I don't doubt that a number of those projects would not be able to continue without these kinds of appeals! Sadly, we have been trained for decades to give to this kind of request "and too many Christians only give when they hear needs presented in this faithless way. But I also believe the main reason some of those projects would "go under" is because God never ordained them in the first place! Or maybe He is trying to get our attention because He wants to create something newer or better.

I've always believed that God is not in any financial trouble. We never need to panic, thinking that somehow we need to help Him out of a tight spot. He has made no promise that He is not able to keep. God is not helplessly looking at a lost world hoping that someone will finally feel guilty enough to do something. He promised that His kingdom will never fall "and the gates of hell will not prevail against His Church. He has enough power to complete whatever He sets out to do.

God is not the One in trouble "we are. We don't understand that He doesn't want our money unless He can have our hearts first!

Isaiah would be shocked. Ezekiel would be shaken. Jeremiah would be shattered. If these prophets were alive today, they would barely believe what their eyes would see. There is an abomination in the household of God.

Unsaved marketing experts write appeal letters for money-starved ministries . . .

Huge computer printers spew out mass produced "personal prophetic words" by the thousands . . .

Women in skin tight bodysuits advertise the latest in "Christian aerobics" . . .

TV preachers in costly apparel promise you riches if you send tithes to their ministry . . .

The blood-washed Church of the Son of God has gone Madison Avenue. Let the prophets weep and wail! The mighty have fallen "and fallen and fallen. Who would have thought we could have stooped so low?

The children of the Lord are hiring out the people of the world to help raise funds for the work of God. Sons of darkness are being consulted on how to merchandise the gospel of light. The hand of God has become attached to an arm of flesh. How can this possibly be?

There was a talented young man in the fund raising industry. He had written many outstanding appeals for religious and secular clients alike. His prize winning letters hung framed on his office wall. He knew how to bring in the bucks. But he didn't know the Lord at all.

He had just finished writing an emergency plea for a prominent international ministry when he received word that his Christian grandmother was dying. He rushed to her side. But she had only one concern. She had to get her social security check mailed out to that very ministry before she died. She had just received their urgent appeal. They desperately needed her help. Could her grandson please send out the funds "before it was too late?

Little did she know that it was not her beloved "TV pastor" who wrote the letter. Little did she know that she was being moved by worldly psychological pressure and not the Spirit. And that young man, her own grandson, was to blame.

He was so shaken up when he saw the effects of his letter that he said, "Never again." He swore off the business for life. But the ministry that hired him just marched right on. How many other dying grandmothers did they plunder? How many poor widows sent in their last dollar? And how much of that money was paid out to the marketing company? How much actually went into the work of the Lord?

God could easily do all His work by Himself without our involvement. After all, He spoke the world into

existence. He doesn't need us to get Him out of a disaster. Some of us have our theology all wrong. We don't understand the role that God has created for us" submission to Him and utter dependence on Him in all we do and undertake.

God has commanded the Church to evangelize the lost because He wants to give us the privilege of learning to obey Him and to love this needy world as He does. He wants His people to participate with Him in the redemption of the world!

It is our greatest privilege, then, to serve Him out of love.

Because we have failed to understand this great truth, we serve Him with the wrong motives. No wonder so much of the Church today lacks commitment. No wonder our own personal Christian walks lack power and joy. With wrong motives, our service for Christ naturally has become a burden and even a guilt trip for many.

Let us once again return to loving the Lord above all our programs, possessions and our very lives. Then our service, our giving and our praying will turn from being a burden into the greatest privilege and joy we have on this earth.

Remember, you are not your own.

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the LORD our God (Psalm 20:7).

Let God be God in your life.