

#297 Kingdom: Change

Heb 12: 28] **Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken**, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; [29] for our God is a consuming fire.

Heb 13: 8] **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever.**

Mal 3: 6] **“For I, the LORD, do not change;** therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

Psa 90: 2] Before the mountains were born, Or Thou didst give birth to the earth and the world, **Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.**

There are a variety of scriptures that declare the permanence of God. He is what He is and He can be nothing else. Since He IS God there is never a reason for Him to change. He is from everlasting to everlasting the same God. **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever. Jesus Christ is what He is and He will always be the same.**

Still, every system and religion that has been built up around Jesus Christ has constantly changed. This is not wrong but is a necessity. This is why we cannot go back to the first century church, walk barefooted, ride on donkeys, hold everything in common and do what they did. If we hope to regain their power and commitment and understanding of Christ by some lifestyle change we will be disappointed. Change is a fact and every system that refuses to change will become so static and inflexible it will be paralyzed. “Holding to the old ways” may seem like a holy thing until we observe the lack of forward growth. Growth always produces change. In fact the very reason for growth is to produce change.

The fact that God, the Father, never changes, Christ, the Son or the Holy Spirit never changes does not mean they have become static but it means they are fixed in their character, attitudes, purpose, power and plan. They didn't start out with one plan and then because of Genesis 3 have to quickly come up with an alternate plan. The Word was and is the Spirit of Christ but He didn't have to change to become flesh. He became flesh without losing or changing anything. He lived in history but history didn't change the Word of God. Rather the Word of God changed history.

Since God cannot and will not change it simply means that **we have to do all the changing** if we are to grow into His image and likeness. If we have not gone through several radical changes since we first received the Lord it means that we have become static and have not grown. To confess that we have NOT changed is to confess that we are not walking with Christ. The fact that He never changes is no excuse for us not changing.

If we study church history we will see several dynamic and radical changes that the Christian movement passed through in its development until today. Several radical changes took place in the last 35 years that we have witnessed. We expect several radical changes in the church in Cuba in the next few years. The change within the Christian movement in Africa has been phenomenal in the last 30 years. The same in China. We are not just speaking of “spiritual growth” but of

changes within the movement.

John 16: 12] “I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. [13] “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. [14] “He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you.

As the Holy Spirit continued to reveal new truth and to guide the church, the church began to develop and development required change. Unfolding truth requires the church to develop and more development within the church releases more unfolding truth which requires change in order to implement the truth revealed. In any time of unfolding truth there cannot be a static church unless it is willing to receive the truth but then do nothing with it. For that reason God is not releasing truth to those who refuse to implement the truth into their experience.

John 7:17] “If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself.

Christianity did not come to the place it is today by refusing to change. At each new revelation there has always been those who rejected the truth that was revealed but the “living church” moved on beyond their current experience to establish that truth within a greater and fuller experience.

We have often pointed out the great change that occurred in the early Christian movement as the church progressed from a hierarchy of leadership at Jerusalem and then began as a “new movement” at Antioch. The work which was started at Antioch was started by believers that were scattered from Jerusalem after the persecution began.. This was a new “pattern” for the church. I don’t think one was right and the other wrong but that this speaks to us of progression and development and change.

In that same way I believe there is a “new movement” about to begin in our day and that will require a departure from the old patterns of the church. I believe we must wait for a totally different “pattern for the church” to emerge. Trying to “invent a new pattern” will produce nothing. To me it appears that the “church that He is building” has the “new pattern” developing within it, subjectively, at the present time. I am guessing that no new pattern will be shown us “on the mountain” but that the Holy Spirit has already given us the “pattern” in the Tabernacle of Moses. What He will do is bring to us an unfolding revelation of how to implement the change in our own lives that we might become the pioneers or forerunners of the next restoration. Not because we are “leaders of the church” but because we are leaders in “changing within.”

The great need today is not for better methods of evangelism or discipleship but an entirely “new Christian movement” that is moving into the next restoration. Of course that doesn’t mean to stop evangelizing but to prepare a “life changing movement” to bring the new souls into and start them out in the new dimension rather than trying to “convert” them later.

