

Dear brothers and sisters,

The 'Noughties' have drawn to a close and a new decade – is it the 'Tens' or the 'Teens'? – is about to begin. It is inevitable that our minds should turn to the subject of time when the calendar turns over a decisive new leaf. Did the last ten years fulfil our expectations? What will the next ten years bring? Newspapers and television programmes compete with one another in producing reviews of this kind, which many people find fascinating.

The ongoing march of time - and we as finite human beings can only march forward through it at a constant speed - can seem exciting, challenging, daunting or perhaps constraining. Younger people can't wait to get older and they are bursting to enjoy the new opportunities that the future will one day bring. Older people might wish they could turn back the clock, but they can't. Whatever our position in life we are frustratingly confined to the 'now'. Yesterday has gone and we can't go on living on memories of the past. Tomorrow promises so much but, don't you know, tomorrow never comes.

What is the remedy for this pessimistic and wearisome enslavement to the unyielding straitjacket of clock and calendar where it is always 'now' and 'today'? As we have seen repeatedly over the last few months, the Bible always encourages us, to borrow William Hendriksen's expression, to 'live in three tenses'. It is indeed Today, it is Now, a day and a time that the Lord has given us. He has allotted the time-period in which we presently live, and our specific dwelling-places (Acts 17:26). But we place our present faith in the great events which God has accomplished in the past, in particular the work which the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished for the sake of his people. A couple of Sundays ago we looked at the Great High-Priestly Prayer of John 17, and then partook of the Lord's Supper. The intervening two thousand years vanish at a stroke as the virtue and power of Christ's broken body and shed blood are known in our present experience. And yet this covenant meal is to be observed only 'until he come'. We eagerly await a Saviour from heaven who will transform all things in creation, and we, delighting in this new creation, will see his face. We ain't seen nothing yet! If this life represented the climax and summit of all Christian experience, what miserable people we would be.

May the Lord Jesus Christ be magnified in 2010,

Paul Yeulett

### **Missionary update**

Margaret Reid visited in December and spoke to the congregation briefly after the morning service. She was serving the Lord with WEC in Albania for some years but has returned to the UK and is now working in WEC's office. Her situation is due for review in June. She covets prayer for a "discerning heart to know how I might serve God effectively and happily in coming years. My 'heart' is for the ones who have no hope and no-one to tell them about Jesus." She also asks for prayer for faithfulness in her present work and for a consistent walk with God.

Heather Cox (OMF, Thailand) moved from Lopburi to Bangkok early in December. She asks for prayer to find a suitable flat to live in, for good progress in language studies and for her work in the church and mission headquarters. Her flat in the UK has become vacant so she also asked for prayer that new tenants would be found soon.

The Christian Institute has issued a DVD entitled 'You are the Light of the World'. This details the work of the Institute and has interviews with prominent politicians and church leaders. If you would like to borrow this, please speak to Robert or Candida Morris. The Institute's Defence Fund has worked on behalf of the Christian hoteliers in Liverpool who were accused of a religiously aggravated public order offence. They are also involved in the case of the Christian registrar, Lillian Ladele, who refused to conduct homosexual civil partnership ceremonies.

Please remember to look at the table at the back of St. Julian's Centre for missionary information and to pray for those we support financially and in prayer i.e. Roop in the Punjab, Andrew and Daphne/James and Rachel Swanson in Cyprus, Shaun and Jennifer Thompson/Geoff Shirley Townsend in Albania, Slav Lands Christian Fellowship, Heather Cox, Margaret Reid and the European Missionary Fellowship. Organisations supported in the UK are UCCF and the Bible Preaching Trust.

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Two quotes submitted by Michael Carson:

The Christian teacher will succeed more by piety in prayer than by gifts of oratory. - *Augustine*

Neglect of private prayer is the locust which devours the strength of the church. - *C.H. Spurgeon*

**As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.**

**James 5:11**