

## ***Paradigm Shift*** by John Woodward

The change of perspective which occurs when one begins to appropriate Christ as life can be described as a "paradigm shift".

A writer on organizational leadership explains this concept. "The term paradigm shift was introduced by Thomas Kuhn in his highly influential landmark book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn shows how almost every significant break-through in the field of scientific endeavor is first a break with tradition, with old ways of thinking, with old paradigms. For Ptolemy, the great Egyptian astronomer, the earth was the center of the universe. But Copernicus created a paradigm shift, and a great deal of resistance and persecution as well, by placing the sun at the center. Suddenly, everything took on a different interpretation . . . Whether they are instantaneous or developmental, paradigm shifts move us from one way of seeing the world to another. And those shifts create powerful change. . . The more aware we are of our basic paradigms, maps, or assumptions, and the extent to which we have been influenced by our experience the more we can take responsibility for those paradigms, examine them, (and) test them against reality. . .[1]

How does the believer's perspective change through grasping "the Exchanged Life"? Here are a few "shifts. Our perspective also needs to change:

\*regarding resources for living: *self effort shifts to empowerment by the Holy Spirit*. (Gal 3:3);

\*regarding perception of personal identity: *feelings and achievements-based identity shifts to a spiritual and Christ-centered identity* (Eph 2:6,10);

\*regarding acceptance by God: *performance-based acceptance shifts to grace-based acceptance* (Eph 1:6);

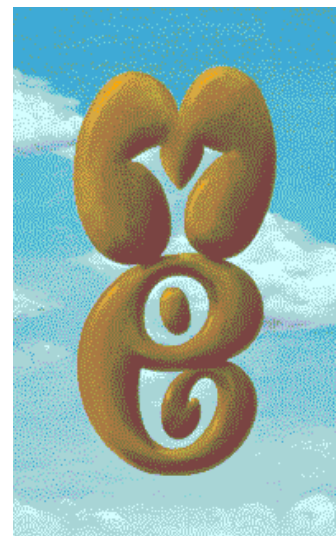
\*regarding work: *doing in order to be shifts to being in order to do* (Col 2:6);

\*regarding self-worth: self -worth based on success by the world's standards shifts to *self-worth based on being created in God's image and redeemed by Christ's precious blood* (Gen 1:26,27; 1 Pet 1:18,19).

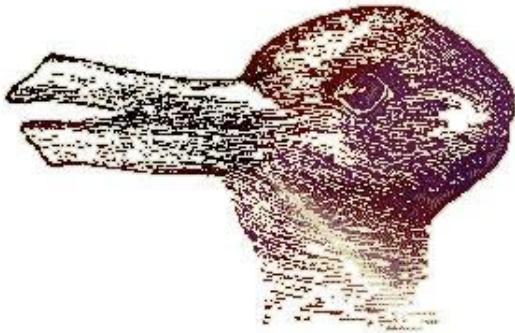
\*regarding holiness. The believer is no longer just a 'sinner saved by grace', rather *a saint who sometimes sins* (1 Cor 1:2; 6:11)

\*regarding ministry. The believer does not primarily 'work for the Lord', but rather *cooperates with God* through His strength and guidance (Gal 2:8).

\*regarding Christ's offices. Christ is not only Savior and Lord, but *Savior, Lord, and Life* (Rom 5:10).



\*regarding God's law as a means of righteous conduct. The believer's resource for godliness is not primarily an external code of rules, but rather *the spiritually prompted, internal principle of the law of love* (Rom 7:5,6; 13:8-10).



The Galatians 2:20 paradigm is not grasped by biblical and theological study alone; it is revealed by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God." (1 Cor 2:12). Biblical knowledge is not the same as biblical insight.. How the Lord must yearn for us us to appreciate the gracious blessings of life in and through Christ!

British preacher, Stephen Olford observed,

The Avis philosophy ('We try harder') is fatal in the Christian life. We do not live the Christ-life by trying, but rather by trusting. When we try, it is self-effort, and we are bewitched; when we trust, it is Spirit-effort, and we are blessed.

Olford went on to recall his "paradigm shift" about the abundant life in Christ:

I recall when this truth became a reality in personal experience. I had already surrendered my life to Jesus Christ for the Christian ministry. While I waited to start my theological training, I spent weekends preaching in local churches. Every time I opened my mouth to speak, I was haunted by the memory of past defeats. Instead of turning to the Lord for deliverance, I tried to conquer the problem by self-effort. The result was disastrous! Instead of being liberated I was paralyzed. "In desperation I went to hear a missionary on furlough give a series of studies on Romans. Expounding chapter 6, he paused to ask this question, 'Is there someone here who is haunted by his past and defeated in his witness?' I knew God was speaking to me, so I listened the more intently. Then he continued, 'Do you know that such introspection is a violation of the principle of grace? God has condemned, crucified, and buried your 'old self.' What right have you to visit the cemetery of your moral past and dig up the bones? Accept by faith what God has done and trust the Holy Spirit to liberate you to live the resurrection life in Christ.' That was all I needed. I saw the foolishness and futility of self-effort, and the grace of God set me free!" [2]

Can you say "amen" to Dr. Olford's wonderful discovery? Is your perception of the Christian life humanistic and feelings-based, or biblical and Christ-centered? Let us continue under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God as He unveils further riches of God's glorious provision for us in Christ.



*We praise You O God for the full forgiveness we have through the Cross of Christ. Deliver us from our own feeble attempts to gain victory, and shift our perspective to fully appropriate Christ's saving life. For Jesus' sake, amen.*

[1] Stephen Covey, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, p.28,29.

[2] Stephen Olford, *Not I, But Christ*, p. 136.

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