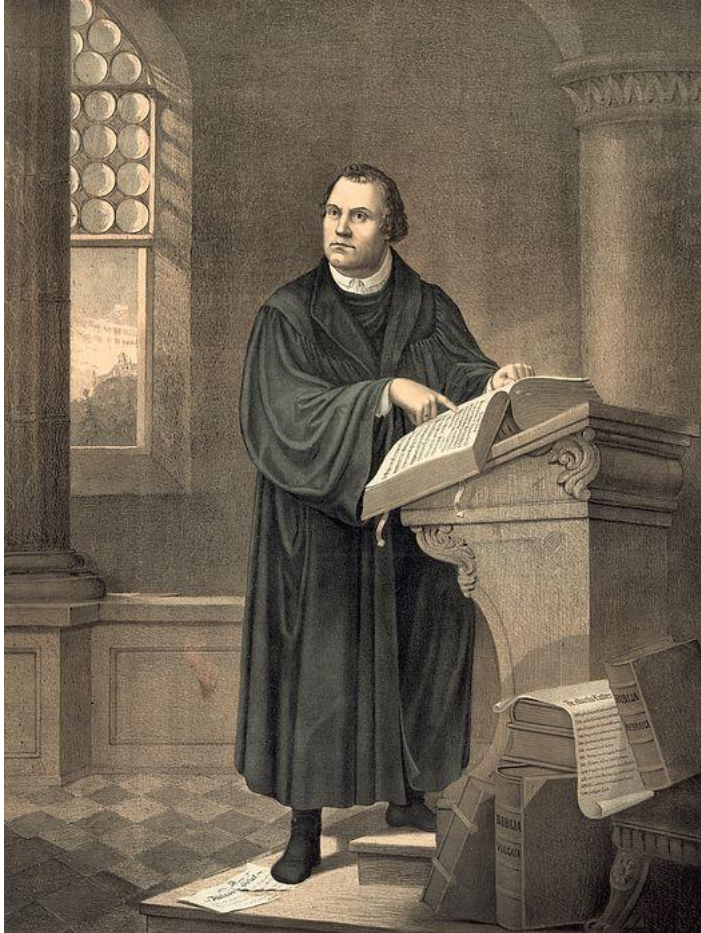


REFORMATION

A NEW CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY?

HOW DO WE MEET WITH GOD?



OCTOBER 2017

Introduction

Spirituality has become quite a “buzz word” in recent years. To me spirituality means to describe the process of how we encounter/meet with God. To Corinne Ware (1995:X111) spirituality begs us to ask the question “why some people worship in one way, while others choose a very different way of expressing religious devotion”. In an article by Wessels & Müller 2013 they quote several psychologists about their understanding of Spirituality and concludes that “Spirituality has been shown to be closely

associated with most of the other discourses which presented themselves as associated with a ‘life that matters’”.

I think we need to define Spirituality more carefully because all people are spiritual, and all people have different ways of expressing their consciousness of a Greater Being that we (as followers of Jesus) call “God” and others may call Science or “Allah”. When I refer to “Spirituality” I mean “Christian spirituality” and when I speak about God – I mean the Triune God who revealed Himself in and through Jesus Christ.

My paper wants to explore why people have/prefer different ways of meeting/encountering this God, hence exploring the different types of Spirituality, which seems to be present all through history – since the formation of the early Christian church (see Ware 1995:108). The big

question to me is whether defining “spiritual types” is still important and relevant in/for our current faith communities.

All people are different and experience their experience of meeting with God or spirituality in different ways. Our differences will be evident in the way we think of God, the church, worship, public prayers, communion and praise. In the end it all boils down to the fact that all people meet/encounter God in different ways.

