



# Christian Church of God Newsletter

Volume 18, Issue 2 February 2009

## The PASTOR'S PEN



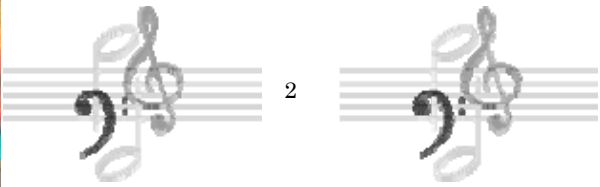
Hello Friends,

Since I last wrote to you, we have inaugurated a new President, and the election of an African-American to the presidency of the United States of America is a remarkable historical first for America, proving the point that Americans are not the racists so many have painted us to be. What other country on this planet would do what the majority of Americans have just done?

The bigger issue now is, how will President Obama lead as our 44<sup>th</sup> President? What's in store for our country now? Is the sun rising or setting on the USA? Barack Obama and our country need our prayers; prayers we should give them freely and enthusiastically regardless of how we may have voted. Whatever our political persuasion, he is our President and as such, Christians have a duty to fulfill, as profoundly elicited by the Apostle Paul:

*"Therefore I exhort first of all that **supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle — I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying — a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth**" (1 Tim 2:1-7 NKJV).*

Who doesn't need prayer? Don't we all? And the greater the responsibility, the more people count upon and look to a leader, the greater the need for divine guidance & spiritual sustenance. The more our President



# The Quester

Across the valley the echoes of the voices of the ages could be heard by Solomon and Jesus. There had been no earthly glory like Solomon's. They talked of kingdoms and empires, of masses of downtrodden humanity, always hurting, suffering from the Curse that was the result of disobedience and rebellion, the choice of mankind's original parents.

As Solomon watched his Lord and King, he saw him transported above him in 'a huge cloud glowing with fire, with a mass of fire inside that flashed continually' and 'the sky spreading out above them looked as though it were made of crystal; it was inexpressibly beautiful.' 'For high in the sky above them was what looked like a throne made of beautiful blue sapphire stones'—and the Son of Man / Son of God now sat on this throne. 'From his waist up, he seemed to be all glowing bronze, dazzling like fire; and from his waist down he seemed to be entirely flame, and there was a glowing halo like a rainbow all around him.' (Excerpts Ezek 1)

And then he disappeared from Solomon's view.

Solomon stood alone with his thoughts now, their conversation reverberating in the caverns of his consciousness. It seemed only yesterday he had written, 'My son, honey whets the appetite, and so does wisdom! When you enjoy becoming wise, there is hope for you! A bright future lies ahead! . . . A wise man is mightier than a strong man. Wisdom is mightier than strength' (Prov. 24:13-14, 5 LB).

Now I know, he thought, that the One who stood here with me is the only True Wisdom, Wisdom Personified. He was emphatic when he said: 'Human wisdom is so tinny, so impotent. I'll turn conventional wisdom on its head, I'll expose so-called experts as crackpots' (1 Cor 1:25a, 19 Msg). So I must take no pride in the wisdom I recorded in the annals for future generations, for I know it was a gift from him. And I now know that Eternal Wisdom belongs to him as the Alpha and Omega.

**He is Lord, and all I ever was as a wise king pales into total insignificance before his power and glory! He is Lord—of Wisdom and Power and Eternity—the Christ of the ages. 'Now Christ is the visible expression of the invisible God. He existed before creation began, for it was through him that everything was made, whether spiritual or material, seen or unseen. Through him, and for him, also, were created power and dominion, ownership and authority. In fact, every single thing was created through, and for, him. He is both the first principle and the upholding principle of the whole scheme of creation. . . . It was in him that the full nature of God chose to live, and through him God planned to reconcile in his own person, as it were, everything on earth and everything in Heaven by virtue of the sacrifice of the cross' (Col 1:15-20 JBP).**

Solomon, now caught up in the Unseen Muse of Heaven, did not understand everything he spoke and wrote. The future "cross" was an enigma to him. He only knew that what he thought and spoke was Truth, and that indeed "one Greater than Solomon" had spoken to him in a timeless dimension.

