

August 12, 2015

Dear Brethren, Co-Workers and Friends,

Sometimes I'm shocked by this world in which we live. The news reports from around the world indicate that society, government, and general popular opinion are moving rapidly in a direction away from God. The laws of the land and the media that barrage our senses only seem to glorify man's perverse ideas about morality and reject the Word of God. Isaiah's warning to the House of Judah applies all too well in this contemporary age, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20). This is the age in which we live, and it is a dangerous place.

It might sound strange to say that we are in danger. Why is it dangerous to live in the age that we do? Many of us live in relative peace and comfort, don't we? To be sure, most of you receiving this letter don't live with a threat to your life lurking around the corner, and in fact, the opposite is probably true. Never before in the history of mankind has there been so much abundance and excess. Yet, therein lies the danger.

In this day and age, we have the amazing comfort to have something shipped to our doorstep from the other side of the globe in a matter of days with the push of a button. This is an example of a kind of power invented by man, for man. This power and others like it might cause us to take the blessings of God for granted, believing that man can do anything without God's help. Comfort, complacency, and pride of the power is offensive to God and places our lives in danger. If we fall into the trap of believing that we can accomplish great things all on our own without God's help and influence, we reject God in effect. We also reject God when we start inventing and developing not-so "great things," including things like weapons of mass destruction or conducting scientific research in an attempt to alter God-ordained natural laws and principles.

In the book of Revelation, the Church of Laodicea is addressed with stinging observations about them. "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see" (Revelation 3:16-18). We understand that this description applies to our present time and addresses the predominant attitude of members within the end-time Church of God. The lukewarm attitude and the complacent pride of the people are reprimanded and Church members are commanded to wake up! These characteristics should serve as a warning to all who live in this age.

We understand that the lukewarm attitude is characterized by making compromises with the Truth. There's an aspect of knowing better with a lukewarm attitude. When the Truth is known, but exceptions are made in our behavior so that we don't have to adhere to the Truth, one becomes lukewarm. When loopholes are sought so that one might kind-of keep God's commandments, but really satisfy their own human-driven desires, compromise becomes manifest. Consider the practice of voting in governmental elections, for example. Church members who choose to do so might believe that they are expressing their Christian conviction by supporting a candidate whom they think will uphold their beliefs. However, the actual effect is an expression of ignoring God, exalting the power of man, and making a feeble attempt to improve this world ruled by Satan. With the pull of society away from being obedient to God, there is no shortage of pressure in God's Church to compromise. The result is a lukewarm attitude in which one attempts to serve two masters (compare Matthew 6:24), but in effect turns from God.

The characteristic of becoming rich and having need of nothing is another distinguishing factor for the Church mentioned here. How closely this resembles our current society, where the knowledge of man and the deductions of science are exalted and the Truth of God is considered ignorance. Society affects us, and Church members must be aware that they can easily fall into the same trap. Following the "god" of science has caused many to reject the Bible and adopt instead the ungodly theory of evolution. There is no question that mankind has managed to accomplish great feats and amass great wealth. This is an objective fact, and inherently no problem. However, the increased pride of man is a problem. Our contemporary age has turned from God, and saying "we don't need God because our way is better" is condemnatory. God is being expunged from the lives of our contemporaries because of pride.

The Church of Laodicea then is characterized by having a bad attitude—one that rejects God and glorifies mankind. Since we live within the society and in a Church age where this kind of attitude is promoted, it is imperative that we remain on guard. By living in a spiritually hostile environment every day, we are influenced in ways that we might not even realize. Just as water flowing in a stream slowly erodes the banks, living in the age when a Laodicean attitude is prominent influences our own attitudes. When our own beliefs and behaviors inevitably come into contact with the attitudes of a Laodicean age, we need to be on guard to make sure that we are not influenced to compromise. The steady pull of society, families and friends away from God has caused many to reject the observance of God's Sabbath and His annual Holy Days, and to replace them with celebration of pagan holidays, such as Sunday, Christmas and Easter.

The willingness to compromise—to make exception to God's commandments and provision for carnal desire—is where we need to be vigilant. Making compromises, as small as they might seem to be, will slowly lead us away from God. By adding each compromise on top of another, little will remain of the Truth. This has happened in the past, and it will happen to people now. But it all begins with a seemingly small and harmless provision.

The attitude of personal pride turns one away from God as well. In a society that glorifies the accomplishments of man and discounts the works of God, those who glorify God are considered weak and ignorant. Since it is human nature to seek approval and acceptance by our peers, we will feel pressure to give in and to give up God so that we may embrace the "enlightenment" of mankind. This is a very dangerous attitude to develop, and it can sneak in very subtly. When God is not needed because people believe they can accomplish something without Him, the attitude of pride has come home to roost. It is dangerous because when man turns from God, God turns from man.

To be on guard against the influence of the Laodicean age, the attitudes of compromise and pride must not take root in our lives. We will encounter pressure to give in just by living in this present age. It is imperative that we take advantage of the tools that are at our disposal to shield against the attacks on our spiritual integrity.

The Church of the Eternal God and its international affiliates take it as our charge to provide you with those tools. You will frequently hear and read about the emphasis to not compromise with the Truth. Indeed, this letter applies. The reason why it is emphasized so often is that we live in a time when God's Truth is constantly threatened. The material that we produce—the weekly Updates, Standing-Watch programs, live sermons and sermons on CD and DVD, booklets, and member letters—are published in large part to support your need to strengthen your spiritual resolve. We encourage you to take advantage of them! You will find an oasis where the Truth is taught boldly and with all honesty. It will help you to build your strength as you stand against the age so adverse to God's one true Way.

With Christian love,



Eric Rank