

Olan Hendrix: The Ordeal of Change

The Biola Hour: The Ordeal of Change
And Missionary Testimony
By Olan Hendrix, Don Ransom, and Lilia Castro

Speaker 1:

This is the Biola Hour program Number 4151, for release on Monday, February 14th, 1972. (Pause)

Speaker 2:

(With harps in the background) To a darkened world holding forth the light of life.

[Song, We've a Story to Tell to the Nations, begins]

(Introduction music continues in the background) For more than half a century Biola has educated Christ-dedicated young people for worldwide Christian service. Now, from the campus of Biola College, and the Graduate School Talbot Theological Seminary, we present a half hour of message in song to uplift and brighten your day, on the Biola Hour.

[Song, We've a Story to Tell to the Nations continues]

Don Ransom:

This is your Biola host, Don Ransom. Welcome to the Biola Hour, and thank you for inviting us in today. Normally we all resist change. It is our nature not to enjoy changes. Today,

Mr. Olan Hendrix of the American Sunday School Union speaks to us about the ordeal of change. I know that his message will be a great help to you. For we all meet changes every day in our lives. And today on our program we meet a student who has accepted change as from the Lord. A Biola student who was willing to experience any new thing for the sake of Christ. Stay tuned and you will hear her testimony. A song now which explains why we as Christians can accept change without fear or an anxiety. We hear the song He Never Sleeps, He Never Slumbers. Our God is always aware of our circumstances because he is always there to hear and to help.

[Song He Never Sleeps, He Never Slumbers, plays]

We're very happy you have with us in the studio again Miss Lilia Castro from the Philippines, who is studying at Talbot Theological Seminary for her masters of religious education degree. Lilia has been here in this country about two years, and has a background of education from the Philippines; a Bachelor of Arts degree from Silliman University, and a Bachelor of Theology degree from the Far Eastern Bible Institute and Seminary there. For seven years she worked as a missionary, and Lilia why did you tell us some of your experiences as you work there amongst the Hmong, and what people was it? What does that mean?

Lilia Castro:

Oh it means mountain people. I started there to make friends to the people and later only just asked me about sicknesses, how to treat their diseases, which I didn't know. So after staying there for two years and in that field I decided that I would just be taking up nursing to be able to

have the people. And when I finished my nursing class I returned among them. And after that, they opened a dispensary. So I was able to have the people in more, and I found out that they were more receptive to the gospel than when I first went in there just to witness to them.

Don Ransom:

After you opened the dispensary. You mentioned that you had opened a school I believe.

Lilia Castro:

Yes together with [inaudible] we opened a school because we controlled Bible class with people look and read and write. So we just started them all from the beginning. They are nomadic people, go from one mountain to the other. So I just announced to the people that I am going to open a school for, and I would only accept five students.

Don Ransom:

mhm

Lilia Castro:

And they will be staying with me, eat with me, and sleep in my home, because they live so far away. I said I will feed them. But at 14 kids came, so we had no money, but that the Lord had supplied our daily needs every day. So for three months I started a school, just to orient them to classes what class are.

Don Ransom:

mhm

Lilia Castro:

Until later on, the people gathered around our station, they wanted other children to learn.

Don Ransom:

Mhm, and so you fed all of these young people, from your own provisions?

Lilia Castro:

Yes.

Don Ransom:

My, Lilia. But how did you carry on dispensary work and academic work at the same time?

Lilia Castro:

Well, we had a schedule for afternoon for dispensary work, and when emergency times come, we would just do away with classes.

Don Ransom:

I see.

Lilia Castro:

Anyway when somebody gets sick, this is a difficult case. Children want to stay put in class, they would just want to see.

Don Ransom:

I see. So that you just have to call off class and take care of the emergency (laughs).