Day and night . . . night and day. . . passed by in accelerated motion as he stood transfixed. His life was a mere snap of the fingers, fleeting in comparison to Eternity. He only hoped that this conversation would be recorded, that it might give others an eternal perspective as they struggled with the issues and problems of life. For he knew that they too were on a quest.

With a deep sigh and a contented smile, Solomon nodded affirmation to the words of his Savior and Lord . . . then disappeared into the evening shadows.

All together now—applause for God! Sing songs to the tune of his glory, set glory to the rhythms of his praise.

-Psalms 66:1-2 (MSG)

I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all the marvelous things you have done. I will be filled with joy because of you. I will sing praises to your name,

O Most High. -Psalms 9:1-2 (NLT)

Contact the Editor at  
jerrydalemc@sbcglobal.net  
or P. O. Box 33134,  
Amarillo, TX 79120

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CCofGod@suddenlink.net

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(Eccl. 8:6-7 LB). 'This, too, I carefully explored—that godly and wise men are in God's will; no one knows whether he will favor them or not. All is chance! . . . Again I looked throughout the earth and saw that the swiftest person does not always win the race, nor the strongest man the battle, and that wise men are often poor, and skillful men are not necessarily famous; but it is all by chance, by happening to be at the right place at the right time' (Eccl. 9:1, 11 LB)."

"The key word is 'trust'—trust in God," Jesus responded. "That was the operative word in Job's case, and his example holds for all: 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him' (Job 13:15a, KJV). Trust in God's providence results in peace and contentment—regardless of what happens. Sometimes there is Cause and Effect; but, know this, my Father and I can override such if the situation fits into our plan and if it is the best thing for the person involved. 'That's why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good' (Romans 8:28, Msg). [Also see: Philippians 1:6-12; 1 Timothy 6:6-19.]

"Down through the ages men have questioned me; such as this: 'Rabbi, who sinned: this man or his parents, causing him to be born blind?' And I responded, 'You're asking the wrong question. You're looking for someone to blame. There is no such cause-effect here. Look instead for what God can do.' What my servants must do is have this attitude: 'We continue to shout our praise even when we're hemmed in with troubles, because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us, and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next' (Rom. 5:3-4, Msg)."

"So," Solomon asked, "was I correct in this saying? 'See the way God does things and fall into line. Don't fight the facts of nature. Enjoy prosperity whenever you can, and when hard times strike, realize that God gives one as well as the other—so that everyone will realize that nothing is certain in this life' (Eccl. 7:13-14 LB)>"

"Essentially. But there is an *eternal* certainty available. Throughout our conversation I have repeated the underlying spiritual principle of all the practical proverbs and principles of living—as I spoke of the daily necessities of life: 'But your heavenly Father already knows perfectly well that you need them, and he will give them to you if you give him first place in your life and live as he wants you to' (Matthew 6:3-33)."

Solomon held the parchment firmly. Resolve and understanding shone from his eyes as he spoke. "Perhaps I can get it right after all; after this wonderful conversation with you, Great I AM, some of my final words in this journal of my life will be: 'It is a wonderful thing to be alive! If a person lives to be very old, let him rejoice in every day of life, but let him also remember that eternity is far longer, and everything down here is futile in comparison. . . . Here is my final conclusion: fear God and obey his commandments, for this is the entire duty of man' (Eccl 11:7-9, 12-13 LB)."

As Jesus turned to face Solomon, his face shone more brilliant than the splendor of the snow-capped mountain on which he stood. His intense gaze revealed both his compassion and authority. His voice, as powerful thunder, created an avalanche of snow, which cascaded down the mountainside. Then he spoke the final words of this encounter with Solomon:

"May everyone who listened to our conversation know and understand this: 'I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. . . . I am both the root and stock of David, and the bright star of the morning' (Revelation 22:13, 16, JBP)! 'I am the Road, also the Truth, also the Life. No one gets to the Father apart from me' (John 14:6, Msg). 'I am the Gate. Anyone who goes through me will be cared for—will freely go in and out, and find pasture. . . . I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of' (Rev. 22:13, 16, JBP; John 14:6, Msg; John 10:9-10, Msg)."



