

Now I Declare New Things!

By Steven Lambert ThD

Isaiah 42:9

Behold, the former things have come to pass,
Now I declare **new** things;
Before they spring forth I proclaim them to you.

Isaiah 43:18,19

Do not call to mind the former things,
Or ponder things of the past.
Behold, I will do something **new**,
Now it will spring forth;
Will you not be aware of it?
I will even make a roadway in the wilderness,
Rivers in the desert.

Isaiah 48:6-8

I proclaim to you **new** things from this time,
Even hidden things which you have not known.
They are created **now** and not long ago;
And before today you have not heard them,
So that you will not say, 'Behold, I knew them.'
You have not heard, you have not known.

Our Father God is a God of **new** things! When it comes to paradigms and patterns, the fact of the matter is: humans tend to be much more conservative than God. God is the God of new things! He is forever breaking the molds and casting new ones. In the arena of the establishment of His Kingdom on Earth, He is constantly declaring new things *before* they spring forth. With the abundance of "Word" and "Faith" teaching the Church has been instructed with over the last thirty to forty years, one thing we know quite well is that everything God does, He does by first speaking it, declaring it, proclaiming it! Then, the word that He declares shall not return to Him void without accomplishing the purpose for which it was sent. He always *performs* what He *proclaims*.

So also, in more recent years with the prophetic renewal, there is an increasing awareness among God's people that it is still the "way" of God that He does nothing on the Earth, whether in the affairs of men or in the establishment of His Kingdom through the operations of the Church, without first revealing it to and proclaiming it through prophets (Amos 3:8). He still reveals His secret counsel to His servants, the prophets. Though such statements make some people bristle, the fact of the matter is that Divine Purposes and Plans remain concealed in the mind of God until they are revealed to and through prophetic people. The prophetic renewal is reestablishing the understanding that the Head of the Church still operates through the Fivefold Ascension Gifts or Ministry Offices as delineated in such passages as Eph. 2:20, 4:7-16, and 1 Cor. 12:28, just to name a few, and that that has always been and remains to be His methodology and modus operandi, which is further corroborated by the irrefutable fact that nowhere in His Word has He made any statements that even remotely approach a rescission of that model. One of those Fivefold Ministry Gifts or Offices is that of prophet. The word prophet literally means to speak on behalf of. Prophets speak on behalf of God. They are God's spokesmen. Speaking through prophets is one of the channels God uses to communicate, to whoever He wants to communicate to, but especially to His People, the Redeemed, the Church.

Rarely in human history has God spoken in an audible voice that people heard. He reserves such a radical measure for the most critical scenarios. We know of at least two times He did speak that way concerning Jesus during His fleshly life and ministry. He also spoke in an audible voice on several occasions in the Old Testament era, a few times heard by large groups of people, others by only a few people, and on only a few other occasions He spoke audibly to certain individuals. In both the New and Old Testaments, he spoke through angels. But since the days of Jesus' fleshly visitation, God rarely speaks through those methods. Rather, the method He uses for audible communication now is through human vessels, which is so very consistent with His master-plan of doing the vast majority of what He does in the world through human cooperatives—in the main, individual believers and the collective the Church.

new

new (nōō, nyōō) *adjective*

new-er, new-est

1. Having been made or come into being only a short time ago; recent: *a new law*.
2. **a.** Still fresh: *a new coat of paint*. **b.** Never used or worn before now: *a new car; a new hat*.
3. Just found, discovered, or learned: *new information*.
4. Not previously experienced or encountered; novel or unfamiliar: *ideas new to her; visiting new places*.
5. Different from the former or the old: *the new morality*.
6. Recently obtained or acquired: *new political power; new money*.
7. Additional; further: *new sources of energy*.
8. Recently arrived or established in a place, position, or relationship: *new neighbors; a new president*.
9. Changed for the better; rejuvenated: *The nap has made a new person of me*.
10. Being the later or latest in a sequence: *a new edition*.
11. Currently fashionable: *a new dance*.
12. **New.** In the most recent form, period, or development.
13. Inexperienced or unaccustomed: *new at the job; new to the trials of parenthood*.

[Middle English *newe*, from Old English *nīwe, nēowe*.]

— **new'ness** *noun*

Synonyms: *new, fresh, novel, newfangled, original*. These adjectives describe what has existed for only a short time, has only lately come into use, or has only recently arrived at a state or position as of prominence

God's New Things in the World

Throughout human history, God has been “declaring new things,” and using people as His channels of communication to declare those things. I am not just referring to preaching, teaching, and prophetic proclamations. Nor am I speaking only of spiritual or “religious” matters. In the 15th Century, God proclaimed a whole new paradigm of mass communication to the masses of the world, by revealing to an obscure German printer named Johann Gutenberg, the principles and mechanics behind a newfangled invention known as the Gutenberg Press, the world's first printing press. It certainly was not coincidental that the very first mass-produced book ever printed on Gutenberg's contraption, was the Bible, and to this day all the printing presses in the world have not exhausted the demand for that one Book, so that it remains the most printed and purchased volume in history. Not only does this demonstrate that God truly is “watching over His Word” but also that it was undeniably He who inspired Gutenberg's conception and calculations. Not only was that invention the single-most important element in reclaiming and returning the Word of God and thus the capacity to encounter God unfiltered by religious establishment to the common man, but it was also the most critical element engendering the tidal wave of mass education and the advancement of scientific knowledge that gradually ensued.

Through voracious study of the writings of emerging science now published in the massive numbers of books produced and disseminated as a result of the printing press, a self-educated Italian by the name of Galilei Galileo, in the following century virtually founded and fathered a discipline of science that came to be known as Physics. Through Galileo's antiestablishment scientific discoveries, which so rocked the scientific universe that he was persecuted and imprisoned by the Roman Catholic Church for heresy, God was proclaiming a whole new paradigm of scientific knowledge and understanding concerning the physics and mechanics of God's Creation that were rudimentary to an incalculable succession of scientific advancements and revolutionary discoveries that culminated in the scientifically and technologically advanced world we live in today.

Then, in the following 17th Century, building upon Galileo's now conventional theorems and the contributions of other pioneering intellectuals and scientists, a prodigious English mathematician and scientist named, Sir Isaac Newton, was inspired by God to propound revolutionary theorems of the laws and dynamics of gravity, terrestrial mechanics, calculus, and even color that together led to yet another paradigm shift in the world of science that would eventually evolve into a multitude of subsequent scientific discoveries and inventions through the centuries that make our world what it is today, from mechanical engineering to electronics to relativity to aeronautics to astronautics to avionics to atomics to the whole new universe of information technology, and on and on.

Through the centuries other great minds emerged into strategically prominent roles to ultimately bring into existence things that did not exist before in every field imaginable, from medicine to transportation to manufacturing to education to telecommunications to computers. The world we live in today was fashioned and formed by a myriad of scientists, inventors, innovators, and entrepreneurs extraordinaire whose God-inspired genius, labors, and involvements brought into existence new things, thinking, models, and paradigms, with names such as Pasteur, Einstein, Edison, Wright, Ford, Flagler, Getty, Rockefeller, Carnegie, Sinclair, Salk, and Von Braun among those topping the list. Each of these brilliant and God-gifted individuals were extraordinarily used of God to make monumental discoveries and advancements in their field of endeavor that produced paradigmatic changes to the systems and structure of our world. In all these epoch cases, God was through the new paradigms produced “declaring new things.” As much as secular humanists want to attribute all the credit to the genius of Man alone, the fact of the matter is, that as the old Hymn says, “This is My Father's World.” None of these massive wholesale changes could have possibly occurred except that these mere mortal men were inspired by the Omnipotent and Omniscient Creator and Source of All knowledge (science), understanding, and wisdom. All of these “new things” happened because God was declaring and proclaiming them through humans who were but the chosen vessels of conveyance for His Purposes and Plans for His Mankind Creation.

