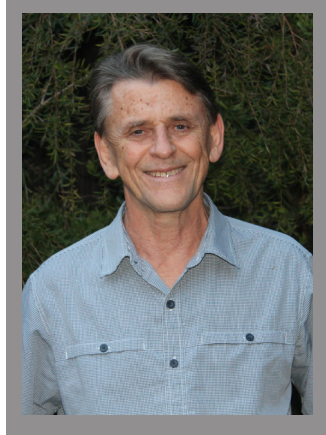


LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Towards sacred community

For several years I worked as an academic at the University of New South Wales in Sydney. I was lucky enough to have an office of my own and at one stage decorated the walls with enlargements of photographs that I had taken when visiting congregations of Sora tribes in India in 1984. One of the photographs was of a mother laughing as she poured a bowl of water over her naked young child to wash him. The look on the mother's face was one of both amusement and love.



One day a student came into my room to ask a question about a course and while she was there also asked, 'Why do you have pictures of poor people on your walls?' To be honest I had never thought of them as poor. They were, of course, some of the most materially poor people I had ever met but they were also some of the most unaffected and joyful. I said something like that to the student and said that the pictures reminded me of a very enjoyable period of my life. I then asked the student, 'What sort of pictures do you have on your wall?' She replied, 'BMW's'.

I guess I was sad that the student didn't see beauty in people notwithstanding their material poverty but I was probably more saddened by the fact that her aspirations seemed to be so material. In the late Marcus Borg's *Meeting Jesus Again For The First Time* he paints a picture of Jesus as a teacher of alternative wisdom, one who challenged and even subverted the conventional wisdom of his day. The focus of this issue of *Australian Herald* is *Venture* and in various ways challenges us to think about our values, about alternative ways of doing things, and about how we can take action to be different.

President Steve Veasey's article calls us to venture into new forms of ministry as we endeavour to develop relational, spiritual, invitational, and

globally connected Christ-centered communities. Robert Thompson's *Comfortably Numb* article, inspired by our recent Peace Summit, asks us to reopen our sensory gates to enable us to be moved to action individually and collectively. Two articles by the World Church Human Rights Team And Theology Subcommittee focus on the Scriptural and Theological foundations of human rights which so often are challenged by injustices in our modern world. Matt Frizell's article challenges us to examine our own and society's attitudes towards race.

Lara-Jane Stewart reflects on the presentations at the recent Peace Summit that inspired her and of her desire to find a deeper connection with nature and all of creation. Finally Andrew Bolton writes with some practical and spiritual suggestions on how to 'Speak Truth To Power' to "courageously challenge cultural, political, and religious trends that are contrary to the reconciling and restoring purposes of God" (Doctrine and Covenants 163:3b). Our editor, Anne Bonnefin's article reflects on the visit by Sister Di from Zará's House to the Tuesday Craft Group at the Newcastle Congregation and then considers stitches in time to embrace the possibilities of relationships and to create safe spaces offering renewed wellbeing for the most vulnerable in society.

John Taylor

Editor in Chief