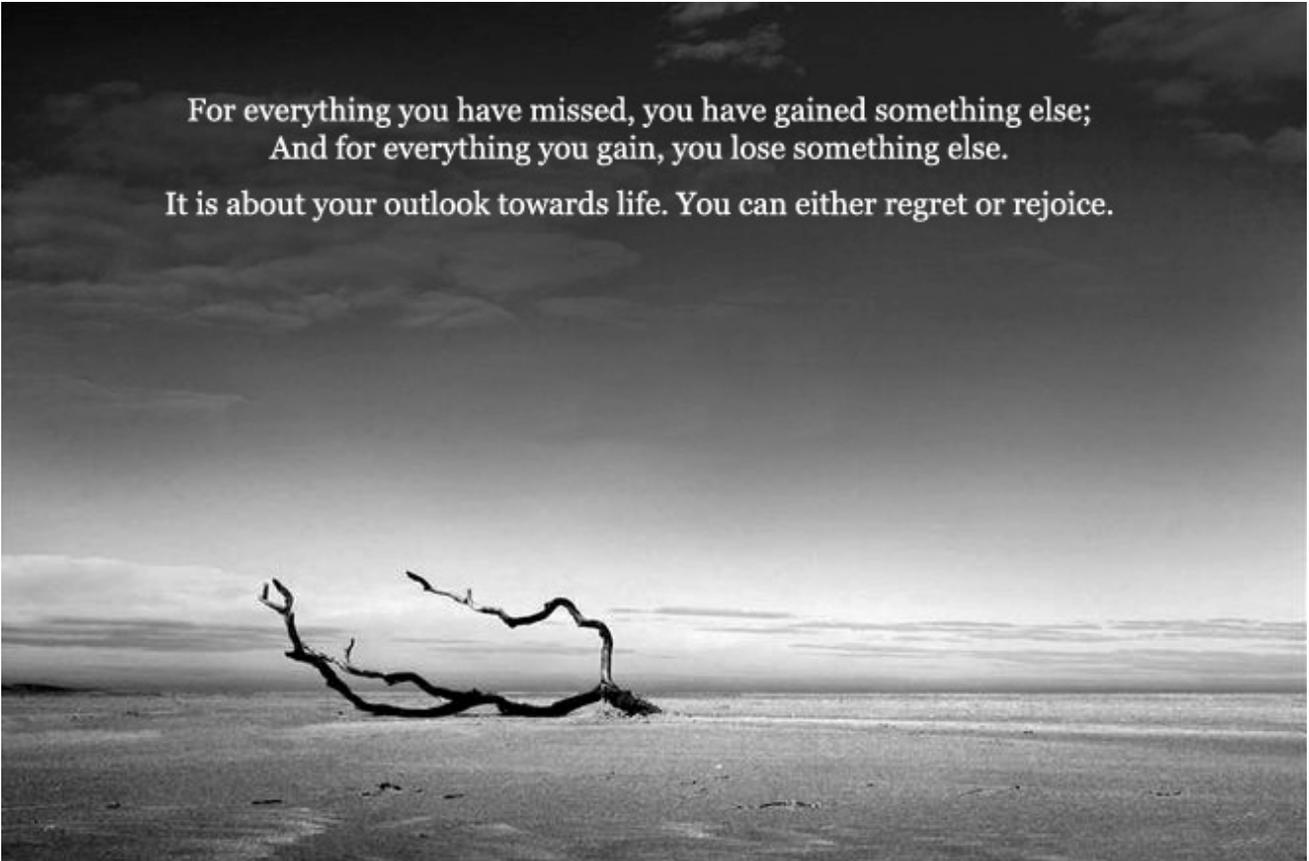


COMMUNING WITH GOD

For everything you have missed, you have gained something else;
And for everything you gain, you lose something else.
It is about your outlook towards life. You can either regret or rejoice.



SUMMER 2010 ~ 11

“By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest;
second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the
bitterest.”

~ Confucius ~

THE AIM AND PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE IS TO

- AWAKEN AND TO STIMULATE INTEREST IN SPIRITUAL MATTERS.
- EXTEND THROUGH MUTUAL INTEREST, THE STEADILY GROWING BROTHERHOOD OF SPIRITUALLY AWARE PEOPLE IN ALL WALKS OF LIFE.
- HELP ERADICATE – THROUGH PROMOTING SOUND AND FEARLESS REASONING – THE SPIRITUALLY CONSTRICTING AND CRIPPLING EMOTIONS OF FEAR AND SUPERSTITION.
- HELP PEOPLE TO OVERCOME THE, TOO MANY, FEARFUL SPECTRES OF DEATH BY PROMOTING THE CONCEPT OF AN ACTIVE AND MEANINGFUL ETERNAL LIFE.
- ENCOURAGE THOUGHT AND UNBIASED REASONING RELEVANT TO SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION, AND THE ETERNAL PROGRESSION OF THE SOUL.
- ENCOURAGE LOVE AND RESPECT TOWARDS ALL OF GOD'S CREATION AND THUS PROMOTE HEALTHY AND MEANINGFUL CO-EXISTENCE.
- DRAW TOGETHER IN MUTUAL INTEREST AND HARMONIOUS FRIENDSHIP, THOSE WHO ARE HONESTLY AND FEARLESSLY SEEKING A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF SPIRITUAL VERITIES.
- ENCOURAGE THOSE WHO, THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF THE WRITTEN WORD, WISH TO EXPRESS THEIR DEEPER THOUGHTS AND SO POSSIBLY, TO OPEN THEMSELVES TO SPIRITUAL INSPIRATION.
- PERHAPS, PROVIDE THAT LITTLE GLIMPSE OF THE INSPIRATIONAL LIGHT WHICH WILL ENABLE SEEKERS TO FOCUS THEIR THOUGHTS.