God's New Things in Our Theology

One of the ways that academic theology does not serve us well in our quest to really “know” the God we profess to serve is that it is far too codified and rigid. As has been often observed, we tend to put God into our little box of definitions of who He is. There are two chief problems with that: one, the box is always way too small because of the puny perspective our finite minds conjure of who God is, and, two, God detests being crammed into our little boxes of limited thinking. The Israelites repeatedly provoked God to anger during their forty years of wandering in the desert by their incessant desire to turn back and return to the bondage of Egypt, by tempting Him, and because they “limited” Him (Ps. 78:40ff). They limited Him not only by their *unbelief*, but also by their *belief*, because even their beliefs about God did not even come close to encompassing who He really is and the extent of His Omnipotence, which in application to them meant what He really was capable of doing for them. But, before we become arrogantly censorial and condescending toward “the church in the wilderness,” we need to recognize that we, as individual believers and the collective church, do precisely the same thing today! Our infe-

rior knowledge and puny perspective of who He is—the little box of our concept of Him—severely limits Him in our lives. And, there comes a point at which that provokes Him to anger. Not only that, but our lack of knowledge, or insufficient knowledge of God—who He is, His Word, Will, and Ways—brings both severe handicap and harm into our lives. Indeed, we are told in no uncertain terms that lack of knowledge will **destroy** us: “My People are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hos. 4:6).

Real and genuine theology is far more than just acquiring information *about* God; it is coming face to face with Him as Moses, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the Apostle Paul, and others did. It is a **divine confrontation!** And when that begins to happen in your life, as it did with all those saints of old, if you will pardon the crassness, it will most literally “scare the hell out of you!” How we need more of the consuming fire of His Presence in our lives! Yet, how little of it we can stand! Have you ever really experienced His presence? If you have, you know that like those saints of old, you can only fall down in His presence as a dead man, lying prostrate before Him, cowering in fear, and begging Him to depart, because of the overwhelming waves of unworthiness and unholiness that flood your entire being like a tidal wave.

Knowing the God of New Things

Our greatest need is to know Him! Know who He really is, rather than how our puny perception of Him makes us see Him. The Apostle “whom Jesus loved,” and who laid His head upon the breast of Jesus at the Last Supper, and who was at His feet when He took His last breath on the Cross, John, reveals this to us about knowing, God,

Beloved, now we are children (sons, KJV) of God; and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1 Jn. 3:2,3; NASB)

He is saying that even though we are already sons of God, having been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, been made a new creature in Christ Jesus, and already received that down payment the Apostle Paul spoke about of our inheritance in Christ, so that we have a semblance of being sons of God *now*, yet it has not yet been fully revealed to us what we are **GOING** to be when we come into our full inheritance, when the last trump of God sounds, “and we shall be **changed**,” changed by virtue of this old body of sin, death, and corruption being removed from us, when “the perishable puts on the imperishable,” and “this mortal puts on immortality,” which shall all transpire at that moment of all moments when Jesus returns to claim the Church as His Eternal Bride, **THEN**, in that moment, “**WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM!**” But the absolutely mind-blowing thing is that John says that we shall be **like Him** in that moment, *not* merely because the sin nature and its byproducts of spiritual death and corruption have been removed, but “**because we shall SEE HIM JUST AS HE IS!**” In that moment, when all the crud of sin has been removed from us, we will finally then **SEE HIM**, not as we **THOUGHT** He was, not how we perceived Him to be, but **AS HE REALLY IS!** For in that moment our sin-affected perception of who God is will then be removed, and our spiritual myopia will be forever cured, our spiritual cataracts forever removed, and the result shall be that we shall **see Him** as He really is and has always been! Glory to God!

The Apostle Paul capsulized the all-consuming quest and goal of his new life in Christ as, “that I might **KNOW** Him and the power of His resurrection!” Indeed, *apprehending* God should be the all-consuming quest and goal of every Christian’s life. *Apprehending*, or “knowing,” God is galaxies beyond merely *comprehending* Him by acquiring and assimilating abstract information and facts *about* Him, and reading about other people’s experiences with Him. *Apprehending* God is a personal **encounter** with the Creator. It is to personally *know* Him—experientially, relationally. It is, indeed, a Divine Confrontation!

The Kingdom of God is replete with paradoxes. Give to get, sow to reap, die to live, lose to gain, all of these concepts on the surface seem contradictory, but in God’s Kingdom the seeming *paradox* produces the desired *provision*. Such is the case as well regarding the dreaded “C” word, the mere mention of which causes angst, anxiety, and apprehension to course through the veins of many people, and triggers tangible tremors of trepidation, repulsion, and resistance, through most congregations of professed “believers.” Most people recoil from and are repulsed by the very concept of change. Yet change is what the Kingdom of God is all about. Ever since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, change has been required for remedy. *Human* nature detests change; *Divine* nature relishes it. While God emphatically declares His own personal unchangeableness with regard to His Nature, “I, the Lord, **do not change!**” (Mal. 3:6) nevertheless, the Kingdom of God is all about change—bringing forth into existence “new” (cf., definitions in box on Page 1) things, renewal, restoration, or returning things to their original, pristine state.

In both passages quoted at the outset, God speaks about “*new*” things. In the first, He says, “I **declare** new things.” And, in the second, He proclaims, “I will **do** something new.” We can see from these and many other portions of Scripture that God specializes in new things! Declaring new things is a recurring action of God’s. More-

over, whenever God says, “I will” as He does in the second passage, we can safely deduce that whatever it is that He says He will do is indeed His *will*, since He never does anything contrary to His will. Doing new things is God’s will. The question is then: why are change and new things so contrary to *our* will, as humans, generally speaking?

God speaks of new things repeatedly in His Word—new wine, new moons, new growth, new things, new strength, new song, new name, new heart, new spirit, new covenant, new tongues, new garment, new commandment, new creature, new self, new man, new and living way, new heavens and new earth, New Jerusalem—just to name the most salient. He not only talks about new things, but also, as alluded to previously, about *re*-newing things, meaning He takes old, obsolete, outdated, outmoded, passé things and somehow transforms them into new. This tells me that new things are **God Things!**

God’s New Things and People

God specializes in declaring and doing *new* things! And, yet so many people specialize in old things or the status quo! God has an *affinity* for the new, and humans, by and large, have an *aversion* against it. In American culture especially, we venerate, if not idolatry, the status quo. We like things to be as we have always known them to be in our lifetime. We dread and are threatened by the least prospect or semblance of change. We all but canonize the person who lived at the same house, woke up every morning at the same time, drank his morning cup of the same brand of coffee from the same coffee cup, made in the same pot, drove the same route to work and back to the same job, and ate the same few varieties of meals, on the same plates using the same silverware—for forty years! (Then, the irony of it all is that to that person who in his own world insisted on making time stand still, we pay tribute with the gift of a gold watch, as if he even has a need for a watch, since for him time already “is no more!”) Salt of the earth, grounded, good people, we call them. And, God help the preacher who dares to stand up before the congregation of the dying faithful and even suggest that something in the church needs to change or that it needs a transfusion with new blood.