Lilia Castro:

Yeah

Don Ransom:

Well the Lord evidently has used you very greatly in the work there amongst the Hmong people. And then he led you here to Talbot Theological Seminary. That in itself is a story you related to us how that you received the letter accepting you at Talbot, because you had missed the bus, and then rather than proceed onto the mission station as you had planned, you left all of your provisions with your co-workers and returned then to Manila, and proceeded to prepare to come to the United States in just an hour's notice. (Laughs)

Well Lilia, we're so delighted to have you here with us in the United States and studying at Talbot for this short time. Tell us just a little bit about how you love the Lord.

Lilia Castro:

The Lord is just real to me and I consider him as a friend, and that he is the one that is really working in my life and reaching others for him.

Don Ransom:

From your own experience, would you relate to us the importance of prayer?

Lilia Castro:

Well, I really believe in the power of prayer because I feel that as a missionary, there was a time in my life where I felt that everything was down and just the Lord was just far away, and all that sometimes in prayer with my partner, we'd say, "Lord please move others to pray for us, because we just feel that we are just down and yet--"

Don Ransom:

Ah, were you lonely?

Lilia Castro:

Many times, because we were there alone.

Don Ransom:

Mhm

Lilia Castro:

But the Lord has undertaken for us. The Lord is just wonderful in revealing things in my daily devotions as I read his word. There was one time, I remember that before the typhoon came to us, he told me about the mountain sleeping, and all this in the Book of Psalms that there will be trouble.

Don Ransom:

mhm

Lilia Castro:

And I thought, what, would the Lord do it today? And I just said it was nothing, and then later on in the day a big typhoon struck us and hit the house; got destroyed and we were homeless. And so I said oh the Lord is just preparing me then this morning. So I see that every day the Lord has a message for us.

Don Ransom:

Hmm. Well now that's a whole story in itself. What did you do after the typhoon destroyed your home?

Lilia Castro:

Well we just crept under--the roof of our house was still intact. So we just crept underneath and sleep there (laughs).

Don Ransom:

Right. And then you had to prepare some other form of shelter.

Lilia Castro:

Yeah, the following day.

Don Ransom:

Thank you so much, Lilia Castro for visiting with us on the program today and telling us how the Lord has worked in your life. We know that we are blessed to have you here studying at Talbot seminary.

[Organ Music Plays]

Don Ransom:

Lilia is a dramatic example of how the Lord brings students to Biola. She is a very quiet spoken but powerful person in the Ministry of the Lord. We would like to encourage you, in fact challenge you, to help us educate such dedicated students. They come to us from all over this country and around the world. God has given us here at Biola a mandate to educate and train such young people. But we cannot do it alone. Would you write to us and find out what your part can be? Our address is Biola, La Mirada California, 90638. Write and ask what it means to become a part of the Biola fellowship. That address again is Biola, La Mirada California, 90638.

And now today's message: The Ordeal of Change by Reverend Olan Hendrix. He is General Director of the American Sunday School Union, has served as a pastor in churches in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Michigan. He has been a foreign missionary executive for over 10 years, and is a popular Bible conference speaker. He has specialized in a study of the principles of management and has delivered management skills lectures for Christian workers in 25 countries. So from a very qualified and dedicated individual, one who knows God's word in a very practical way, today's message: The Ordeal of Change, Reverend Olan Hendrix.

Olan Hendrix:

Eric Hoffer, the popular writer of our day, the San Francisco longshoreman entitled his book *The Ordeal of Change*. I believe that it is the right description how the effect that change has upon the emotions of most of us. Lewis A. Allen says that, "The further the plan changes from traditional ways, the greater the potential resistance to that change." I found this true in all of life. I found it true in the church and out of the church. I found it true sociologically, psychologically, economically, and just about any way you want to look at it.

We as human beings do resist change. A part of this is because of the fact that we are creatures of habit, and a part of it is the fact that we just instinctively and automatically fear the unknown. Yet, change is a way of life. And basic to every human personality is this quest for, desire for permanence. We want something that is lasting. Have you ever noticed in the Word of God how many times we are assured that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever? How that God change is not? How that God's promises do not change?