THE EDITORS DO NOT NECESSARILY AGREE WITH ALL THAT IS PRINTED IN THIS MAGAZINE. THE VARIOUS ARTICLES EXPRESS OPINIONS: EACH MUST BE ASSESSED ACCORDING TO THE REASON OF THE READER. THE OPINIONS OF OTHERS PROVIDE FOOD FOR THOUGHT.

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The magazine produced on a non-profit basis and not for monetary gain.

If there are any profits these will be donated to a worthy cause.

***ALL ARTICLES APPEARING IN THIS MAGAZINE
ARE PRINTED IN GOOD FAITH.***

CONTENTS

TITLE	PAGE
Editorial	2
This Remarkable Man Jesus the Christ	3 & 4
Christmas Pagan Origins	4 - 6
Do All Religions Lead to God	6 - 8
Spirituality	9
Fifteen Things God Won't Ask	9 & 10
A Recipe For a Happy New Year	10 & 11
A Prayer for the New Year	11
New Year's Day	12
If You Can Dream It	12 - 14
Consequences	14
The New Year's Gardening Tip	15
Good Advice to Live By	15
Auld Lang Syne	16
Classifieds	17 & 18
World Healing Meditation	19

A short poem

Mind is the master power that moulds and makes,
And we are Mind, and evermore we take
The tool of thought, and shaping what we will,
Bring forth a thousand joys, a thousand ills,
We think in secret, and it comes to pass -
Our world is but our looking glass.

~ James Allen ~

EDITORIAL

Once more the festive season is upon us. Is it the time for over indulging and buying material goods and spending money on presents that are often not used or appreciated? Or is it a time when we should look at ourselves?

A quote from Kahlil Gibran

*“There are those who give little of the much which they have,
And they give it for recognition and their hidden desire makes their gifts
unwholesome.*

*And there are those who have little and give it all.
These are the believers in life and the bounty of life, and their coffer is never
empty.”*

This is not only the festive season in it being Christmas, but also the celebration of the birth of one of the greatest teachers and healers that has walked amongst us. If the human race could live according to his principles and beliefs (and those of the other great masters that have shown us the way); there would not be so many of us still “lost”.

It is also the beginning of a New Year. We need to look back at the year that has past, one in which we may have said farewell to friends and family that have made the “transition”, or those that may have moved away to other places. To reflect on the wrongs that we have done during the past year and not on some silly “New Year Resolutions” that are usually never really accomplished. It is also a time to reflect on what I can do to improve the plight of others; how I can help to heal the planet, and stop the inhumane way some humans treat animals.

But, it is also a time to celebrate and give thanks for events that happened in the last twelve months. The birth of a child and two people proclaiming their love for one other; overcoming sickness and pain. There is so much that each and every one of us can and should be thankful for!

My Christmas wish is all the best to everyone over the Festive Season.

For those of you that are travelling, please take care.

Enjoy your holidays and the time you spend with friends and family.

To the folk who are not Christians, enjoy the holidays.

And thank you to those non Christians that stand in for Christians in essential services over this period.





This remarkable man Jesus the Christ

Where did He come from? What did He teach? Was He God in the flesh? Was He only a man? Why did He die?

Few will dispute that a man named Jesus lived about 2,000 years ago and that He was a great teacher who impacted on the world from His time onward. But He has always been a controversial figure. He made a claim that was breathtaking in its audacity—that He was the very Son of God, the long-prophesied Messiah! Yet the religious authorities in Jerusalem rejected Him, hated Him and eventually succeeded in having Him put to death. Likewise, the local Roman civil authorities also saw Him as a threat and became complicit in His execution. The religions of His day, both Judaism and Paganism, opposed the growth of His teachings and used unlawful and violent means to try to destroy the Church He founded. The government of Rome also came to vigorously persecute the followers of this Jewish teacher from Galilee. Today Jesus continues to be a controversial figure who continues to arouse passions. It appears that some churches have moved God to the background. What is known about this great man? Jesus was born to a devout Jewess named Mary and a carpenter named Joseph according to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Matthew and Luke also report that Jesus was born in Bethlehem because the Roman emperor had decreed that all families register for a census in their ancestral hometowns. There is a lot of conflicting information surrounding his actual birth date. If one looks at historical events that took place at that time, it is probable that he was born about **4 BC and that he was crucified about 33 AD** (Depending on which source of reference is used) Mark and John do not discuss Jesus' birth; they begin their narratives with Jesus' adulthood. The Gospels are virtually silent when it comes to Jesus' early life, but some information can be inferred from references elsewhere (The Aquarian Gospel). Jesus was from a small town called Nazareth, where he probably trained as a carpenter under the guidance of his father. Jesus spoke Aramaic, a Semitic language related to Hebrew, though it seems he knew enough Greek to converse with Roman officials during his ministry. The Gospel of Luke offers the only account of this period, in which a 12-year old (about 8 AD) Jesus wanders off from his parents in Jerusalem to discuss religion in the temple. When his frantic parents finally track him down, Jesus asks, "Didn't you know I would be in my Father's house?" From then until he started his ministries, very little is known about his life. In the Aquarian Gospels of Jesus the Christ (by Levi) it appears that he may have travelled to India, Tibet, Greece and Egypt. It is theorized that the human Jesus became Divine after being baptized by John The Baptist. Jesus spent forty days and nights in the desert overcoming temptation.

