



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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Continuing in the Way

*By Rev Terry L. Johnson, Senior Minister of Independent Presbyterian Church in Savannah, Georgia
Adapted from TABLETALK from Ligonier Ministries – December 2009*

How different are our times from apostolic times? The modern technological world seems light years away from the world of antiquity, at least on the surface. They rode camels, we fly in jets. What more needs to be said? Whatever continuity we can establish, the ridge between the days of the apostles and our own is long indeed.

Yet the apostle Paul’s description of the “difficult times” ahead for the church sound remarkably familiar. We are in difficult times right now. The stock market has plunged, the housing market has collapsed, foreclosures number in the millions, and the national debt and unemployment are rising to worrisome levels. Financial hardships, however, are not the kind the apostle has in mind.

The difficulties highlighted by the apostle that resonate with us today have to do with ministry in the context of rapidly escalating evil. Let’s look at a sample. In the difficult time of which he writes, people will be “*lovers of self, lovers of money*” (2 Tim 3:2). That sounds familiar. “*Boastful, arrogant,... ungrateful, unholy*” (vs 2). Yes, we recognise that. “*Without self-control... haters of good... reckless*” (vs 3–4). Contemporary indeed. “*Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God*” (vs 4). Oh my! That hit 2009 right on the head. There’s more. His description of religion without godliness and learning without truth (vs 5–7) sums up the spiritualism and relativism of our time pretty well. Opposition and persecution for those who follow the apostolic teaching and practice (vs 9–13)? Yes, we’re seeing more and more of that.

What then are we to do? What kind of ministry is called for in “*difficult*” times? Special times need special ministry, don’t they? “If we selfishly cling to the old, familiar, and comfortable ways we’ll lose the entire next generation” – I’ve heard that said at important denominational meetings, the claim backed up with the authority of Barna.

Listen to the apostle: “*Continue in the things that you have learned and become convinced of*” (vs 14). Continue, he says. Continue. That, apparently, is the crucial commitment for ministry in difficult apostolic times. Want people to get saved, Timothy? Continue in “*the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom...*”

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that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (vs 15). Want people to grow? Preach the word in such a way that it teaches, reproves, corrects, and trains in righteousness, and the result will be that the people of God will be "*equipped for every good work*" (vs 16–17).

Here's some additional ministry counsel to the same Timothy facing the same difficult times: pray for a full-diet of prayer ("*I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men,*" 1 Tim 2:1) and read Scripture ("*give attention to the public reading,*" 1 Tim 4:13.) "Oh, and by the way," the apostle Paul might continue, "the preaching that I mentioned above, it should arise out of the reading," that is, preaching should be expository ("give attention to the public reading, to exhortation and teaching"). "You'll want to sing intelligent, thoughtful, edifying, instructive songs as well, but I've said that before" (1 Cor 14:14–19; Eph 5:19; Col 3:16).

Here, then, is the critical question: Are our difficult times enough like the difficult apostolic times to just "continue"? Generational hubris hampers clarity of thought. Baby Boomers in particular have always thought of themselves as so different and, truth be known, so superior to all that came before them, that change is instinctive. They, and subsequent generations, drink innovation like mother's milk. To tell the church to just "continue" to preach, read, pray, and sing the Scriptures, sounds to them so... yesterday. Our times are unlike any before us. New methods are essential. The old ways are inadequate. We have the capacity to enhance ministry with the use of video, power point, lighting effects, drama, praise bands, and even an array of stunts and gags. Why not?

"Why not?" was exactly the question facing the sixteenth-century Reformed church. They restored the simplicity of the word read (*lectio continua*), preached (sequential and expository), prayed (restoring the six basic genres of praise, confession, thanksgiving, intercession, illumination, and benediction), sung (psalms and biblical hymns), and the sacraments administered with frequency. They assumed, as does the apostle Paul in his instruction to Timothy, continuity between their time and his. What worked for the apostle is adequate for the Reformers in the difficult times ahead of them.

The apostle Paul tells Timothy, the Reformers, and us to "continue" because the fundamental things do not change: the gospel, human nature, and the means of salvation.

The Incarnate Deity

"Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." (Philippians 2:5-7)

The entire gospel message runs counter to the human mind. The Creator dying for the creation. The judge paying the penalty for the guilty. The immortal One dying. Sinless God substituting for human sinners. No human or devil ever could have thought of this scheme, and indeed, no such one did. This is evidenced by the works-oriented salvation offered by all cults and false religions, as conjured up by such sources.

But make no mistake! The babe in the manger was the Creator, holy and eternal! "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. . . . All things were created by him, and for him: . . . that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself" (Colossians 1:15-20).

