

SOUTH HEIGHTS BAPTIST'S *WEEKLY*

# REMINDER

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## ***HOW TO KILL YOUR CHURCH***

adapted from an article by the late Davis Huckabee

**N**ew Testament churches do not naturally die; they are so constituted that they cannot die a natural death. They may, however, be killed, but even in this, they can hardly be killed by outsiders except by the annihilation of the entire membership. Churches are most often killed from *the inside* - their own members kill them. A church is not an organization: it is also an **organism** - a living thing, and, as such, it has the potential of either growing and thriving, or of languishing and dying. The Lord promised that His church, considered as an institution, would not die, (Matthew 16:18), but this only means that there will be a continuity of churches like the Jerusalem church until His return; it does not guarantee the continued existence of any individual church. How, then, can you killed your church?

### ***I. BY STAYING AWAY FROM IT***

The Scriptures liken church members to the members of a physical body, (I Cor.12:12), and, just as certain organs of the human body cannot be removed without death coming to the body, so it is with the church, the body of Christ. When the members of the church start staying away from it, this soon leads to its death.

This is generally a gradual thing, starting first with the neglect of the Wednesday evening prayer meeting and Bible study time because "by the middle of the week, I'm too tired to go out again after having come home from work", or something similar.

The Sunday night services are really the acid test of a church member's love for the Lord, for many people come to church for the morning services simply because there is nothing else to do except stay home. Of course, many professed Christians who will even forsake the House of God Sunday morning in order to sleep in; these are the very most unfaithful kind. But of those who attend the Sunday morning services regularly, many could not be gotten out for evening services for anything. But the same excuses that are thought to be valid for staying away from church services, will not do when one is invited to a party, or when money is to be made by being in a certain place, etc. But the Lord will one day settle up the accounts: "*All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits*" (Proverbs 16:2).

Some church members permanently forsake the church, never more to return; but if we consider the connections between the two verses in Heb. 10:25-26, we find that this is an indication that the individual was only a false Christian. The same is true in I John 2:19: "*They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*"

### ***II. BY STARVING IT THROUGH LACK OF NEW MEMBERS***

A church lives and grows only by conversions and the additions of those converts to its number, and, therefore, if it is not  
(continued inside)

## **HOW TO KILL YOUR CHURCH** (continued) -

nourished by conversions as a result of preaching and praying, it will soon die off from lack of additions. Souls being saved are a blood transfusion to any church. **"And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47)**. God does the adding to the church, yet He does it through the prayers and the preaching and the witnessing of His people.

□ **Starving Your Church Through Lack of Spirituality** - A church may be killed by starving it of spirituality. Heresy in doctrine is first preceded by heresy in **practice**; i.e., by a carnal life. How may this be prevented? By its members living a sanctified (dedicated) life from day to day (not week by week, nor month by month). But dedication requires self-denial, and all too many professed Christians are unwilling to do this.

□ **Starving Your Church Through Lack of Prayers and Finances** - It is also possible to starve a church to death by not supporting it with your prayers and finances. In a way, a church is a business - the grandest, most worthwhile business in the world, and, therefore, it must have money to operate. Because it is a heavenly business, it needs, in addition to money, the prayers of the Lord's people. Some professed believers are much more diligent in running down the church, the pastor, and those who are faithfully working in the church, than they are in praying for these and helping them. The same thing is true of Christians as it is of mules: **THEY CAN'T PULL WHILE THEY ARE KICKING, AND THEY CAN'T KICK WHILE THEY ARE PULLING**.

As to the failure of God's people to support the church financially, Malachi 3:8-10 is still in the Bible, and it calls the withholder of the tithes and offerings just what he is - a thief. Nor will it do to say "But that is in the Old Testament." The principle of tithing was in place BEFORE the Law of Moses was instituted, and I Cor. 9:1-14 obligates believers to support the church in precisely the same way that the Tabernacle was supported - by tithes and offerings. See especially I Corinthians 9:14.

### **III. BY BRINGING STRIFE INTO IT**

Strife has probably killed almost as many churches as any other one thing. When two people are in disagreement, and both are utterly selfish, it will cause a strife which will grow until it consumes the whole church, unless the church takes steps to end the strife. Strife is a mark of spiritual immaturity and carnality: **"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ ... For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (I Cor. 3:1 & 3)**.

Strife generally has its roots in pride, for where there is strife, both parties proudly assume that they are right, and will not admit even the possibility of being wrong. At the same time, neither will try to see the other's point of view, nor will either admit that the other could be right in the least degree. It is a fortunate church which does not have such an undercurrent of

strife.