## Prayer Requests

" . . . The prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up; . . . Pray for one another that you may be healed." — James 5:15-16.

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**Sheri Bartlett:** Julia McKinney's daughter, continues to have serious health problems.

**Amber & Dylan Clark:** Grandchildren of Betty Clark, cerebral palsy.

**Vickie Crevoi:** Sister of Linda Booth, Chronic Progressive MS.

**Bob Fink:** Larry Lyles' daughter's father-in-law, prostate cancer which has metastasized to the bone, undergoing chemo.

**Sherry Evans:** Niece of Jerry McClenagan & Glennis McAlister, is now home, very weak.

**Paul Flatt:** James Bailey's brother-in-law, suffered a heart attack. He is undergoing alternative treatments & is improving.

**Velvet Green:** Suffers from schizophrenia.

**Bobbie Gatson:** Mother of Velvet Green, nerve and back problems making it difficult for her to walk.

**Je Keishalyn Henley:** Daughter of Velvet and Gary Green, is incarcerated and having health problems. Pray for an early release.

**Benny Ray Hicks:** Betty Clark's daughter's brother-in-law, diagnosed with leukemia.

**Anna Law:** In need of a kidney transplant; she has dialysis three times a week.

**Weldon McAlister & Martha McClenagan:** Each received heart pacemakers this past month. Praise God, they are doing well, pray for continued healing.

**Dollie Meil:** She is suffering with cerebral palsy & is in MacKenzie House, Lubbock, Texas. She is to undergo cataract surgery Jan. 28.

**Ted Rankin:** Tests show he has increased brain lesions, indicating MS, but he seems improved a little.

**Kathryn Scott:** Friend of the Baileys; severe MS, losing use of arms and swallowing ability.

**Carol Sellers:** Mother of James Sellers, much improved following a heart attack.

**Wilson Stewart:** Diagnosed with prostate cancer, numbness and difficulty swallowing.

**Jeanne Vincent:** C.B. & Darrell Sehorn's sister, breast cancer which has metastasized to the bone. She is stable but very weak.

**Ron Vorheis:** He is still having serious health issues, but has more good days than bad.

IF YOU HAVE UPDATES OR NEW REQUESTS PLEASE INFORM THE EDITOR. [jerrydalemc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jerrydalemc@sbcglobal.net)



# Celebrations<sup>4</sup>

## Birthdays:

Merle Vines                    02/08  
Candace Sellers              02/13

## Anniversaries:

Henry & Virginia Sellers    02/14

# Condolences

Julia McKinney died January 30<sup>th</sup> and was buried in Dumas, Texas February 2<sup>nd</sup>. Our prayers go out to her husband and children



**LAUGH LOUDLY  
LOVE DEEPLY  
LIVE SIMPLY  
BE INNOVATIVE  
BE PASSIONATE**

# The Quester

By Jerry McClenagan  
Continued from January '09 newsletter



This is the final installment of the serialization of the forthcoming book, THE QUESTER. It is creative nonfiction based upon my research into the writings of Solomon and the words and life of Jesus. I use not only the traditional KJV, NKJV and NIV, but have relied heavily on *The Message* to give a contemporary flavor to the ancient proverbs of Solomon as well as the NT quotes by and about Christ.

## SCENE FOURTEEN

*Mortals make elaborate plans, but God has the last word. —Solomon (Prov. 16:1, Msg)*

*Set your heart on his [God's] kingdom and his goodness, and all these things will come to you as a matter of course. Don't worry at all then about tomorrow. Tomorrow can take care of itself! One day's trouble is enough for one day. —Jesus (Mt 6:33-34, JBP)*

"Master," Solomon said, "not once have I heard you say that our lives should be trouble-free. I have learned that life will be filled with trouble and uncertainty; but I believe it must still be approached with wise planning. A few of my proverbs: . . .

