

Community of Christ
Fairbanks Congregation Happenings
June 14, 2006

The theme for this Sunday is "Become New" (Father's Day)

Nothing last for an
Eternity -
Whew!!!!!!

"If your God is an impersonal, cosmic force, your religion will be noncommittal and vague. AAAThe image of a God as an omnipotent thug who brooks no human intervention creates a rigid lifestyle ruled by puritanical laws and dominated by fear. But trust in the God who loves consistently and faithfully nurtures confident, free disciples. A loving God fosters a loving people." The Ragamuffin Gospel – Brennan Manning

Change - II Corinthians 5:17 A Sermon by Dr. Neil Chadwick

Change is what we carry in our pockets to have ready at the toll booth or to drop in the slot of a soda machine. Change is what we do after working under the car, and before we go to church or out to eat in a nice restaurant. Change is what we do to the oil in the car or the light bulb over the kitchen sink. However, while we don't mind changing a dollar bill, our clothing, the oil or the light bulb, when it has to do with us personally, change seems to be much less desirable - when we begin to talk about change, the only thing we want to change is the subject.

By the way, speaking about light bulbs, haven't you become tired of hearing all those light bulb jokes? Here's my own "Top Ten" list of "How Many Does It Take to Change a Light Bulb?" jokes:

10. How many government workers does it take to change a light bulb?
Forty-five; one to change the bulb, and 44 to do the paperwork.
9. How many chiropractors does it take to change a light bulb?
Only one, but it takes forty-five visits!
8. How many philosophers does it take to change in a light bulb?
Don't know; they're still debating the existence of light bulbs.
7. How many First Year College Students does it take to change a light bulb?
They don't know how; it's a second year subject.
6. How many computer programmers does it take to change a light bulb?
None. "That's a hardware problem."
5. How many managers does it take to change a light bulb?
They never change light bulbs; they prefer to keep their people in the dark.
4. How many engineers does it take to change a light bulb?
Four; one to hold the bulb and three to drink enough coffee to make the room spin.
3. How many lawyers does it take to change a light bulb?
That depends on how many you can afford.
2. How many T.V. Evangelists does it take to change a light bulb?

One; but for the light to continue to go forth, send in your tax-deductible donation today.

And the number one Light Bulb joke is:

1. How many psychologists does it take to change a light bulb?

Just one; but the bulb has to really WANT to change.

Whether we like it or not, we live in what has become a rapidly changing world. Perhaps we are willing to accept the change of the seasons, and the change of weather patterns, but everything else seems to be changing too:

Jobs change, careers change, schedules change, economies change, family relationships change, neighborhoods change, roads and highways change, eating habits change, rules and regulations change, school subjects change, technologies change, theologies change.

Rattled by all this change, we come to church saying, “At least here’s one thing that doesn’t change.” And then the Pastor changes the order of service and the Music Director changes the songs we sing, and the version of the Bible is no longer St. Paul’s sacred King James Version!

Someone has facetiously quipped, “The only thing that doesn’t change is death and taxes.” Perhaps even more accurate is the saying, “The only thing that doesn’t change is change.”

Why don’t we like change?

Perhaps it’s fear of the unknown, or a dislike with being dislodged from our comfort – certainly, change can be stressful and frustrating.

On the other hand, when we come to the beginning of a new year there’s a lot of emphasis on those things people want to change – bad habits are renounced, and new habits put in their place. Of course much of this has to do with the outer man – we want a body weight change, vow to do more exercise, and hope to stop smoking, etc. - although some may include more spiritual matters in their New Year’s commitment to change – read the Bible from cover to cover, pray every day, increase church attendance, etc..

When we look to the Word, it seems there is an attitude of pessimism whether or not there can even be change when it comes to human nature.

The Preacher said, “What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.” (Ecclesiastes 1:9); and The Prophet wrote, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil.” (Jeremiah 13:23)

But then we come to our text and learn from Paul that “old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.” That sounds like change to me! But the point of this Scripture has little to do with the changes we want to bring about for ourselves, but rather the change that happens when we come to Christ. II Corinthians 5:17

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away behold all things are become new.” (KJV)

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”
(NIV)

First, there’s something quite interesting about the use of verb tenses in this verse.

With the first verb “passed away,” the tense is what is called “aorist,” which means that “it points back to a definite moment or event.” In this case, it refers to the experience of the new birth. Everything that was associated with the old life – “distinctions, prejudices, misconceptions, and enslavements of the former unregenerated way of life – assume the character of pastness.”

A different tense is used for the words “become new.” Now the tense is “perfect active indicative”, which indicates that “the old things became and continue to be new; for the newness of God’s new creation is not a newness that in course of time palls and grows old and outmoded,” it is a newness that continues to become new. (New International Commentary on the New Testament, II Corinthians, Philip Hughes, p.203) As Robertson puts it, they “. . . have become new to stay so.”

Secondly, as we have pointed out many times, when we come to a verse like this we first want to look at the immediate context to discover what changes the writer may have had in mind when he wrote these words.