Corinne Ware says in her book “Discover your spiritual type” we need to answer two questions:

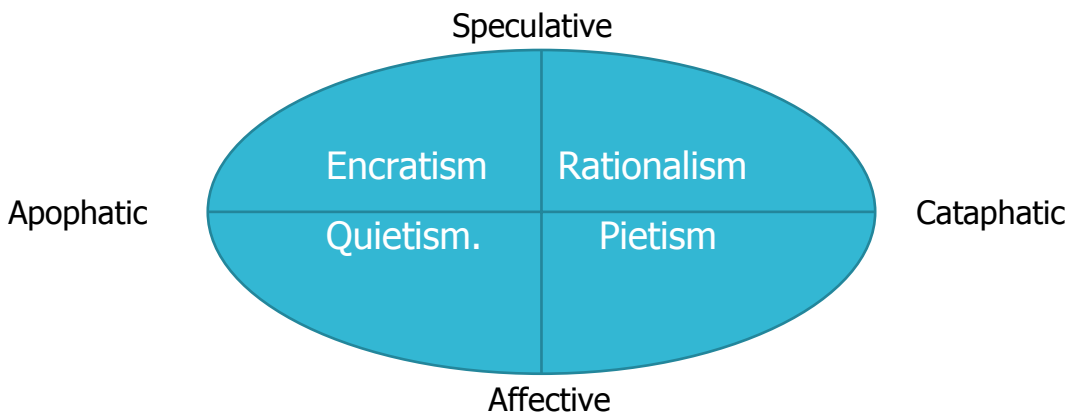
1. Who am I as a spiritual person?
2. What is the spiritual profile of my worshipping group? (Cf 1995:1)

I intend to explore:

1. The different types of Spirituality according to Ware and Holmes,
2. Assess if these types were evident in the history of the Christian church since its humble beginnings,
3. Ask the critical question if the Reformation brought forward a new type of Christian spirituality (I will mostly refer to/focus on the theology of Martin Luther)?
4. Ask the question of how our understanding of Spirituality and Spiritual types can help us to move forward in a Christian environment in a non-judgemental and inclusive way?
5. Closing remarks

Different types of Spirituality

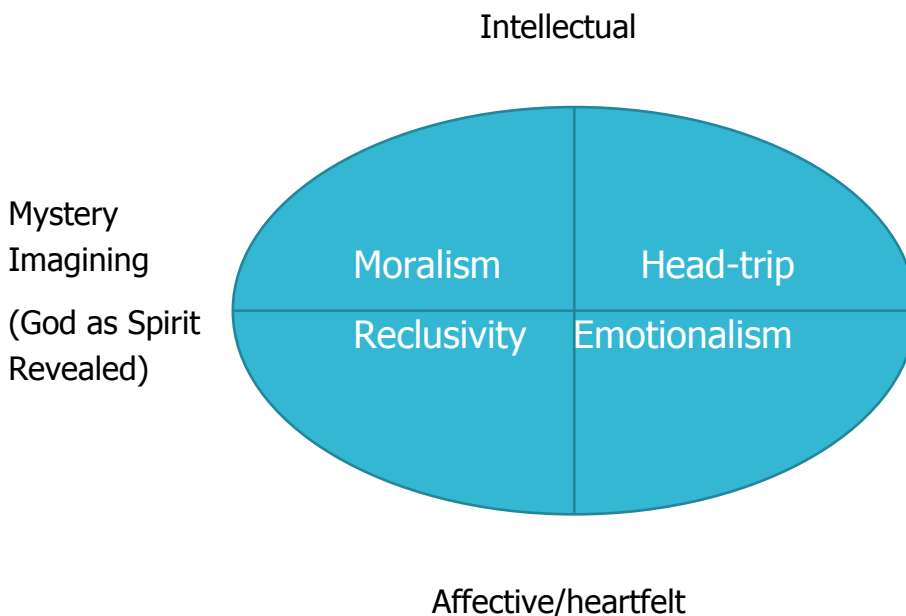
Urban Holmes (an historian)(1980:3-7) recognised four types of Spirituality which he called the "circle of sensibility":



Holmes (1980:3-7) defines sensibility as: "that sensitivity to the ambiguity of styles of prayer and the possibilities for a creative dialogue within the person and within the community as it seeks to understand the experience of God and its meaning for our world". I cannot agree more. We have to acknowledge the differences and respect the fact that not all people meet with God in the same way.

Corinne Ware (1995:8) adapted the model by using more contemporary or "accessible" words, which according to me makes more sense in conceptualising spirituality.

Her adapted model looks like:



The circle emphasises and suggest integration of different parts into a whole, while the quadrants intersecting axes, represent individuated parts of the whole. "Integration points to one's being embedded in the given, while individuation points to one's carving out of new territory" (Ware 1995:10). Ware (1995:11) says to have a "healthy and growing spirituality", we should have both integration and individuation. They are complementary and dialectical, bringing the different parts into a whole.

