



the clear word

a publication to encourage a clearer understanding of God's word.

JANUARY 2010

The Need for Change

By Bryn Jones

"All it takes to make sure nothing changes is to settle for things as they are."

The church has never been as numerically strong, or as globally widespread as it is today. Christianity is presently the world's largest religion with 1.6 billion adherents. Yet, in the early years of this new millennium, the church is wrestling within itself to identify both its moral base in a culture that has generally abandoned moral absolutes, and its role in a world that tends to view the religious establishment as irrelevantly archaic. Internally riddled with dissension, its testimony blunted by mediocrity, its voice muted by compromise, today's church is in danger of simply meandering into the new millennium, having lost sight of God's original purpose. The crisis is serious, and must be successfully confronted if the church is to be in this new millennium what it was in the first: a light shining in the darkness of the moral maze, the hand of God reaching to heal the sick, bless the underclass, lift the downtrodden and give hope and life to the hurting masses.

An Historical Overview

To be sure, this is not the first time the church has faced millennial or generational crisis. From its very inception, from both within and without, the church

has had to grapple with ideas and beliefs contrary to the purpose of God's will. The incarnation itself presented a crisis moment for the Jewish nation. All those in the faith of Abraham were faced with decision; and despite the fact that the majority in Judaism rejected Christ, the true line of faith in Israel responded to him as their Messiah. Crisis again erupted in the early church over the issue of circumcision. Teachers from Jerusalem travelled throughout Galatia, contending that it was necessary for the Gentile believers to be circumcised to be truly accepted as the people of God. This provoked the formation of the first church council, assembled to bring resolve to the matter in a way that preserved the unity of the churches – at least for a time.

Successive crises from then until now have resulted in further upheavals, divisions, church councils, and even Reformation. In it all, there have always been people committed to the quest for unity believing that there would be a "restoration of all things spoken of by the prophets" (see Acts 3:21) before Christ would return, and spiritual movements throughout history have quickened this hope afresh.

The Moravians, Anabaptists, early Franciscans of Assisi, Christian Disciples, and – at the close of the last century



– the Christian Brethren, were all rooted in a restorationist philosophy. Often rejected and persecuted, they nevertheless kept hope alive throughout succeeding generations, determined that Christianity would not be buried in the shrouds of institutional religion. They strove to fulfil the purpose of God in manifesting the fullness of Christ in the life and works of his church. Evangelicalism, Pentecostalism, Charismatics and to some extent discipleship, faith, deliverance, and prophetic movements of our time, have all helped fuel a new spirit of inquiry, a new intercessory passion, a heightened expectation and faith for the "restoration of all things" to happen – in this generation.

Where We Are Today

The crisis currently facing the church - although similar in some respects to those >>

this issue

- P1 • The Need for Change
- P2 • The Need for Change
- P3 • Voices of Change
- P4 • Coming Events



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continued from page 1

that have preceded it – is also different to any previously encountered in history. The 1960s, dominated by the quest for a meaningful spiritual experience gave rise to various kinds of religious groups – from those representing the fringes of Christianity to those oriented toward Eastern mystic religions. The Jesus People, The Way, Children of God, Hari Krishna, Divine Light, and Scientology, and the rise of New Ageism – are all competing for the minds and souls of people. In addition to the religious search reflected in these cults and groups, today's generation has accepted the paranormal, the psychic, the occult, and the many differing aspects of spiritistic activity in an unprecedented way. All this confronts us with a deepening crisis which we cannot afford to dismiss or ignore.

If people are to see the church as something other than a dinosaurian relic in the world of the third millennium, then we as the church must be willing to discard all irrelevant religious baggage and strip ourselves of all biblically unsupportable practices in the process. We must become passionately clear and decisive on the moral issues of our time. If we are to be relevant to the need and search of mankind, we must rediscover our true mission

in order to capture this present post-industrial generation. We must rediscover and reaffirm our commitment to the integrity of the gospel and the manifestation of the dynamic power of God in ministry.

As God's people we believe he intends something significant to happen in this generation which will restore the message and ministry of Jesus and the Christian communities of 2000 years ago, and take us forward to realities and maturity the early church never saw. This demands a willingness on our part to change. Successive revivals have highlighted the Spirit's call for change, not for the sake of change, but to recover lost ground, to re-align ourselves with divine purpose, and to continue the process of the restoration of all things. *It is not enough for us to try harder and harder to do old things better and better; we have to change.* And it is not sufficient to initiate change just on the periphery of our meetings, methodology, music leadership style etc.; it must occur at the very core of our thinking and practice. Such changes are painful, disruptive, and costly, which is why many people initially resist or resent them.

