

YOU ARE INVITED: A reception is being planned for me in New Braunfels. Not having been back since I moved to Oregon ten years ago, I am eager to see former friends again and to meet new ones. It will be a come-and-go reception on Sunday, October 24 from 2:00 to 5:00 in the fellowship room of the Church of Christ. Take the Walnut Street Exit of IH-35 and go three blocks toward San Antonio. So, come along! Tell others who may be interested for no mailout invitations are being sent. More info next week, or call Brad and Kay Bradfute: 1-830-625-4273.

FR 234

Free To Change: Preface

(This preface to "*Free To Change*," with slight revisions, was written fourteen years ago. I think it is worth reading again. All who are so fearful of "change agents" may find some relief by pondering it. I am currently re-reading the book. I think you should also!)

Why change? Why unsettle your mind? Why rock the boat? Without change there can be no growth!

Change for the sake of change is of questionable value, but change is necessary for maturing. Even in acceptable procedures like the order of assemblies, variations may serve to avoid letting those methods take on the force of law.

Although physical development is mostly involuntary, it can be encouraged or restricted in some ways. Spiritual growth must be sought voluntarily. Progress in broadening our knowledge and understanding may be limited by lack of incentive. It may be impeded by illiteracy, misdirection, lack of time, and other circumstantial factors. It may be blocked by prejudice and fear. It is resisted by one who thinks he or she is already fully mature in knowledge and spirituality. These factors can imprison and enslave us by restricting our freedom to change.

Change can be stifled and frustrated by fears of cutting loose from ideas in which we have found comfort and security. We dislike being the cause of controversy. We dread the rejection, misrepresentation, and abuse that leaders suffer. We anticipate with fright the loss of vested interests -- status, role, reputation, income. We have to be the "good ol' boy" to keep our place.

When we are supported by the system, we must support the system and, as long as we must please a system, we are not free.

Once a person can release himself or herself from these tension traps, there is a new world of discovery ahead to explore. One may then go to the Scriptures with nothing to prove and no apprehension as to what will be learned. Bible reading becomes a new, exciting, and refreshing experience. It brings one much closer to God even though misguided fellow-disciples may tend to reject the freed one. These friends may think that one is reacting to some bitterness or disappointment, or is being misled by others. They find it hard to believe that one is just being honest with self.

Without intellectual honesty, one is not free to change. Honesty is not demonstrated by parroting the party line, but it is seen in the expanding to the dimensions of new-found truth.

The following paragraph entitled "*The Love Of Truth*" by W. E. H. Lecky in *The History of European Morals*, page 189 sent to me by Bob Gleaves, of Brentwood, Tennessee:

"To love truth sincerely means to pursue it with an earnest, conscientious, unflagging zeal. It means to be prepared to follow the light of evidence even to the most unwelcome conclusions, to labor earnestly to emancipate the mind from early prejudices, to resist the current of desires and the refracting influence of the passions, to proportion on all occasions conviction to evidence, and to be ready, if need be, to exchange the calm of assurance for all the suffering of a perplexed and disturbed mind. To do this is very difficult and very painful, but it is clearly involved in the notion of earnest love of truth."

In order to follow truth, one must be free to change.

Most of the essays in this collection were published in Restoration Review, Ensign, The Examiner, One Body, or Refreshing Waters. They are not all on the subject of change, but their challenge to restudy various aspects of our beliefs should bring about profitable change and growth.

In our freedom to change, let us be supportive of each other so as to encourage full growth in Christ.

(Cecil Hook: August 2004)

Talkin' Texas: When Texas became an independent nation and then a state, it claimed the Rio Grande as its southern and western borders. That included Santa Fe and the western half of New Mexico territory. It was disputed. Due to the conflict over slavery, the Southern States backed Texas' claim and the North opposed it. The inhabitants voted for rejection of slavery and remaining in the Territory of New Mexico. An agreement finally conceded it to the Territory because Texas was already so immense.