

Moravian Women's Association – Devotional Paper

December 2024 / January 2025

On The Journey Together

Read Matthew 2:1-12

Before I began studying for ordained ministry in the Moravian Church, I was for many years a community physiotherapist. My A to Z was an essential piece of equipment, it was consulted daily. Alas the Sat Nav has now taken its place for most people!

The visitors from the East (Magi) didn't have a Sat Nav or even a map to help their way-finding. They were both astrologers and astronomers – they both observed the stars and planets and attributed meaning to astronomical events. When some new astronomical event took place, this was interpreted as God breaking into his ordered world to make something known. There was a widely-held belief in the whole of the Middle East that a leader was to come from the Jewish people, so when a new star is observed, the Magi saw this as indicative of the birth of a new king, a king deserving of their worship. So armed with their knowledge of stars and planets and their understanding of the star's significance they embarked upon a journey which in the end had a successful outcome.

We don't hear about the Magi again in the Bible. T.S. Eliot wrote a poem called 'Journey of the Magi' where he imagined that the Magi are profoundly changed by their encounter with the baby Jesus. He imagined that their lives back home were never the same again – they felt unsettled and yearned for something different.

***'We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people, clutching their gods'***

It is my belief that feelings of yearning and discontent are placed into all of humanity by God. All of us have a 'God-shaped hole' which will only be filled when we encounter and continue to encounter God. Sometimes God gives us hints – as the Magi received in the form of a star. Sometimes however, we will need to deliberately set out to find out what God is trying to tell us – as the Magi did in leaving their homelands.

Discussion

1. When I was a community physiotherapist, my A to Z was my 'Bible.' How can we use the Scriptures to help us to encounter God and navigate our lives?
2. Do any of you have any personal experiences of how the Bible has spoken to you personally?
3. Have you been helped by anything/anyone else to navigate your life?