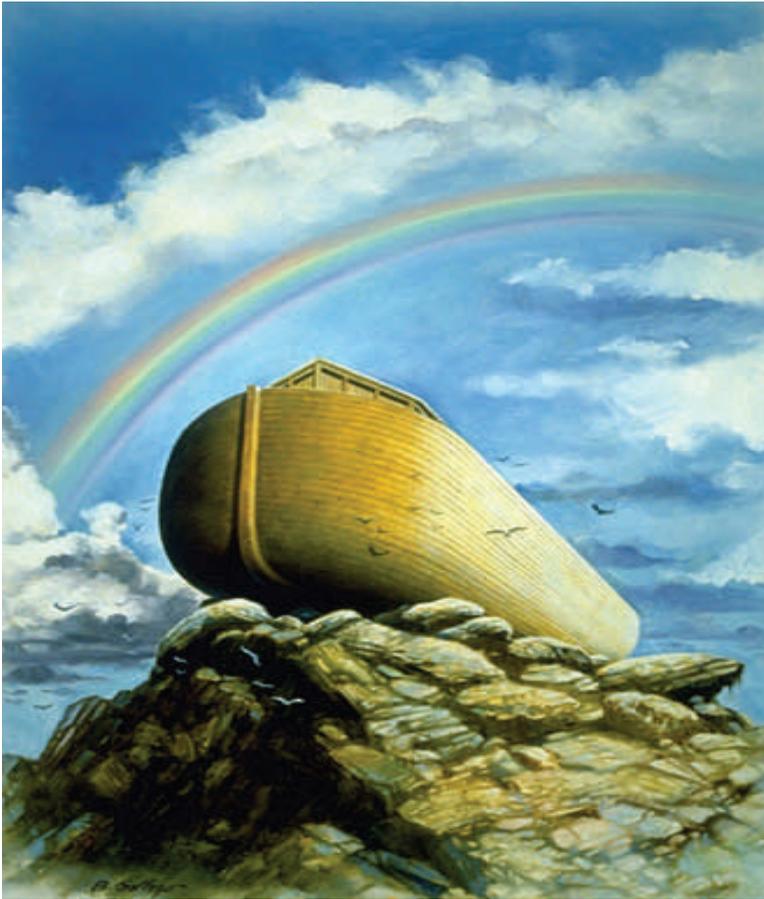




**CHRIST CHURCH
CROUCH END HILL
LONDON N8 8AX
CROSSLINKS
A NEW BEGINNING**

A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH ON THE HILL



The first rainbow, a sign of God's promise never to send another flood to destroy all of life. *Copyright © 1989 Blas Gallego.*

JANUARY 2008 ISSUE 8.92

Vicar's three minute reflection

Give Thanks . . . in Everything



Sometimes worship and thanksgiving can be hard work. That may be because we are down or depressed or things aren't going all that well for us. Maybe hardship or tragedy has struck our lives and we find it very difficult to appreciate God's love in such circumstances. Yet the Bible urges us to give thanks to the Lord. Psalm 106:1 says, "Praise the Lord! Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever" (NKJV). We are not told to give thanks to the Lord because we feel good; we are to give thanks to the Lord because He is good. As we approach God to ask for new blessings, we should never forget to say thank you for the blessings already given, whatever our present circumstances may be. We should be just as definite in returning thanks as we are in requesting help. But many times we aren't. We are quick to ask for help, but we are slow in giving thanks. If we consider the story of the ten lepers healed by Jesus Christ, only ten percent of the lot returned to give thanks.

When we reflect on God's goodness, pure gratitude wells up in our hearts for all He's given to us. And it's easy to be joyful and at peace.

Thanksgiving in the Greek is called *eucharistia*. The heart of that word is *charis*, which means grace. So the heart of eucharist is grace, and the heart of grace, *charis*, is the word, *chairô*, which means "to rejoice." Thanksgiving, then, means to rejoice in God's presence for blessings freely received from him. It is joy expressed in word and deed toward God for his grace.

In *King Lear*, Shakespeare says, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child." Worse, I would say, is the ingratitude of born-again children of God. Unbelievers have no reason to thank God; rather, it is their nature to credit everything to themselves or to luck. Paul speaks about such people in Romans 1:21: "For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him."

