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# The Next 50 Years Of The Church

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# THE NEXT 50 YEARS OF THE CHURCH

I. None of us know for certainty the future.

A. Sorry, "I'd change doctors."

B. Our uncertainty born of:

1. Human inability.

Matt. 6:27 "Which of you by taking thought"

Matt. 6:31 "Therefore take no thought saying..."

2. Return of Christ

I Thess. 5:2 "For yourselves know perfectly"

:6 "Let us not sleep ad do others"

C. But as long as the promises of God stand, some things I know.

II. That which is certain.

A. Christ and the church will be there.

Matt. 16:13 "When Jesus came into the..."

Heb. 12:28 "Wherefore we receive a king.."

Luke 8:11 "Seed is the word."

B. Battle with sin be severe.

Eph. 6:13 "Wherefore take unto you..."

Eph. 6:12 "For we wrestle not against..."

C. But righteousness will win.

2 Pet. 2:9 "The Lord knoweth how..."

I John 4:4 "Greater is he that is in you..."

D. Prayer will not have lost its potency.

Phil. 1:19 "I know that this shall turn to.."

- E. Fellowship and sharing will triumph.
  - 1. Love powerful.
  - 2. Burdens borne.

Gal. 6:2 "Bear ye one another's burdens."

- F. Christ's return will be closer than ever.

John 14:1 "Let not your heart be troubled."

III. I predict the sea wall of truth will be assaulted by many waves.

- A. Satan is the father of lies.

John 8:44

- 1. He'll open new assaults.
- 2. God is dead--school prayers.
  - a) Abortion
  - b) Homosexuality
  - c) Live-in marriages
  - d) Obscenity--120% increase in murder by 18-20 year olds.
  - e) Pornography
  - f) Children sue parents.
  - g) Third wave of Pentecostalism Wumber illustration.
  - h) Pragmatism
  - i) Religion marginal and private--no impact on society yet crime is every year--last 25.
- 3. Conservatism cursed.
  - a) Threat to pluralism
  - b) Legalistic

- c) In throes tradition
- d) Robs of Freedom
- e) Post article

B. Worship patters will vary.

1. Spontaneous, unorganized, open will be vogue for awhile.
  - a) Don't embrace error.
  - b) Don't evidence stuffy superiority. (Family that maintains no balance lose their children).
2. Preaching will suffer and will pay.
  - a) "Dance with the one that brought you."
  - b) Called to proclaim, not grow.

- Acts 2:47 "And the Lord added to the.."
- Zech. 4:6 "Not by might nor by power but"
- John 6:63 "The words that I speak are spirit."
- John 17:17 "Santify them through thy truth."
- Heb. 4:12 "For the word of God is quick and powerful..."
- I Pet. 1:23 "Being born again, not of corruptible seed..."
- I Cor. 1:22-24 "Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom."
- Isa. 55:10-11 "For as the rain cometh..."

- 3. We must call for a radical life, thought, attitude change, else less than a civic club.
- 4. I can tolerate some music--but not error in words.
- 5. Proclaim:
  - a) Hell
  - b) Exclusivity of Christ
  - c) Atonement
  - d) Obedience
  - e) Righteousness--moral code essential
  - f) Judgment
- 6. Struggle for minds.

Hosea 4:6 "My people destroyed without understanding come to ruin."

- 7. Every people makes a difference.
- 8. Spring reconciliation, new wine, old skins--catch words.

C. Growth mania will come.

- 1. 90% of all churches 200 or under.
- 2. 1970--100 mega churches--1,000  
1990 - 4,000 mega churches
- 3. 100,000 close this decade
  - a) 65% Americans in 1962 believe Bible true.
  - b) 1992 - 32% do
  - c) 50% fear fundemenalism
- 4. 100 gain 1.7 members  
200 gain 3 members  
Replace the dead

5. Reshuffle the saints.
  6. Government on the right track, only problem the train isn't moving
- D. To grow.
1. Reach folk at crucial time: marriage, birth, death.
  2. Good nursery, child care
  3. Plenty of parking
  4. Friendly
  5. Attractive bulletins
  6. Preaching to needs (even went to sleep on Paul).
  7. Leadership
  8. Vigorous, moving worship
  9. Sound preaching
  10. Wooden be in condition, play as a team, full court, speed.
- E. Lines drawn are fuzzy.
1. Charity's cousin is compromise.
  2. Absolutism question: way right, not wrong--67% Americans say no such thing.
  3. Marriage and latch key kids vulnerable.
  4. Highest % incarceration per capita of any nation.
- F. Identity Questioned
1. Predenominational Christianity forgotten.
  2. Sectarianism "I'm a church of Christ."

- 3. Church organizations strained.
  - a) Elders vs. democracy.
  - b) Embrace women.
  - c) Preachers as pastors.
  - d) Shepherds yes but also rodless.

G. Para church

- 1. Boards and budgets stronger than local churches.
- 2. Adv. skills greater
- 3. Camps replace meetings.

IV. But we'll be here by grace of God.

- A. Take our risk.
- B. Lay our plans.
- C. Preach his gospel.
- D. Trust God for increase.

# IMPRIMIS

Because Ideas Have Cons

Chuck Colson

In February of 1993, the *Washington Post* featured a front-page article that characterized evangelical Christians as “largely poor, uneducated, and easy to command.” If a journalist said that about any other group in America, he would be fired on the spot, but the *Post* didn’t fire anyone. It merely expressed surprise that many readers found the description offensive. A few days later, one of the bemused editors explained that they felt they were simply printing something that is “universally accented”