



# ***NEW LIFE***

## ***BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH***

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*"For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:9)*

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Vol. 11 No. 1

**LORD'S DAY 31 DECEMBER 2006**

*My dear readers,*

### **First Things First**

Someone once suggested to me that a minister must always be calendar-sensitive. That is to say, a minister should always make his preaching or writing relevant to the occasions on the calendar. If it is Christmas, he should preach a Christmas message. If it is Mothers' Day, he should write something on mothering. If it is Children's Day, he should preach a children's sermon, etc.

I must confess that the advice, which came from an experienced minister, has left me not without a struggle whenever it comes to certain times of the year. In particular, I would always have some difficulty when it comes to the New Year. I do not have much difficulty with most other dates because they usually pass by without my noticing! But End of Year and New Years are hard to ignore. Often, I would struggle for hours to think of something that is relevant and yet 'fresh' to write or preach on. Sometimes I succeed in being 'relevant,' but most times, I trawl my brain in vain. This is apparently one such time.

Despite hours of thinking, praying and searching, nothing 'relevant' and yet 'fresh' came up. Then I began to think: What do I really want the congregation to do this year? I know what I wish would happen in the congregation and I know what I am praying for; but how can I exhort the congregation? Calendar-sensitive ministers will often talk about annual goals and themes or things they want the congregation to give priority to. What do I want the congregation to give priority to in the year ahead? When I began to ask this question, the answer came very quickly: It is not what I want the congregation to give priority to that is important. It is what the Lord, the Head of the Church, wants us to give priority to that is important. And what does He want us to give priority to? He says:

*"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).*

This verse and the duty enjoined are extremely familiar to us. But how many of us live it out consistently?

### **Priority**

Consider, first of all, that to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" requires us to give priority to activities that *directly* pertain to our sanctification.

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This is quite clear from the context of the Lord's words, for He is contrasting between the pursuit of things temporal with the pursuit of things eternal (see verses 25-32).

Yes, there is a sense in which all of our life has a spiritual dimension. We will talk about it in a moment. But it is clear from our Lord's sermon that we must nevertheless distinguish between that which directly pertain to our bodies and that which directly pertain to our souls. No, it does not mean that the things that pertain to our bodies are bad. To say so is to fall into a Gnostic error. But what it does mean is that we ought to consider how we are ordering our lives. Are we giving priority to spiritual exercises?

Think of the use of our time. Think of the weekdays. The Lord gives us six days to manage according to our own wisdom and faithfulness. We have much latitude in the use of the six days. We may sell a part of it away through legitimate employment. We may use it also for study, recreation and housework. And of course, we can use it for personal devotion, family worship, Bible Study, prayer meeting, witnessing, etc. Now, strictly speaking, we cannot charge a person for sin if he chooses to use his time for one thing or the other, so long as it is an activity that is not sinful. However, it ought to be clear to us that we are not seeking first the kingdom of God if we give very little priority to the spiritual exercises. How can a man be said to be seeking first the righteousness of God, if he would rather watch television than lead his family in worship? How can a man be said to be seeking first the kingdom of God if, for example, he comes for prayer meeting only if he has nothing else to do—whether at work or at home? Is this man not rather seeking first the cares of this world?

Need we talk about the Sabbath? This day is the Lord's Day. It is a day belonging to the Lord and sanctified by the Lord. We sin against the Lord, if we use the day for our employment, study, housework or recreations (Isa 58:13). Yes, acts of necessity, mercy and emergency are allowed on the Sabbath. But how can a man be said to be seeking first the kingdom of God if, on the Sabbath, he consistently chooses activities that pertain to his earthly life rather than his heavenly life, and then seek to justify himself by labelling his activities as 'necessity'? It is not wrong, for example, to visit a relative on the Sabbath; but if I do so in place of public worship, does it not give an indication of my heart?

Beloved, let us resolve to start anew to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness by giving priority to spiritual exercises in the year ahead.

## **Purpose**

Consider, secondly, that to "seek first the kingdom of God" requires us to make the glory and enjoyment of God the goal of our life in all that we do. We mentioned that there is a sense in which all our lives must be lived spiritually. The apostle Paul highlights this duty in numerous places. For example, he teaches us: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor 10:31); and "whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Col 3:23; cf. Eph 6:5-7).

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But what does this mean in practice? It means, first of all, that we should make an effort,—till it becomes a part of us,—to consider how any of our activities touches the glory of God. Eating and drinking are mundane activities. How can we glorify or fail to glorify God when we do them? We can because,—as apostle Paul suggests,—we can stumble our brethren by our eating or drinking (1 Cor 10:30). We can also glorify God by thanking Him and being grateful for what He has given. On the other hand, we can also sin against Him by gluttony, wastage and also by being full of complaining and grumbling as we eat. Yes, we may seek the kingdom of God even in mundane activities if we are determined to improve upon them by careful consideration of how we may glorify God through them.