At the beginning of the chapter Paul seems to be talking about our new “eternal house in heaven”(v. 1), the ultimate “mega” change we all long for.

Later, the newness of our life in Christ means that we “live by faith, not sight” (vs. 7 + 12) – certainly that’s a major change.

Something else that distinguishes the re-creation is that now we want to please God (vs. 9 + 15)

Paul may have been speaking biographically when he indicated that the view of Christ had changed. Prior to his conversion he viewed Christ “from a worldly point of view” (v. 16), but that has now changed. Where formerly Christ was seen as a Rabbi, Prophet, Miracle Worker or King, He now is regarded as the Messiah, the very Son of God.

But certainly Paul must have had other “new creation” items in mind, for he makes reference to this same idea in other texts:

“Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation.” (Galatians 6:15)

“. . . put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” (Ephesians 4:24)

“. . . be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (Romans 12:2)

Furthermore, this idea of change accompanying conversion was not original with Paul.

Commentator Adam Clarke reported that “The conversion of a man from idolatry and wickedness was among the Jews denominated a new creation. ‘He who converts a man to the true religion is the same,’ says R. Eliezer, ‘as if he had created him.’”

Is there any surprise here - God is the creator, after all! If He created the world “ex nihilo” – out of nothing, certainly He is capable of recreation.

So, when a person becomes a Christian, he or she is launched into a recreation mode which brings about significant change. The question is, what is new? Looking for an answer to this question I quickly perused the commentaries to find out what these teachers have included in their lists. Here’s what I found:

When we are saved, there is a new mind, a new will, a new judgment, new affections, new conversation, new power to do well, new views, new motives, new principles, new objectives, new purposes and plans.

For the Christian there's a new rule of action, a new course of conduct, new joys, new sorrows, new hopes, new fears, new relations, new prospects.

There's a whole new life, new senses, new faculties, new appetites, new ideas, new conceptions, new thoughts.

For me, these items didn't seem to provide a complete list, so I've added some of my own:

Becoming a Christian produces a new interest in the Bible, new faith, new attitudes, new desires, a new commitment to truth, new pride, new values, and new priorities. Also, there are new moral standards, and new love and compassion.

With the new Christian life come new friends, new habits, new schedules, and new daily routines.

In short everything changes!

But the most important point is this: it is not we who do the changing, nor is it we who demand change in others. Christ is the change agent, He is the Creator, and He is the re-Creator. So long as we are "in Christ," the changes will be made, they will go on being made, and they will always be for the good. We could read a hundred self-help books, watch Dr. Phil every day of the week, visit the therapist twice a week for ten years, and attend four weeklong seminars every year - and not begin to realize the beneficial changes which will take place by merely trusting in Christ.

If I may refer again to Jeremiah, it's in chapter 18 where he tells about God sending him to visit the potter's house.

"The pot he [the potter] was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him. Then the word of the LORD came to me: 'O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?' declares the LORD. 'Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.'" (Jeremiah 18:4-6)

The question for us is, are we willing to place our own names in the verse? We too have been marred, but in the hands of the Master Potter, those changes are being made which will truly make something beautiful of our lives. – From - www.webedelic.com

Announcements:

No Potluck this month.

Ragamuffin Gospel class – 10:00 Class will discuss of Chapter Two- Magnificent Monotony.

July 16th – Potluck and Baby Shower for Tawanna Bowser immediately after the worship service.

July 16th – Congregational planning meeting after Potluck and shower – Come prepared to share in the planning for future events and projects and discuss current business.

July 30th – Aug 4th – Congregational Leaders Workshop – Lamoni, Iowa – See Mission Center or World Church webpage for details.

August 26th and 27th – Witnessing Community seminar. Make plans now to attend this event.

See Mission Center web page for more information
See the mission center web page for camp and reunion information

The following is a schedule of those that are currently scheduled to deliver the message for the 2nd quarter. This is not the “official list” and is for informational purposes only. Please refer to the worship schedule in the fellowship hall for changes.

June 19th – Leo & Carole Caesar

June 24th – David Watson

The nursery schedule cannot be posted in the family center for January through March 2006. Please contact Andrea if you are interested in volunteering in the nursery this quarter.

Nursery Schedule:

We need volunteers for the nursery. Please see Andrea Watson.

Please review the prayer list in the Sunday bulletin. If you have added someone to the list please update Leo Caesar with any new information and current status of the prayer concern. Please contact Leo Caesar if you wish to add/remove someone from the list.

Calendar & Mission Center News:

The Coastal Bend Mission Center is proud to announce that the Coastal Bend web site is up and running! You can visit the site at www.coastalbendmc.org

I will be sending out periodic e-mails letting everyone know what is “HAPPENING” at Fairbanks. Please let me know if your e-mail or other contact information changes.

Mark your calendars and **participate, enjoy, reach out!!!!!!**I pray that everyone have a safe and happy week.

Martha Romig