

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Revelation 3:14-18**.
- B. There are several church diseases that kill growth. Some of the diseases that I want to talk about are terminal; that is there is no known cure.
- C. Fortunately, most of the church diseases can be cured. We must however recognize what is going on so we can affect the cure.
- D. I would like to talk about six diseases that affect church growth:
 1. Ethnik-itis.
 2. Old age.
 3. People blindness.
 4. Koino-itis,
 5. St. John's syndrome.
 6. Sociological strangulation.

I. ETHNIK-ITIS.

- A. Ethni-kitis is basically defined as an unchanging church in a changing community.
- B. Sometimes due to a plant opening or closing and other factors a make-up of a particular town may drastically change and the church must learn to change with it.
- C. Every church needs to keep up with the times in worship and especially in the Bible school program. The use of computers, marker boards, films, and the kinds of things going on is necessary for good growth.

II. OLD AGE.

- A. Unfortunately the problem of the old age church is a terminal problem in some areas.
- B. The old age church has the following symptoms:
 1. A disappearing community.
 2. A growing percentage of members over the age of 50.
 3. The number of funerals is greater than weddings.
 4. The young people don't return to town after graduation.
- C. This was the situation we were in, in Sentinel, OK before coming here.
- D. We can never say churches like these won't grow, but the track record is not good and there are no easy answers.

III. PEOPLE BLINDNESS.

- A. People blindness is simply cultural ignorance. We must realize that there are differences in people.
- B. We cannot force everyone into our mold. Different races, ethnic backgrounds, levels of education, etc., all make for a possible rocky road to fellowship as well as church growth.
- C. Let us never be guilty of looking for only a particular type of person to have as member of the church.
- D. The solution is to drop all prejudices and treat people how they want to be treated (1Cor. 9:19-23).

IV. KOINO-ITIS.

- A. The church disease called koino-itis is when there is an over active fellowship in the church so much that the church spends all of its time with itself, and not with non-Xians.
- B. When this happens visitors become invisible to the members. And when the visitors are not greeted warmly they will not come back.
- C. This can be a serious problem. We must always be working on coming out of ourselves and meeting new people who come to our building. Don't fellowship with the same people all the time.

- D. The church needs good fellowship functions to draw strength and encouragement from each other, but let us not make this an end of itself.

V. **ST. JOHN'S SYNDROME.**

- A. The name of this particular disease is from John the apostle. Not to think that he started a church problem, but that it is entirely possible he was the last apostle to die, and after that happened the church changed--for the worse.
- B. You can remember how John was writing the book of Revelation and mentioned the church at Ephesus having left their first love.
- C. St. John's Syndrome as it is called took place in the second century as the church as a whole grew lukewarm. Having a name one is alive but being dead is no good.
- D. We need revival and regeneration in our attitudes, commitment and works.

VI. **SOCIOLOGICAL STRANGULATION.**

- A. We must be careful about this one right here at Lake Land! This one could happen within the next two years and in some ways I hope it does!
- B. Sociological strangulation is when a church out grows its physical building size. When the auditorium is overcrowded, the parking lot full, classrooms bulging, it's time for the church to stop growing and it normally does.
- C. A rule of thumb is about 80-85% capacity and then start adding to the current facility or begin building a new one.
- D. One of the greatest ways for a church to stop growing is to fall in love with its building. We need to be ready to change it and/or move into a new one when growth demands it.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Let us continue to reach out. May we continue to grow--praise God.
- B. May we always be ready to change, adapt, recognize, and be ready to do new things to keep our 'family' growing.
- C. Jesus can save a person from their sins by His blood.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.