



## Seasoned Thoughts

from Naomi

The **Voyager I** spacecraft turned around on Valentine's Day in 1990, so that it could take a picture of Earth from the very edge of our solar system, about 4 billion miles away. In the photograph earth appears as a tiny bluish speck. Carl Sagan, a contemporary scientist who communicated the value of reason and scientific discovery to the lay person, later wrote of the photograph, "Look again at that dot. That's here. That's home. That's us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives... [on] a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam."

This image painted by Carl Sagan was stunning to me. It caused me to ponder the meaning of the traditional Christmas story with new perspective. I thought about how the birth of Jesus in Luke's gospel uses heavenly angels, rather than a lens from a camera, to bring new perspective to a young girl and a small community suffering under the oppression of the Roman Empire. The angels represented a God of the universe who had spoken to the Jewish people throughout history. When God spoke, it put life into perspective and reminded them that their history was bigger than the moment in which they currently lived. Mary's response (Luke 1-2) to the word from heaven renews hope in the midst of a government which viewed Caesar as god and cared little for Jewish existence. The community records their protest to Rome's oppression in Mary's words (Luke 1:47-55, the magnificent). She would not disappear under Caesar's government. Mary believed that from her womb the promised Messiah was to come into the world. The existence of her community was defined beyond the reach of Caesar's limited power.

The Christmas story invites us to step into our short lived reality, to realize that every soul on this tiny planet has the potential to leave an imprint of God's image on earth. If indeed we exist in a vast universe and our lives appear to lay "on a sunbeam," then it seems we do not have time to be fretting about race, religion, sexuality or gender. We may appear small but we are bigger than the power of religious, cultural and political dogmas. The story calls us to hope in the best of what humanity can be. We do not have time to think of ourselves as strangers but in a glimpse of the universe we are invited to protest once again and believe in the possibilities of our existence on this earth.

During this Christmas Season may we open our eyes and ears to hear and see what it means to share this tiny moment of time on a "mote of dust suspended on a sunbeam!" Our earth is not so big we cannot solve our problems. We are not so powerless that we cannot bring "Peace to earth. Goodwill to humankind." Amen.

**Milk and Honey Ceremony**

**January 6, 2008**

**Sunday Worship**

For several years now, Wellspring has set aside the first Sunday after New Year's Day as a time when we drink a cup of milk and honey for communion. I heard about this tradition at the Re-imagining Conference in Minneapolis. It was based on sketches of evidence that a cup of milk and honey was taken in the early church and was symbolic of the healing of God's spirit for the bitter experiences of life. It is consistent with the symbolism in the story of the Israelites leaving a life of slavery and the wilderness and entering into the promised land of milk and honey. When I returned, we drank the cup for New Year's 1995 and in the years that followed it became an integral ritual for our community. People anticipate it and prepare for it as they choose and I think it is as important a Sunday to us as Easter. I will send out some thoughts by e-mail ahead of time for reflection. People that are unable to come because of sickness or travel many times drink their cup with us regardless are where they are physically on this Sunday.