



CHRIST CHURCH  
CROUCH END HILL  
LONDON N8 8AX

**CROSSLINKS**

"I WILL LIFT UP MY EYES"

**A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH ON THE HILL**



**JANUARY 2009    ISSUE 9.103**

**Vicar's five- minute reflection**  
**YOU CAN BE HAPPY IN 2009**



At the beginning of a new year it is customary for us to greet each other with "Happy New Year!" We give the greeting on New Year's Day, but on the seventh day of the new year, are we still saying it? Are we wishing friends to be happy for only a day or for a whole year? How can one be happy for a whole year when the forecast for the new year predicts unhappy times? Can you be happy if in the coming year you may have less to eat, if you must make old clothes do for another year, if a vacation is out of the question, and if you must worry about the bills coming due?

As I was preparing this article for Crosslinks (on 31st December), I decided to go down the memory lane and ponder how we have all fared in 2008. I will not bore you with the gloomy financial periscope, the downward spiral of the sterling against major world currencies nor the threat of war in the middle East. I choose not to rehash the daily diet of news about job redundancies and the like. I have decided to focus my mind on the good things that the Lord has done for us. And the greatest of the lot is again the wonderful reminder that God came to us on Christmas day to help us out of our sin and filth and lead us to His glorious presence. And for Him to do this, He was born in the lowliest of places – a cattle shed. This clearly demonstrates that the lowliest person can identify with Emmanuel – God with us.

Regardless of conditions, we do want to be happy. A magazine called "Today" took a poll of 40,000 readers. Eighty-three percent responded that their main question was, "How can I find real happiness?" If anybody should be happy, it is a Christian. Christians have good reason to be the happiest people in the world as their happiness is not based upon the condition of the world but upon the condition of the heart. They are happy because of God and not because of man.



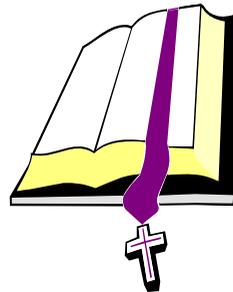
We Christians are the happiest people in the world because Christ has set us free by his death on the cross. This sacrifice on our behalf frees us from the guilt and power of sin. Now we are free and clothed in the robe of righteousness-the perfect righteousness of Jesus. God does not see us in the nakedness of our sins but sees us covered with the perfection of Christ.

There is another reason why you as a Christian can be happy throughout the coming year. It is because you can say in Christ, "I shall overcome." A Christian lives with a sense of victory over the world. This simply means that a Christian is happy even when things are bad, when life is in the winter season. To be a Christian does not guarantee that the skies will always be blue and the highways of life will be flower-strewn. Like every other person in the world, a Christian experiences the seamy side of life with its disappointments, sorrows, tragedies, injustices, and misunderstandings. Suffering and death come to a Christian as well as to the non-Christian. The difference is that a Christian lives with a spirit of "I shall overcome." In the darkest hour of his life when he was faced with the cross, Jesus said to his disciples, "In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world." Happiness comes from a confidence in God's overruling providence. Christians go through life with trust in these words, "All things work together for good to them that love God ..." God can take the worst and change it into the best for us. (concluded on page 14)

### Memory Verse

Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the Lord rises upon  
you. See, darkness covers the earth  
and thick darkness is over the peoples,  
but the Lord rises upon you and his  
glory appears over you.

**(Isaiah 60:1,2)**



## NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE FROM GREAT MINDS



### A.W. Tozer's New Year's Message

Tozer once penned this greeting for the cover of the January 1, 1938, edition of *Alliance Witness*. It read in part:

*While all the promises of God are true and precious, yet it is good to take them one by one and especially commit ourselves to them. If you ask God to give you a special message for the opening year, one that will be made seasonable and real in every exigency of the unknown future, you will be surprised how faithfully He will fulfil His Word, and how fittingly the Holy Spirit will speak to you of things to come, and anticipate the real needs and exigencies of life.*

