

Within the church, change is inevitable. The church must change, because the people who attend the church and the growing culture around the church are changing all the time. Through personal experience, I have found this concept to be true.

I attended a Presbyterian Church for eight years of my life. I loved the church. It was very traditional, and very proper. The building had been there since the early 1900s, and the old decorations they could bring out at Christmas were something I looked forward to every year. We sang the same type of songs each week, and everyone knew the format for the sermon, because the pastor basically just rotated speeches each week. Tradition was the name of the game, and everyone liked it that way. They knew what to expect, no surprises, nothing new, and everything predictable. Which was great...for a long time. However, new churches started popping up in the area, and members of the Presbyterian Church started to branch out.

The new churches held the same beliefs and preached the same things, but they did it differently. The new churches were “hipper” and “funnier.” They had personality and pizzazz. They were appealing because it was not boring and there was something new every week. Even I was considering checking out a new church. When I eventually did, I saw what the big deal was about. To start out the service, the band (yes, band, not a choir) played worship songs, but these songs were different. They were fun, and people were clapping along to the beat. As I looked around, I saw people dancing and raising their hands to praise the Lord. It was awesome. After the music, the pastor got up in front, and right away, he started telling funny stories. Personal stories about himself or people he knew that helped to illustrate the lesson he was trying to teach that day. I could not stop laughing. Throughout the sermon, he continued to tell jokes. At one point I just looked around at everyone. I could not believe that I was laughing in church. It was unbelievable. I could definitely see why people would choose this kind of church over my old, traditional Presbyterian church. I began attending the new church regularly, but one week I went back to my old church. To my surprise, they had created a “contemporary” service for people that preferred that option. The service played newer, more upbeat music that compared with the other new churches in the area. However, the church still had two additional services that were the same as they had been before.

My former church had learned that it needed to change with the times. Modern culture had begun to lean towards more contemporary music and services. So the church realized that if it wanted to keep people at the

church, and be able to reach a more contemporary generation of people, it needed to make some changes.

However, the church realized another important concept as well. They knew that foundation of the church itself could not change. The church is based on certain beliefs and principles, and those cannot vary with the times. If the foundation changes, then the whole basis of the church itself would not be credible. You have to have some tradition to fall back on, but the way in which the church presents its beliefs should be able to vary as society's preferences demand.

I am glad that I was able to have the experience that I did. I was able to see that there are different ways to share the same message of faith. I feel like I can worship and praise God so much better when I am able to stand up and clap and just sing as loud as I want to. I love being able to dance along to the music. I think God wants us to worship with our whole heart, and my whole heart wasn't in the music that was at my old church. I didn't feel like I was truly worshipping God, because I was just going through the motions that I always did. So, through my personal experience, I found that change is good, and in the end, inevitable.