To enter the third millennium sharper, anointed, ready in every respect for its challenges we must seek *actively* to return to

those biblical principles that will enable us to be all that God intends us to be.

Christianity is not a system of beliefs; it is men and women filled with the life of God living their lives his way, doing his will endowed with his Spirit and demonstrating his power, performing his works amongst men. For God's covenant communities to fully emerge like this requires a spiritual, moral and intellectual revolution. As Restorers we do not find this a daunting prospect; on the contrary, it is the very thing for which we live in active faith. We are entering the third millennium as the extension of the living Christ. The religious world makes a mistake if it thinks it can push what is being said by today's apostles and prophets into a corner and label it "restorationist" doctrine or churches. *God is not after restorationist churches; he is restoring his church!*

The late Bryn Jones (1940-2003) was recognized as an apostle whose vision and pioneering spirit helped raise up individuals and churches all over the world to live for the restoration of God's original and intended purpose for creation. This article is used by permission from the website TheRestorer.net





Voices for Change

The following quotes from various writers have been gathered as sources of inspiration, but most importantly, to encourage change in our lives. We trust you take their message to heart:

Augustine - "That which man builds man destroys, but the city of God is built by God and cannot be destroyed by man."

Martin Luther King, Jr. - "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

Bryn Jones - "The harvest is not inside four walls vibrating with hymns or choruses, but in our streets, hospitals, prisons, clubs, and workplaces. Christians need to

embrace the implications of the call of God that has sent us into the world."

Winston Churchill - "What is the use of living, if it be not to strive for noble causes and make this muddled world a better place for those who will live in it after we have gone."

Nelson Mandela - "I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended."

The Clear Word newsletter is a publication of New Life Church in Peterborough. The focus of this publication is to encourage a clearer understanding of God's Word and to challenge Christians to press on towards maturity in faith and practice.





Barb Sali shared the following Prophetic Word to New Life Church on November 15, 2009

"I your God would say to you to be assured and confident of My Providence which is with you now and has been from the beginning. Be ready for I am blowing in a wind of change for these days of harvest.

Do not allow fear or worry to enter your lives, for it is I who will direct your path. For those who love Me have special Providence, for have I not said, "Just as I care for the birds of the air and their needs, so I care for you." For you are of more value than these. My intent is never to restrict you, but to give you freedom. There is freedom in My Holy Spirit. There is freedom in the name of Jesus. Humble yourselves and allow My Holy Spirit to guide you. Go forth and heal, deliver and speak to the lost. For the time of grace and favour is increasing among you.

Let My Providence be an anchor in your lives. One that holds you secure and steadfast when things of the world appear to be rocky and uncertain – an anchor that helps to preserve and uphold you as you fulfill My plans and purposes for your lives."

Coming Events for January 2010:

- Jan. 3 - The First Sunday meeting of the New Year at TASS!
- Jan. 6 - Daybreak Ladies New Year's Brunch at the Clark's at 10:00 a.m.
- Jan. 6 - Special Five-Star Family Meeting in the Otonabee Room at the Best Western at 7:00 p.m. This will be an important gathering to look at how we have done over 2009 and to look ahead into 2010. Coffee and tea are available at 6:45 p.m.
- Jan. 10 - Beginning of the Mini School of the Word in the Otonabee Room at the Best Western starting at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome. Coffee and tea are available from 6:45 p.m. onwards.
- Jan. 11 - Men's Meeting at the Clark's at 7:00 p.m.
- Jan. 13 - Daybreak Ladies meeting at 10:00 a.m.
- Jan. 15 - The Worship Team will be meeting with Matthew Ling. Details to follow.
- Jan. 17 - Matthew Ling from Coventry, U.K. will be with us for our morning gathering.
- Jan. 20 - Daybreak Ladies meeting at 10:00 a.m.
- Jan. 20 - Mid-Week meeting. Location to be announced.
- Jan. 22 - Ladies Dessert Night at Montana's Restaurant on the Parkway at 8:00 p.m. Sign-up sheet on the back table.
- Jan. 27 - Daybreak Ladies Meeting at 10:00 a.m.
- Jan. 31 - David Emmett from the School of the Word in Manchester, U.K.



New Life Church
Currently meeting at
Thomas A Stewart Secondary School
on Armour Road every Sunday
10:30 am in the cafeteria

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