

## Minister's Message – November 2012

### Super-storm Sandy

Atlantic City was the first to be hit when cyclone Sandy crossed the east coast of the USA. The Leisure City that boasts twelve casinos and a high crime rate is also a city with 25% of the population below the poverty line. Its casinos were shut down and reportedly losing \$5million a day. In New York City trading on Wall Street was suspended for two days with huge financial losses. The morality of much of this trading has been called into question by a former trader. He tells of a culture of greed and gambling. He says that these traders gamble with the pension funds and savings of millions of ordinary people.

The race for the Presidency was put on hold for a few days. With millions of dollars being spent every day on these campaigns, huge sums must have been saved with the cyclone. Halloween celebrations were damped greatly by the cyclone. This supposedly innocent celebration encourages children to dress up as witches and devils, and play with occult like practices. It certainly is not honouring to God.

As the huge storm approached millions moved out of their homes into safe places. They were powerless to stop the storm. The most powerful nation on earth, ruled by the most powerful man, simply watched and waited. All were humbled in the face of such fury from 'mother nature', as they say. Thankfully the storm passed quickly and everyone is working together to rebuild, and hopefully re-assess their lives.

'Mother nature' is a strange term. Father God is the one who controls 'mother nature' and everything else in this universe. 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth', are the first words of the Bible. The eternal, creator God continues to control his creation. There is not force or power over which God does not have control. Further on in the Bible we read 'I make peace (Shalom) and create calamity. I, the Lord, do all these things' (Isaiah 45:7). 'If there is a calamity in a city, will not the Lord have done it' (Amos 3:6). If God is supreme over all things then he has allowed this calamity in the USA and all other calamities. Cyclone Katrina was a similar calamity to hit a similar city.

No man on earth could stop this storm. All had to watch and wait. But some 2000 years ago a man did stop a storm. Jesus was on the lake with his disciples when a furious storm blew up. They were afraid of drowning but Jesus spoke to the storm and it stopped (Mark 4:39). God has power over wind and waves, over floods and earthquakes and all things.

Calamities remind us of God's supreme power. They remind us how weak and vulnerable we are. We think we are in control of our lives but this is a lie. After a calamity in Siloam, when a tower fell and killed eighteen people, Jesus said 'unless you repent you will likewise perish' (Luke 13:5). We must humble ourselves before Almighty God and repent of our rebellion before it is too late.

Such calamities are but a taste of things to come. One day the whole earth will be destroyed and the elements will burn up in the intense heat (II Peter 3:12). That will be the day when Jesus returns in glory to gather those who have repented and believed in him. He will gather us into the glorious heavenly city, in a new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21).

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