

UNITY
CHURCH OF BAKERSFIELD
"A POSITIVE PLACE TO GROW!"

Today's Lesson
A Matter of Paradigms
PowerPoint notes available at:
www.unityofbakersfield.org

A Matter of Paradigms

When a group of Sunday school children were asked what they thought paradigms were. One young boy stood up and said, "I know!"

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We hear a lot about paradigm shifts. A paradigm is:

1. A set of rules and regulations that establishes boundaries and helps us solve problems within those boundaries.
2. A mind-set that acts as filter to screen data that comes into our minds.
3. A process of determining how we "see" things.

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Thomas Samuel Kuhn (July 18, 1922 – June 17, 1996) was an American physicist, historian, and philosopher of science whose controversial 1962 book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* was deeply influential in both academic and popular circles, introducing the term "paradigm shift", which has since become an English-language staple.

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The term paradigm is used to describe a set of beliefs or assumptions that comprise the basic framework, or model of reality, within a particular science; or when a new understanding creates profound breakthroughs.

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When we study the spiritual teachers, guides, mystics, wayshowers, within the history of humankind we discover that each of them brought a new understanding, a paradigm shift in consciousness, for connecting to spirit and everything spiritual.

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Unity minister, Leona Evans and the late Carol Keefer have written in their book Spirituality & Self-Esteem that:
The challenges we face in our spiritual lives are not based on who we are, but who we have believed ourselves to be.

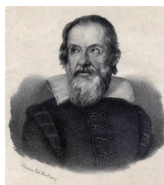
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As students of truth we strive to put into practice Paul's statement to the Romans, to transform our lives by changing our thoughts, and to study ways to change our beliefs so that they reflect more of our true Christ identity, thus allowing us to come to a realization that our spirituality lies in being fully human.
 It has been said, ***“What we believe to be true becomes our reality. All real changes are changes of mind.”***

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To undergo a paradigm shift in our thinking, our consciousness of being, requires us to change what we thought and believed to be true in our lives. Too often we make the choice of being pulled downwards and backwards, in fact afraid of change in our lives. Who of us have not heard or used the following statements at one time or other:
“This is the way things are; That’s the way it always been; If it was good enough for grandpa it’s good enough for me; God said it, I believe it and that’s it!

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One of the reason’s I think we fight to keep things the way they are is that, what I call the evolutionary changes, threatens us and our closely held belief system. Case in point:
In the early 1600's, when Galileo presented evidence that the earth revolved around the sun, the Catholic Church was deeply threatened.

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The new findings contradicted their beliefs and teachings about how God created the universe. In 1615, the Church officially condemned Galileo’s theory as incompatible with biblical teachings. In 1633 he was ordered to recant his views and put under house arrest until his death in 1641. Three-hundred and fifty-nine (359) years later...

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On February 15, 1990, in a speech delivered by Cardinal Ratzinger, the future Pope Benedict XVI, cited some current views on the Galileo affair as forming what he called “a symptomatic case that illustrates the extent to which modernity’s doubts about itself have grown today in science and technology.”

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He stated:
The Church at the time of Galileo kept much more closely to reason than did Galileo himself, and she took into consideration the ethical and social consequences of Galileo's teaching too. Her verdict against Galileo was rational and just, and the revision of this verdict can be justified only on the grounds of what is politically opportune.

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In 1992, Pope John Paul II came out in favor of Galileo, it was reported in the news that the Catholic Church had turned around towards vindicating Galileo:
Thanks to his intuition as a brilliant physicist and by relying on different arguments, Galileo, who practically invented the experimental method, understood why only the sun could function...

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... as the center of the world, as it was then known, that is to say, as a planetary system. The error of the theologians of the time, when they maintained the centrality of the Earth, was to think that our understanding of the physical world's structure was, in some way, imposed by the literal sense of Sacred Scripture.

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It took the Church 359 years to officially vindicate Galileo. It has been over two thousand years since Jesus spoke the words, *"It is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom; The things I have done you will do also; Love God, love neighbor as yourself; I came that you may have life and have it abundantly; God does not desire sacrifice but mercy; forgive 70 times 7; it is the child-like consciousness that will get you into heaven, not my death."*
 How long will it take for fundamentalism to have a paradigm shift.

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At the end of the 19th century a paradigm shift took place within the Transcendentalist movement that ushered in the New Thought movement. Today we are on the threshold of another major shift with advent of the Progressive movement.
This shift doesn't necessarily cause us to see different things, but rather, it allows us to see the same things differently.

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It's as if we are taking a hot-air balloon ride up into the air. We are now able to "lift ourselves" above what we previously saw as either-or to both-and.
 Change is a constant activity in our lives and affairs. Paradigms are a major catalyst to all change.

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As someone once said, "Shift happens!" So here are some insights to help you in your paradigm moments:

1. Open your mind to new ways of seeing yourselves and your relationship with God.
2. Being active in the disciplines of self-observation, meditation, and journaling.

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3. Examining old behaviors to see if you have truly transformed yourself or have you just adapted new ways of remaining in your old mind-sets.

4. Looking honestly at your own resistance to change as a normal part of the paradigm shift. At some point we all have to do it.

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5. Remember that your purpose is to be an expression of the individualization of that Universal Being which we call God, which is Life in all its unlimited fullness.