

THE NEW PEOPLE

By

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Instinctively in the human race is the desire for “newness.” But disappointingly the “new look” and the “New Frontier” and all other efforts at “newness” too soon face and become obsolete and outworn ideas. Powerless to create anew, man is only substituting his product for those which God alone can produce.

What man is powerless to do, God hasn't the least trouble in doing. In fact, this is the whole scheme and purpose of God in what He has revealed to man in the Bible, that He intends to fulfill this inherent longing of man for “newness.” In Isaiah He has said, “Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind” (Isaiah 65:17). John, in the Revelation, wrote that he “saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. And he that sits on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new” (Revelation 21:1-5).

The subheading of today's newspaper read “World coming unglued!” Nothing could be any more obvious than the fact that the world, having rejected the counsel and guidance of its Creator, is rapidly being reduced to chaos. This, too, is a part of God's revelation. “The heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men” (2 Peter 3:7). This corrupt and rebellious race is to be destroyed in judgment. But God's intention is to have a new one, “and there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that makes an abomination and a lie; but only they that are written in the lamb's book of life” (Rev. 21:27).

The Creator of the universe is not to be thwarted in His purpose. While this present world and its occupants obviously do not fulfill His creative intent, the play isn't yet ended. When the curtain comes down in judgment, there is yet another act to follow, one that gives the ideal conclusion to the story, the one and only time it can be truthfully said, “And they lived happily ever after.” Peter has written plainly, “But, according to his promise, we look for a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness” (2 Peter 3:13).

This can only mean that there is not only to be a new heaven, but a new earth occupied with a new breed of people. Our chief interest in this article is these new people.

The core of Christian doctrine is not the future life of spirit, but rather the resurrection of the body, so that the whole man becomes immortal, body and spirit, in an ideal creation. What we hope for is not merely a new environment, but a whole new life, including new bodies. This “newness” of the whole man is far more important and more exciting than is generally recognized. We know what joy soundness of body brings and what havoc and

sorrow is caused by the deterioration of the body. What God promises is a body that is not only sound, but which is more firm and vital than we have ever enjoyed before. And besides, it will remain that way forever, which is the meaning of “immortality.”

The resurrection, however, involves more than a physical mobility. For example, it also involves our minds. Mental (and spiritual) response depends upon an aging brain which functions in every way as the creator intended. But how many of us really have the full benefit of a perfect brain? Edison estimated that we use only about one-millionth of potential. Our brain Much of this failure is due simply to physical fatigue, nervous disorder and the general weakness of the human body. (Remember that Adam was such a perfect specimen at creation that he lived 930 years before finally running down!) We are slow to remember, slow to concentrate, often poor in judgment and we can trace many other failures to our physical weakness.

But in I Corinthians, chapter 15, we read that we shall be raised “in power” (verse 43). The entire man will function in perfect power, and possibly with powers lost when Adam sinned and lost his right to life. One will not have to buffet himself, as Paul did, to bring himself under subjection for every facet of his life shall function in perfect order as he desires it to do. Besides all this, he will be given (by God’s grace, praise His name!) a whole new world in which to live and enjoy fellowship with and service to the creator.

All of which brings us around to the fact that when we become Christians we become a part of this “new creation.” It was never intended that a believer should sit down and wait until Christ comes to begin living this new life. Paul flatly declared that “if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Of course he is laboring in the present corruptible and infirm body, and under adverse conditions, but he has already entered into the creative scheme of God to make him over and fit him for the whole new creation.

Aligning oneself with this purpose of God changes a person’s whole aim in life. The standards of the world – even its attempts at “newness” – no longer appeal. Now there’s the divine standard of a new creature. He is unimpressed by “social status.” He seeks the stature of Christ, who is his example and pattern. The world moves in one direction, the Christian in another. What motivates the doomed and hopeless man in the “unglued” world fails altogether to move the new creature; he is motivated by the Creator’s will. He doesn’t covet gold; he has his heart set on God.