Jesus then spent a number of years teaching and working miracles among his disciples and before large crowds. His recorded miracles included turning water to wine, walking on water, healing the sick, multiplying a small meal to feed a crowd, casting out demons, and even raising a man from the dead. The teachings of Jesus focused primarily on "the Kingdom of God" and were usually relayed through parables drawing on familiar images from agricultural life. He rebuked the hypocrisy of some Jewish leaders and taught the importance of love and kindness, even to one's enemies. From the point that he started his ministries his life is well documented. There is much debate and speculation as to the actual birth date of Jesus. What is more important is the teachings and lessons He left us; for if we all adopted a similar philosophy, the world would be a far better place. In closing Jesus was and is a truly remarkable being.

Some of the references used in this article include:-

The Bible.

The Aquarian Gospel.

Various sources on The World Wide Web.

It is not my intention to offend or to dispute various historical sources regarding the dates of Jesus' life. Anyone is at liberty to investigate information available on Google by typing in "Jesus' Birth date". *Conrad Wilhelm*

Hebrews 13:8 "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."



The Pagan Origins

Few people realize that the origins of Christmas were pagan & celebrated in Europe long before anyone there had heard of Jesus Christ.

No one knows what day Jesus Christ was born on. From the biblical description, most historians believe that his birth probably occurred in September, approximately six months after Passover.

One thing they agree on is that it is very unlikely that Jesus was born in December, since the bible records shepherds tending their sheep in the fields on that night. This is quite unlikely to have happened during a cold Judean winter. So why do we celebrate Christ's birthday as Christmas, on December the 25th?

The answer lies in the pagan origins of Christmas. In ancient Babylon, the feast of the Son of Isis (Goddess of Nature) was celebrated on December 25. Raucous partying, gluttonous eating and drinking, and gift-giving were traditions of this feast.

In Rome, the Winter Solstice was celebrated many years before the birth of Christ. The Romans called their winter holiday Saturnalia, honouring Saturn, the God of Agriculture. In January, they observed the Kalends of January, which represented the triumph of life over death. This whole season was called Dies Natalis Invicti Solis, the Birthday of the Unconquered Sun. The festival season was marked by much merrymaking. It is in ancient Rome that the tradition of the Mummers was born. The Mummers were groups of costumed singers and dancers who travelled from house to house entertaining their neighbours. From this, the Christmas tradition of carolling was born.

In northern Europe, many other traditions that we now consider part of Christian worship were begun long before the participants had ever heard of Christ. The pagans of northern Europe celebrated their own winter solstice, known as Yule. Yule was symbolic of the pagan Sun God, Mithras, being born, and was observed on the shortest day of the year. As the Sun God grew and matured, the days became longer and warmer. It was customary to light a candle to encourage Mithras, and the sun, to reappear next year.



Huge Yule logs were burned in honour of the sun. The word Yule itself means “wheel,” the wheel being a pagan symbol for the sun. Mistletoe was considered a sacred plant, and the custom of kissing under the mistletoe began as a fertility ritual. Holly berries were thought to be a food of the Gods.



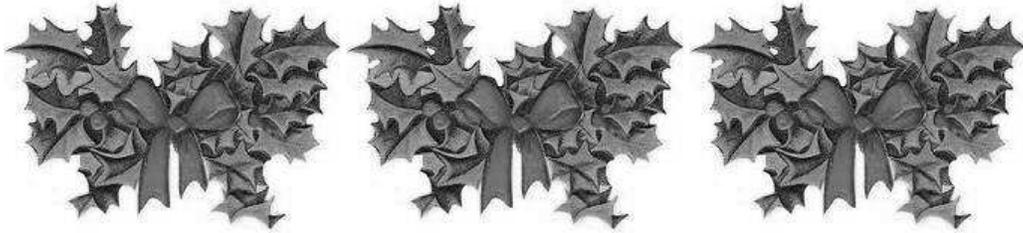
The tree is the one symbol that unites almost all the northern European winter solstices. Live evergreen trees were often brought into homes during the harsh winters as a reminder to inhabitants that soon their crops would grow again. Evergreen boughs were sometimes carried as totems of good luck and were often present at weddings, representing fertility.

