



## Pastor's Page

### **“Up to Speed”**

There was only one empty seat behind the desk right at the front of the room, and that was my place. I walked down as confidently as possible glancing around at all the other participants. As I took my seat I looked at the young man next to me, “Hi” I said, “bit like being at school again! “Yeh” he said “only we didn’t have our own computers when I was there”. I resisted the urge to tell him that they weren’t even invented when I was there! However, I’d been informed as I “checked in” that the computer was going to play quite a part in this workshop so I made sure that I was au fait with it before we began (Basically I sussed out where the on/off switch was!) A man in a white shirt introduced himself and said “I guess you’re here today because you received a letter informing you that the authorities had taken a photograph of your car and as a result you were invited to come to a speed awareness day” He then asked; “so why did you choose to come?” There were a few uncertain answers before I quietly said, “I didn’t want 3 points on my licence” “Don’t mutter boy” He said, “speak up so that we can all hear” Well he didn’t quite say that, but it felt pretty close to it! (I thought I was going to be kept behind at play time!) However, he seemed to like my answer because he said “Yes, that’s the real reason you’re all here isn’t it? - You were given an alternative to having penalty points put on your driving licences and you’ve taken it” We all nodded in a repentant sort of way! He went on to explain that even though this was our reason for coming he hoped that we would get a lot out of the session and understand better why exceeding the speed limit is a bad thing.

The next two hours were filled with questionnaires, videos clips, and power point presentations all helping to communicate the message the speeding is not good. On the “Perception and Performance Driving Risk Profile” that we completed was a section on choices. The profile said “ How you choose to drive is one of the biggest choices that you will face in life as this choice can directly impact whether you place yourself and keep yourself in a high accident risk category or not. In Great Britain over 3,000 people die in road accidents each year and over 300,000 are injured. Unfortunately for most of us these statistics mean nothing – until we or someone close to us becomes one” It was statements and statistics like these that made us all reconsider our attitude to speeding. As the day went on I sensed the atmosphere changing from a “come on we’re here, just confirm the fact that we won’t get any penalty points then we can go home ” to a “ yes, I really am going to work harder at obeying the speed restrictions in order to become a safer driver” So am I now a safer driver and a truly reformed “speedo”? I hope so. I certainly have a greater desire to obey the law, not only to avoid having to pay the penalty for breaking it, but also because in doing so I might save lives. One of the most sobering things that we saw that afternoon in West London was a series of pictures taken following a road accident. In it a driver had been overtaking a parked van when a 10 year old boy on a bike pulled out into the road from behind the van. The boy was hit and killed. We saw the pictures of the car and the bike. The driver had been doing 35 mph in a 30 mph area, and those extra 5 mph probably made the difference between life and death. It is so easy to be blasé about driving believing that a bit of speeding here and there will do no harm – but this is far from the truth. I hope that this workshop has made me into a more thoughtful and responsible driver. And if the Profile was right in stating that “How you choose to drive is one of the biggest choices that you will face in life” then we drivers must choose wisely. But of course the bigger choice facing us all is the one regarding Jesus. He is God’s answer to our problem of wrongdoing (including speeding!) We need to think carefully about Him because he is the only one who provides a way of escape from the deadly consequences of sin.

In both Speeding and Salvation the choice is ours

*21st October 2007*