Perspectives

December 2023—February 2024

The Trinity: The Father-God

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In the next few issues we will focus on the Trinity. This issue is about the Father; the Easter issue will be about the Son. The June–August issue will be on the Spirit.

Why choose such a theme at a time of pressing political and social need?

For most people today, if they are aware of the doctrine of the Trinity at all, it seems far removed from their daily concerns. The more historically informed may share the view, going back at least as far as Edward Gibbon, that the propensity of early Christians to argue about the Trinity was a contributing factor to the decline of the Christian Roman Empire. Some historians writing today believe that it was their weariness with theological nitpicking that made conversion to Islam attractive to many people living in Egypt and North Africa in the seventh century.

It was experience, not a desire to complicate things, that led to the description of God as three in one and one in three. For well over a millennium, the Jewish people had been trained in the rigour of monotheism—the way of looking at the world that was not distracted by the lure of the myriad impressions of the sensory world, but held fast to the invisible unity that held it together. Time and again, the Jewish people fell back into the old consciousness that experienced the spiritual in

every phenomenon. They had to learn the danger of idolatry: nothing in this world could be more than a pointer to the one God beyond and behind everything. To look at a thing or a person and call it God was the greatest blasphemy a Jew could commit.

All this is the background to the moment when Thomas, a Jewish monotheist, saw the risen Christ and said, 'My Lord and my God'. The revolution in experience took centuries to become doctrine. But that moment of realisation contained the whole experience of the Trinity. In his encounter with the divine-human reality of Jesus Christ, Thomas realised that he was meeting God himself. And the Holy Spirit, which Jesus bestowed on the disciples and on Thomas as part of his greeting, was the means by which this experience shone out in Thomas' soul. It was a long way from Thomas' original experience on the Sunday after Easter to the dogmatic formula: three divine persons in one divine substance. But the dogma was an attempt to make sense of the experience.

We are still discovering the profound consequences of this experience. In the last seventy years, some Western Christian thinkers have explored the idea of the so-called social Trinity—the image of the Trinity that emphasises the distinctiveness of the three persons and the bond of love that unites them in community. Taking this as a starting point, rather than the traditional Western emphasis on the unity of God, leads to revolutionary ideas. If the ultimate ground of existence is not a solitary monad existing in remote perfection, but a community of divine beings in relationship, does this change our view of power and leadership? And is it not easier to imagine how we might find our place in the community of the divine world when we understand that relationship is at the heart of divine life?

Tom Ravetz

A contemplation on the experience of the Father

Ioanna Panagiotopoulos

There was a time when human beings looked up to the sky and saw the Ground of the World, his cosmic thoughts lighting up like stars. In deep silence, he thought creation into being; thoughts that weave within, and light up our present world.

Cosmic waters heaved to birth sun, moon and stars.

In almighty awe we sensed Him, this Ground of all being called existence, the Father of worlds—silent, still, in the storm of creation.

Every living being has looked to Him; every living being has called him Father. But our present Earth and we its people have become father-less.

The sky, no longer brimming with creative power has, in our seeing, grown dull. We read matter as if it were solitary, orphaned, without a known source that is a living being. We see creation without purpose; sun, moon, planets and stars appear to be drifting. The blue veil that spreads with unending generosity, a bestowal of deep, contemplative peace for the turbulent human soul, we rather see as a scattering of light by molecules of air.

There are facts of our existence. We are born, we grow, we endeavour, we develop, we die. The fact that is denied is this: Every human born today will experience the death of the Father. In childhood we live within Him. As we grow, we also grow distant. We take a journey away from the Father. We endeavour to know things differently; the spark, the light, the air of divine childhood falls and melts into the crucible of adolescence; the world becomes dark. We no longer listen in the night for the breath of our Father to affirm our existence as we did as little children. We find new ways to know things, desolate, clever, matter without spirit. Drifting instead of pulsing to the heart and breath of a living ordering of life. Living as we do in a faithless age, it takes a great leap of courage to be a human being who dares to seek

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the Ground of the World. A human being who seeks religion, to bind oneself once more with one's true source. And looking up to the skies, once by us called heaven in distant times, we are met with beauty, but it is a silent one. It does not speak.

But in the fatherless soul that finds the courage to seek, something new can stir: a memory, a sense that as we walk our path in the darkness of time, still we can sense the breathing of the Ground of all Being. He begins to breathe from the grave, as we wrest the feeling to grow in devotion, as we question our existence rather than conceptualise about it.

In a moment we may feel ourselves affirmed:

I am, though the stars are lost to me, though the fire of a once-inspired mind has left me; still there is to my existing, a source. I become once more a son.

My soul, a daughter of life.
My thoughts rebirth the stars.
My heart warms the grave of my father Earth.
I become for Him, a Sun.

Otechestvo, the Fatherhood or 'Paternity' icon

'The Father-God be in us'

Paul Newton

Is there a God or does God not exist? The fact that the question can be posed suggests, at the very least, that the answer is not self-evident. Already centuries ago, when theologians began coming up with 'proofs' for the existence of God, it was evident that something that had been self-evident was no longer so.

This fundamental question centres on God's relation to *being*. In the Act of Consecration, we hear (seven times) 'The Father-God be in us' and the first part of what we usually call the Trinity epistle elaborates this simple sentence, keeping the focus very much on the *beingness* of the Father. He 'is', has 'being' and 'substance', but also, bringing in an element that leads towards the Son, he 'moves'.

These statements about the Father are not brought as a simple affirmation of God's being. Rather, all this comes in relation to *us* and our *human* being and existing. It is present human consciousness—with its strong sense of individual self and relation to the sense-perceptible material world—that has led to a widespread disbelief in God. Vaclav Havel (the former Czech dissident and later President) remarked unhappily that we live in the world's 'first atheistic civilization'.

But, crucially, the Trinity epistle directs us precisely to our own human consciousness as a path to experience of God: 'Conscious of our humanity, we feel the Divine Father'.

St Paul spoke, in his Letter to the Romans, of how all peoples had a knowledge of God: the Jews through the Mosaic revelation and the gentiles through the revelation of nature:

> *For what can be known about God is plain to them, because he has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.* Romans 1:12–20 ESV

Certainly, faced with a beautiful landscape, the starry sky or the wonders of the working of the physical

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body, we might well feel that only God could be the origin of all this. But modern atheists may well also be capable of amazed awe when beholding the natural world. Although one could argue that St Paul's words still hold good, it is my sense that the degree to which divinity can be experienced in the natural world has significantly changed in modern times.