The Druids used the tree as a religious symbol, holding their sacred ceremonies while surrounding and worshipping huge trees.

In 350, Pope Julius I declared that Christ's birth would be celebrated on December 25. There is little doubt that he was trying to make it as painless as possible for pagan Romans (who remained a majority at that time) to convert to Christianity. The new religion went down a bit easier, knowing that their feasts would not be taken away from them.

Christmas (Christ-Mass) as we know it today, most historians agree, began in Germany, though Catholics and Lutherans still disagree about which church celebrated it first. The earliest record of an evergreen being decorated in a Christian celebration was in 1521 in the Alsace region of Germany. A prominent Lutheran minister of the day cried blasphemy: "Better that they should look to the true tree of life, Christ."

The controversy continues even today in some fundamentalist sects.



Do All Religions Lead to God

Perhaps you've heard people say that all religions lead to God. This idea is called religious pluralism. Pluralism comes in two forms. First is the fact that we live in a society that has many cultures and many religions, and we are to treat each with respect. That is true, and good. We should be tolerant, but that does not mean that we have to agree with everyone. Religious pluralism goes beyond this—it says that all religions are equally valid. What about it? Could all religions be valid paths to God?

What is a religion?

First, we have to define what a religion is. Is Taoism a religion, or just a philosophy of life? What about the branch of Buddhism that says there is no God? Is it a religion? And what about Satanism, which says there is a God, but they don't want anything to do with him? Are all these religions leading to God whether they want to or not?

People who say that all religions lead to God often accept anything and everything as a religion. The real goal, it seems, is not to invalidate anyone. As a result, they say that everyone will end up with God no matter what religion they have, even if they don't have a religion. So the original idea, that all religions lead to God, is not really about religions—it's a belief that everyone will be saved (universalism) regardless of their beliefs.

But there is another problem with the original idea: Different religions have different ideas of God. Some view God in spiritual terms, others more physical, and some religions have no God. Some have many Gods, some have one and some have none. Some people don't even want to get to God, so they wouldn't like the idea that they will get to him whether they like it or not.

Another problem is that each religion has its own idea of what salvation is. For some, it is nothingness, an elimination of personal consciousness. For others, it is an eternity with personal consciousness. It is difficult to see how both of these teachings can lead in the same direction. If someone says, "All religions lead to God," we might ask: "How do you know? Have you tried them all and found God at the end of each one?"

Anyone who claims that all religions lead to God is actually claiming to know better than the Muslims and Hindus and everyone else. The Muslim says that only Islam leads to God, and the pluralist says: "No, you are wrong. Let me tell you, because I know more than you do. All religions may be good, but mine is better than them all."

How does the pluralist know? What authority do pluralists have for their view? Usually only themselves! They are their own religious authorities. They have decided what is right, and they don't want to be bothered with the facts about what any particular religion believes or does.

Different religions contradict one another. Logic says they could all be wrong, but logic says they can't all be right. Nevertheless, the pluralist says they are all right. Contradictory ideas are right. Believing in Jesus is just as good as believing in Mohammed, even though neither Christians nor Muslims would agree to that.

Religious wars.

One reason that pluralism is attractive is that many bad things have been done in the name of religion. Religious differences sometimes turn into religious wars. So people think that the best way to stop all this violence is for everyone to accept everyone else's religion, and then we'll have unity and peace. That is a naïve view. Religions have developed so as to distinguish themselves from other religions, and wishful thinking won't change that. Differences in religions are as much a result of human division as a cause of it. In pluralism, there is no foundation for truth—no reason for people to agree, except that the pluralist wants them to. I am not saying that all Muslims and Hindus are lost. What happens on the Day of Judgment is God's business, but we do know from the Bible that God encounters and saves people through Jesus Christ (Christians only), not through their religions. God may save them despite their religions, but not because of them. Those whom God saves, He saves by drawing them into fellowship with Christ. I am also not saying that all Christians are exactly where God wants them to be, either. Just because some people call themselves Christians does not mean that they trust Jesus Christ for grace and salvation.

The gospel is for people who realize they need the mercy of God and who trust Christ to give it to them, turning their lives over to him as Lord and Master. Whether a person is a Buddhist or a Christian, the only path to salvation is God's free gift. Hinduism says that not all Hindus will be saved; Islam says that not all Muslims will be saved, and Christianity says that not all Christians are saved. So it seems silly for a pluralist to say that all Hindus, for example, are saved, when not even the Hindus say that. The pluralist is contradicting the religions he is trying not to offend. In trying to say that they are all valid, he ends up saying that they are all in error. Pluralists are often uncomfortable with the unique teachings of Christianity, because Christian claims about Jesus, are often not acceptable to Muslims. And pluralists are often uncomfortable with claims about Mohammed, too, since those claims also cause mutual non-acceptance. So pluralism often tries to find the smallest common denominator in the religions, and to discard everything unique. Actually, most religions aren't worried about the salvation of people in other religions. Most religions don't have a God who loves the whole world. The pluralist idea, that God must save people in other religions, is actually rooted in the Christian teaching that God loves the whole world.

