



## Pastor's Page

### “One Small Slip-Up”

Forty years ago tomorrow history was made as Neil Armstrong and Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin became the first human beings to land on the moon. At 20.17 GMT on Sunday 20 July 1969 Armstrong memorably announced, “Houston, Tranquility Base here, the Eagle has landed.” I along with millions of others was fortunate enough to watch these incredible events take place as the Apollo 11 Mission unfolded. What I remember most is that amazing moment when a shadowy Armstrong emerged from the lunar module and started to descend down the ladder towards the moon’s surface and uttering one of the most famous phrases of the 20 century “That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.” (And yes whatever they say about a letter “a” getting lost in the transmission, let’s just face it - Armstrong fluffed his line! But to be honest the quote as he said it sounds much better than it does with an “a” in it - even if it is meaningless!!) The two astronauts then spent a couple of hours bouncing around on the lunar plane taking pictures, setting up experiments and gathering rocks before joining Michael Collins in the “mother-ship” Columbia to head back to earth.

I’ve always felt so fortunate to have been alive to witness this momentous happening. It was like a proverbial bolt out of the blue then when I realised that I might not have witnessed it! Allow me to explain; I recently purchased a collectors edition of the BBCs *Sky at Night* magazine (how sad!) commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Apollo 11 Mission. In reading it I discovered that the historic first step on the moon happened in the small hours of Monday 21 July in Britain at 3.39am. I certainly don’t remember staying up or getting up in the middle of the night to watch it! So I checked with the rest of the Family. My Mother said that 3.39am must have been the time in America (it wasn’t!) My sister said that she remembered watching it at school (they we’re in school at 4.00am!) My brother said he remembered watching it in the bedroom (that was no help!) and my Dad said “Moon Landings? No one told me!!” (I think he was joking!) So my sad conclusion is that I probably saw “the landing” live but watched the famous “First step” later (Maybe as late as the following evening on the news.....disaster!!)

So I think I must have missed one of the greatest events in history! It’s perhaps just as well then that having met and shaken the hand of James Irwin (another man who walked on the moon) I believe what he said, namely that “When man walked on the moon it was no where near as important as when God walked on the earth.” The moon landings were an amazing achievement but nothing compared to what Jesus achieved. When He visited planet earth he broke the power of sin, he defeated death and he secured salvation for all who will believe.

From the surface of the moon Buzz Aldrin quoted Psalm 8:3-4—“*When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place; what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?*” God does care, and what Jesus achieved when he visited planet earth can make all the difference in the world to our lives. Putting our trust in Him is no small step but a giant leap into God’s good purposes – Let’s make sure we don’t miss it!

19<sup>th</sup> July 2009