

Hope in this time of transition!

by Irene Fournier

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Transition is defined as “a passing from one condition, form, stage, activity, place, etc. to another; the period of such passing.” Because the church is a living organism we are perpetually undergoing change, growth, and transition. This is not a new phenomenon to us, but it is often an uncomfortable one and one that causes us to be stretched, sometimes beyond what we think we can endure. In George Warnock’s book “Evening and Morning” he speaks in great detail regarding transition. He focuses on how we are constantly entering transition periods where the Lord is taking us out of our old ways and into His new ways. During these transition periods we often become perplexed and confused. We hesitate to let go of the old until we firmly have the new in our sight and in our grasp. We know we want the new things of God but we are often held back by fear and cannot step forward in confidence in a way that is unknown to us and seen only by faith. We are human beings prone to desiring what is tangible. In Luke 5:39 the Scripture reveals to us that we are reluctant to let go of our old wine that we have been drinking for years. “And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, the old is better.” But verses 36-38 make known to us the Lord’s heart regarding this reluctance. “Then He spoke a parable to them: No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was taken out of the new does not match the old. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved.” We must come to a place of **trust** in our Heavenly Father that He knows when it’s time for new wine to be poured into new wineskins! Hebrews 10:9 assures us “...**He** takes away the first that He may **establish the second.**” When the Lord is taking away from us, it is always because in His eternal plan and infinite wisdom He has something better for us. He took away the old covenant that He might establish the new! He took from Paul all of his spiritual pedigree, including being “a Hebrew of the Hebrews,” being blameless in and having his own righteousness in the law, having great zeal and great confidence in the flesh, to a place of counting all those things as dung that He might gain Christ and the righteousness that is through faith in Christ! That’s quite a transition! He took Jesus Christ, walking as the son of man here on earth, away so that the disciples, and all who would believe on His Name, might experience Him in even greater measure as spoken in John 14:28 & 29: “You have heard Me say to you, I am going away and coming back to you. If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, I am going to the Father, for My Father is greater than I. And now **I have told you** before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe.”

In my opinion and level of understanding, this hour of the church's transition is one that includes:

- ❖ A change in the form, or structure, of the church
- ❖ A transition from being a largely "pastoral church" to becoming an "apostolic/prophetic church" with all of the gift ministries and body ministries functioning
- ❖ A transition from "occupying" in the church age to ruling and reigning with Him in the "kingdom age"
- ❖ A transition from leaders going beyond "networking" and having "associations" in a city to truly establishing city-wide eldership or presbytery
- ❖ A transition from sin consciousness to experientially knowing the imputed righteousness of Christ He has clothed us with
- ❖ A transition from "my ministry" focus to the "ministry of Jesus Christ" and of the "one Body"
- ❖ A transition from church programs, traditions, and leaders doing what is right in their own eyes to bodies that are pursuing the eternal vision of God and coming into greater obedience to His ways and purposes, operating according to His revealed pattern in all aspects of the ministry
- ❖ A transition from being children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine to those that are growing up into the fullness of Him, into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, the Pattern Son

In our transition times the Lord may be taking away from us things that were once a glory and a beauty to our lives and/or ministries, even that which may have been a source of blessing to others. We knew that this particular way was of God. We knew that God was moving mightily by His Spirit. What happened? Perhaps God is preparing to lead His people on to greater fullness, to a greater measure of the inheritance, to a greater involvement in the realm of the Divine will, and therefore He is drying up the springs of former blessing in order to **encourage us to move on** to the new and fresh springs with Him. We may have even felt that these circumstances were the result of some satanic influence that was trying to rob us of the blessings and promises of God. We may have been unable to recognize that it was a Divine influence that was urging us to move forward to greater depths in God! He was taking away the former only to give us the latter with its greater glory!

We are becoming a church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Throughout the centuries the church has been involved in times of restoration. In the 1700's the church experienced the holiness movement, in the 1800's the faith healing movement, in the early 1900's the Pentecostal movement, in the mid 1900's the latter rain movement, in

the latter 1900's the prophetic movement and now in the beginning of this century we are hearing about and experiencing, in some measure, the restoration of the apostolic ministry to the church and the message of the LORD restoring His pattern to the church.