Responding to pluralism

The best response to pluralism is to explain what we believe. In everyday language, the gospel says:

1. No one is perfect, and everyone has done something wrong. Right and wrong are not just a matter of opinion—they are rooted in reality, defined by an authority greater than human opinion.
2. The wrong things we do hurt other people, and the wrong things they do hurt us. That's why they are wrong.
3. We all want to live in a world in which no one does anything wrong—that is, no one hurts other people. But the fact is, none of us is perfect, and therefore none of us is fit to be in a perfect world.
4. People cannot turn themselves around. Some people have pretty good ethics, but even they have flaws. It doesn't work to let people choose their own ethics, and it doesn't work to impose one person's ethics on everyone else. We need an authority for ethics that is greater than humanity.
5. We have all fallen short and cannot save ourselves. We need to be forgiven—and we need help that is stronger than human help. We need God.
6. The Gospels teach that God has supplied what we need—he supplies the definition of right and wrong; he supplies the forgiveness that we need; he supplies the supernatural power to change us.

That's the good news, and we can trust in the goodness of God, not in the flimsy goodness of human beings. We can trust God not just for our own salvation, but also for the salvation of the people in other religions. We may not know what, how or when God will draw them, but we trust that God will be gracious and good.

Spirituality

Having faith, believing in a set of values and traditions, and applying the principles to a way of life describe the millions of religious people around the world. Cultural beliefs are typically related to religious beliefs. For example, the identity of a person or group is shaped by religious values, beliefs, and affiliation. These values are often passed on to future generations.

There are many reasons as to why people are drawn to a religious or spiritual way of life. Many find comfort and guidance from the teachings of wise thinkers and prophets. Having faith in something 'bigger than us' can encourage strength in times of trial and peace to those questioning life and death.

Religion and spirituality are not interchangeable terms, even though they are often used together. Where religion is typically more strict and organized, spirituality tends to be defined by each individual on a more personal level. It can mean an appreciation for and understanding of various religions.

The majority of the world's population believes in a certain religion and worships either one or several Gods. The major religions, based on the number of followers, are Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Chinese Traditional Religion (Taoism, Confucianism). Other religions with deep histories are Sikhism, Judaism, and Shinto. Many contemporary religions, particularly those of Pagan origins, are interpretations of ancient ethnical and magical traditions. The most popular Pagan religion today is Wicca.

But religion is not for everyone. It is estimated that over 1.1 billion people identify as non-religious. This group includes: atheists, those who do not believe in the existence of God; agnostics, those who deny religious beliefs due to the uncertainty surrounding the issue; and seculars, those who reject everything that is religious or spiritual.

While religious beliefs can inspire great kindness and service, many of the world's oldest religions have a history of oppression and offenses committed against foes and non-believers. It is the work of religious leaders to acknowledge the past, commit to furthering inter-religious dialogue, and promote understanding and peace among religions and peoples.

Fifteen Things God Won't Ask

God won't ask what kind of car you drove, but will ask how many people you drove who didn't have transportation.

God won't ask the square footage of your house, but will ask how many people you welcomed into your home.

God won't ask about the fancy clothes you had in your closet, but will ask how many of those clothes helped the needy.

God won't ask about your social status, but will ask what kind of class you displayed.

God won't ask how many material possessions you had, but will ask if they dictated your life.

God won't ask what your highest salary was, but will ask if you compromised your character to obtain that salary.

God won't ask how much overtime you worked, but will ask if you worked overtime for your family and loved ones.

God won't ask how many promotions you received, but will ask how you promoted others.

God won't ask what your job title was, but will ask if you performed your job to the best of your ability.

God won't ask what you did to help yourself, but will ask what you did to help others.

God won't ask how many friends you had, but will ask how many people to whom you were a true friend.

God won't ask what you did to protect your rights, but will ask what you did to protect the rights of others.

God won't ask in what neighbourhood you lived, but will ask how you treated your neighbours.

God won't ask about the colour of your skin, but will ask about the content of your character.

God won't ask how many times your deeds matched your words, but will ask how many times they didn't.

By: Author Unknown, Source Unknown

"Do something for somebody everyday for which you do not get paid".

~ Albert Schweitzer ~

Recipe for a Happy New Year

Take 12 fine, full-grown months; see that these are thoroughly cleansed from all old memories of bitterness, rancor, hate, and jealousy.

Cut these months into 4 of 30 days and 6 of 31 days and lastly one of 28 days. (This batch will keep for one year. Do not attempt to make more than one batch at a time - many people spoil the entire lot in this way.)

Prepare one day at a time as follows: Into each day, put 12 (twelve) parts of faith, 11 (eleven) of patience, 10 (ten) of courage, 9 (nine) of work (some people omit this ingredient and spoil the flavour of the rest), 8 (eight) of hope, 7 (seven) of fidelity, 6 (six) of open-mindedness, 5 (five) of kindness, 4 (four) of rest (leaving this out is like leaving the oil out of the salad - don't do it), 3 (three) of prayer, 2 (two) of meditation, and 1 (one) of well-selected resolution.

