

Minister's Message – January 2009

Year of the Lord

The year 2009 has been labelled the 'year of the mouse' by the Chinese, the 'year of astronomy' by the UN and the 'year of creativity and innovation' by the EU. It looks like being a mixed us year. Maybe a mouse will make it to mars! I suggest we call it the 'year of the Lord'. When Jesus began his work he said 'the acceptable year of the Lord' had arrived.

As we enter a new year we pause to reflect on the past year and anticipate what 2009 will bring. How was your 2008? Not so long ago Queen Elizabeth II, reflecting on the year just past, called it *annus horribilis*, a most horrible year. I am sure she started that year hoping for peace and happiness but it did not turn out that way. We all hope for peace and happiness in our lives as we enter 2009, but can we be sure this is how it will turn out?

Are you entering this year in financial difficulty because of the global financial crisis? With the dramatic downturn in the share market the life savings of many have been severely eroded making life more difficult and uncertain. Others are uncertain about their job. Others are worried about a natural disaster after being ravaged in the past year. Still others face family problems, illness or general uncertainty. One thing is certain and that is that we cannot be certain about anything as we look to the future – apart from death.

If all this seems gloomy then I have some good news for you. We can be certain about something else. Jesus is coming again soon. He may not come this year – but then again he may. No matter, he will certainly come again. He told his disciples – *if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again* (John 14:3). The Bible ends with the words *surely I am coming quickly* (Revelation 22:20).

Jesus, who was born into this world just over 2000 years ago, lived among us and was put to death on a Cross outside Jerusalem. He was buried but rose from the dead, and now lives in heaven. This Jesus is coming again. I call this good news because Jesus is the king of the eternal kingdom of God. He is bringing that kingdom, and those who believe in him will live with him forever.

The coming of Jesus is not good news for you if you do not believe in him. Please be certain that Jesus is coming again as he said, and reflect on your relationship to Jesus as you enter 2009. Jesus the king will destroy his enemies when he comes. He will sit on his throne judging the living and the dead. If you keep saying no to Jesus, who says *come to me all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest*(Matthew 11 :28), he will say to you on that day when he come *away from me you cursed into everlasting fire* (Matthew 25:41). What will you say to Jesus in this year? May 2009 be for you the 'year of our Lord'!

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