

Christian Church of God

801 Quail Creek Drive
Amarillo, Texas 79124



Christian Church of God Newsletter



Hello My Brothers & Sisters in Christ!

As we step into 2011, this is typically the time of year to make resolutions. In the dictionary resolution is defined as "a course of action decided upon; a fixed purpose."

A woman walked into her bathroom at home. As she did, she saw her husband weighing himself on the bathroom scales, sucking in his stomach. The woman thought to herself, "He thinks that he will weigh less by sucking in his stomach." So, the woman rather sarcastically said to her husband, "That's not going to help." Her husband said, "Sure it will. It's the only way I can see the numbers."

We resolve to do things differently. We resolve to lose weight... to exercise more... to be a better person... to dispense with old bad habits and begin some new good ones. One of my favorite resolutions is to become as wonderful a person as my dog thinks I am.

I have a suggestion for a New Year's resolution that we ought to be able to remember. It is simple, broad & very general, but here it is. In 2011, as God's people, as His church, let's make

this one simple resolution that we're going to **make a change for the better.**

I encourage you to read Proverbs 3 for guidance in meeting this goal. You can draw upon the wisdom of Solomon by adhering to his admonishment to let love and faithfulness never leave you, by trusting in the Lord with all of your heart, by not being wise in your own eyes, by honoring the Lord with your wealth, by not despising the Lord's discipline, by searching for wisdom, living without fear, not withholding good from those who deserve it, not plotting harm against your neighbor. This is certainly the way to develop a positive outlook toward life. What do you anticipate for this year? Are you full of enthusiasm, looking forward eagerly to what each day will bring? Or are you filled with dread, worried that 2011 will be worse than 2010 for you?

The Apostle Paul, even though in prison, chained to a Roman guard, under horrible conditions, writes these wonderfully positive words, *Philippians 3:12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ ~ Cont. pg. 5*

The Pastor's Pen

Then the LORD said to me,
"Write my answer plainly on tablets, so that a
runner can carry the correct message to others."

Hab 2:2 (NLT)





The 'Son'ogram

11

Here is how I imagine God the Father viewed His newly conceived Son — Son of God, Son of Man — in the womb of the Virgin Mary . .

Let us go into His tabernacle; Let us worship at His footstool (Psalms 132:7, NKJV). / Behold, bless the LORD, All *you* servants of the LORD, Who by night stand in the house of the LORD! ² Lift up your hands *in* the sanctuary, And bless the LORD. ³ The LORD who made heaven and earth Bless you from Zion! (Psalms 134:1-3, NKJV) /Praise the name of the LORD. Praise him, you servants of the LORD ² who are standing in the house of the LORD, in the courtyards of the house of our God. ³ Praise the LORD because he is good. Make music to praise his name because his name is beautiful (Psalms 135:1-3, GW).

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CHECK THIS MEDIA

Email: CofG@SuddenLink.net

Our sermons broadcast on

KGRO Radio 90.5 AM

Sunday.

We are told in the Gospel of Matthew that the birth of Jesus took place like this: His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph, but before they came to the marriage bed, Joseph discovered she was pregnant. Joseph, chagrined but noble, determined to take care of things quietly so Mary would not be disgraced. While he was trying to figure a way out, he had a dream; God's angel spoke in the dream: "Joseph, son of David, don't hesitate to get married. Mary's pregnancy is Spirit-conceived. God's Holy Spirit has made her pregnant. She will bring a son to birth, and when she does, you, Joseph, will name him Jesus—'God saves'—because he will save his people from their sins."

Matthew adds the words of the prophet that a virgin would conceive, bear a son, and that they would name him Emmanuel (Hebrew for "God is with us"). (See Matt 1:18-23.)

Recently, as I began to think about this marvelous and unique event of history I recalled David's inspired words in Psalm 139, and considered that this psalm could also have been prophetic, voiced in the first person singular from the mouth of Jesus:

Oh yes, you shaped me first inside, then out; you formed me in my mother's womb. I thank you, High God—you're breathtaking! Body and soul, I am marvelously made! I worship in adoration—what a creation! You know me inside and out, you know every bone in my body; You know exactly how I was made, bit by bit, how I was sculpted from nothing into something. Like an open book, you watched me grow from conception to birth; all the stages of my life were spread out before you, The days of my life all prepared before I'd even lived one day. Your thoughts—how rare, how beautiful! (Psalms 139:13-17, MSG)

Nine months before Jesus' birth, He was conceived in Mary's womb, and the embryo began to form: *Like an open book, you watched me grow from conception to birth; all the stages of my life were spread out before you.* As the first few months transpired, could the scene have been something like this?

God the Father watched the tiny forming fingers and remembered how His Son had been the Creator-in-Action, the Word who now had become flesh.