In 2 Chronicles 20 we find King Jeshoshaphat facing a serious trouble: A vast army was coming against him (v. 2). But in verses 5-12



Jehoshaphat prayed, "O lord...power and might are in your hand ... we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you." What followed was an assurance from the Word of the Lord. Now read verse 21: "After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise him for the splendour of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: 'Give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures forever.'" As they went out to face this vast army, they gave thanks to God.

In Acts 16 we see Paul in deep trouble in Philippi. He was beaten and thrown into prison, and his feet were in stocks. Yet in verse 25 we read, "About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God." They were more focussed on the goodness of our Lord Jesus than on their present incarceration. This is what it means to give thanks to God always.

Often we get into such a rush to get more that we do not notice what we have. It is easy to focus on how the glass is half empty instead of how it is half full. Even when it is almost empty there is still a little in it. Choosing to notice what we have often results in mental and emotional upliftment. A few times a week, I make a deliberate decision to notice what small and large things I should be thankful to God for. I put that into a quick prayer and then seek more. When I do this my mood improves and I am not as stuck on the negative things around me. I am able to see by faith that God is taking tender care of me one day at a time. I am able to give thanks to the Lord for the events of 2007, and how much His presence in my life, and the prayers of His children on my behalf have worked to make the difference in my situation. I am able to appreciate that a new year can begin only because the old one ends. When I reflect on God's goodness, pure gratitude wells up in my heart for all He's done for me. And it's easy to be joyful and at peace.

Dele Agbelusi

Memory Verse

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5: 18



SECRET PASSAGEWAYS BETWEEN WOMEN'S WORDS AND MEN'S EARS



After twenty-seven years of marriage, I've discovered some of the secret passageways between women's words and men's ears. The following four communication techniques have helped my husband and I understand each other – demystifying some of our differences.

1. Allow Room for Venting. I tend to think aloud. I use my words to help me sort out my thoughts and decide how I feel about something. Sometimes I don't want a solution; I just want to "vent." For some reason this makes my husband, Ron, uncomfortable because he wants to fix it, forget it, and move on.

When we were first married, we moved into a new neighbourhood and began attending a new church. I was almost friendless because I was shy and waiting for a warm and wonderful woman to approach me with a sign on her forehead that read "Friend of Nancy's." She hadn't yet appeared, so I wanted to share my feelings with Ron, "I'm lonely. I wish I had a girlfriend." Ron, with the best of intentions, started to help me solve my problem. He gave me a lecture titled "Friendship 101": In order to have a friend you must be a friend. What have you done to be friendly? Then he... got out a legal pad ... and wrote in block letters, "Nancy's Friendship Goals." Next, he started to draw a flow chart. He was befuddled when I started to cry and said, "I don't want a diagram. I want a friend!" Now if I just want to vent, I tell Ron ahead of time. He's even learned to ask me, "Do you want my advice or just my ear?" What a guy. I think I'll keep him!

2. Want to Please Me? Don't Tease Me! Many couples tease each other, and if you can keep it friendly, it might be fun. If, however, your humour is at someone else's expense, it's too costly. My husband is a funny guy...He was always looking for a laugh. So when I ruined a meal or gained weight, he thought of it as new comedy material. I thought his comments were insulting and cruel. We had some of our biggest fights about his definition of humour. After I explained how much it hurt me, he stopped making my butt the butt of his jokes. He's still funny, but now, we share the same rule: cruel personal insults are not funny.

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Secret passageways between women's words and men's ears

3. Be Specific; Be Heard. A few years ago, I hit on a principle that's saved us from hundreds of misunderstandings and arguments. One afternoon, I was frantically cleaning the house for our son Nick's birthday party. Ron was sitting in the living room reading the newspaper. "Will you please pick up those papers," I asked, "and sweep the front steps? They'll be here soon!" "Uh..." he grunted, without looking up. "I'll take that as a *yes*," I shouted as I sprinted upstairs to fix my hair and make-up. Twenty-five minutes later, I looked out the window, and saw a guest's car in the driveway. "They're here!" I heard Ron as he jumped up from his chair, shoved the papers into the wastebasket, and ran to the front door with the broom. He was sweeping the porch steps as our guests walked up the sidewalk!

He had no idea why I was upset. Later, when our guests left, I said, "Why didn't you do what I asked you to do?" He said, "I did!" "But you did it when our company was in the driveway!" "Yeah ... so? You didn't say *when* to do it." He was right—I didn't. I had the *expectation* that he'd do it as soon as I asked, but I wasn't specific on my time-frame. **Here's a news flash. Your spouse can't read your mind!** Now I ask, "Can you do this by 6:00?" or "Will you be able to have this done by Tuesday?" If he can't do it, he'll tell me, and then I can either do it myself or make other arrangements.