In the 'Michael Letters' of 1924, Rudolf Steiner described how in the past the sense-perceptible world was an expression of 'divine working' but that now it is 'accomplished work':

> *To human vision the Divine is manifested in the forms and in the processes of Nature; but it is no longer indwelling as a living principle… In this world of sunlike Divine glory, but no longer livingly Divine, man dwells. Yet as a result of [the Archangel] Michael's working on him man has maintained his connection with the essential Being of the Divine and Spiritual.* **He lives as a being permeated by God in a world that is no longer permeated by God.**
>
> ('The Activity of Michael and the Future of Mankind', translated by George Adams, my emphasis.)

Thus the path to the Divine indicated by the Trinity epistle: again, 'conscious of our humanity, we feel the Divine Father'.

Considering the Trinity epistle, we can become aware of how much is not said—the word 'Father' but nothing else particularly fatherly, and nothing about love, almightiness or any other specific attributes. The language is remniscent of philosophical metaphysics: being, substance, existence.

Consciousness of our humanity—a deep living into our humanness—leads to the sense for a divine *ground of being*. This feeling sense is not, in the first place, something personal.

My favourite American evangelical pastor, Ray Stedman, once said, in a critique of existentialist theology, that you cannot have a personal relationship with 'the ground of being'—meaning that it is a mistakenly impersonal way of describing the living God (as opposed to the connotation of 'Father'). He is right! Or, at least, half right.

The liturgical prayers of the Act of Consecration begin by addressing the 'Divine Ground of the World', to whom we turn in offering. During the Offertory it becomes clear that we can make this offering inasmuch as we join in *Christ's* offering. Through the affirmation of 'Christ in us'

the mode of address changes (within the first part of the Transubstantiation) from 'Divine Ground of the World' to 'Father-God'.

Christ Jesus is the one who enables us to say Father: his statement in the Gospel of John (14:6) that 'No one comes to the Father but by me' is not a claim that Christianity is the only path to God. Rather, the astounding truth of Christianity is that in and through the Son the divine ground of the world is revealed as Father. In Paul's terms, through Christ we are 'adopted' as sons of God and come into a son-Father relationship (Romans, 8:15). The 'Our Father' is the *Lord's* (i.e. Christ Jesus') Prayer because in praying it we join Christ in sonship.

We see how, in the Trinity epistle, and in the Christian understanding of the Trinity, we cannot rest in a simple concept of God. There is a dynamic interweaving expressed in the Trinitarian differentiation of God and in our human approach to and relationship with God. It is the logic of reality that we are led from Father to Son to Spirit (or 'Healing God').

In a recent session in the Spring Valley congregation, one member said that being 'conscious of our humanity' made him think of all the terrible things that human beings do and that he did not 'feel the Divine Father' in that. This is an authentic experience that, I am sure, would be shared by many. The path that is opened up by consciousness of our humanity is not guaranteed to be an easy one. One of the profound mysteries that it leads to is that of the good God's relation to evil. This article is not the place to go into this mystery but I mention it as an example of what can open up for us in the dynamic of consciousness of our humanity and feeling God.

That consciousness of our humanity confronts us with our highly flawed nature is also ultimately the basis for a real sense of need for Christ, the Divine Son, to work in 'our humanity'. Humanness is grounded in God (the Father) and needs to be rescued by God (the Son). It is one thing to read such a statement and quite another to experience and feel it. The rhythmic repetition of the liturgy can be taken as a stimulus to our own individual work of being 'conscious of our humanity' *and* 'aware of the Christ in our humanity'. Such inner activity of the human spirit opens up the third Trinitarian relationship: 'Grasping the Spirit through our humanity we feel the Healing God.' Understanding comes when the time is right and we can trust in our prayer: 'The Spirit God enlighten us.'

The Light

Sean Byrne, Holywood, NI

I am the awakening to spirit birth.
I guided you to life on Earth.

Write down the words you love the best,
My spirit Being will do the rest,

Will show your troubled heart and mind
Those things that only I can find,

Who is the One all beings should know
But only saints and poets show,

The reason of their heart's desire,
The vision born of holy fire,

The rhythms that can cure the sick.
All these I am, the honeyed milk,

The food, the medicine you need
To heal your wounds and sins and greed

For knowledge of the ways of love.
I am the serpent and the dove,

The pain and pleasure of all things,
The life and death that each day brings,

The sleep you need when day is done,
The stars, the moon the setting sun,

The One who rises every morn.
Greet me therefore as if reborn

In poems, prayers and words like these
That warm the heart, put minds at ease

And in time you'll see me as I am:
The light that lives in Everyman.

Silence, nature and the Father-God

Luke Barr

Several years ago, I was walking in a provincial and sparsely-populated part of Jutland in Denmark. It was neither forest nor coast, but a road beside endless agricultural fields. Consequently, there was vast space around me. In this abundance of space, under a huge sky, I suddenly realised that there was no noise. I could hear no machines. No cars, no planes; nothing at all. There was just nature's silence. At first, it felt slightly unnerving; then it felt like a wonderful respite. As I walked my sleeping child in his pram, my whole body became more attentive to my—and my child's—existence. It was a brief revelatory episode, pregnant with existential meaning; it remains in my memory like an unexpected gift, a presence from a different, holier realm.

Recently, I saw a painting of a peasant woman by Paula Modersohn-Becker, painted around 1900. The sitter stares with empty eyes into eternity.

What astonished me was that in this painting I felt that I could hear the silence. It was possible to imagine this silence being interrupted only by the ticking of the grandfather clock, or by nature's own timepiece, the rooster. This experience of silence made a deep impression on me, and I realised that we have lost this silence today.

Silence began to be lost during the early third of the twentieth century, with the rapid advancement in industrialisation and technology. Human experience of what we hear changed. For a few, experience became heightened. For many, it became dulled. Around this major shift in our perception, the First World War stands as a grim milestone, wedged into humanity's evolution, an explosion of universal noise and horror into an unexpecting humanity. Already by 1914, the metropolitan life of European cities had left behind the world of peasants who had known nature and its silence. Georg Grosz draws the din of the city, the loss of the God we had known, and the increasing inner unrest of humanity, with his horrific *Pandemonium*.

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Once, it was self-evident to human beings that God was in the world of nature. Gradually, that certainty was lost. The Romantic painters are the last to affirm their belief in the sublime that is in nature. Thereafter he can no longer be found there either.

The philosopher Nietzsche had in 1882 famously proclaimed that 'God is dead'. It took a generation before he could be heard. Shortly thereafter, Nietzsche himself fell into God's silence; it manifested as an insanity in which he would remain until his death in 1900. Only after his death did his voice begin to be heard, and the silence of his 'blasphemy' was broken. Now, everywhere, his vision could be seen and heard. In the noise of every machine, the words 'God is dead' resounded. In this dissonance, God moved out of our lives, and entered into sacrificial silence.