### Matthew Henry's New Year

In his journal on January 1, 1705, Matthew Henry wrote:

*Not renouncing, but repeating and ratifying all my former covenants with God, and lamenting that I have not lived up more closely to them; I do in the beginning of this New year solemnly make a fresh surrender of myself, my whole self, body, soul, and spirit, to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, my Creator, my Redeemer, and Sanctifier, covenanting and promising, not in any strength of my own, for I am very weak, but in the strength of the grace of Jesus Christ, that I will endeavour this year to stand and complete in all the Will of God.*

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Have you ever noticed that your car's windshield is fifty times larger than your rear view mirror? It is quite simple—we are to spend 50 times as much energy and time looking forward than looking backwards. When you drive on the M25, A1 or any of our Motorways, it is good to occasionally check your rear view mirror to see what is behind you, but it is dangerous to drive using only your rear view mirror. If you live mentally and spiritually only looking backwards, you will never get started to run the good race and to fight the good fight.

D.A.

## LET US PRAY OUR WAY INTO THE YEAR 2009

"Eternal God, before whom we are creatures of the day and children of the hours,

I lift my prayers to you as I stand in the shadow of the waning year.

I am aware once more of the fleetingness of time, and the transience of my being.

So much has happened to me during the year which has now slipped away,

So much of hurt and happiness, of loss and gain, of hope and fear.

I did not expect the sorrow that was thrust upon me. I was surprised by the turn of events that changed my life.

As I look back, I remember how different life a year ago was,

The slow, quiet erosion of the days has gone on, and I am not quite the same person I was, for better or for worse.

I have had a whole year to grow in love or to fall out of love, to turn my hands to constructive tasks, or to turn away in idleness.

I have had a whole year, and now it is gone.

No matter what I have done or failed to do, O Lord, keep me from dwelling on it too much.

If I have failed, help me put my failure behind me.

If I have done well, help me to be glad but not complacent. There are other hills to climb and new hopes to be realized.

I know, O God, you understand my need to look back for awhile, wistfully peering at the past. But start me looking forward.

I do not know what events are ahead, but I do know you are there, and I am grateful. AMEN.

## SUPPORT YOUR PASTOR!

**'Hold them in highest regard ...'** 1 Thessalonians 5:13

Phil Hines tells a humorous imaginary story about Jesus walking along the road one day and seeing a man crying. When He asked what was wrong, the man replied, 'I'm blind' so Jesus healed him. Further along He met another man in tears and asked him the same question. In response to Jesus' question he replied, 'I'm a pastor.' So Jesus sat down and wept along with him! Pastoring can be a thankless job; that's why the bible says, 'Hold them in highest regard.'

Somebody has described the 'Perfect Pastor' as one who preaches 20 minutes and sits down, condemns sin without offending anybody, works 16-hour days doing everything from preaching to sweeping, makes £400 a week and gives £200 back to the church, wears nice clothes, has a model family, supports good causes and helps beggars who stop by the church. He's 36 and he's been preaching for 40 years! He has a burning desire to work with young people and spends all his time with senior citizens. He smiles all the time while keeping a straight face, because he has a keen sense of humour that finds him seriously dedicated. He makes 20 visits a day, spends every waking moment evangelising and is always in his office in case he's needed. The bad news is, he burned out and died at 37! Paul writes,, 'Appreciate ... pastoral leaders who gave you the Word' Hebrews 13:7). 'Honour those ... who work so hard for you, who have ... the responsibility of ... guiding you ... Overwhelm them with appreciation and love!' (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13). In other words, support your pastor!

Bible in one year

### **HOW WONDERFUL!**

Because Jesus came out of eternity He is able to lead us into eternity. The Son of God became the Son of man in order that the sons of men might become the sons of God. How wonderful. How very wonderful.

D.A

## THE DEAD CHURCH

A new Pastor in a small Oklahoma town spent the first four days making personal visits to each of the members, inviting them to come to his first services.

