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NAKED

Charles C. Ryrie

I don't suppose there are any statistics available to tell us whether there is more or less nudity today than say 100 years ago. But it certainly seems like there is more!

On a family vacation last summer we were being shown the sights of a major European city. About noontime as we drove by a beautiful inner-city lake, the guide announced that we were passing a nude beach! And off in the distance were business men, secretaries, families playing and eating lunch in the brilliant sunshine of that day, and all in the nude!

Churches can be naked too, and this in spite of beautiful buildings, well-dressed worshipers, and every material benefit in evidence. Naked, not as man sees them, but as God does.

Such was the case with the church in ancient Laodecia. It was rich in all things material, but the Lord saw through all that surface prosperity and pronounced that church naked (Revelation 3:17).

A city that generated great wealth, Laodecia enjoyed enormous prosperity in the first century. Indeed, when a disastrous earthquake levelled it in A.D. 60, the citizens, refusing an imperial subsidy, rebuilt their city out of their own resources.

Three principal industries accounted for this great wealth: banking, the production of wool cloth, and medicines. Cicero cashed a letter of credit in Laodecia on a trip he took through that area in A.D. 61. The cloth, specially made from black-wooled sheep, was exported all over the world. And the medicines included a widely-used remedy for eye trouble.

Undoubtedly many who joined the church in Laodecia were wealthy people who gave generously to its support. As a result, the congregation lacked nothing. Or so they thought.

But when the risen Christ inspected His church in Laodecia He pronounced it "wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked." Further, the Lord instructed the apostle John to write the church and inform them of His assessment. Can you imagine the shock waves the reading of that letter created in the congregation? How dare anyone, even the Lord, say such things?

The problem was that there were many members of that church who were nothing more than that--church members. They did not belong to Christ, just the church, for they had never entered by faith into that living relationship with Him. Respected church members, but naked sinners before God.

Graciously, the Lord offered them clothing to cover their nakedness, for He said they could have the white raiment of salvation freely for the asking (Revelation 3:18). No longer would they be naked, but clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

Regretably, Laodecia is reincarnated in some church today. It need not be so.

Let's stamp out spiritual nudity!