

The Way Forward

Illus: Leisure center in London: noisy distractions, no classrooms, dirty, AC/heat, bring books, Bibles, podium, etc. *“Better the evils you know than the evils you don’t.”*

1. Egyptian Bondage vs. Freedom

- A. Slavery was threat to children’s welfare (Ex 1:16, 22), hard labor (Ex 1:11, 13; 3:7, 9), physical abuse (Ex 2:11) but also provided food, shelter, protection.
- B. God’s deliverance promised a good, large land flowing with milk/honey - Ex 3:8.
- C. In order to obtain these blessings the Israelites must face risk and hardship:
 - 1. The Egyptians increase their burdens - Ex 5:7-9, 14, 21-23.
 - 2. Threat of destruction - Ex 14:10-12, 15 (*“tell the children of Israel to go forward”*)
 - 3. Uncertainty of daily provision - Ex 15:24; 16:3.

2. The Way Forward

- A. Progress involves **vision**.
 - 1. Complacency and self-satisfaction lead to stagnation.
 - 2. The setting of goals and objectives brings focused effort, enthusiasm. **Illus.** A committee at Huey. working on 1/5 yr. plans. Churches in B’ham dwindling.
 - 3. Where is Conyers going? Curriculum goals? Evangelism - local/distant? Elders? Businesses aren’t accidentally successful. Teams don’t accidentally win.
- B. Progress involves **change**.
 - 1. In a world that is constantly changing, routine, predictability are comfortable.
 - 2. Sometimes we answer questions that no one is asking anymore - they’ve moved on to other issues. The questions asked we may be unsure how to answer.
 - 3. Change - both “maintenance” and “improvement” - are essential to growth.
- C. Progress involves **courage**.
 - 1. Ex 13:17 - Not in the way of the Philistines **though closer**. *“Lest perhaps the*

people change their minds when they see war ...”.

2. Sometimes changes lead us into the unknown, and the unknown challenges our faith. To remain unchanged is to be “safe”; the Lord had to drive Christians out of Jerusalem with persecution in order for the word to be spread.

3. Progress ...

A. Is not:

1. Change without purpose or objective. Some try a short-cut to spirituality - change for the sake of novelty alone.
2. Doctrinal deviation. In specific matters we cannot innovate. However, God has “built in” a great degree of flexibility in the church; there are wide latitudes of judgment, expediency which can be adapted to various circumstances.
3. Thoughtlessly doing things a certain way simply because “*we’ve always done it that way.*” Is it **still** expedient? Is there a **better** way?

B. Is:

1. Creating an atmosphere conducive to substantive Bible study and challenging people to know *the reason* for their convictions.
2. Stimulating our enthusiasm for worship and thus joyfully honoring God and edifying each other.
3. Being creative in broadcasting the gospel according to our opportunity and resources.

Conclusion: *What can I do to make Conyers everything the Lord wants His church to be? Am I holding it back or pushing it ahead?*