1. 'A sensible man watches for problems ahead and prepares to meet them. The simpleton never looks, and suffers the consequences' (Prov. 27:12, LB).
2. 'What a shame—yes, how stupid!—to decide before knowing the facts' (Prov. 18:13 LB)!
3. 'We should make plans—counting on God to direct us.' 'We can make our plans, but the final outcome is in God's hands. We can always "prove" that we are right, but is the Lord convinced? Commit your work to the Lord, then it will succeed' (Prov. 16:9, 1-3 LB)."

"You are correct on all counts, Solomon. I didn't promise a rose garden . . . well, perhaps I did; but I didn't promise there wouldn't be thorns. Long ago I put you in the position of kingship and placed a pen in your hand to write the wisdom I channeled through you. 'It is dangerous and sinful to rush into the unknown. A man may ruin his chances by his own foolishness and then blame it on the Lord!' (Prov. 19:2-3, LB)."

"As always, Lord, you have perfect recall of all that I penned. Everyone needs to learn to plan ahead—even for the generations to come. But one should be humble before you, for 'man proposes, but God disposes' (Prov. 19:21, LB)."

"I meant for each person to experience the excitement of planning for the good life. There is a balance between two of your adages: 'The intelligent man is always open to new ideas' (Prov. 18:15a, LB). But the propensity to be independent results in bad planning as well, so you added this advice: 'Get all the advice you can and be wise the rest of your life' (Prov. 19:20, LB)."

"I learned from personal experience, Lord, that 'any enterprise is built by wise planning, becomes strong through common sense, and profits wonderfully by keeping abreast of the facts' (Prov. 24:3-4). But even then I observed a strange and mysterious working in the universe. Perhaps it was in one of my more cynical moments that I wrote, 'Yes there is a time and a way for everything, though man's trouble lies heavy upon him; for how can he avoid what he doesn't know is going to happen'



# Heartbeats

Editorial  
Jerry McClenagan

Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Prov 4:23 (NIV)

## INNUNDATED WITH GOODNESS

The Shepherd is always there to lead, provide, and encourage. The only time He isn't there is when I stray.

Much like the little story about the wife's comment to her husband as they drove down the highway: "You used to sit close to me when we travelled." To which he replied, "I'm still sitting where I've always sat." (Today's car designs and seat belts have restricted this romantic practice, however.)

And Jesus is always there; He hasn't moved. "I will always be with you," He promised.

The 23rd Psalm goes on to say, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me." Let's see if I have this right: I follow the Shepherd; goodness and mercy follow me.

But it is even better than I could hope for. It isn't just a casual, not-in-a-hurry ambling behind me as I follow Christ. It is rather a focused, deliberate attempt to enfold me in God's care.

"Surely your goodness and un failing love will pursue me all the days of my life" (NLT). "Your beauty and love chase after me every day of my life" (MSG).

There is absolutely no excuse for me as a Christian to whine and moan about my lot in life. Not if I am conscientiously following Jesus.

A deeper look at the verse shows me that this goodness of God not only chases after me, but that it fully embraces and enfolds me. Young's Literal Translation has it: "Only goodness and mercy" pursue me. Is it not as the words of Joseph to his brothers after they had sold him into slavery? "Now, don't be sad or angry with yourselves that you sold me. God sent me ahead of you to save lives" (Gen 45:5, GW). Romans 8:28 still declares loud and clear:

**And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.** ■

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the **unforced rhythms of grace**. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." ~ Jesus. Matt 11:28-30 (MSG)