We have almost a national obsession with preserving the memories of those and that which has passed, contemporaneous with such a barbaric contempt for the new that has yet to live that millions are unceremoniously murdered and their remains strewn about refuse landfills like discarded chicken parts and flushed through the sewers like human waste. We construct elaborate monuments to immortalize the dead. We spend billions of dollars on museums and such things as presidential libraries, Smithsonian Institutes, Halls of Fame of various genres to preserve memorabilia and memories of departed people and artifacts of passé cultures. Treasured “antiques” and venerated “historic” structures are valued many times higher than their modern counterparts. A plethora of books and magazines filling our national libraries and booksellers’ shelves are devoted exclusively to reminiscing nostalgically and longingly of days gone by, eras past. All this underscores our collective proclivity of living in the past.

God declares that He will shake everything that can be shaken, as of created things, in order that only those things that cannot be shaken shall *remain*, yet, people shake in terror at the mere thought of those things that can be shaken being *removed* and the treasured status quo changing!

Why is that? Two words, **insecurity** and **idolatry**! We make huge investments in the status quo. We are vested in what has been, what has already transpired, rather than in what will be and what is becoming. Without even realizing it, our security, our hope, our faith, all become wrapped up in the status quo—our own world we have worked so hard to create. It gets to the place, though few ever see it, where we are trusting in that status quo, the world we have been the creator of, rather than God, the true Creator! It takes little thought to see that that is the very essence of idolatry. Only the deity we are exulting is not some wooden object representing some strange, mythological false god, but rather *ourselves* as the creator of the world we have fashioned and which we are venerating. So, the form of our idolatry is self-deification.

And, then along comes God, and says, “Behold, I will do a **new** thing!” Talk about shock and awe! Such a concept just does not compute or comport with *our* thinking and *our* ways. “A *new* thing?!” Wait a minute! Doesn’t that mean change? Change?! “New?!” Instinctively, subliminally, we know the inference of the word “new” is that what has been is now old, outdated, outmoded, worn-out, obsolete, and passé. How can that possibly be? And, even more pressing, “Then, what now?!”

The Required Response to God’s New Things

Notice that word “*Behold*” in God’s declaration, “Behold, I will do a new thing!” It means: *Attention! look at this, see this, give your attention to this, consider this*. The first requirement in understanding something for the first time is to look at it, give your attention to it, focus on it, examine it, consider it! God wants us to behold the new thing that He is doing. It is critical that we do what God tells us to do! The problem is that whenever God is doing something new in the Church realm, the vast majority of believers, leaders included, do not look at it, give their

attention to it, examine it, consider it, but rather their first reaction is to reject it! If it's new, that is, something that departs from or is different from how things have been, then it cannot possibly be from God, is the subliminal attitude of most Christians. The root cause of this kind of reaction to new things, it seems to me, has a lot to do with the completely unscriptural yet nonetheless prevalent notion about God and His Kingdom that they are somehow static, fixed, and inanimate. But, as I am trying to demonstrate in this series of articles, nothing could be further from the truth. Moreover, one of the parts in the series will be an entire article dedicated to the matter of institutional resistance to change and the new things God does, in which I will enumerate the reasons behind it and how they can be remedied that the Lord has shown me.

A trait of religiosity is inanimateness, i.e., deadness. One dictionary defines inanimateness as anything that does not have qualities associated with active, living organisms; not animate or energetic, dead, dull, nonliving things, and refers the reader to the synonyms for the word "dead." An accompanying characteristic of religion is inertia, which is defined as: resistance or disinclination to motion, action, or change. Any church that is governed or even being affected by the spirit of religion is always all of those things—full of spiritual death instead of the abundant life Jesus came to give us and proclivity to inertia. Such churches eventually and inevitably become completely severed, disconnected, disenfranchised from the very God and His Kingdom they claim to worship, and gradually slip into the spiritual grave of worshipping the *church* of God vis-à-vis the *God* of the Church. They become more dedicated, devoted, and obsessed with preserving the accoutrements of their institution than knowing, worshipping, and walking with God Himself, and being committed to the fulfillment of His Kingdom Purposes and Plans. Most ecclesiastical institutions don't even know what the Kingdom Purposes and Plans *are*, much less committed to their fulfillment. The last words of a dying church are, "We've never done it this way before!"

Many church leaders, scholars, and theologians think that in being resistant to change and reticent to embrace "new things" that emerge, they are being faithful "defenders of the faith," or "gatekeepers," or "guardians of the flock." And, certainly there is a proper place for that role by church leaders. But, it is also our role to be so close to God that we know Him and His Ways intimately. If we do, there is no way the fact that God is the God of new things and constant change could possibly elude us. Someone once quipped, "constant change is here to stay." That is certainly applicable to the Kingdom of God. If we know God and the modus operandi of His Kingdom intimately, we know unequivocally that He is never static in His dealings with us individually or collectively, and that the Rivers of Living Water of the Holy Spirit are never stagnant but ever-flowing. God is always moving, and moving in ways that are different than the ways He moved in the past—"new" ways, new spiritual dimensions—that is part of the continuum of personal sanctification as well as corporate purification and performance.

One of the attributes of an anointed leader in God's Kingdom, who stays tuned into the Spirit and "keeps an ear to the ground," so to speak, is that He knows when the Spirit is stirring the waters and change is imminent. He knows when the time has come to institute the changes God is requiring, and he possesses the fortitude and faith to boldly implement them according to God's plan and timetable.

Prophets—God's Change Agents

One of the tribes of Israel, the sons of Issachar, were "men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do" (1 Chr. 12:32). Prophets are spiritual "sons of Issachar." The spiritual inheritance of that tribe is alive within them. They have a special anointing for discerning the times and knowing when God is bringing forth new things, new paradigms, and bringing the Church into new dimensions of the Spirit. Because they are discerners of these things, they frequently "see" things *before* others do, including other leaders. There is a pioneering aspect to the personality and gifting of prophets. They are also *predictive*, rather than *reactive*, vis-à-vis most other people. Most people believe it *when* they see it. Prophets believe it *before* other people see it, because they've already seen it and its outcome in the Spirit. Prophets are still "seers." They perceive things in the Spirit realm others do not, at least not yet. They specialize in revealing the "secret counsel" of God in His timing. When a prophet prophesies over you, he is speaking of those things that be not as though they were. Many people do not understand prophecies spoken over themselves or others because they do not understand this about prophecy. Prophecy is often predictive, and in fact that is one of the most important aspects of prophecy. I mean, hey, you already know what things are right now, right? What you need to know is either why some things happened that have happened or you need a new "vision" for the future as a guide in your pursuit of God and His purposes for your life. That's what prophecy does. That's why I'm not impressed when people say, "Hey, there's this prophet at such and so place who is telling people their names and addresses!" Well, friend, if you don't already know your name and address, you're suffering either from Alzheimer's or amnesia, and what you need is a healing, not a prophecy! Legitimate prophecy deals primarily with what we don't already know through our own natural knowledge and reasoning. Legitimate prophecy tells us what we **don't** know and only God **could** know, **supernaturally!**

The main point I'm trying to make is that prophets, like God, specialize in "new things." They are change agents. Prophets are spiritual marines—they're always moving on from vanquished territories and enemies to charge new beachheads for God. They are spiritual Daniel Boones—always looking forward in search of new spiritual frontiers and forging Wilderness Roads through Cumberland Gaps into new territory for God. They are antsy, and others often misjudge them as being impatient. They are easily bored with the status quo, are almost obsessed with movement, and detest stagnancy. They are instigators, "stir-er-up-ers." The prophetic personality and presence seems to stir up the human spirit without trying or intending to. Prophets are forever stirring things up. They'll sometimes stir things up, just because they can't stand inanimateness and lifeless atmospheres. The prophetic personality and anointing is about movement. Just the prophet's presence stirs things up. Just their presence elicits reaction from people, and it is never indifference. Wherever they go, demons, likewise, **always** react; it's as if they have no choice. When a prophet walks into a room, his presence is always felt. The prophetic anointing charges and changes the atmosphere. Like the Apostle Paul, wherever they go, they either start a riot or a revival. Prophets are provokers. They are constantly provoking people to good works and continual advancement. The prophetic perspective and personality is well captured in the quotation Ted Kennedy, in his emotional eulogy of his slain brother, said that Bobby often quoted: "Some men see things as they are and say why. I dream things that never were and say why not."

