

**Glimpses
of God in
Daily Life**

A Trinity of Transformation

Yeast, salt and light
each able to transform
one state of being to another,
but together they become
images for our understanding.

It is as if
we are the fruit of God's planting.
From harvested grain
we can become fine flour
as we pass between life's millstones.

The yeast of compassion
lightens our heaviness.
The salt of our deepening faith
adds flavour.
Living water of God's Spirit
transforms our very being.

As time passes
we become like risen dough.
Baked with the warmth of Jesus's light
we become bread to be shared
in God's world.

We have so little to offer
but from our little, freely given,
God creates enough and to spare
because only a little is needed.
IF we cooperate
and contribute our yeast, salt and light,
we become a miniscule trinity of love.

Challenging God

You do not call us to a life of self-indulgent ease.
You send us out amid challenges, difficulties,
opposition, animosity or even enmity,
to travel as flickers of light in a dark world.
But the light we carry is unquenchable
even in the most dire, most hopeless situations.
It may burn low, this light of life, but nothing,
in this life, or the life to come
can conquer the light of your eternal love,
which will see us through to the end.

Come to the Firelight of God

In the darkness and the cold,
people are drawn to the light
and the warmth of a fire,
welcoming, cheering and strengthening.

Just so, am I
drawn to the presence of God,
content just to be there.

Not wanting,
not pestering,
silent as I recognise the inadequacy of words,
savouring the divine presence
which enables me
to live out my faith in an often cheerless world.

Cross-shaped Spaces

Christians.

We are people infused
with the Christ light
that streams through
the cross-shaped space
between time and eternity.

We are members of Christ's body
here on earth,
reaching out in love.
up to God,
out to friend and to stranger,
down to care for our planet.
Living cross-shaped spaces
of light, hope and love,
apertures for God in our dark world.

Empathy

Will you walk with me through the dark ways of life?
Be with me on the pathway,
fearfully, cautiously,
winding through unfamiliar times and places,
walk in my shoes – that you may accompany me on my journey?

But do not expect my shoes to be comfortable,
moulded as they are by my pounding feet.
Nooks and crannies corresponding to my idiosyncrasies
will not fit you.

Will you feel pinched, cramped, rubbed sore in my shoes?
Will you trip as overlarge shoes flap?
Can you take the discomfort of walking with me?
But will you come with me – come what may,
a Christ in disguise ministering to my need?

Ever-present God

Ever-present God,
help us to know you
as a priming coat of love,
so close to us,
but hidden by the concealing gloss paint
of worldly values,
possessions and concerns.

Ever-present God,
enveloping protection,
a companion
just out of sight,
help us to trust you more.

God's Strength

God's strength is not like a lump hammer!
Not like a pick axe or a bulldozer,
pounding, crushing, pulverising,
imposing his ways
on uncooperative resisting humanity.
beating us into obedience.

Rather, God's strength resembles a tensile mesh.
finely woven, flexible;
undergirding us with a strong foundation,
encouraging and enabling us to be the people
we have the potential to be.

That supportive mesh
immeasurable,
often unperceived,
is sacrificial love
which does not rust nor decay,
and which the greatest evil or even death
cannot destroy.

God's Treasures

We are born into this world,
personalities malleable, unshaped,
gradually solidifying self-centredly,
rough hewn with bulges, cracks, corners and spikes.

As we travel through life
constantly jostled by people, events and circumstances
slowly but surely we are shaped.
Selfishness, irregularities knocked off,
the smoothness of concern and love for others gradually emerging,
revealing the essence of our true nature
in our faces, our actions and attitudes, our words and our thinking.

But if we allow ourselves, through the power of the Spirit
to be immersed in God's water of life,
the depths of true beauty, in the image of God, becomes visible,
transformed like pebbles dropped into a bowl of water,
from dull ordinariness to God's treasures.

Living A Cross-shaped Space

Each day make space
to reach up to God
in prayer, petition and praise.
Not God high in the sky,
but God beyond all names,
greater than our finite minds can comprehend
yet God encountered in our inner being.

Each day make space
to reach out to one another
with ears to listen, hands to help,
faces to smile, feet to visit,
compassion to care.
Reach out in both directions
easily to those you love,
but harder to those you find difficult,
even dislike.

Each day make space
to reach down to the earth.
Treat the earth gently –
the cradle of our creatureliness,
the home we share with all that has been created,
our heritage from the past,
our bequest to those yet to come,
where we are stewards, not rulers.

Each day make space
to reach up and outwards and down,
creating a cross-shaped space in our lives,
Not always easy,
but at its heart,
where the beams cross,
we find the enabling of Christ's resurrection love,
equipping us through the power of the Spirit,
to be the body of Christ on earth.

