

# A Resolution

By Bubba Garner

It's that time of year again. Just about everyone has some resolutions for the new year, some things that they've previously tried to get into the habit of doing but have never been able to conquer. We try and take advantage of the fresh start of January and decide to lose weight, to start exercising, to save more, to spend less time at work and more time with the kids.

A *resolution* (re-solve) is an intention, a pledge, a commitment to do better. While aspirations of investment programs and work out routines are certainly important, we need to set some spiritual goals as well that will help us be more devoted and dedicated Christians in 2010 than we were in 2009.

**Set your house in order.** So said Isaiah to King Hezekiah when the Lord was about to require his life (**2 Kings 20:1**). This was not just a plea to arrange his will and estate, but to prepare himself for his inevitable meeting with his God. You need to set *your* house in order and make ready *your* affairs for such an appointment. You cannot cancel it, postpone it, or be late for it—"it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes the judgment" (**Heb 9:27**). We just need to be ready for it.

**Burn your bridges.** In **Acts 19**, the people in Ephesus responded to Paul's preaching and many who had been prac-

ting magic and sorcery brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of all. Upon their conviction and conversion, they realized that their former sinful practices were a hindrance to their spiritual growth, and they disposed of them. They did not pack all the books in a box and place them in the attic so they could return to them during a moment of weakness, they burned them. *We* need to burn our bridges in the new year. This involves completely cutting ourselves off from the things of the world that entice us and lure us into Satan's traps. If we don't, there is a greater temptation to return to them.

**Keep your faith.** Some of our people dropped out of the race this last year because they decided that the temporary pleasures of sin were greater than the eternal rewards of righteousness. Paul, who could have given up several times, said "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness" (**2 Tim 4:7-8**). Make a resolution to keep pressing forward, no matter what obstacles are thrown in your path, no matter who tries to stand in your way. It's worth it.



**(1 Peter 1:6-9)** - In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not <sup>seen</sup> you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls.

## Sick

<b>Jim and Barbara Kicker</b>	<b>Pam Dial</b> (Laura Weldon's Mother)
<b>Heather Adams</b> (Luke Bridges' Cousin)	<b>Rose Tate</b> (Toni Herd's Cousin)
<b>Adriana Mininno</b> (Haley Chittam's Cousin)	<b>Dave Bradford, Sr.</b>
<b>Blake Whatley</b> (Hunt's neighbor)	<b>Dave Brown</b> (Friend of the Lanier's)
<b>Marty Meeks</b> (Toni Herd's Nephew)	<b>Call Yvette at 734-2134</b> <b>To Have Someone Put on this List</b>

## News and Notes

- Let's remember our expectant mothers: Jana Hall, Laura Humphrey, and Rachel Bradford.
- The "Our Spiritual Heritage" Classes begins today for grades 6 and below. This is a also a new quarter for all classes.
- Starting next Sun. (Jan 10) we will have a Sunday Evening class and singing for kids at 5:15. This will continue every Sunday.
- Let's be preparing for our meeting with Bob Harkrider, Jan 24-27
- Audio CDs of Today's Sermon will be immediately available.
- Let's give a warm welcome to our visitors!

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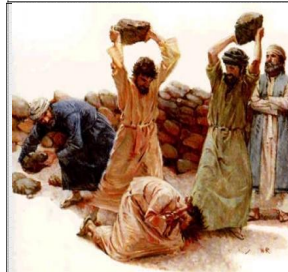
# The Auburn Beacon



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (**Matthew 5:16**)

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## Thought to Ponder

It may take a crucified church to bring a crucified Christ before the eyes of the world.

**Do You Have a Bible Question?**  
Call (334) 734-2133 or  
E-mail:  
LarryRouse@aubeacon.com

## SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class ..... 9:30 AM  
Worship ..... 10:20 AM  
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM

### Wednesday

Bible Classes..... 7:00 PM

Ask about our home Bible Study Groups!

Larry Rouse  
Evangelist and Editor

## If We Believed What They Believed

By Gary Kerr

One of the reference works I usually keep close at hand when studying any part of the New Testament is the paraphrase translation of J.B. Phillips, *The New Testament In Modern English*. I don't agree with all of Phillips' suggested wording, but I often find his efforts helpful in clarifying some particular passage or point. The translation was originally produced in sections, with the first, *Letters To Young Churches* (Romans through Colossians), being published in London during World War II (it included a preface and recommendation written by C.S. Lewis).

In his introduction to that book, Phillips writes the following about the New Testament epistles and their authors and recipients:

"Without going into wearisome historical details, we need to

Do not be deceived into thinking that their achievements were easily accomplished. Right from the start they were opposed and persecuted. When the first of their number was martyred, such a widespread persecution developed that all except the apostles were driven from their homes and scattered abroad (**cf. Acts 8:1**).

remember that these letters were written, and the lives they indicate were led, against a background of paganism ... Slavery, sexual immorality, cruelty, callousness to human suffering, and a low standard of public opinion, were universal; travelling and communications were chancy and perilous; most people were illiterate. Many Christians today talk about the 'difficulties of our times' as though we should have to wait

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for better ones before the Christian religion can take root. It is heartening to remember that this faith took root and flourished amazingly in conditions that would have killed anything less vital in a matter of weeks. These early Christians were on fire with the conviction that they had become, through Christ, literally sons of God - they were pioneers of a new humanity, founders of a new Kingdom. They still speak to us across the centuries. Perhaps if we believed what they believed, we might achieve what they achieved."