According to the psychologist Abraham Maslow (2014:7) most people think atomistically, that is in terms of either-or, black and white and in other mutually exclusively categories. According to him (2014:7) in the history of many organised religions there is "a tendency to develop two extreme wings: the "mystical and individual on the one hand, and the legalistic and organizational [sic] on the other". Maslow (2014:8) says that there is a real danger in choosing either/or forms of spirituality in which "the churches, finally may become the major enemies of the religious experience and the religious experienter".

When choosing the one above the other there is a real tendency to forsake the internal, intuitive religious experience and redefine religion as a set of habits and dogmas that become legalistic, bureaucratic, conventional and empty. To place the subjective or experiential above or against the legalistic, can become a truly subjective and self-absorbed religious experience.

In the light of Maslow's (2014:7) opinion that "the profoundly and authentically religious person integrates these trends easily and automatically", I would like to propose an **and - and** approach where both elements (mystical and rational) form part of the Spiritual encounter with God. Hebrews 11:1 defines faith as: "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Faith incorporates/includes both elements of spirituality namely the intellectual (assurance of knowing) and the "mystical (what we do not see). The Heidelberg catechism question and answer 21 confirms this Scriptural truth by defining faith as: "True faith is not only a sure knowledge by which I hold as true all that God has revealed to us in Scripture it is also a wholehearted trust ,which the Holy Spirit creates in me by the gospel, that God has freely granted, not only to others but to me also, forgiveness of sins, eternal righteousness, and salvation. These are gifts of sheer grace, granted solely by Christ's merit."

I do not agree with Corinne Ware (2014:13-15) to use Jesus's ministry on earth to proof a "spiritual prototype". I do it on the grounds of the fact that

we can never be Jesus or even dare to say that “we can achieve” what He did as He was fully God. The Bible is clear that we are humans and God is God and Jesus was fully human and fully God. Moses’ encounter (Exodus 3:1-6) with God is a good example in Exodus 3:

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. ³ So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.”⁴ When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!” And Moses said, “Here I am.” ⁵ “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” ⁶ Then he said, “I am the God of your father,^[a] the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

I would like to look at Jesus’s ministry on earth from a different angle. I would like to focus on how **He** dealt with someone who was different from Him and who did have a different “spirituality”. As an example I refer to the story of the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15:21-28:

22 A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.” 23 Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, “Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.” 24 He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.” 25 The woman came and knelt before him. “Lord, help me!” she said. 26 He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.” 27 “Yes it is, Lord,” she said. “Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.” 28 Then Jesus said to her, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed at that moment.

What is going on in this text? Why is Jesus rude to the poor woman?

Well Jesus was a rabbi and he was following the Jewish law which prohibit any Gentile from becoming a Jew with only one exception - if you were a Gentile woman you could become a Jew like Ruth in the Old Testament. Jesus was using the standard Jewish religious intellectual “spirituality” to arrive at a “true spiritual encounter with God”.

Although exceptions were made, there was a strict law that made it clear that if a Gentile woman wanted to become a Jew, she had to go to the Priest and proof her true intentions three times. After being sent away by the Priest

for three times, if she returned she was accepted as a Jew. In our reading Jesus is doing the same with the one exception: He accepts her into the faith community and instead of saying: TRADITION has saved her daughter, He says her FAITH saved her daughter!

So, what was her "spiritual need"? Obviously, she was desperate to find a way to get her daughter "healed" from the demon possession. If Corinne's theory holds any ground, I would say that she had a vague idea whom Jesus was, thinking of HIM as the perfect KING who replaced David. In many ways her spiritual type was bordering on the mysterious. But at the end of her encounter with Jesus, it seems fit to assume that she found faith as God revealed HIMSELF to her, hence the "imagining Spiritual type". During her encounter with Jesus her whole "spiritual need" is heartfelt and genuine.

In another encounter, a woman in Luke 8:43-48, was healed without any word being spoken. She just touched Jesus' outer garment. In this case the woman revealed her Spiritual type as being "affective" according to the language and model of Holmes.