If you have no conscientious scruples, add a teaspoonful of good spirits, a dash of fun, a pinch of folly, a sprinkling of play, and a heaped cupful of good humour.

Pour love liberally into the whole, and mix with vim. Cook thoroughly in a fervent heat. Garnish with a few smiles and a sprig of joy; then serve with quietness, unselfishness, and cheerfulness - and a Happy New Year is a certainty.

May God make your year a happy one!
Not by shielding you from all sorrows and pain,
But by strengthening you to bear it, as it comes;
Not by making your path easy,
But by making you sturdy to travel any path;
Not by taking hardships from you,
But by taking fear from your heart;
Not by granting you unbroken sunshine,
But by keeping your face bright, even in the shadows;
Not by making your life always pleasant,
But by showing you when people and their causes need you most,
and by making you anxious to be there to help.
God's love, peace, hope and joy to you for the year ahead.



A Prayer for the New Year

Come, Holy Spirit,
Spirit of the Risen Christ, be with us today and always.
Be our Light, our Guide, and our Comforter.
Be our Strength, our Courage, and our Sanctifier.
May this New Year be a time of deep spiritual growth for us,
A time of welcoming your graces and gifts,
A time for forgiving freely and unconditionally,
A time for growing in virtue and goodness.

Come, Holy Spirit,
Be with us today and always. Amen.

New Year's Day

I'm walking along a dry riverbed in California and it's a beautiful day. The future stretches out ahead, in the valley, hills and mountains that surround me. The past is there too, but today I prefer to walk forward: to live "in the now", and truly see all the good things in the world. The air is warm and dry. Fleecy clouds float high in the bright blue sky, and the sunlight glitters and shines off the houses and cars in the distance. People walk and ride bicycles on the bike path that follows the river. They talk and point, and laugh together, as they enjoy the day off from work. What a beautiful and peaceful scene it makes!

My heart is suddenly full of joy as I remember that it is New Year's Day. A day to start afresh and I feel overwhelming gratitude for the gift of life that God has given me. I pass by a man and his son, a toddler sitting on the "lofty" wooden fence by the path, but held safely in his father's arms. His face is a study in pure joy and wonder, as he looks out over the miles of sandy wash, green hills, and towering mountains of his brand new world. It is the beginning of a beginning, and tears gather in my eyes with the power and sweetness of this simple thought. A man sits on a rock and gazes into the distance. He looks sad and forlorn, as the breeze blows by and makes the leaves flutter on the tree next to him, in this lonely scene. I am reminded of other days in the past when sadness and hopelessness were my only companions. I say a silent prayer for him, and profound thanks, to God, for me. Then I walk on.

A young couple crouches next to a "bicycle built for two" that has thrown its chain. As they look up, I grin and say "Happy New Year. Dammit"! They grin and laugh, and wish me the same. It is a simple thing, but for a moment we have become one with the world and a sudden joyful exhilaration takes my breath away. An old woman leans on a fence post, looking into some other time. She doesn't seem either happy or sad, just gazes into the past, or maybe the future. I wonder what her ageing, but still lovely eyes have seen, in the time that she has spent in this world. Where has she been? What amazing things has she witnessed? A lifetime lays hidden behind her eyes. A feeling of timeless peace flows through me and all fear of what the future may bring drains away. I thank her with my thoughts, and move on.

I am almost home. I walk by a stand of young trees swaying in the wind. A loud burst of cheerful chirping and tweeting erupts from the little grove, and I can't help but laugh out loud, at the "bird party" going on next to me. As I reach home, go inside, and close the door, I say another thanks to God for the gift of "now". It has taken a long time to find it, and although I can't seem to keep it with me, all of the time, I know how to open the door again, when the time is right. I know that whatever the New Year will bring, there will be joy, and enough treasures of "now" to help me through the hard times that we all must face.

Happy New Year!

By Robert Flynn

IF YOU CAN DREAM IT

To look at her, one would never know. With her red-gold hair and her sea-green eyes, one might never guess. With a smile so bright, she could shame the sun, and a laugh that rolls out like the breaking dawn, and a caring spirit that warms all who know her, one might miss her struggle. She is beautiful, brilliant, and funny.

Her small, perfect hands are lovely, and to see them folded in her lap, or softly touching a child's cheek, one might never comprehend her great effort, just to sign her name. Her name is Helen.

The Greek name, meaning "light," is a perfect reflection of her personality and character. Her name could also be "courage," for courageous she is.

We first knew that something was happening, as Helen entered puberty, and her voice began to change. A slight quaver at first, in time became a tremor. A gifted singer at four years of age, her beautiful Irish soprano began to disappear by the time she was ten. By fifteen, she was unable to "speak-up" in her classes, and her voice would often disappear as she struggled just to make herself understood, word by word. I had been a trained singer, and I remembered a similar struggle as I entered puberty, so I began to work with Helen, especially with her singing, training her to depend upon her diaphragm, rather than her vocal chords.

However, the tremor in her speaking voice never completely recovered, and it would be aggravated under extreme stress.