In the second place, seeking first the kingdom of God, as regards to purpose, means putting thought to how our activities may be used to promote the kingdom of God. For example, we ought to consider how our working relationships can contribute to the advance-ment of the kingdom of Christ. A Christian worker who is seeking first the kingdom of God, for instance, will be very diligent in his duties so that his bosses take notice; and he will have such a cheerful countenance even when under pressure that his colleagues cannot help but notice his Christ-likeness.

In the third place, those who are seeking first the righteousness of God, in regard to purpose will avoid being idle and will be calculative in the use of his time. Thus, for example, while it is not wrong to play computer games, one who is seeking first the kingdom of God will not fritter hours away on a meaningless, even if challenging game.

## Plan

Finally, "seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" requires us to make plans according to the principles of pleasing God *today*. This becomes immediately clear when we read what the Lord teaches us to do immediately after He calls us to seek first His kingdom and righteousness:

*"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof"* (Mt 6:34).

This is a verse I find myself turning to very frequently in my pastoral visitations. Why? Because most of us are worriers! We worry a lot about what tomorrow will bring. But why does our Lord bring up this problem of worrying in the context of His exhortation to seek first heavenly things? Is it not because our worrying often cripples us spiritually?

Consider how few Christian students today are willing to forgo studying or doing their homework on the Sabbath. Why? Is it not because many are worried that they might not be able to catch up or to compete with their peers if they but rest one day in seven?

Or consider how many Christian mothers are afraid to give up their jobs to look after their children, for fear that the family may not have enough to survive? I am, of course, not denying that there are exceptional circumstances, but are not many working mothers afraid of letting go of their jobs due to excessive worry that the...

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family will not be able to cope financially?

I can give many more examples, but I shall forebear lest I be seen to be targeting anyone I know.

But let me add a word of admonishment. We all have our reasons or excuses, for taking a particular course of action over another course of action, even though we may suspect that the second course of action is more pleasing to God. But pause for a moment to think: Would your reasons still be valid if you can have a 100% guarantee that things will turn out well in future?

The fact is: our sovereign God has promised that He will work all things well for those who love Him and obey Him (Rom 8:28). He has promised to take care of all our needs, if we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. Is this not a sufficient guarantee?

Bear in mind that seeking first the kingdom of God in terms of planning requires us first to seek to please God based on the circumstances known to us today and upon God's promises rather than on variables that are future and not known to us.

## Conclusion

What should we resolve to do in the coming year? For me, I am prayerfully resolving to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. I will look at various aspects of my life and see how I may work out this resolution in practical and definite ways. I know that it is in this way that I may be said to be truly following Christ.

What about you? Will the new year see you beginning and persisting in family worship? Will it see you making a commitment to seek the Lord at the evening service and prayer meetings?

Will it see you humbling yourself and seeking reconciliation with someone? Will it see you making family and career decisions that will enable you to put first things first? Whatever it will be, as long as you are seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, it will be an exciting year ahead. You can be sure of that!

*Pastor Lim Jyh Jiang  
Pilgrim Covenant Church, Singapore*

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## Colloquy Cymraeg

### Welsh Sayings (dated 29 Oct 20)

#### The Church's Steering Wheel

There are essentials and non-essentials in life. No doubt, the demarcation line between the two differs according to each individual's perspective and opinion. To define which is which, one could say that essentials are what are most needed and constantly used, and non-essentials those things that are occasionally needed or used. For instance in the ownership of a car, the steering wheel is essential, and constantly used, whilst a spare tyre is very rarely needed. In fact, in forty years of driving, I have only once had to change a punctured tyre.

In the spiritual realm, is prayer to you a steering wheel or a spare tyre? Is it essential or occasionally so? The answer must be that it is personally essential, and most decidedly so in corporate church life. Do you just feel an occasional need to attend the prayer meeting, or do you really consider it the driving force of church life? It is the weekly prayer meeting that steers the church through the multitude meanderings of life, to bring us to the desired destination. Watch and pray.

*Pastor Jeff O'Neil*

# A New Year With The Lord

By M.S.Lowndes

A new year is about to unfold  
With new opportunities to explore  
Doors will open for new experiences  
New adventures with the Lord

Remember not the former things  
The things of this past year  
The Lord will do new things in us  
Much more than we are aware

For He will make a way for us  
As we put our trust in Him  
And He will guide our every step  
By His presence we have within

What God has placed within our  
hearts

We find we'll be able to do  
If we look for the opportunities  
We'll see the door to go through

We mustn't let anything hold us back  
But rise up and take our place  
And be all that God wants us to be  
With a fresh touch of His grace

## In Green Pastures Devotional Readings for Every Day of the Year

By J.R. Miller, D.D.

