

Seeing with new eyes

Written by Administrator

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It's fascinating to see the ever-increasing amount of energy that is put into celebrating New Year. The firework displays in the world's major cities rival one another for drama and firepower. It's all very exciting . but why go to all this trouble? January 1st is, after all, only another day. And yet . and yet . it holds out the hope of life being different, life being better, life being fairer, life being happier. and we all crave those things.

The Christian message is profoundly interested in the issue of "newness". Indeed it gets right to the heart of the issue by showing how life can be completely changed, completely renewed. St Paul talked about this to the Corinthians by explaining that when someone becomes a Christian they become a new creation. The thought that Jesus simply helps us through life and gives us a better moral framework is nowhere to be found. Christ turns our lives and our perceptions upside down! Life starts all over again.

But that's just the beginning. The New Testament makes clear that living with Christ is a matter of continual renewal. To the Christians in Rome Paul says, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." I think this challenge needs to be seen alongside Jesus' insistence that the only way into the Kingdom of God is through becoming like a little child. Children are a good model for us precisely because they are so open to new experiences and new ways of looking at life.

Over the past few years we in the Baptist family in this country have spent a lot of energy on reflecting on our life together. We have deliberately sought to look at the life of the Baptist Union with new eyes and some very bold changes have been made. And the process continues. Last year we launched a "Roles and Tasks Group" which is looking hard at the way in which we do our work at national and regional levels. Our task is to become ever more effective at supporting local churches in their mission and we are sure that we could do that better than we do at present. As a piece of administrative reorganization such an exercise would have no appeal for me. But we believe that the Holy Spirit is at work and that, day by day, he is enabling us to see our work with new eyes. That makes the work of the "Roles and Tasks Group" incredibly exciting and I look forward to the way in which its report challenges and stimulates our life together.

I wish you a very happy New Year and the joy of seeing all that you do with new eyes.