Strife is also promoted by self-righteousness in that one looks down upon others, while exalting self in his own mind. He takes the attitude of the Pharisee in Luke 18:9. Pride stands in the way of humility, which is always the first step toward repentance.

One of the most tragic forms of church strife is when a member, or group of members, get their feelings hurt by the preaching (which is very common when the preacher is faithful to preach against sin, and to declare the members' duties). Often the dissident members will mount a campaign to run the preacher off, and the most common excuse used is that he is a "dictator." Now we have no sympathy with a genuine dictator in the pulpit, but ere a man of God is stigmatized as a dictator, men had best consider what the preacher is commissioned and commanded to do: he is to **"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 4:2)**. **"Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear" (I Tim. 5:20)**.

On the basis of these, and the many other similar texts, the preacher has a duty not only to declare the truth, but also to rebuke those members who are living wayward lives, and no one has a right to call him a dictator for only doing his duty. This is not to say that he may use the pulpit to chide members for personal differences of opinion, nor that he should jump upon and spur every one for every little misstep. The wise pastor will quickly learn to that **"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Proverbs 15:1)**. A belligerent or overbearing preacher will produce only heartache for himself and discouragement for the church.

### **IV. BY STUBBORNNESS**

In the Scriptures, stubbornness is a sin that is compared to witchcraft and idolatry, I Samuel 15:22, and yet some people seem to delight in stubbornly resisting all spiritual progress and activity in the church. It is no virtue to be so set in one's ways that one hinders a church from changing for the better. No church was ever so perfect when it started but that it has room to change for the better. Indeed, sanctification is itself a progressive changing for the better of individuals, and if the members daily change for the better, so should the church. The sin of the Sardis Church was that it stubbornly refused to repent of sin (Rev. 3:3), and consequently, it slowly died on the vine, all the while refusing to admit its cold and indifferent state. There is such a thing as dead orthodoxy - a doctrinal soundness which is devoid of any real love to Christ.

Some say, "Well, it is my life, and it is my business whether I repent or not," but this is not true, for every person is an example to someone else, and his bad example will lead others astray, perhaps concerning something much worse. Besides, the corruption of a church member is a corruption of that much of the church, and the Bible says that **"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (I Corinthians 5:6)**. No one can afford to indulge any sin, because sin in church members is what kills churches.

There are many ways to kill a church, but the important thing to notice is the solemn consequences of tearing down a church of the Living God. It matters not what excuses may be given, if an individual or group of individuals so conduct themselves as to cause the death of a church, they had better prepare to shortly face the judgment of God in the loss of their physical lives.

A church is of more importance than the collective "rights" of all the members, for a church exists, not just for its own present members, but is a witness to many who may never join it, but who may be led to the Lord through its ministry. Not only so, but the rights of future members must also be considered when taking any action that might be detrimental to the church. Many carnal church members, in their zeal to get their own way, justify their own sins, sooth their own pride and hurt feelings, do not care that they may quench the only faithful lighthouse of the truth in their community. They care not that future generations may not have opportunity to hear the gospel and to be saved because a church was destroyed by the carnality of its members.

The attitude of some is "I'm saved - I've got my fire insurance, and that's all that matters." Such an attitude hardly evidences genuine salvation. If it be true that *"Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (I John 3:17)*, how much more so is this true of those who have no concern for the welfare of the souls of others? God pity the man who destroys a church: if he is saved at all, he puts himself under the judgment of physical death for putting his own selfish wants and will above the welfare of a church of the living God.

#### **V. BY SELFISHNESS**

All of the foregoing points may be summed up in this one, but we venture to make a few more comments which fall specifically under this heading. We live in the most affluent age that this world has ever known. Add to this the fact that this generation has greater means to get the gospel to every race, nation and tribe of people than any previous generation. Radio, TV and the press make evangelism possible as never before. But what happens? Instead of using these means for the glory of God, men become so selfishly involved in them that all of these become definite detriments to the truth.

It has been found that people [in some countries] spend hundreds of times more on pets than on all religious enterprises combined, and Newscaster Paul Harvey reported that for every dollar that is spent on churches, \$12,000 is spent on crime. It should be obvious from this that we are working at the wrong end of the problem. The selfish use of the Lord's money for the gratification of the members of a church will kill that church as quickly as almost any one thing. May God give us more sound and serviceable churches by stirring up church members to be more dedicated and obedient.