Our relationship to God did change at this point. It is of course constantly evolving. But it seems to me that with the advancement of the industrial-technological world, that which we call Father-God evolved into a state of being of pristine silence. We could imagine that he took a vow of silence. In this silence, he awaits those who have the courage to become silent. In His silence, we can find our voice.

It is only when we have lost everything of our spiritual inheritance, that we can find our own voice. This is the voice of freedom. One can witness what a blessing it can be for a young person when their parents learn to step back at the right time, passing on the voice of authority to the next generation. This stepping back cannot take place too soon, before the young person is mature enough. It should not be taken too late. Part of the art of parenting is to encourage the ripening of the voice of the next generation. Their sense of 'I' must increase; ours must decrease…

Of course, God's silence was known to those who wrote the New Testament. But his voice was known as well. In the Old Testament, he had spoken in Eden, and to the Patriarchs. He spoke also to the Prophets who had to learn through rigorous self-discipline to hear his language. Then in the New Testament, the silence of the Father has begun. The Word is speaking in his stead. It assumes human form. Only at the most portentous moments is the voice of the Father heard: at the Baptism, and in the voice of thunder that echoes in John 12.

All of us experience the constant, busy chatter of our mind. Outwardly, we are bombarded (as in that terrible war that inaugurated our age)

with crass images and words. And inwardly, we are full of other people's words, and pictures of what we have seen, pictures of our worries. Mostly, we carry this burden around without noticing. Sometimes, we are forced into an uncomfortable renunciation of this activity, when we are sick. Then, we do not have the strength to read, or be entertained. We are left alone with ourselves, and with silence.

In such moments of illness, the life forces—normally silent—which so perfectly and quietly hold us together, become loud. They consume our whole attention. After such times of illness, it is important not simply to return to the state we enjoyed before but to break through to what can be found beyond the 'noise'. This is the silence in which the Father-God dwells. To seek this silence is not a retreat from the world. It means that we are going forward—like the divine being who goes 'before us'. In the mysterious wording of the first sentence of the Creed, we learn that the Ground of the World is pushing forward, pioneering, clearing a necessary path into the future. Can we imagine that this happens supremely through the medium of our silence?

God has become silent, so that we may learn truly to hear. We all live in Babel here on Earth. One voice supplants another. Everyone is trying to speak as quickly as possible, to say their bit while they can, 'to strut and fret their hour upon the stage'.* They do so because since the 'death of God', life seems to be nothing but a 'brief candle', lighting up an otherwise dark universe, lived out for no apparent purpose.

And yet beneath the discord of our cumulative voices, with all their differing desires and truths, there is one underlying true voice: the voice of silence. That silence accompanies our lives here on earth, as a quiet undercurrent, or as an intangible sense of purpose and meaning, leading us on, 'going before us'. Always, it invites us into its peace.

When we first get to know the Act of Consecration, we can feel almost overwhelmed by a mighty stream of words. As we grow into it, we notice that these words are different from everyday words: they become a speaking silence. Our inner voice aligns with this silent speech. We enter into the realm of hearing the Word, where it acquires supra-meaning—meaning which is alive like us! This meaning cannot be contained or compartmentalised by our minds.

This experience of the Word is where our creating Son-Self reunites with the Father-forces in the natural word, which has died. Together, they 're-enliven the dying earth existence' of our words—and of our bodies, and of our Earth itself. They become healing for ourselves and for our world.

When human beings began to fall out of their cosmic context, the world of the Father did not stay perfectly closed within itself, uninterested in us, who are a part of it. It suffered with us. It suffered a wounding, a rending which is yet to be healed. Amfortas, the wounded king of a wasting kingdom in the story of Parsifal, is an image of the Father, who waits for human beings to turn our attention towards him in love, and to ask the question that only we can ask. Again and again in life, we are thrown out of his kingdom and his presence, because we are not aware of who we truly are, and where we truly are, and how important our smallest actions are.

When we re-enliven our words through repeated and earnest immersion in silence and its helpers—meditation, prayer, the Act of Consecration—we heal the sundered world. We heal the Father-God, who tore himself apart for us.

* Macbeth

The Trinity,
Russian icon

The Word – its progress in the world

Louise Madsen

In his Gospel, John tells us that the Word was 'in the beginning'.

And that the Word 'was with God'.

And that the Word 'was a divine being'. If we then look at the first words of the whole Bible to see how it all began, we read that in the beginning, God (Elohim), in his creating of the heavens and the earth, spoke on the first day and said,

'Let there be light'; and there was light and He 'saw that the light was good.'

Then, as on each intervening day, God again spoke on the sixth day of creation and said,

'Let us make Man, humankind, in our own image, after our likeness…' So God created Man in his own image, in the image of God he created humankind.

Following on from these generations or evolutionary cycles, 'the Lord God, Jehovah Elohim, then formed Man, humankind, of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and Man became a living being.'

God placed Man in the Garden of Eden in which he had caused to grow the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And now out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast, every living thing of the field, and every fowl of the heavens or bird of the air, and brought them to Man, humankind, he who was endowed with the power of speech, to see what he would call them. And whatever Man called the living being, that became its name.

In their further turbulent and chequered development human beings wielded their god-given power of speech for good and also for evil, to sway the affairs and destinies of all tribes and nations, cultures and individuals.

Then came the *kairos* moment (the critical, or decisive moment) in human evolution when, 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us' and 'we beheld His revelation, the revelation of the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.'

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Christ came. On one momentous occasion he met a Samaritan woman by Jacob's well and while conversing with her he pointed out that the time had come for a next, new step to be made in people's relationship to the divine: no longer was it fitting for human beings to bind their worship to a particular locality or place; rather, the true worshippers are to turn to God in spirit and in truth because God is spirit, and those who wish to worship him must do so in spirit and in truth (John 4).

Today, in the new dispensation of the sacrament as given to The Christian Community, we hear in the epistle for Advent of the working of the Fatherground of the world, working within the human soul, within the hoping heart of man. In the silence of the world around us, we are told, can be heard the *sound* of divine creation. We hear of the divine *speaking* within the human soul; how it is a word of the future urging us to become, that the divine itself may evermore *become* within the human being's *becoming*.

In the beginning the creative Word, the Logos, spoke out of the Godhead to bring the world into being; at the turning point of time, in the Son, the Word entered into earthly existence and lived in Jesus, a human being, amongst human beings. In the new revelation of the spirit in modern times, we are given indications of the way in which the time has now come for human beings to so exercise their will that the divine seed, the Word, in the hearts of humankind may be brought to life in us, by us. Thus may the light of the spirit begin to shine out of human hearts to bring healing and love into a broken world.