He saw the forming face and recalled how His Son had visited prophets and kings in angelic form.

The Father observed the movement of His Son's arms, knowing that one day they would reach out and touch the diseased with healing, and would compel the storms of sea to be calm.

He watched the small feet, knowing they would walk the paths of earth to spread the Good News of His Kingdom.

He studied the closed mouth, knowing it would soon open to declare a powerful message of grace and freedom.

And as the tiny fetus squirmed and turned, the Father in Heaven closed His eyes and stifled the tears as He saw the future of His Baby Boy, turning and writhing in pain on an old rugged cross!

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16, NKJV).

~ Jerry McClenagan

TEST THIS QUESTION: What if God's only gift to you were his grace to save you? Would you be content? You beg him to save the life of your child. You implore him to remove the cancer from your body. What is his answer is, "My grace is enough"? Would you be content?

You see, from heaven's perspective, grace is enough. If God did nothing more than save us from hell, could anyone complain? . . . Having been given eternal life, dare we grumble at an aching body? Having been given heavenly riches, dare we bemoan earthly poverty? . . . ~In The Grip of Grace/Phil. 4:11

JOHN'S DESCRIPTION of the future [in the book of Revelation] steals your breath. His depiction of the final battle is graphic. Good clashes with evil. The sacred encounters the sinful. The pages howl with the shrieks of dragons and smolder with the coals of fiery pits. But in the midst of the battlefield there is a rose. John describes it in chapter 21. . . .

I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. . .

In this final mountaintop encounter, God pulls back the curtain and allows the warrior to peek into the homeland. When given the task of writing down what he sees, John chooses the most beautiful comparison earth has to offer. The Holy City, John says, is like "a bride beautifully dressed for her husband." ~The Applause of Heaven/John 3:29

WHILE WE LIVED in Rio de Janeiro, we met several American families who came to Brazil to adopt children. They would spend days, sometimes weeks, immersed in a different language and a strange culture. They fought the red tape and the large

fees, all with the hope of taking a child [home] to the United States. . . .

Hasn't God done the same for us? He entered our culture, battled the resistance, and paid the unspeakable price which adoption required. Legally we are his. He owns us. We have every legal privilege accorded to [his] child. We are just waiting for him to return. We are, as Paul said, "waiting for God to finish making us his own children" (Rom. 8:23). ~When Christ Comes/John 1:12

THE SHEPHERD KNOWS his sheep. He calls them by name.

When we see a crowd, we see exactly that, a crowd. . . . We see people, no persons, but people. A herd of humans. A flock of faces. That's what we see.

But not so with the Shepherd. To him every face is different. Every face is a story. Every face is a child. Every child has a name. . . .

The shepherd knows his sheep. He knows each one by name. The Shepherd knows you. He knows your name. And he will never forget it. ~When God Whispers Your Name/John 10:14

EVERY CHRISTMAS I read this reminder that came in the mail several years ago:

If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent an educator. If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist. If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist. But since our greatest need was forgiveness, God sent us a Savior. . . . ~When God Whispers Your Name/Isaiah 9:6

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.

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

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

Mary Jo Flatt: James Bailey's sister, was hospitalized recently to deal with complications of her bladder reconstruction surgery.

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

Joe Kirkpatrick: He has been diagnosed with stage 3 bladder cancer. He will begin treatment this month.

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

Dollie Meil: She suffers with cerebral palsy and lung problems.

Ted Rankin: MS; he is somewhat improved.

Jane Shaffer: Sister of Joe Kirkpatrick, malignant bone tumors. Recent tests show tumors are shrinking.

Laura Stephens: Mother-in-law of Shannon (Sehorn) Stephens, cancer in lungs, kidneys and liver. Undergoing more chemo.

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

Jo Beth Vines: Jo Beth is back home after a triple bypass. She is recovering slowly. God is good! Thanks you to all for your prayers

Ben Vorheis: Son of Mary, serving in Afghanistan.

Jackie Ballew: Fell, fractured eye socket, now in Dalhart hospital; should be going home any day now.

IF YOU HAVE UPDATES OR NEW REQUESTS PLEASE INFORM THE EDITOR.

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Celebrations⁴

JANUARY		FEBRUARY	
<u>Birthdays:</u>		<u>Birthdays:</u>	
Helen Kennedy	01-01	Merle Vines	02/08
Virginia Sellers	01-02	Candace Sellers	02/13
Francis Carlson	01-04		
Rudolph Rankin	01-15		
Norma Hamilton	01-25		
Roy Carlson	01-31		
<u>Anniversaries:</u>		<u>Anniversaries:</u>	
Linda & Darrell Sehorn	01-06	Henry & Virginia Sellers	02/14



Condolences

To the family of RON VORHEIS who died after suffering from Alzheimers.

