

## Positive Change without Worldliness

Phil.3:14/21 Thank the Lord for a positive change in a man called Paul!

(Psalm 25:9, 12) <sup>9</sup> The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way. <sup>12</sup> What man *is* he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way *that* he shall choose.

Is it possible for a church to have positive change without letting down their guard in the area of worldliness? I believe that it's not only possible but just simply necessary for their ministries to go forward. Let's be honest and admit that things are changing no matter if we like it or not. But let's also admit that not all change is bad or worldly. As we all grow older let's admit that we are changing, mentally, emotionally, physically, and hopefully spiritually.

The ways and methods of doing things that we used to do are changing also. Hopefully we are wiser and more mature than we used to be in doing ministry and working with people. I now use the computer to do a lot if not most of all my research and study. Yet there are still some that believe and preach that the computer is a tool of the devil and it can be if the owner operator doesn't have self-control. Most everyone has a cell phone and what a change that has made in the last few years, both positive and negative, again it's up to the operator.

Change just for the sake of changing and doing something different or following the latest fad is a sure way to stir up strife and division in the church. Even positive change if not led by the Holy Spirit and done in the right time can cause undue problems. There will always be those that will resist any change in the church even though most everyone else sees the need for change. Some will stubbornly hang on to the past until the people leave, the pastor leaves or the church is dead and ready to close the doors.

Those who reject any type of change come in all different areas of the church; pastors, staff, deacons, "self" and church appointed leaders, trustees, teachers, song leaders and choir members and the list could go on. Change is one of those hard and controversial areas that God has to work into people, before working through people.

The Lord wants to use all of us in a great way, but we must be willing to change as He leads us in personal discipleship and maturity. When a person gets saved what a wonderful "change" will come into their life as a new creature in Christ. And as they grow and mature, there will always be new areas of change that God wants them to experience for their own good and for His glory. Again God is always seeking a positive change in our lives that will show forth His work to a lost and dying world that He is worth changing and living for.

May we all ask the question, "How or what positive change could God make within me or our church this week"? May God richly bless and have a great week!

Bro. Mickey - SCM

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When the idea of change is mentioned most will think about heading toward the world in changing the style and appearance of the church. We are so conditioned in our thinking that anything new is bad or unscriptural, but in reality some of the old things that some churches are doing are just as flawed. Did we ever consider that sixty years ago there were new ways of doing ministry from the previous decades in which they were accustomed to doing ministry?

There are certainly many things that should never be tampered with or changed in regard to our Bible and our Baptist distinctives. Our stand against sin and worldliness and certain convictions about separation should stay in line with the word of God. As a pastor grows and matures in his personal life, there should be a willingness to learn and minister in areas that he has matured in with insight and wisdom. This is not saying he is compromising or slacking off his convictions, but ever learning and growing in the Lord and His word. Hopefully we are growing in our devotional and study time with the Lord.

There was a time that I believed certain things just because I heard them from a respected man of God, and didn't search it out for myself. I don't believe that these men were trying to mislead, but they themselves were following others instead of the word of God. For instance there was a time that if you changed the times of your services from 7 pm to 6pm, you were out of the will of God. Certainly that is not found in the Bible and today many churches have moved their service times to help their members to better attend services than ever before.

The pastor is the key leader in positive change in the church or will be the one that hinders and holds back the church from making positive and constructive changes that moves the church forward. In his book, (Leading Turnaround Churches) Gene Wood says, "Over a period of 25 years, I've watched with fascination as some pastors have chosen to be voted out of their churches, leave the ministry, or hold a funeral service for their churches rather than change. Why? Is it too painful to admit what they're doing is not working? How can leaders expect their congregations to change if they themselves are unwilling to lead the way?"

The hardest thing to do is admit that we need to change, personally and collectively as a church to begin to moving forward again in our ministries. We have been in the ministry of helping pastors and churches full time now for four years. We have had to constantly change things in our ministry to better serve others and to obey the Lord's leading. There are always trials and trying periods for change, but if the Lord is in, it will be for the best for us and His glory. May our Lord bless you and His church this week.