These characteristics are what make prophets so needed in many ecclesiastical institutions, and entrepreneurial enterprises as well, and worth their weight in gold. People with a prophetic personality are advancement agents. They will keep whatever entity they are involved with moving in the direction of new things and constant improvement and advancement. They prefer *evolution*, but in places where that has not been occurring, for whatever reasons, they will initiate *revolution*! They are relentless motivators of movement. They're going to move *something*, or *somebody*! And, if you refuse to move in the direction of advancement they are motivating you towards, *they* will move—over, on, and away, and find someone who will! They can't help it! That's who they are!

In the Church, we erroneously "anoint," appoint, and "knight" some people "leaders," who are not leaders at all. The word "lead" implies movement. A true leader is a visionary. He has an internal vision of where he wants to go, and he motivates others to get on the bus and go with him. They are forward-thinking; always looking into the future to new vistas of advancement.

Many people in the ministry, including those who are the chief leaders of churches and ecclesiastical organizations are not really leaders, because their mindset and modus operandi does not fit the definition of a leader, and I don't mean that in a pejorative way. They are really managers, and managers are very much needed. But, managers are just that, they manage what already exists, what's there now, the status quo. They are caretakers. They will take good care of what is there now and manage it well, but they are right now where they are always going to be. A manager-type will never advance the organization toward new horizons and into new territory, because he is incapable of seeing it. Vision is not his forte. Now, every entrepreneur-type needs good managers. But, manager-types make terrible entrepreneurs, because the entity under their leadership will eventually die because it failed to continue to advance and was not forward-thinking.

Accountants, for example, are great at accounting for what you have obtained, but someone who has strictly an accountant mentality, will never advance the entity because advancement involves risk and adventure, and accountant-types think in terms of safety, security, and the known. Risk and adventure scare them to death. Entrepreneurial-types, on the other hand, give about as much thought to risk and adventure as they do breathing. Both types have their upsides and their downsides. Now, when entrepreneurial-types connect and partner together in tandem on an enterprise, the result is generally success! Prophets are spiritual entrepreneurial-types.

If the manager-types leading our churches and ecclesiastical institutions would begin to recognize the critical need for the spiritual entrepreneurial mindset that prophet-types bring to the entities they lead, and begin to "receive a prophet in the name of a **prophet**," not trying to "quench the Spirit" by resisting the unique ways He operates through the prophetic personality, gift, and office, but actually "receive the reward (benefit)" of the prophet's ministry, then the Church would begin to see an unprecedented dimension of "success" in the accomplishment of the purposes and plans of God! And, that is precisely where God is taking us in the new dimensions that lie ahead. New, advanced concinnity among Fivefold Ministers is the only thing that will bring the ultimate fulfillment of the Ephesians Four Objective—"a (singular) mature (spiritually perfect) man, according to the measure of the stature of Christ!" The results of that Spirit-produced concinnity will exceed by light years anything the most advanced "church growth" concepts ever conceived in the mind of men could possibly ever achieve.

Pursuing God Like David

There are those brave God-chasers who do indeed want to operate in new dimensions of the Spirit. However, the problem is that often even they are not willing to leave their status quo, their place of security and familiarity,

their comfort zone, in order to move into the new dimension. Essentially, that is expecting God to be our step-and-fetch-it, to bring it to us. But, the longer you serve God, the more you become aware He never cooperates with or feeds our insecurity, spiritual laziness, and arrogance. He is not *our* servant; we are *His*! He is not the waiter who serves us at our spiritual table in the restaurant of the Kingdom. He refuses to “bring it to us,” but requires that we rise up out of our present place, our present circumstances, our present perspective, and proactively pursue it—ask, seek, and knock. To receive from God what He wants to give us or take us into requires that we pursue not the thing, but **HIM!** He possesses “the thing,” because it is in actuality a part of who He is, a part of Him! We have to rise up and go **PURSUE GOD!** The proof of genuine desire is **pursuit!** Pursuit validates desire.

In all our spiritual journey, we must continually and repeatedly be like David, who was “a man after the heart of God.” So often when preachers allude to this quality of David they give the impression that it means that David’s heart was so much like God’s, but that is not what it means at all. Is God an adulterer and a murderer? Obviously not! David was a fallen creature permeated with the sin nature just like all the rest of us. This description does not mean his heart was like God’s, rather saying that he was “after” the heart of God meant that David was in **pursuit** of God. David’s spiritual genius, if you will, was not that he was so *perfect*, but that he was a *repenter*, a *quick* repenter. Whenever he was confronted with his sin, he repented. And, he had learned over his years of intimacy with and worship of God, the faster the better. The longing of David’s heart was intimacy—closeness, fellowship, communion—with God; not merely in the time of crisis and extreme need, but **all the time**, every moment of every day. And, unconfessed sin and wanton rebellion, he had learned in his worship times, negated or caused a breach in that intimacy. Repentance is what would remove the breach and restore the intimacy. So, the further he traveled in his spiritual journey of intimacy with God, the faster he became at repenting, because there was nothing, nothing that would satisfy him and bear the peace in his soul that his intimacy with God produced.

The Church and New Things

If the Church is going to walk into this place of intimacy with God, cultivating His Presence in our midst in our gatherings and having His continual presence in all our Kingdom endeavors, we must pursue God the same way David did. We must rise up out of our carefully crafted world we have created, our homeland, the status quo, repent of our idolatry, self-worship, and insecurity, and with fear and trembling, begin to pursue God! Not on *our* terms, but on **His!** Not according to *our* ways, but **His!** We must be willing to leave the dimension we are presently abiding and operating in, and walk into the new dimension that He had ordained and is calling us into. The new thing is God’s purpose now, and it trumps the old things.

Once the new thing, the new paradigm, is revealed, the old things, the old paradigm, has come to pass and are now obsolete and ineffectual in the Spirit realm. They may retain some effectiveness in the natural realm, but they will only produce natural results, not Kingdom fruit. Our craving for the Presence of God, personally and corporately, must outweigh our desire for ostensible security, and motivate us to move, to reposition ourselves on the other side of the line separating the new from the old. The longer we resist the new pattern and model, the more of our spiritual and natural capital we are wasting in the boondoggle of the old dimension.

