

Why Congregations Die

Rev. 3:1

Introduction:

- A. Congregations can die (text) – the work of God destroyed (Rom. 14:20).
 - 1. Some still meet regularly but are dead and don't know it.
 - a. May be very active, but unscriptural.
 - b. May be very inactive, except to meet.
 - 2. Some cease to meet – property sold or abandoned.
- B. Congregations die from various causes, like all living organisms – note ways congregations can die.

Discussion

I. *Depleted to Death*

- A. Losses (due to death, moving, drop-outs) cannot exceed gains on and on. (Water reservoir, Money)
- B. Losses must be replaced. (cf. Acts 2:47)
 - 1. By general evangelism (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15; Acts 8:4).
 - 2. By passing faith on to our children and grandchildren (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15)

II. *Starved to Death (cf. 1 Cor. 3:1-3)*

- A. Replace strong Biblical preaching with social talks, philosophy, pop-psychology and “3 s's”
- B. Replace spiritual diet and exercise with carnal growth programs and gimmicks.
- C. Reduce other opportunities and means to increase Bible knowledge (cf. Hos. 4:6)
 - 1. Good Bible classes with good teachers and materials.
 - 2. Good gospel meetings with emphasis on teaching.
 - 3. Either the church does not provide these or they are not attended.

III. *Discouraged to Death.*

- A. By seeing the Lord's work at a stand still (cf. Hag. 2:1-4).
- B. By constant murmuring (1 Cor. 10:10; Num. 14:1-2, 35-37).
 - 1. Some forever “down in the mouth” – cold water on any positive moves.
 - 2. Some gripe about everything or nothing.
 - a. See little good in anything, anybody or any situation in the church.
 - b. Speak of “greener pastures” elsewhere, do little to make pastures green at home.

IV. *Frozen to Death (cf. Matt. 24:12)*

- A. Lack of warmth toward each other (Rom. 12:10)
- B. Lack of warmth to needs (especially spiritual) of others.
- C. Lack of warmth to own need of other brethren (“I have no need of you’)
- D. Lack of warmth, tenderhearted, forbearing and forgiving – just demand it of them.

V. *Bitten to Death (Gal. 5:15).*

- A. With harsh and unnecessary speech to and about each others – like snapping turtles.
- B. With crafty words designed to put another “on the spot. – “gotchee.”

VI. *Polluted to Death (cf. 2 Pet. 2:20; Eph. 5:27).*

- A. With false doctrine (Gal. 2:4)
- B. With worldliness, ungodliness and immorality (1 Cor. 5:5, 6)
- C. Both kinds must be nipped in the bud. (Gal. 2:5; 1 Cor. 5:7)

VII. *Choked to Death (Luke 8:14).*

- A. Too busy with job, school, clubs to attend to give attention to church and spiritual exercise.
- B. Too busy with sports, games, T.V. etc. to think of spiritual matters.

Conclusion:

- A. Don't take health and prosperity of congregation for granted.
- B. Don't contribute to its decline and fall by the thing discussed.