The Lord wants to renew our minds, to transform us, to give us a new mindset so that we may be free from sadness, disappointment, disillusionment, and depression over the past, and even the current state of the church, that we be not robbed of our faith for what is coming or become immobilized by our unbelief or grief of heart so that we cannot participate and co-labor with the LORD in the fulfillment of all He has promised! Haggai 2:3,4, & 9 states, "Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing? Yet now, be strong, Zerubbabel, says the LORD; and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and **be strong**, all you people of the land, says the LORD, and work; for **I am with you**, says the LORD of hosts. The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, says the LORD of hosts." Isaiah 43:18 & 19: "Do not remember the former things nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; **shall you not know it?** I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." Again, in John 14:29, remember what Jesus said to His disciples: "And now **I have told you before** it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe." We must not allow the enemy to cause us to be overcome by sadness, by remorse, by longings for the "good old days", by fear that we cannot know what is ahead in God's plan, by unbelief at the magnitude of the work ahead! He would like nothing more than to confuse, to paralyze, and to immobilize us in this crucial hour of the church's transition into the pattern set forth in Scripture!

The Father gives us His wisdom for traveling through these transition times. In addition to the Scriptures above, He speaks to us in Isaiah 44:3: "For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, and My blessing on your offspring." We must believe that our dryness, our thirst, our seeming emptiness, is really a promise from the LORD that He will pour His water on us, He will satisfy our thirst, and He will fulfill the longings we have for Him and for His kingdom to fully come on this earth! We must believe that He is only taking away the first, or the former things, that He might establish the second, the new things He has promised. We must obey the admonition of Romans 12:12 to be "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation {testing}, continuing steadfastly in prayer." We must not dwell on or overly grieve concerning what God was doing, but look forward and begin to appropriate by faith the new workings of the Holy Spirit. We must believe

the promise of Isaiah 66:9: “Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery? Says the LORD. Shall I who cause delivery shut up the womb? Says your God.”

Another pitfall that we want to avoid during our transition time is that of becoming impatient and moving out in the flesh to make something happen. We want to avoid a “self-start.” The Old Testament teaches us this principle quite clearly through the account of Moses on the mount receiving the law and the impatience of the people that compelled them to enter into the sin of idolatry with the golden calf. Abraham and Sarah learned this lesson with the promise of the heir and the moving out in the flesh to bring forth Ishmael. Far better for us that we wait upon the LORD to receive renewed strength and endurance and to receive the revelation and strategy He wants to reveal to us in this hour. Isaiah 30:15: “For thus says the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel: In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength...” Isaiah 49:23: “...For they shall not be ashamed who wait for Me.” Psalm 25:1-5: “To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in You; let me not be ashamed; let not my enemies triumph over me; indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed; let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause. Show me Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day.”

God’s Word speaks of a divine pattern, of proper alignment, of the Head being joined to the Body so that the intercessions of Christ may be fulfilled and the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. Exodus 25:8 & 9: “And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it.” Hebrews 8:5: “...see that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.” I Chronicles 28:11-13, 19: “Then David gave his son Solomon the pattern {plans/details} for the vestibule, its houses, its treasuries, its upper chambers, its inner chambers, and the place of the mercy seat; and the pattern {plans/details} for all that he had **by the Spirit**, of the courts of the house of the LORD, of all the chambers all around, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries for the dedicated things; also for the division of the priests and the Levites, for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the articles of service in the house of the LORD...All this, said David, the LORD made me understand in writing, by His hand upon me, all the works of these plans {pattern/details}.” Pattern is the Hebrew word “tabniyth” [tab neeth] meaning “structure, a model, resemblance, figure, form, likeness, pattern, similitude.”

