



Pastor's Page

"Delivered in Time"

A number of Christmases ago I called in to church one Saturday morning and before I had even opened the door I spied about 40 Christmas cards, newly delivered, strewn across the foyer floor. As my key turned inside the front door, I humbly reflected on my popularity as a pastor evidenced in the deluge of Christmas cards, that I'd been sent, some from overseas! Carefully picking them up I started to read the envelopes – the first one wasn't to me at all but to a member of the fellowship known as Sister Margaret. I tried hard to identify her, but failed to do so. The second one I picked up was addressed to sister Valerie who again I struggled to identify, as I did, sister Sheila, sister Dominique and sister Marjorie. *I also noticed at this point that all these cards were addressed to St Paul's Convent.* "Just a few stray ones" I mused, mixed in with all my fan mail!! But one by one as I looked at each card in the pile, I soon discovered that every single one was for someone belonging to the nunnery. *Although disappointed that my fan mail hadn't extended beyond my mum's card,* I quickly decided that I had better finish off the post man's job and deliver this pile of cards to the right address in order that the right people might receive them in time for Christmas. This I did.

This simply experience reminded me that the true meaning of Christmas is about a gift delivered in time. God's eternal son broke into time and space 2,000 years ago in a barn in Bethlehem! The bible says; *"the Word (Jesus) became flesh and made his dwelling amongst us"* (John 1:14). Jesus came to earth to; **Show us the Father**. It is hard to believe in something that's invisible, so God became visible in order that we might see him. Jesus said *"Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father"* (John 14:9) A recent survey by GfK Custom Research Worldwide, reports that nearly three-quarters of people in the UK (over 40 million) believe in God. In Jesus we can see what God is like. The best answer I've heard to the question *"Who is Jesus?"* was given by a young boy in Sunday school who answered *"He's God with skin on!"*

Share our Humanity. The bible says *"And being found in appearance as a man he humbled himself."* (Phil 2:8) The story is told of a Shah in Persia who one day disguised himself as a poor man and went to visit the public baths. The water for the baths was heated by a furnace in the cellar, so the Shah made his way to the dark place to sit with the man in charge of the fire. The two men shared a meagre meal, and the Shah befriended him in his loneliness day after day Eventually the Shah revealed his true identity. The poor man looked long into his leaders face and said, *"You left your Palace and your glory to sit with me in this dark place, to eat my course food and to care what happens to me. On others you bestow riches and gifts but to me you have given yourself"*

How much more did Jesus give for us?.

Save us from our sin. The apostle Paul says; "You see, at just the right time while we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. While we were still sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6&8) Jesus was born to die, and that death was the price that He paid for our sins. Jesus is God's indescribable gift, delivered in time for us. And God's gift is not just for Christmas, but for life!

May the Lord richly bless you this Christmas time

17th December 2006