We noticed that Helen held her pen with extreme tightness, when she wrote, and we tried to encourage her to keep a light touch, so that she would not tire her hand. All this was to no avail. We took her from specialist to specialist, and there seemed no answer to her ever increasing struggle. By the time Helen was twenty, it was obvious that something was terribly wrong. She could not write, yet she kept going. She would contort her hand, just to sign her name. Her voice became faint, and she could not pronounce certain letters, but nothing could stop her sense of humor, or her courageous journey towards excellence.

She excelled in every job she ever had. She taught herself to write with her other hand. She finally found a doctor who was able to give a name to her condition, "dystonia." Although there seemed no reasonable course of treatment, she absolutely refused to give up on her life! She went back to college, at twenty-five, and she was just amazing in her engineering classes, making **A.s** in subjects that I could neither pronounce nor spell. Throughout these incredible achievements, Helen was the first to laugh at herself, and to make light of her struggles, as she both worked and went to school.

During all this time, Helen's faith in God, and in herself, seldom wavered. She knew that she was in the hands of a loving God, and with the love and support of her family, Helen continued to succeed in every endeavor. However, time and the course of her disease, finally made it impossible for Helen to continue without assistance. We are fortunate to live in a country where no one need be left behind, unless one chooses to give up. Assistance in funding for school, and the tools to succeed were more than available, and now Helen is part of a research program through the National Institute of Health (NIH). There is, now, hope for treatment. Helen is disabled, but she is not handicapped.

Being "handicapped" is an indictment one gives to oneself. When one is **DISabled**, one can still be **ENabled**. The only thing holding a person back is oneself. Helen is proving that one can achieve under extreme difficulty.

As Helen's mother, I will soon be involved in the NIH Dystonia Research Program, along with her, to see if I am a carrier of the gene which causes dystonia. Helen will soon be 29, and, of course, 30 years ago, there was no such thing as genetic testing. I'm glad it did not exist. If I knew that I carried a genetic defect, perhaps I would have made the "proper" decision to not pass on my defective genes. We didn't know in those days. We didn't have those choices.

Would I have chosen not to have this child, had I been given that choice, knowing her as I do now? I think I would have chosen to give her life. For I would not have missed a moment of this precious life. I would not have missed a single breath, nor a smile, nor a laugh. For a life without Helen would be a poor life indeed. She is my precious, beautiful daughter, a bright, shooting star, who has enriched my husband's and my life, beyond our wildest dreams.

It is true that Helen has a disability, hidden from view, at first glance. But don't we all have hidden disabilities? Don't we all have that "cannot achieve" disability that we nurture deep inside the dark reaches of ourselves, because of the unkind judgments we collect through life, from teachers, peers, or even, sadly, sometimes our parents?

When life seems impossible to me. When dreams seem unachievable to me. I like to look at Helen, and I think, my-my, how pale my life would have been without her. How inspiring is her courage and strength. Helen is my youngest child, and as her name means "light," perhaps her story will light up your life. Helen is a shining example of what one can achieve, in the face of adversity.

Helen is proof that IF YOU CAN DREAM IT, YOU CAN ACHIEVE IT.

So, strive for excellence. Reach beyond your grasp.

Who knows what dreams will become reality, if you only reach for them?

~ Jaye Lewis ~

Jaye Lewis is a writer and poet, who lives with her family in the Appalachian Mountains of southwestern Virginia.

CONSEQUENCES by Winifred Kempson Submitted by Ann Baker

*No action without a reaction,
Have you ever thought of that?
If you have a puncture,
Your tyre goes very flat.
Should you drive your car at speed,
In a hurry to get somewhere,
The answer to that one surely is,
The two little words "take care".
Be very careful what you say,
When anger rears it's head,
For the reaction to those words,
Could make you wish them unsaid.
There are so many things we do,
Not thinking, but nevertheless done.
Which if we had given a careful thought,
We would surely have left them undone.
Many a marriage goes on the rocks,
Because of a careless word,
A little thought before one spoke,
Would have brought its own reward.
So remember the words at the beginning,
Ponder on them - give them thought,
No action without a reaction,
Make sure you are not caught!*



The New Year's Gardening Tip:

First: You come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses....

For the garden of your daily living, plant three rows of peas:
Peace of mind - Peace of heart - Peace of soul

Plant four rows of squash:
Squash gossip - Squash indifference
Squash grumbling - Squash selfishness

Plant four rows of lettuce:
Lettuce be faithful - Lettuce be kind
Lettuce be patient - Lettuce really love one another

No garden is without turnips:
Turnip for meetings - Turnip for service - Turnip to help one another

What would life be without thyme:
Thyme for each other - Thyme for family - Thyme for friends

Water freely with patience and cultivate with love.

There is much fruit in your garden, because you reap what you sow!

Good Advice to Live By

If you want your dreams to come true, don't oversleep.
The smallest good deed is better than the grandest intention.
Of all the things you wear, your expression is the most important.

The 10 commandments are not multiple choice.
The pursuit of happiness is the chase of a lifetime!!!

By Author Unknown

Auld Lang Syne

Should *old* acquaintance be forgot,
and never brought to mind?
Should *old* acquaintance be forgot,
and *old* lang syne?