The Holy Trinity
Andrei Rublev

Pablo Neruda's Ground of the World

Jens-Peter Linde

Pablo Neruda, the Nobel Prize laureate died on September 23, 1973, eleven days after the military coup in his native country, Chile. This coup started a terrible time of fascism and dictatorial persecutions, a situation which would have made his life in Chile impossible. It is not clear if he was murdered or if he just 'escaped' such karmic complication by cancer. By now, fifty years later, I hope he has been able to find his true home in post-death's yonder realm of 'the Word'.

All his life he had been searching for his 'Ground of the World'. His mother had died when he was a baby. He left his father's house when he was a teenager to study and write. To find a way to live and write he spent many years as a consul for Chile in Asia and in Spain—just being able to escape during the civil war there. Also later in Chile he had to hide during times of persecutions and then flee into exile.

As an idealist he thought he had found a home in the communist party but was terribly shocked when he heard of the Stalinist terror in the Soviet Union. He hoped he could find a home in the arms of women and although he was married three times, he continued to search by intimately listening for 'the Word'. He tried to craft his poetry thus—but he always wrote in a seemingly homeless and at the same time moving manner.

I should like to give an example of this dichotomy by quoting a few lines from his poem 'La Palabra'—'The Word'—published in 1962.

The Word
was born in the blood ...

it came from dead fathers and from wandering tribes,
from lands that had returned to stone ...

Still the atmosphere quivers
with the initial word

dressed up
in terror and sighing.
... The first
word uttered —
perhaps it was only a ripple, a drop,
And yet its great cataract falls and falls...

The fathers whom Neruda speaks about sound like bossy chieftains; they initiate developments which bear pain and sacrifice, even if their commanding words were only drops within the ocean of creation. However, drops may become a cataract, falling and falling—a stream of words which try to encompass that other 'Word' which was 'in the beginning'.

All his life Neruda felt he had to battle the 'bosses'—the bosses of the American mining companies, the super-rich 'land-lords' who exploited their labourers like slaves, the politicians who betrayed the Chilean people with false election promises. So also he felt antagonism against that other Big Boss who priests preached about. He could not find his home with their poster of a Being.

However, for one to be a father there must also be a mother and later in the poem Neruda mentions her:

I drink to the word, raising
a word or a shining cup.
In it I drink
the pure wine of language
or inexhaustible water;
the motherly source of words.
And cup and water and wine
give rise to my song
because the verb is the source
and the womb of life...*

* The Spanish original is *vierte*, a word which I can't find in the dictionary, but was translated as 'vivid'. Is it perhaps a misspelling? I chose 'vientre', meaning 'womb'.

So, he does not praise the Father and his subject-essence, but the consecrating dimension of the motherly 'verb', the active bearer of evolution, the cup in which water and wine are united.

In the Spanish language, father and mother are *padre* and *madre*. As in English, the difference in their sounding is minimal; the 'p', however, starts with closed lips and then lets the breath out (the English 'f' lets the breath out more slowly) while the 'm' takes the air from the outside, closes the lips and lets the breath out through the nose—after internalizing it and transforming it within. I don't want to get into gender politics here but want to meditate on how Neruda's homelessness—a very modern experience—could find its elevation, comfort and joy when experiencing the consecrating dimension of poetry.

Neruda's birth territory in the South of Chile gave him always a sense that he had a point of departure. Similar to the continuing rains there, he could use his words in such a way that nouns flowed in a stream from picture to picture—in a fatherly way. At the same time his words could give ordinary people a feeling that they were understood and respected; in the chalice of their relationship love could germinate in a motherly way and become fruitful—like the verbs of activity.

Taking communion, we do so with the body and the blood of Christ—the consecrated substances of bread and wine. It is said that His body enters into our 'sick dwellings', but thus it can 'make them whole'. The F of the Father which streamed out from Him can *im*pregnate us, be *im*planted, germinate and thus become the Ground of the World, the home base to give birth to our M-like utterings. Complementing this we take in the consecrated wine and thus may become M-like *confessors*, pregnant by divine revelation, and thus be saved from adversary attempts to let us spread uncontrolled F-spells into the world, instead giving birth to forward-looking engagement with His substance, which we need to re-create again and again.

Then, indeed, 'the Peace' can be with us. Perhaps it is heartening that this peace will not be one of continuous comfort, but rather one of eternal searching from exile through exile to find that yonder realm whence we can look back one day and realise that our seeking was embraced by that which poetry can offer: by 'the Word' which was 'in

the Beginning' and which continues to begin anew with each breath that we take—if we take it as an 'act of consecration' of ourselves and of the world around us.
This will be poetry, not one we might get the Nobel Prize for, but one whose words would help to create *Peace for Our World—the Ground of Existence of the Heavens and of the Earth.* This poetry, I believe, is Prayer…

From Otherness to Here-Now

Pablo
Neruda
The poet heard sounds,
Minded them, formed them and tuned
Otherness—to sing
Twixt heaven
And earth.

Homeless
He searched for
Peace like nature's grace
As he had known it in woods,
In his childhood's rains,
On the trains,
In dreams.

In politics he
Missed it. In poetry he
Found Love as Here-Now.

Jens-Peter Linde

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Women in the life of Christ Part Two

Louise Sofair

Mary and the wedding at Cana

In St John's gospel we hear that Jesus and the disciples made their way to Cana to attend a wedding there. Catherine Emmerich* indicates that this was a family wedding in which Mary and her children had a share in providing for the feast, according to the Jewish tradition. As we do not hear otherwise, it seems that Jesus had not seen his mother since before the Baptism in the Jordan.

Two factors need to be taken into consideration regarding this meeting between Mary and Jesus. Firstly, according to Rudolf Steiner in *The Fifth Gospel*, Mary had undergone a far-reaching transformation. Jesus, in great despair for the loss of humanity's connection with the spirit, which he deeply felt, had poured out 'his whole being' in a confessional conversation with his mother, who absorbed his soul pain and even the forces of his ego in an act of complete receptivity. Such was the intensity of this moment that the being of the Nathan Mary of St Luke's Gospel, who had died several years before but maintained a close spiritual connection with Jesus, now became very strongly connected to Jesus' adopted mother, the Solomon Mary of St Matthew's Gospel. It was this remarkable, amalgamated personality of the mother of Jesus who now presided over aspects of the marriage feast.

Secondly, Jesus had undergone an even greater transformation, whereby the Christ being had begun to incarnate into him.

