

LESSONS FROM THE FAREWELL CRUSADE OF GOD'S GENERAL: EVANG. REINHARD BONNKE

On the 8 to 12 of November, 2017, the city of Lagos stood still for the Farewell Crusade of a rare gem, Evangelist Reinhard Bonnke whose life and ministry has been a huge challenge to all in the Christendom all over the world. For over fifty years, this precious gift to the body of Christ has bestridden the gospel firmament like a colossus with the sword of the Spirit long drawn to crusade for the Kingdom of Christ. A scourge to the kingdom of darkness, a barometer of the conscience of spiritual and ministry leaders in the body of Christ and a role model for the sincere seekers for the raw power and fire of God. Indeed, when the chronicles of God's generals is compiled, his name will find a prized place.

Known for massive crusade usually greeted with diverse miracles, it is said that over the years, Reinhard Bonnke's ministry has witnessed over 75 million souls declaring for Jesus Christ. Little wonder therefore that his Farewell Crusade which held recently in the suburb of Lagos witnessed the attendance of millions of people who came to receive once more the touch from on high through the ministration of this matchless humble servant of God. The crusade was also well attended and supported by the top echelon in the body of Christ in Nigeria where they all gathered to bid farewell to a general in the army of the Lord.

The historic crusade gloriously crowned his fifty years ministry which began in the small southern African country of Lesotho where God placed upon his heart the vision of 'the continent of Africa, being washed in the precious Blood of Jesus'. From there, the entire continent of Africa had been reached with the Gospel. The fact that the crusade was not only meant to celebrate God for a glorious life and ministry of Evang. Reinhard Bonnke, but to also pass on the burning torch to the next generation, gives us real lessons to ponder on.

First, the crusade brought to bear the need to redirect the body of Christ in Nigeria which seems to be losing focus of the centrality of the gospel. Evang. Bonnke had steadfastly held on to the commandment of Jesus that we should "Go... into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature". Unfortunately, the church seems to be drifting with the spiritual things being replaced by the mundane things of this world. Most churches have relegated the very essence of the gospel to the

background.

Also, the crusade teaches the need to bring down that wall of denominationalism and build the bond of unity among Christians. The body of Christ must realize now that Jesus is the only theme of our faith. The enemy is doing everything to undermine the power of our bond of unity by setting up unnecessary wall of denominationalism. Reinhard Bonnke overcame in this area. His focus has always been to see souls saved and after that they are integrated into the various local churches where the crusade holds. His mission is not how many people have been added to his ministry but how many souls have been added to the kingdom of God. Wherever they chose to fellowship thereafter is less of his concern. Over these years, he has travailed for the souls of people in Africa until Christ be formed in them.

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The crusade has a huge lesson for church founders and general overseers in Nigeria. It is noteworthy that Evang. Reinhard Bonnke is married to Anni, father to Kai-Uwe, Gabrielle, and Susie and he also has grand children. In choosing who to succeed him as the next leader of Christ for All Nations (CfaN), he did not have to consider his wife,

children, people of his German origin or the oldest person in CfaN but rather chose Daniel Kolenda, a young American to step into his giant shoes. Succession in the body of Christ should in no way be determined by sentiment neither should it be done as the people of the world play their politics of vengeance and vendetta but rather same should be subject solely to the leading and dictates of the Holy Spirit. Thus, Reinhard Bonnke has given the church especially in Nigeria where leadership succession is laden with all forms of unwholesome practices, a template to follow.

At 77, Bonnke passed the torch, not only to Daniel Kolenda, but to a new generation of evangelists at the Fire Conference. Those who were at that conference can testify that of a truth the torch has been passed. The question now is not whether the torch has been passed but as many as received the torch to what use should it be put? To glorify God or for self aggrandizement? As believers we receive power to witness and not to withhold. Sellah!

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