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Oprah Winfrey

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Christ's Mission, Our Mission

Sparks light up the night sky orchestrated by forces that are seemingly invisible, fireworks form patterns as they dance and interact with each other. They are first one thing and become another, then just when we think they are exhausted along comes another burst of energy, another colour, another display.

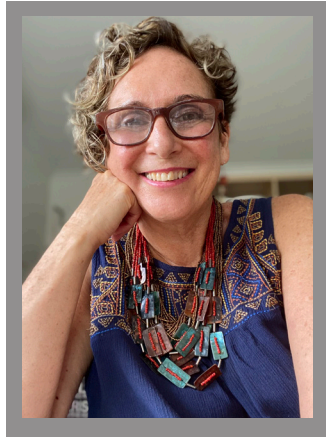
Do you remember the first time you saw fireworks? The first time you held a sparkler and waved it magically in the air, making patterns of light if you could move quickly enough. Are you like me and can remember cold winter evenings gathering as family with maybe a few friends or neighbours to celebrate with fireworks?

By the time our children had come along we had been warned of the dangers of fireworks so usually the children and I gathered behind the safety of a window while Peter played pyromaniac.

The 'pièce de résistance' at our place was the pin wheel either attached to a tree or some large wooden post - the suspense mounted as the pin wheel was put in place. Would it light this year? Would it spin lopsidedly? Would it spin at all or disaster of disasters would it spin out of control, dislodge itself from its hold and launch itself over the back fence or plop unceremoniously at someone's feet? Success or a spectacular failure - either way it would be exciting.

At the end of the evening all would go dark and still, save the smoke hanging in the air, and we would then light the sparklers. Just for a moment we were all light makers.

Indeed, we are all light makers. Oprah Winfrey says you need to 'find what sparks a light in you so that you in your own way can illuminate the world.' First there is perception and then there is action. Ben Smith reminds us of this in his words given at our recent Mission Conference and shared here in this edition. As a community of people, 'we must discern and then pursue'. He likens this process of pursuing to a pinwheel – pursuing our discipleship, pursuing the kingdom, living our lives as authentically as we can, creating communities of joy, hope, love and peace – these should look like circular fireworks shooting light out everywhere in an ever-widening circle.



In her article *Mission in 2021* Emma Gray Pitt also shares her thoughts about the current process of discernment our International leaders are exploring on behalf of our World Church. We are in a changing paradigm and Emma distills for us some of the opportunities and insights that they are investigating. "This is a time to re-imagine church – what it is, what it does" says President Steve Veazey. "How can we be the most meaningful, effective expression of Community of Christ in our time?" asks Emma.

In the article *Scripture as interpreted through Jesus the Peaceful One*, Lew Shepherdson, Chris Barrows and Ken Barrows ask us to engage with Christ's message by re-examining our assumptions and exploring new ways to respond to God's boundless love. In my interview with Warren Simmons he also speaks about discernment and the actions we can take in response to God's call. He shares moments in time that have had a profound effect on his sense of purpose and his awareness of Divine love. John Taylor in his article speaks about engaging in Christ-like openness towards people, the summons to open friendship, hospitality and the need to break down inner prejudice of our own making. Finally, John Rawson shares his reflections on the recent workshop by Matt Frizzell on Nonviolence and Scripture and asks, 'What is it that engages me in Christ's mission?'

This is the question I hope you ask yourself as you read through these pages. 'What is it that engages me in Christ's mission?' What ignites my passion and that of my community? Is it the welfare of others, or healing or hospitality or wholeness or inclusiveness? Is it about bringing God's Kingdom to earth? Is it about divine grace and seeing God in everything and everyone? Is it about helping humanity move forward?

Take time to engage with God in prayer, in community, in discernment and study and ask for Christ's love to ignite your inner being so much that you cannot help but be like a pinwheel shooting out Christ's love and light and grace and inclusion - person by person, heart by heart, spark by spark.

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