This is how my wife and I came into the Charismatic Movement as it was just beginning. We

didn't have to cast off a "Christian religious system" in order to investigate another one. We could easily lay aside the cult and its doctrines we were in before and fully embrace the Charismatic Movement because we could sense "life and movement" in it. Still, when it had run its course we had no desire to try to keep it alive and preserve "old memories of what used to be." In 1985 we began to look for the next restoration.

My understanding of the church that began at Jerusalem is that all the decisions were made by the Apostles and the decisions were handed down to the laity who were on the "outside" looking in. The "laity" were marginal within the church. The "leadership" became "authoritarian" and held to "racial" guidelines. We can certainly excuse them because they were in a whole new movement and had no experience in this realm. "The Jewish customs" would be forced upon the Gentile Christians and try to remold them into a Jewish culture. I expect that it was necessary for the "new movement" to escape from this religious atmosphere and begin new at Antioch among the Gentiles. In this "newer movement" there were no prophets or teachers sent up from Jerusalem because that would just have prolonged the transition to a Gentile church. Rather, believers started the church at Antioch and "prophets and teachers" were raised up locally.

Acts 13:1 Now there were at Antioch, **in the church that was there, prophets and teachers:** Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. [2] And while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." [3] Then, **when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.**

It is interesting that they didn't confer with Jerusalem but just followed the leading of the Holy Spirit and sent out Paul and Barnabas to the "work" of establishing churches. This was not to start a "New Jewish Denomination" or to extend the "Church of Antioch Denomination." They were called "to the work." "THE WORK" must take precedence over denominationalism.

While the church at Antioch seemed to be comfortable by being autonomous, the church at Jerusalem seemed to need to have their viewpoint enforced upon Antioch and tried to export their doctrines into the church there. Circumcision must have been a requirement for membership into the church at Jerusalem. For the church to become a "priesthood ministry" it must be free from "man's control" and come under the universal dominion of God. In other words, for the "church" to have dominion it must be under dominion but the dominion of man is too earthly, variable and many times too self-serving for the church to continue to develop.

It is my opinion that quite often the church has been stifled when it has been structured after the "pattern" of Jerusalem. Many have sought to become "Apostolic churches" by being centered in the "apostles and prophets." The church at Antioch was first called "Christian" because they were centered in "Christ." That doesn't mean there were no "apostolic ministries" or that they lacked "prophets and teachers" but that the church was not centered in the "ministries" but in Christ.

In the Book of Revelation it is not the "Apostles" who are walking among the Lampstands and saying "I know your deeds." We need to be reminded that "Apostles and Prophets" are just men

like other men but have a specific calling.

1Cor 3:10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it.

[11] For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Eph 2:19] So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, [20] **having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets**, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, [21] in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; [22] in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

This verse has been the authority of the "Apostolic Movement" to insist that "they are the foundation" upon which the church is built. The Twentieth Century Translation says "built upon the foundation laid by the Apostles and Prophets" which brings it into harmony with what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3. "The foundation OF" can easily mean "the one they laid." If the translators had known that this verse would be interpreted to mean that the "Apostles and Prophets were to be the foundation of the church" they would have translated it more carefully. It is not likely that Paul would contradict himself in these two verses when he was so specific about **Jesus Christ being the only foundation that could be laid for the church.**

It seems that the "ministries" are designed to be "servants through whom you believed" rather than "foundations upon which you were built." This may seem like a small thing but "the change" that is coming must not be hindered by "apostolic logic" or "apostolic authority."

Rev 21: 14] And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

This is another "proof verse" that is given to support the "Apostolic Foundation" doctrine. No one would question if the Apostles laid the foundations for the future city of God they might have their names attached to "their work" but Jesus said they would sit on twelve thrones. Having their names attached to their work doesn't diminish the importance of their work. Still, no prophets are mentioned here.

Mat 19:28] And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, **you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**

Paul condemned the doctrine of "I belong to Paul," "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas." He indicated that none of them could be foundations. Only Christ!