Bro. Mickey  
SCM

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There can be positive changes in our churches if we are willing to accept and admit that they are needed. The first step is maybe the hardest for most people to take because they have to acknowledge that the way they are going and doing ministry, needs reviving. Change with most people and churches are difficult because of a rut or routine that they are so used to getting into each week. And change will cause some uncomfortable feelings and upset the unchangeable.

If a ministry is stagnate or in decline there needs to be immediate change, or over time the church will not only be ineffective but could close its doors. Any church that wants to be their best will need to take inventory of its self with honesty and humility. Until a church admits its need, it will not have the courage or willingness to seek positive changes. The most needed of positive change in most churches is in the leadership's willingness to see their own necessity of change. Again we are not talking about changing Baptist doctrine or moving toward the worldly culture.

The pastor and leadership in the church must have a vision from God for the ministry of their present and future mission field (community). In many churches their ministries have never changed over the past forty to fifty years. This is not to say that there may be a few things that don't need changing. But for the most part of their ministries there has just been neglect or unwillingness to change. We can thank and praise the Lord for what has worked in the past, and yet be willing to use and except what can work for today and the future.

If the pastor, deacons, or power members will not let anything new into the church that will engage the ministry with its current mission field, the church will continue to decline. For some pastors they will need to get a new suit which is in style, the seventies are gone and so are there fads. Let technology be a help and not a hindrance in the pulpit and the church as a whole. I-pads are not unbiblical, nor are the use of power point on a screen if used in a balanced, professional and productive way to help the members. Many churches need to update their websites, sound systems, mission boards on their walls, the whole look of the auditorium. By the way there were no websites or sound systems at one time, what a change they have made.

Thank the Lord we can communicate with missionaries and churches by internet in real time today and see what God is doing in other places around the world. What a positive change that has made for some churches and ministries. Can we let the Lord show us some positive changes without compromising our Bible convictions, (Biblical convictions) not personal preferences? Could we ask the Lord to make some positive changes in our lives that would honor Him and be a blessing to His church? God bless and have a grace-filled week!

Bro Mickey  
SCM

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There could be much said about worldliness and what it is or isn't according to our understanding of scripture. The basic idea here is anything that takes away our devotion and love for the Lord (1John 2:15-16). The natural man has no problem with the world's system, culture, and desires which all are of the fleshly sinful man. We can't be out of the world, but we must be separated from its influences and involvements with our lives.

There will always be differences in certain interpretations about some things concerning what is worldly in the church because of personal preferences. We are not talking about Bible doctrines, but the use of or change of some ways which a church may do and serve in their ministries. Here are just a few "suggestions" to spark ideas for change and which none are worldly or unscriptural.

- Fixing and cleaning up the appearance of the buildings inside and out. Sometimes just a little fixing and cleaning will bring encouragement to the church and let the community know that they are still alive.
- Have a greeter and usher training and watch the excitement about looking for new visitors. (We have a Greeter and Ushers Training at SCM).
- Change service times to accommodate the young and elderly. Sometimes parents want to make sure their children are in bed and ready for school and the elderly can't see after dark.
- Learn and use power point for churches information and teaching for different ministries and classes.
- Training and changing Sunday school teachers and workers. New teachers, workers with class materials and themes can help and encourage students.
- Make the music lively and purposeful for the services. Some may need to invest in new hymnals and sing-along cd's if they don't have a proficient piano player. There are many good conserved music cd's for the use with hymnals.
- Have the announcements at the end of the service with prayer request if needed. Many times the whole atmosphere of the worship service is quenched or down played by all the things that are taking up time and attention from the congregational singing and preaching of God's word.
- Use a balance approach in the preaching ministry. Sometimes there is a need to use different types of sermons and series to meet certain needs of the church family. Have preparation as well as passion in the pulpit, making sure that you are yielded and filled with the Holy Spirit.
- Use different approaches to the invitation. This will lead to a stirring of the hearts if used correctly. Sometimes just end in the service with the people quietly setting and reflecting on the message before leaving. Most of the time there should be a strong call to a commitment from the message. Be led by the Holy Spirit.

It's not all about our way of doing things but honoring Christ and serving others as much as possible. God bless and have a great week in the Lord!

Bro. Mickey - SCM

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.

The work of the body will be changed  
The actions of the soul will be changed  
The unction of the spirit be changed