Now there are a lot of things that do change: the world about us, the predicament in which we find ourselves, the situation in which we live, and work, and move have a constant evolutionary aspect. But God, his message, his word, his methods, are timeless. Now, change is probably one of the most talked about and most exciting subjects in our day. It is something that is ever present with us, but it is more evident today than ever before in the history of man. Change is absolutely inevitable, and today many people are talking about not just the rate of change, but the rate of change of change, to try to indicate the acceleration of change that we are experiencing.

Now, the human being--no matter who he is, no matter where he lives--desires something that is permanent. He resists change instinctively, and he fears the unknown. This is what led the

hymn writer to say, "Change and decay and all around I see. O thou who changes not, abide with me." Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul said, "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For other things which are seen are temporary but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Now Paul was not a pessimist. Rather he was a realist. To anticipate the night while it is still day is based on sound reasoning. We live in a time of unprecedented discoveries, many of which tend to make life longer and living more comfortable and enjoyable. But with change and progress, the law of change and decay also operates. Strange that so few in this world prepare for the inevitable. A reporter was interviewing an old gentleman who was celebrating his one hundredth birthday. "Sir," he said, "You must have seen a lot of changes in your time." "You bet, sonny," said the old man, "and I was against every one of them." Well, (laughs) I sometimes wonder if I might not have had that man on a board somewhere, or in a church that I pastored.

Do you feel that way about change? Change is inevitable. Change is certain. My friend, George Thomas, said, "Change is the child of discovery. It thrives in the environment of investigation and innovation. The essential requirements of research." Why then, no change in the management, for example, of Christian organizations? The urgency to expedite the propagation of the gospel, to train and deploy a greater number and more effective group of witnesses, to improve the efficiency and the implementation of Christian Endeavor, provides justification for this kind of change. I agree with Mr. Thomas.

Today as never before in the church, we need to change. But let's be careful. Let's be careful that we not change for the sake of change because that is not virtuous. It can be merely the evading of boredom. And let us be careful that we change only what God has prescribed as changeable, and not attempt to change the things that should not be. Now, just for example, there

are some things about the work of God that are absolute, that cannot be changed. Much of our structure can be, much of our methodology can be changed--and indeed should be changed. But there are some things that are absolute. For example, the message that we proclaim should never be changed. Because man's sin does not change, because man's basic need does not change, and because accessibility to God does not alter, we cannot change the message that we proclaim. Now perhaps we can change our terminology, especially if that will facilitate communication. We can change the way and the place where we attempt to communicate. That's quite all right.

For example, I remember the day--I've been a Christian now for about 25 years--and I remember the day back in the South in Alabama and Tennessee, where I grew up. I can remember when we used to have tent meetings, and these tent meetings would be attended by great swarms of people. Now, today that method in many sections of the country is not only unacceptable, but in many places it is downright repulsive. Well, what does this mean? This means we have to find new ways to communicate the same old method. A very perceptive missiologist said not long ago, "Difficulties arise when attachments that are proper to faith are transferred uncritically to methods of work." Now I believe that God's people ought to meet just as often as they can for prayer, for worship, for the Study of the word, and to listen to the preaching of the word. And I believe that it's very well for people to meet Sunday morning and Sunday night. But, I ran into this situation not long ago, where someone said something like this. They said, "Well that church has really capitulated. That church has denied the faith and they are no longer true to the gospel." "Really? How do you know," I ask. "Well," they said, "they don't even have a Sunday evening meeting anymore. Well now, I'm for Sunday evening meetings. But does the utilization of the Sunday evening method indicate orthodoxy? Of course not. No. What about the places in the world where you can't meet Sunday night? Where you can't go down the

little jungle path because of the snakes and the scorpions, or the Leopards, or what have you, and you have to work in your rice paddies Sunday morning. So when do you meet? Well Sunday afternoon. I've been in many places in the world where they can't possibly meet Sunday morning or Sunday night. Does that mean they're not true to the word? Of course not. But you see, we are creatures of habit and we do tend to attach an importance to the past, particularly to past methodology, that is not justifiable in the light of the Word of God.

