

*"...having the eyes of your heart enlightened..." Ephesians 1:18*

## Group Meetings Today

If you do not know what group you are in or where you're meeting today, see one of the elders or deacons. The groups are also posted on the bulletin board in the lobby. As usual, there will be no class here tonight and no young peoples' class at the Posey's. We'll resume next week.

## Welcome Visitors!

You are our honored guests and we are pleased that you have chosen to visit us today. Our goal is to do everything according to God's word, including respecting its silence. This is a church of Christ; we are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church and we have no earthly "headquarters." The five elders oversee this work and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily aimed at our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don't understand something, please do not hesitate to ask one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God's word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

**Please fill out a visitor's card and put it in the collection plate. Thank You**

## Schedule

### The Lord's Day

9:30 AM – Classes

**Auditorium: The Gospel**

**13/14: Jesus in the Gospel of John**

10:30 AM – Assembly

Speaking today: David Posey

2 PM Class at the Building

Room 13/14

**Minor Prophets**

5 PM (building)

**No class tonight**

Weekly Young Adults Class

**No class tonight**

Tuesday AM Class (at building, room 13/14)

**I Thesalonians**

10 AM at the Building

Wednesday, 7 PM

**Auditorium: The Gospel**

**13/14: Jesus in the Gospel of John**

Men's Saturday Morning Meeting

7 AM, second Saturday of the month (see Tyler Wade)

## Information

### Website & Online Presence

Visit our website at [www.folsomchurch.com](http://www.folsomchurch.com) for updates and material on current and past classes, and recorded sermons and classes. You will also find a directory of churches on page one. If you are a member of the church here at Folsom, see one of the deacons or elders to inquire about access to the password - protected members section. Find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/folsomchurch>

### Children's Classes

We have classes for children from 18 months and up. Please see the map in the hallway or ask any of the members which room is appropriate for you and/or your child. There are several Bible studies in progress on Sunday afternoon and evening. Check with David Posey if you have questions.

### Restrooms

There are two sets of restrooms: one off the first hallway to the right of the lobby and another at the end of the first hallway to the left. Ask anyone and they'll be happy to point you in the right direction.

### For Small Children

There is a special room for nursing mothers and a separate "cry room" at the rear of the auditorium. You enter them from the first hallway to the right, across from the restrooms.

### View & Junior View

Be sure to pick up a copy of the View and Junior View; both are sent out weekly to our member list and hard copies are printed on Sundays and available in the foyer.

# A Half-Century of Change: Part I

BY AL DIESTELKAMP

[For several years, I have been receiving a helpful little quarterly newsletter entitled, *THINK on These Things*, published by Al Diestelkamp. Articles in the paper always make me think, but in the latest issue, I was especially interested in what brother Diestelkamp has to say about changes that have taken place in the last 50 years or so. I have found his thoughts to be well-balanced and accurate (at least in my, similar, experience). I believe the saying goes, “those who ignore the past are doomed to repeat it,” or something like that.

I have received permission from Al to reprint these

articles, which I will do in the next couple of issues of the *View*. If you would like to subscribe to the paper, contact Al at [aldiestel@gmail.com](mailto:aldiestel@gmail.com) or check out his web page at [www.thinkonthesethings.com](http://www.thinkonthesethings.com). The opinions, of course, are those of the author. If you find something you disagree with, feel free to write brother Diestelkamp, as he invites you to do (see end of article on page 4).]

Former British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli whom is credited with coining the phrase, “Change is inevitable—change is constant.” I think we can all testify to the general truth of this statement; so it should not surprise us that there have been many changes over the past five decades.

In this issue I will share my perspective on changes I have witnessed over the years. It was sixty-five years ago that I was baptized into Christ which qualifies me as a witness to many changes in our world, in the home, and in the church.

Let me begin by stating emphatically that all change is not necessarily bad or necessarily good. However, change is often unsettling to those who do not consider it to be for the better.

One does not have to be very old to be aware of constant changes in the world and our culture. Every generation experiences changes which cause the elderly to look back with favor to “the good old days.” However, lately it seems that the rate of change has picked up speed.

Again, not all the change in the world around us is bad. Even many of us in the older generation would resist having our cell phones taken out of our hands. The ability to communicate with our children and grandchildren via social media and even visit using computer apps such as *FaceTime* is a real blessing. There have also been encouraging changes in some areas of morality. Though there still is room for more improvement, some progress has been made in race relations.

However, along with the good comes evil. The Internet is a voluminous source for Satan’s evil schemes. His false teachers, disguised as “ministers of righteousness” (2 Cor. 11:15), pervert the gospel of Christ and thus deceive the masses. If that’s not enough, the devil floods the Internet with every form of temptation in an effort to take captive the minds of millions.

While the negative changes in our culture have increased at break-neck speed of late, much of this is the result of subtle and gradual changes in past generations. Secular humanism, a philosophy of life which espouses ethical behavior and responsibility without belief in or guidance of deity, has had an adverse effect on our world and contributed to a rise in atheism. Many in the elite scientific and academic communities have embraced this philosophy and promoted it in every way possible.

With God “out of the way” and humanity viewed as

the ultimate authority, there is no limit to the decline in societal values and morality. Without an unchangeable source of authority, “truth” and “morality” are as changeable as society itself.

The result is a set of “standards” based on majority-rule or the current thoughts of people in positions of power or influence. The so-called “sexual revolution” of the 1960’s and the accompanying “women’s liberation movement” paved the way for much of the moral decline in our nation.