When challenged by his mother to provide more wine for the marriage guests, Jesus realised that from now on he could only provide physical substance through spiritual power. He had hitherto been able to heal with the divine aura around him; now he understood that he must act with the will-force of the Father. However, he did not feel that this force was sufficiently incarnated within him yet: 'Woman, what have I *to do* with you? My hour has not yet come.' (John 2:4)

Mary, however, discerned that the next stage of Christ's incarnation within Jesus was imminent. With complete confidence, she created a situation whereby Jesus had no choice but to comply; she instructed the servants to carry out his will. The result was that Jesus' first act as the Son of God was realised and the water which was used for ancient ritualistic purposes was miraculously changed into new wine. This event was not only enlightening for the disciples but must also have been a heightened awakening for Jesus himself. He became aware of his divine ego-task.

The woman at the well

While travelling through Samaria, the disciples went to get provisions and left Jesus alone by Jacob's Well, near Sychar. Jesus had given the disciples strict instructions not to join the community of the Samaritans (Matt.10). Now he met a Samaritan woman from the locality and when he asked her to draw him some water from the well, she challenged him for addressing her, because of the enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans. The woman represented a race which lived in expectation of the Messiah but had not undergone ego-development to the same extent as the Jews. They worshipped God intui-

tively, 'on the mountain', while the Jews worshipped through study and ritual, 'in the Temple'.

Jesus' answer to the woman's provocation was to reveal that he was capable of giving her the water which could quench humanity's thirst for eternal life. For the first time, Jesus proclaimed—not to those close to him, but to this 'alien' woman—that he was the Messiah. He united two streams which had long been in opposition, explaining about a new way of inner worship regardless of the outer situation. He announced that it was the Father's will that both 'sower and reaper' begin to rejoice together.

After this proclamation and a deeply personal conversation about her relationships, the woman believed that Jesus was, indeed, the Messiah. She had a significant influence in her community and was able to convince many fellow Samaritans of her conviction about Christ Jesus. They became followers of the one whom they believed was not only the saviour of the Israelites, but of the whole world.

The last words of the New Testament in the summation of The Revelation to John describe the Water of Life: 'Let him who is thirsty come. Let him who desires, freely drink the water of life.' Remarkably, this had already been spoken about by Christ himself on earth, in a private conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well!

The woman taken in adultery

As Christ incarnated more deeply into the human being, Jesus, he proclaimed his divinity publicly. Thus began a movement of dissension against him, even by some of his followers, many of whom now 'drew back' (John 6). As he had healed a paralysed man on the Sabbath, his persecution was gaining ground among the Pharisees.

A dark, dangerous milieu was created by his enemies, into which they threw the challenge of judgement against a woman whom they accused of being an adulteress. The woman had apparently been 'caught in the act' although, notably, the man involved was not brought forward for judgement. Furthermore, the punishment for adultery was death by stoning, in accordance with Mosaic law. Deeply ingrained in the Jewish culture was the conviction that extra-marital relationships should on no account be indulged by women because the important purity of the bloodline depended on them. (While the allegorical figure of Eve epitomises sexual temptation, spiritual science explains that, in epic picture form, this is really the description of the important stage of human development from uni-sexuality to the division of the sexes.*) Furthermore, marriage was regarded as a reflection, in human terms, of the divine covenant between the Jewish people and God. Matrimony was therefore considered to be sacrosanct. To break the marriage vow (devotion of a wife to her husband) meant a betrayal of the foundation of Jewish society. This was the basis of the harsh punishment of an adulteress, who was deemed to be a traitor to Jewish religious and social tradition.

The seriousness of the accusation was not in question. However, the scribes and Pharisees rallied an impromptu public trial, interrupting Christ's teaching which he had begun at dawn in the synagogue. They encircled the woman, placing her 'in the middle' in an oppressive and humiliating way. It is feasible to assume that they made her a scapegoat because, in fact, it would have been very difficult to catch someone in the act of sexual infidelity, which was the requirement for the law. They were really putting Christ on trial and us-

ing the woman as a means of doing so. Thereby, Christ was both challenged by the lawyers and by the plight of the terrified woman.

In contrast to the aggressive questioning and posturing of the 'gang' of accusers, Christ remained calm and silent. This no doubt gave some solace to the lonely figure of the vulnerable woman, who had been given no opportunity to defend herself. During this episode Christ repeated a gesture twice. With his index finger, signifying the ego, he bent down and united himself with the sandy earth in which he wrote. Then he straightened up, raising the ego upwards. This was a prequel to his future acts of raising Lazarus from death and of raising 'the cross of the world' up again to the divine, when he was crucified at Golgotha. His resurrection-force was demonstrated, like a force of light piercing through darkened human existence.

His enemies could no longer act as members of a group but suddenly experienced their individual egohood. They each had to inwardly account for their own transgression of following the lower rather than their higher ego and so they left, 'one by one'.

Christ then addressed the woman as an ego-being in her own right, giving her the possibility of moving forward in freedom and overcoming the darkness of human astrality. He exhorted her to be true to her higher self: 'Go your way.'

The challenge of his meeting with the 'adulteress' and saving her from dark persecution, motivated Christ to proclaim: *I Am the light of the world.* This was the moment of a further deepening of the divine incarnation into the human vessel of Jesus. He proclaimed he was the I AM of the Father God, which had once been unveiled to Abraham, the patriarch of the Israelites. There was great alarm at this revelation among the Jews and the intention to punish the woman for adultery by death was now directed towards Christ himself.

A man who lived in earthly darkness because he had been born blind was then healed by Christ so that he received the light of sight, not only physically but also in his soul. Christ said, 'You have seen (the Son of Man) … He it is who is speaking to you' (John 10: 37). Christ then proclaimed, *I Am the Door and I Am the Good Shepherd*. The divine was now overwhelmingly present in Jesus and he also became aware that his task was to offer up his life and then to receive it anew.

Martha

In contrast with Luke, the Gospel of John gives considerable importance to the two women named Martha and Mary, who were the sisters of Lazarus. The mention that Martha 'served at table' in John's Gospel (12) is an indication that this was the same woman alluded to by Luke.

We are told that Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus (John 11). Jesus was the master who taught Martha that a new, inner path was necessary to achieve insight into the spiritual world, over and above the traditional path of service. Christ progressed Martha's spiritual development to the level of imaginative cognition where she could see spiritual reality with her heart forces. After he proclaimed to her, *I Am the Resurrection and the Life*, she was able to say, 'With my heart I have seen that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world' (John 11:27).

On this occasion, the I AM proclamation came before a divine act. It had been drawn forth by the challenge of

Martha's insistence that Lazarus was dead and would only be resurrected at the end of time. *I Am the Resurrection and the Life* was said to Martha alone. Of the seven I AM sayings, only one was said to an individual rather than a group of people; it was this proclamation to Martha. And now, Christ's ego entered even more deeply.