To the family of JANET LYNN RANKIN VOSS who died December 20, 2010 at the age of 60 after a long, hard battle against cancer.

Lifepoints for 2011

If I am faithful to the duties of the present, God will provide for the future.

~Gregory T. Bedell

Faith is the belief that God is real and that God is good. Faith is not a mystical experience or a midnight vision or a voice in the forest . . . It is a choice to believe that the one who made it all hasn't left it all and that he still sends light into shadows and responds to the gestures of faith.

~ Max Lucado

Don't believe all you hear, spend all you have, or sleep all you want.

~ The Complete Life's Little Instruction Book, #699

If you can't believe in God the chances are your God is too small.

J. B. Phil-

lips

God gives every bird its food, but he does not throw it into the nest.

I said to a man who stood at the gate of the year: "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." and he replied, "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than a light and safer than a known way."

~ Minnie L. Haskins

NEVER LET THE ODDS KEEP YOU FROM PURSUING WHAT YOU KNOW IN YOUR HEART YOU WERE MEANT TO DO. / REMEMBER THAT YOU CAN MISS A LOT OF THINGS IN LIFE BY HAVING THE WRONG ATTITUDE.

~ The Complete Life's Little Instruction Book, #s1143, 1200



Guard your heart more than anything else, because the source of your life flows from it. ~Proverbs 4:23 (GW)

Dear Friends, As we enter a new year, I remind you, in the words of the Scripture:

“ . . . Everything belongs to you: . . . the whole world and life and death; the present and the future. Everything belongs to you, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.”

~1 Corinthians 3:21-23 (NLT)

There is indeed a future, and your hope will never be cut off.

~Prov 23:18 (GW)

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” ~ Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)



**Another year of progress, another year of praise,
Another year of proving thy presence all the days.**

Another year of service, of witness for thy love;

Another year of training for holier work above.

**Another year is dawning; dear Father, let it be,
on earth, or else in heaven, another year for thee.**

~Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879)



Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. NKJV.

The world says that the way to feel good about yourself is by climbing the ladder of success... by making a lot of money...by having influential friends ...by receiving a lot of awards ...by belonging to the right circles. Those are the things that are supposed to make you feel good about yourself. But the Bible teaches us that we are to feel good about ourselves because God loves us. You are such a treasured person in God's sight that He gave His only Begotten Son for you. That makes you valuable, & you can feel good about yourself. Those who do not believe in creation, but consider themselves products of blind chance, just accidents of nature, may find it difficult to have a good, positive self image. The Bible tells us that we are wanted and loved & cared for by God Himself for we are created in His image!

We must also develop a positive attitude toward the Church, supporting, upholding and believing in Christ's body. One thing that is right about the church is that our desire is to preach the Gospel...share the truth and lift up our Lord, Jesus Christ...., to reach out to a lost and dying world with the message of salvation. Yet, at times people criticize the church. The world would consider something waste that we consider valuable. The world thinks you're wasting your time going to church. You want to hear about God & Jesus Christ, & the world thinks that's a waste. When the world looks at your tax return and sees that you gave away 10% or more of your income to God, it would call that a waste, too. But the things the world calls wasteful today are the only things that will last for all eternity.

Also, we should display a positive attitude toward others. How many more people do you think we could influence for Christ if we just treated people kindly? This is a hard world, a world that doesn't always exercise courtesy. Sometimes it's a dog eat dog world. People are jockeying for positions on the roadways and in their companies, and they're filled with all kinds of stress and anxiety. You see, if we treat each other with love, then the kingdom of God is advanced. People

need people...there's a song about that. But more than that people need positive people bringing a positive influence in their life.

Another year has come & gone. A new year stretches before us. Ask the Lord, to help you redeem the time. ...to have a truly happy New Year! And during the New Year may you have:

- enough happiness to keep you sweet
- enough trials to keep you strong
- enough sorrow to keep you human
- enough hope to keep you happy
- enough failure to keep you humble
- enough success to keep you eager
- enough friends to give you comfort
- enough wealth to meet your needs
- enough enthusiasm to make you look forward to tomorrow, and
- enough determination to make each day better than the day before.

Making resolutions is a very Christian thing to do. How do your resolutions measure up to what Solomon wanted? By doing this we say, "I want to be better prepared for life in the Kingdom of God by starting to live a more godly life right now." All this could be summed up in one resolution for the year: a change for the better. Use the 12 months. 52 weeks. 365 days. 8760 hours. 525, 600 minutes and 31,536,000 seconds of this year wisely as Solomon exhorts... for this is to the glory of our Lord! What will you do with all this time?

