

Column

It doesn't seem possible but April marks the 25th year of my weekly column. Their scope in terms of distribution has expanded as well. Instead of appearing solely in the *Blue Ridge News Observer*, they now appear in two other North Georgia newspapers, the *Blairsville North Georgia News* and the *Ellijay Times-Courier*.

Beyond the shores of this country, they are, on occasion, picked up by a parish magazine in Shropshire, England. I guess that makes me a syndicated columnist!

Let me take this opportunity to thank you my loyal readers, including those who take time to comment. Your words of encouragement mean a great deal. If anything I have written has been helpful, *Soli Deo Gloria*, to God alone be the glory.

The world of 1998 differs in many ways from the world of a quarter century later. The hype and hysteria surrounding what came to be known as Y2K was soon to begin. Thankfully, no planes fell from the sky and toaster ovens continued to work as the clock struck midnight and Jan. 2000 was born. No doubt, a lot of entrepreneurs benefited from the fear generated by this hyped-up crisis. I wonder what became of all that freeze-dried food people bought in preparation for this apocalyptic event?

A quarter of a century ago, anything on the order of 911 could not have been fathomed. The Cold War was over. Capitalism had won, and the United States was the world's only superpower. Secular democracies were the wave of the future. For most, radicalized Islam was off the radar screen.

Many other things were different as well. Not everyone had the Internet, and patience was required for those who did. A cup of coffee

could be poured and partially consumed as the dial-up modem sputtered during the uploading of a website.

Moreover, people in those far-off days still read daily newspapers which, especially on Sunday, were full and fat. Film cameras were the way to go if you wanted quality pictures. Most homes had landlines. Mobile phones were the purview of the few, and ‘texting’ was unknown. For the most part, men and women still got married before setting up housekeeping, and, especially in the South, everyone was expected to be a member of some church.

Though there have been many changes over the past 25 years, many things have stayed the same: People still need the Lord; things go better when His laws are known and followed; humans are to be loved while things are to be used (and not the other way round); children need the support of a loving family; death remains the great leveler and enemy of the human family; conflicts between men and nations show no signs of going away; the power of the Gospel of Christ to bring hope and lift up the fallen remains; and opportunities for service and witness continue for Jesus’ believing people.

A new world and set of circumstances but, still the same Christ and Gospel. Let us carry on until the last paper rolls off the press.

ALMIGHTY Father, who hast given thine only Son to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification; Grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness, that we may always serve thee in pureness of living and truth; through the merits of the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Collect for the First Sunday after Easter, Book of Common Prayer)

The Rev. Victor H. Morgan is rector of St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, Blue Ridge.