

Minister's Message – February 2009

150 Years

This year, 2009, marks the 150th anniversary of at least two important events in Australia's history. 1859 is a year to be remembered, if not celebrated, in our history.

In 1859 Thomas Austin introduced 24 rabbits into Victoria in order to pursue his love of hunting. He soon found that he had more rabbits than he needed for this purpose. The rabbits found conditions here favourable and they 'bred like rabbits' spreading out across Victoria and into neighbouring states. They dug burrows all over the countryside destroying much valuable land. They consumed cultivated crops and also the native grassland. Without grass cover the land was vulnerable to erosion. Millions of tonnes of topsoil were eroded across the nation threatening the productivity of the land for future generations. Efforts have been made to reduce the rabbit population but with limited success. Rabbits still run wild destroying our scarce resources and the long-term productivity of the land. Was Mr Austin's introduction of rabbits to Australia such a clever idea? Will you join the celebrations?

This year also marks the 150th anniversary of the publication of *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (The Origin of the Species) by Charles Darwin. Darwin was a naturalist, who on one expedition, observed wildlife on the Galapagos Islands. He noticed how the birds were so wonderfully adapted to their environment. Rejecting what the Bible says about God making all living creatures to multiply according to their kind – and that he made everything very good – Darwin came up with the idea that these creatures had a common ancestor from which they evolved into new species. His new theory was that by genetic mutation and natural selection these creatures adapted to different habitats.

The science of genetic mutation and the probability of natural selection requires millions of years if evolution of a new species was to occur. Having turned away from what is written in the Bible Darwin had no problem with millions or billions of years. He went on to propose that human beings, like all creatures, evolved from a common ancestor. Man was no longer made in the image of God as the Bible says, but was made in the image of the monkey from which he descended.

Darwin's theory spread throughout the world, including Australia. It eroded the foundation of life based in the truth of the Bible. If we are not wonderfully created by God, but simple an advanced form of monkey struggling to survive in their world, then what hope do we have? It is no coincidence that the last 150 years are marked by two world wars. It is no coincidence that moral values have been eroded and a sense of hopelessness pervades our society– for those without God live without hope.

Was Mr Darwin's idea of evolution such a clever idea? Will you join the celebrations? We may never undo the action of Austin but we can undo what Darwin has done to the human race. We can return to the Bible and listen to what the apostle Paul wrote. *By Him* (Jesus) *all things were created that are in heaven and on the earth ... all things were created through him and for him* (Colossians 1:16). This is the message of hope that dispels the doom surrounding the theory of evolution proposed by Darwin just 150 years ago.

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