Unfortunately, because it tends to become rigid, inflexible, intransigent, unmalleable, obstinate, and resistant to change, theologically and institutionally, the Church suffers from Bi-polar Disorder and Schizophrenia. The cause of our bi-polar or “split” personality is our attempt to behold and operate in the dimension of the Spirit while abiding in the carnal realm. That will make you go crazy! Even those who pride themselves on being Spirit-filled (as if there’s any other kind of Christian) or what I think they really mean, Spirit-Baptized, want to perceive, behold, appropriate, possess the revelation of new dimensions of the Spirit, but from the present spiritual “place” and vantage point. They don’t want to have to make any kind of move or advancement toward God in order to possess or walk in the new dimension.

schiz·o·phre·ni·a

schiz·o·phre·ni·a (skīt’ sə-frē’ nē-ə, -frēn’ ē-ə) *noun*

1. Any of a group of psychotic disorders usually characterized by withdrawal from reality, illogical patterns of thinking, delusions, and hallucinations, and accompanied in varying degrees by other emotional, behavioral, or intellectual disturbances. Schizophrenia, often associated with dopamine imbalances in the brain and defects of the frontal lobe, may have an underlying genetic cause.
2. A condition that results from the coexistence of disparate or antagonistic qualities, identities, or activities: *the schizophrenia of the double espionage agent*.¹

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But, when it comes to “vision” or sight, our present spiritual state is much like our present physical state—it has limitations. We cannot see “forever” in the natural, rather we can only see so far into the distance. Even when flying through the firmament at 10,000 feet in a 747 on one of those days that the skies are so clear or void of clouds that it invokes the description “unlimited visibility” in aviation transmissions, the fact of the matter is that the visibility really *is* limited—to what the human eye can see. Our spiritual vision in our present spiritual estate, even

when unfettered by clouds of unbelief, carnality, and human reason, even on our best days in our most spiritual state, is limited to being able to see only as far and as much as the Holy Spirit enables us to see and perceive. We only see in part and know in part. Now we are limited to the “partial.” In the day of perfection, when the perfect comes, when the Perfect One comes, and removes from us the imperfect, i.e., the sin nature, then shall the limitations of our vision and visibility be removed from us. So, if we are going to “behold” or “see” the new thing God is doing, the new dimension He is wooing us to, we must leave our present place and move toward the sound of His voice by faith until we reach that place in the Spirit where the new thing begins to come into view and we can begin to “behold it.”

All this is true with denominations and networks, as well. God will not pour out the new wine of the new dimension into old wineskins, because the new wine (new revelation) is “alive” and “active,” and it would burst any wineskin that does not have the capacity to stretch and expand any further with the dynamic of the fermenting wine. He also cannot simply sew a new, unshrunk patch onto an old garment that has already shrunk as far as it can shrink, because doing so would only cause a worse tear, split, gap, or hole in the garment that a patch would be intended to repair, which would render the garment unusable. Indeed, that has been what has happened in past moves of the Spirit—the old garment (denomination or network) would not stretch with the new dynamic or dimension God brought about, which caused a major tear or split. Not all church splits are of the devil, some are God-caused. In fact, the Apostle Paul in the same epistle in which he exhorted the Corinthian church that “there be no divisions among you” with regard to doctrine (1 Cor. 1:10), by inspiration of the Spirit also declared that some church splits or separations were inevitable and necessary in order to demonstrate who was “approved”: “For there must also be factions among you, in order that those who are approved may have become evident (margin, manifest) among you” (1 Cor. 11:19). The “approved” are those believers who stay positioned in the new thing, new paradigm, new pattern, new model, God is operating in currently.

Metaphorically speaking, in order to advance us into new dimensions of the Spirit, God often longs to give us a new suit of new spiritual perception and perspective for us to wear. Sometimes, He wants to fill our closets with a whole new wardrobe of new clothes. But, our aversion to new things and our preservation and packrat proclivity precludes us from clearing our closet out of the old, worn-out, out-of-style, outmoded, obsolete, passé, clothes—our status quo clothes—in order to make a place for and accommodate the new wardrobe. Like those Jesus described, we say, “The old is good enough,” and we see no need for the new.

Unfortunately, ecclesiastical institutions often seem to reflect this kind of intransigence and resistance to change. That pattern makes it necessary at times for the Lord, who is still the Head of the Church, to effect the change He has decreed through *revolution* rather than the less “violent” and preferable means of *evolution*. When reform does not occur through *evolution*, then it must occur through *revolution*, but it must occur, because God has decreed it. In those times when reform is being resisted, the Lord sends change agents—reformers and revolutionists—prophets, to begin to initiate change via their six-faceted ministry (Jer. 1:10). And, when God sends in the prophets, there’s going to be some stirring up, some agitation, some provocation, some friction—all the natural byproduct of movement, change. *Change* always begets *crisis*, especially when change has been resisted. The greater the resistance, the greater the crisis. The most common reason institutions resist change is its constituency’s personal vested interest in maintaining the status quo. Change usually is not perceived as being personally beneficial to those who have been benefiting from the current system. Institutional change always requires systemic and cultural change, which is rarely seen by the constituency as being advantageous or conducive. Thus, the Lord must send in change agents from the outside, because the institution, like the individual person without Christ, is wholly incapable of changing itself; it needs a deliverer, a savior, to save it from itself.

Abraham and His New Thing

We cannot make a paradigm shift by beholding the new from the position of the old. Repeatedly, in issuing a new calling to saints of old, God told them they had to rise up and leave where they were presently living and go to another place of His election, and **there** He would speak to them further, giving further instruction and revelation. Abraham could not “see” the Land Flowing with Milk and Honey from where He was residing in Haran. He had to leave his relatives, the land of his birth and residence, the place of his status quo, in order to go to Canaan Land. It was **there** in Canaan that God caused His plan and purpose for a whole new paradigm to unfold. It was **there** that God established His Covenant with the patriarch of the Holy Race, and gave Abraham the visions of the sands of the seashore and the stars of the sky that guided him and kept him on course all the rest of his days as he progressed toward the new paradigm that affected the future of the whole world for the rest of time—the fathering of the Hebrew and Arab races.

We know how it all turned out with Abraham, and we get all charged up with our Word/Faith preaching of how we, as believers today, can by faith inherit the blessings of Abraham, but rarely is it emphasized as strongly as it should be that those blessings Abraham received from God over the course of His life of pursuit of God happened

because, "By faith, Abraham, when he was called, **obeyed** by going out to a **place** which he was to receive as an inheritance; and **he went out, not knowing where he was going**" (Heb. 11:8). Like every one of us, he could not see the end from the beginning. He had to leave his status quo and everything that it consisted of, and launch out into "the great unknown," in what we would call "blind faith," not having a clue where he was going, but just knowing that He was following the leading of God, like a blind man walking toward the sound of a voice in the darkness, or like fire victims, totally blinded by the smoke, following the faint sound of a voice, crying out, "This way! Come this way to escape!"

Abraham put it all on the line, to follow that still, small Voice from within, whose instructions were, compared to the magnitude of what was being required, so scant, "**Go forth** from your country, and from your relatives, and from your father's house, to the land which I **will** show you." God was instructing him to go forth without even telling him where he was going to go, except that it was a land where He was going to show him. The going forth by faith rather than sight was the divine requisite to subsequently being shown "**the land**" where he was going. Oh, as we know so well, God promised to bless him exceedingly, which was the "what," but He told him in advance literally nothing about the where and the how. And, the clincher is that He was telling him to do all of this **at the age of 75!**

How many believers today would leave everything, their entire status quo, all that they had worked so hard for so long to attain, from things to status and standing, to embark on a journey to where they knew not, following nothing but the inward Voice of the Lord and His promise of blessing, whether it's at 45, 55, 65, or 75?! **NOT MANY!** Most would listen to the imploring counsel of all their well-meaning family, friends, and fellows indicating in no uncertain terms that it would be sheer lunacy to suddenly pack up and leave everything and simply head out, not having a well-conceived plan that included in vivid detail all the where, the what, and the how by which they were going to accomplish the plan, and above all, **succeed!** And, the vast majority of even Pentecostal/Charismatic/Word/Faith "spirit-filled" Christians would no doubt be fully convinced that the whole scenario was "demonic" and that their "Abraham" needs deliverance and prayer by the entire corps of intercessors around the world! It is that kind of mindset that keeps the vast majority of believers, lay and leaders alike, from walking in the new dimensions of the Spirit that God initiates by declaring and proclaiming them through faith-filled, fearless pioneering prophetic voices.

