All Things New - Total Renewal.

St. Anthony's
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In many circles of our white S.A. community there is currently an air of expectation, a feeling of uncertainty and some important signs of possible change. Words such as change, reform, renewal are constantly used to describe this current mood and hope. The President talks of a decade of decisive change whilst in Zimbabwe everyone is aware that, however the outcome, the old acapacization has something of the past.

This spirit of expected change has to a certain degree replaced the previous feelings of uncertainty, confusion and even despair of the past years. At the same time we should be aware that in our Black Community the disbelief that anything worthwhile social or political change will occur, remains as strong as ever.

Churches: How has this current mood affected the churches as institutions? If we judge the Church by specific action of Synods, Councils and decisions requiring definite actions, there seems to be very little proof of a vital interest in and adequate understanding of the signs and movements of change at work in society. And even when
such an understanding exists, it does not seem to be the case that the Church has always been deeply concerned with the changes occurring from such movements are going to affect the churches' witness, work, and worship. I get the strong impression that the mainstream of new ideas which will bring about either transformation or continuation of our present social structures are largely being kept out through our churches for many members and congregation, their religious (as well as their general) life remains the same as it has been the past 15, 20 or even 50 years. The challenging predictions and stimulating prophecies of Jeremiah, Paul, and John (Rev) about a new life, a new creation, a new heaven and new earth, have very little relevance or meaning for them.

Charismatic Movement. In contrast to these things, there are many charismatic groups talking excitedly—and sometimes ecstatically—about renewal through the power of the Holy Spirit. Some of these groups believe that their active participation reflects an unconscious withdrawal from the harsh realities of racial and social conflict when emotional release by freer movement is experienced which has very little relevance to the suffering and injustice which so many experience daily.

Other Christian groups. Other Christians, deeply aware of their own spiritual needs and hunger, are disillusioned about the failure of the churches; frustrated about the failure of the churches to bring about the renewal of life promised by God, are more and more coming to believe that the answer lies in small groups of Christians spontaneously and informally creating communities of people giving mutual support, meaningful spiritual and material support; meaningful sharing of talents, material wealth, and spiritual experience, and that such communities could become the models of real renewal of human society.

Problem and Dilemma facing Christians. One aspect

1. To know whether this clear and definite promise of a new life and a new society which the prophets predicted, Christ confirmed, and the apostles proclaimed is to be taken ite-
rally or figuratively? Is it part of reality of the future of mankind on earth or is it an utopian dream never to come true? Or is it only intended as a flight of fancy, of human dreams never to be realised? What can we really believe about these prophecies and promises?

2. To adequately face and answer the disappointment, the disillusionment - yes even the cynicism about an institutional church which has been proclaiming the message of hope for centuries but with what concrete, tangible results?

Isn't there much truth in the criticism that for 2000, 4000 years this message has been proclaimed in some or other form - and that despite that we are no nearer to the realisation of these prophecies and promises than, say, 2000 years ago?

3. To discern clearly which of the diverging interpretations of Scripture are presented by theologians and lay Christians to the valid one. How do we discern between the what, the when and the how if there is so little unanimity within the Christian Community?

4. How to respond to 5. Main claims: In the beginning was the word, continuing new life, growth, humanisation, becoming human society

The direction: To seek the answer.

It would be presumptions and a segment of the dilemma in which both Christians and non-Christians find themselves but I believe that God is pointing out to us, very clearly the direction in which the answer is to be found.

The unfolding message of human history (which both the Old and New Testaments have confirmed) is that the events of history all move towards an eventual realisation of God's purpose with his whole creation - including humanity.

When we hear the words of Rom 8:15 "And now I make all things new!"

2. The birth, the life, death and resurrection of Christ is God's unerring assurance that he has in fact already created and set in motion this powerful force of renewal of human life and human society...
And when, but only when, we as His children have taken that first step in obedience and trust, will He show us what to do next and when and where to take the next move on our pilgrimage into a new life and a new future — God’s future for each of His children and for all mankind!

Amen.

We are waiting for God to do on His own what He will not do except in and through His own! — Wait in vain!
St. Anthony's Church
3-02-1980.

Total Renewal.

Hymns: 6 v 1-7
8 v 1-4
23 v 1-2 (23 v 1-4)
26 v 1-5.

Scripture: Isaiah 65: 17-25
2 Cor. 5: 16-19.
Neh 10: 19-25
Rev 21: 1-5 (Rev)

1. Welcome
2. Notice
3. Scripture