

2014: The Year of God's Presence

"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:20, NIV).

None of us knows what the **new year** holds. Will my daddy move to our Father's house? Will my husband get stronger or more feeble? Will the stock market crash or keep soaring? Will the Middle East erupt in a war that drags the rest of the world into it? All of the uncertainty can give us pause and cause us to step gingerly into the new year. Except for one fact. One certainty. One shining, undisputable truth. God is there!

This confident **hope** is eloquently expressed in the following note that was written by pastor Farshid Fathi. Pastor Farshid is incarcerated in the notorious Evin Prison in Tehran, Iran, because of "the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 1:9). His thankfulness for the past, his clear vision for the future and his heartfelt joy in the present have been such a personal challenge to me that I wanted to share his words with you:

"Dear brothers and sisters,

"We are celebrating Christmas in prison with honor and unexplainable joy in Christ.

"2013 is going to end, and we are very thankful to the Lord for everything we were given this year. I had called 2013 'the year of revelation.' Now I am very excited because I am calling 2014 'the year of God's presence.'

"God calls us to walk before Him and be blameless, as he said to Abraham. So far, walking before Him is very sweet and so exciting. It is filled with great endurance, afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, sleepless

nights, hunger, purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love, truthful speech and the power of God.

“So my dear brothers and sisters, if you read this, be ready for a very exciting journey in 2014.

“Thank you so much for remembering me in your prayers after 1,100 days.

“With blessings in Christ, your brother, Farshid”

Please do not cease to pray for **Pastor Farshid, Pastor Saeed**, and others around the world who are paying a supreme price for their **devotion** and service to Jesus.

*Called “the best preacher in the family” by her father, Billy Graham, **Anne Graham Lotz** speaks around the globe with the wisdom and authority of years spent studying God’s Word.*