

## Minister's Message – September 2007

### Role Model

'Joey confesses to being on drugs' was a recent newspaper headline. Yet another famous footballer bites the dust. Yet again the image of a role model gets smashed. Then again, what is the image we are looking for? Is it the public and the press that create this image, only to delight in seeing it smashed? Can any man live up to our expectations? It seems that the image portrayed by sports stars and celebrities cannot last. Many end up on drugs, in jail, or dead at a young age. Rock stars have a very short life span according to a recent study.

The bright light that attracts millions of moths fluttering about does not last. It is snuffed out and all the moths are left in the dark and shattered. 'How could it happen?' they ask. 'Why did the light go out?' But it is not long before they all fly off to flutter around another hero and role model. Should we feel sorry for the fallen star, or for the millions who make him a star?

There seems to be something in the human psyche that makes us like sheep wanting to follow someone or something. When Jesus went through a particular town he spoke to lots of people; he said of them 'they are like sheep without a shepherd' (Matthew 9:35). They had no one to guide them. Maybe they had been following some celebrity as a role model but they were let down.

Why do our role models always fail? One commentator was asked this question of 'Joey'. He pointed to three things – money, adulation and time – too much money, too much hero worship, and too much time on his hands. This is the mix for a tragic fall. A wise man once prayed 'give me neither poverty nor riches...lest I be full and deny you, or be poor and steal' (Proverbs 30). Money is the root of all kinds of evil.

Adulation, along with money, is more dangerous. Seeing one's face constantly on the TV, and being followed by worshipping fans all the time has its effects. A person starts to think they are a god. They start to think they are invincible and untouchable by the law. They are superstars and so not restrained like other people. The 'lusts of the flesh' soon kick in, especially when they have time on their hands. King David knew all about this as he walked on his roof one evening (II Samuel 11).

If we need a role model in our life, as we apparently do, then who should we choose? Certainly not celebrities and sports stars! We should choose someone who is less vulnerable to temptation and corruption. But are not all people tempted, and don't all people sin?

Here is a secret, a 'mystery' as it is called in the Bible. There is a man who was tempted just like every other human being, but who never sinned. His name is Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth. What a great role model to have! He lived a perfect life so is a perfect role model. No drugs, no drunken binges, no orgies, no fisticuffs outside a pub, no stealing, no lying. Jesus loved his Father God and loved other people even when they hated him. The apostle Paul said 'be imitators of me even as I imitate Christ' (II Corinthians 11). Jesus is the only role model worth having.

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