

FACING A NEW YEAR WITH ASSURANCE

By Bishop Henry Harbuck, Overseer

We've been hearing a lot about **CHANGE** in the political arena for the new year of 2008; but as children of God, we know that we serve an unchangeable Creator! While there will always be a need for change in this world, we have the **ASSURANCE** that we are part of "*An Unshakable Kingdom*" (theme of the 2008 AEGA World Conference).

Too often we are bound with chains of our own making, and thus resist change. Yet our Heavenly Father shakes this world so that changes will take place within us to prepare us for the Kingdom to come. A man once stopped to talk with a farmer in his field. "How's your corn this year?" he asked. "Didn't plant any, afraid of the blight", the farmer replied. "How's your wheat?" "Didn't plant any, afraid it wouldn't rain." "What did you plant this year?" he finally asked, "I didn't plant anything," the farmer replied, "I just played it safe." ("*He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap*" - Ecclesiastes 11:4 KJV). Those who "play it safe" will never accomplish anything for the Kingdom.

Change also requires a renewed vision, and the ability to visualize what is on the "other side". Thomas Edison received over 3,000 patents in his lifetime, and it is recorded that he always "saw" the finished invention before he ever began. As Christians, we must continue to seek and renew the vision the Lord has given us. Sometimes this requires serious introspection on our part. We must examine ourselves to see where we have fallen short, and then embrace the vision of "who" we are in Christ that the Holy Spirit reveals to us. In John 1:41-42 Jesus saw Cephas and renamed him Peter because He saw Him as a rock -- even though this "vision" for Peter's life was not yet evident in his experience. In the days ahead, however, Peter was able to stand "like a rock" and proclaim the Gospel without fear. He had become what Jesus revealed to him. If you are a pastor or head of a ministry, you must continue to ask the Lord to refresh and renew the vision within you. Press beyond your ability...the vision must be bigger than you!

Change often requires new priorities. Too often this is like our cleaning a closet. We want to get rid of the clutter, yet in the process we find many things with which we cannot part. In the end, we wind up keeping almost everything that was already there. Is this really change? I know I am the world's worst (Just ask my wife!) at keeping everything. It is our nature to hold on to things we don't really need. Thus, we must learn that when God "shakes" us to get rid of some of those "things" in our lives, it is for our good so we can set new priorities needed to complete the vision He has put in our hearts.

So for 2008, let's continue to remind ourselves that we are part of "An Unshakable Kingdom" and remember who we are in Christ! Let us rejoice in our victories, and be assured in the struggles that our destiny is not determined by this world's changes, but only by the **assurance** of an unchangeable God!