

NEW YEAR – NEWS & GOOD NEWS

1. Doom and Gloom was the message of most U.K. newspapers on New Year's Day.
2. Fear always increases sales, so it is in their interest to be gloomy!
3. If you daren't look forward – look back? For those without a Christian faith, that may be an escape away from life into nostalgia
4. For the faithful, however, we don't look back to run away from life, but to move to its centre. At the cradle, the cross and the empty tomb we face both sides of life, its horror and its hope.
5. Jesus has a two-sided message for us [John 16:33 NIV] :

In the world you will have trouble.

But take heart! I have overcome the world!

6. It is the shifts in life that we call crises. These crises are best coped with when we focus on that which is unchanging. This prayer has served Christians for over a millennium – and I have retained its old-style English as a reminder that living with uncertainty is nothing new!

O Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men:

Grant unto thy people that they may love that which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise; that so, among the manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

7. When read in context, it is clear that the prayer repeatedly relates to God's action through his Holy Spirit.

It is mainly by the empowering Spirit within us that our own sinful wills and affections can be ordered, thus equipping us to ease this year's troubles – rather than add to them!

8. Whatever crises may befall us, we will experience no alarming shift or uncertainty in God's faithfulness or in his love; there will be no changes in the scope of Jesus' saving work for us and the world; God will continue to welcome us, and to forgive us. His Spirit's renewing power will not run dry, his commissioning of us will not change – neither will his help falter or fade.

His Word will remain; his promises will not be broken.

We *have* a Gospel to proclaim

The Good News for 2008!