Romans 13:11 -12 says, "The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light."

May your mind and your heart be closely aligned to the will of God in your life and may you know his blessings for trusting in the Lord & loving Him... place your life in His hands & allow Him to use you to His glory.

Blessings to you this year!

Jeff Booth

Gene Shelburne

[EDITOR'S NOTE: I thought you would find the words of my friend and colleague fascinating in view of your various backgrounds regarding Christmas. ~ JDM]

Christmas Changes

I was shocked to learn that the hottest two issues in American pulpits right after the Civil War were slavery and whether to celebrate Christmas.

Two hundred years earlier, laws in the English colonies mirrored those in Puritan England. Closing your store or taking a holiday on Christmas was against the law. Lawmen were dispatched to catch and fine any culprits who dared to celebrate the holiday.

In the centuries since, most denominations have shed their opposition to Christmas, but seldom have our changes in one group tracked the same timetable as similar shifts among our neighbors.

The fellowship I grew up in was still anti-Christmas, while our neighbors in those pre-vandalism days erected elaborate manger scenes in their church yards.

Those who shied away from Christmas back then were not as bah-humbug as I assumed. Their scruples against the holiday were rooted in historical reservations that most of them probably were unaware of. It made them feel a bit holier and bit less like Scrooge when they pointed to the holiday's pagan roots as a good reason to avoid Yuletide festivities. As a young minister I couldn't

keep from observing that all the pagans in town thought Christmas was a Christian holiday, and just a handful of straight-laced Christians labeled it pagan.

In our pre-WW II Protestant groups older folks had been born almost a century closer to the Reformation, so it should not have surprised us that their mature pastors (trained in the 1800's) almost unanimously censored Christmas as a Papist holiday. It didn't take a calendar expert to discover it, but Christmas-objectors were right when they insisted that nobody knows the actual date of Jesus' birth.

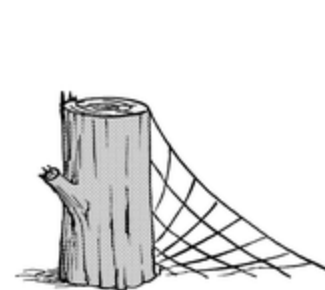
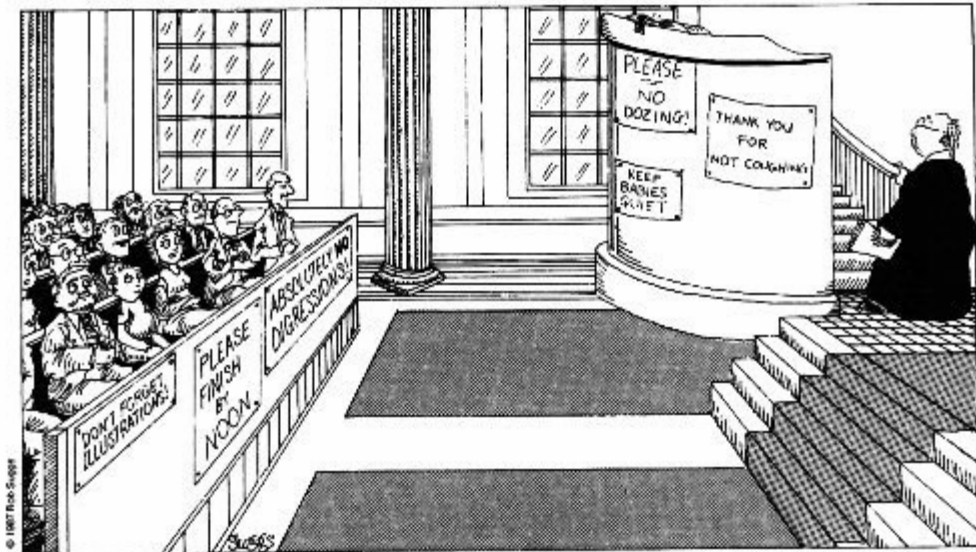
And not a few devout Christians, serious about God's word, searched the Scriptures for verses that seemed to back up their inherited discomfort with Christmas. It took them a lot of years to realize that most of those verses actually had nothing to do with the December holiday.

Against this background, imagine my delight last December when I spotted the message on the display sign of a large congregation that traditionally has opposed (or at least ignored) Christmas. There for all the city to see they said, "Happy Birthday, Jesus!"

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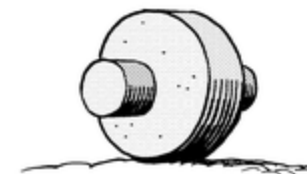
A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person's strength.
~ Prov 17:22 (NLT)



WEBLOG



7-30



MOBILE DEVICE



TEXT MESSAGE