CHORUS:

For auld lang syne, my dear,
for auld lang syne,
we'll take a cup of kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.

And surely you'll *buy* your pint *cup*!
and surely I'll *buy* mine!
And we'll take a cup o' kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.

CHORUS

We *two* have run about the *slopes*,
and *picked* the *daisies* fine;
But we've wandered *many* a weary *foot*,
since auld lang syne.

CHORUS

We *two* have *paddled* in the *stream*,
from morning sun till *dine*[†];
But seas between us *broad* have *roared*
since auld lang syne.

CHORUS

And there's a hand my trusty *friend*!
And *give us* a hand o' thine!
And we'll *take* a right *good-will draught*,
for auld lang syne.

CHORUS

CLASSIFIEDS - SANCTUARIES

MANY OF THE SANCTUARIES WILL BE CLOSING THEIR CIRCLES AND OTHER ACTIVITIES OVER THE DECEMBER AND JANUARY PERIOD. PLEASE CONTACT THEM REGARDING WHAT WILL BE ON DURING THIS TIME

Centre of Universal Mind

**46 Albert Dlomo Road
0849519566**

**Tel: +27 31 2055768 Cell:
Fax: +27 31 205 2968**



**E-mail: universalmind@telkomsa.net
www.centreofuniversalmind.co.za
CHAIRPERSON: GAIL COETZEE 083 9500699
TIMES OF SERVICES**

***1st Sunday morning of every month* 10h00**

Crystal Healing is offered before the Sunday morning service

***Tuesday morning services* 09h30**

***Sunday evening services* 19h00
*Healing takes place 1 hour before each service***

The Sanctuary will be open from 6-8pm each Monday Evening for Healing. Come and receive Reiki, Body Balance, Crystal & various other forms of healing for a small donation of R20 and while you are there receive a FREE Tarot Reading from some of our members who are still learning and need the practice!

SANCTUARY OF PEACE

**24 Raven Street
Pietermaritzburg
Contact Di Matheson 033 3441495 or 072 5241376
P O Box 1351
Pietermaritzburg
Service at 10.00 Sundays**

**SANCTUARY OF THE GREAT
WHITE LIGHT
9 BARROW STREET
UMKOMAAS
4127**

**OUR SUNDAY SERVICE IS
HELD FROM**

10H00 – 11H00

**HEALING IS OFFERED AFTER
THE SERVICE**

CHAIRMAN: WAYNE WESTON

0836666614

SECRETARY: GAYLE WESTON

031 9038108 OR

0836545261

Melville Spiritualist Church

**P O Box 2546
Port Shepstone
KwaZulu Natal
South Africa
4240**



Chairman: Charlie Nicholson 083 593 9771

Treasurer: Elaine Whitwam

**Our services are at 10am every
Sunday Morning.**

**Healing is offered by arrangement at
any time.**

*Sanctuary of Serenity
Gillitts Community Hall
(Next to Fire Station)*

**Services every Sunday at 10 a.m.
For details contact John
031 767 2096**

**To Give Service to Others, To Love
and Forgive
Healing is available before and
after the Service**

Place of Grace

Durban North

**Durban Crusaders Bowling Club
10 Ranleigh Crescent, Durban North
Services every second Sunday**

**Please contact Desiree von
Dresselt**

**For next service date and information
082 4545037**



WORLD HEALING MEDITATION

What is true of me is true of everyone
For God is all and all is God
I see only the spirit of God in every soul
And to every man, woman and child on Earth I say
I love you, for you are me. You are my Holy Self.
I now open my heart
And let our pure essence of Unconditional Love pour out.
I see it as a Golden Light radiating from the centre of my being
And I feel its Divine Vibration in and through me, above and below me.
The one Light of Love, Peace and Understanding is moving
It flows across the face of the Earth
Touching and illuminating every soul in the shadow of the illusion.
And where there was darkness, there is now the Light of Reality.
And the radiance grows, permeating, saturating every form of Life.
There is only the vibration of One Perfect Life now
All the Kingdoms of the Earth respond
And the Planet is alive with Light and Love.
There is total Oneness, and in the Oneness we speak the word.
Let the sense of separation be dissolved.
Let Mankind be returned to Godkind.
Let Peace come forth in every mind
Let Love flow forth from every heart
Let Forgiveness reign in every soul
Let Understanding be the common bond.
And now from the light of the world
The One Presence and Power of the Universe responds
The Activity of God is healing and harmonizing Planet Earth
Omnipotence is made manifest.
I am seeking the salvation of the planet before my very eyes as all
false beliefs and error patterns are dissolved
The sense of separation is no more; the healing has taken place
and the world is restored to sanity.

THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF PEACE ON EARTH AND GOODWILL
TOWARD ALL
AS LOVE FLOWS FROM THE HEART
FORGIVENESS REIGNS IN EVERY SOUL
AND ALL HEARTS AND MINDS ARE ONE IN PERFECT
UNDERSTANDING.
IT IS DONE AND IT IS SO
The above beautiful Meditation has been slightly condensed.
All blessings to you and yours –

