



# THE EXHORTER

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*“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40*

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. ([prchurchofchrist.org](http://prchurchofchrist.org))

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## Jump Start # 2992

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*Psalms 73:1 "God certainly is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart."*

The year is nearly over. It's been yet another tough year. Things have not snapped back to normal as many were hoping. The pandemic is still dominating the news. Restaurants are still understaffed. It's hard to get some items such as appliances and certain cars. We may have thought that turning the calendar in January was going to turn things back to where they once were. Churches have gotten back to in-person Bible classes and worship but many places are still missing people. The numbers are not the same.

I was reading an article entitled, "A warring world's biggest wish." It was in an issue of Gospel Advocate in 1915. A.B. Lipscomb, the writer, was talking about the war in Europe and the spirit of many concerning the war. The war he was referring to was World War I. Here we are more than a hundred years later and the things we could tell that writer that was still to come. America didn't get into World War I until 1917. That was still to come. There would be a massive depression after that. Food lines, banks closed, unemployment off the charts. There would be yet another World War. That one was more intense. Then there was a war in Korea. Then Vietnam. Then Iraq. A president would be assassinated. Another president would resign. A global Pandemic. Schools and churches closed. Travel postponed. If Lipscomb could look into a crystal ball and see what was yet to come, he may have given up.

And, here we are. Another year is about in the books. A new year, bright and fresh is about to begin. Will things be better? Will they be worse? We can't see what's coming. But there are some lessons for us.

First, God is still on the throne. He has never left the throne. Wars. Depressions. Pandemics. Things shut done. Things turned upside down. Yet, God is still believed, prayed to and our source of strength. God is greater than wars, diseases, and hardships. Jesus showed us that while he was on the earth. In a short section in Mark 4-5, Jesus demonstrates that He is God on earth by doing four impossibles. First, He changed the weather and calmed the sea. Second, He cast out multiple demons. Third, He cured a disease. Fourth, He raised the dead. Powerful. Convincing. This same Jesus reigns from Heaven.

**(OVER)**

Second, God's people still thrive. Congregations are larger and doing so much more than what they were doing in 1915. The Gospel is crisscrossing the planet daily. Simple blogs, like Jump Starts, podcasts and recorded sermons are now part of an international audience. It is not uncommon to find many congregations with 8,10, 12 or more shepherds. That was unheard of in 1915. Churches seem to be driven by a base of internal godly men rather than just from the preacher. A lot has happened in the past 100 years, but we are still here as the people of God.

Third, the assurance of these first two principles helps us to face yet another unknown year. What if things get worse? They did before. Yet, people continued to worship God, teach others and stay committed to the Lord. Through those hard times, the people of God prayed. Through those hard times, the people of God continued to trust the Lord. It was the Lord, not the politicians that got the people safely through. If there is yet another 100 years still left for this planet, folks may look back on our times, like we do for the people in 1915.

Even though there were wars, economic depression, and hardships to come, people in 1915 fell in love and got married. People were taught the Gospel and were baptized into Jesus. Some men took up the mantle of preaching the Gospel. Church buildings were built. New congregations were started. Trips were made to foreign lands with the intention of preaching the Gospel. Life went on and good was done. And, that example stands before us. No matter what is coming down the road, we must continue to do what the Lord wants. Good can and must be accomplished.

Those believers in 1915 are now on the other side. Their troubles are now over. Their faith in the Lord got them safely through. And, someday that will be said of us. We made it safely home because of the Lord. Wars, depressions, pandemics, troubles will all someday be completed. I tend to think that we will forget all those troubles once we are on the other side. It's a lot like flying. I've had some real experiences flying. And, when I'm on the ground, at my destination, and people ask, "How was your flight?" It doesn't matter. I'm where I'm supposed to be. Long journeys. Crowded flights. Bumpy. Scary moments. That's all soon forgotten once one is where they are supposed to be. And, such it will be for us. I'd like to run into some of our brethren from 1915. There is no need for bragging or saying, "What you went through was nothing like what we went through." No, none of that stuff. I'd like to thank them for their example. I'd expect they'd point to some who went through the Civil War and remained faithful to God. I'd expect that group would point back to those who first brought the N.T. way to America. There was a lot of resistance. They'd likely point back to the early Christians in Rome. They'd likely point back to God's people in Babylon. And, collectively, all of us, all generations, would thank the Lord. Had it not been for the Lord, we would not have made it.

We welcome a coming new year. Bring it on. We pray for the best but will not be moved by the worst. To God be the glory and hope.

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)

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