

The Death of a Church

Dearly Beloved,

We are here to say good-bye to an old friend: a friend we have loved for years. We did not come to praise her; we came to bury her. What can you say about a church that weathered the riches of the 90s, the emergent movement of the 2000s, and the schisms of the 10s? In 2009 we knew she was sick, so we hooked her up to committees and brought in consultants.

Yes, we tried new-member transfusions, and we cloned new additions to her. We felt certain that a new recreation center, a change in music style, more variety of worship times would breathe new life into her veins. We even blended our worship, but it caused more controversy among those hoping to save her.

What disease slowly squeezed the life out of her? Was it her inability to accept others because of their appearance, race, or social status? Or was it her constant obsession with the churches nearby? She was always so busy, so conflicted. Yes, she had issues: the color of the carpet, the bitter taste in her mouth, her frequent bouts with fatigue, narcolepsy, and acute preoccupation. Yes, indeed, she was self-absorbed. But, no one can deny that she loved to have a good time. But, even good times and the good medicine of a merry heart couldn't revive her.

We bury her today, but, alas, she died quite a long time ago. She just didn't have the good grace to lie down until now. In truth, I believe it would be fair to say that her death can be attributed to her tragic flaws: an inability to love, to weep, to speak, to serve...

These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God

and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God.

Revelation 3:1-2