

The business of the Church!

Most of our time spent at board, zone, presbytery and conference meetings is dedicated to resolving the practical issues of the Institute we are members of rather than to work on our understanding of the spiritual values the members of a church hunger for. That is good for the institute. It is not so good for the members of the church. How to change this!?

We have to start realizing and admitting that Christianity as it exists today demands an overhaul in order to get rid of the accrued mistranslations and misinterpretations which obscure the real Christian message. To even suggest this will raise a wall of resistance. That however ought not to deter us. I refer you to the time the powers that be decided that the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel needed restoring. The resistance was vocal and loud. Despite that resistance the job got done and we all enjoy the recovered splendour of Michelangelo's paintings.

Similarly today, regardless of the resistance, we need to scrape the layers of mistranslations and misinterpretations off the Bible books. Once that is done we can stand back and glory in the beauty and majesty of the actual

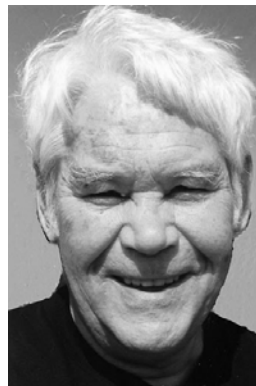
message God wanted us to have and, for us, this message is clearest in the actions and deeds of Jesus the Christ. Again the question is how to proceed? The answer is found in the many books which are written on the subject.

In order to remove any roadblocks from God's work, the most constructive thing we can do for our people, in my opinion, is to shift from our traditional way of referring to humanity as a "fallen race" to a new tradition of referring to humanity as part of God's family and therefore God's heirs. My position is that this shift will produce the result of the paradigm shift hoped for.

Shalom!

1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.



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Thunder Bay

Host to General Council 39,
Delegates and Visitors,
Come, rest awhile and
be transformed!



www.shekinah-jwh.ca



Delegates and Visitors to General Council 2006

Greetings!

During the 40-odd years that I have been a member of the United Church of Canada, I have attended several GC's and since this is my hometown and I am rather excited about the agenda, I take this opportunity to share some of my excitement with you.

The reason I am so excited about this agenda is above all because of the effort to produce a new Statement of Faith, which Thunder Bay had a hand in launching. I am excited because a shift from a "Belief-Centred Paradigm" to a "Transformation-Centred Paradigm" is being hinted at. I am excited because the UC of C is informing its readers that about one-third of its agenda will be dedicated to determining the purpose of the Church, and finally I am excited because a local group of enthusiasts (lay and clergy) have worked their way through the DVD program "Living the Questions" in preparation for presentations we want to make in our congregations, starting next church year.

New Statement of Faith

At the Spring meeting of 2000 AD Cambrian Presbytery adopted, with nary a dissenting vote, the motion to petition GC 2000 to start work on an up-to-date Statement of Faith that reflected the contemporary knowledge of our times and that is presented in the language of the common person. The motion moved up the ladder to Man-N.W.O conference and was adopted there also without amendments. Today, anybody who is interested can download the "Song of Faith" from my website @ <http://shekinah-jwh.ca/links.htm>

Although this document is not similar to the statements of faith we are used to, it is a marvel as it contains material galore to start studying about God, Creation, Humanity, the Fall, the broken relationship God-Humanity, Jesus, (self)-Sacrifice, Resurrection, Ascension and more!

The most significant issue I detected is the move, intended or not, away from a traditional Trinitarian formula into an acknowledgment of a newly emerging relationship God-Everything.

From Belief-Centred to Transformation-Centred

From one way of seeing things to another... that is what it means to move from one paradigm to another. The movement from one world view to another is treated at length in the book, "The Emerging Christian Way". Having given it considerable thought, I haven't been able to distance myself from the image of a tsunami being formed by the movement of tectonic plates. Only the "Plates" I refer to are of a spiritual nature.

We are all aware of the fact that the collision of tectonic plates release humongous forces that reshape the landscape for better and for worse. The Himalayas were build that way.

Then what of the so-called religious-spiritual plates? I believe them to be a metaphor for the birth of Jesus and other religious leaders and we all know how much good as well as evil those births have caused. And now we are warned that a new Christianity is emerging. Is that for the good or for the bad, and how do we prepare for the accompanying events?