

# Hot, cold or lukewarm? Moonshine or lemonade?

Revelation 3.14-end

Victor Jara sang:

*Usted no es nada*

*No es chicha ni limona*

meaning:

You are nothing. You are neither chicha nor lemonade

(Chicha being a strong alcoholic drink)

Victor Jara was a Chilean folk singer. He came to prominence in the early seventies as a prominent supporter of the Allende government.

The Allende government was elected in 1970 on a programme of far reaching reforms which were designed to give the poor a greater share of the wealth of Chile. Allende was toppled by a coup backed by the CIA which brought General Pinochet to power. The Pinochet regime was to become infamous for its use of torture. It brought repression and poverty to the people of Chile.

Victor Jara was arrested in the first days of the coup. He was one of many who were imprisoned in the main football stadium of Santiago. He was executed there. Before he was executed he was beaten and his hands were broken so he would know that he would never be able to play the guitar again.

The threat of a coup was an ever-present threat during the years of the

Allende government. It was clear to many that a showdown was coming. It was in this context that Victor Jara sang 'you are neither chicha nor lemonade'. His song was addressed to people who were in the middle of the road. Those who neither supported Allende nor the generals who were rumoured to be plotting a coup. His point was that when the coup comes, there will be no middle of the road. You are either for democracy or for oppression.

The message of the Spirit to the church in Laodicea was similar to the one in Victor Jara's song.

*'I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot.'* (Revelation 3:15)

Just as Victor Jara's challenge to the 'middle of the roaders' was in the context of the apocalyptic struggle that was coming, so all the messages to the churches of Asia in the Book of Revelation are, of course, to be read in the context of the apocalyptic vision that comes later in the book.

I'm sure we have all felt the pull of the centre ground in politics. We desire to find some good in everybody's ideas. We yearn for consensus. We want to maintain good relations with everybody. Victor Jara's song argues that there are some political situations where the middle of the road is not a tenable or sustainable position.

In the same way I am sure we have all felt the pull of lukewarm faith. A faith just for Sunday mornings. A faith that does not threaten our relations with people around us. A faith that does not challenge the way we live our lives and spend our money. The Book of Revelation says that in God's plans for humanity there is no place for this kind of lukewarm faith. To the

church in Laodicea that is neither hot nor cold, neither chicha nor lemonade the Spirit says this:

*Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me. To the one who conquers I will give a place with me on my throne, just as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. (Revelation 3:20-21)*

Open the door! Take your place on the throne that has been conquered! Or not. That is the choice. Because testing times are ahead. The time for a decision is coming.

We have already passed through some testing times this year. As individuals and as a church we have had our hot moments and our cold moments and a few lukewarm moments. But taking our collective experience as a whole, I don't think St Philip & St James Alderley Edge is like the church of Laodicea. The faith I have witnessed around me has not been lukewarm. So, while the Spirit may have things to say to us as individuals in this text, I don't think this is our text as a church. I think we are ready to open the door and take our place on the throne that has been conquered.

But just to be sure we have listened to what the Spirit is saying, why not read Revelation 3: 14-end and watch this clip of Victor Jara's song accompanied by images of people in Chile shortly before the coup.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=laore8\\_sjJY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=laore8_sjJY)

Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying.

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