4. Hint and Miss. Another way I drove Ron crazy was to hint at something and then throw a fit because he didn't "get" the hint. For example, one warm, sunny day as we drove by an Ice Cream store, I said, "I love lemon sherbet." He just kept driving. I guess he didn't know that my hint meant, "Stop the car. I want some ice cream!" My girlfriend Tonya would have understood the hint and would have said, "Good idea. Let's get some!" But Ron was oblivious. He thought I meant just what I said.

Men rarely hint because they've learned to ask for what they want. If women would stop the "hint-speak" and ask for what we want, we'd be much more likely to get it. These changes didn't take place overnight. If I can see that Ron is making an effort, then I give him some room to fail occasionally. If I went "postal" on him each time he forgot, he'd get discouraged and stop trying.

(continued on page 6)

LEARNING TO WRITE IN STONE

There's a story about two friends who were walking through the desert. During some point of the journey they had an argument, and one friend slapped the other one in the face. The one who got slapped was hurt, but without saying anything, wrote in the sand: "TODAY MY BEST FRIEND SLAPPED ME IN THE FACE."

They kept on walking until they found an oasis, where they decided to take a bath. The one who had been slapped got stuck in the mire and started drowning, but the friend saved him. After he recovered from the near drowning experience, he wrote on a stone: "TODAY MY BEST FRIEND SAVED MY LIFE."

The friend who had slapped and saved his best friend asked him, "After I hurt you, you wrote in the sand and now, you write on a stone, why?" The other friend replied: "When someone hurts us we should write it down in sand where winds of forgiveness can erase it away. But, when someone does something good for us, we must engrave it in stone where no wind can ever erase it."

Learn to write your hurts in the sand and to carve your benefits in stone. They say it takes a minute to find a special person, an hour to appreciate them, a day to love them, but then an entire lifetime to forget them.

Continued from page 5 (Secret Passageways...)

So as you see your mate start to develop new positive patterns, encourage him or her, and be willing to overlook an occasional slip. Be sure to verbalize your praise and notice when your spouse does it *right*. Your marriage will grow sweeter as you have less conflict and more understanding and patience. **"Husbands, likewise, dwell with them [wives] with understanding."** (1 Peter 3:7)

The article above is adapted from the great book, *Avoiding the Greener Grass Syndrome* – by Nancy C. Anderson, published by Kregel Publications. This book was written by a woman who strayed to the other side of the marital fence – and returned to find forgiveness and restoration. Based on the principle that the grass is always greener where it's watered, this book focuses on how to grow a beautiful marriage in your own backyard by establishing six protective "hedges" around it. Nancy does a terrific job telling her compelling U-turn story of rebellion, repentance, and restoration. This really is a very good book for every Christian couple to read! We highly recommend it.

NOTICE BOARD

Christ Church Needs Your Help!!!

It has been over eight years since the internal decoration in the church has been IN NEED OF RESTORATION. These soft cries began with the flaking paints which were followed immediately by cracks in the plaster. We carried out some temporary works which revealed that a lot more work was required. Our wooden floor and public address system also require an upgrade, as well as the belfry which needs protection from the pigeons.

We must rise up now to restore the worship area to its former glory, that expresses our love for God. The estimated cost of the works is £65,000, and we intend to commence works in February/March 2008.

We will appreciate your donation towards this project. "You are so rich in all you have: in faith, speech, and knowledge, in your eagerness to help and in your love for us. And we want you to be generous also in this service of love" (2 Corinthians 8:7).

Please make your cheque/s payable to Christ Church PCC, and send it to Christ Church (Renovation Appeal), c/o The Vicarage, 32 Crescent Road, London, N8 8AX.

Thank you and God bless you.

Rev Canon Dele Agbelusi,
Vicar

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.

HOW TO WASTE YOUR TIME IN 2008

With the dawning of a new year comes a deluge of resolutions, reminders, and exhortations. They all follow similar how-to themes: how to increase your efficiency; how to make every moment count; how to invest your time wisely and productively etc.

Well, just for some tongue-in-cheek fun, I'd like to take the opposite tack. I'm going to tell you how to *waste* your time in 2008. That's right, if you follow this advice, you will make absolutely no progress this year. Guaranteed!