Would the LORD give Moses the pattern for the tabernacle in the wilderness, David the pattern for Solomon’s temple, the early apostles the wisdom and authority to co-labor

with Him in the building of the early church and not give the apostolic, the prophetic, the five-fold ministers, the one corporate man of the last day church the illumination to see the revealed pattern in His Word, the plans, and the details to restructure and to build this last day church? Remember Isaiah 43:19 that we just read "...I will do a new thing...**shall you not know it?**..." Isaiah 42:9: "Behold, the former things have come to pass, and **new things I declare**; before they spring forth **I tell you** of them." The Word promises us that our God never changes. Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever." James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning."

Furthermore, the New Testament promises us that God has given foundation-laying, true temple-building, mystery of God revealing wisdom to His own in these last days. Ephesians 3:1-5: "For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles – if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that **by revelation He made known** to me the mystery (as I wrote before in a few words, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it **has now been revealed by the Spirit** to His **holy apostles and prophets...**" Ephesians 4:11-16: "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ – from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love." We have Scriptural precedence, and the promises of God, to anchor us to hope and expectation that the Almighty God will indeed illuminate His revealed pattern to us and teach us how to build His Church according to that pattern, design, and purpose!

Gaining the knowledge of this pattern and being allowed to be a co-laborer with God in this great work will cost us! I Chronicles chapters 28 and 29 reveal to us some of the "cost" for David and for Israel. David gave gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, precious stones, marble, he gave "of his own special treasure" to this temple to be built according to God's pattern. Israel was also asked to give and they did. They gave gold, silver, bronze, iron, and precious stones, willingly. I Chronicles 29:9: "Then the people rejoiced, for they had offered willingly, because with a loyal heart they had offered

willingly to the LORD; and King David also rejoiced greatly.” We understand that the record of this giving of material things represents far more than just the donating of the items themselves, for the Word tells us in Psalm 50:10 & 12: “For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills...If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is Mine, and all its fullness.” These are the external proofs that the LORD had worked in the hearts of men to bring them to a place of surrender to Him and to the greater purposes of His kingdom as revealed in the latter verses of I Chronicles chapter 29.

We must consider individually, and corporately, what the “cost” might be to us. Would it include giving up, or laying down at His feet as an offering, something that was once a glory and beauty to our lives and ministries, and that benefited others? Would it include our personal vision, personal ministry dreams and goals, personal ambitions, our own work and the labor of our own hands? Would it include relinquishing our zeal in doctrines and dogmas that cause us not to be able to be one with His Body? Would it include laying down our doubts, fears, unbelief, sadness, depression, confusion as to what we are leaving behind and where this transition time is taking us? Remember, David gave “of his own special treasure.” Psalm 50:14 says: “Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High.” Haggai 1:3-14: “Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins? Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: consider your ways! You have sown much, and bring in little; you eat, but do not have enough; you drink, but you are not filled with drink; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes. Thus says the LORD of hosts: consider your ways! Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified, says the LORD. You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? Says the LORD of hosts. Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house. Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands. Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him; and the people feared the presence of the LORD. Then Haggai, the LORD’s messenger, spoke the LORD’s message to the people, saying, I am with you, says the LORD. So **the LORD stirred up** the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God...”

Can we trust in our Heavenly Father that He is able to take us through this time and to fully bring us into our possession of all He has promised before His physical return? We cannot afford to miss out on what is coming right up ahead. We cannot and must not allow fear, mistrust, confusion, tradition, comfort of our old ways, familiarity of what has been, etc. to keep us from transitioning on into a church built according to the pattern revealed from His very throne!

In this very hour the Lord is raising up an apostolic voice that is once again laying the foundations and making clear God's vision and God's pattern! He is raising up statesmen in this region to help us come into the fullness of what He has planned. A statesman is "a person who shows wisdom, skill, and vision in conducting state affairs and dealing with public issues, or one engaged in the business of government; one sent forth with a specific mission." An apostle is "one who is sent." A "sent one" comes with the full authority of the one who sent Him as His representative, His delegate, and His ambassador. In this very hour the Lord is once again making the vision clear so that all who run may read it! He is telling us, through the apostolic/prophetic voice, of the new things before they spring forth!

We can, and should have great hope, great confidence, and great assurance that He is only bringing us out that He might take us in! Into the church built according to the pattern, according to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, the Pattern Son!