

# Fitting Death Certificates for Dead Churches

Rev. 3:1,2

## Introduction:

- A. The year is 2038 - 50 years from today.
  - 1. You visit this congregation, what do you find?
    - a. A few struggling to keep church going - to keep tradition alive?
    - b. A larger building - "Family Life Center" is on the sign in front?
  - 2. You ask, "What happened to the church as we knew it 50 years ago?"
    - a. Dead or near dead! How did it die?
    - b. You are asked to put the cause of death a "death certificate"?
    - c. Knowing what you know now what do think would be the probable cause?

## Discussion:

### I. **Died from Spiritual Malnutrition.**

- A. Didn't develop beyond milk stage. (1 Cor. 1:2; Heb. 5:12-14; cf. 1 Pet. 2:2).
  - 1. Unable to discern between good and evil.
  - 2. Unable to discern enough to set priorities.
- B. Didn't develop a taste for strong preaching. (2 Tim. 4:2-4; cf. Isa. 30:10).
  - 1. Preferred style to substance.
  - 2. Preferred pampering to prodding.
- C. Didn't develop elders, teachers, preachers to "fulfill their ministry" (2 Tim. 4:5).
  - 1. Taught what was wanted rather than what was needed. (v. 3).
  - 2. Scratched itching ears rather than "endure affliction" (v. 3.)
  - 3. Left the word of God and served tables. (Acts 6:2,4).

### II. **Died from Spiritual Depletion.**

- A. Did not replace losses with genuine converts.
  - 1. Lose some by normal means - deaths, moves, etc.
  - 2. Lose some by unfortunate means - drop-outs, disgruntled.
  - 3. Lose some who are searching for "perfect church".
- B. Did not cut their losses by proper vigilance.
  - 1. Tried to hold next generation by tradition rather than conversion.
  - 2. Tried to keep young people interested by social means - could not compete.
  - 3. Tried to solve problems running or wrangling - rather than working out.

### III. **Died from Spiritual Pollution.** (cf. 2 Pet. 2:20-22)

- A. Moral pollution. (1 Cor. 6:9,10)
- B. Doctrinal pollution. (Tit. 2:7 KJV)
  - 1. 1 Cor. 15:33 usually applied to immoral companions - context doctrinal.
  - 2. The closer the doctrine is to truth, the more dangerous it is.

### IV. **Died from Spiritual Hypothermia.** (cf. Matt. 24:12)

- A. No longer warm and kindly affectioned toward one another. (Rom. 12:10)
- B. No longer warm and sensitive to the needs (especially spiritual) of others.
- C. No longer warm and aware of own need of other brethren. ("I have no need of you")
- D. No longer warm, tenderhearted, forbearing and forgiving of others - just demand such from them.

### V. **Died from Spiritual Lethargy.** (Eph. 5:14)

- A. Lethargy: "1. a) An abnormal drowsiness; great lack of energy; inertness. b) a prolonged and unnatural sleep. 3)total indifference; apathy.
- B. Drowsily performed "minimum requirements". - little signs of life beyond this - no real eagerness to learn and serve.

- C. Aroused only negatively - when sleep disturbed or feelings hurt. - Like grandpa's "ole rattler" (Wouldn't hunt, just growled and barked when disturbed).

VI. **Died from Spiritual Cannibalism.** (Gal. 5:15).

- A. "Bite and devour" as opposed to "love your neighbor as yourself". (v.14).
- B. "Bite and devour" with works of flesh. ("hatred through "heresies").
- C. "Bite and devour" by "majoring in minors" (cf. 2 Tim. 2:23)

Conclusion:

- A. What the church will be like 50 years from today is important.
- B. What you will be like 50 years from today is even more important.