

Publishing Editor's column

THE Post Office is a very familiar organisation to everyone living in Britain, and no doubt readers in other countries will have a similar organisation in their country. Several years ago it decided to call itself Consignia, but this raised such an outcry that it reverted to being the Post Office. Such changes of name are, however, typical of today. At one time it was all very simple: the Post Office delivered letters and provided a telephone service, electricity was provided by the electricity board, gas by the gas board and water by the water board, whilst British Rail provided rail services across the country.

The situation today is radically different. Basic services are provided by a whole host of different companies, in many cases competing for business. Companies change hands and change names overnight. Large corporations invent meaningless names for themselves, and spend fortunes on developing new images. Familiar brand names disappear. Queries are answered, not by a friendly local voice, but by an impersonal call centre located many miles away, perhaps in another country. In the world of work, people are constantly experiencing reorganisations and new initiatives. Change is not always bad, but there can be no doubt that we live in a world of constant change, too much for many people to cope with.

I recently attempted to give a leaflet advertising Bible reading seminars to a man standing in his front garden. Seeing the word 'Bible' he would not take it, saying that the Bible was 2,000 years old and man's thinking has progressed a lot since it was written. I pointed out that it was the Word of God, not man's thoughts, and thus still relevant today, but he was not convinced. In the Bible we do indeed have a contrast to the constant changes which afflict us today. The Bible presents the eternal verities of God and His purpose:

"Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations . . . from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God" (Ps. 90:1,2);

"I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal. 3:6).

Unfortunately, however, many professing Christians do not accept that the Bible is the Word of God and that its teachings remain valid today. In my own lifetime, Bible teaching on sexual relations and the role of women has been rejected as outmoded and not appropriate to our times. Sects like the Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons change teachings at the behest of bodies of men claiming divine authority. The Roman Catholic Church has a long history of adding new teachings from time to time which have sent it further and further away from the Scriptures. The writer to the Hebrews refers to "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (13:8), and it is comforting and assuring in a fast-changing world to have the unchanging truths of God's Word and of His eternal purpose in Jesus Christ in which to place our trust. But there is a corresponding responsibility upon us firmly to uphold these truths, even when they are far removed from the accepted views of our contemporaries.

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Publication of articles in The Testimony does not presume editorial endorsement except on matters of fundamental doctrine, as defined in the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith.