The Survival of the Local Congregation
Rev. 3:1-2

Introduction:
A. The universal church or kingdom will survive forever (Dan. 2:44; Heb. 12:28; Matt. 16:18)
   1. The seed cannot be destroyed (Matt. 13:19; 1 Pet. 1:23-25)
   2. There will be Christians alive at his coming (1 Thess. 4:15-17).
   3. The kingdom will be here to be delivered up to the Father at Christ’s coming (1 Cor. 15:24)
B. Local congregations often survive only for a relative short time.
   1. Where are the local churches named in the New Testament?
   2. Strong churches 30 years ago in the Birmingham area (B. points, N. B’ham, Midfield, F’view, 4th Ave.)
   3. Some congregations are barely holding on with a little handful of old er members.
   4. What must be done to insure the survival of this and other local churches?
C. We notice 3 steps that must be taken for a local congregation to survive – to say nothing of growing.

Discussion:
I. We must Activate the Present Generation.
   A. The local church is edified by the effective working of every member (Eph. 4:16).
      1. “Every church is made of willing members, 10% willing to do all, 90% willing to let them.”
      2. Preachers and elders cannot do your work, nor you theirs.
   B. Local churches seldom survive without an active program of work beyond Sunday AM services.
      1. How many do you know that have survived with only Sunday AM services?
      2. How many do you know that have survived by just “keeping house?”
   C. Local churches cannot survive when most members are spiritual “couch potatoes.”
      1. With little or no interest in participating in church’s edification activities – classes, meetings, etc.
      2. With little or no real participation in services they do attend – just passive observers.
      3. With more of a sense of duty than with a sense of gratitude.
   D. How long do you think this congregation would survive:
      1. Without the members growing in knowledge? (Cf. 2 Pet. 3:15)
      2. If we had to drop our Bible class program for lack of interest?
      3. If we had to drop our Sunday night services for lack of interest?
      4. If we depend solely upon the “old folks” to keep things going?
      5. If it depended on folks like yourself to keep it going?

II. We must Indoctrinate the next Generation. (Cf. Judges 2:10-12; 2 Tim. 1:5)
   A. They need to be grounded in the fundamentals of faith.
   B. They need to be grounded in the gospel plan of salvation.
   C. They need to be grounded in the New Testament pattern for the church.
      1. It’s worship, work, and organization.
      2. It’s distinction from denominational churches.

III. We must Replace Our Loses.
   A. Loses due to death, disability, backsliding.
   B. Lost members must be replaced with new members.
      1. Means we must put more effort into sowing the seed (Mk. 16:15; Acts 8:4; 1 Cor. 3:6)
      2. Means we must put more effort into restoring backsliders (Gal. 6:1; Jas. 5:19-20)
   C. Lost preachers must be replaced with new preachers.
   D. Lost elders and deacons lost must be replaced with new ones.
      1. More effort made to qualify men for these offices (cf. 1 Tim. 3:1-13)
      2. More effort made to appoint the qualified to these offices.

Conclusion:
A. If this congregation survives, it will be because of these things.
B. If you are inactive – become active, help indoctrinate the next generation and replace those lost.