

## *Sounding the 'Still'*

Christmas is now in the rear-view mirror. For most of us, it has been a time of celebration, of spiritual highs with the music and preaching about the coming of our Lord, of get-togethers with family, and of giving and receiving presents.

As the holiday fades, however, our routines shift to a return to the demands and deadlines of busy work schedules, the alarm generated by the pounds put on around tables gaily laden with culinary delights, or concern about the health of a loved one, all of which have been pushed temporarily into the backs of our minds as we participated in the festivities around us. Mix into that potpourri of reality the bills incurred in the yuletide observance.

Straight ahead is New Year's Day, signaling the "birth" of 2014. What does that measure in time hold for us? What joys will we experience? What love and laughter will enrich our lives? Can we find peace that somehow always seems elusive?

On the other hand, what emergencies will we face? What adversity will come along? What challenges will test us?

How will this coming year be remembered as 2015 and 2016 and their successors roll by?

Perhaps the best practice – with two days past Christmas and the future facing us – is one symbolized by a seagoing tradition. When disaster strikes a British navy vessel, the "still" is instantly sounded. It is a warning device that simply means: *Prepare to do the wise thing.*

When an emergency comes, few know what to do, but in moments of calm enforced by the signal, each man finds his responsibility and functions accordingly. By sounding the "still," confusion is averted and many tragedies prevented.

When tragedies or emergencies arise in our lives, we seldom know how to cope with them. For these occasions, God has the "still" that should be sounded. "Be still, and know that I am God ... the Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge" (Psalm 46:10-11). In the calmness of His presence, we can learn direction, receive strength, and meet the situation, whatever it may be.

Most of us are worrywarts. We fret about the future and if we will be able to stand under all sorts of living pressures. Observing the "still" is not a neurotic escape from reality. Rather, it is receiving instructions and inspiration from Him who has all of us in His hands.

– Beecher Hunter