The following Sunday the church was all but empty. Accordingly, the Pastor placed a notice in the local newspapers, stating that, because the church was dead, it was everyone's duty to give it a decent Christian burial. The funeral would be held the following Sunday afternoon, the notice said.

Morbidly curious, a large crowd turned out for the "funeral." In front of the pulpit, they saw a closed coffin, smothered in flowers. After the Pastor delivered the eulogy, he opened the coffin and invited his congregation to come forward and pay their final respects to their dead church.

Filled with curiosity as to what would represent the corpse of a "dead church," all the people eagerly lined up to look in the coffin. Each "mourner" peeped into the coffin then quickly turned away with a guilty, sheepish look.



In the coffin, tilted at the correct angle, was a large mirror.

Author is Unknown

So, how are you going to contribute to the vitality of God's Church this year? You cannot afford to fold your arms. There are opportunities for you to use that your "single" talent so that others may come to share in the grace of God through Jesus Christ. You may not be able to preach like your minister, but you can invite someone regularly to come and listen to the good news. You can be an Andrew to them. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah". And as for Philip, He found Nathaniel and invited him to Jesus. Don't hoard God's grace, share it.

D.A.

## POETRY CORNER

### AFTER ITS' OVER

The weeks that follows Christmas  
Its to me the best of all.  
The rushing days are over  
And friends begin to call.

What joy to read the greetings  
Besides the lighted hearth.  
What pleasure now to travel  
The miles of memories.

The week that follows Christmas  
Holds restfulness and cheers  
It's a time for dedication  
At the closing of the year.

Sue Ogilvie-Arendse  
(1927-2008)

### THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER REQUESTS

This month we pray for members of our church family whose surnames begin with G, H, J, K, L

Gallagher Denise; Garness Terri; Goldson Barrington & Sharon; Green Peter; Greenaway Catherine; Haggerty Mark & Margaret; Horton Betty; Horton Rosemary; Hunt Ruth; Jackson Elizabeth; Joseph Etwyn; Kambeja Harriet; Kirsakye Sydney and Barnadette; Lines Florence; Liscott Peter; Lukomona Desiree.

## **NOTICE BOARD**

### **Update on Church Renovation Appeal**

Construction work on the nave and chancel commenced on 12th January. Due to the works and the erection of scaffolds in the church, weekly activities of the toddlers, and uniformed organisations which take place in the church are suspended. We hope the works will take about eight weeks. We apologise for any inconvenience.

Donations to the fund are still welcome as we are yet to meet our target.

### **Miracles of New Birth**

We rejoice with the families of Haggerty, Agbelusi and Cox for the additions to their families and our church family.

Anaiah Olukemi was born on 9th December 2008 to Sope & Shireen Agbelusi.

Daniel was born on 19th December 2008 to Matthew and Gloria Cocks.

Katie was born on 19th December 2008 to Mark and Funmi Haggerty.

### **Call to Glory**

Madam Aolat Matanmi-Ogunbona (Agbelusi) passed on to glory on 31st December 2008 at the age of 100. She will be buried at Lagos, Nigeria on 23rd January 2009. Madam Aolat is the mother of our vicar Rev Dele Agbelusi.

### **Christ Church is looking for a Youth worker**

Do you love the Lord Jesus and are interested in working with Young people; can spare Sundays and possibly one week-day? Let us meet and discuss the terms. Please contact the vicar on 02083401566 for a brief chat.

# LAUGHTER LINES

## Which Way to Heaven?

Reverend Billy Graham tells of a time early in his ministry when he arrived in a small town to preach a sermon. Wanting to mail a letter, he asked a young boy where the post office was. When the boy had told him, Dr. Graham thanked him and said, "If you'll come to the Baptist Church this evening, you can hear me telling everyone how to get to heaven."



The boy replied, "I don't think I'll be there... You don't even know your way to the post office."

## Lesson in Lying

A minister told his congregation, "Next week I plan to preach about the sin of lying. To help you understand my sermon, I want you all to read Mark 17."

