

# Responding to Changing

*(Published, 1 November 2013, Barbados Today, headlined 'On Gasping Change')*

In the life we live irrespective of where we are across the world, there are two constant features of life over which no living man has control. These two things are change and death. Whereas man has the ability to do and change most things, the inevitability of death removes perceived invincibility and power.

In our daily lives, the opportunity is afforded all to oppose and or to make changes. Here again, the power to make changes in our individual lives or within an organization is constrained by a variety of factors. Whatever these may be, it is a fact that the law as it applies in any given instance, rules, regulations and procedures will dictate the limits of our behaviour and action.

Change is considered to be a good thing. It should always be welcome particularly where the intended purpose is that of empowering, uplifting, and effecting mobility in the life of an individual or organization. It is expected that any opposition to change would be for good reasons. With human nature as it is, those who oppose change which is linked to any of these three elements may be accused of doing so because of a perceive threat or challenge to their status quo. However you look at it, all indicators point to the fact that opposition to change is usually for selfish and personal reasons.

This problem is one that stifles the growth and development of organizations. It is not uncommon for large dues paying organizations to seek to exercise their influence at every given opportunity. This cannot be a healthy practice for any organization. It is important that the leadership of organizations have the fortitude to resist such dominance and control. The excuse that the organization is operating on a shoe string budget and needs big brother or sister, is one that cannot be entertained as the basis for allowing an individual to dictate or control an organization.

The people of the Caribbean have suffered the indignity of having our forefathers enslaved. We have had our rights and freedoms trampled. The trade union movement has been in the vanguard of change so as to allow for the independence of our people and institutions. It is to be reinforced that this is all about empowerment, upliftment, and effecting mobility.

As we look to progress as a people, it is for us to promote unity and solidarity, and most of all, freedom of association. Are we to be taken seriously if those who feel so empowered attempt to block the progress of individuals or organizations from aligning

themselves with an institution of choice? Isn't such action nothing short of a disgrace? Is this not a case of being hypocritical, dishonest, and disloyal? It is a given that change within any organization is not something to be taken lightly. It therefore requires the demonstration of a sense of responsibility and maturity when handling such matters. As can be expected with life, it requires that sacrifices have to be made in the interest of progress.

In order to accommodate change, it is to be accepted that the roles of individuals may have to be adjusted. In the case of trade unions consolidating themselves under umbrella organizations or national centres, this is the likely price to be paid. It is time to move beyond focusing on the perceived loss of pride of place. Should our leaders not also display a greater sense of maturity and responsibility than resorting to the bullying and intimidating tactics that include of threatening to withdraw from a process each time they fail to get their own way?

If it is accepted that change is for the better, there is nothing to be gained by making a case that speaks to 'jurisprudence antecedents.' Globally we all speak to the ill of others but sadly, we fail to see the failings on our part.

In a day and age when the labour movement across the world continues to preach solidarity, unification and tripartism, it would come as a shocker if actors with the labour movement were to be seen as making a different call.

We shouldn't fool ourselves that the world isn't watching. Caribbean trade union leaders should therefore be weary of not allowing themselves to be recorded in the pages of history as being guilty of doing the same thing they have accused others of having done.