⁴³ And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years,^[a] but no one could heal her. ⁴⁴ She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.⁴⁵ "Who touched me?" Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you." ⁴⁶ But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me." ⁴⁷ Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. ⁴⁸ Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace."

Jesus was making the point in both cases, that although we all have different "spiritually needs", after an encounter with God, we will receive a sense of "spiritual wholeness". He is also saying that meeting with God is not restricted for JEWS only but for each and everyone who wants to meet with HIM through faith alone. Although the first woman was a "despised Gentile women" and the other an unclean/unholy woman, both were not excluded from God's presence or being banned from having an encounter with God through Jesus.

Spiritual types within the context of the history of the Christian church: a brief depiction

The early Jesus followers came together frequently either in nature (read the story of Lydia in Acts 16:11-15), or in houses like the story of Peter who entered a Christian prayer gathering after being set free from prison in Acts 12. The early Jesus followers was a strong fellowship where all the believers shared everything they had. We read in Acts 2:42-47:

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

According to Corinne Ware's suggestion, we can define the early followers of Jesus as people who listened to the teachings of the Apostles (intellectual), as being intuitive by praying and praising God, as being heartfelt by giving away their possessions to those in need, as celebrating the mystery of God who added more people who were being saved to their number daily. Their experience of God was a holistic encounter "where they praised God and enjoyed the favor of all the people".

But as Rev Keith Ross pointed out this morning it was not all love in the early Christian fellowship especially when we read the Letters to the Corinthians. They had all sorts of issues and conflicts.

But then with Constantine's so called "conversion" in 312, something was lost when the "early Jesus movement/following" became more of an "institution", "a uniformed and clearly structured movement" who followed a prescribed interpretation of Scripture. In 313 Constantine issued the "Edict of Milan," which granted official toleration of Christianity and other religions. He ordered that Sunday be granted the same legal rights as pagan feasts and that feasts in memory of Christian martyrs be recognised. Constantine also outlawed gladiatorial shows (although they persisted until the 5th century) and forbade Jews to stone to death other Jews who converted to Christianity.

He called the first church council who met at ancient Nicaea (now İznik, Turkey) in 325. The Council of Nicaea, (325) as it was called dealt with the opposing views of Arius of Alexandria who proclaimed that Christ is not divine but a created being. Constantine, fearing the instability of his empire, hoped

a general council of the church would solve the problem. The council reaffirmed the Biblical truth that Jesus was fully human but fully divine, ONE with God the Father.

The council condemned Arius and, with reluctance on the part of some, incorporated the non-scriptural word ***homoousios*** ("of one substance") into the Nicene Creed to signify the absolute equality of God the Son with God the Father. The emperor then exiled Arius.

After Constantine, Emperor Theodosius made Christianity the official religion of the empire on the 27th of February 380, with the decree "*Cunctos populos*", the so-called "Edict of Thessalonica". This declared the Nicene Trinitarian Christianity to be the only legitimate imperial religion and the only one entitled to call itself Catholic.

In May 381, Theodosius summoned a new ecumenical council at Constantinople to decide on the being/nature/attributes of the Holy Spirit. The council decided that the Holy Spirit, who, "though equal to the Father, 'proceeded' from Him, whereas the Son was 'begotten' of Him."

The Eastern Church broke away from the Western church in 1054. They had different reasons but the one who stood out was the "Filioque" (proceeds from the SON) issue. According to the Orthodox tradition the Holy Spirit originates, and has his cause for existence or being (manner of existence) from the Father alone and not like the WESTERN CHURCH who confessed that the Holy Spirit "proceeds from the Father and the Son". Later there was a further split in the Eastern church which resulted in the existence of the Greek Orthodox and the Russian Orthodox church. When visiting these churches, one will immediately sense the emphasis of an "affective and mysterious" spirituality type.

The church when it became institutionalised departed from their early intimate fellowship. It was the start in the Western church of priestly orders where likeminded people formed groups to live out their likeminded "spiritual types" where they committed themselves to a specific vow of obedience to their cause and fellowship. This is important to note especially in relation to what happened later with the Reformation.