But the world fails to see all this because the church is too busy trying to be like the world! Somehow church leadership too often thinks that the way to win men from the outmoded and perishing world is to imitate the world. The church tries to appeal to sinners by copying the sinner’s songs, his jokes, his ideas of entertainment, and all the rest of his mundane paraphernalia. Christians mistakenly try to impress unbelievers by living like the unbeliever. (or is it possible that all such are really unbelievers, who are only pretending to desire the object of God?)

In one of his books, C. S. Lewis describes the “new men” dotted here and there over the earth – the ones who have really entered into God’s plan – and says he strongly suspects

that they recognize one another immediately and infallibly, across every barrier of color, sex, class, age, and even creeds. “In that way, to become holy is rather like joining a secret society,” he comments.

Another reason this program of making men new is largely unknown to the world is that this total purpose-to have a whole new creation at the day of resurrection-is seldom presented. Instead, the church has been saying that the hope of Christianity is fulfilled at death. You read of men that have died as having “passed to their reward.” The church speaks of men as dying and “going to heaven,,’ as if this were the object of the whole thing. The true Biblical doctrine of a resurrection, a whole new creation (not at death, but at the coming of Christ) is belittled in favor of speculation upon a “spiritual” heaven. But if the reward is to go to heaven at death, then what would be the meaning of a resurrection, or for the new heavens and earth, for that matter? The fact is the resurrection of the body and life in a new creation, including a new earth for righteous people, is everywhere evident in the Bible as the ultimate goal of the Christian.

Tired of the old routine? The old life? This old world? Have faith and patience. God has yet to bring His work to completion. And when He does, His “new creatures” will enjoy a whole new creation. You, too, can be one of the “new people,” but you have to begin NOW. God bless all you who have “put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him” (Col. 3:9-10).

JUST FOR YOU–TH

This gap in understanding between parents and teenage children, this gulf which seemingly no one is supposed to cross, just where did it get started? I don’t suppose we can trace it to the starting point, but perhaps we can find some clues that will help.

For a starter, your parents grew up in a less organized day. We had Boy Scouts and Girl scouts, but for most communities that was about the size of it. If we wanted to play ball, we simply grabbed a glove, stopped by the homes of two or three of the fellows, met at the vacant lot, and the game was on. There were no “sponsors,, no equipment except the ball, bat and glove, no coaches, and nobody around selling soda pop in order to help pay for the grounds. We didn’t play as good a ball as the kids do now days, but everyone got to stay and there were no adults around to tell us how to do it. If we flubbed a play we got no bawling out from dad nor from the coach. And we never worried about being a losing team, because we never had the same team twice in a row and didn’t bother much with scores.

If there weren’t enough for ball, we dug a cave or built a tree-house or invented some other project. When we got too old for caves and tree-houses we figured out some other recreation without the aid of an organization and still managed to stay out of trouble.

I'm not saying that our way "in the old days" was the best way, nor am I saying that the organizations are wrong. What I'm saying is that in your parent's days of youth they were less under the influence of organizations and more under the influence of their parents. The deciding factor as to who played where was more of a direct agreement between parent and child.

But you who are the YOUTH of today are growing up in a world of organizations. Instead of getting direction from home, the tendency is to get it from some organization, either in school or some extra school group. Junior comes home and says, "Mother, our group is supposed to do so-and-so." Just Like that. And mother inwardly thinks, "Says who!" Then trouble begins.

The trouble is that too many people (young and old) do not think there is any authority for a thing unless an organization is behind it. The argument is that it must be good, or the organization wouldn't back it! But just remember that the most powerful organization in the world is the Communist Party, and you wouldn't say it is good, would you?

We need also to remember that the first thing God did with regard to man was to start the "organization" of the home and it is the only truly authoritative organization God ever founded for young people!

So here is a source of conflict and a clue to the lack of "understanding." Parents expect children to make individual decision upon the advice and training the parents give. But too often the youth are waiting for the "official" voice of some organization. This leads to following the crowd, even when the parent knows the crowd to be in the wrong.

The way for a Christian is to take the parental advice and act on the basis of God-given initiative and His revealed Will — not on the so-called "authority" of the group or organization.

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