



Archbishop Peter Jensen's 2007 Christmas Message

Dr. Peter Jensen is the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney

Hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus, the Bible records a prediction by the prophet Isaiah.

He says "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace".

Given the way we now think of governments, this may seem a strange way to put it. After all, the Australian people have spoken to change our national government and we now think of the government as being on Kevin Rudd's shoulders and the shoulders of his ministers.

But what I once told John Howard is true of Kevin Rudd also – we all have a higher authority to which we are accountable and ultimately, God has placed the government of us all on the shoulders of Jesus, the one the prophet Isaiah spoke about. That is a radical change of perspective!

If we imagine ourselves as independent human beings who do not need God - the world will prove us wrong. Climate change – for example. It is right we take action but our own actions must be accompanied by prayer to the God who sends the thunder and the rain.

It is vital that action continues to be taken to protect children in aboriginal communities but we must also help and pray for those who have already been affected. There is a dark legacy of abuse that may leave its mark for generations to come.

Our government, under God, also has a responsibility to look outward – to help our overseas neighbours both in peace and in war. The price some have paid for this came home to me this month as I took the funeral of Private Luke Worsley, killed in action in Afghanistan. We must pray for the safety of the men and women who serve Australia overseas in Afghanistan, Iraq, Timor and elsewhere.

On a local level, it will be our SES volunteers and bushfire fighters who serve and support neighbours during the coming summer – it is right we pray also for their safety and well-being.

Finally, may I wish you and yours a joyous time of celebration of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a time to connect with friends and family and to rest and relax. I hope you are able to do that this Christmas, remembering the great truth we celebrate at this time, that Jesus is God come down to us in flesh – the God of the universe connecting with us.

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