## GraceRhythms GraceRhythms

"The love of the Lord." Hosea 3:1 Believer, look back through all thine experience, and think of the way whereby the Lord thy God has led thee in the wilderness, and how He hath fed and clothed thee every day--how He hath borne with thine ill manners--how He hath put up with all thy murmurings, and all thy longings after the flesh-pots of Egypt--how He has opened the rock to supply thee, and fed thee with manna that came down from heaven. Think of how His grace has been sufficient for thee in all thy troubles--how His blood has been a pardon to thee in all thy sins--how His rod and His staff have comforted thee. When thou hast thus looked back upon the love of the Lord, then let faith survey His love in the fu-

ture, for remember that Christ's covenant and blood have something more in them than the past. He who has loved thee and pardoned thee, shall never cease to love and pardon. He is Alpha, and He shall be Omega also: He is first, and He shall be last. "For I am persuaded, that neither death; nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Surely as we meditate on "the love of the Lord," our hearts burn within us, and we long to love Him more.

—Morning and Evening / Spurgeon

OUT OF THE



& INTO THE  
WORLD

### CONTINUING PIPPERT'S evangelizing efforts:

Two things concern me about Cathy and so many young Christians I meet. I am distressed by a frighteningly debased view of the truth. Many students may be convinced that Christianity is true, but the truth of something doesn't seem to have any binding consequences. Second, there seems to be a disease of superficiality in their faith. This stems, I fear, from our impoverished understanding of what it means to call Jesus Lord. . . .

Unless seekers clearly understand the gospel, both its costs and privileges, before they commit themselves to God, our harvest will be poor indeed. We must communicate that salvation is clearly tied

to a relationship to the living Christ as *Lord* as well as Savior; it is tied to objective truth that demands a total response. Warm feelings and shivers are not enough; they are not even required.

Cathy believed in Jesus but she failed to integrate his person into her life. If we fail to integrate, what does that say about our spiritual beliefs in the first place? What does it mean, then, to allow Jesus to be the Lord of our lives? What does it mean that anything is the lord of our lives?

Just this: Whatever controls us is our lord. . . . If Jesus is our Lord, then he is the one who controls, he has the ultimate power.

[Read: Galatians 2:20; John 15:10]

## His Powerful Word

God means what He says. What He says goes. His powerful Word is sharp as a surgeon's scalpel, cutting through everything, whether doubt or defense, laying us open to listen and obey. Hebrews 4:12, The Message

### The Cost of Being a Disciple

25 A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, 26 "If you want to be my disciple, you must hate everyone else by comparison—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. 27 And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple. 28 "But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? 29 Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. 30 They would say, 'There's the per-

son who started that building and couldn't afford to finish it! 31 "Or what king would go to war against another king without first sitting down with his counselors to discuss whether his army of 10,000 could defeat the 20,000 soldiers marching against him? 32 And if he can't, he will send a delegation to discuss terms of peace while the enemy is still far away. 33 So you cannot become my disciple without giving up everything you own. 34 "Salt is good for seasoning. But if it loses its flavor, how do you make it salty again? 35 Flavorless salt is good neither for the soil nor for the manure pile. It is thrown away. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!"

~Luke 14:25-35 (NLT)





and our leaders seek God's way the greater the blessings for America. Prayer by and for each other increases our readiness to live humbly, wisely, and courageously, three attributes our president most definitely needs. The campaign is over; extraordinary challenges confront our chief executive and our populace: economic collapse, Jihad against America, nuclear weapons proliferating amongst our enemies, social issues that will move us closer to a Christian country or a humanistic nation. Indeed our president needs the humility of Joseph, the wisdom of Solomon, and the courage of David. Wherever we may be politically, these three qualities should guide our prayers for the leaders responsible for our nation. Leadership that lacks either of these three character traits will struggle with these trying times.

Our President needs the humility to live and lead in dependence upon God, practicing what Jesus lived, a willingness to serve in dependence on the Father.

*Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Phil 2:3-11, NASB)*

Let's pray that our new President Obama will listen to God with a clear awareness of who he

is and who he is not.

When we kneel before God beseeching Him to grant wisdom to our President, we are asking that he be led by the truth, acting with discernment and justice. We may be tempted to pray that policies or political ideologies we support, but it is imperative that we pray that "God's will be done", not ours nor the will of the man who resides in the Oval Office. Instead, we should ask God to grant our leader the wise implementation of the office's power and authority so that our people and our communities thrive.