Each day make space
for through that space can stream
the healing light of the world,
beacons witnessing to God's all-encompassing love,
reaching out to all humanity –
if you make space.

Missing Link

It's there, ready in the corner,
the journey, the man-handling safely survived.
It has its own place, fits in well.
Electrical and TV sockets conveniently nearby.
But where is the cable from socket to set?
Potential is there but all remains dead.
Wonderful technology, but frustratingly useless.

Just like a branch pruned from the vine, withering, fruitless,
yet not like a branch, once severed, fit only for burning.

A remedy is obtainable.
Just that insignificant length of cable, plugged either end,
pushed into the socket, and into the set.
Unseen waves enabled to flow,
Transmitted and now received.
Clear pictures and sound.

So with our lives, spiritual TV sets.
So with our God, transmitter of all that is seen and unseen.
Christ the once missing link between God and humans,
through the power of the Spirit
enabling God's love to flow freely.
The transmitting connection available for all,
Empowering and enabling.

Are you ready to receive the message,
to plug into the power source,
that the light of his glory may shine clear in the darkness?
Will you use the cable of prayer to dwell in his love?

Prayer ?

We name it prayer,
those times when we pause from the demands of daily life,
entering as if into another dimension
when the brief moments of earthly time
expand into the boundlessness of eternity.

Perhaps it is a little like children released from the classroom
exuberantly liberated in the playground,
like solid dough gently transformed as its yeast gets to work,
like steam gently rising as water boils.
Is it a little like the touch of a button releasing pressurised gas
expanding beyond measure
or even like a bursting forth of music
when one tunes in to the correct frequency?

A cornucopia of images all helping us to understand the timelessness
of earth-bound prayer transformed by the power of God's Spirit
as it ventures into the realm of eternity
into deeper awareness of God's presence
touching places and people way beyond our knowing.

So, let us pray.

Rainbow Revelation

If we can still our bodies and minds
while focussing on the presence of God in our lives,
it is 'something like'
the rays of the sun passing through a prism,
revealing a rainbow of intense beauty,
witnessing to the Spirit's activity in the world,
a revelation of God's love
through our lives and activities in his world.
Be still, and let God be God.

Rainbows

The walnut-sized piece of glass hangs in my window
carefully crafted with a multifaceted surface –
but still only an ordinary piece of glass.
The morning sun greets me with a scattering of rainbows,
randomly distributed across ceiling and walls,
moving gently in the breeze
then with more determined progress as time passes.
Nearby are tiny rainbows, yet with a full spectrum of colours.
Across the room dissipated light paints rainbow streaks and pools,
beautiful to behold.
Little grandson is unsuccessful in trapping them in his hand.

Yet all disappear as the earth spins
or are hidden from view on a cloudy day.
They remind me of glimpses of God,
often in unexpected ordinary places,
of different proportions,
Yet all revealing something of that essential essence,
sometimes seemingly absent,
sometimes clear as crystal,
but always there if we have eyes to see.
The sign of the rainbow.
An awesome sighting of God's glory.

Sleeplessness

Ever wakeful God,
I am afraid, in the dark watches of sleeplessness,
that the burden of care
poised to fall upon me
will be heavier than I can carry.

Help me to remember that I am not alone,
but that the inner strength of your Spirit
together with the love and support of friends
will sustain and encourage me
when my own strength and determination are weak.

The Beach Bridge at Newquay in Cornwall

A tenuous link bridges the jagged cliff and the beach fortress of rock.
The rock in itself an age-old reminder of foundational security of God.

The fragile appearance of the suspended bridge
belies the strength and reliability linking us and God.

And, on the beach below,
ordinary people immersed in their own lives and activities,
heedless of the fragile link above them,
the only access to the house perched high on the rock.

So with our lives.
Some find the path up the cliff
and the narrow way into God's kingdom.
Others pass by on the other side.

The Concert

Four young East Germans playing Bartok in Leamington Spa.
Comfortable middle-class, mostly elderly audience,
torn from upholstered seats in the warm self-indulgent Pump Rooms,
ornate with chandeliers, portraits and Georgian decor.
Dragged with haunting melodies, with discords screaming with
anguish, back fifty-odd years,
as the endangered Bartok fled, risking turbulent waves,
for a haven across the ocean.
But the torment dogged his flight.
Memories of pounding feet, harsh commands,
still silences splintered by tormented cries,
yet interspersed with snatches of now impossible happiness.
Journeys to the unknown, to the unfaceable, to death and worse.
The music searing our souls, dragging us,
inwardly protesting,
from our comfort,
to search deep within our collective past.
Guilt, fear and pity, surfacing intermingled.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken us?
Where were you in all this unending torture?
Were you visiting the sins of the parents unto the fourth generation?
Were you there in the heart of Bartok as his anguish gushed on to the
paper?
Are you here in the musicians, tearing their hearts out
as they bow and pluck these torturing sounds from the past?
Are you here in us as we listen, captive in the horror pent up in these
notes?