Despite the importance of Martha's relationship to Christ the Master, and her presence at the raising of Lazarus, she is only mentioned once more: when she served at table in Bethany on the evening of the Last Anointing. The Sanhedrin resolved to kill Jesus; the seventh divine act of the raising of Lazarus was Christ's prequel to his own death. Martha was one of the women who witnessed the death on Golgotha from afar. She had already been initiated by Christ himself, in preparation for this momentous event.

**The Life of Jesus Christ,*
Ann Catherine Emmerich

The wounded human being Part one

Elements of a Christian study of man

Ulrich Meier

At first sight, it can seem surprising that Christians choose the image of the wounded and crucified Christ as their inspiration. Isn't religion concerned more with strengthening our morality than with confronting us with human frailty? However, this tension between the reality of our mortality and our striving for immortality informs our life as Christians. In this article and the ones that follow, we will explore this field. One help for our exploration will be elements of the Lord's Prayer.

'…you who are…'

In the wording of the Lord's Prayer in the New Testament (Matt 6 and Luke 11), Jesus addresses God much as our new translation in the Act of Consecration of Man: 'Our Father in the heavens'. Older translations bring out what is implicit in this most condensed formulation: 'Our Father, who art in heaven'. Friedrich Rittelmeyer, in his book *The Lord's Prayer* points out the connection between the creation and the reason for being of their Creator. Referring to one of the great proclamations of Vedantic Hinduism, 'Tat Tvam Asi' (That Thou Art), he states:

> *The Indian deeply feels the consubstantiality of all beings. In this basic feeling of life he steps among the animals, the plants, the stars. No less profound is the kinship, the communion of beings felt in the word 'Our Father'. All those who have the same Father belong to him, not only the human beings on earth, but also all the beings* below *the human being, whom they command, and all the beings* above *them, who precede them. They all bear the seal of the Father. Even if they do not know it, we pray with them all: Our Father.*[1]

Today we would perhaps prefer to speak of the stewardship that we as human beings should assume for our fellow creatures rather than our commanding them. But to feel in prayer a comprehensive community and kinship of all beings towards the divine Father is a basic religious experience of being human. Furthermore,

we can relate this to the fact that two paths lead to the spiritual core of the universe: the perception of the world and the self-awareness in one's own inner being. Rudolf Steiner says it this way in relation to the 'That you are', the 'Tat Tvam Asi': 'If I look out into the world of the 'Tat', I find a spiritual world; if I dive into my own soul experience, I find a spiritual world; and the two are one.[2]

God's being and human non-being

The question of being, the existence of God and the existence of man, was approached with different feelings at different times. In the past, a part of the unquestioned belief in divine revelation was that the eternal existence of God was absolute, whereas the existence of human beings as his creatures is relative. Today it seems almost the other way round: the existence of man is not questioned, but the reality of God is now in question.

For my taste, it no longer makes sense to want to set one sentiment against the other. Atheists should no longer be branded as enemies of religion and shunned; rather, they are allies in their questioning attitude. The affirmation of uncertainty can be recognised as the productive beginning of a path that can lead from not knowing to holding faith as possible. If anyone comes to believe in God today, it is not because of social pressure, but through their own grappling with what we cannot yet know.

Back to the question of being: the hiddenness of God is deeply connected to the human inability to comprehend the beginning and end of being itself — including our own being. The fact that we cannot experience eternal laws and beings — or only in special moments — does not have to mean that they do not exist. It is possible to live together with those parts of the world and of ourselves that are still in the hiddenness of the unknown. We can wait with them for the hour when they emerge from the shadows to become visible, audible, touchable. In this, our not-knowing can become awake and a tool for inner development. Not-knowing can become the key that allows us to understand what for the ancient world was self-evident: As human beings we are condemned to live in non-being as long as we are alienated from God's being.

The first wound: Separation from God

Here lies the first rupture in the relationship between the human being and God. It need not be seen either as an accident or as the consequence of human error. In the course of our lives, sooner or later, we find that our earthly consciousness has severed the link with the all-embracing reality of God. In the paradise myths of the ancient world, the 'Fall', which leads in Christian theology to 'original sin', represents a release from God's presence in the Garden of Eden. We could describe in modern terms in the following way: losing our awareness of belonging together with the spiritual-divine part of the world and its beings as well as the spiritual part of ourselves, leads us into one-sidedness, which in turn allows us to develop a way of knowing that is directed only towards the material and sense-perceptible. Against this background, the word 'sickness', which is used in The Christian Community for this separation, also called sin or sundering, can be understood: the 'sickness of sin.'

From this point of view, religion can mean the prospect of healing the sickness of sin. How can recovery begin here in concrete terms? It can be described like this: Our not-knowing can open up to us as a hidden part of the possible knowledge of God. This can come to us where we open ourselves

to the fact that God emerges from his hiddenness. If the incalculable multiplicity of all beings is a hidden community, unified with the Creator's ground of existence, we could dare to take the first step into the unconcealed by recognising the beings surrounding us as our fellow creatures. To be Christian would then no longer mean an anxious search for what is lost, but an active participation of our creative self in the whole of the creative world of spirit.

Confessing the Being

If in our in prayer we call the '…Thou who art…' to the hidden God out of our connectedness with all creatures, we begin to extend our own, still separate being towards his being. For me, when I took my prayer life into my own hands, this leap was the greatest hurdle to begin with: I would much rather have spoken from the certainty of a divine counterpart than to attempt what felt like flying blind, moving from the earthly to the 'Father in heaven'. What finally made me overcome this hurdle were experiences in other areas of life. For example, as a violin student I was dependent on practising the earthly side of the craft of mastering the instrument, without much prospect of achieving the perfection of the piece as it would be played by a virtuoso. There were moments, though, in which my imperfect skills were completed by the genius of the music. They made me trust that my attempts to call upon God in prayer — this God I could not yet grasp on earth — could also touch a higher reality. This trust, I later learned, can also be called faith.