Today we have to find new ways new methods to do what God has been requiring his church to do through all of the centuries. And this involves the ordeal of change; painful, difficult, and sometimes downright repulsive for all of us. How much change have you experienced in your own life and in your own church? Well let's say in the last five years. Or let me put it this way: are you able as a group in your church to sit down and look critically at the activities that you are pursuing? Is it possible that you are perpetuating activities that are quite ineffective, and produce few results that are desired, but you perpetuate these activities because you've been doing it for so very long?

One time when I was a pastor a lady stopped me and said, "Why do we have such and such and such, a ladies meeting, once every month." "Well," I said, "I don't know. You're the president of the group, the leader. You tell me why you have these meetings." "Well," she said, "I don't know." She said, "I've been asking around, and the only answer I can find is that we have always had these meetings." Is that reason enough to continue? No. We must have such a goal orientation, that all of our methods are subject to change for the sake of achieving our objectives and our end results. Now, this was true in the life of the Lord Jesus. It was true in the life of Paul and the life of Moses. It was true in the life of Hudson Taylor, and William Carey, and the greats

of church history. And it must be true of you and of me in our day. We must devise ways to do what God has been requiring us to do, even if it involves change.

Robert Moses once said, "Have no fear of change as such and on the other hand no liking for it merely for its own sake." That's good advice. And in our churches we desperately need to look at change from a utilitarian point of view. Emerson once lamented, "Improved means to unimproved ends." I wonder sometimes if he had in mind the great flurry of activity emanating from churches and missionary organizations. Some of us continually improve our ways of doing things without ever really knowing what we're trying to accomplish. Einstein seems to have been similarly impressed when he said, "Few things so characterize our day as perfection of means and confusion of goals." Well you see, both are true. On the one hand, we can be so addicted to the way we're doing things that we forget what it is that we're trying to achieve. And then, we can also be so absolutely taken up with what it is that we're trying to achieve that we forget to improve the ways of doing it. Both are terribly, terribly important

Henry Kaiser, the great industrialist, once observed, "You can't sit on the lid of progress. If you do, you'll be blown to pieces." Well, I wish we could have some kind of explosion within the evangelical church. Oh, the right kind, mind you. Not the kind that is so characteristic of our world in our day but a kind of an explosion that would catapult us into the place of looking critically at what we're doing, how we're doing it, and whether we are really achieving the end results that we long to achieve--the end results that God has for us.

We do resist change. All of us. Now let us remember this. We instinctively and natively resist change, and in order to change we must discipline ourselves, and we must think objectively, and we must think with regard to our goals. And then we must measure and evaluate all change in the light of God's eternal, infallible, and inerrant word. Otherwise we can become

so utilitarian that we forget the theological absolutes. Let us let us experience in our lives and in our churches the dynamic of change for the sake of our objectives.

Let us pray (Organ music plays in the background). Our Father, we thank thee today for thy great grace, and for thy love, and we ask the just now, make us pliable in my hands for thy purposes, for Christ's sake. Amen.

Don Ransom:

Thank you Reverend Hendrix for that very practical challenge. Reverend Olan Hendrix as general director of the American Sunday School Union. He will be conducting management skills seminars for Christian workers in the South San Francisco area March 7th through the 9th, and in Anaheim California March 14th through 16th. If you would like more information concerning these management skills seminars, write to the American Sunday School Union, or contact me personally here at Biola and we'll see that they receive your message. Today's message will be in printed form in the Bible the broadcaster. To receive your copy, simply write to us at Biola. That's Biola La Mirada California 90638. And now, this is Don Ransom and saying goodbye, and God be with you.

[Song, Goodbye, Our God is Watching O'er You plays]

Speaker 2:

(Music continues in the background) Spurgeon said, "As sure as God puts his children into the furnace of affliction, he will be with them in it."

[Song finishes]