

From The Family News May 2006:

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea" Rev. 21:1

The central message of the Bible is a message of newness. It speaks emphatically and forcefully of the creation of a new heaven and a new earth (Rev 21:1). It addresses the fact that God is doing a new thing - "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up do you not perceive it?" (Isa 43:19). And, "See the former things have taken place, and new things I declare" (Isa 42:9). Again-"Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth...." (Isa 65:17). Paul speaks of the new creation - to wit, that if anyone is in Christ he / she is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). Jesus Christ said that it is absolutely necessary for a person to be born anew in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven (John 3:3).

Newness suggests the emergence of a totally unheard of reality. It suggests that God is progressively revealing new realities, new ideas, new concepts, new paradigms etc. to us! Out of this never failing store He draws out new things! Not that there is anything new to God since all is known to Him - past, present, and future are all rolled into one. But to us He is revealing new things! I believe the reason God is doing this is to point us to the fact that there are a hundred million other stars and suns and galaxies and systems of the universe that are just waiting to be discovered. In other words, don't get fixated on the little you know! Perhaps, this was what Jesus was alluding to when, on one occasion He said to His disciples: "I have yet other things to say to you but you cannot receive them". Why? - because our minds are jaded, and slow to absorb and appreciate the new revelation.

Experience has shown that we resist change. Never mind that change is the only constant in life. We resist change except when it is beneficial to our well-being.

Whether we resist or embrace change, however, it is occurring - with or without us.

You have no doubt seen the signs along the WestBay road that say "CaymanaBay. A new town blossoms" and at an estimated 300 - 500 million dollars! A new town and a new concept. "A new town blossoms!" Indeed! The future is here. Gone forever is much of the Cayman of yesteryear. But is that necessarily unfortunate? Not really. It says we live in a dynamic (not static) universe where change is in perpetual motion. We are not museums - always holding on tenaciously to the relics of a bygone age - but laboratories - where through the scientific method we create new things while discovering things that are already there! Such as the Gnome Project where all 350 thousand genes in the human body have now been identified!

Change is occurring everywhere - in nature, in our societies and even in our own bodies. Case in point. Every seven years all the cells in our own bodies die and are replaced by new cells. But does this change inevitable apply to the ministry and mission of the Church? Most certainly. The Church's basic doctrinal, biblical and theological beliefs do not change. For there are the eternal, universal truths that apply to every human being and nation in every age and in every civilisation.

What must change, however, is the way the Church **thinks**. The way she positions herself to exploit the opportunities for mission in a world whose values are always shifting. It is imperative that we assume a pro active, aggressive stance in the implementation of the great Commission given by Jesus to " Go into all the world and preach the Gospel", Matthew 28:19.

We must vigorously resist the settler mentality or the maintenance mode to hold on at any cost to any piece of real estate. Christ calls the church to be pioneers! He calls the Church to build God's Kingdom through soul winning! All the material resources - land, buildings, money etc. - are but the resource He provides to advance His work.

As we work faithfully to honour our Lord's command, let us do so with the knowledge that in the final analysis our focus is on the new heaven and the new earth—the new Jerusalem of God, that shall never pass away.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus

Reverend Joe Crawford