The following Sunday, as he prepared to deliver his sermon, the minister asked for a show of hands. He wanted to know how many had read Mark 17. Every hand went up. The minister smiled and said, "Mark has only sixteen chapters. I will now proceed with my sermon on the sin of lying."

## Preaching

The preacher was wired for sound with a lapel mike, and as he preached, he moved briskly about the platform, jerking the mike cord as he went.

Then he moved to one side, getting wound up in the cord and nearly tripping before jerking it again. After several circles and jerks, a little girl in the third pew leaned toward her mother and whispered, "If he gets loose, will he hurt us?"

# LAUGHTER LINES

## Please move your cat!

On a sunny Sunday afternoon, two young church members were going door to door to invite people to visit their services. When they knocked on one door, it was immediately clear the woman who answered was not happy to see them.

She told them in no uncertain terms that she did not want to hear their message, and before they could say anything more, she slammed the door in their faces.

To her surprise, however, the door did not close; in fact, it bounced back open. She tried again, really putting her back into it, and slammed it again with the same result - the door bounced back open.

Convinced these rude young people were sticking their foot in her door, she reared back to give it a slam that would teach them a lesson. Just then, one of them said quietly: "Ma'am, before you do that again, you really need to move your cat."

## From a 3-year-old:

"Our Father, Who does art in heaven, Harold is His name. Amen."

## Cost of a Sermon

One beautiful Sunday morning, a priest announced to his congregation: "My good people, I have here in my hands three sermons...a \$100 sermon that lasts five minutes, a \$50 sermon that lasts fifteen minutes, and a \$10 sermon that lasts a full hour.

"Now, we'll take the collection and see which one I'll deliver."

## BIBLE STUDY : PHILIPPIANS 3

One year, a man who was making New Year's resolutions said, "I will not get upset when Sam and Charlie make jokes about my baldness." The next year, he said, "I won't get annoyed when Charlie and Sam kid me about my hairpiece." A year later, he said, "I will not lose my temper when Charlie and Sam laugh at me for wearing a girdle." The following year, it was, "I will not speak anymore to Charlie and Sam."

**If you look over your shoulder to see what other runners are doing, you will break your stride and may ultimately lose the race.**

We adjust our resolutions with the passing of time, don't we? But instead of more resolutions, we need a spiritual solution, and it is found in the pages of Scripture. In Philippians 3, the apostle Paul identified what really matters in life. He helps us to understand what our priorities ought to be:

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ. . . . (verses 7-8 NIV)

Next, he shared what he really wanted in life: "Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (NIV 13-14)

On more than one occasion, Paul compared the Christian life to running a race. But we need to realize that it is not a 100-meter sprint; it is a long-distance run. Consequently, there are some principles we need to remember as we run this race.

We must pace ourselves. It is not all that significant if you hold first place for nine out of 10 laps. What matters is the tenth lap.

## BIBLE STUDY : PHILIPPIANS 3

That is why David said, "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. (Psalm 51:10 NIV). "Steadfast" could be translated "consistent." In other words, David was saying, "Give me consistency. Help me to stay with this." We need to learn to pace ourselves.

**We must play by the rules, or we will be disqualified.**

In an athletic event, you have to play by the rules. You can't make up your own. In this race, we have a rulebook called the Bible. If we are going to run, then we need to play by God's rules that He has given to us in Scripture.

**We must get rid of any extra weight or sin that would slow us down.** We need to run light. Periodically, we need to take stock of our lives as Christians and ask ourselves the question, "Is this a wing or a weight? Is this speeding me on my way spiritually or slowing me down?"

**We must run with the right motive.** Paul said, "I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. ... " If you are a Christian because you want to impress someone, then you are not going to make it in this race. You must run this race for the Lord himself. It is what will give you the strength to keep going when things get hard-and they will.

**Don't look back.** Paul said, "Forgetting those things which are behind. ... " If you look over your shoulder to see what other runners are doing, you will break your stride and may ultimately lose the race. Forget the things that are behind.

