

# Making Space for God

## Elemental Spirituality—Depth

### Opening Prayer

*I should like to bring the routine of my daily life before You, O Lord, to discuss the long days and tedious hours that are filled with everything else but You. Look at this routine, O God of Mildness. Look upon us who are practically nothing else but routine. in Your loving mercy, look at my soul, a road crowded by a dense and endless column of bedraggled refugees, a bomb-pocked highway on which countless trivialities, much empty talk and pointless activity, idle curiosity and ludicrous pretensions of importance all roll forward in a never-ending stream. Touch my heart with Your grace, O Lord. Touch me with Your love which can allow my daily routine to remain routine and still transform it into a home-coming to You. Amen*



*Karl Rahner (1904-1984)*

### Arrival

Take five minutes to settle yourself by breathing deeply. Inhale for the count of five through your nose and as you do so pray silently, “I belong to Jesus.” Exhale through your mouth for the count of ten and as you do so pray silently “Body and Soul, in this life and the next.” Once you feel relaxed invite the Lord to guide and direct your thoughts for the day. Think back over where you have been in the last eight weeks. What burdens, emotions, and concerns do you carry? What are you thankful for? Offer these to the Lord.

### Depth

Depth is a spatial term. Shallowness is its opposite. The word is often used in the Bible as a metaphor. Paul speaks of the deep things of God. (1 Corinthians 2:10) The Psalmist cries to the Lord from out of the depths. (Psalm 130:1) Job says that the knowledge of God is higher and deeper than anyone could imagine. (Job 11:7) Synonyms for depth are words such as profound, insightful, heartfelt, thoughtful, reflective, or weighty. Within InterVarsity, we have pursued a pattern of discipleship that we hope will help staff and students become people of depth. Take some time to reflect on two passages: Mark 4:1-9 (the Parable of the Soils), and Ephesians 1:15-23 (Paul’s prayer for spiritual wisdom).

### Out of the Depths I Cry to You<sup>1</sup>

What lies hidden beneath the superficial surface of our souls?

What treasure or trial might lurk in the murky depths?

An underwater world, where sea creatures swim languidly looking for a nibble

While sea monsters prowl for prey.

It’s a place of dreams and forgotten memories where myths and metaphors are born,

Where poetry and painting originate.

A place where ghosts and goblins haunt and guardian angels hover.

A dark womb of creativity and chaos into which midnight monks cast their nets,

<sup>1</sup>Reflection and Painting by Steven Stuckey 2018

Hoping for a catch that will sustain their empty lives for another day.  
Sadly "No Fishing" signs keep the cognitive majority away from the deep.  
Only the eccentric and deviant venture near.

By choosing quantity over quality, clarity over confusion and the pragmatic over the profound,  
We strip Reality of all her adorning beauty leaving her cold, calculating, and boringly predictable.  
In our affluence we exchange absent gods for present goods and substitute entertainment spectacle for the sacred.

Expectations are diminished to what can be seen, bought, or experienced and our ancient instinctual capacity to be astonished is abandoned.

But the deep does not disappear just because we fail to fling our fragile web of words into the caldron of chaos.  
"Out of the depth I cry to you O Lord. Hear my voice. Hear my voice!"

## Reading for Reflection

In times of prosperity, spirituality stagnates. It is only in the context of the harrowing experiences of deconstruction that forward movement is initiated...We do not find God when the going is good. The sense of well-being that is generated by positive experience makes us somewhat self-sufficient. At least it tends to limit our horizons to the range of possibilities available to us in the present world. We become insensitive to other-worldly realities. We forget God.

*Michael Casey*

My belief as expressed in this book is that the whole of our life is lived whether consciously or unconsciously in the presence of God. This is true of all, believers and atheists, religious and irreligious alike. No one, I believe, is without the unseen, fostering, influence of God pressing them towards self-realization in whatever way, however unlikely, this can best be achieved. But I believe that it is an advantage beyond price for us to be able to realize this Presence and consciously respond to it, to be able to rely on a wisdom and strength greater than our own and to try to follow the direction in which divine wisdom guides and divine strength enables.

*From the River Within by Christopher Bryant, page 148*

Despite the blandishments of popular culture, the goal of life is not happiness but meaning. Those who seek happiness by trying to avoid or finesse suffering will find life more and more superficial. As we have seen, in every swampland there is a task, the addressing of which will enlarge one's life not diminish it. Life is not a problem to be solved, finally, but a series of engagements with the cosmos in which we are asked to live as fully as we can manage. In so doing we serve the transcendent meaning that is meant to be brought into being through us. In fleeing this fullness of life, we violate our very purpose.

*James Hollis in Finding Meaning in the Second Half of Life, page 232*

## Benediction

*My God and my love, you are mine and I am yours.*

*Deepen your love in me, O Lord, that I may learn how joyful it is to know you and serve you.*

*Let your love take hold of me and raise me above myself, that I may be filled with devotion because of your goodness. Then I will sing to you a song of love. I will follow you, and my soul will never grow tired of praising you. Amen*

*Thomas a Kempis (1380-1471)*