First, worry a lot. Start worrying earlier in the morning and intensify your anxiety energy as the day passes. Short on a supply of things to worry about? Check the newspaper, television, or Internet. You'll have enough bad news, doomsday reports, human tragedies, and late-breaking calamities to keep your heart and mind churning all through the night.

Something I have found helpful in my own worry world is to do a lot of reflecting on my failures and mistakes. If you're a parent, think long and hard about what you should or could have done for your children. That will give guilt the green light it's been waiting for. Do you need a few other categories to camp on? The things you don't like about your marriage or your job. The possibility of a leaky roof, car trouble, and aging. If you plan all this right, you'll be loaded with a full pack of worries long before February comes. Start now! Those potential ulcers need fresh acid.

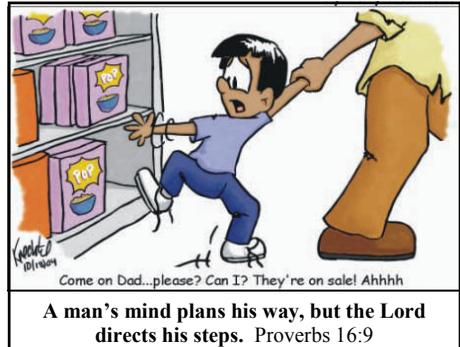
Second, make hard-and-fast predictions. Why not? A whole new year is in front of you. Your date book is empty and ready to fill with detailed plans. Of course, you'll need to ignore that little throw away line in the fourth chapter of James: "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city,' ... Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow." Forget this verse, and chisel your expectations in stone, convinced that things will turn out just like you plan.

Third, fix your attention on getting rich. With this mind-set, you'll fit right in with most of the hype that's pouring out of

How to waste your time in 2008

entrepreneurial seminars and upbeat sales meetings. Make certain to get your ideas about money from the secular bookshelves, and definitely don't pay attention to men like Solomon, who wrote: "Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint... For they will surely sprout wings ... like an eagle." (Proverbs 23:4-5). I mean, what does Solomon know about money and contentment and consequences?

Fourth, compare yourself with others. Here's another sure time-waster for 2008. Not only will you ricochet between the extremes of arrogance and discouragement, you will spend another year not knowing who you are. And if external beauty happens to be your thing, comparing yourself to the latest Hollywood stars ought to help - and those gorgeous models they plaster on the covers of Vogue will do nicely for you.



Fifth, lengthen your list of enemies. Playing the Blame Game will keep your wheels spinning during 2008 more than any other activity. With a full arsenal of suspicion, paranoia, and resentment, you can waste endless evenings rehearsing your feelings of hate as you stew over those folks who have made your life miserable.

There you have it, five proven time-wasters. Put these suggestions into motion, and your new year could set records in wasting valuable time.

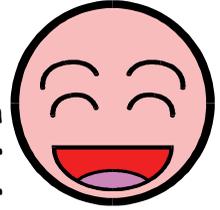
But on the other hand, who wants to do that? No one aims to run in circles-it just happens. So, let's get serious. Beware of the time-wasters! Instead, pray more than worry. Be flexible. Give more. Be content with the way God made you. And let the oil of forgiveness loosen your grip on those grudges. In other words, make this year your most productive ever.

Iyabo Agbelusi (adapted from Insight for living 2007).

LAUGHTER LINES

Thou Shall not kill

A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six year olds. After explaining the commandment to "honour thy father and thy mother," she asked "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?"



Without missing a beat one little boy answered, "Thou shall not kill."

No Offence Intended: Don't try this in Sudan!

I'm in the process of potty training my 2 1/2 year old daughter. She has a cute little angel bear that sings "Jesus Loves Me". She was playing with her bear one day and I asked her "Do you have to go potty"? She said yes and ran to the bathroom with her bear. She placed the bear up on the counter while she pottied. When she was finished she got down grabbed her bear and held him over the potty seat and said "now you pee Jesus!" She still thinks the bear's name is "Jesus". I am trying my best to explain!

Thank God for Children Saying Grace...

Last week I took my children to a restaurant. My six-year-old son asked if he could say grace. As we bowed our heads he said, "God is good, God is great. Thank you for the food, and I would even thank you more if Mom gets us ice cream for dessert. And Liberty and justice for all! Amen

Submitted by Deb Rogers

LAUGHTER LINES

Is That God? Shh! Shh! Be Quiet

One Sunday morning I sat in the back of the church with Anna, my four-year-old. Like most parents of young children, I was primed for a quick getaway, should something untoward occur. When the procession of the Celebrants made its stately way up the aisle, I realized that the bishop was visiting.