**Press on, even when it gets hard. Paul said, "I press toward the goal. . . . "** The word "press" comes from the Greek word agonize, which points to strong exertion. There are times in our lives as Christians when it gets hard. But it is then that we learn what it means to walk by faith and not by feeling. You are not alone. Jesus is on your side and He will see you through.

D.A.

## Vicar's 7-minute reflection (continued from page3)

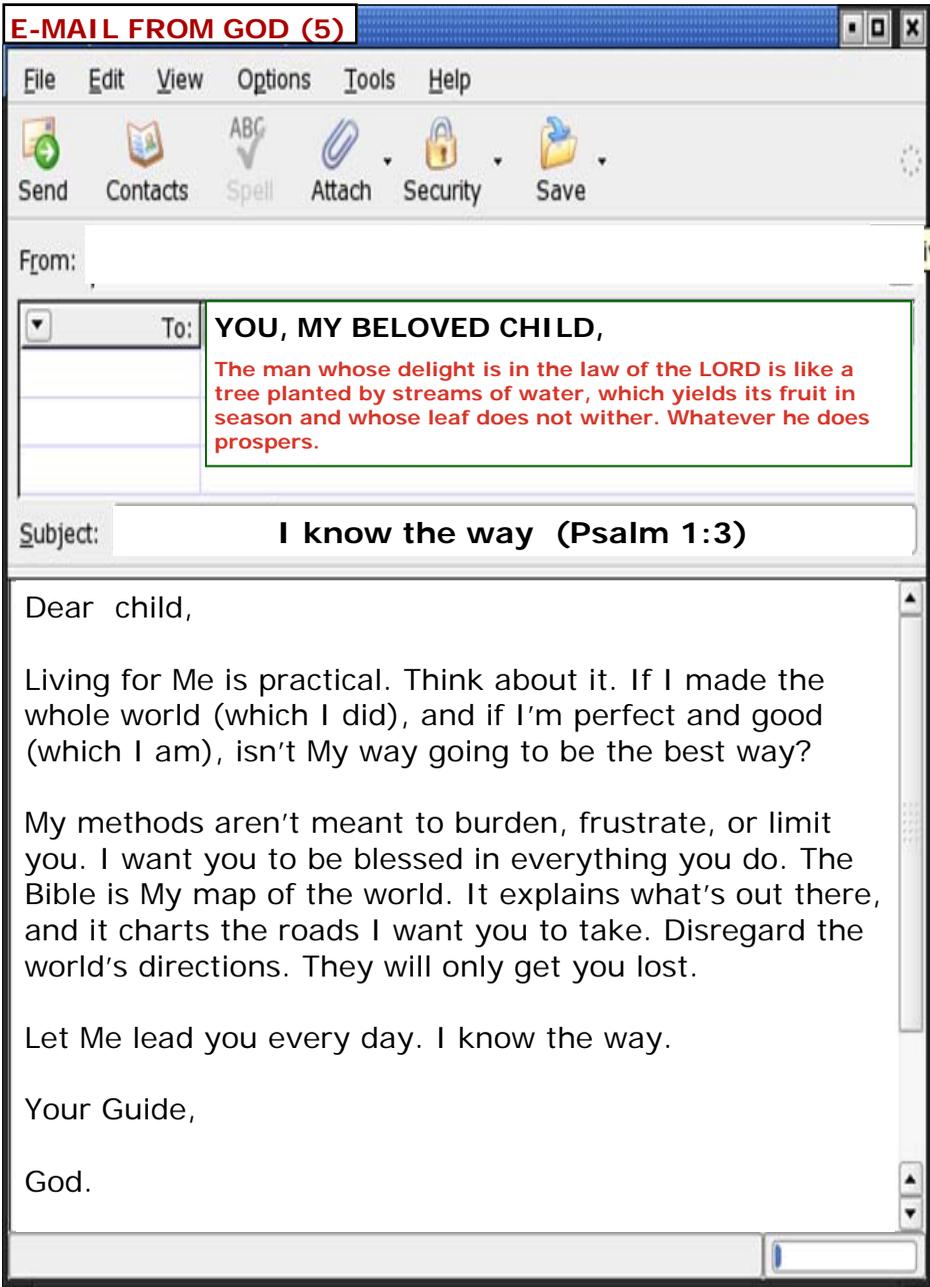
One day a lady showed the great artist, John Ruskin, a very expensive handkerchief, ruined by an indelible ink spot that had fallen on it. When Ruskin asked for it, the lady wondered what he would want with a ruined piece of cloth. Some days later he brought it back to her. Starting with the ink blot as a centre, Ruskin worked out a beautiful pattern and design. The handkerchief was now more beautiful than ever. That is what God does with our blunders, our failures and our sorrows. Knowing this, we are happy to have a God like that.

