

SERMON AT GELORUP CHRISTMAS 2017: GEOFF CHADWICK

“SATNAV” KNOWS THE WAY

The other day I was driving my car through the back-blocks of Bunbury, dutifully following the instructions of my Satellite Navigation system (Satnav). “In 300 metres turn right” it would bark as I negotiated my way to an unfamiliar place.

Then in the middle of all this my mobile phone rang, and having a hands-free system I answered the call legally. The person began to chat as I continued to drive. At the end of the call I noticed that a strange phenomenon had been happening. Being a male, and thus “multi-task challenged”, I discovered that my brain could not cope with watching the road, manipulating the car, listening to a phone call *and* following the instructions of Satnav.

Whilst attending to the call I had been driving along the streets according to some random path that had nothing to do with Satnav’s directions. As I hung up from the call I looked at my surroundings and wondered- “How did I end up here?!” Not to worry, Satnav had it all under control. It had simply recalculated my route several times and kept my destination firmly in its sights. No matter where I wandered it still was able to blurt out the necessary instructions to correct my path. Satnav knew where I was heading even if I have wandered from the way. Satnav had kept its reference point and got me to my destination despite myself.

So what’s this got to do with Christmas? Well it reminds me of the story of the Magi following the star to visit the Christ-child. How did they know the way? Satnav the star kept them on track. “In 300 paces take the track on the left.” ‘In 100 paces, you have reached your final destination... You have reached your final destination.”

Despite any detours, digressions or meanderings, Satnav the star was firmly fixed on the final destination. At every wrong turn, a new calculation would keep the journey on track.

The destination, is of course, the Christ-child, and the purpose of the journey is worship (which implies the giving of gifts). Jesus and worship, that's the point of the journey, and no matter how far the Magi wandered from this, Satnav the star knew the focus, and the focus is Jesus the Christ-child.

Perhaps this is a metaphor for our lives.? All of us wander in life. Sometimes our direction is clear, sometimes we're not sure where we're heading. Sometimes we know where we'd like to be but aren't sure how to get there. Sometimes we hit dead ends - and a U-turn is needed at the end of the cul-de-sac. In life: we know our way, we lose our way, we find new ways, and we even find surprising ways. The journey of life is not always that strait forward.

Nevertheless, whilst the journey might meander, the final destination is always the worship of the Christ-child. Christ is our point of destination. Christ is the focal point of all destinations. Somehow the birth of Jesus becomes the central point of all our journeys.

Whilst we might pursue wealth, or power, or influence or status; in the end it is Christ who will meet us. All that we are, and been and will be meet him there. This point of meeting has been called by some "the turning point of time." There is a modern carol expressing this idea which you will hear shortly. It says in music all that I might otherwise say in words.

We all have inner Satnavs. Even when we wander, or forget the point of life, our inner Satnavs constantly and faithfully recalculate a new path for us. This inner Satnav, is of course, the work of the Holy Spirit in us and this Spirit is ever faithful, pointing us to the

Christ Child. Even if we forget where we are meant to be or are wondering “How did I end up here” the Spirit will always find a way. At that first Christmas God found a way. Today we seek our way as we turn our direction towards the Christ child and offer our worship with gratitude and praise. If Jesus is the destination of all our journeys, then he is also the “turning point of all time” where all things find their true meaning.

May Christmas blessings be with you.

And also with you.

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The text of *Turning Point of Time*: Music Doug Simper. Words: Neil Quintrell, 1973

From: Songs From The Still Strange Land, Joint Board of Christian Education (JBCE),

Melbourne 1989

1. The stillness of anticipation
Cradles tiny Bethlehem
Silent now in preparation
For the miracle of birth.
All creation , hushed, expectant
Waits a baby’s cry;

Chorus:

Born in all simplicity at the turning point of time.

Born in all simplicity at the turning point of time.

2. Be silent, earth before the myst’ry
Of the long-awaited birth.
All the hopes of human hist’ry-
Longings, yearnings, dreams, desires-
Gathered in a single moment,
Focussed in a child:

Chorus

3. A nascent star, in celebration,
Blazes over Bethlehem;
Crucible of all creation,
Where the human and divine;
Are refined in simple beauty
In the new-born child;

Chorus

