

*the main points again...*

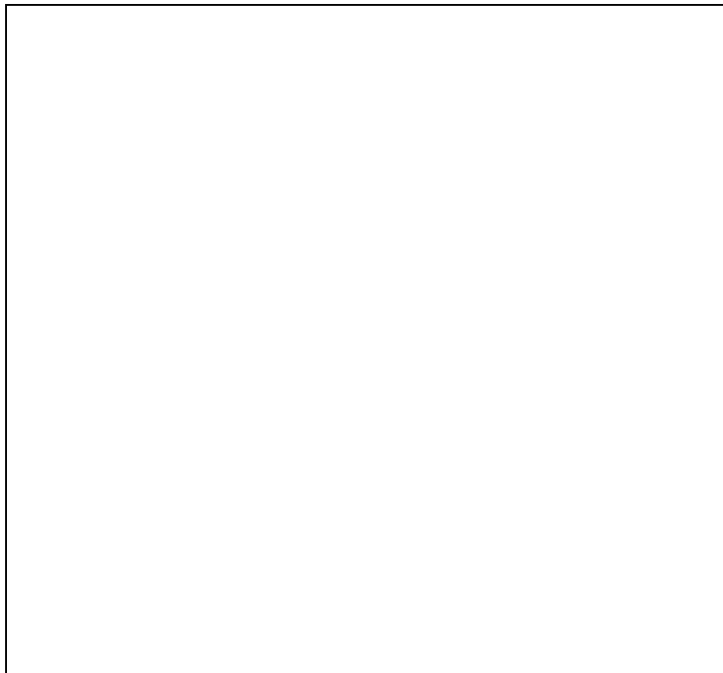
Your good people and your bad people  
Your true churches and your false churches

**EXPOSING EARTHLY APPEARANCES  
IN THE LIGHT OF HEAVENLY REALITIES**

Seven letters to seven churches in Asia  
Seven letters to all seven churches in a circular letter  
Seven letters to all churches everywhere

Addressing the spiritual health of the church...

**BEWARE!**



**THE LETTER TO SMYRNA**

Each letter addressed from appropriate part of vision of Christ in 1.12ff  
'These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again.'

Resurrection message for a suffering church  
'I **KNOW** your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich!'

Suffering that is certain but limited  
Calling for faith not fear

A church which is following Christ  
'...we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.'  
- Romans 8.17- see also verse 18

**THE LETTER TO SARDIS**

*'Situated at the junction of five roads and commanding the Herman valley, Sardis was an active commercial centre and wealthy. The city's wealth seems to have made for slackness.'*  
- Leon Morris

Dead or alive?  
A church full of activity but in danger of heart failure  
'having the form of godliness but denying its power' - 2 Tim 3.5

Wake up- not by doing more but by recalling what you believe  
'Those whom I **LOVE** I rebuke and discipline' - Revelation 3.19

Reading the letter from Medellin in Croxley Green  
Revelation asks not only,  
**'WHO IS LORD OVER THE WORLD?'**

BUT  
**'WHO IS LORD OVER THE CHURCH/THIS CHURCH?'**

## *So what?*

If you have time, read all seven letters to the different churches...

What do you think are the main concerns and themes that are addressed?

How would you feel about a frank letter to CGBC being aired before other churches?

What do you think is the place of discipline in the life of our church? Cf. Rev 3.19

Does discipline imply abandonment or devotion?

Each letter is addressed from Christ in terms of an aspect of the description found in 1.12ff.

Smyrna's address emphasises death and resurrection (2.8);

Sardis' presence and awareness (3.1).

In what ways are these appropriate?

Smyrna's letter guarantees suffering even to the point of death.

How do you respond to this?

Compare Romans 8.17-18

Pray for churches facing this reality today...

Sardis' letter perhaps sits rather more uncomfortably with us...

What is a sign that a church is alive?

Is it activity? OR something else (see 3.3)

Compare this letter with that to Laodicea

Where is Jesus in relation to these sham churches?

Each of the churches' letters ends with encouragement to use their ears to hear and to overcome...

Overcoming ultimately here is about being true to Christ

Try to personalise this, share if you feel able and pray...

# *Sunday June 1<sup>st</sup> 2008*

## *it's curtains* *Peeping into Revelation*



### *Matters Arising: Revelation 2-3*

**Devoted to Christ, people, mission**