

Minister's Message – April 2010

Heaven Hour

Enthusiasm for Earth Hour appears to be dimming. Headlines in *The Sydney Morning Herald* (29/3/10) declared 'millions switch off lights for climate change', but the news item went on to report that only 41% of Australian adults living in the city took part in the lights out protest. The drop in electricity usage during this hour was just 6% compared to 9% last year. The shine on this gimmick to make people aware of climate change appears to be fading fast.

Sensible people turn their lights off when they are not needed because electricity is expensive. Sensible people turn their lights on when needed, rather than sitting in the dark for an hour. According to *The Sydney Morning Herald* report, one politician is promoting an alternative 'human achievement hour'. He wants people to turn their lights on and enjoy life as usual.

He has a point. While lights were turned off in cities around the world, millions living in villages in Asia and Africa had no electric lights to turn off. Some rich people make this token effort to reduce energy consumption in the vain hope of prolonging their own existence on this earth, without giving a thought to the millions who struggle to gather sticks or cow dung to cook their food, and stuff rags into a kerosene bottle to make a small lamp for their single roomed hut.

Earth Hour! Human Achievement Hour! What next? What this earth and all human beings in it need most is a Heaven Hour. What after all is this earth? What is a human being? In the Bible we read that in the beginning God made the heavens and the earth. God created all living creatures. God made man in his own image and put him in charge of the creation. All this was perfect. There was complete harmony between man and the creatures while man was obeying God. Adam ruled over the garden and the creatures perfectly.

Disharmony began when man thought that he knew better than his Maker. When man's relationship with God was broken, because of sin, then his relationship with the creation was broken (weeds started to grow in the cursed ground), and his relationship with other human beings was broken (Cain murdered his brother Abel). Broken relationships are what we see in the world today.

Some think what we read in the Bible is myth – as if Earth Hour is not a great myth! What we read in the Bible explains perfectly the reality of human society and the problems in the environment that we see today. In the Bible we read *a righteous man regards the life of his animal, but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel* (Proverbs 12:10).

Heaven Hour would benefit all human beings, and through them all the creation; because *the creation eagerly awaits the sons of God to be revealed* (Romans 8:18). What would we do in Heaven Hour? We would stop focusing on ourselves and focus on our creator for an hour. If God made all things and sustains all things, as he tells us, then surely we need to bring God into the picture. We would open the Bible and read how God has dealt with the sin that brought corruption into his perfect world.

We would read in the Bible how God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, into this world, and how Jesus died on the Cross and was raised from the dead by the power of God. This is the way God has dealt with the problem of human sin, sin that is at the root of the corruption all around us – and in us. God tells all human beings to confess their sin and believe in Jesus Christ. He will forgive your sin and bring

you into a relationship with Jesus. Your relationships with other human beings, and with the whole creation, will be restored.

Heaven Hour! Yes, just an hour when every human being stops what they are doing to open the Bible and hear what God says about this world he created and about what he has done to redeem men and women from the darkness of sin and death. This would make the world of difference to your life and through you to other people and the whole creation.

Sit in the dark or in the light – it makes no difference. What we need is the inner light, the light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ shining in our hearts today and always (John 1). Heaven Hour will become heaven for eternity.

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