In His mercy God takes the unfortunate things that befall us and makes us better persons out of them. As I prepared to write this article, I receive news from Lagos that my mother died in the early hours of 31st Dec 2008. I was numb and the only thing I remembered to say was "Thank God for Jesus". I was determined not to spoil the fun and the joy of those around me as we prepared for the watch night service. I decided not to allow grief to obscure my vision of the Lord as I beheld His face in anticipation of His blessing on me so that I could in turn bless others. Whatever the case may be, with God on my side, 2009 will be a happy and fulfilling year for me, even with the reality of burial ceremonies for my mother within the first three weeks of the year.

True Christians have a radiance that will not go away no matter what happens. They can laugh at death, even when their dearest dies. How can this be? It is because as Christians they see beyond death and the grave to life and the resurrection. Christ conquered death, and because Christ lives, those in Christ live, too. This turns a Christian funeral into a victory celebration. God is with us and for us. In the coming year God is going to do something good for us. As Christians we enter the new year with joyful anticipation, excitement and with high hopes for the very best. I wish you a happy 2009 in Jesus Christ.

Dele Agbelusi

# HEAVENLY CORRESPONDENCE



Adapted from 'e-mail from God for Teens'-Clonigers

## MOTTO/TEXT FOR THE YEAR

**“I CAN DO EVERYTHING THROUGH HIM WHO GIVES  
ME STRENGTH” PHILIPPIANS 4:13**

### FINDING OUT ABOUT ...CHRIST CHURCH?

Tel/Fax: 020 8340 1566

We are a family of men and women, boys and girls who are trying to live for God in a world that has largely chosen to ignore Him.

We believe that it is God's world and that He has given the answer to all human problems in Jesus Christ.

As a body of believers, we offer to all who come regular opportunities for worship and service that point the way to God as our strongest resources in all aspects of life.

We will be pleased to welcome you to any of our activities. You will find a warm welcome at Christ Church.

#### Times of worship and fellowship are shown below:

- Sunday**
- **8.00am.** Holy Communion ( Book of Common Prayer)
  - **10.30am.** Main service with Crèche facilities
- There is family/parade service once every month— usually the third Sunday of the month unless otherwise indicated.
- **5.00pm.** Evening worship

#### ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK

- Sunday - Choir practice in church (**9.30 am**)
- Monday - Baby n' Toddler Group and Brownies *meetings in church suspended for 9 weeks due to renovation works.*
- Prayer meetings in church-19th January, 2nd & 16th February (**8 pm**)
- Wednesday - Bible Fellowship in church - West Chapel (**7:45 pm for 8.00pm start**)
- Friday - Bible Fellowship in church - West Chapel (**2.00 pm**)
- Scouts meeting in hall (**6.00 pm**) - *Scout meetings in church suspended for 9 weeks due to renovation works.*
  - Music Team practice in choir vestry (**6.30 pm**)

Enquiry/Counselling/Prayer Lifeline - please phone 020 8340 1566

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**Church Wardens:** Peter Green, Charles Murphy

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**YOUR COMMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME**

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