

Planning for Change in the Local LWML Society

by Christine Steele

Change is a basic characteristic of the world today. Nothing functions very long or very well without deliberate and intelligent planning for change. This is a short Bible study on change which will help us look at some of the changes which have taken place since the LWML society was established, and which will help us re-identify the purpose and plan for the future.

Bible Study

- I. In the beginning, God created a perfect world. There was no need for change; it was very good. Read Genesis 1:31.
- II. God did not create robots; he created human beings with minds, capable of choosing and of making decisions. Adam and Eve, like many of us today, were not satisfied. They wanted to improve on God's creation; they wanted to change the rules and be gods themselves. Read Genesis 3:1-6.
- III. Because of sin, change came – and what a change! Read Genesis 3:16-24. They did not stop to think, to consider the consequences of their actions. It was change for the sake of change¹. Certainly they did not pause to analyze the situation and plan for the future.
- IV. The world changes, but God and His gospel message do not change. Read Malachi 3:6. In this ever-changing world, our only hope is to change from our sinful ways and turn to God, our only constant. Read Acts 3:19.
- V. When Jesus died on the cross, it brought about a big change in the lives of Christians. Read Galatians 3:22-25. Before the coming of Jesus, God dwelt in the tabernacle, and everyone came to the tabernacle to worship and pray. When Jesus died, He was the final sacrifice that changed the Jewish laws. Now Jesus dwells in the heart of every Christian and we are free to worship, pray and be reconciled not through the law, but through faith in Christ. There were some at that time who refused to change and were lost.
- VI. Peter made a big change after having a vision about God's kingdom being open to all believers. Read Acts 10:9-16 and 24-28. This change started the ministry among the Gentiles. There were some at that time who refused to change and were lost.
- VII. Martin Luther, in his time, saw the traditions and laws of men once again replacing the true gospel. He brought about a big change clarifying the pure doctrine of justification by faith. There were some at that time who refused to change and were lost.
- VIII. Our German Lutheran forefathers came to America for religious freedom. They brought with them customs and language. To adjust to their new surroundings and to continue to grow, it was necessary to change the language of their worship services and some customs, while still preserving the true doctrine. There were some at that time who refused to change and were lost.

Changes Since Your LWML Society was Established

As a group, list the changes that have taken place in your congregation and LWML society since its establishment.

Possibilities: More women working, higher education among women, larger (or smaller) group, more opportunities for service, more decisions to make,

longer meetings, more (or fewer) newcomers, more ladies without family nearby, more young mothers without family nearby . . .

Your LWML Society's Purpose

As a group, state the purpose for the existence of your LWML society.

***Mission Education
Mission Service***

***Mission Inspiration
Mission Grants***

The Effectiveness of Your LWML Society

How do you meet the mission inspiration needs of members in your group? Is servanthood through mission service a priority in your group?

As a group, list the activities of your LWML society that still serve our purpose in these changing times and **should be continued**.

Possibilities: Bible studies, service to the church, mission outreach and support, education programs, prayer chains . . .

List the activities that no longer serve the purpose of LWML in these changing times and **should be discontinued**.

Possibilities: Afternoon meetings only, same officers every year, business decisions made by same group . . .

List the activities the society **should adopt** to serve the purpose of LWML in these changing times:

Possibilities: Meeting times to fit the schedules of the working woman or young mother, smaller group decision-making, more women involved, guidelines for activities, leadership training . . .

Facts About Your Church Women

List some facts about the women in your congregation.

Total number of women:

Number who do not attend church or are not able to:

Number who are members of LWML and Bible study circles:

Number who regularly attend LWML or a circle meeting:

Number of women who work full-time outside the home:

Number of women who do not work outside the home

and have children under school age:

Examples of Changing Church Groups

Evaluate examples of some groups in your congregation or in other churches that have made some changes to be more effective in today's changing times.

Possibilities: Including women in Voters' Assembly, appointing women to boards, electing women to positions of leadership, opening various women's groups to any women who is interested . . .

Planning For Change

List some changes that could be made in your LWML society which would help you to more effectively fulfill your purpose.

Possibilities: Form a committee of 12 or fewer (Jesus only worked directly with 12 disciples) to study the group's purpose and needs, and come up with a plan for change. Include on the committee current officers, a representative from each functioning group, an older member, a working woman, a mother with young children . . . to fairly represent most of the interests of the women in the congregation.

Praying for Guidance in Change

Heavenly Father, thank you for yesterday, the memories we cherish of a mission fulfilled through your guidance. And thank you for today, for preserving our society and blessing our mission. We know that in this sinful world, tomorrow will bring change. Forgive us for being so comfortable with the traditions of yesterday and today that we refuse to plan for the future. Help us, Lord, to know the difference between what is true doctrine and what is tradition. Give us the wisdom and strength to remove the stumbling blocks and still preserve that true doctrine. Help us to look honestly at our situation, and give us the courage to make the changes necessary to insure that our mission will continue when we are no longer able to serve. In Christ Jesus our Savior, we pray. Amen.

¹ *BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON CHANGE, LWML Member Development Committee, Assembly of Leaders, 1988*