

TODAY'S SPIRITUALLY DROUGHT CHURCH

It is Sunday morning; the focus is on going to church, a place where time is used to worship the Lord and learn from His word. The time is peaceful and complete with song, focusing on exalting our Lord YAHSHUA for His redemptive sacrifice; with hearts contrite before Him, acknowledging His love. It is to be an anointing time dedicated to the Lord. But somehow, the church has lost its meaning in relationship with her Savior from her beginning. The letters written to the seven churches in Asia, reveal the progressive apostasy embraced by the churches from those days to present day. Dr. Fruchtenbaum connects each of the seven churches of Revelation time to eras of past and present.

The Ephesus church represents the apostolic church from A.D. 30-100
(Rev. 2:1-7).

Smyrna church represents the Roman persecution from A.D. 100-313
(Rev. 2:8-11).

Pergamum church represents the age of Constantine from A.D. 313-600
(Rev. 2:12-17)

Thyatira the church of the Dark Ages A.D. 600-1517
(Rev. 2:18-29)

Sardis the church of the Reformation A.D. 1517-1648
(Rev. 3: 1-6)

Philadelphia the church of the Great Missionary Movement A.D. 1648-1900
(Rev. 3:7-13)

Laodicea the church of the Apostasy A.D. 1900- present day
(Rev. 3: 14-22). (The Footsteps of the Messiah)

When the church abandoned her first love, which was the Ephesus church, apostasy entered the church's heart; the church forgot the meaning of its existence and from that time on, the churches have progressively lost its identity with the teachings of our Lord YAHSHUA. Today's church resembles that of the church of Laodicea from Revelation chapter three. Rich, but very poor. Beautiful buildings, but empty of the Spirit of God. This is the church of lukewarmness- not cold, and not hot. YAHSHUA said of her: *Because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth! For you say, I am rich; I have prospered and grown wealthy, and I am in need of nothing; and you do not realize and understand that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked* (Rev. 3:16-17). This is the situation of today's church before God.

When the Lord's church was established by YAHSHUA and confirmed by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, it was the season for spiritual renewal, when revival broke out and many experienced the new birth. Hands lifted up, bent knees and hearts, angels invisibly joined the church, connecting heaven and earth, as praises traveled many miles in a split second with voices echoing through the space between heaven and earth, arriving to the throne of grace in a beautiful aroma of holiness. Heaven and earth were united, while the praises continued going

up. Worshipping in spirit and truth, the church of our Lord caused the angels to respond with Amen! Halleluiah in that spiritual season of spring, when the Holy Spirit descended, bringing the rain, filling the people with life. That was the season of spiritual prosperity and beauty. We read in the book of Acts the following: "And when the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all assembled together in one place. When suddenly there came a sound from heaven like the rushing of a violent tempest blast, and it filled the whole house in which they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues resembling fire, which were separated and distributed and which settled on each one of them, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages. As the Spirit kept giving them clear and loud expression" (Acts 2:1-4).

Mega churches are filled with beautiful music, expressed through professional musicians; their voices fill the sanctuary with rhythms of joy; all seems so perfect and peaceful. But the messages are the type to fill good, empty of conviction of sin. They are more the type to entertain the emotions, causing the congregation to laugh as in comedy. Positive attitude message is preached without biblical background in its complete meanings. Meanwhile, God's sufficiency is replaced with self-sufficiency: "I need nothing." They do not realize their spiritual wretches, blindness and poverty. In the frame of today's Laodicea church, many are lost and confused, because they are embracing lies and conformism with the world's attitude, when the word of God pleads with us saying, *I appeal, to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and well pleasing to God which is your reasonable service and spiritual worship; do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind so that you may prove what if the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect (Rom. 12:1-2); and if then you have been raised with Christ, aim and seek the that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God; set your minds and keep them set on what is above, not on the things that are on the earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:1-3)*. The church of YAHSHUA in general, is suffering spiritual famine and drought without realizing it. It is spiritually dying a slow death in ignorance and lack of understanding of God's word, for accepting only the things that tickle their ears. The Lord says to this church: I spoke to you in your prosperity, but you said, I will not listen (Jer.22:21a).

The Psalmist cries to God saying, "As the deer pants and longs for the water brooks, so I pant and long for You, O God" (Ps.42:1). "Search me O God and know my heart today; try me and know my thoughts! And see if there is any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:23-24); "O God, You are my God, earnestly will I seek You; my inner self thirsts for You, my flesh longs and is faint for You, in a dry and weary land where no water is" (Ps. 63:1). These are prayers acknowledging our spiritual need for God. It is only through Him that our spiritual thirst will be satiated; our hunger satisfied. It is only through Him that the church will be healed, when she surrenders to His holiness. In Isaiah 55:1 there is an invitation to all who are thirsty to come to the waters... "Incline your ear and come to Me; hear, and your soul will revive; and I will make an everlasting covenant or league with you, even the sure mercy promised to David...Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near." (Isaiah 55:6). "Now, on the final and most important day of the Feast, Jesus stood, and He cried

in a loud voice, If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink; he who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, From his innermost being shall flow springs and rivers of living water. But He was speaking here of the Spirit, Whom those who believed in Him were afterward to receive.” (John 7:37,39).

The Holy Spirit was promised to all who will believe in YAHSHUA. A gift that was revealed as “Emmanuel- God with us.” He is the Living Water needed to satisfy our spiritual thirst. He is the Living Bread, which was broken for us in the person of YAHSHUA for our spiritual and physical healing. YAHSHUA said, I will ask the Father, and He will give you another comforter, that He may remain with you forever (John 14:16). Paul warned us not to quench the Holy Spirit (I Thess.5:19). Our life-style and behavior will certainly testify to the world who lives in us. It is not only in a church building that we can worship God, but in spirit and in truth. He said to the woman at the well, “A time will come, however, indeed it is already here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father is seeking just such people as these as His worshipers. God is a Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24). The bride of Christ is His church. We can worship Him anywhere we go, in any circumstance we face; for a building is not where the Holy Spirit dwells; we are His temple, as Paul so expressed: “Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit Who lives within you, Whom you have received from God? You are not of your own; you were bought with a price. So then, honor God and bring glory to Him in your body” (I Cor. 6:19-20). YAHSHUA invites the Laodicea church saying, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears and listens to and heeds My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will eat with him, and he with Me. He who is able to hear, let him listen to and heed what the [Holy] Spirit says to the assemblies” (Rev.3:20,22). Can you hear, would you listen to what the Holy spirit is saying to you? That will be the beginning of your spiritual walk in relationship with your Savior and Master, YAHSHUA.