

University Heights Church  
of Christ  
445 Columbia Ave.,  
Lexington, KY 40508  
(859) 255-6257  
www.uheightschurch.com

#### WORSHIP SERVICES

##### **Sunday**

Bible Study: 9:45 AM

Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM

##### **Wednesday**

Bible Study: 7:30 PM (This is  
immediately followed by a  
short worship period)

##### **First Friday of Each Month**

Singing: 7:30 PM

#### LEADERSHIP

##### **Elders**

Garry Banks, David Collins,  
John Thompson

##### **Evangelist**

Adam Litmer

##### **Deacons**

Troy Antle, Richard Brundige,  
Matt Thompson, Adam  
Litmer, Bill Morelan, Jim  
Parsons, Pat Seabolt, Adam  
Daniels, Jamie Powell

#### Adam's Office Hours

Tuesday-Friday (8:30-4:00)

### News And Notes

My brother-in-law, Adam Knollman, lost his father (Mel) suddenly early last week. His death came as a shock and the family is in desperate need of prayers. I will post their mailing address on the bulletin board in the hallway.

Shirley Harrod's surgery went well and she was able to return home Tuesday evening. Her son and daughters have been helping them but it never hurts to check whether there is something we could personally do for her and Louis as she recovers.

We have so many of our members traveling now that the weather has warmed up. Let's remember them in our prayers.

### IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Jeff Howerton, Rhonda Boyd, Paul Atkisson, Barbara Matheny, David Morrow, Debbie Parker, John Bennett, Robert Brundige, Donald Dawson, Gail Stein, Sandy Childress, Susie Burton, Jacob Profit, Valerie and Barry Boyd, Jannett's mother and stepfather, Sandy Driver, Erlene Young, Doris Baker, Bernard Larch, Burnice Richardson, Ruth Poynter, Janice Parsons, The Spivey family, the Dillard family, Cassie Neel, Larry Sells, The Morgan family

# University Heights Messenger

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### *Nothing Is Killing The Church*

Adam Litmer

Within the last few months I have read a number of articles whose titles went something like this: "\_\_\_\_\_ is killing the church", or "\_\_\_\_\_ is why the church is dying." In fact, I began this article Wednesday and came across another article with one of the above titles Wednesday afternoon. The writers insert whatever particular problem they feel needs to be addressed. In each case I believe the issues they addressed are important and many of their warnings quite valid and needful for Christians today. However, I do take exception to the statement that something is killing the church today or that the church is in the process of dying.

Many centuries ago an interesting and extraordinarily important discussion took place between the Lord and his apostles. *He asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* (Matthew 16:13-18) Christians correctly believe that the rock upon which Jesus would build his church was the confession that he is "*the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" No force existed that could keep him from building his church and no force exists that can kill it while innumerable saints across the world boldly continue making that confession. And friends, innumerable saints across the world *are* boldly continuing to make that confession!

No, beloved; the family and household of God (Ephesians 2:19), the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-12), the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16-17), the church purchased with Christ's own blood (Acts 20:28), is most assuredly *not* being killed nor is it in the process of dying.

But have we not all seen local congregations close their doors, begin treating one another abominably, simply start going through the motions, or wander off into error? Yes. But are we to conclude that the entire body of Christ throughout the world

has been taking its cues from that one group (or even several groups) and is about to follow suit?

Many times I believe statements about something killing the church or the church being in the process of dying are made as the result of frustration and discouragement upon observing ungodly behavior among Christians. I can certainly understand that. However, we must not allow frustration or discouragement to cloud our vision or cause us to ignore facts. Here are some incredibly heartening facts: there are Christians who have left the truth to promote error, yet there are so many who remain intensely dedicated to God's truth. There are Christians who compromise to be accepted by the world, yet there are so many who would rather be approved before God. There are Christians who just go through the motions, yet there are so many who worship God in spirit and in truth. There are Christians who are hypocrites, yet there are so many who have truly given themselves to the Lord. There are Christians who mistreat one another, yet there are so many who outdo one another in showing honor. There are Christians who never pick up a Bible outside of the assembly, yet there are so many who search the Scriptures daily. There are Christians who elevate their own uninspired traditions to the level of inspired revelation, yet there are so many who would never dream of doing so. There are young Christians who have abandoned their faith and been lost to the world, yet there are so many who set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity. We could extend this list much further if we were of a mind to do so.

Other times I wonder if small numbers cause people to make statements about the church dying or being killed. I'm not sure how many people live in Lexington. I *am* sure that of that number only an extraordinarily small fraction are Christians. Every Christian who reads this knows exactly how Paul felt when he exclaimed, *I would to God that not only you but also all...might become such as I am!* (Acts 26:29) Sadly, that is not going to happen. Only a very small number of people will come to Jesus Christ on his terms. Yet let us recognize this for what it is: not a sign that the body of Christ is dying or being killed, but that the body of Christ will only ever be comprised of a remnant of the people (Mathew 7:13-14). Elijah, overcome by discouragement and frustration, was convinced that he was the only faithful servant of God left. He was wrong. *Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.* (1 Kings 19:18). Out of all Israel seven thousand was such a small number, nothing more than a remnant, yet God said that remnant was His. Such is the church today.

Further, let us not mistake the need for continued spiritual growth as a sign of impending death. Would we claim that our newborn son is as good as dead because he has not yet learned to walk? Would we claim that our toddler daughter is doomed because she cannot yet do arithmetic? Growth and development are required and will

come in time. The same is true spiritually. Peter shows this when he finishes his second letter in this way: *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.* (2 Peter 3:18) A babe in Christ is not a veteran soldier of the cross and it is silly to expect them to be. This is not the say that their mistakes and errors are to be ignored. It *is* to say that patience and much training is required. Let us not mistake growing pains as precursors to spiritual death.

Finally, let us not present that for which our Lord died in such broad, negative terms. A preacher, not too long ago, exclaimed that "our problem today is that we just do not love the Lord." This was said during a sermon to a group of brethren and visitors about the Lord's church generally. What a terrible and false thing to say! Were I a truth-seeking visitor I would see no reason to be among those people any longer. Were I a weak Christian feeling a very strong pull from the world that statement may very well have been the catalyst that sent me falling back. As was mentioned earlier there are innumerable saints throughout this world who love the Lord with all of their hearts, who love the brethren with all their hearts, and who love the souls of their fellow men. Besides this, Jesus paid the ultimate price to purchase the church. It would be better for us to bite off our own tongues than to speak broadly and disparagingly about that which he loves so much. This is particularly the case when just a little thought demonstrates that what is being said *is not true!* After cautioning brethren not to take becoming teachers of God's Word lightly because teachers will be judged with greater strictness, James immediately began to speak of the great danger of the tongue and the terrible destruction it can leave in its path (James 3:1-8). Let us take great care in our words at all times, but especially when we are speaking of the church our Lord loves and died to establish.

Satan is bringing the fight to the Lord's church every day. Some have fallen by the wayside, some have surrendered, and some continue on blissfully unaware as Satan ravages their hearts and minds. Even so, countless saints around the world, encased in the mighty armor of God, are taking the fight right back at him. We are and have only ever been a remnant, but we are very much alive and we are fighting the good fight (2 Timothy 4:7a). We will continue to love God and our brethren. We will continue to grow and mature. We will continue to worship and praise. We will continue to be opposed and persecuted. But know this: the church will *always* live within the Word and it will *always* live within the world as long as saints are willing to stand up and boldly confess, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!*" I have no intention of ever surrendering that confession. How about you?