The next restoration will demand that each of us be firmly attached to the Vine and not to some ministry. Drawing our "life" from the ministries can become a dangerous precedent that must be discouraged. That would be "change" in the wrong direction. Ministries built upon men has nearly

always been divisive. For example; Mennonites – Lutherans– Calvinists.

The “church at Antioch” was not built upon the foundation of Paul or Barnabas or Simeon or Lucius or Manaen. This church was built upon Christ and therefore could be called “Christian.”

So why make such an issue out of this “structure at Antioch?” Because it represents the whole church functioning together. A “laity group” doing the ministry as a body. My opinion is that the next restoration will require the whole body ministering as a “royal priesthood” to the Lord and then becoming His ministers. The Holy Place Ministry will be by Jesus Christ, our High Priest, and His sons, the priests, and not by a hierarchy of apostles and prophets. In the Outer Court ministries there should be no controversy about the various ministries or what name they are called that describes “their work” Let each man work according to his own grace and calling.

My theory is that **“the church that Christ is building”** will be focused upon the laity and that will present the greatest danger to Satan and his kingdom. The example given is when Stephen stood up to preach in Jerusalem. Stephen was just a believer, a lay person, a deacon chosen to serve tables. He was not what we would call “apostolic.”

Acts 6:8 And **Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people.** [9] But some men from what was called the Synagogue of the Freedmen, including both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and argued with Stephen. [10] **And yet they were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.**

Acts chapter 7 is the message of Stephen for which they stoned him and the persecution began. It was because of this persecution that the “laity” was scattered. Philip [a lay person] went down to Samaria to preach and many believed and received deliverance. Others came to Antioch and preached the gospel to the gentiles and started the church there. The apostles stayed in Jerusalem! It seems that the “lay ministry” IS the pattern given by God and confirmed by the Holy Spirit at Samaria and at Antioch. Ephesians 4:11 tells us the “apostolic ministries” should be preparing the “laity” to do the ministry.

My theory is that preachers standing in the pulpit delivering a message behind closed doors does not represent a great danger to Satan. However, when the “laity” are scattered throughout the land preaching the gospel as they go, then Satan’s kingdom is shaken and the persecution is the counter attack.

We witnessed this “change of ministry” during the Charismatic Renewal which began as a “lay ministry! We then saw more emphasis upon the “laity” in the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship. The “laity” was doing the ministry everywhere. In hotels, in restaurants, on the job, in homes, in the parks and on the streets. The movement didn’t begin with “professional ministers” but with “laity.” Later it was “managed” by the professionals that were put out of their churches and the movement soon began to die.

What we heard from the pulpits of established churches was “Oh, this is just a laity movement.”

The implication was that this can't amount to very much because these are untrained people and many are "loose canons." One Pentecostal pastor told me "Well you people give a message in tongues and then I am stuck with coming up with the interpretation." I told him that is not a problem because there are also people in the congregation that can give the interpretation. However, the "Pentecostal mold" of the pastor giving the interpretation was firmly set.

Jesus was the "Lay Person" of His day. The disciples were the "lay persons" who were considered as ignorant and unlearned men. Later the "professional ministries" were established and given positions of authority and titles but few had the power, the wisdom or the spirit of Philip or Stephen. The "system" got changed to professional ministries but my opinion is that it is about to get "changed back again" and the Joel 2 ministries will be "lay people."

This "lay movement" that Jesus started when He appointed 70 others and sent them out can be considered as "prophetic" of God's plan. There were 12 who were arguing over which one was greatest and Jesus appointed 70 "lay people" to carry on the ministry.

John 15: 16] **"You did not choose Me, but I chose you,** and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain,

All the initiative for choosing and appointing those who serve Him is given to Him alone. We may think that we chose Him and accepted Him as our personal savior but unless the Father draw no one can come. Since He is the Head over all things to the church, He is the one who decides all these things. Those who are doing "things" on their own initiative are not working with Christ but are doing their own work.

