

# RELIGION

## Many chances for new beginnings in new year

By Dr. SCOTT H. CARR Sr.

A new year with new opportunities and the same purpose has come upon us. Here we are already 10 days into 2009 with only 355 days until 2010. It will be here before we know it and our new president would already be a quarter of the way toward completion of his first term.

Life is so fast and complex that we often can lose perspective and direction if we aren't careful. Facing a new year and all that goes with it can be extremely overwhelming. It is too easy to look at the unknown and be consumed with fear.

In the same token, viewing the future through the eyes of Jesus causes one who knows him as their personal savior and lord to be encouraged rather than discouraged, confident rather than fearful, and an over comer rather than a defeated human being who is created in his image.

You may be like me and have already broken some, if not all, of your new year's resolutions, but remember that each day is the opportunity for a new beginning. So if we have 355 days remaining in 2009, then we have 355 new beginnings this year alone.

Be encouraged to look at your challenges and trials as opportunities to grow as you follow him.

I invite you to permit him to stretch your "comfort zone" in 2009. If you are a disciple of Christ, then your purpose is to keep in step with his spirit as he leads you through each opportunity of your daily new beginnings. Spend time with him so you can be sensitive to his promptings in your daily walk with him.

Be careful not to run ahead of him, nor lag behind him. In order to do this, take care of all aspects of your being: spirit, soul and body. Listen to him speak to you through his word, prayer and fellowship with other believers. Share your faith when the opportunities arise. Try to maintain a balance of the right amounts of sleep and rest, exercise, and diet so your body can be the best temple possible

for our Lord to use in the building of his kingdom.

Please remember that he invites all to come to him and find rest. Rest from our weary way of living and rest so we can be used in the master's family.

Will you come to him today if you have not already done so? Will you come to him daily for the next 355 days of 2009 and all the days of the years beyond that he permits you to breathe? Will you allow him to use you to bless others in ways that only he can in your small corner of the world which ripples out and touches others in ways that only eternity will reveal?

While there is still time, Jesus desires to help you fulfill his command that we refer to as "The Great Commission" through you by making disciples of all nations. We don't have to go far in Bridgeton to find many nations that need the gospel. Will you do your part, even in South Jersey?

Here are some practical suggestions for your prayerful consideration. One would be to join different believers at the Salvation Army each Saturday evening at 6:30 for intercessory prayer and worship for our community and beyond. Another would be to encourage your church's leadership to plan community outreaches to the poor. Still another opportunity is to daily allow the Holy Spirit to guide you in your dealings with those whom he sends across your path to be Jesus to them in word and in deed.

In closing, keep in touch with Jesus daily, listen to his voice, and be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading and power for you to do as he leads you. You will be abundantly blessed as you take advantage of your minimum of 355 opportunities to fulfill your purpose in leading others to Christ in 2009.

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