

**Dr. Nalini Arles,  
President ICPCC**

### **Christmas Greetings**

To-day the season of advent can never be missed even if one desperately wants to avoid it. The coloured lights, decorations, different sizes of Santa Claus and Stars (especially in Asian countries) hanging all over the place, dazzling sales tags, gifts of all kinds, combined with different smells such as the aroma of soaps, perfumes, intercepted with strong and powerful smell of cinnamon and cakes from the bakery bombarded with Christmas carols – classical or modern- sets the trend these days. Everyone interprets the meaning of Christmas from their own perspectives based on their contexts. As I reflected on the birth of Christ five categories of people emerged in my mind except that one set of people were absent in those days. They were:

- a) Searchers, just like the Wise men searching for the new born Christ in those days today also people are still searching for the meaning of life, in situations, paradoxes, mazes, puzzles, events both normal and unexpected such as earth quakes, floods, and fire that have overwhelmed them. The search is still going on....
- b) Seekers for truth were engaged in the study of scriptures, literatures, prophecies and sayings regarding the birth of Christ. Still to-day people are seeking for truth in maps, artifacts, soothsayers, calculations and magic, misinterpreting and misleading people by setting dates and time for the second coming of Christ often culminating in mass suicide if such prophecies were not fulfilled. This pre-occupation with dates and time prevents them from being involved in action and reflection of the Christ event.
- c) Simpletons, the classical example of such category of people were the shepherds, obeying the voice of the angels and submitting themselves to the Christ, born in the stable, allowing the truth to shape and control their lives instead of controlling the birth and interpreting the message to meet their needs. Many such simpletons are exploited today in the name of progress and growth.
- d) Sabotagers who aspired to know the birth place of the messiah in order to kill the baby for vested interest. So that they can keep the

power in- tact built on nepotism, innocent blood, greed for position and wealth. Today there exists a group of people controlling the power, world's wealth, lands, seas, crops, medicines, information technology and in this process eliminate the poor and unskillful and promote the powerful and skillful people.

- e) The 'absentees' in the birth event were the media and commercial folks. This saved Christ from being on soaps, plates, cups, bags, tea shirts, bed spreads and cards etc. the cutting edge of today is the need of people who will not only preach but practice the values of the kingdom in order to bring, justice, equality and peace. To be like Mary who willing took the prominent risky role in the Christ event to bear the baby and be the "Other" and face the consequences.

Our prayer is that the God Almighty and the Saviour born as the marginalised Christ strengthen and empower us in our struggle to be human so we can touch lives and bring healing, in this war toned world where competition, greed, power and control are the catch words, trampling over hunger, homelessness, poverty, isolation and alienation of people.

The executive members of the ICPCC,  
Daniel Louw, Jennifer Wegener, James Reaves Farris, Klaus Temme,  
Helen Papuni (convener of the congress) and I  
would like to take this opportunity of wishing you all  
a very Meaningful Christmas and a Blessed New year.

Peace,  
Nalini

**December 17, 2009**  
**UTC, Bangalore, India**