"Lawlessness" can be as basic as working on your own initiative even if we ask Jesus to bless our work. It will not be necessary to do anything on our own initiative in the Holy Place Life and ministry. The "change of illumination" will solve the problems of not knowing what to do or when to do it or who to do it with. In that dimension we will just need "permission" from Him and everyone will be getting their assignments from Him and not from each other.

The cast system of first class citizens and second class citizens of the Kingdom that is created by a divided priesthood must be eliminated sooner or later. The "Clergy and Laity" divisions will not be found in the Holy Place priesthood. We should return to God's original plan of all the people of God becoming a Kingdom of priests as He revealed at Mt. Sinai. (Exo 19)

The "clergy" on the field playing the game while the "laity" are in the stands watching the show appears to be far removed from what God has planned as a "Kingdom of priests." We are watching the competition between the "clergy" with some winning more points than others. My idea of the "Kingdom plan" is for the "Laity" to get out of the stands and on the field and the "Clergy" to get on the sidelines and coach the game. Instead of competing with other "believers" of Light there should be one common opponent of darkness. The system of "believers" as spectators is a system that is destined to be sidelined in the next restoration.

The next move of God cannot be accurately described as a "lay movement" as some have said

because that suggests a two level priesthood. again. The “lay movement” and the “clergy movement” must merge into the “priesthood movement.” This suggests a radical change!

The system today is for the “Clergy” to do 10 mens work. The new system is for 10 men to do the work and the “clergy” to train the workers. That way no one is overburdened and the work still gets done but now by the corporate body instead of by a “body part.”

The “Reconstructed Church” will look very different from the “Competitive Church” of today. It will function not on the basis of doctrine but on the basis of Life. “Our doctrine are better than your doctrines” and “our preaching is better than your preaching” and “our music is better than your music” our “building is better than your building” “our parking lot has more cars than your parking lot” is more or less standard fare. The partially secular church must become the 100% Christian church. When 100% of the Christians are a “Kingdom of priests” there will be only one adversary to overcome.

The Kingdom must be the “leaven” that leavens this whole “lump of dough” [the secular church] until it becomes the bread of God that feeds the hungry and sets the captive free. “The Church of Compromise” tries to win the world by compromise and by lowering the standard so more people can get in and participate. “The Church of the Kingdom” cannot lower the standards for participation because these have been fixed from all eternity past but it has the provision to live the standards, in the Kingdom. The Kingdom alone can lift a fallen society up to the standards acceptable to the Kingdom. Once the standards are met an abundance entrance is made for them into the Kingdom of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ.

The question that always seems to present itself is this; Can the “Clergy” preaching in the current “cast system” change this old order of “Laity and Clergy” into the New Order of the Kingdom of Priests? The old systems can effectively preach some “idealism” as a possibility someday. If and maybe! It is my opinion that the new systems of the Kingdom of Priests must preach a “realism” that can be publically demonstrated. This will require a “subjective experience” that will manifest the Kingdom. This is what we are calling “The Kingdom Change.”

This is not just an individual change but requires a corporate change and a ministry change that will certainly require a vision change and a change of faith. The “Clergy” will have to decrease and the “Laity” must increase, not in ego but in Life and reality. Together they must both “increase” into the character of the Kingdom so they can corporately demonstrate the Kingdom.

The point of compromise is always to “pass the buck” or follow the “postponement theory” that says “Yes, that is true but not today. The church is not ready! We don’t want to move ahead of God. Let us wait and see what happens. Others have tried that and it didn’t work. It is probably true but that is too high and lofty for us. We are just a small people. Let us pass a resolution and assign a committee to investigate. Let us send in spies to spy out the land.”

Either the Kingdom is a “working principle of life and reality” in the church or it is just another “idealism” that we can preach but never experience. Some think it would be great but who can do it? It seems obvious that this mentality must be overcome if the believers in the current church

systems are to participate in this next restoration. This “process” may be too slow and the Lord may have to start outside the “cast system” with a new group of believers like He did with the Charismatic Restoration.