

# New Beginnings

By Red Miller

In the summer of 1874 a horde of grasshoppers swarmed onto a Kansas farm and devoured every green growing thing. On Dec. 31, 1874 the farmer wrote in his diary, "I have harvested this year; from 8 acres of corn, nothing from 16 acres of wheat, 350 bushels; from 6 acres of oats, feed only; from 2 acres of vegetables and potatoes, seed only, scarce and poor quality."

He could easily have given up but he didn't. On Jan. 1, 1875 he wrote, "A fresh New Year, Thanks be to God." 2013 has gone, it is now the past. We may have had victories or we may have had defeats, but either way it is still the past and we cannot bring it back. The most important time of our lives is right now. We must live in the present and look to the future. Whether we have had success or victories, we cannot stand on them. We must let the go and move on. As Christians we must continue to grow, we cannot stand still.

We cannot become discouraged from failures and give up. Many of our greatest advances have come from mistakes or failures. When we learn from our mistakes they show us a need for change. Sometimes we find it difficult to forget our mistakes and we live with some guilt. However, God forgives us, and we should forgive ourselves and move on.

We read in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." We have just gone through the Advent season and have celebrated the birth of Christ. Christ brought new life and hope into the world, and also a new calendar. Now every 365 days, God conveniently provides us with a new year and a chance for a fresh start.

Psalms 8:4 "What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? ... 8:6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet..."

God has given us life, He has given talents, He has given us many material things. As Christians we realize that all that we have is really not ours. The ownership belongs to God and He has merely put these things in our care. So, perhaps now is a good time to do some soul searching about the past. Have we used our lives in a manner that pleases God?

And now that He has given us a new year for a fresh start, if we are to grow as Christians, how can we use our past experiences to improve our future? How can we become better stewards of all that God has entrusted to our care? How can we make the coming year better than the past?

*In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy. Philip. 1:4*