SOME POSITIVE PERSONAL CHANGES AMONG BRETHREN

By Al Diestelkamp

I regret that the space available on this page will permit me to enumerate only a few of the positive changes that I have observed over the past fifty years in the personal and spiritual lives of brethren.

Let me preface this by pointing out that, just as my list of negative changes cannot be attributed to all Christians, we cannot claim that the positive changes have been universally adopted.

Many of the positive changes evident in the churches would not have happened without some changes in the attitudes and personal lives of the brethren.

We’ve already noted improvement in local churches with regard to racial issues. This could only have happened as a result of misguided Christians coming to their senses and changing their attitudes toward those of different races and ethnic groups.

The progress regarding the appointment of elders has required positive changes in the personal lives of men who desire the work and set out to prepare for it. It also has required the wives and children of these men to be supportive of their desire to serve.

We noted that churches are doing better now in providing adequate financial support of preachers than they did in earlier times. This improvement is mostly due to members recognizing the preacher as a co-worker who is “worthy of his wages” (1 Tim. 5:18) rather than as an employee.

There have been positive changes in “one-another” relationships. I see many Christians who are ready, willing, and able to lend a hand to brothers and sisters who have needs. There seems to be a greater concern for the welfare of others and a desire to spend time together. Additionally, many brethren are ready to help beyond the needs of fellow Christians when there are misfortunes in the lives of their neighbors and of strangers (Gal. 6:10).

It seems to me that there has been an important improvement among fathers of younger generations. Many of them are more personally involved with their children, both socially and spiritually, producing a brighter future for the cause of Christ.

Many parents are taking a more hands-on approach to the education of their children by either home schooling them or closely monitoring what is being taught in their schools. Parents are also appropriately limiting and filtering what is accessed on the Internet and television.

Our young people, especially those of high school and college ages, seem more interested in additional spiritual activities outside the church assemblies. They are more likely to plan or attend devotions than they were years ago. They also are more likely to invite their non-Christian friends to these events or offer to have personal Bible studies with them.

The younger generations are also less likely to believe something simply because their parents do. Parents might find this somewhat frightening, but it is necessary for their children to develop their own faith. After all, no one will stand in the final judgment before their parents, and no one will successfully appeal to the Lord on the basis of his or her parent’s faith.

I believe it is good that today’s brethren are less likely to be tradition bound and, therefore, more willing to accept beneficial changes in how things are accomplished as long as the “new” ways are within God’s authority.

Finally, perhaps there is even justification for giving a “high five” to us older folk for not *always* being “old fuddy-duddies.”