Our religious longing can reach in two directions: first, we may long for a 'return' to the reconnection of our non-being — limited as it is in space and time — with the eternal and unified being of God the Father. In this direction we hope for healing and salvation from God: may he gift us with his being so that our being is completed and fulfilled. This is the receptive part of religious humanity that gratefully receives what is given to it by divine grace. It lives in the words spoken at the beginning of each of the seven stages in the Act of Consecration of Man: 'The Father-God be in us'. In the Trinity epistle, the next layer of our connectedness shines out in the words: 'Our being is his being'. The being of the human being rests on the being of the Father, which fills and sustains our being. If we turn to the other direction of religious feeling and action, the words 'Our being is his being' can also signify our confession and our promise actively to connect our own being with the Father's being. Our own, independent action wants to be part of our religious practice. This is based on the feeling that we should not only be 'consumers' of divine gifts, but may feel called in due humility to help bring forth the divinity of the world or at least to share out its gifts. This raises the question: Must the divine being be understood as absolute and complete in itself, or do the steps we take, through which we move from temporality into eternity, or from separateness into reconnection, mean something for the divine being, which would be missing without the initiative of human beings? In the Sacrament of Ordination, the candidates are addressed as follows, when the celebrant draws the cross before them: 'You, who thinking, think the Father-God actively'. What a goal of faith for all Christians: as those who know God, we bring forth that which we know.

Friedrich Rittelmeyer: *The Lord's Prayer. A Path to Becoming Human*, Stuttgart 2015, p. 31

Rudolf Steiner: *The Orient in the Light of the Occident*, Dornach 1982, GA 113, p. 112

Reviews

The Discovery Illustrated Family Bible

Christian Maclean

Illustrated by David Newbatt

324 pages, 58 colour illustrations, hardback, Floris Books

Reviewed by Sabine Haus

This book is a wonderful gift, bringing to life the Book of Books: the Bible. From the beginning of the book of Genesis, the books of Moses, the prophets and kings of Israel, we accompany human beings on their journey to a new beginning with the birth of Jesus, leading us through Christ's life and work on earth to the Book of Revelation in the future.

The Bible is a cultural heritage and yet so many people, especially children, have never been introduced to its content. Here is a chance to explore and discover the ancient stories from Adam via Noah to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who becomes Israel and whose twelve sons make up its tribes. One of them, Joseph (with the dream-coat), becomes Pharaoh's advisor and provides for Egyptians and Hebrews alike. After many trials Moses leads the Hebrew people out of Egypt and teaches them how to relate to their god and to each other. It is a constant struggle with so many other gods made of earthly substance to be worshipped.

Kings like Saul, David and Solomon lead their people, but also succumb to straying from their path, thereby losing the connection with their God. Human weaknesses like jealousy, desire and selfish power lead to the kings' downfall and the kingdom of Israel is divided.

The prophets, Elijah being the strongest messenger, become the bridge between the people and their God. Elijah and Elisha, to whom he passes on the task, are the conscience of their people, using their voice as a wake-up call. But they are silenced and the prophecy is fulfilled that Jerusalem is to be destroyed and its people exiled to Babylon.

Individuals like Daniel, who with his friends survives the fire in the furnace, and the lion's den, become beacons for the future. Women like Deborah and Esther play their part in saving the people of Israel who keep to their faith. Devout Mattathias and his sons stand up to the intruding rulers and it is the Maccabees who restore the temple and live in expectation of the Messiah.

Here the New Testament begins with the annunciation of the one who is to prepare the way: John the Baptist. Next the angel appears to Mary, announcing the birth of Jesus, the Son of God. It is the shepherds who first hear that the longawaited Messiah has come to Earth. Thereafter the three kings are introduced and the flight to and return from Egypt, followed by the twelve-year-old in the temple.

The life of Christ begins with the baptism by John and we are introduced to the teachings, healings and parables of the gospels, as well as the course this divine life is taking, upto and through Death, Resurrection and Ascension.

Whitsun begins with the Acts of the Apostles, telling us the adventures of Peter, John and Paul with his companions, who are going out into the world letting the people in and beyond Israel know about the living God. Their speaking out of what they have witnessed as well as inspired by the Spirit kindles the fire in many people's hearts and leads to the founding

of congregations throughout Asia Minor, Greece and west to Rome.

Paul's Letters to the congregations he founded are mentioned and the one to the Ephesians containing the Armour of God is included. The Book of Revelation to St John completes the content side showing us the pictures of the Son of Man, the Heavenly Throne, the Woman clothed by the Sun and the Heavenly Jerusalem in words and illustrations.

The whole book is framed by a Table of Contents at the beginning and at the back with the History of the Bible, Unfamiliar Words explained in alphabetical order, giving a picture of the Timeline and Maps of the Region, ending with the Bible Sources relating to all the content. This again is enveloped with pages of colour by the artist David Newbatt, who has brought his skill of creating a mood in our soul with his pictures illustrating the contents throughout.

I am very grateful to Christian Maclean who spent much time on retelling the stories, true to their essence, and for weaving them together so masterfully, written in such a way that you want to read on to find out how life carries on. The collaboration with David Newbatt brings together much insight and life experience and I hope that the book will find many readers and tellers and onlookers and explorers. The title invites us to discover!

Many thanks to the team working on its creation and to Floris Books for subsidising such a book which with its beautiful hardback cover and 300+ pages printed on paper supporting responsible forestry is an inexpensive precious jewel.

An excerpt from *The Discovery Illustrated Family Bible* is printed on pages 30 and 31

Encounters: Moments of Destiny in the Bible

Ruth Ewertowski

Translated by Cynthia Hindes

Reviewed by Douglas Thackray

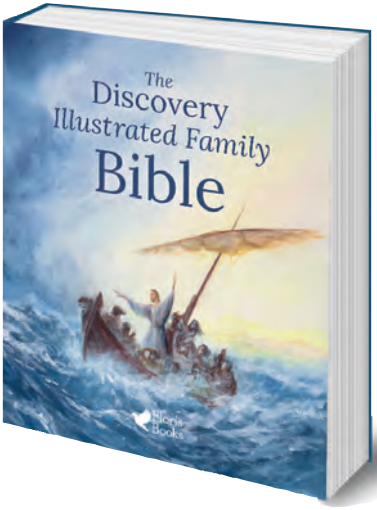
In this fascinating and thought-provoking book, Ruth Ewertowski explores over thirty five meetings described in the Old and New Testaments.This is a book unlike any other book of biblical commentary that I have read. What is so new is that she highlights similarities in the characteristics of people as diverse as Solomon and the disciple Peter, showing their strengths and weaknesses, as well as the way that their individual freedom comes into conflict with the 'will of God', still winning through from failure to redemption.

Ewertowski takes the innovative approach of pairing Old Testament and New Testament personalities, offering nuanced psychological insights. She presents these figures not as mere characters in a biblical narrative but as living, breathing individuals who transcend their roles. This technique adds depth and relatability to the reader's understanding of these iconic figures.

Another important aspect is that she shows how from unlikely or even impossible situations the 'hero' wins through by following their genius, living into the beginnings of the consciousness soul. Ewertowski provides several examples that resonate with the reader's own journey towards spiritual growth, which leave a lasting impression.

