

## A New Birth

For many, with the birth of a new year come new possibilities, commitments, and hopes. Perhaps the new year will bring opportunities to cultivate the blessings and to heal the wounds of the past year. It is a time of "resolutions" to diet, quit smoking, exercise more, etc. This day causes us to reflect on the past and muse about the future. It somehow gives us a renewed sense of hope.

At the risk of being a killjoy, we all know January 1 is just another day. A new birth has not really taken place. A new year involves no inherent change in the nature of reality; it is the same old time marching on, just another year with a different name.

Jesus speaks of possibilities, commitments, and hopes not wrapped up in a new year. They are the fruit of a new birth of "water and Spirit" (John 3:3-5). Echoing Jesus' words, the apostle Paul wrote: "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection" (Romans 6:4-5).