

## Minister's Message – September 2013

### How to Vote

In a few days all Australian citizens will have to vote for the person they want to represent them in the Federal Parliament. This is the privilege we have of living in a democratic nation. In some democracies voting is not compulsory, but we should treasure this privilege and exercise our right to vote anyway.

You may think your vote will not make any difference but that is not the point. You must have you say and then accept the outcome. Be thankful that we do not live in an autocracy, religious or secular. So while you may be fed up with being bombarded by political messages day after day, this is the democratic process. You will have to make a choice on polling day as to who you will vote for. Before you do, there a number of things a Christian should do.

Firstly, pray. Pray knowing that God is sovereign, even in this democratic process. God will appoint whom he chooses to govern our nation, and the leader of the government (Daniel 2:21, Romans 13:1). We pray that God will overrule in the election, and we will pray for the people who get elected, especially the leader (I Timothy 2:1-2).

Secondly, learn all you can about your local candidates. They will represent you locally; you may have cause to consult them one day. You will be interested in their background and their morals. They may belong to a major party and therefore be obliged to vote along party lines. If so, find out what the party stands for. It is good that we have two potential leaders who appear to be faithful husbands.

One major party has given its members a conscience vote on the moral issue of homosexual marriage. In this case you need to know where your local candidate stands on this issue. A minor party has a policy for homosexual marriage on the top of their agenda even if they campaign on other issues.

There are other moral issues, such as abortion and euthanasia, you need to consider as you vote. You will also look at their concern for the truly poor and marginalised in our society, and even other societies. When, in the Bible, the leaders of Israel turned away from God they began to oppress and exploit the poor. It is interesting that the Sabbath day, a day of rest and worship, was a blessing to the poor. A nation that pays heed to the commands of God will be blessed by God.

Thirdly, do not simply vote for the person who promises to put more money in your pocket. We do of course consider the economic management credentials of those who will govern us, but we want them to govern for the benefit of everyone. We want to have a government concerned that people are working, and being paid a fair wage. In the Bible we are told to work hard and provide for our families (I Timothy 5:8; I Thessalonians 4:11, *cf.* II Thessalonians 3:3). We are told to share with those in need, the poor and those who suffer loss (Galatians 6:10). The Bible tells us not to be hoarding wealth for ourselves (James 5:1-3).

Remember that political candidates do not always do what they say. This means you must be wise and discerning. This brings us back to our first point which was to pray.

*Rev. Dr. Dennis K. Muldoon*