As we pray for our new Commander in Chief, ask that God will bestow upon him the courage to stand up to all Goliaths. Given the social, economic, and security threats today, we are in danger. This is an exceptional time, when our leadership needs the backbone and strength to stand up against the wicked and stand up for our people, seeking, saying, and doing what is right.

We are not just praying for the church, for the community of God's people, instead, the blessing we seek isn't just for ourselves but for all our people. A nation, as a family, is blessed by the righteous in its midst.

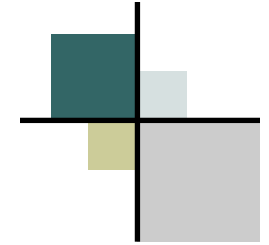
When we pray for these things—humility, wisdom, and courage—we are fulfilling a calling higher than that of any political party or campaign. We are seeking instead to be prayerful partners of God's blessing that comes, at least in part, through humble, wise and courageous leaders and presidents.

God Bless America,

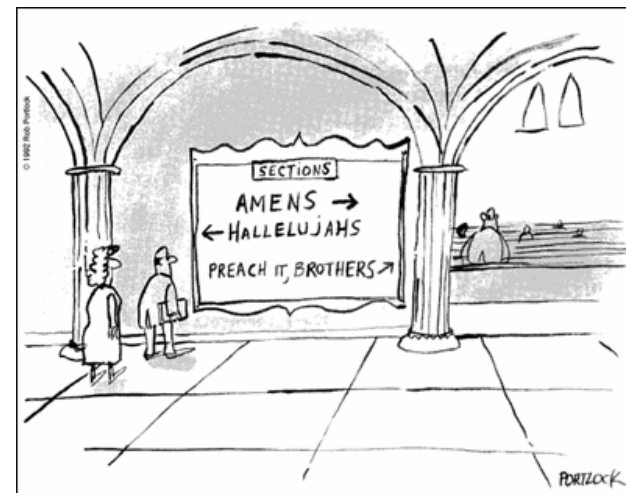
*Jeff Booth*

# CHUCKLES

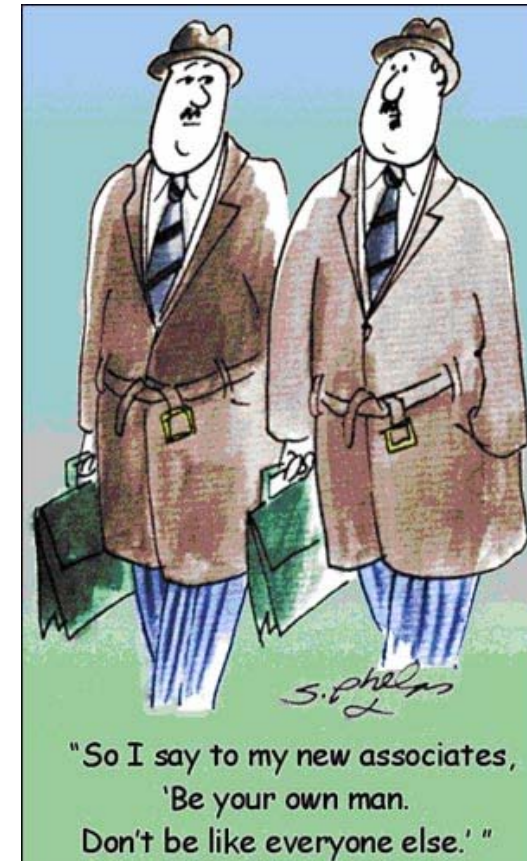
A cheerful disposition is good for your health; gloom and doom leave you bone-tired.



"Keewinn! You out here? Keewiinn! It's the pastor! Your wife wanted me to talk to you about spending more time at home! Keewiiiiinn!"



PORTLOCK



"So I say to my new associates, 'Be your own man. Don't be like everyone else.'"