

FROM THE *Pastor's Desk*

Dear Friends in Christ,

When we Christians talk about God, we are talking about the mystery that created the universe. God is way beyond our understanding or imagination. I can't begin to understand what theoretical physicists are talking about when they talk about quantum mechanics or string theory. But I do know this that even the most intelligent physicist cannot begin to explain who God is.

And yet, we can begin to imagine something about God when we study the creation around us. According to Psalm 19, the heavens declare the glory of God. According to Romans 1, God's eternal power and divine nature have been clearly understood from what has been made. The immensity of the universe speaks of God's infinity. The complexity of our DNA speaks of God's intelligence. The cuteness of a puppy speaks of God's playfulness. The love of a parent for a child speaks of God's heart of love. The violence of our world speaks of the judgment of God.

But just looking at creation leaves us think of God as distant and perhaps ultimately uncaring. It is the gift of Jesus that opens our eyes to see God as gracious and passionate, tender and truthful. Without Jesus we have no hope of a life or relationship with God. But Jesus came to show us the invisible God lived out in his life. He showed us that God is a just God who hates sin, but loves sinners. Surprise! He showed us that God suffers for our sake and that death is not the final word on our lives.

Anybody can understand God's power in nature. But we Christians are the ones entrusted with the good news of God's love in Jesus to share with the world. We can do it in small ways on our own. But we do it most clearly when we join together to be the Church, the people gathered around the Gospel of Jesus like it is the most valuable truth in the world – because it is. Our neighbors may not pick up a Bible to read, but many of them will accept an invitation to Church. And when they come to Church, I pray they will see a people made humble and hopeful by the good news of Jesus.

Yours in Christ, **Phil Nielsen**