SERMON AT APPLECROSS PARISH: GEOFF CHADWICK: ADVENT SUNDAY: 1/12/1991
Lk 21:25-36: THE LORD'S ADVENT WAS, IS AND SHALL BE AN ADVENTURE

Today is Advent Sunday, the first day of the liturgical calendar-so happy new year!

Most of us know Advent as a preparation time for Christmas. In particular, if you are anything like me, when Advent arrives you think:

> *Goodness me is it that time of the year already! Where has the year gone? Dear O dear, Christmas is coming and I haven't made any preparations yet!*

Advent is indeed, the "coming season". Christmas is coming, the exam results are coming, the holidays are coming, summer is coming and the *South Africans* are coming to play cricket against us!

Nevertheless, we in the church know that Advent is a time when we focus on the coming of the Lord. So why do we call this season Advent? It's quite simple really. According to the dictionary, the term *Advent* comes from the Latin *adventas* which means *an arrival* or *to come (WUD, 1968, p36)*.

Quite literally Advent is the coming season. More than this, Advent is also meant to be an *adventure.* If you were to look up the meaning of the word *adventure* you would find that it too is derived from the Latin *adventus* but it has been modified through the French to mean:

> "*a daring hazardous enterprise which encounters risks and participates in strange and exciting events"* ((WUD, 1968, p36).

This indeed, is the meaning of Advent.

So here we have it. Advent is meant to be an *adventure* and it seems to me that we do well to realise that the Lord's Advent is also an adventure. If nothing else, when the Lord comes, it is indeed *a daring hazardous enterprise which encounters risks and participates in strange and exciting events*. In addition to this, we need also to remember that the Lord's coming, or Advent, incorporates:

- the past

- the present
- and future tenses.

The Lord has come!

The Lord is come!

The Lord shall come!

THE LORD HAS COME

The Lord's Advent has been an adventure in the past. The Lord has always come with a sense of adventure!

The Lord took a risk and participated in strange and exciting events when he came to create the cosmos.

The Lord undertook a daring and hazardous enterprise when he gave humanity the freedom to accept him or reject him.

The Lord took a risk in revealing himself to what was a small an insignificant band of Hebrew nomads hoping that they might come to worship him faithfully.

And also, we Christians know only too well the daring and hazardous enterprise which the Lord undertook when he chose to come as one of us: "*incarnate in the flesh*"; God with us!

The hazards are well known to us:

- Undergoing childbirth and childhood.
- Being tempted in the desert.
- Being worshipped by some.
- Being rejected by others.
- And ultimately suffering the indignity of an unfair trial and a brutal death.

The *strange and exciting events* of the Lord's coming are also well known:

- The shepherds;
- The angels;
- Mary and Joseph;
- The Christmas star;
- And the jealous Herod.

These are all strange and exciting events, but there's more to the Advent of the Lord than just what happened back then. Sadly this is where so many of our Christmas celebrations tend to focus.

There is the Advent of the Lord in our lives right now, at this very moment. Indeed the Lord is come.

THE LORD IS COME

The Lord's Advent is an adventure now!

What adventure are you having with the Lord right now? What *daring, hazardous enterprise involving risks and strange and exciting events*, are you involved in right now?

I can't answer for you.

but I can make a few suggestions:

- Perhaps your adventure is a battle with an illness? The Lord is come!
- Perhaps it is rejoicing at the new direction in life? The Lord is come!
- Perhaps it is thankfulness and blessings received? The Lord is come!
- Or perhaps is a state of confusion over some nonsensical thing the Lord seems to have done? Don't despair, the Lord is come!

Whatever is happening in your life right now, look closely and you might see that the Lord has come in some *hazardous risky strange or exciting ways*.

We come now to the final focus of the Advent season.

THE LORD SHALL COME.

The Lord's future Advent will be an adventure indeed! The following Advent Gospel reading gives us a glimpse of this adventure.

> *There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then I will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.* (Luke 21: 25-27, NRSV)

Now there has been much speculation over the exact meaning of this passage. Some would want to take it literally, whilst others would want to see it more as allegory. Nevertheless, one thing is sure from this passage: that the Lord's coming, no matter how or when or that might be, shall be an adventure. It shall be *a daring and hazardous enterprise which will encounter risks and participate in strange and exciting events*.

For the moment, during this Advent, may we all seek to remember that the Advent of the Lord:

- was an Adventure
- that the Advent of the Lord is an Adventure
- and that the Advent of the Lord shall be an Adventure!

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Webster Universal Dictionary (WUD, 1968)