



THE HARVEST TIMES

THERMOMETERS OR THERMOSTATS?

By Dr. Jim "Umfundisi" Lo, Director

Jesus Christ spoke about churches in Revelation. The church that especially caught my attention recently is the church of Sardis, which was composed of congregants who were living on past glory.

Imagine a star far enough from earth that it could be plunged into darkness, but its light would be still reaching our telescopes. I am concluding that in our present day, there are churches that are like these stars. They appear to be alive, shining solely by the light of their brilliant past. But in the present they are lifeless, or on the verge of lifelessness.

As I have been studying and reflecting about the church in Sardis, I find that this lifeless congregation lacked the following:

First, they lacked the emotion of love. What they did was not necessarily done out of love for God, but out of routine.

Second, they lacked enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is often misunderstood. Some think of enthusiasm as simply being a cheerleader. While enthusiasm may sometimes involve clapping, cheering, and other outward signs, it doesn't have to!

The word "enthusiasm" is derived from two little Greek words, *en* and *theos*, with *theos* being the Greek word for God. So "enthusiasm" literally means, in its root concept, "full of God." The opposite of enthusiasm is apathy, indifference, and laziness. We should all aspire to grow in Christian enthusiasm.

Thirdly, they lacked empathy. Empathy is the capacity to feel another person's feelings, thoughts, or attitudes vicariously. The apostle Peter counseled Christians to have "compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous" (1 Peter 3:8). The apostle Paul also encouraged

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Dr. Jim's Travels

Please pray for Dr. Jim as he ministers in various places over the next few months:

August 10-12, Cayman Islands

August 22, Stockton, MO

August 30, Parkway, Fort Scott, KS

September 11-22, Ghana

September 27, Rockbridge, Columbia, MO

October 1-11, St. Croix and Anguilla





CHURCH OF GOD (HOLINESS)

WORLD MISSIONS

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MINISTERING ON THE HILL

Home assignment, or furlough, equals lots of ministry opportunities. This was true for two missionary families last month, as several members volunteered (or were campers) at Harmony Hill.

At Kids Kamp, Larry Doyle and his son Lawrance were counselors, Christy helped manage the cleaning and laundry, and Jacob was a camper. In the picture above, Amaziah assisted the boys teams with woodworking.

Another family had members involved, as well, although names cannot be shared for security reasons.

Two weeks later, the Doyle family was back at Harmony Hill to participate in Youth Camp, where Larry and Christy volunteered in various capacities.



empathy when he exhorted fellow Christians to “rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep” (Romans 12:15). The ability to do this happens through the in-filling of God’s Spirit into one’s emotions.

But churches must be alive for this to happen. Lifeless churches are not able to be empathetic, which causes them to hibernate and not reach out to minister to the hurts and needs of those around them.

And, fourthly, the dead church lacked enemies. I know this may sound odd — the absence of enemies. “Don’t enemies IMPEDE spiritual growth?” Ironically, the OPPOSITE can be true. Sometimes, churches and individual believers grow BEST when they encounter enemies of the faith, or encounter difficulties and struggles which can cause the church to turn to God for help.

Mark Adams states, “The church of Sardis was completely untroubled because they were a very UN-troubling church.” The church in Sardis was not having problems or enemies because it was not aggressive in its witness to the city. They didn’t stand out as salt and light in a city darkened by sin. So, there was no persecution because there was no invasion into the enemy’s territory. This church was a perfect model of inoffensive, comfortable, “no-risk” Christianity.

I am burdened about the following: Churches that are thermometers that register the temperature of the culture around her, instead of being thermostats, that with God’s help, can change the culture’s temperature for the glory of God.

I pray that the Churches of God Holiness will be thermostats!

VBS IN GRAND CAYMAN

From July 6-10, the Red Bay church in Grand Cayman hosted their annual Vacation Bible School and Teen Challenge. This year’s theme was Illumination Station, which focused on shining the light on who Jesus is.

A total of 87 children and teens attended, and many adults volunteered to help with teaching, music, puppets, registration, cooking, games, etc. The highlight of the week was that many children and teens gave their hearts to Jesus during the event.



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