31 December 2006

### MORNING

**PSALM 90:12 "So teach us to  
number our days, that we may  
apply our hearts unto wisdom."**

THE last day of a year should make us thoughtful. We cannot but ask whether we have been faithful, whether we have done all our duty, and whether we have learned the lessons set for us during the year. There is none who has not come short, and who has left no duty undone. There is none who has left no white page blotted.

One purpose of life is that we may grow, that in all the experiences of our days we may be learning new lessons and becoming better. Growth of the body is not all, nor is growth in knowledge the test of living. One may be physically stronger and yet be no better in character. One may know a great deal more and yet be no wiser. We are growing only when the peace of our heart is becoming deeper, when we love more and are gentler, sweeter, and more unselfish. We shall want to make this last day of the year very beautiful—beautiful enough to be the last of our life. We should leave no duty undone when its last hour strikes.

### EVENING

#### **THE BLESSING OF PENITENCE**

THE memory of transgression will always give pain. Penitence is not the best thing; innocence is far better. But, having sinned, penitence is infinitely better than despair. And even out of the sin, the shame, and the sorrow God can bring blessing for ourselves and for others. While we cannot undo our wrong deeds, God can keep them from undoing us, and can even bring good out of them in some strange way, if we commit the whole matter to Him.

**WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON**  
**CHURCH THEME: STRIVING TO LIVE ABOVE OUR SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS**  
**IN CHRIST (Ephesians 1:3)**

Our worship services begin promptly at **11.00 am and 4.00 pm.**

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

| Worship Services                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                       |                                                                  | WELCOME                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Morning</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Today: 31/12/2006</b>              | <b>Next Week: 07/01/2007</b>                                     | We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |
| <i>Chairman:</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Jonathan Kim                          | Yoong Chiang Seetoh                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| <i>Speaker:</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Pr Mok Chee Cheong                    | Pr Mok Chee Cheong                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| <i>Message:</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Our Dwelling Place in all Generations | The Danger of Deception                                          | NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |
| <i>Text:</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Psalms 90:1-2                         | Leviticus 19:26-32                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Watch Night Service (31 Dec):</b> This evening, we will be having a Watch Night Service in place of the evening worship service. This will commence at 6:00 pm, instead of the regular 4:00 pm. Do invite friends to come to usher in the New Year.</li> <li>• <b>Basic Bible Knowledge (BBK):</b> The BBK classes will commence in Jan 07. For those who are seeking baptism and interested in church memberships, please see Pr Mok.</li> <li>• <b>Dedication Sunday:</b> For all who are serving the church in various ministry, please take note a dedication service will be held on Jan 14. Also, for those who would like to serve in any ministry, please see Pr Mok or Jonathan.</li> <li>• <b>Sunday School for 2007:</b> Classes will be rescheduled to 12:30pm after the morning worship service.</li> <li>• <b>Church Theme for 2007:</b> The theme for New Life BP Church in the coming year is: "Walk in Newness of Life" (Romans 6:4)</li> <li>• <b>Happy New Year:</b> New Life BP Church would like to wish all worshippers a Blessed New Year.</li> </ul> |  |
| <i>Organist:</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Yanning                               | Anthony                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| <b>Evening</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                       |                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| <i>Chairman:</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Jeff Pun                              | John Poh                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| <i>Speaker:</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Pr Mok Chee Cheong                    | Pr Mok Chee Cheong                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| <i>Message:</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Behold I Make All Things New          | The Names of God – El Olam                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| <i>Text:</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Revelations 21:1-5                    | Psalms 90:2                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| <i>Pianist:</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Yanning                               | Feng Qian                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| Other Duties                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                       |                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Today</b>                          | <b>Next Week</b>                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| <i>Ushers</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Jeff/Chin Kiong                       | John/Sharon                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| <i>Sunday Sch:</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | No Sunday School                      | Carol                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| <i>Lunch:</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Maureen                               | Constance                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| <i>Washing-up:</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | YAF Group 2/Volunteers                | YAF Group 1/Volunteers                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| <i>Bible Study:</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Video Presentation                    | Video Presentation                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| Appointments of the Week                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                       |                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| Fri 5 Jan                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 7.00 pm                               | <b>Young Adults Fellowship:</b><br>No YAF Fellowship             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| Sat 6 Jan                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 4.00 pm                               | <b>Prayer Meeting &amp; Bible Study:</b><br>Spkr/C'man: Jonathan |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| Last Week's Worship Service Collections                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                       |                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| <b>Offering:</b> £168.00                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                       | <b>Love Gift:</b> £30.00                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| <h2 style="margin: 0;"><u>The Lord's Prayer</u></h2> <p style="margin: 0;"><i>Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen</i></p> |                                       |                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |