

## To be ‘Othered’: Freed for Others <sup>1</sup>

*A human being is more human,  
The more he RELATES  
To God-in-Christ-the-man.  
Sin represents degrees of unrelatedness  
To the person of Christ.  
Through sinning,  
Each human being is left WITH HIMSELF  
With his limited, unfulfilled nature,  
And is thus less human than he could be.  
In simple terms, sin de-humanizes him.  
The sinner’s final limitation – final dehumanization – is DEATH.*

*The person who sins, seriously,  
Is limited ETERNALLY in death:  
Restricted SOLELY TO HIS SELF  
Nor relating to any other  
– Either to God, or to human beings!  
Short of this doomed destiny  
Sin incrementally ENSLAVES  
– That is, it increasingly restricts one  
To subservience to just one other  
... To one’s ‘owner’,  
Be that an enslaving attitude, or habit, or addictive pleasure, or controlling emotion,  
This is self-evidently just a PART of one’s OWN SELF  
– Such that, through a habit of sin, we are ‘EN-SELFED’!  
Increasingly we become self-centered and self-absorbed,  
Rather than relating freely to many others.*

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<sup>1</sup> Written at Aquinas College community, Southport, 1982

*Tragically when thus enslaved, one cannot even re-establish  
One's relationships – with God, or humankind  
... The 'others' in one's life  
... Precisely because one is 'en-selfed'!  
One has to be liberated or 'OTHERED'  
– Freed for others.  
Indeed only others  
Can re-establish 'otherness' in one's life.  
One cannot do so, from oneself,  
Because one cannot be 'other' to oneself!  
Others of humanity can liberate us  
But ONLY TRULY, IN CHRIST  
... Ultimately, the only TRULY FREE AND OPEN human person,  
The only one, at all times, FREELY OPEN to God.*

*Through Jesus, in His Ascension,  
We actually enter into the freeing, 'othering' Presence  
Of the Father of all love.  
It is only when we are thus freed,  
To become a 'new humanity', 'a new person', in Christ,<sup>2</sup>  
That we are –  
Free to be truly ourselves,  
Free to be for others,  
Free to free the other, IN CHRIST.*

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<sup>2</sup> Eph 2: 15 (NRSV and JB)

## The Ascension's Gift<sup>3</sup>

A.

*The Ascension is the renaissance of humanity:  
The turning point of our race.  
Our humanity is drawn, IN Christ,  
Within the Divinity,  
And is, THUS, both –  
Divinized in the Spirit of the Father and the Son,  
And drawn into communion with the Divine Family.*

*It is from the heart of the Ascension,  
That we are sent, IN CHRIST,  
In our 'new humanity',<sup>4</sup>  
To bestow this Spirit, as Gift, to others.  
– Person to person –  
To enable others to join us, IN CHRIST.*

*In the climactic moment of the Ascension  
We EXPERIENCE ALL that is of Christ  
– Who is 'all in all' –<sup>5</sup>  
Of both Old and New Covenants  
... As WE are drawn, INTO HIM  
Within Abba's Embrace.  
Thus we are enveloped  
Within Abba's arms  
As 'the New Man'.<sup>6</sup>  
Our receiving the Holy Spirit of the Promise,  
– This Gift of Adoption, this Gift of Love –  
Allows us to become the Giver of the Gift of the Spirit!  
Indeed, it is to become, IN CHRIST, the SHARER of the Spirit  
... From brother to sister, sister to brother!  
From sister to sister, brother to brother!  
Alleluia!*

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<sup>3</sup> Written at Aquinas College community, Southport, 1982

<sup>4</sup> Eph 2:15

<sup>5</sup> Col 3:11

<sup>6</sup> Eph 2:15

B.

*To be IN the Ascended Christ, embraced by Abba ... is to be IN –  
The risen Lord of Glory!*

*The second Adam!*

*The first-born Son, ransomer of His brothers!*

*The Messiah, ‘the longed for of ages’!*

*Our Emmanuel, the Prince of Peace!*

*‘The new man’, unlimited by time or space! <sup>7</sup>*

*The Son of Man, model for humanity!*

*He who is the first fruits of the New Creation!*

*Indeed, to be in Christ Ascended, IS TO BE –*

*In the New Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph!*

*In the New Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David and Solomon!*

*In the King of all Patriarchs and Prophets!*

*In the Chosen One of Yahweh, Leader of His People!*

*In the Lamb of God who carries away His People’s sin!*

*In that New Law and Ageless Wisdom ... PERSONIFIED!*

*In that New Covenant between Abba and His People ... PERSONIFIED!*

*In that New Temple of God, that New Jerusalem ... PERSONIFIED!*

*In that New Israel, that New People of God ... PERSONIFIED!*

*Yes, to be IN CHRIST ASCENDED is to BE –*

*One with the humble son of Mary and Joseph ...*

*One with the preacher of the Good News ...*

*One with the brother of the poor, the ‘friend of sinners’ ... <sup>8</sup>*

*One with the worker of miracles, for those with faith ...*

*One with the Light of the World!*

*One with the Way, the Truth and the Life!*

*One with the Suffering Servant, the Crucified One!*

*One with Him whose Flesh and Blood is the Life of our world!*

*One with the humble washer of feet ...*

*And above all, one with Him who is Son to Abba!*

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<sup>7</sup> Eph 2:15

<sup>8</sup> Lk 15:2

## Jesus' Eternal Delight<sup>9</sup>

*In the Ascension,  
To Jesus' Eternal delight,  
In the most surpassing act of love ...  
Abba, as it were,  
Does not wait for Jesus' return,  
But 'runs to meet Him' ...<sup>10</sup>  
Holding 'the New Man'  
In the fondest of embraces,  
Kissing Him tenderly ...  
And – anticipating Jesus' desire –  
Breathes into Him  
... As man ...  
The Spirit of Love!  
Then ...  
Breathes forth WITH Him,  
THEIR Spirit of Love  
– Into the hearts of all  
Who are ready-in-faith,  
To be united  
To their crucified, risen and ascended Jesus!*

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<sup>9</sup> Written at Aquinas College community, Southport, 1982

<sup>10</sup> Lk 15:20

## Indwelling Love <sup>11</sup>

*The Spirit of Abba and of Jesus Ascended  
Comes to dwell*

*... In the very essence of all persons  
Who are faithful imitators of Jesus.*

*This Spirit DWELLS*

- Beyond the limit of our senses*
- Beyond the penetration of technology*
- Beyond the reach of our emotions*
  - Beyond our intuition*
  - Beyond our imagination*
- And beyond our memory's recall!*

*INDEED, THIS SPIRIT DWELLS*

- Beyond the reach of our minds totally*
  - ... the gaze of our intellect*
  - ... the logic of our reasoning*
  - ... the power of our will*

*Even dwelling beyond the reach of our contemplation*

- ... the realms of our consciousness*
  - ... the realms of our sub-conscious*
    - Beyond the reach of our dreaming*
    - Beyond, indeed, any natural capacity*
- Which our spirit possesses to depth itself!*

*However, in the realm of the human spirit,*

*Particularly in our unconscious depths,*

*Which Abba sets aside as 'His own'*

*– As His own eternal dwelling-place –*

*It is here that the Spirit of Jesus Ascended*

*Finds a home*

*... A home with the Father of Light!*

*And with the Son of Truth!*

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<sup>11</sup> Written at Aquinas College community, Southport, 1982

*It is here  
In the limitless depths of the human spirit  
– At the very Source of our being  
– At the very Goal of our existence  
That the Glorious, All-empowering God  
... All Loving, All Beautiful, All Intimate ...  
Dwells.*

*Here the God of ALL Love ABIDES  
– In sublime silence  
– In absolute stillness  
– In absolute vitality  
– In impenetrable light  
– In utter simplicity  
– In unspeakable joy  
– In unutterable peace  
... In every regard, inexpressibly perfect!  
... Yet, at home, and content, in our company!*

*Marvellously ...  
Our All-Loving God is present TO our bodies,  
But not present IN our corporeality.*

*And, Mystery of all mysteries,  
Since the 'centre' of a human being  
Is precisely SPIRITUAL  
– And NOT of space or of time –  
It is the VERY SAME 'centre'  
For every person, in every age!  
God's Centering Presence  
Is One in the many!  
And through the One, the many become one  
... WITHIN that centre of their being,  
– Of which they know nothing DIRECTLY!*

*And, seemingly,  
 God chooses to REVEAL little,  
 But the most fleeting experiences  
 Of this Central Reality,  
 To the faithful imitators of Christ.  
 The Light of all Lights chooses to actively dwell within,  
 But to remain HIDDEN  
 – In the centre of each person who truly models Christ,  
 – And in the centre of each community who live Christ's Life!  
 Yet hidden, though Their Reality be,  
 The Triune Glory, or Each Divine Person's presence  
 Is mediated – overwhelmingly through SYMBOL!  
 Very occasionally,  
 The Divine Presence is immediate and utterly intimate  
 Such that the Triune – or Each One's distinctive personal – REVELATION  
 Is stunningly irrepeatable, and special!  
 And it is always, by way of GIFT  
 – With the Givers accompanying Their Gift  
 In a brief, but wondrously mysterious way!*

*Yet, deepest Mystery of All:  
 The Three always are as One.  
 While it is They who TOGETHER actualize  
 Each good impulse within us  
 – Every Christlike movement of our being –  
 Abba, Jesus and Loyce <sup>12</sup>  
 Each takes the initiative, in Each One's Personal way.  
 Yet They never infringe on our independence of action,  
 Or on our liberty to choose or reject  
 Such Divine Intimacy!  
 It is They who hold to Themselves,  
 The mystery of our will  
 – Which, though enshrined in Theirs,  
 Remains eternally free to choose  
 Isolation from Them!*

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<sup>12</sup> See Note on Poem 69



## Spirits Communing<sup>13</sup>

*In the context of our amazing FREE WILL,  
We have the basic, terrifying choice –  
Of choosing a DESTINY WITH GOD,  
Or, of one apart from God.  
This fundamental life choice  
Intrinsically involves the allied choice –  
Of wanting to commune, WITHIN, with other human spirits,  
Or of rejecting our essential communality of spirit.*

*While each person's body LOCALIZES the mind's operation,  
And each one's personality SEALS one's spirit in a unique way,  
Holistically, one's spirit is FOREVER OPEN to God, in Christ;  
And, being open to Christ, the template for all humanity  
Is to be open to all other human spirits communally  
... And to each spirit individually.  
However, God permits entry to this sanctum  
Only to those whose lives are Christlike.  
This experience is usually COMMUNAL, but need not be so  
... If Christ so chooses.*

*Our entry into others' spirits,  
Or their entry into ours,  
Seems characteristically*

- To be by way of circumstances, rather than by choice or plan,*
- To be registered in the heart, rather than in the mind,*
- To be communal in OUTCOME, more than individual,*
- To begin in need and incompleteness, and end in joy and peace.*

*It is an entry in which time and space are irrelevant;  
And the perspective we gain, is NOT our own, but God's ...  
'Because where two or three are gathered in my name,  
There am I in their midst'.<sup>14</sup>*

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<sup>13</sup> Written at Aquinas College community, Southport, 1982

<sup>14</sup> Mt 18:20

*In this co-dwelling of spirits – for Christ’s purposes,  
Since it is the gift of God’s perspective we share in,  
It is overwhelmingly varied and creative,  
Yet simultaneously, inwardly, truly simple and constant!*

*Our spiritual communing  
Seeks both  
A dynamic encounter,  
And a desire to rest together :  
The grace for us, again, FOR BOTH,  
Is to interact and come to rest, through God’s activity  
– Not ours!*

*Wondrously, God’s activity and God’s rest  
Are one and the same –  
The Presence of the Holy Spirit!  
Thus entry to this sanctum – mutually, communally or personally –  
Is through the empowering of the Holy Spirit’s Presence:  
No created intelligence or will, angelic or human  
Gains entry except in the Spirit!  
To abide there, to experience the spiritual communing,  
Are themselves both gifts of the Spirit!*

*However, we can dispose ourselves in readiness,  
And open ourselves for the Spirit’s gifting.  
It is by that attraction with which God first attracts us,  
That we desire to attract other spirits to ours,  
And to be attracted to other spirits  
– So as to spiritually commune  
In the Spirit!*

*And, beyond ATTRACTION between spirits,  
There is a NEED for spirits to commune  
– To forgive, and to be forgiven  
– To heal, and be healed  
– To be compassionate to a spirit lost in pain  
– To welcome a bitter spirit, to be at home in our spirit  
– To be a meeting-place for many spirits  
And so share in the joy of being  
... a family of spirits!  
... a community of spirits!  
... a Church of spirits!*

*And, simply, TO BE PRESENT to each other’s spirit personally.*

## Attuning the Human Spirit to Christ's<sup>15</sup>

*It is the Spirit of the Ascended Jesus' mission,  
To ATTUNE our spirits  
With His own,  
– But to attune them, not TO His own Spirit  
But TO Jesus' human spirit.*

*It is His mission to reproduce in our spirits  
– By Presence and grace –  
The ever more glorious image of Jesus.  
In so doing, He allows us  
To more lovingly relate  
To our own spirit's depths  
– To be at home there,  
With and IN Jesus  
Who is the only human being  
Fully capable of entering into, and abiding in the DEPTHS  
Of His own, human spirit.  
It is Jesus who, finding and experiencing Abba dwelling there,  
Is able to say FOR US,  
'Abba loves the Son,  
And shows Him all that He Himself is doing',<sup>16</sup>  
And  
'I only do what I see Abba doing'<sup>17</sup>  
– Hoping that we will IMITATE Him,  
And become part of His own relationship  
To Abba!*

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<sup>15</sup> Written at Aquinas College, Southport, 1982

<sup>16</sup> Jn 5:20

<sup>17</sup> Jn 5:19

## In Our Weaknesses<sup>18</sup>

*God has not redeemed us  
FROM our weaknesses,  
But has redeemed us  
IN our weaknesses.  
God may not always rid us  
Of our fears,  
But does promise  
To face them with us  
... 'I am with you always.'*<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Written during a year of Religious Studies at University of Queensland while in St Joseph's College community, Gregory Terrace, 1983. I had never had time off for RELIGIOUS studies and I availed of a general Province-wide offer to use 1983 for this purpose. I pursued them within the Religious Studies Department of the University of Queensland, St Lucia. With enthusiasm, during Semester I, I launched into Old Testament Studies, The History of Christian Thought to Wycliffe, Social Sciences and Religion and Religion and the Human Condition. For Semester II, I focussed on The History of Christian Thought from Wycliffe to the 1950's and New Testament Studies: the World of Jesus and the Early Church

<sup>19</sup> Mt 28:20

## Good Seeds, Good Fruit<sup>20</sup>

*Life presents us  
With a recurring choice:  
Either – as a time to plant seeds  
Of dissension, discouragement, indifference or self-indulgence  
... Producing stunted, disease-prone growth,  
And infertile and bitter fruits;*

*Or – as a time to plant seeds  
Of heartfelt love, ready compassion and Paschal peace,  
... Leafing into abundant, glossy growth,  
Flowering in joy, with juicy, healthy fruit  
... Fruit which is Eternal!*

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<sup>20</sup> Written during a year of Religious Studies at University of Queensland while in St Joseph's College, Gregory Terrace community, 1983

## Knowing Love Is Experiencing Love<sup>21</sup>

*We stand  
Before the Cross  
– As the true tree  
Of the knowledge  
Of Paschal good and human evil –  
... With Jesus, the Second Adam.  
Jesus is crucified there  
For His LACK of compromise with evil.  
His giving heart, sliced open by evil,  
Reveals the deepest love  
For all of those who have compromised with evil!  
To know such love, is to experience it.*

*Accompanying her own son into death  
– With her heart too, rent with love ... for us –  
Mary, the Second Eve  
– True ‘Mother of the living’ –<sup>22</sup>  
Accompanies all those through life,  
Who give birth to Christ  
In others.*

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<sup>21</sup> Written during a year of Religious Studies at University of Queensland while in St Joseph’s College community, Gregory Terrace, 1983

<sup>22</sup> Gen 3:20

## Finding Wisdom in Creativity<sup>23</sup>

*Wisdom is found –  
Not in world avoidance ...  
Retreating into myriad expressions of escapism;  
Not in world absorption ...  
Enmeshed in consumerism, the quest for novelty, the cult of celebrity;  
Not in world shaping ...  
Pursuing progress, privilege, possessions and power;  
Not in world fatalism ...  
Withdrawing into apathy, individualism, cynicism;  
Not in world gratification ...  
Captivated by self-indulgence, impulses and hedonism;  
But  
In world creativity ...  
To be in this world, grateful for it,  
Engaged in the challenges it offers,  
Working in partnership with it,  
But, consciously, not OF it,  
Involved, but detached,  
Content with sufficient,  
Focussed on the Eternal.*

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<sup>23</sup> Written during a year of Religious Studies at University of Queensland while in St Joseph's college Gregory Terrace community, 1983

## With New Eyes<sup>24</sup>

*In the presence of the poor...  
With grace, we can come to realize –  
Our common humanity,  
Our own insensivities,  
Our own neediness,  
And our shared primal need of God.*

*From this neediness,  
From this deep, primal openness to God,  
Flows forth NEW ENERGY  
... To meet the poor as they are,  
... To see the world through their eyes,  
To become vulnerable WITH them.*

*With these new eyes ... and new presence  
We begin ...  
To learn patiently from them,  
To stay-insecurely-with them,  
To let them gentle us into simplicity,  
To let them express THEIR needs,  
To be open to where WE might help,  
To discern what WE might need,  
To ask them where THEY might help us  
And to celebrate Eucharist together  
... Equal partners in a shared future.*

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<sup>24</sup> Written during a year of Religious Studies at University of Queensland while in St Joseph's College Gregory Terrace community, 1983. This was my first experience of part-time teaching in prison, at Boggo Road. This poem is a response



## Self Fulfilment Through Christ <sup>25</sup>

*Self fulfilment is self-deception  
... A persuasive cumulative self-deception ...  
WHEN it is focussed only on self,  
And not on others.*

*In deep truth,  
I become myself  
Only through the other, others;  
Or conversely,  
Only others, ultimately,  
Can truly fulfil one's self ...  
All else is illusory.*

*True self fulfilment is, at heart,  
A mystery:  
An imitation of Christ's totally authentic humanity  
... What a paradox!  
To ENABLE this,  
The Paschal Christ, as 'the perfect Man,' <sup>26</sup>  
Allows OTHERS perfectly free entry into His life  
And wondrously, into His very PERSON  
– So imitation becomes IDENTITY!*

*Before Jesus became 'the NEW MAN,' <sup>27</sup>  
He, Himself, grew THROUGH others,  
And allowed others' needs, pains, weaknesses  
To find the deepest, healing WELCOME, within Him  
– So that this ACCEPTANCE becomes a source of personal growth  
For them ... and Him!*

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<sup>25</sup> Written during a year of Religious Studies at University of Queensland while in St Joseph's College Gregory Terrace community, 1983

<sup>26</sup> Eph 4:13

<sup>27</sup> Eph 2:15

*At the same time He hoped that His needs and limitations* <sup>28</sup>

*Would find a welcome with them*

*– And their acceptance a source of personal growth*

*For Him ... and them!*

*Thus, to enter, by invitation, into the life of Christ*

*– The now perfectly fulfilled ‘new creation’ of humanity –* <sup>29</sup>

*And, more profoundly, to live His very life, IN HIM,*

*Is to be guaranteed the fulfilment of our humanity!*

*This is the VERY best that humanity can aspire to,*

*And something the divinely human Jesus can truly ENABLE.*

*As such, Jesus is the cherished OTHER for us*

*... For it is only through ‘others’,*

*– The others who co-live Jesus’ life with us –*

*That we BECOME ourselves.*

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<sup>28</sup> An example of Jesus’ human NEED is, for affirmation. Two examples of Jesus’ LIMITATIONS are, ‘not being a woman’ and ‘only being an Israelite’.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. 2 Cor 5:17

## Pain Bearers<sup>30</sup>

*When we relieve the pain of another,  
It is Christ, too, who is relieved  
– That is ‘re-loved’.*<sup>31</sup>

*When we thus enter into the life of this ‘other Christ’,  
It is only by invitation,  
Only, as guest.*

*Together, we enter into a covenant of suffering:  
The one, in the hope of gaining re-lief in weakness,  
The other gently moving into being a supporter,  
A sufferer  
... Touchingly aware,  
That to carry another, specifically a sinner,  
Is to be a pain-bearer  
– Transferring sin’s sting to oneself,  
Substituting one’s self for the other.*

*In this ‘pass-over’ of pain,  
The living presence of Christ the Crucified is SENSED  
– Fulfilling His promise  
To these ‘two or three’<sup>32</sup>  
Gathered in a healing encounter,  
In His Name.*

*The hurting one, the sinner, now gains courage  
To bear some of the other’s own pain.  
As the one becomes the other ...  
The now mutual sufferers both feel  
Christ’s healing, flow.  
Both become one of a kind,  
Paschal ‘blood relations’ – co-sharers of Christ’s sacrificial blood,  
Sons of Abba, brothers to Jesus, breathers of the Spirit  
... Breathing life into each other!*

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<sup>30</sup> Written during a year of Religious Studies at University of Queensland while in St Joseph’s College Gregory Terrace community, 1983

<sup>31</sup> Anglo-Saxon usage where ‘liev’ means ‘love’

<sup>32</sup> Mt 18:20

## The Fellowship of Love<sup>33</sup>

*For the Christian,  
The ultimate ground of all reality  
Is the Fellowship of Love<sup>34</sup>  
... Father, Son, and Spirit ...  
'The one thing necessary.'<sup>35</sup>*

*When our lives are lost in a plurality of distractions,<sup>36</sup>  
And we turn to the Spirit to re-set our life's compass,  
The Spirit will lead us into the One Love  
– Into that mystery of eternal freedom  
That sets NO LIMITS  
... To Abba's overflowing eagerness to fill our lives,  
... To His eternal sense of purpose, personified in Christ  
In whom 'all things come together',<sup>37</sup>  
... And to that sustained joy in life, embeautied in us  
By the Spirit of Love Himself!*

*Abba, Jesus and Loyce TOGETHER,<sup>38</sup>  
Are not only our journey's beginning,  
Not only our journey's end,  
But the very journey itself:  
'The Spirit is LIFE'.<sup>39</sup>  
Moved by the Spirit, indwelt by the Spirit,  
We are INCORPORATED by that same Spirit  
'As members, one of another,'<sup>40</sup>*

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<sup>33</sup> Written during a year of Religious Studies at University of Queensland while in St Joseph's College Gregory Terrace community, 1983

<sup>34</sup> This is my first use of the term Fellowship to describe Trinitarian communing or intimacy or the more theological *circuminsessio*. I find it a more dynamic term, emphasizing the active relating or the inter-personal relating that the above alternative terms, or such terms as Circle of Love, do not capture AS FULLY. The phrases *Dance of Love* or *Dance of Life*, are terms emphasizing the action-based aspect of the Fellowship, and are celebratory of this Fellowship

<sup>35</sup> Lk 10:41

<sup>36</sup> In NT Greek, sin is a 'distraction' or 'missing the mark'

<sup>37</sup> Rom 8:28

<sup>38</sup> See Poem 69 for note on *Loyce*

<sup>39</sup> Jn 6:63

<sup>40</sup> Rom 12:5

*In that Fellowship  
Between Abba and the Ascended Jesus  
Which the Spirit EXPRESSES and PERSONALIZES!  
Thus, while it is the Spirit who CENTERS  
This Fellowship of Love,  
Wondrously, we are ENFLESHED in it  
In Christ.*

## Describing Ourselves<sup>41</sup>

*We ought never seriously describe ourselves*  
... *By our interests,*  
*By our work, or by our possessions*  
... *By our influence on, or by the approval of, others,*  
*But, by who we are,*  
*And, by how we relate.*

*The best thing we can ever say of ourselves*  
*Is that the Father, Son and Spirit*  
LOVE US,  
*And that it is Abba's love for us, IN Jesus Ascended,*  
*That allows us to discover*  
*Jesus' qualities*  
*In others,*  
*And allows the Spirit of Jesus*  
*To enable us to be Christ to them*  
... *And to unite us, as 'one in heart and soul',*<sup>42</sup>  
*With 'glad and generous hearts'.*<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Written during a year of Religious Studies at University of Queensland while in St Joseph's College Gregory Terrace community, 1983

<sup>42</sup> Acts 4:32

<sup>43</sup> Acts 2:46

## The Best of Brothers <sup>44</sup>

*Jesus welcomes us eternally,  
With the open tender affection  
Of the best of brothers.  
To be open  
To His enveloping love,  
We must allow Him  
To DISPOSSESS US OF OUR SELVES  
– So that others may openly lay claim  
To my love, to my talents, to my presence  
... And so find and love HIM in me,  
This best of brothers!*

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<sup>44</sup> Written during a year of Religious Studies at University of Queensland while in St Joseph's College Gregory Terrace community, 1983

## Celibacy as Proclamation<sup>45</sup>

*Vowed celibacy is a renunciation:  
To re-nounce is 'to proclaim anew'.  
Thus, to dedicate my sexuality,  
To a loving God  
... Unconditionally ...  
Is to proclaim anew, HOPE IN LOVE!  
– To all who hope to ELEVATE THEIR LOVE,  
– And, in a special way, to those who feel devalued  
In the name of love.  
Vowed celibacy is to be someone  
Who loves to be loved,  
And who loves to love!  
It is to be someone  
Whose loving life  
Inspires others to selflessness  
And to lovefulness!  
It is to be someone  
Who lives life lovingly,  
Yet vulnerably  
–Alert to the allure  
Of the world, the flesh, and the devil!  
And, finally,  
It is to be someone  
Who is ever sensitive  
To one's deepening NEED  
Of the seductive love  
Of Abba, Jesus and the Spirit,  
And of Their strengthening Presence!*

*This is the vowed celibate's proclamation!  
Their re-nunciation!*

---

<sup>45</sup> Written during a year of Religious Studies at University of Queensland while in St Joseph's College Gregory Terrace community, 1983



## Centering Our Lives<sup>46</sup>

*Both the man, Jesus ... and sin ...  
Are at the very heart of life's mystery  
... At the heart of our striving and struggles on earth:  
We will always find Jesus, THERE  
– Crucified to OUR SIN.  
All others have fled, excused themselves, or are self-absorbed.  
It is, precisely, at the heart of OUR WEAKNESSES,  
That we discover Jesus  
– Within our hearts,  
Here!*

*Here, He beckons  
– From the heart of the contradictions  
Of our own human nature,  
– From the shifting sands of our betrayals.  
From within OUR suffering,  
He welcomes, He invites  
... Gentle, comforting, forever kind,  
Overflowing with graciousness,  
... With the fondness of the best of brothers.*

*He CENTERS our lives  
With His compassion,  
Opening to us the Face of His Abba  
... The arms of limitless love ...  
As a HOME for our wandering hearts.*

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<sup>46</sup> Written during a year of Religious Studies at University of Queensland while in St Joseph's College Gregory Terrace community, 1983

## Our True Nature<sup>47</sup>

*Adam's story is ours –  
He refused to accept his human nature ... with its limitations:  
We, too, want to 'be as gods!' <sup>48</sup>  
With him, we share an ambivalence and dismissiveness  
About being mere CREATURES:  
Like Adam, we fear diminishment, because our destined fulfilment  
Is inextricably linked to our CREATOR-GOD!  
We want an 'UNTIED' identity and destiny.  
We want to experience freedom, APART from God: on our terms!*

*Thus we inherit both –  
Adam's rebelliousness against his humanity,  
And his ambiguity about his identity and his destiny.  
We live out our lives, wounded by sin  
– With a sense of being DISLOCATED within ourselves  
... In a world, marred by DISJOINEDNESS.*

*But there is also a WONDROUSNESS to Adam's story:  
One of his descendants, JESUS CHRIST,  
Is the first to live perfectly in harmony  
With the true nature of humankind  
– With a simple, open-hearted acceptance  
Of being the creation of a loving God,  
– With His identity and destiny  
Lovingly linked to His Creator.  
Indeed His whole being is attuned to God's ...  
Both within His heart, and mind, and spirit,  
And within the context of God's world.  
Thus, in His whole person, wholly sensitive  
To the whole range of His human limitations,  
Jesus enshrined within His integrated humanity,  
These distinctive markers of His dignity  
As a CREATURE.*

---

<sup>47</sup> Written during a year of Religious Studies at University of Queensland while in St Joseph's College Gregory Terrace, 1983

<sup>48</sup> Gen 3:5

*However, Jesus' life was lived out within a PARADOX:* <sup>49</sup>

*For, while Jesus' life was beautifully integrated,  
It was lived out in the midst  
Of a humanwide, inherited alienation,  
And of a world, inherently disjointed.*

*The first implication of this for Jesus  
Was for His human FREE WILL  
– Still approachable, as was Adam's, by Satan's presence.  
Thus, even though His nature was not DISORDERED,  
Jesus had to struggle with temptation,  
As is evidenced during His forty days in the desert.*

*But a much more radical implication beckoned.  
For Jesus, being true to His depthless sense of humanity,  
Meant identifying totally,  
Sharing utterly,  
In ALL that is human.  
... Finally, He chose to be baptized into,  
To immerse Himself in,  
The SINFULNESS of humanity  
... Past, present and future ...  
In that miasma of sin  
– The accumulating chaos of ALL humanity's sins –  
... IDENTIFYING WITH IT ALL,  
WITHIN HIS PERSON!*

---

<sup>49</sup> From this point of the poem onwards, I was responding to what was simply a life-changing grace for me. During my university Religious Studies, early through Semester 2, 1983, in reviewing my motivation, I decided to drop two of my four subjects. Providentially, it seems, for a week later, in Terrace's front garden, in response to my invitation to Abba – that I would give my LIFE to whatever He indicated, in the Scriptures on my lap – when my finger alighted on the phrase 'freedom to prisoners' – in Luke 4:17, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me etc' – I was stunned and delighted! In Semester 1, I had happened to 'help out' another Brother, 2 hours a week, in his prison teaching ministry. And so, within a couple of months, of this clarion call, this splendid grace, my enriching 13 year prison ministry began, under the guidance of Fr. Peter Kennedy, then prison chaplain.

*Faithful to the PURITY of His human nature,  
Jesus' innocent open-heartedness  
Recoiled in horror  
At the ugliness, the twistedness, the malevolence of such SIN.  
He shuddered, in intense repugnance  
– To the point of sweating blood –  
In identifying with it!  
But ... He did so LOVINGLY,  
Because he longed to take all of us to His heart,  
Even at our repulsive worst!*

*Jesus yearned to ENPEOPLE within Himself  
The whole of humanity, sins and all  
– Even in the midst of our cynical rejection  
Of all that He is.  
Jesus, in His dream for the rebirth of humankind,  
Did not seek to evade  
The deepest of all our limitations  
– That blackest darkness of our COMMUNAL guilt and shame.*

*With terror in His heart  
– Threatening to overwhelm His depthless love for us –  
Jesus allowed Himself to be engulfed  
... In the pervasive godlessness of our world,  
... In its endemic deceitfulness,  
... In the stench of its hatred of self and others,  
... In its aching despair at rejection and abandonment,  
... And in the screamless intensity of its stark loneliness.*

*In the face of such evil,  
Yet true to His untarnished humanity,  
Jesus simply KEPT ON and KEPT ON, LOVING  
– Right through to the ultimate outcome  
Of identifying so completely with us  
... Even to DEATH!*

*However, the fatal intensity of His sacrificial love,  
The deathly finality of His commitment,  
Was not the END of His loving.  
His disembodied spirit  
Bared itself, in utter openness, to His Abba.  
His depthless, living trust in Abba  
WAS CERTAIN  
That Their mutual love for us  
WOULD  
Bring forth life for all –  
A torrent!  
A river!  
An ocean!  
Of Love.*

*And so on Easter Dawn, leading into the Easter Noon  
Of His Ascension to Abba,  
THEIR LOVE flooded forth, from THEIR faithful hearts embracing,  
INTO all our hearts  
... Enpeopled within His!  
... Regenerating our human nature!  
... Elevating it!  
... Uniting all that is human with all that is divine!  
... Divinizing our identity and destiny!  
... Drawing us into Divine Fellowship!  
Transforming, glorifying, Adam's story – utterly!*

## The Rhythms of Human Nature <sup>50</sup>

*Humankind constitutes the only creatures  
Who can choose to live  
Other than by the natural rhythms of life  
– For us, the rhythms of human nature.*

*To do so wilfully,  
Is to discount Jesus' identification with,  
And love of, humanity,  
And, hurtfully for all of us,  
To dismiss His sacrifice  
... To redeem, free, renew, and elevate  
Humanity!*

*O Jesus, lover and template of 'a new humanity', <sup>51</sup>  
Send us Your Spirit of Repentance  
... Forgive our sinning against our humanity;  
Enable us to BE YOU in our world!*

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<sup>50</sup> Written during a year of Religious Studies at University of Queensland while in St Joseph's College Gregory Terrace community, 1983

<sup>51</sup> Eph 2:15

## A Light Hold on Life <sup>52</sup>

*To cling to one's life,  
– To be possessive  
Of persons, pleasures, power or things –  
Is to 'lose' this life – that is ...  
To fail to embrace life-as-Mystery!  
... To reduce life's Wonder  
To a blinkered reality –  
To the trifles I treasure now,  
To current creature comforts,  
To my petty pattern of power-plays.  
What tragic blindness!  
It is to repeat one's past choices, again and again!  
It is to tighten our grip  
On a pretence of reality!*

*Alternatively,  
To have a light hold on life  
Is to live in a tender, ready attitude  
Of release  
... Able to surrender the urge to cling to persons  
And to favoured slivers of reality  
– Unintegrated segments of reality, with 'a life of their own'.  
To live in this attitude of release and surrender,  
Is to gain Life  
... To delight in the constant surprise of Mystery!  
... To be nourished by the ever-new faces of Love!  
... To be freed by trust in OTHERS, and in their gifts.  
It is to be nurtured by humankind's true way,  
The Way of Christ  
... Who surrendered all of Himself, to all of us!*

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<sup>52</sup> Written during a year of Religious Studies at University of Queensland while in St Joseph's College Gregory Terrace community, 1983

## Where One is None<sup>53</sup>

*A heart unmoved by suffering  
Is a heart not truly human ...  
A heart secured in its own strength  
A heart unsustained by the weaknesses of others  
– Unresponsive to the neediness of others –  
A heart enclosed in its own individuality  
A heart, reduced to self-ness, one-ness.  
But, in human terms, one is none:  
For one human being is meaningless.*

*To carry the sufferings of others  
Is to become-a-people:  
To become ENPEOPLED in Christ!*

---

<sup>53</sup> Written during a year of Religious Studies at University of Queensland while in St Joseph's College Gregory Terrace community, 1983



## Lives Intersecting on the Cross<sup>54</sup>

*Jesus was like us in all things  
Except that He did not CAUSE suffering.  
Yet, paradoxically, He accepted suffering,  
Because it IS OUR needs, our pain, our weakness  
– In a word, our suffering –  
That is the critical point of intersection for human lives.*

*Suffering is Jesus' CHOSEN point of entry into our lives.  
Our lives intersect on the Cross.  
Sorrowfully, it was OUR cross He suffered on.  
But, since He never caused suffering  
– Unwilling ever to rupture human fellowship  
Or to further disjoint creation –  
It is only in Jesus Ascended  
That human fellowship can be re-sourced,  
And creation re-newed.*

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<sup>54</sup> Written during a year of Religious Studies at University of Queensland while in St Joseph's College Gregory Terrace community, 1983

## Jesus' Debt to Others <sup>55</sup>

*To relate in a truly human way  
Is to mutually ACCEPT the other's strengthening  
For our needs and weaknesses.  
It is also to WELCOME this reality  
Of mutual indebtedness,  
And thus, to let our lives,  
Flow unreservedly INTO each other's.*

*Jesus not only became  
More and more fully human in His relating,  
By welcoming such strengthening  
... From Mary and Joseph, from His Nazareth friends,  
From John the Baptist and from the Twelve ...  
But also very really –  
From those He helped  
From those He healed  
And from those sinners He forgave.*

*Each of these called forth  
More and more of His love,  
More and more of His compassionate humanity;  
So did the Pharisees and the Romans  
And His taunters on Calvary!  
In open-hearted ways,  
He deepened His humanity, through them.  
He learnt more and more,  
How essentially indebted He was  
To His own human kind!*

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<sup>55</sup> Written during a year of Religious Studies at University of Queensland while in St Joseph's College Gregory Terrace community, 1983

*Jesus learnt this lesson of love, both –  
From those whose lives of love touched His,  
And from those whose lives called forth  
His own human love.  
Within this, He profoundly deepened His conviction  
That the wellspring of ALL human love  
Has an Eternal Source.*

*His own life of love for others  
Became more and more the IMITATION  
Of Abba-Yahweh's deep, deep love for Himself  
... A love visibly evident in the affirmation  
Of those whose lives He embraced.  
Indeed, His open-hearted compassion for them,  
Beautifully mirrored  
The wondrous strengthening He felt from Abba  
... Especially the wonder of being FATHERED!  
... Having His whole reality sourced in His Abba!*

## En-Spiriting Others<sup>56</sup>

*The Spirit, in Christ Ascended,  
Empowers those who love  
So that they can en-Spirit others:  
Being empowered, they become sacraments of Christ's Gifting  
... Breathing the Spirit into others' lives.  
Just as we all, like Eucharistic ministers, can offer Christ  
Through a communion of hearts, to others ...  
So, through the service of humility and compassion,  
Identifying with the Paschal Christ,  
We can breathe forth, with Him, His Spirit  
... En-Spiriting others.*

*We, mostly, are unconscious of doing so  
... Not knowing 'whence the SPIRIT-WIND comes or where it goes',<sup>57</sup>  
Nor conscious of either giving or receiving It,  
Nor even of doing both MUTUALLY  
... If the Spirit also chooses to FLOW BETWEEN our lives!  
But of one thing, we are CERTAIN.  
We do so, IN CHRIST,  
And, as members of Christ's Body, IN THE CHURCH.  
We do so, in clear witness to our communal identity  
– And, ultimately, to build up Christ's Body.  
Indeed, en-Spiriting, and being en-Spirited,  
Can, thus, never be a private covenant  
... Although it may affect us in a deeply personal way.*

*Moreover, it is not something  
That happens once, or even occasionally.  
Rather, it is more of a continuing 'surrender-gift' of the Spirit,  
Between loving spirits,  
Who, in becoming ever more alive IN Christ Jesus,  
Give glory to the Father of us all ...  
By sharing Their Spirit!*

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<sup>56</sup> Prison Ministry at Woodford began while in Terrace community, November 1983. This is the first use of my long-term usage of En-Spiriting

<sup>57</sup> Jn 3:8

## Relating Through Weakness<sup>58</sup>

*Our needs issue out of our lack,  
... Out of our weaknesses, and negativity  
And yes ... out of our sin.  
Where we are needy, we can unite.*

*Especially in any deeper relationship,  
– When we are truthful  
About our needs,  
And yes, about our sin –  
Others BELIEVE us,  
And can relate to us, as we TRULY are!  
Deeper relating happens, when we are mutually needy!*

*In our relationships, our personal strengths  
Are there to serve the other's neediness and weakness  
... And their strength, serves our neediness.  
Thus, in a group,  
Our various strengths  
Serve the FELLOWSHIP of need, of weakness, of being sinners.*

*In a heartfelt, Christlike relationship,  
My need truly ATTRACTS the other's strength,  
And allows the other to feel truly USEFUL.  
Contrarivise, if we project ourselves as a 'tower of strength',  
... Wanting just to be admired, or to stay competitive  
Or NOT to be vulnerable ...  
Then we keep our relating shallow, and frustrate true union.*

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<sup>58</sup> Prison Ministry at Woodford began while in Terrace community, November 1983. I used this poem, in a 'secular' form, while conducting RELATIONSHIP COURSES, for many years, in Queensland prisons.

*Thus, our weaknesses, and yes, our sin,  
CAN be profoundly relational;  
And, from the sinner's point of view,  
We ought accept the other's strengths  
As GIFTS ... for uplifting my life.  
We ought not construe it as 'charity to a victim',  
Or as an opportunity for dictating change  
– But, as another chance to actively CHOOSE DEPENDENCE!*

*If we DO choose dependence,  
We gain a deeper respect  
For weakness, pain, and disjointedness  
– Both in ourself and in others.  
We see how it can become  
A template for our NEED OF GOD;  
And we experience, more deeply,  
The Presence of the crucified Jesus  
At the center of our weakness and sin,  
And co-experience with Jesus,  
His Spirit of Unity's EMPOWERING PRESENCE!*

## Suffering, Transcended and Transformed <sup>59</sup>

*Christians gathered in the Paschal Christ,  
Hope to INCORPORATE suffering and death, POSITIVELY,  
Within the very mainstream of life.*

*They believe that pain and suffering  
And the disjointedness of life itself,  
Largely arise out of humankind's evil  
– Because it is the evil in our hearts  
That deharmonizes and destabilizes  
Both our human and natural environments.*

*Even when pain and suffering  
Arise out of matures' turbulence  
Or out of life's 'random' accidents,  
It is the DEGREE  
Of evil or goodness in our hearts  
That shapes our deeper responsiveness  
To this – as with ALL – pain and suffering.*

*Committed Christians in accepting that Christ offers us  
A 'NEW HUMANITY', <sup>60</sup>  
Believe that IMITATING Christ comprehensively  
– Loving as He loved,  
Drawing ALL suffering, evil and death,  
Within a Christ-like embrace –  
TRANSFORMS all such experiences  
From what is human, to what is Divine.*

*The transcending effect of this entry of God into human life,  
Is to replace our human disharmonies  
With a unity that enables;  
And to replace our destabilization of creation  
With a creativity which re-integrates.*

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<sup>59</sup> Prison Ministry at Woodford began while in Terrace community, November 1983

<sup>60</sup> Eph 2:15

*Simply, Christlike lives  
Can be as truly redemptive as Christ's:  
In His 'sinful' humanity,  
Our brother Jesus, in His very PERSON,  
Was both CO-EXTENSIVE  
With all our suffering and evil  
And with a disjointed creation.  
In his 'new humanity',<sup>61</sup>  
Jesus Ascended's very PERSON  
Is now co-extensive  
With 'a new heaven and a new earth'<sup>62</sup>  
... Offering US  
A new identity and a new destiny!*

*Thus, for us, NOW ...  
The long-term repercussions of SIN  
– Within us, between us, and in creation –  
Can be transcended, transformed, and a cause for thanksgiving  
IF, we accept a new, graced identity with Christ!*

*Crucial to this re-birthing of humanity,  
Is our continuing personal – and Eucharistic – DESCENT  
Into Christ's suffering and death,  
And our continuing 'being raised up with Christ'<sup>63</sup>  
To a condition where tears, suffering and death  
'Are no more'<sup>64</sup>  
– Both personally and communally.*

*Thus, our co-identity with Christ in suffering  
Is REDEMPITIVE  
Both, for ourselves  
And – in the most selflessly integrative use of suffering –  
For OTHERS  
... And, regenerative for creation.*

---

<sup>61</sup> Eph 2:15

<sup>62</sup> Rev 21:1

<sup>63</sup> Col 3:1

<sup>64</sup> Rev 21:4



## Limitlessly Lovable<sup>65</sup>

*I am most lovable,  
Uniquely lovable,  
Limitlessly lovable ...  
Because it is God  
– Who is love –  
Who loves me  
... Eternally.*

*This is the core,  
The very heart –  
Of my worth,  
Of my innate dignity  
– Being the beloved of God!  
Beloved, in The Beloved!*

*Being a son or daughter to God  
– A son or daughter in The Son –  
Divinizes my relationship  
... And with others, similarly fathered and brothered,  
Divinizes our humanity!*

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<sup>65</sup> Year 1, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, 1984

## Human Wholeness in Christ<sup>66</sup>

*We belong to each other;  
Together we are a channel of life to each other;  
Together we belong to God  
– The source of our togetherness.*

*Natural love between us  
Is a human affirmation of our human dignity;  
Graced love  
Is a divine affirmation of our human dignity  
– Of our physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual dignity.*

*Such love is a graced quality of life we RECEIVE together  
– In Christ*

*It is also sharing ourselves, and sharing what we have  
– In Christ*

*... So together,*

*We grow towards human wholeness,  
Into that 'new', mature humanity  
Of becoming Christ, together!*

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<sup>66</sup> Year 1, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, 1984

## Beyond What Is Fair<sup>67</sup>

*Just as our faith in Abba is blind  
... Mirroring the Mystery that is God ...  
So too our justice must be open-ended,  
Not righteously 'balanced'  
... But moving far beyond human estimates  
Of what is fair and equitable,  
To reflect always  
The boundlessness of God's justice:  
Be compassionate  
As Your heavenly Father is compassionate'.<sup>68</sup>*

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<sup>67</sup> Year 1, Prison Ministry, Woodford from Gregory Terrace community, 1984

<sup>68</sup> Lk 6:36

## Limitless Self-Revelation <sup>69</sup>

*Humankind forever seeks closure;  
– But, God’s ways are not ours!  
What Abba offers is DISCLOSURE  
... Of His own Reality  
– An ever-surprising  
Open-ended  
Limitless  
Self-Revelation  
And, with it,  
An invitation to us to share  
In His inner Fellowship <sup>70</sup>  
– With His radiant Word of Invitation,  
– And Their Spirit of Openness.*

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<sup>69</sup> Year 1, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, 1984

<sup>70</sup> See Note 2 in Poem 94

## Being Present<sup>71</sup>

*Within the peace of the Spirit,  
We need to be PRESENT –*

*To our PAST*

*With FAITH ... to proclaim the gifts God has given  
With humility ... to affirm that it is all God's work*

*To our PRESENT*

*With LOVE ... to treasure Abba's Face wherever it appears  
With surrender ... to fully offer each moment in the Spirit*

*To our FUTURE*

*With HOPE ... to be open to the Spirit's promptings  
With courage ... to trust in Abba's faithfulness.*

---

<sup>71</sup> Year 1, Prison Ministry, Woodford from Gregory Terrace community, 1984

## The Surprise of Grace<sup>72</sup>

*If we do not love ourselves,  
We project precisely this feeling onto others,  
And, by extension, onto God.  
For those times we can't accept God's love  
– Because we feel UNLOVABLE –  
We prefer to believe  
That God turns away  
From both the sin and the sinner.  
In reality it is I who turn ...  
From myself, from others, and from God  
– Instead of turning from my SIN!*

*In excusing myself thus  
I seek to justify further inaction  
And failure to take responsibility:  
– 'No one, not even God, cares for me  
... So what do I care?'*

*This encourages repetition of sin,  
And postpones the call to conversion.  
We become hostage to our own helplessness.  
We look for a way out.  
It is only the SURPRISE OF GRACE,  
The unexpectedness of the Spirit's promptings,  
And the realization that it is God  
Who EMPOWERS us to change  
That allows us to sense –  
'We must be of considerable WORTH  
... For God to be so insistently kind!'  
This newborn sense of worth  
Is the circuit breaker  
Which moves our hearts, once more,  
To feel loved,  
And to seek reconciliation.*

---

<sup>72</sup> Year 1, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, 1984

## Sins of Omission<sup>73</sup>

*I was hungry  
And you DID NOT  
Give me to eat'*<sup>74</sup>  
*... Our pervasive sin  
Is the sin of OMISSION.*

*We arrange our life  
So as NOT TO HEAR  
The cry of the poor!*

*We skilfully skirt  
The mentally disabled,  
So that their mute call  
On our compassion,  
Is avoided.*

*We fake empathy,  
And speak in clichés  
– Just to avoid commitment!*

*We avoid eye contact,  
We turn up the music volume,  
We play 'busy',  
We pretend to converse  
– All to evade responsibility.*

*By quietly engaging in these stratagems,  
We stifle the Spirit's URGINGS  
... And we resort again,  
To tokenism, to studied neutrality,  
Or, simply, to crass self-interest.*

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<sup>73</sup> Year 1, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, 1984

<sup>74</sup> Mt 25:42

*... Or, moved by Jesus' plea,  
'Do not be afraid',<sup>75</sup>  
We can –  
Open our hearts,  
Let our conscience be triggered,  
Let our lives flow into theirs ...  
Sacrifice our time, energy, and resources,  
Let our lives be disturbed  
– Even re-orientated –  
As we re-focus on others.*

---

<sup>75</sup> Lk 12:32



## Our Soaring Spirits<sup>76</sup>

*All matter*  
– *Cosmic matter, earthen matter*  
*Even our personal matter ... our bodily reality –*  
*Is, of its nature, finite, limited, closed:*  
*We sleep, because our energy is FINITE;*  
*We read, because our ability to gain and retain knowledge is LIMITED;*  
*We repeat the marriage act, because our delight reaches closure.*

*Contrariwise, our spirit, wondrously,*  
*Is not 'closed', at any stage, to further possibilities*  
– *Because, spirit is OPENNESS TO THE ABSOLUTE,*  
*And, decisively, every spirit can indwell every other – IF welcomed.*  
*Thus, when welcomed, whoever our spirit indwells*  
*... Either intensifies our spirit's openness, or has their openness intensified.*

*The very Presence of the purest, most perfect spirit*  
– *God's Spirit, the Spirit of Uniting*  
*Enables our spirit*  
*To open to the Absolute, itself.*  
*God's Openness thus activates our openness,*  
*Enabling our spirit's very RECEPTIVITY, to God's Spirit.*  
*Moreover, God's Spirit empowers without compelling:*  
*The Spirit of Uniting empowers us*  
*To FREELY receive Him,*  
*As Lord of our hearts!*

*Thus God is exquisitely in tune*  
*With the rhythms of our free spirits.*  
*Our free choices*  
*Are forever within the embrace of God's freedom:*  
*God's Spirit*  
*Freely and simultaneously wills*  
*Whatever good our spirit freely chooses.*

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<sup>76</sup> Year 1, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, 1984

*How marvellous, then, is God's creativity  
— In wedding  
Finite, limited, 'closed' matter, so seamlessly,  
To our soaring spirits!  
Free spirits, in soaring, are given wings  
By the very Presence of the Divine Spirit!*

## Shame and Forgiveness<sup>77</sup>

*If our shame, confusion and sorrow  
Are not RELATIONAL,  
If they do not draw us beyond ourselves to others  
... In repentance, in humble service, in forgiveness ...  
Then, they are not Spirit-inspired,  
But are caught up in my pre-occupation with others' opinions,  
Or with my self-guilt.*

*Forgiveness – by God and others,  
Links us to others IN THE PRESENT,  
And does not focus on one's own PAST.  
Moreover, true realization of sinfulness is God-directed,  
And always leads to gratitude, to the Spirit of Forgiveness.  
Simply, true self-worth is not found  
Through the deceit of self-affirmation,  
Rather, it must be gratefully RECEIVED, as gift,  
In the experience of Abba's forgiveness.  
His generosity causes true hearts  
To overflow with gratitude:  
Our renewal is God's work, not ours!*

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<sup>77</sup> Year 1, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, 1984

## The Once Tempted One<sup>78</sup>

*Humility comes through self-humbling ...*  
*BEFORE Abba's love, lavished on us, in Jesus*  
*Possesses us.*

*Humility blossoms into a desire for reconciliation ...*  
*It is GENTLY characterized by shame and self-humbling*  
*In the presence of others' GOODNESS*  
*– The face, for us, of God's GOODNESS.*

*Thus, it is the sheer power and beauty of Jesus Ascended's GOODNESS,*  
*Often manifest in the lives of others, through GRACE,*  
*... That fills our hearts with loving trust,*  
*... That fires us with a divine jealousy of others' obvious goodness,*  
*... And that invites us to walk, hand in hand,*  
*With Jesus Ascended.*

*This once tempted one, Calvary's Victor over sin,*  
*Companions us as we encounter evil on our life's journey,*  
*And strive, humbly, to imitate Him*  
*Who encourages us*  
*... To BE Him, to others.*

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<sup>78</sup> Year 1, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, 1984

## For Poverty To Be Grace<sup>79</sup>

*For poverty to be grace  
Is to allow Abba, the fondest of sculptors  
To have His way with us.  
... It is to form us into treasured artworks of His love  
... To mould us into persons who are 'gentle and humble of heart'<sup>80</sup>  
... To shape our attitudes, our personalities,  
With His beloved Jesus, in mind  
– Into images of the poor man of Nazareth,  
The Beloved of His Father's heart!*

*Lovingly ...  
In the face of our self-focussed tendencies,  
Or in the face of our half-heartedness,  
Abba carefully incorporates some of Jesus'  
Calvary spirit, His overflowing generosity, into our lives.  
Yes, in the face of our smallness of mind  
Our stinginess of spirit,  
Abba embodies a lavish measure  
Of Jesus' self-sacrificing love!  
And in the face of our empty promises,  
And relentless self-focussing,  
Abba blends in  
A godlike measure of 'Not my will, but Yours be done'!<sup>81</sup>*

*Faithful to His desire to really capture  
The identity of One who was so 'poor in spirit',  
Abba re-moulds and re-shapes us  
As brothers and sisters  
Of the Paschal Christ.*

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<sup>79</sup> Year 1, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, 1984

<sup>80</sup> Mt 11:28

<sup>81</sup> Lk 22:42

*He does this so that we too might take up our cross daily,  
And sacrifice our lives, especially for the marginalized  
– Even for those who mistreat us!  
– And even for those who despise us!  
It is then that OUR poverty of spirit  
Will reveal itself AS GRACE.*

## For Obedience To Be Grace<sup>82</sup>

*For obedience to be grace,  
Is to allow Abba to transform us  
– As He did His Son Jesus –  
Within the accompaniment of our free choice  
... Through the ENABLING power of His Spirit of Love.*

*To be graced, our obedience  
Needs to be essentially PASCAL :  
'To be of one mind with Christ'<sup>83</sup>  
... Who 'gave Himself up in our place,  
As a fragrant offering, and a sacrifice to God'.<sup>84</sup>  
It was to Abba He surrendered the ultimate choice,  
The choice of LIFE ITSELF,  
'Not my will but Yours be done!'<sup>85</sup>*

*Thus, through the humility of a true humanity,  
Jesus took obedience to its perfection:  
'Learning obedience, through what He suffered,  
He was made perfect'<sup>86</sup>  
... Thus making of His death, the most precious sacrifice  
– That of obedience!<sup>87</sup>*

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<sup>82</sup> Year 1, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, 1984

<sup>83</sup> Phil 2:9

<sup>84</sup> Eph 5:2

<sup>85</sup> Lk 22:42

<sup>86</sup> Heb 5:8

<sup>87</sup> Heb 10:5-10

*Hence, it is through the enabling power  
Of Christ's own loving obedience  
That, sinfully human as we are  
– We achieve, DIVINELY beyond what we are capable of!  
We do so, with our free will  
Lovingly enshrined within His!  
We do so, with His Spirit, who ensures  
That 'all things work together for our good!' <sup>88</sup>*

*We do so, that 'together, we become Christ's body', <sup>89</sup>  
'So that each part,  
May be EQUALLY CONCERNED for all the others.' <sup>90</sup>*

*Thus our obedience, flowing out of Jesus',  
Leads to a fellowship of equality and concern.  
Blessed by God, it has truly become a fellowship of GRACE!*

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<sup>88</sup> Rom 8:28

<sup>89</sup> I Cor 12:27

<sup>90</sup> I Cor 12:25



## The Freedom of Dependence<sup>91</sup>

*To be 'IN Christ',  
We need to surrender our AUTONOMY  
Purchased, at great LOSS, by Adam and Eve!*

*Yes, we need to choose DEPENDENCE  
... To become re-dependent  
On each other, and on God  
... To be raised up, with Christ,  
To the freedom of dependence ...  
On an utterly creative  
And freeing God!*

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<sup>91</sup> Year 1, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, 1984