



21 April 2005

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRAYING FOR NEWLY ELECTED POPE

National President of the Assemblies of God in Australia, Brian Houston, has congratulated the election of Pope Benedict XVI as the leader of the world's Catholics.

Pastor Houston said the shoes of the charismatic and endearing Pope John Paul II, who taught the world so much through his life and his subsequent suffering, would be difficult to fill.

“Pope John Paul II left an indelible mark on the world, and we pray for Pope Benedict as he takes on the leadership mantle of the Catholic Church and navigates the challenges and opportunities facing the global Church in the 21st century,” Ps Houston said.

“It is important for all of us to honour and pray for anyone in a position of leadership and authority. Pope Benedict XVI is a spiritual and experienced leader and is now head over a significant portion of the Christian community, so we will pray for wisdom in his immensely influential role,” he said.

“We pray too that this papacy, like those before it, is marked by a commitment to seeing the Christian message continue to go forward and people changed by the power and truth of the Gospel.

“Obviously, as Protestants, our views are considerably different to the Pope's on a number of issues however, we share a common desire to exalt Christ and serve our community to the best of our ability.”

**FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES CONTACT MARIA IEROIANNI (02) 8853 5303 OR 0413 447 771
OR EMAIL maria.i@hillsong.com**