Are you here in the tears dripping unchecked from an old man,
reliving memories perhaps?
Here in the frozen stillness of those too young to remember,
experiencing vicariously that never-to-be-forgotten horror?

Are you here, binding us together,
Jews and Gentiles, Germans and British, young and old, rich and less
rich,
pilgrimaging together along the torn lane of feelings?
Is this the heart of the cross, this shared suffering?

Let us here learn and heed your commands,
as the music dies into silence
and the time comes to part, never to be held in this oneness again.

Let us love one another as you have loved us,
united in the language of music, unimpeded by national barriers,
united by the past in the present, going forward into the future.

Dear God, let it be a future where such things can happen no more.
Let us not forget this little sharing in the cup of suffering,
but henceforth walk your ways, Spirit-filled,
to bring peace to your stricken world.

Waiting

Too often, waiting becomes a negative,
an interruption of our plans,
an undesirable delay,
preventing action,
a red light,
a long tailback,
an interrupted journey,
waiting to see the expert,
fretting,
with watch checking,
finger-tapping,
wishing away the minutes,
maybe the hours.

Be still my soul.
See this time as a gift,
unexpected and free.
A chance to breathe deeply,
inhaling the life-giving power of God,
exhaling the cares and worries,
tension dissipating with each new breath.
Time to surround a needy one,
with the light of love of the Lord,
holding them in the golden stillness,
their needs enfolded in his presence.

Cherish these 'wasted' moments.
Use them well.
Drink deeply at the wellspring,
that when it is time to move on,
you are refreshed and strengthened,
ready for the next demands.

Words, Words, Words

As the years pass
and my ears and eyes register
yet more and more words,
spoken and written,
a sense of oppression develops
under the weight
of yet more and more words.

And with the oppression
comes a growing awareness
of the inadequacy
of yet more and more words.

Words fail to encapsulate,
fail to communicate
the vital essence
of the deeper values
and of that
which we name God.

In the space of older years
may there be time
to be silent,
to be still,
to allow our hearts to reach out
and grow towards wholeness
in the sound of sheer silence.

And in that stillness,
may we become more aware
of the God
whose
language

is

rarely

words.

Worlds of Difference

I remember a long ago world
dream-like now
peopled by shadows, distant, unreal,
viewed as if through another's eyes.

Yet once it encased me.

A world of security despite ongoing war;
daily delights untouched by man-made horrors.
bare feet running on grass, clod-hopping clayed wellies;
autumn-leaved scrunchings;
sodden splashings in brooks and puddles;
harsh stubble ends penetrating shoes and socks,
joys of school broadening horizons.

Then, a fractured world. with changes, new beginnings.

The pace quickened.

Journeys to new delights, fresh experiences.

Interim times, wildernesses,
which fragmented and splintered happiness.

Less security; more responsibility.

Pain mingled with pleasure.

But then, new vistas;

hinting of joys and dangers.

New world after new world

requiring new paradigms of understanding.

Pilgrimaging, yet sometimes caging.

No more freedom to roam unhindered.

Responsibilities to shoulder.

Demands of others to be met.

No space for a joy-inspired scamper.

And then a door – just ajar,
glimpses of a new world, a new journey?
Courage to push the door in the wall,
to step through into a new world?
Freedom, not just for me,
but to fulfil that always accompanying quest.
A new journey, new places,
new people for this world, here and now.
Freedom to step in and out, to follow the insistent call,
the call that leads to life in abundance.

And the future?
Worlds yet to come, glimpsed only in dreams.

Yesterday's Memories

*Who are you, child at my door?
Who are you with your persistent knocking?
Why don't you leave me in peace,
secure within the walls I have built?*

I am your real self,
repository of all your feelings,
vulnerable to painful memories,
ready to reopen old wounds.

*I can't let you in.
I am afraid to make a breach in my walls,
afraid of reliving the pain,
afraid of re-awakening the fears.*

I need to come in
if you are to grow.
Just think how the seed case fragments itself
as roots and shoots thrust outwards.

Inside your wall
You will shrivel and become old,
a dried out kernel of what you might have been.
Hear my knock, open the door and begin to live.

*In my own strength, I cannot open up,
but I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
Wait there while I call on his name.
His power is greater than my defence.*

***Lord, hear me when I call.
Come to me in my distress.
Help me to break down the barricades.
Help me to welcome my true self.***

*You child, still knocking at my door,
repository of all my deepest feelings,
though you are my vulnerability
come in; come in and be welcome.*

*You child, within my heart,
stretch and grow; thrust outwards to new life.
Through memory, sorrow and pain,
let new life in Christ be our joy, our peace,
to the end of our journey.*