

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

## A JOURNEY TO GOD'S HEART

An old favourite story of many people concerns the visually impaired people and the elephant. If you know the story one person grasps the tail of the elephant and says 'the elephant is like a rope', another grasps the trunk and says 'the elephant is like a hose', while a third pushes up against the body of the elephant and says, 'the elephant is like a wall'. The conclusion to the story is that each of the visually impaired people was correct but, at the same time, they were completely wrong. The whole, in other words, was greater than the sum of its parts. While probably significantly underplaying the perceptions of visually impaired people the story does resonate when in the Advent and Christmas season we contemplate and celebrate the mystery of the incarnation.

When we read the New Testament it is clear that, while the writers are unified in their testimony of Jesus Christ, the differing ways in which they express that testimony reflect the perspective, needs and life situation of the writer and the intended audience.

In this issue a diverse group of writers provide their testimony of the significance for them of Advent and the birth of Jesus and of the relevance of the Christ event for today. Of course no one testimony can do justice to the Christ event or, for that matter, to the ongoing action of God in the world.

We lead off this issue though with a message from President Veazey which is not explicitly about Advent or Christmas but is very much about doing the mission of Christ in our world today. President Veazey's article challenges us by speaking of: The Great Door of Opportunity; Poverty Traps; and God's Kind of Justice.



Three writers, Katie Harmon-McLaughlin, Anne Bonnefin and Joan Thompson, share their thoughts about wonder: addressing the paradox of beauty and suffering, and challenge us to deepen our connection to God, the earth and each other through a lens of wonder.

Kassandra Unger looks at what is recorded about the life of Christ in the Bible. She explores the foundation of what it means to be a Christian. Harry Fielding and Peter Lonsdale also take a look at what we know about the life of Christ and come to a similar conclusion about sharing God's love and what matters most.

Andrea Putting tells the Christmas story yet places it in a contemporary setting whereas Jeannine Lewis reinterprets the Birth of Christ in rhymical prose - best read out loud!

Sue Palmer Lander reminds us that God chose the outcasts to be first to see the Prince of Peace. She exhorts us never to exclude anyone of God's great unending love and Bill Gillard emphasises the need to remember to keep Christ at the centre of our preparation and celebration this Christmas.

Finally Wendy Ballard's article reads as a Blessing and we are uplifted by her message and Ken Robinson takes us to the core of our faith, asking us to pray for God's Spirit to guide us to be the 'Good News' to others.

I hope you will find this issue comforting, stimulating and challenging.

SHALOM!

*John Taylor*

Editor In Chief