Elijah and His New Thing

Likewise, when through his own prophetic declaration God brought forth a three-year long drought/famine in all the land, God told Elijah, "**Go away from here** and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the Brook Cherith ("cutting place"), which is east of the Jordan. And it shall be that you shall drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to provide for you **there.**" "*There,*" at the place He told him to go, away from where he had been living, God told Elijah He would provide for him. Now what would your reaction be to a word ostensibly from God that said that He was going to physically sustain you by commanding birds to bring you food? "Yeah, right! I rebuke that in the name of Jesus," would be most believers' reaction. But, not Elijah, because, you see, he had come to truly **know** God, and He knew that God could do anything, including making the birds do His bidding! But, even if that was true, what purpose would there be in going to "hide" by a brook? What kind of "victorious living" is that, and what in the world could he possibly accomplish for God hiding out in solitude by a brook? But, Elijah had learned to just trust and obey. He knew God and His Ways well enough to know that the **process** was more important to God than the **produce**, and in fact the process would determine the produce. Though we are not given details of it, no doubt this period of being hidden away in obscurity where probably no one even knew where he was, indeed was a very vital time of Elijah's preparation and training for what lay ahead, for where he was living now was "the cutting place." God was cutting on the prophet, removing every hindrance in his mindsets and heart to him being all that God needed Him to be in order to press through the obstacles that lie ahead and accomplish every assignment from God that awaited. We have no way of knowing what all those were, but I strongly suspect that one of them was his own physical sustenance. Having birds bringing him both bread and meat in the morning and then again in the evening, must have been both humbling and awe-inspiring at the same time. Certainly this was a "new paradigm" that he had never been subjected to before.

In time, when the brook dried up from lack of rain and the scorching heat of the desert, and the birds no longer came because they had to migrate to where there was food and water, God again spoke to Elijah, directing him to arise and go to Zarephath, a city in the territory of Sidon, outside of Israel's boundaries, and to "stay **there.**" As if "the cutting place" was not enough, now the Lord was directing him to "the refining place," the meaning of "Zarephath." At "the refining place," the Lord informed him that it was not birds that would feed him now in this new dimension, but a **widow woman**, "I have commanded a widow woman there to provide for you." It was one thing for birds to be the vessels God used for His provision to you, but it was quite another to have to receive God's provision from a widow woman, especially when the one little wrinkle in the plan was that she did not have

a clue that this was God's plan and Elijah would have to be the one to tell her! Talk about "new paradigms!" This one no doubt sorely tried his theological pliability, requiring him to adjust his thinking to comport with the new revelation God was giving him concerning who He was and His Ways and Means. The great prophet who had come to know God so intimately that when He opened his mouth and said, "Thus saith the Lord," it was God Himself speaking through him and what he declared came to pass, was now being called by God to enter into yet another dimension of His Spirit that God had not taken him into before and was previously unknown to him. God was doing "a new thing," and giving Elijah "new wine" of new revelation to drink in preparing and training him to be able to walk in the dimension of the Spirit that God would lead him into ahead.

Us and Our New Thing

"Whatever was written in earlier times was written for *our* instruction" (Rom. 15:4). These events in Abraham's and Elijah's lives were chronicled in the Bible, not to give us good Sunday School material, but for our instruction. They are an example of instruction to us that illustrate the principle that God often requires us to leave the place we are currently living, whether that be physically or spiritually or both—our status quo (by definition, the existing conditions or state of affairs)—in order to advance to some new station, status, or place where He is leading us, and that it is **there** that He will speak to us. No matter how unreasonable or impracticable that may seem to our human minds, when this is the Divine Decision and requisite, we simply will not receive "further instructions" until we obediently pack up, and all that entails, and go to that place where He has called us. Again, that place may be a new spiritual "place"—a new dimension, understanding, or paradigm, for example—or it could be a new place geographically, or sometimes both are involved, in that the further instructions awaits us at the new place, and will be revealed sometime after we have arrived there. If *initially* He does not speak, He will speak *eventually*.

In times like these, our natural minds will question Divine Wisdom, asking in incredulity, "But, God, here I am, I'm praying and petitioning you to hear from you, so why don't you just speak to me now, here where I am now? Why do I have to go out somewhere else, not knowing where I am going or what awaits me when I get there, in order for you to speak to me there? Speak **now, here, Lord!**" But, He doesn't. He requires we go "**there**" for Him to speak to us. When, we in faith go to the "there" place, He will speak to us. If we are ever going to understand how to walk with God, we must understand two vital things about revelation: one, that it is *positional*, and two that it is *progressive*. In the examples of both Abraham and Elijah I referenced, they both had to leave the place where they had been living (spiritually and physically), and go to another place, and it was **there** that God began speaking to them (positional), and the revelation of the purposes and plans of God **then** unfolded to them incrementally (progressive) in response to their obedience and walking by faith. A little bit here, a little bit there, line upon line, order upon order. Jesus says to His disciples (followers, learners) yet today, "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them all now." So, revelation is progressive, positional, and is revealed through faith.

Even in the matter of Divine Purposes and Plans that God performs through us, the *process* is just as vital as the *performance*. The process makes *us*, which enables us to in turn make the performance. God makes the *man* (or woman), and out of the man flows the *ministry*. Genuine ministry is only and always an outflow of the vessel. "Out of your innermost being shall flow rivers of living water!" Jesus prepares the person, and the prepared person performs the ministry of Jesus. The truth is that Jesus is not focused on performing His mission and ministry now, but rather He is fixated on the single task of building His Church—His Body of Believers, His Betrothed—and it is the Lamb's Wife, His Ambassadors, His Envoys, His Delegates, His Deputies, who will in turn complete His mission and ministry on Earth. God's plan is not to bypass the Lamb's Wife, the Church, but to deputize her. Everything God does on the Earth, He does through the Body of Christ. "Know ye not that ye are the Body of Christ?" We are literally His Body, His hands, His feet, His mouth, and so on. Anything He desires to accomplish on Earth, He turns to us, and takes us into whatever dimension of the Spirit that is required for us to accomplish His Purposes and Plans.

"The Former Things Have Come to Pass"

There are two vital truths we need to extract from that statement. The obvious and most common is that the things that used to be are now completed and are now **passed**. In speaking of someone who has died, we use the euphemism that they "passed away." That is precisely how God wants us to regard the modus operandi of the past—as "the former things"—at those junctures when He comes to the Church and proclaims, "Now I declare *new* things! Behold, I will do something *new, now* it will spring forth!" God is in those moments acting as a spiritual attending physician pronouncing the former things dead, but at the same time acting as the spiritual obstetrician delivering the baby of the new thing that will replace the old. Simultaneously, at that juncture we have the stark dichotomy of the lifeless corpse of the deceased, whose heart has ceased to pump the blood of life, that is growing colder by the minute, and which has already begun to undergo the death and decay process, as well as the vibrant embodiment of new hope and new life in the form of the newborn. The only thing we can do with the de-

ceased at that point is embalm and bury it. Otherwise, all we'd be doing is propping up a lifeless corpse for appearance sake, or have a version of dead men walking. Soon, we must come to grips with the harsh reality that the former things have passed away—they're dead, deceased, gone, and not coming back. At some point, the sooner the better, like David with the loss of his infant child, we must cease mourning over the deceased, wash our face, and rejoice in the God of Life who always gives a Solomon in one form or another in the place of our lost offspring. Then, we must commit our attention and energy to the newborn, the "new thing," that has been birthed and is alive, for it is now our progeny, our seed—the means God has ordained for producing our heritage. At that point, there really is no choice—life cannot be produced by the dead. Only living things can produce living things. Dead things cannot produce anything.