He marched toward the altar in all the glory of glittering robes with a tall mitre on his head. Anna stood up on the pew to see over the heads in front. Just as the procession reached the altar and the bishop took center stage, she turned to me, her eyes shining with reverent awe.

"Is that God?" she asked in a voice that carried beautifully throughout the sanctuary. I watched in horror as all the shoulders in the congregation began to shake.

"Shh!" I replied, red-faced, "No!"

"Well, if it's not God, who is it?" came the voice of curiosity. I hadn't noticed before what great acoustics that church has.

"Shh, be quiet," I pleaded. "It's the bishop. He's visiting. I'll tell you all about him later." Then I swooped her up and made that quick exit all parents anticipate with dread.

I got a call that afternoon from the parish priest. He brushed aside my frantic apologies and informed me that the 'man who was not God' seemed to have a great difficulty keeping a straight face during the service!

STORY OF THE MONTH

BOBBY'S VALENTINE

Bobby was a special-education boy. He was just bright enough to remain in a regular classroom but was still noticeably different. He was the constant butt of jokes by his classmates, but he never seemed to mind.



Every day, as the neighbourhood kids walked home from school, Bobby's mother would look out the window to see them all laughing and joking together – all except Bobby. He was always walking behind the others, all alone. It was obvious that the other children felt uncomfortable around Bobby and shunned him.

One day Bobby burst into the kitchen after school. "Mom, guess what?" he said. "Valentine's Day is two weeks away, and our teacher said we could make valentines and give them to the other kids in our class!" His mother's heart sank as she pictured yet another opportunity for Bobby to be excluded. "Mom," Bobby continued, "I'm going to make a valentine for every person in my class!" "That's very nice, Bobby," his mother answered, fighting back the tears.

Over the next two weeks, Bobby worked every afternoon on those valentines. They were truly labours of love. When the big day finally came, he was so excited about taking his valentines to school that he couldn't eat breakfast. But he was also a little worried.

"I hope I didn't forget anybody," he said as he dashed off to school. Bobby's mother made a fresh batch of his favourite cookies and prepared herself to comfort her son when he returned home broken-hearted from the valentine exchange. She knew how disappointed he would be with the response he got from the other children.

That afternoon she saw the same cluster of neighbourhood kids walking home together. A half block behind them, all alone, was Bobby. Bobby's mother turned away and placed a plate of cookies on the table. Much to her surprise, Bobby came through the door with a huge smile on his face. "What is it, Bobby?" she asked. "How did it go?"

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Bobby's Valentine

With a shout of pure joy, Bobby said, "Guess what, Mom! I didn't forget a single kid!"

What Lessons can we learn from Bobby?

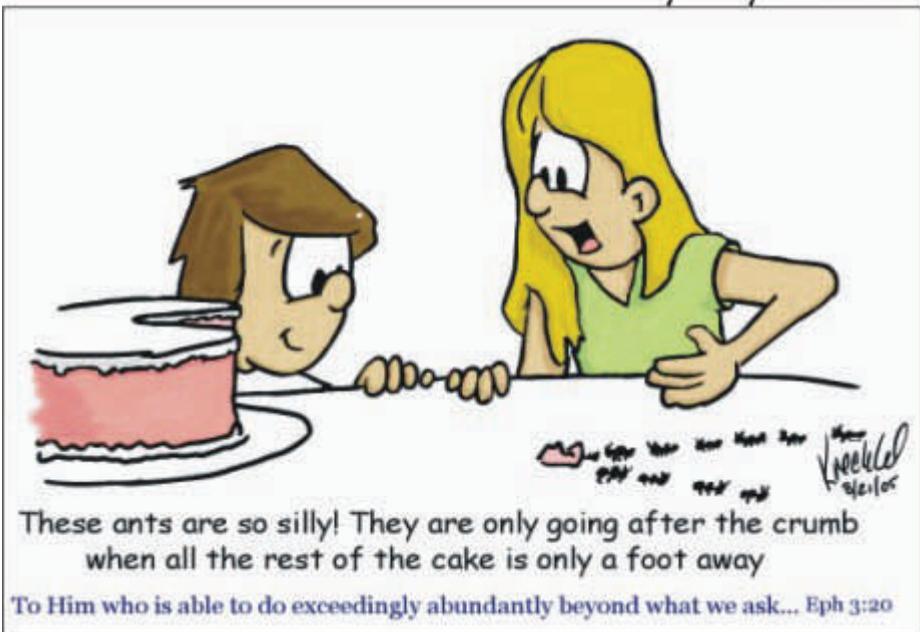
He was so focused on giving that he didn't consider the response he would get. He was so concerned about others that he was blind to the fact that he was being slighted.

