

SEVEN GLOBAL SHIFTS

There are some significant global shifts taking place in the church today. A global shift occurs when the Holy Spirit brings a new and clearer understanding of Biblical truth to the worldwide church with a resultant change of behaviour. The Bible says that we should understand the times and seasons in which we live. I do not pretend to know every shift taking place, but some I am aware of are:

1. The shift from church to Kingdom – seeing beyond the local church and viewing all sectors of society as important to God. The local church becomes an agent of the Kingdom and releases its people to bring God's presence and grace into all the places they go. The church is no longer seen as an end in itself but as the engine of the Kingdom to bring transformation in all spheres of life.

2. The shift from tithing to stewardship – it is not enough to give ten percent or more of our income but we also need to steward wisely the other ninety percent. Then God can entrust us with many more resources to use. People give and expect God to bless them, but if they are careless stewards of what remains, why should he? Generous giving and thrifty living are the secrets of a prosperous life.

3. The shift from programmes to presence – all over the world the Holy Spirit is creating hunger for the presence of God. Church programs and structured meetings are good, but God's presence is better. In fact it's not either/or but both/and. Churches that pursue the supernatural without some structure and order may become sloppy. Jellyfish have no skeletal structure and they wobble all over the place! Conversely, some churches are so programmed, that people ask, *"Is this all there is? Is it just the same old, same old all the time?"* And they are not asking in a narcissistic way but out of hunger. God wants to create churches that have structure, excellence, and the manifest presence and power of God!

4. The shift from routine to intimacy – we are called to relationship not religious routine. When my wife and I were courting I would email, text, phone, write letters and travel distances to see her. It was not an obligatory routine, but the joy of growing love and intimacy. God is looking for people who delight in Him and who allow willing spirits to overcome weak flesh so that spiritual disciplines are a joy not an obligation. Its not about formalism – it's about relationship with him.

5. The shift from being orphans to being sons/daughters – orphans see God as a master; sons see him as a loving Father. Orphans live by the love of the law; sons live by the law of love. Orphans must be holy to keep God from getting angry; sons want to be holy because they don't want anything to hinder intimacy with him. The Holy Spirit is revealing God as Father as never before, which will produce a generation of believers who will be spiritual fathers and mothers to the many fatherless in society today.

6. The shift from striving to rest – God is shifting us from driven, performance-based Christianity to Spirit-led, at-rest Christianity. Rest comes from the revelation of sonship – we don't need to perform to be accepted. Rather we rest in God's favour and love because Jesus has purchased these for us on the cross. From that position, we serve him and ministry becomes more effortless. We work from rest, not merely rest from work. Contemplative prayer (called 'soaking' by some), once confined to monastic orders and historic churches, is making a comeback because of this reason.

7. The shift from pastoral to apostolic anointing –Pastorally anointed churches are concerned with church growth and health. Apostolically anointed churches are concerned not only with church growth and health, but also with transformation of a community, city, nation, and nations. Need both – the first has dominated. We have to get an apostolic mindset- think transformation rather than just having my needs met. Think carrying Kingdom life wherever you go. There needs to be a return to the apostolic pattern of **Rom. 15:18-19**.

Conclusion

Seasons of shift can be uncomfortable as we leave the familiar and comfortable and embrace the new. E.g. shifting house – some things no longer fit or suit. Get rid of them or store them. Change can be painful, but its worth it in the end. God is forming a radiant bride in the earth for his Son, a bride that will accurately reflect him to the world. Let's pray that we move with him into this new season in history.