At some point, the sooner the better, like David with the loss of his infant son, we must cease mourning over the deceased, wash our face, and rejoice in the God of Life who always gives a Solomon in one form or another in the place of our lost offspring. Then, we must commit our attention and energy to the newborn, the "new thing," that has been birthed and is alive, for it is now our progeny, our seed, the means God has ordained for producing our heritage. At that point, there really is no choice...life cannot be produced by the dead. Only living things can produce living things. Dead things cannot produce anything.

Whenever God takes you into a *new* thing there's always an *old* thing to leave behind—an entire set of circumstances and settings—trappings, systems, models, methods—that have exhausted their usefulness, are now outmoded and obsolete, and will not be useful in the new thing, phase, paradigm, or dimension. Unfortunately, sometimes that which must be left behind also includes people, relationships. Some just will not make the trip, for various reasons. But, that is part of the process of pursuit of God and His plans and purposes. By that, I do not mean the particular relationships that are left behind, but rather I am referring to the process. In some cases it is necessary for us, the person moving on, because we need a new and different kind of provision in the new phase that those old relationships simply cannot provide, and sometimes it is because *WE* are a new provision to the new relationships that are formed in the new phase, and yet other times it is because of issues in the lives of the former phase people that prevent them from properly relating to us in the new phase.

Notice the associating of the word "*now*" with the word "*new*" in all these passages in which God is speaking about declaring and doing new things. Here's the part that the Church is very lax in recognizing. When God declares something new, unlike other matters especially in personal prophecy over individuals, He always intends it to be "effective immediately!" Certainly, He is demanding that we behold it, see it, look at it, give our attention to it, *immediately*. In the Isaiah 43 passage, He reinforces that with the Divine inquiry, "Will you not be aware of it?" Beholding, giving our attention to, pursuing, walking in the new thing that springs forth with God's declaration and proclamation is not optional, but mandatory, compulsory. If we are to continue our pursuit toward Him, being conformed into His Image, being transformed from glory to glory into the glory of His Image (2 Cor. 3:18), and walking in intimacy in His manifest presence (glory), and be positioned in the "place" where His favor and provision is being poured out, we must walk in the new thing that He has decreed. That is what He means when He follows up the 18th verse of Isaiah 48 with what He says in the 19th verse: "I will even make a **roadway** in the *wilderness*, **rivers** in the *desert*."

Wildernesses and desert experiences almost always precede a "new thing" God is about to do in our lives or the Church. But, eventually in those seemingly aimless wanderings in the spiritual wilderness and slow trudgings through dry spiritual deserts when mentally we know He is with us but our soul is parched and thirsting for a fresh infusion of the Water of the Spirit, He makes a *roadway* and a *river* that leads to His Precious Presence. But, at that moment—when the roadway in the wilderness or the river in the desert appears—we are in a dilemma, a fork-in-the-road crisis! For, now the pathway has been illuminated—by the lamp unto our feet and light unto our path—and now we must chose, either to follow the illuminated pathway toward God and the next juncture He has ordained for our life, or stay on the path we've been traveling and remain in the familiar and friendly surroundings of the wilderness or desert we've been sojourning in!

The second, more obscure, meaning we need to draw from God's declaration, "The former things have come to pass," is that the reason that the former things came in the first place is so that they can in time **pass**—they have come in order to pass. It is vital for people who intrinsically resist change and tend to be regimentally set in their ways to understand that many circumstances and situations in life that develop were never intended by God to be *permanent*, but have come in order to one day *pass*. The saying, "All good things must end," is more apropos than we realize or want to acknowledge. We don't want "good things" to end. But, sometimes that is the will of God. Sometimes *good* things **must** end in order to advance us into a *better* thing. As it has been said, sometimes the *good* can be the thief of the *best*. Sometimes good things end as a *precursor* to *promotion*.

"This too shall pass!" is a concept that can carry great consolation, encouragement, and hope when we are traversing through trials, troubles, and tribulations. Just knowing that everything in this life eventually passes can

be a source of great strength and assurance. It is inevitable that our journey of pursuit of God will take us through “high water,” so that we can come to know the God who is a strong tower in the time of trouble that the righteous run into. Sometimes it is our own Sea of Galilee raging storm experiences so that we like the Apostles of the Lamb can experientially know the God who has the power to calm the raging storm with just one word! Or, a Red Sea experience to introduce us to Jesus the Deliverer that Moses and the Israelites met following their deliverance from Egypt. Primarily, these kinds of crises come into our lives to drive us closer to God, to force us to come to know Him and His power and provision in a *new*, more spiritually advanced dimension.

Virtually every set of circumstances and scenarios we traverse through in our own trek through the wilderness toward God and His Kingdom are merely temporary. Usually they happen for our teaching, training, and testing in preparation for further spiritual advancement along the continuum of being conformed into the Image of Christ and being transformed from glory to glory. Not recognizing this is a source of needless despair and despondency for individual believers. Moreover, one of the biggest problems we have in the Church is our obsession to fix as *permanent* what God intends to be only *passing*. My conviction is that it is the spirit of religion that engenders that kind of misjudgment and misunderstanding of events and circumstances. A characteristic of religiosity is obsession with preserving the past, what once happened, what God did in another era, and the status quo, rather than “press(ing) on,” a la Philippians 3:14, to possess as our present possession what God is doing today in our midst. “**THIS** is the day (today) that the Lord has made; I will be glad and rejoice in **IT!**” In fact, Paul said that in order to “press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus,” we must “**(forget)** what lies behind and reach forward to what lies ahead!” If we acted as if God is truly the “**I AM**” contrasted to the “**I WAS**,” our personal lives as well as our churches would be a whole lot different than they are!

The phases of our journey are only temporary, but rarely, especially at the intrusive inception of adverse circumstances—times of trouble, trial, tribulation, and temptation to despair—do we perceive them as such. One of the most effective weapons the enemy of our souls has in his arsenal to use against us is discouragement and despair. Whenever adversity hits our lives, our first reaction typically is to despair and become discouraged, because we presume it is here to stay, instead of something that has *come* to be *overcome*, “for *in all these things* we are **more than conquerors** through Him who loved us” (Rom. 8:37, KJV). Our first reaction to trouble is to be highly offended. It’s as if we say, “What is this?! How dare you come into my life! Don’t you know who I am?” Well, the truth of the matter is that Satan brings these things in our lives and God allows him to bring them into our lives because they both **DO** know who we are! Difficulties come into our lives so that we can advance into the dimension in which we indeed are **MORE THAN conquerors** by appropriating the powers of Him who loved us and overwhelmingly **CONQUERING** those difficulties (cf., Rom. 8:31-31)! Remember, God will not allow any temptation, test, trial, or trouble to beset us beyond what we are “able”—not simply to *withstand*, but to *overcome*!