That final sentence is profound and powerful -- "Perhaps if we believed what they believed, we might achieve what they achieved!"

Within a generation of the establishment of the church, the apostle Paul could write of those who carried the gospel message that "their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world" (**Romans 10:18**). Paul wrote about the gospel that it had been preached "in all the world" and that it had been "proclaimed in all creation under heaven" (**Colossians 1:6, 23**). This is an incredible achievement -- to begin with a few comparatively unknown and uneducated people (**cf. Acts 4:13**), and to have a message did not appeal to the "wise", the "mighty," or the "noble" according to the flesh (**1 Corinthians 1:26**). But they had strong faith and a zeal born of that faith, that caused them to launch out boldly and sacrificially, to the point of being willing to give up their

lives for the cause they had taken up. And God gave them amazing success. They were "on fire" for the kingdom, for the gospel, and for the souls of their fellow human beings, believing with all their hearts in the sacrifice and promises of Jesus, the Son of God and Savior of men. Being a Christian and going to heaven meant everything to them, and they wanted "all creation under heaven" to share with them in these blessings.

Do not be deceived into thinking that their achievements were easily accomplished. Right from the start they were opposed and persecuted. When the first of their number was martyred, such a widespread persecution developed that all except the apostles were driven from their homes and scattered abroad (**cf. Acts 8:1**). But this did not slow them down or dampen their enthusiasm. Wherever they went, they were found "preaching the word" (**Acts 8:4**). They preached it as they had opportunity, not depending on others (i.e., preachers, elders, etc.) to do the work for them. Each Christian considered him/herself both privileged and responsible to win souls for Christ. Their cause was new -- they were pioneers.

I fear that today we do not appreciate our "spiritual blessings" as they did. It is not our life as it was theirs. We are not spending and being spent for it as they were. To some degree, at least, perhaps we do not "believe what they believed."

"Perhaps if we believed what they believed, we might achieve what they achieved." If we did, I am convinced that God would give us success, too.



## Just Wad It Up and Start Over

By Dee Bowman

New beginnings are a necessary part of life. I remember doing my math homework and running across a difficult problem. I'd work on it and work on it and finally, in sheer disgust, wad up the paper and throw it in the vicinity of the trash basket. Then I'd get a new page and start all over again.

Traditionally, January first is the time we take to re-examine how things are and make resolutions to make them better-to start over again. It's like a new page, so to speak, one that is uncluttered and where there is room for new purposes and fresh plans. And I suppose all of us like the idea of being able to start over again.

Forgiveness of sins is the best of all possible new beginnings. Can you imagine what life would be like if we have to carry around the baggage of all the mistakes, all the misjudgments, all the immoral things we have done in the past? The sheer weight of the guilt would be imposing, if not impossible to bear. The angelic annunciation stated that "He shall save His people from their sins" (**Mt 1:21**). That's the best of all new beginnings.

So maybe it would be the best of a new beginning to start with a fervent, personal prayer for forgiveness. That's what I'm going to do. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" we are told (**1 Jn 1:9**). That's about as good a way to begin the new year as I can think of.

I have put together some other resolutions, fitted for the refrigerator door or the mirror in the bathroom, in the hope that they will help us be better servants of His in the new year.

I am resolved to get closer to God, to make a special effort to read and study His word and put it to work in my life.

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I am resolved to put first things first, to put my relationship to God first in my life and then arrange everything else in its proper order.

I am resolved to make plans each morning to do some deed of kindness that day, then to look for an opportunity to make my resolution a reality.

I am resolved to keep my role-whatever it is-in perspective and to perform the obligations it calls for with diligence and concern. I will try and be a better father, mother, son or daughter, brother

or sister, employee or employer.

I am resolved to be confident about who I am-a Christian. I will not be ashamed and I will look for opportunities to tell someone about Jesus.

I am resolved to take at least 10 minutes each day and be with God-to dismiss all the cares and problems of my life and be thankful, to ask Him for His help and forgiveness, and praise Him for His blessings.

I am resolved to learn the value of the short prayer, to stop and pray several times a day and thereby let God be a part of all that I do, no matter the size or significance of the project.

I am resolved to look for good things in people, to respect the common folks, to give something to the less fortunate, to notice those who have little or no recognition.

I am resolved to budget my time so that God's cause is part of them. I will not allow anything to crowd out the time I have decided to give.

I am resolved to say "I love you" more and mean it.

I hope these suggestions will be a beginning place for a new beginning for you. I want to do better, don't you?