The author does not shy away from confronting evil in the stories that led to the coming of Christ. Her analysis of David's affair with Bathsheba and his involvement in her husband's demise reveals how human sin can play a significant role in shaping the course of history. Ewerstowski comments: 'It's

A beautiful bible for all the family



The first of its kind for The Christian Community, this lovingly illustrated Bible has been retold for children aged 8 and up in an engaging and easy-to-understand style.

Soft, glowing watercolour illustrations help to bring a full range of Old and New Testament stories to life, making this an inspiring and powerful introduction to overarching Christian themes: God's faithfulness to his people and the promise of Christ for all of humanity.

Readers can also discover insight into the people and places of the Bible through a family tree, a glossary, timeline and maps of the Holy Land. This is a wonderful gift, bound in a durable hard cover with a navy ribbon marker.

The Discovery Illustrated Family Bible | Re-told by Christian MacLean | Illustrated by David Newbatt
324 pages | hardback | 978-178250-865-6 | RRP: £16.99 | OFFER: £13.59

'*The Discovery Illustrated Family Bible* retells the stories of the Bible in accessible yet beautiful language, and with useful explanations of faraway places and ancient times and their customs. The illustrations bring the stories to life so they will live on in those who read them.'

– Tom Ravetz, Lenker of The Christian Community in Great Britain and Ireland

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amazing how often human sin becomes a historically powerful component of future meaning. Sin, too, belongs to fulfilment without being justified by it. It confirms the value of freedom for David in that freedom included self knowledge. He recognised his guilt and did not seek to repress it.'

In the story of Job, Ewertowski shows how evil can be overcome through a profound transformation, leading to a unique covenant with God. Job's journey is likened to a journey through death and resurrection, emphasising the capacity for profound change and renewal.

She also touches on the evolving feminine theme in biblical stories, highlighting figures like Rahab, the prostitute, and the Samaritan woman, who exemplify independence, fearlessness, and openness to change. These women stand out as sovereign individuals, leaving their pasts behind to embrace a new way of life.

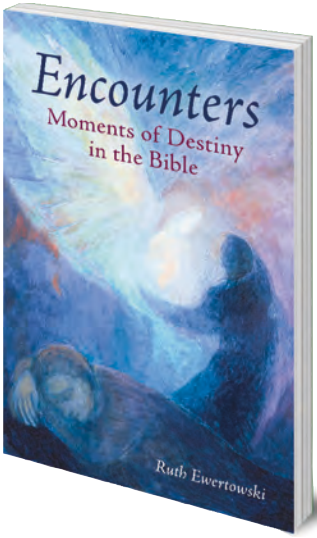
Overall, the book encourages readers to reflect on the author's perspective and compare it with their own beliefs. If we agree with her analysis, our existing viewpoint will be reinforced; should we disagree, reading Ewertowski's descriptions can be like striking two flintstones together: sparks fly. Through such confrontations, our thinking transcends what we previously thought and we find our way into a new and bigger picture. For moments our thinking seems to become independent of us, as if the content 'thinks in us'. Something more is taking place here than can be described in words. We can say then that this book gives us an opportunity to learn on our Christian path, strengthening our prayer and faith. It brings us to a closer understanding of the life of Jesus Christ and the major personalities around his incarnation.

Ruth Ewertowski's insightful perceptions are akin to a dragonfly briefly skimming the water's surface, leaving a vibrant ripple of colour and wisdom in its wake, in a way which left this reader genuinely astounded.

Moments of Destiny

In this fascinating and thought-provoking book, Ruth Ewertowski explores over 35 meetings described in the Old and New Testaments. These include Joseph's confrontation with his brothers, Moses' encounter with God in the burning bush, the story of Rahab and the Israelite spies, the appearance of the Archangel Gabriel to Mary, and profound encounters between ordinary people and Christ.

Time and again Ewertowski shows how the weaknesses, setbacks and failures of the Bible's all-too-human protagonists are brought into harmony with a divine plan. The short, self-contained chapters are perfect as daily readings, but together they provide a panoramic sweep of the Bible narrative.



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Joseph

Joseph's dreams

Jacob was now called Israel, and he had twelve sons named Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph and Benjamin, as well as a daughter named Dinah. His favourite child was Joseph, Rachel's firstborn son. As Joseph grew, in his eyes Israel saw the eyes of Rachel; in his voice he heard the voice of Rachel; and in his walk he saw the walk of Rachel, the woman he had loved since he had first set eyes on her. Israel made Joseph a special coat of many colours, which he wore all the time.

When Joseph's brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him. None of them had a good word to say about him.

But Joseph seemed unaware of their feelings, and lived in a world of his own. One day he said to them, "Listen to the dream I had. We were binding sheaves of grain in the field, when suddenly my sheaf stood upright and your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it."

His brothers mocked him, saying, "What? Do you think you are going to rule over us?" And they hated him all the more.

Later he had another dream and told his father and brothers, "This time the sun and moon and eleven stars bowed down to me."

His father rebuked him. "What kind of a dream is that? Is it supposed to mean that your mother (may she rest in peace) and I, and your brothers should bow down to the ground before you?"

Nevertheless, Israel kept the dream in his heart, in case some truth may come from it one day. But Joseph's brothers were still jealous and hated him even more.

Page spread from *The Discovery Illustrated Family Bible,* reviewed on page 25

Temple Lodge Club

a quiet oasis in the middle of London

Temple Lodge is a Georgian listed building in the centre of Hammersmith and was once home to artist Sir Frank Brangwyn. The house is now a guest house welcoming visitors to London from the four corners of the globe. The large studio he built for his work has been refashioned into a space for worship by *The Christian Community* in London. The mezzanine floor has been kept for its historical associations and has been home to *The Gate* vegetarian restaurant for the last 30 years.

Many visitors have described the peace and tranquillity they experience upon entering the house as an oasis amidst the turmoil they leave outside. An experience of the garden can be gained from most windows, and this will be enhanced as a redesigning and replanting of the garden takes place.

The work in the garden follows work to build three new double-bedded garden suites, each with its own en-suite facilities. Guests now have access to and through the garden on their way to the dining room. A hearty and substantial vegetarian/vegan breakfast provides just what is needed for the new day ahead.

Upon becoming members of the **Temple Lodge Club** (£2.00 annual membership) visitors seeking accommodation may share in all the facilities the house has to offer. There is the Reading Corner with newspapers and the Library for reading, relaxing or quiet conversation, the well-used Conference Room with seating for twelve around the table and the unique Lantern Room taking its name from the large octagonal skylight which provides an exceptional, comfortable and adaptable space for many and varied meetings.

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