What’s the big deal? Why are you hammering on this thing about the past? I’ll tell you what the big deal is. It is that we cannot possess as our present possession what God is doing **now** in this time, the dimension of His Power and Presence He is manifesting **now**, from the vantage point of where we have been, what was, or what has been; i.e., the former things that have come to pass! We can only possess as our present possession what God is manifesting by forgetting the former things, by “not call(ing) to mind the former things, and not “ponder(ing) things of the past,” in order that we can “Behold” and “be aware of” the new thing God is doing! This simply is the way God operates. We cannot operate in a new dimension until we leave the former dimension and move into it. We must let the dead bury the dead, the lifeless, the deceased, and move on into the Land of the Living.

Time and Tabernacles

Perhaps this fixation with preservation of the past is a product of the existence of “time” in the world we live in, as opposed to the realm of the Spirit, the domain of God in which “time is no more,” where there is only eternity and “be-ing,” where there is no passing away (cessation of being or living; i.e., death), where Jesus is the only beginning (Alpha) and end (Omega), because everything in that realm begins with Jesus and ends with Jesus. All carnal, human reasoning is linked to and predicated on time. But, with God, there is no time, distance, or space. In the Kingdom of God, there is no “going to be” or “will be”—there is only **IS** and **AM**. That is why when Moses asked the God of Consuming Fire who was speaking to Him out of the burning bush who He should tell the Israelites and Pharaoh sent him, He responded, tell them, “**I AM**.” He just **IS!** Always! There has never been a time when He was not! Our human minds have such difficulty in grasping these concepts of eternity.

So, when God does manifest His presence in our midst or moves in the Church in a new dimension, we typically have the same mentality Peter reflected following the Transfiguration experience. Suddenly, he, James, and John saw Moses and Elijah flanking the Transfigured Christ on either side and talking to Him. In the fluster the awesome moment of Divine Manifestation generated, Peter blurts out his magnanimous offer, “**I will build three tabernacles** here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” Perhaps any of us would have reacted similarly. In the only paradigm of God’s Manifested Presence Peter was familiar with, this was a *perishable* event

that needed to be *preserved*, and God had always manifested His presence only in tabernacles made with human hands. God's response in an audible voice, one of only two times He thus spoke during Jesus' fleshly life, signifies the importance He attached to the apostles' and all subsequent disciples comprehending that the significance of this event was that God no longer dwells in temples made with human hands, but in His manifested sons, "This **IS** my beloved **Son** in whom **I AM** well-pleased; listen to **Him!**" Jesus manifested a "new and living" paradigm as the "firstborn" (Gr., "prototype") of a new Race of Sons of God, in whom God dwells. **Now**, are **WE** the Sons of God (cf., 1Jn. 3:1-3; 1Cor. 3:16), who **are** the new tabernacles and temples in whom God dwells!

Ponder Not the Past

Some groups, churches, and leaders today are in all sincerity and fervency trying to develop and advance ministries by operating through paradigms and programs indigenous to past moves. The phrase, "beating a dead horse," has never had any more apropos application than in such cases. The horse is dead and ain't gonna giddy up no matter how hard you beat it! Such groups and people are trying to advance into new dimensions of the Spirit by riding beached waves of the past! It ain't gonna happen! The Holiness movement of the 1800s is a dead and beached wave. The Pentecostal Movement as it existed and blossomed in the 1900s, is a lifeless and beached wave, as is the Charismatic Movement, with all its sub-movements or —emphases. Each of those moves of God are now "the former things" that "have come to pass." They have "passed away," they are dead now, and even buried in the mind of God. All these movements served their purposes for their time, and there may be some useful information we can ascertain from reading about them and key people of those epochs, but they have no spiritual efficacy now, and the human instruments God used in those moves are now dead and buried or soon will be. Neither is God going to repeat what He did in those eras, but rather he has long since moved onto "new things," new paradigms, new ways, new methods, new emphasis. Moreover, He is quite capable of and desires to do now and in the days ahead far more than what He did in any of those epochs. This is the plan and the will of God. The bluntness of these statements may make them sound iconoclastic and offensive to some readers, but I can assure you that there's not an ounce of disrespect, dishonor, or desire to offend in making them. Sometimes the truth is blunt when examined from a present perspective that God wants us to move out of and on from.

Harkening nostalgically and melancholically back to a former era when God did this or that does not please God. "The glory of the latter house shall be greater than the former"—this is the continuum on which Jesus' Church is progressing. While church historians laud and immortalize the Early Church, marveling at what happened under its auspices, and preachers weave melodramatic tales about the particular saints of old they will look up and dote over when they get to Heaven, the fact is that when we enter the Portals of Glory the Early Church saints are going to give us in the Latter House standing ovations, and throng and fawn over *us* because of what God did through *us* in *our* day. The *Early* Church had some *power* but they did not possess nearly the spiritual *perfection*, or maturity, and *purity*, and accompanying dimension of *power* that the *End-Times* Church shall have at the point at which Christ returns to claim the glorified Church as His Eternal Bride. I know many people will bristle at these statements, and want to castigate and censure me, and even call me a heretic, but it nevertheless is a true prophetic word from God!

The New Dimension of God's Manifest Presence

God requires that we stop focusing our attention on the former things, the old thing, the passé, passed away thing, in order to behold the new thing. The favor and blessing of God will be upon those who are seeing, examining, and focusing on the new thing, and leaving behind the old thing. Then, there comes a point at which if we have not crossed over the line separating the old thing from the new thing, we actually inherit the disfavor of God, and cut ourselves off from all that abiding in His manifested presence engenders. And, indeed that IS the "new things" that God is declaring and doing in this hour—cultivating His manifested presence, or Glory, for the Glory of the Lord is the emphasis of this day in the Church. Living merely in His *omnipresence* will produce less and less of His provision in this new dimension. Now, we must earnestly seek His *manifested presence*—**His Glory**—in order to operate in His favor and in the increased measure of His Power and Provision that He is pouring out in this new dimension.

In this new dimension that God is now proclaiming and which has already begun to spring forth, we must with the zeal of David militantly march into the camp and house of the Philistines and by spiritual force and authority retrieve the Ark of the Covenant (the type of the Glory of God) and return it to its proper place of veneration among the saints of God in Beth-el, the House of God! But, even the greatest of zeal does not override wrong order, as David found out through tragedy! We must learn from the mistakes of David, and learn that there is an "ordinance" of God, a predefined, ordained order and procedure for transporting the Ark that bears the Glory of God about which God is deadly serious! We cannot handle and touch the Holy Manifested Presence of God any ole way we want to, do it any ole way we want to, and expect God to follow *our* program and manifest His Presence in our midst. It has only been by His great grace and mercy that we have had the fleeting and limited mani-

festations of His Presence in our meetings in the past. But, it will not be that way in this new dimension, in which we will be “handling” the very Presence of Almighty God. There is an inviolable order that must be followed in which only those who have been selected, sanctified, and set apart to “handle” or “touch” the Ark of His Presence can do so, anyone else who even so much as touches It, like Uzza, shall be stricken dead! For it is the Presence of God, the Glory of God! And, in this new dimension, the Provision of God will come with the Presence of God. In this new dimension, the Church must become the “temple” that God desires to *abide* in, not merely *visit* occasionally. Over any Church-entity electing to remain in the former dimensions rather than moving with God into this new dimension He is declaring shall be written in the Spirit, “Ichabod!” for the glory shall surely have departed.

Understanding that order, that ordinance, and operating in accordance with it, will be the key to this new dimension. A consensus is emerging in the proclamations of God’s prophets. God is declaring that He is launching a “new thing,” a whole new paradigm, during the Year of 2004. It will be a new dimension of the Spirit that God is calling the Church into. An upcoming series of articles will be devoted to what that new paradigm is, and how individual believers as well as the Church Jesus is building can prepare to enter into that dimension. Stay tuned!

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