

Spirit-Filled California Pastor Battles Demonic Forces in Fight for Religious Freedom

“First they came for the communists and I did not speak out because I was not a communist. Then they came for the socialists and I did not speak out because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me. —Martin Niemoller, German Lutheran pastor arrested and confined to Dachau camp but released in 1945 by the Allies.

When Jesus was asked about the end times and what were some of the signposts, He cited persecution, deception and division at the top of the list (Matt. 24).

If the people of God are not prepared amidst the escalation of demonic activity, apostasy and hostility, multitudes will be offended at God. Jesus warned, “Then many will fall away ... because iniquity will abound, the love of many will grow cold” (Matt. 24:10;12). Lawlessness leads to lovelessness!

Dr. Che Ahn, senior leader of Harvest Rock Church in Pasadena, California; founder of the Harvest International Ministry (.) with churches in 70 nations and 162 churches in California; and international chancellor of Wagner University recently faced fierce opposition from Gov. Gavin Newsom to prohibit Christians singing in church services and hosting Bible studies and fellowship gatherings in homes! Knowing this has implications for Christians across America, Che prayed, sought counsel and knew it was time to stand up to the former mayor

of leftist-leaning San Francisco.

As one of my dearest friends for over 45 years, Che sat down recently with me to share the lessons learned during this journey. During four 15-minute *Here's the Deal* podcasts on the Charisma Podcast Network, Che explains in detail what led up to this defining moment as well as its' implications for Christians across America.

Standing Strong on Biblical Grounds

Che is working with Mat Staver and Liberty Counsel, a Christian ministry protecting believers and their legal rights in disputes that arise such as this. Mat is a brilliant attorney as well as Liberty Counsel's founder and legal director. Their team and Che will work to confront the governor and the state of California in this horrendous example of overreach and violation of constitutional rights.

Listen how Mat describes what is happening: "All home-based small group Bible studies and private worship among friends and family are illegal for 80% of the California population! The same order that bans religious gatherings in private homes allows and even encourages the insane anarchist riots, blocking highways and destroying city blocks... In California you can stand shoulder to shoulder with Marxists singing about killing cops, but you cannot worship with freedom in your own home. Don't let America's churches be driven underground!"

What's happening in California is a foreshadowing of what is coming the way of Christians in these end times prior to the return of Jesus Christ. Leftist politicians, media, celebrities, educators and heretical religious leaders are all being manipulated by demonic forces to try and thwart advancement of the gospel of the kingdom at the close of the age.

Multitudes of Christians and Christian leaders have been

deceived into believing that there is to be a “separation of church and state” which means we steer clear of any engagement with our culture. Quoting a letter from Thomas Jefferson to inquiring Baptists, the enemy has misled millions down a path of appeasement and retreat from marketplace involvement. Tragically some leaders say, “We’re called to preach the gospel, not get involved with ‘political’ issues like gay marriage, abortion the LGBTQ agenda or socialism. They’re too controversial ... invite death threats ... cause decline in members and giving.”

What is currently unfolding in California is intended by God to inspire Christians to discover the truth on what it means to be “salt” and “light” in our society, both of which prevent societal rot. Christians are not called to be silent bystanders but rather active participants through prayer, lifestyle evangelism, voting and civic engagement.

Lawsuits Are Unscriptural?

In my almost 50 years of Christian ministry, I have found myself involved in three lawsuits. Like Che Ahn, I am grateful for clear biblical teaching on this issue, which becomes increasingly important for us in our post-Christian, lawsuit-ready culture.

Space does not permit a comprehensive treatment of this topic, so I will recommend a classic resource by Christian attorney Ken Sande that has helped people in America and abroad. The book is titled *The Peacemaker—A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict* and is available on Amazon.

In his book, Sande addresses the subject, “When is it right to go to court?” He dispels the myth that Christians can never resort to a court of law to resolve disputes!

Explaining the scope of 1 Corinthians 6, which addresses lawsuits, Sande explains the view that the Bible forbids any and all lawsuits between people who profess to be Christians

is erroneous. He states that it is “not supported by the express language of the passage, nor is it consistent with the rest of Scripture, which clearly indicates that God has established civil courts and expects his people to respect authority and cooperate with them in appropriate situations” (Appendix D).

Hope for the Hopeless

As an apostolic leader who has traveled extensively throughout the world in leadership training and church planting, Dr. Ahn addresses many relevant topics for Christians in the midst of our turmoil today. In a day in which we need all the encouragement we can get, learn from the lessons of this well-traveled man of God who has been successful in both family and ministry while impacting people on a global stage.

I strongly encourage you to listen to the podcasts that are available in this commentary to gain inspiration, insights and an impartation from one of the finest men of God I have ever been privileged to know! I promise you will be freshly motivated as he recounts his experience beginning with his early conversion from a drug pusher and radical “peacenik,” through the supernatural adventure of the “Jesus Movement” and finally being catapulted into full-time vocational ministry where he continues to leave an incredible footprint for Jesus on the world.

Here’s the Deal: In a day of cataclysmic change, Marxist upheaval and an avalanche of deceptive schemes intended to take down America as a Judeo-Christian nation, God is using extraordinary ambassadors like Dr. Che Ahn to awaken us and advance His kingdom purposes in our day. {eoa}