



## Pastor's Page

### **"Where on earth are we going?"**

Just a few Januaries ago (not many honest!) I celebrated my 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. As well as having a big party a friend of mine organised a surprise excursion for me. I was told nothing about the trip, where we were going or what we would be doing, I was just told to keep the date free. On the big day I was picked up by my friend's mother and whizzed off to Manchester Airport. Panicking I thought I was being kidnapped! My friend suddenly sensed that I wasn't coping too well and wisely said "I can keep it a surprise a bit longer or I can tell you now where we're going – what do you prefer?" My answer was emphatic "You have to tell me where we're going now!" And they did. (Rome!!) Once I knew where I was going I relaxed and enjoyed the whole experience. It was a trip to remember but I tell you, I absolutely needed to know where I was going before I would get out of that car!

If you're not sure in life where you are heading then knowing what you should be doing is almost impossible. One of the great phobias of people in the last Century, according to Paul Tillich, the German theologian, was "meaninglessness". There is something desperately sad about a person who has no purpose or direction in life. In contrast to this the Bible tells us that we were made on purpose for a purpose. It is I (God) who made the earth and created mankind upon it" (Isaiah 45:12) Aurelius Augustine, the great 4<sup>th</sup> century theologian phrased it like this; "For you (God) made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you" This life is no accident. This truth is in stark contrast to secular thinking, which says life is ultimately meaningless. Jean Paul Sartre the French existentialist philosopher said "*I come from nothing, I am nothing and I will go to nothing*" What a contrast to Jesus Christ who said; ***I am the way and the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father (God) except through me*** (John 14:6). Jesus goes on to say in this same chapter of John that if we put our faith in Him we can be sure of our salvation and sure of our destination. The two things are inexorably linked; Jesus has opened up the way for us to have a relationship with our creator and he has opened up the way to heaven. John Stott comments; Nothing baffles us human beings more than nothingness and death. The angst of 20<sup>th</sup> century existentialists, is at its most acute, their dread of the abyss of nothingness. And death is the one event over which (in the end) we have no control, and from which we cannot escape...But nothingness and death are no problems to God. On the contrary, it is out of nothing that he created the universe and out of death that he raised Jesus. The creation and the resurrection were and remain the two major manifestations of the power of God.

So the Christian life is a journey with a *clear* purpose and a *sure* destination, and knowing where we are going makes a huge difference to how we live. The psalmist said "**Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him and he will do this**" (Psalm 37:4-5) If we want to know God's guidance in our lives then we need to know and trust God's guide for our lives –Jesus Christ, the way the truth and the life –

Let's resolve to follow him for heaven's sake!

25<sup>th</sup> January 2009