



"Change is not made without inconvenience, even from worse to better."
—Richard Hooker

18-Jan-08

The Word of the Hour

And that word—or buzzword—ladies and gentlemen, is "change."

With the Presidential nomination campaign in full swing prior to "Super-Duper Tuesday," February 5, the candidates are making "change" their mantra. This is only to be expected in an election year following a two-term President like George W. Bush, and especially after a tenure that inspired so much unbridled vitriol and sheer hatred. It began with the 2000 election chad fiasco in Florida—inwhich Democrats claim Bush supporters all the way up to the Supreme Court "stole" the Presidency for him—andit never let up. Well, it did, but only for those few weeks of revenge and resolve after September 11, 2001.

It is a good thing that our Constitution now limits a President to two terms. Any more time in office would grant the President too much time to garner excessive power to himself. The office is already quite powerful, and Presidents have managed to make it even more authoritative through the Constitutionally vague use of executive orders, an unbalanced and unchecked mechanism designed to get things done quickly and without oversight. There are dark rumors of secret executive orders that would go into immediate effect during a real crisis, making the President a virtual dictator. However, this is nothing new: The revered [Abraham](#) Lincoln accrued similar powers to himself during the Civil War.

In times like today, candidates of the opposition party—the Democrats—yamme repetitively for change as if their voices were on the proverbial broken record:

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- The slogan of Barack Obama's website reads, "Change We Can Believe In." He is quoted prominently (at the top center of the page) saying, "I'm asking you to believe. Not just in my ability to bring about real change in Washington . . . I'm asking you to believe in yours."
- John Edwards' site asks one to "Join the Campaign to Change America." His 80-page policy paper, "Plan to Build One America," carries the subtitle, "Solutions for Real Change."
- Hillary Clinton has a harder time stressing change, since her husband's administration was one of those two-term, establishment Presidencies. However, after her defeat in the Iowa Caucus, where Obama's message of change hit home, her first New Hampshire advertisement was titled, "Ready for Change." In it the narrator declaims, "We will change things in this country, because we want it. Because we have one candidate who spent her life fighting for it. Standing up for our families, our children, our veterans."

Republicans have latched on to the hour's buzzword too, doing their level best to distance themselves from Bush's unpopularity:

- Mitt Romney insists he is the candidate who will bring "change to Washington." In one 15-minute news conference on January 4, he used the word "change" 21 times.
- Mike Huckabee's supporters argue that "he is the one for honest change" and that "this is the year of change and Mike Huckabee is the best representative."
- John McCain says that he, too, is an "agent for change," claiming that he has been the force behind the greatest changes in our Iraq strategy, campaign finance laws, and government spending.
- On Fred Thompson's website, a supporter declares, "What I want and what this party and this country needs is a conservative leading the country for a change." Thompson himself, however, vows that he will not be jumping on the "change bandwagon," saying leadership and telling the [truth](#) are more important messages.
- Ron Paul's message of change is perhaps the most radical: returning America to its Constitutional roots and the Gold Standard. In fact, his website encourages its visitors to "Join the Revolution."

Concerning change, one verse jumps out as a stern warning: "My son, fear the LORD and the king; do not associate with those given to change; for their calamity will rise suddenly, and who knows the ruin those two [the LORD and the king] can bring?" ([Proverbs 24:21](#)). Obviously, this is a caution against revolution, attempting to overthrow the government. Most rebellions are hugely unsuccessful, stamped out by the government with merciless violence. This is shown to great effect in *Les Misérables*. The hotheaded university students' revolution against the French state suffers brutal annihilation, their hasty barricades overrun, and all their hopes for just and glorious

change dashed.

This warning takes on greater significance due to the mention of God's involvement. If we believe [Romans 13:1-7](#) is true, we also believe that [God](#) is engaged in the governance of nations, working out His purpose through "the lowest of men" ([Daniel 4:17](#) ; see verses 25, 32; 5:21). Moreover, in the modern [nations of Israel](#), He is even more intimately involved. As Winston Churchill declared, ". . . he must indeed have a blind soul who cannot see that some great purpose and design is being worked out here below." From this vantage point, we can conclude that agitating for change could be fighting against God. He may very well have orchestrated the nation's intolerable conditions to instigate the next phase of His plan.

Among humans, change is inevitable because people are different. No two people can agree completely about anything, it seems, so their solutions to problems will often be diverse. And not all change is bad; things can be changed for the better. Certainly, when people sincerely [repent](#) and turn to God, what great changes occur ([II Corinthians 7:11](#))! Yet, change for the sake of change is dangerous, for who can foresee the effects that change will bring?

The surest course we can take is to throw in our lot with God and cling to Him and His way with all our might. He says in [Malachi 3:6](#), "For I am the LORD, I do not change." Why should He change when His way, His government, is perfect?

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Change and Hope](#)

by John O. Reid

John Reid, reflecting upon the experiences in our previous fellowship in which we anticipated a soon coming place of safety, now soberly witnesses the rapid deterioration of our culture with no place of safety in sight. Things have not exactly gone the way we had anticipated. As God found it necessary to test our forebears, Abraham, Moses, Gideon, Barak, Jephtha, David, Samuel, Paul, and our Elder Brother Jesus Christ, He has allowed us to go through these grueling experiences (trials, tests, and temptations) for maximum growth. We, as God's called out ones, need to develop an intense love for the truth, bonding with one another, preparing for the tasks God has designated for His elect. Our entire lifetime will be engaged in overcoming sin and our human nature in order that we may attain the hidden manna (special wisdom) and the white stone (a

symbol of acquittal).

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Facing Change: A Lesson from I Kings 13](#)

by John O. Reid

Using the story of God's prophet in I Kings 13, John Reid derives several lessons we can apply in this time of doctrinal confusion.

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