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# THE SOWER

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## Arthur Church of Christ

415 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Arthur, IL 61911

### Times of Worship

Bible Classes.....9:30 a.m.  
Morning Worship.....10:30 a.m.  
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.  
Wed. Bible Study.....1:30 p.m.



**Ron Bartanen, Minister**

**WELCOME** to today's Bible class and/or worship assembly. If you are a VISITOR, we especially appreciate your decision to meet with us. It is our hope that you will return at every opportunity.

**Have you visited our website lately?** ([www.arthurchurchofchrist.com](http://www.arthurchurchofchrist.com))

Be sure to check out the "Christian Evidences"/"Apologetics Press" links Now in both English and Spanish.

January 4, 2009

(For this first Sunday of the new year I want to share with you an article from the Jan. 4, 2000 issue of *Keynoter*, Little Rock, Ark., written by brother John Gipson. It supplements my thoughts from last Sunday's message, "Everything New.")

### A NEW YEAR

Standing at the opening gates of a new year is an awesome thing. No one can really see what will be.. As Solomon said, "Every matter has its time and way, although man's trouble lies heavy upon him. For he does not know what is to be, for who can tell him how it will be?" Even at the best, our acquaintance with the future amounts only to a "perhaps."

Some men greet a new year with only a yawn. There is no expectancy. Life is stale and hope has died. They have faced many sorrows and disappointments and now they are filled with cynicism. Solomon was such a man. He could find nothing new under the sun. He observed that the winds move in circles and never get anywhere. The rivers flow into the sea, but the sea is never full. The sun rises in the east and sets in the west with monotonous regularity. There is only one good man in a thousand; and there isn't any such thing as a good woman. Everything is vanity. And matters cannot be changed. "The crooked," he said, "can never be made straight."

But wait! Before you join Solomon in the chorus of his song, let me remind you of the throne set in heaven and the voice which cries, "**Behold, I make all things new**" (Revelation 21:5). This King of kings and Lord of lords has made possible:

**THE NEW COVENANT.** The Old Covenant was a sentence of death upon all of us (Galatians 3:10). But Christ has made a New Covenant and sealed it with his own blood (Matthew 26:28). And he says, "I will be merciful toward their iniqui-

ties, and I will remember their sins no more” (Hebrews 8:12). You can receive pardon for the sins of the past.

**THE NEW MAN.** Life can be made over again. Listen! “Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has passed away, behold, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

**THE NEW WAY.** The right approach into the presence of God has been prepared for us “by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh” (Hebrews 10:19, 20).

**THE NEW JERUSALEM.** “He who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God: never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name” (Revelation 3:12).

It is a new year. And even though we do not know what is to be, we can live under a new covenant, become a new man, walk a new way and come to the new Jerusalem. So, Happy New Year!

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## MAKING JUDGMENTS

Judge with a righteous standard, Jesus said. So often we hear some people say to the Christian that it is wrong to judge. Those who so assert are mistaken. The Lord was displeased with those who judged with a standard of righteousness, and then did not apply the same standard to themselves (**Matthew 7:1-2**). This is known as hypocrisy. We can't live in this world without making judgments, and a thoughtful person will note that quickly. Since this is true, how do we then judge? In **John 7:24** the Lord spoke to the Jews about them judging Him: “Do not judge by appearances, but judge with righteous judgment” (**ESV**). In other words, get a handle on the facts of the situation before rendering a judgment. We are smart enough to handle facts; judging motivations, though, is much more difficult. Motivations of a person will be because we see and understand the facts of the situation. Let us not be too quick to evaluate motivations, but let us be clear in our understanding of the facts. (cf. **Matthew 7:16**).

--Ron Thomas, Sullivan,

## EXCERPTS FROM THE AFA JOURNAL (Jan. '09)

For over 32 years a leading proponent of godly standards for “promoting the Biblical ethic of decency in American society with emphasis on moral issues that impact families” has been the American Family Assn. in the publication of the *AFA Journal*. I'm devoting this column to brief quotes from this month's issue to assist us in recognizing some of the issues we will be facing this year.

The editorial lauds California churches that made a difference in educating the public regarding Proposition 8, amending the state Constitution to define marriage as being between a man and a woman. Peaceful participants in a candlelight vigil in support of the measure were harassed. “A 69-year-old woman was attacked when she brought a cross in order to witness to members of the crowd,” which “pressed in on [her],, ripped the cross from her hands and stomped on it.” After the Prop 8 vote a Lansing, Mich. church was “invaded during its morning worship service by homosexual activists who ran through the sanctuary screaming things like ‘Jesus was a homo!’”, and two lesbians “began making out.”

Another article announced the launching of a boycott of PepsiCo for their \$1 million donation “to two homosexual political groups that lobby for same-sex marriage and other gay agenda issues.. PepsiCo products include, Pepsi, Mountain Dew, Lays, Fritos and Quaker products.

On the issue of abortion we are reminded of president-elect Obama's promise to Planned Parenthood: “The first thing I'd do as president is sign the Freedom of Choice Act” which would “prohibit the government from denying or interfering with a woman's right to abortion, or discriminating against abortion with respect to benefits, facilities, services or information.” States' requirements for 24-hour waiting periods, informed consent and parental notification would be annulled. “Doctors and nurses, too, will be forced to perform abortions or face the loss of their medical licenses.” We need to pray and work that our nation not go further down this godless path of disregard for human life at every stage.

--Ron

*“Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that we look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blame. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation...” (2 Peter 3:13-15a).*

- **“FACING THE NEW YEAR”** will be the morning message, with Philippians 4:4-13 as the reading. This evening’s lesson will be, **“The Called Out Body,”** and 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17 will be the reading.
- **NEXT WEEK the Potter Children’s Home van** is to be in our area. Suggested commodities are ziti noodles, white rice, bathroom tissue, 3x5 index cards and microwave popcorn. Checks to assist with providing perishable items would also be appreciated. See the bulletin board for details.
- **THE NURSING HOME SERVICE** will be January 20, at 6:45 p.m. Plan to be with us.
- **PRAYER LIST:** Rodger is to have bypass surgery Wednesday at Covenant Hospital in Urbana. \*\*\* Continue to remember: Paul & Nadine; Dean; Inez; Lyla; Lester; Woody; Mary’s mother; Charles Moore (Tex.); Lewis & Mary Carter (Fla.); Lola Hilliard (Tenn.); Doris’s former brother-in-law (cancer); our service men and women; and our nation’s and world’s leaders as they seek a way for peace. Pray that more will come to know Him who is the Prince of Peace.