**Self-checkout Lane**

We used to pull up to gas stations and choose between full service or self-serve. Today it’s only self-service at the gas stations. Today at the big box stores we choose between having someone else scan our items, or the self-check out and bag our own groceries. Similarly, God has made transitions in the church. After Jesus ascended to heaven, the apostles were leading people to salvation. A person believed in Jesus, confessed him as LORD, repented of their sins, and were “baptized for the forgiveness of their sins” (Acts 2:38). “And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.”(v.47).

And the apostles were there in Jerusalem with them, to encourage people to “grow up into salvation” (1Peter 2:2). It was a full-service church, led by the apostles and prophets.

Earlier, the transition was from Jesus to the apostles.

Looking back at the first transition, it was difficult too. “… Do you take offense at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?” (John 6:61-62). Now Jesus made the transition easier. “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.” (John 14:26). When Jesus did leave, the apostles became more dedicated men; a prayer meeting was called, Acts 1:14. That is the first time that is recorded! The apostles stepped up, especially prayer became more central.

Now when the apostles died out, a new transition took place. The direct power of the Holy Spirit was no longer needed. The church was growing up. “…but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease…

When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. ” (1Cor. 13:8-11). The church was growing up and transitioning from the direct power of the Holy Spirit. But the apostles and prophets left behind the product of the Holy Spirit. The complete New Testament to help the following generations of the church.

Every generation must go from a full service station to pumping your own gas, and from a full service line at the grocery store, to a self-check out lane.

More is being asked.

God is pruning us, making us more productive. “every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.” (John 15:2). It is time to bear more fruit. It is time to be more productive. It is time to scan our own items in the self-check out lane… i.e. reading our bibles more, praying more, doing more for the church and with the church. Dan Peters