**SO** - are you killing your church by your sinfulness by your

selfishness, by your neglect?

If so, the time to repent is now - before both the church and yourself are destroyed. ■



**Standing  
Amazed In The  
Presence...**

Well, Sunday, August 2 with the Duggar Family has come and gone, and it's hard to believe how wonderfully everything all came together. We had a FANTASTIC turnout - around 185 people were here last Sunday morning, and many of them stayed for the dinner that followed! The singing was excellent, the special music was beautiful, and we all had a great time in the Lord as Jim Bob and Michelle shared their personal testimony of how God has blessed their lives.

All of our people did an excellent job of making our guests feel welcome and at home. While most of those who were here as our guests are currently members of other churches, it is important to remember that they each have their own circle of friends, and, we pray, if they have a friend who is looking for a church home, perhaps they will recommend our church to them.

There were so many that did so much to make last Sunday a wonderful success that I'm afraid I'd leave someone out if I tried to name them all, so please allow me to say A BIG THANK YOU to everyone for their willingness and sacrificial efforts! Everything went SO well, and you all did wonderfully. Thank you so much!

Incidentally, for a recording of the service from last Sunday, please visit our website at:

[http://www.southheightsbaptist.com/Duggars\\_index.html](http://www.southheightsbaptist.com/Duggars_index.html)

Also - if you have photo's of the event, please email them to me, as we'd like to put them on the website.

Now, we're back to our normal selves again - school will begin soon, and the Fall will bring cooler temperatures. Our outreach efforts need to ratchet up again, as well as our faithfulness in our attendance, giving, and service to the Lord.

May this time with the Duggar's show us that, though we may think WE are busy, Jim Bob and Michelle REALLY are, and remember that it is always possible to put Christ as the center of our lives, no matter how busy we may get.

Thank you all again for your loving faithfulness. ■

### **NURSERY MINISTRY WORKERS FOR THIS WEEK**

10:50 a.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Shirley White  
 Cradle Roll 2: Merri Geroux  
 6:00 p.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Rebekah White  
 Cradle Roll 2: Nathaniel White  
 Wed. Eve. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Charity Crawford  
 Cradle Roll 2: Brian Crawford

### **AND THE PEOPLE CAME...**

*Week of August 2, 2009*

Sunday School ----- 31  
 Sunday Morning Service ----- 185  
 Sunday Evening Service ----- 33  
 Wed. Eve. Service, 08/05/09 ----- 27

### **AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...**

*Week of August 2, 2009*

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 1,147.75  
 Love Offering, Duggar Family ----- \$ 100.00  
 New Hymnals Fund ----- \$ 40.00  
**Total Received for Week of 08/02/09: \$ 1,287.75**

**Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed  
 to operate the church  
 EACH WEEK,  
 as a minimum = \$ 1,400.00 📢**

### **FUND DRIVE REPORTS**

#### **NEW HYMNAL FUND**

Offerings Received To Date: \$ 1,529.00

#### **NEW PIANO FUND**

Offerings Received To Date: \$ 570.00

#### **PARSONAGE RENOVATION FUND**

Total Received, To Date: \$ 335.00



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### **WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED**

1. **Admit that you are a sinner.**
2. **Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.**
3. **Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.**
4. **You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).**
5. **By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.**



### **Please Remember To Be Faithful to Give!**

As with everything else, the costs of keeping a church going never go down - they always go **up**. Bills wait for no one, and churches are no exception to this. An extra, sacrificial gift today by everyone present would go a long way...

We encourage all of our membership to practice obedience to God by being faithful every payday to give back to Him His tithe (10%). *If every family in our church would practice this one simple discipline, we would never have weeks where we have to put off paying some bills until the following week!*

Everything is expensive, especially for a small church like ours, but ours is a BIG God, and He LOVES to bless His children when they are obedient to Him!

If you are already a tither, we thank you, and encourage you to also give offerings as well. If you're currently not tithing, won't you please start **today** - **OK?** Thank you.

### **Church Directory**

Todd W. White ----- Pastor  
 Mickie Shatwell ----- Pianist  
 Dickie Eberle ----- Greeter, Custodian  
 Larry Mathews, Caryn Quinnelly, Todd W. White ----- S.S. Teachers  
 Larry & Mary Byars, Brian & Charity Crawford,  
 Nathaniel & Rebekah White ----- Outreach  
 Flowers ----- Hannah and Shirley White