In order to qualify as a sacrificial substitute, He had to be born as a child into humankind, but without the inherited sin nature of His human parents. A virgin birth was therefore necessary.

He had to live a sinless life. He had to be fully human, but also fully God, so that His substitutionary death could apply to the sins of more than one guilty sinner. He had to be "God with us," the meaning of the precious title Emmanuel (Matthew 1:23), as prophesied years before (Isaiah 7:14).

John D. Morris, Ph.D.

(<http://www.icr.org/article/5020/>)

The Prince of Peace

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." (Isaiah 9:6-7)

There will come a time when the Creator's work of salvation will be complete, and we will fully realize the eternal life we now possess. Make no mistake! He has already assured the outcome of this work, but one day sin and its effects will be totally removed (Revelation 21:4-5), and the curse will be repealed (Revelation 22:3), for: "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. . . . Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:26, 54). He says, "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings" (Malachi 4:2).

The fact that He was born into the human race qualified Him as a sacrifice for us. He had to be a sinless human to die for humans. His death freed us from paying sin's awful penalty ourselves, for He has paid it! But He also rose in triumph over sin and death, assuring us that we who have accepted His free gift of forgiveness and eternal life through the second birth (John 3:3, etc.) will also rise again just as He, the "firstfruits," did (1 Corinthians 15:20).

Until that day arrives, we have glorious peace, for the Prince of Peace "made peace through the blood of his cross" (Colossians 1:20). "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you" (John 14:27).

John D. Morris, Ph.D.

(<http://www.icr.org/article/5021/>)

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WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

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
Morning	<i>Today: 20/12/2009</i>	<i>Next Week: 27/12/2009</i>	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We like to welcome Tan Kee Sing and Jonathan to our worship services last Lord's Day.
<i>Chairman:</i>	Joey Seow	Jonathan Kim	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Rev Timothy Ki	Rev Timothy Ki	
<i>Message:</i>	The Genealogy of Jesus Christ	Grace Till End	
<i>Text:</i>	Matthew 1:1-17	Matthew 3:1-12	
<i>Organist:</i>	Grace	Anthony	
Evening			NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
<i>Chairman:</i>	Joey Seow	Jonathan Kim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church Resident Minister: Thank God for the safe arrival of Mrs Ki & sons. Pray that their shipment will arrive safely in January. • Christmas Carol Service: Friday 25th December, 11am. Please see Rev Ki or Jonathan if accommodation is required. • Saturday Bible Study: Rev Ki has commenced a series of studies based on the Shorter Catechism. • Pray for those who are sick: - Constance (ankle), Douglas (knee pain), Barbara (Alzheimer's), Prema (thyroid & skin condition), Eld Jack Ford (old age and knees), Margaret (asthma), Eld Chew (recovery from shoulder injury), Maureen (knee/leg pain), Sophia (cold) • Pray for those who are/will be travelling: John & Sharon, Sophia, Joshua, Lee-Wei, Jia Yun (S'pore), Nicolas (Belgium), Yetta (S. Africa), Fung (HK), Margaret (US), Joy (Madrid), Grace (US) • Pray for those seeking employment/new opportunities: Joy, Yetta
<i>Preacher:</i>	Rev Timothy Ki	Rev Timothy Ki	
<i>Message:</i>	Enoch's Faith	Importance of Faith	
<i>Text:</i>	Hebrews 11:5	Hebrews 11:6	
<i>Pianist:</i>	Anthony	Anthony	
Other Duties			
	<i>Today: 20/12/2009</i>	<i>Next Week: 27/12/2009</i>	
<i>Ushers:</i>	Jonathan / Daniel	Joey / Evelyn	
<i>Lunch:</i>	Maureen	Tbd	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers	
<i>PA Crew:</i>	Brian	Brian	
<i>Bible Study:</i>	Lesson 29 (Gen 38)	Lesson 30 (Gen 39)	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 25 Dec	7:30pm	Young Adults Fellowship: No YAF	
Sat 26 Dec	4:00pm	Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Led by Jonathan	
<u>Worship Service Collections</u>			
Offering: £426.49		Lunch: £39.50	
<u>Forgetting Promises</u>			
<i>Adapted from "In Green Pastures" by J.R. Miller, D.D.</i>			
A promise made to a child or to the lowliest, most unworthy person should be kept, no matter how hard it may be to keep it "I entirely forgot my promise," one says, as if forgetting it were much less a sin than deliberately breaking it. We have no right to forget any promise we make to another. If we cannot trust our memory, we should make note of our promises and engagements on paper, and then keep them scrupulously, on the very minute. To break even the slightest promise is grievously to wrong and hurt another life.			