



## ***Pastor's Page***

### **"Photo Finish"**

Emails are very convenient, but you can't beat a proper letter! There's just something very exciting about the sound of a well travelled envelope tumbling through your letter box. So it was with great pleasure that I peered into my humble porch on Tuesday to see a couple of letters lying on the tiled floor. Walking back to my sitting room I opened one en route only to discover that it was a circular (I could have guessed) The next one didn't look much more promising but I opened it none the less. It was from the police. How nice of them to keep in touch! As I read on, I discovered that they'd been taking pictures of my car! Yes dear friends, I've been caught by a speed camera...again!

Well my first reaction was anger "This is ridiculous" I mused "How dare they!" I looked at the details to see where and when it happened (I was half hoping that I would find a mistake and might be let off on a technicality) I knew that I had driven fast over the weekend that I was down in London exceeding the speed limit on my return home in order to get to Harborne for the 6.30pm service. So I was expecting it to be from that journey. However, it wasn't. The date of the offence was a week earlier and the place was very close to church. When I looked at the time, I could pinpoint exactly what I was doing - I was serving the Lord! It was five minutes to three on Sunday afternoon and I was heading to Balsall Heath to pick up the minibus to take 12 people off to the Gorsley Festival. My anger rose again, "How can the police be so mean as to prosecute me for going 9 miles over the speed limit when I'm serving the Lord!" It hadn't even been a calculated risk or deliberate action, I had not realised that I was speeding. I pondered the possibility of fighting my case, in court if needs be, standing up for justice and freedom and calling for special dispensation for all Baptist ministers who are always running late in their sincere attempt to serve the Lord. Then I thought it might just be easier to plead guilty! So I did. (I await the outcome)

As you can see I tried to justify myself in the wake of this illegal action. "I was running late, I would have let people down, what else was I suppose to do?" Running late is a poor excuse for speeding and this is an issue I need to sort out. I also tried to put the blame somewhere else. "It's not my fault - 30 miles an hour is not fast enough - what a silly law - the law is wrong - I'm right," Don't we do a very similar thing with God's law? "How can God expect us to "love our neighbour as ourselves" that's impossible, his law must be wrong" We may not articulate it like this but the mere fact that we don't obey his law implies that we think we know better (Just like Adam and Eve in Eden) but it's only as we take responsibility for our actions, acknowledging our guilt before God that will we seek a saviour - and praise God he has provided one for us - his only son.

And it's Jesus our saviour that we serve. He has not only saved us but he has also entrusted us with the 'message of reconciliation' - the gospel message, and we will be answerable to him as to what we have done with it. Have we kept the message to ourselves or have we passed it on to others? This is our calling, this is our ministry, and this is our responsibility.

*9<sup>th</sup> September 2007*