Many of the negative changes we have witnessed in society have resulted from reliance on the thoughts of academia, legislators, the Supreme Court, or celebrities. I will not attempt to name all the specific negative changes in society over my lifetime or in just the past fifty years, but the following are some of the most significant:

**Family breakdown:** Displacement of the intact family of a married father and mother as the preferred and ideal home arrangement is one of the most disturbing changes. Materialism or the desire for “fulfillment” has taken mothers *and* fathers out of the home at critical times in the lives of children. Easy, no-fault divorce and so-called alternative lifestyles have left children without a father or a mother.

**Moral decline:** Social acceptance of fornication, adultery, homosexuality, and their public and pornographic portrayal has increased. The entertainment industry plays a significant part in “normalizing” these sins. The Bible and all who dare to speak against these sins are often maligned in the media and courts of public opinion.

**Devalue of life:** Induced abortion, which once was a crime in our nation, has since been declared a “constitutional right” by the U.S. Supreme Court, ignoring the clear statements in God’s Word declaring that those who “shed innocent blood” are an abomination to the Lord (Prov. 6:16-17).

Indeed, we live in a changing world. The only hope for reversing the negative changes is through the gospel of Christ. Let’s not sell the gospel short! It has the power to change hearts, lives, and nations, but any such changes must start with us.

What follows are some changes we have seen in the past half-century.

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## Note from the author:

“Readers may be happy to learn that when I revealed my intent to write about change, one of my children volunteered to run my articles through her “Old Fuddy-Duddy filter” before publishing.

## **Conviction & Lifestyle Changes Among Brethren**

I think it's safe to say that our reliance on the Word of God without any man-made written creed will inevitably result in differences in our understandings and applications of biblical teaching. Any differences we have among ourselves are not the fault of the revealed Word but a result of our own interpretations of it.

We hold firmly to the principle that the Scriptures are inspired of God and "able to completely equip us for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Unlike many in the religious world, we reject the idea that the gospel message changes with the times. Therefore, any changes in doctrinal positions must be due only to our own previous misunderstandings of the Holy Spirit-inspired text.

The changes discussed in this article are some which I consider to be concerning. Some are subtle changes in long-standing doctrinal positions generally held by brethren, and some are less restrictive applications of moral and lifestyle matters.

### ***Local Loyalty & Commitment***

Of concern to me is what I view as a decline in personal loyalty and commitment to the local congregation. It doesn't seem to take much for some to excuse themselves from worship. What doesn't keep them away from work, school, or fun activities will often prevent them from being present for assemblies of the saints. Also, the Lord's day has become a convenient day for an impromptu family outing or for the beginning or end of a vacation. Some don't bother to seek out a faithful congregation when traveling away from home. In today's economy, most families' incomes don't vary significantly which means if members are giving "as prospered," the local church could expect its income from offerings to be consistent. Many brethren are good about making up their contributions after being away, but many others are not.

### ***Instrumental Music in Worship***

Churches of Christ are well known for insistence on a cappella music in worship. Yet now more than ever I hear brethren defending the use of musical instruments in worship. It's not that they want to add it to the assembled worship, but they don't see it as unscriptural. There have always been some among us who were unable to fully accept the opposition to this practice but were willing to keep silent on the matter for the sake of unity. I can respect this; but my fear is that if teaching on this subject is not done, we will raise a future generation who will actively advocate for it and force division once again.

### ***One True Church***

When some of our own leave our midst and join themselves to churches that fail to teach the pure gospel concerning salvation (besides many other digressions), some brethren are resistant to any disciplinary action as an attempt to win them back. Sometimes they will even say, "There are Christians in many churches" and defend the choice to have

fellowship with error. It may be technically true that there are Christians in such churches, but that's not where they belong! There are many places where you may find Christians where they ought not be.

### ***Moderate Drinking***

There was a time when Christians were known for abstinence from the social and recreational use of alcoholic beverages. While I think that most brethren abstain and even oppose such, there seem to be growing numbers who defend the practice. The argument offered is usually that the biblical prohibition is of drunkenness—not moderate drinking. Jesus' first "sign" in turning water into wine is offered as proof. What's interesting to me is that they use this argument to condone not only wine but beer and other intoxicating drinks. They seldom quote the various warnings of wisdom that paint all intoxicating drinks in a negative light (i.e., Prov. 20:1).

### ***Modest Attire Issues***

With the constant changes in dress and modesty in society in general, the issue of what is modest and what is not has long been an issue of debate among brethren. Generally, Christians tend to adjust their standards of modesty slightly behind the world. Most Christians don't dress in the most provocative manner but adopt a less noticeable style. What is quite obvious to us "older" folk is that what now seems to be quite acceptable among Christians was once considered immodest. I recall once in my childhood that my family was invited to a picnic in a public park with Christians we didn't know personally. When one of us asked how we would know which group was "ours," my dad said, "by the way they're dressed." Today, in some cases this is not as clear an indicator.

The change in modesty standards among Christians is not limited to leisurewear. On *Facebook*, it is not unusual to see pictures of wedding attire that is quite revealing. Apparently, some Christians must think that special occasions are exempt from chaste attire.

### ***Dancing***

Another change that is evident is attitudes toward dancing. Now, I must make clear what most people already know: I'm not talking about all dancing (i.e., for joy, as in the Bible), but about men and women, boys and girls, who are not married to each another, engaging in the sexually provocative kind of dancing that is common at high school proms and formal events.

In the past, concerned Christians often would plan wholesome social events for teenagers in their area as an alternative to the prom. In recent years, some have quit hosting such events after they realized that many of the young people were happy to attend the alternative event, but it didn't deter them from attending the prom.

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