Sometimes when we give, our motive is to make people think we're wonderful or to prompt others to give something in return. But that's not the way of Christ.

Jesus gave his life for us knowing that we would "not receive him" (John 1:11). That's agape, God's love. It is unconditional, unselfish, and given with no strings attached. "For God so loved the world that he gave..." (John 3:16), and he didn't forget a single one of us.

May we all be more like Bobby.

Youth's Specialties



Cartoon Knuggets: Troy Knechtel

HAPPY NEW YEAR

What we anticipate seldom occurs; what we least expect generally happens." So said 19th century politician Benjamin Disraeli. At every new year the experts try to determine what will happen in the forthcoming months: politically, economically, and socially. The tabloids take it a step further. They consult astrologers and psychics who predict the future for the new year. Christians know that the future is not seen in the stars, or in the subconscious minds of so-called psychics. Even the brightest and best minds can not predict what 2004 holds for us. Humanly speaking, we would do well to remember Disraeli's quote.

On 31st December, I had the privilege of leading our congregation in a Bible reflection on the theme "The God of Surprises". This was premised on 2 Chronicles 20:15-18. God was going to do a great thing in the midst of his people, he was going to surprise them again with the strength of his arm; he was going to turn around their moment of tears into a season of laughter, and their songs of dirge to a triumphant refrain. Materially and otherwise, God has our best intentions at heart, and He wants to surprise us with his blessings. We often anticipate material blessings but God is very keen to enlarge our coasts spiritually too.

God was going to do a great thing in the midst of his people, he was going to surprise them again with the strength of his arm, he was going to turn around their moment of tears to a season of laughter, and their songs of dirge to a triumphant refrain.

We must be mindful of the fact that God is primarily still in the business of saving people. Spiritually speaking, we should be wise to our immediate future. In Matthew Chapter Sixteen, Jesus chides the Pharisees and Saducees for not discerning the times in which they lived. They were better at weather prediction than Bible study. Likewise, many Christians today live in ignorance of God's mighty workings because of Bible neglect. What are some of the things we can anticipate God doing in 2008?

(continued on page 15)

Happy New Year

Are there any clear-cut answers in the Scripture? Where will we be this time next year? What are our expectations and what are our priorities? Are we really burdened that there are many around us who are perishing as a result of the stranglehold sin has on them when we can show them the way to freedom in Christ Jesus?

Let us anticipate God's Grace that He will save. I know that some Christians seem to think that God is going out of business! They forget that **2 Peter 3:9 is still in the Bible:** The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. We have not passed unknowingly into a new dispensation in which God has ceased saving by grace through faith. He is still convicting! He is still drawing! He is still saving!

Are you desirous to be a partner with our Lord Jesus in the ministry of reconciling sinful people to a Holy and Righteous God? I remind you of the story of David and Mephibosheth in which David said, "Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him?" The negative thinking Christian can think of a hundred reasons why few are being saved today. But God would have us anticipate His grace in 2008. There is yet room in the House of God! There is yet room in the Family of God! There is yet room at the feet of Jesus!

If the Lord Jesus is our Shepherd, we shall surely find in him satisfaction for the hunger and thirst of our souls. With Him as our Shepherd, we shall not want for leadership and guidance. "He leads me beside still waters." That means that he goes before me into my unknown tomorrow. I have not passed this way before. No one has. How we need such guidance! How limited is our vision! How often we stand bewildered at the forks of the road not knowing which way to turn! "We are the first that ever burst into this silent Sea." But this is our consolation, that our way is not new or strange to him who goes before us. Happy New Year.

Dele Agbelusi

Motto /Text for the year
"I CAN DO EVERYTHING THROUGH HIM WHO GIVES
ME STRENGTH" *PHIL. 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

Monday - Baby n' Toddler Group (**10.00 am to 12 noon**)
- Brownies meeting in Church (**5.30 pm**)
- Next Prayer Meetings 21st January, 4th & 25th February (**8pm**)
Wednesday - Bible Fellowship in the Hall (**7:45pm**)
Friday - Scouts meeting in church and hall (**6.00 pm**)

Enquiry/Counselling - please phone 020 8340 1566

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