There was the Order of Saint Benedict, the Carmelites, the **Franciscan Order**, the Dominican Order, and the Order of Saint Augustine. Augustine saw God as a mystery. In this priestly order "justification was primarily a process whereby the individual steadily became more and more righteous through the impartation of Christ's righteousness" (Trueman 2006:85). In this order it was achieving a Spiritual encounter with God through hard work

and devoted labour. In the Benedictine Order it is about maintaining a life of dedication to God through prayer and preserving long periods of silence. The **Franciscan Order** was found by **Saint Francis of Assisi** and focussed on not having any ownership of property, requiring members of the order to beg for food while preaching. The austerity was meant to emulate the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Franciscans travelled and preached in the streets, while boarding in church properties. The Dominican Order was founded to preach the Gospel and to oppose heresy, the teaching activity of the order and its scholastic organisation placed the Preachers in the forefront of the intellectual life of the Middle Ages.

But what about the ordinary people who did not find themselves in a “priestly order” of whom could not read or write or speak Latin, who did not have the BIBLE in their own language. They did not know anything about God, the sacraments, justification, forgiveness of sins, hell or heaven, without believing what the Roman Catholic clergy told them. What about their Spirituality? How could they meet/encounter God?

Martin Luther brought an end to this when on the 31st of October 1517 he nailed 95 theses on the door of the Roman Catholic church (“Schlosskirche”) in Wittenberg. It was clear to him that faithful people were exploited in the name of “God”. Ordinary people did not have access to the Bible in their own language and could only know about or encounter God by listening to the words of the POPE or the clergy. It is no wonder that he reacted and in theological language challenged the POPE as the representative of the institutionalised church. He (Luther 2005:9,13) said in:

- theses 6: “The pope cannot remit any guilt, except by declaring and showing that it has been remitted by God...”;
- theses 33: “Men must especially be on guard against those who say that the pope’s pardons are that inestimable gift of God by which man is reconciled to him”.

In 1521, he translated the New Testament in German within 11 weeks. He also stated on the 18th of April 1521 when he was standing trial said: “Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures or by evident reason-for I can believe neither pope nor councils alone, as it is clear that they have erred repeatedly and contradicted themselves-I consider myself convicted by the testimony of Holy Scripture, which is my basis; my conscience is captive to the Word of God. Thus I cannot and will not recant, because acting against one's conscience is neither safe nor sound” (Cf Van Wyk 2017).

He translated the whole Bible in German in 1534 which not only helped the people to understand who God is in their own language but also to educate people to learn to read and write in the language they spoke.

Luther never wanted to start a new church (see Van Wyk 2017:19). He did not break away from the Roman Catholic church in the way Calvin and Knox did. Instead he “reformed” the church which became known as the Lutheran church. I am not so sure if he thought of the Reformation as a movement separate from the Catholic church. I am more convinced that he thought of the Reformation as something of a new order with a different form of Spirituality, where all people have access to God (see Klän 2015). He emphasised the justification by faith in God alone in and through the Crucified Christ especially when he studied the Letter to the Romans, remarking that this is *the* letter that summarises the essence Jesus’ teaching the most (see Luther 1947:84). He uses an image of a “rose” (in Wittenberg they speak about Luther’s rose) to describe the meaning of the coming of Christ to the world:

First, there is a black cross in a heart that remains its natural color. This is to remind me that it is faith in the Crucified One that saves us. Anyone who believes from the heart will be justified (Romans 10:10). It is a black cross, which mortifies and causes pain, but it leaves the heart its natural color. It doesn’t destroy nature, that is to say, it does not kill us but keeps us alive, for the just shall live by faith in the Crucified One (Romans 1:17). The heart should stand in the middle of a white rose. This is to show that faith gives joy, comfort, and peace – it puts the believer into a white, joyous rose. Faith does not give peace and joy like the world gives (John 14:27). This is why the rose must be white, not red. White is the colour of the spirits and angels (cf. Matthew 28:3; John 20:12). This rose should stand in a sky-blue field, symbolizing that a joyful spirit and faith is a beginning of heavenly, future joy, which begins now, but is grasped in hope, not yet fully revealed. Around the field of blue is a golden ring to symbolize that blessedness in heaven lasts forever and has no end. Heavenly blessedness is exquisite, beyond all joy and better than any possessions, just as gold is the most valuable and precious metal. (Letter from Martin Luther to Lazarus Spengler, July 8, 1530 [WA Br 5:445]; tr. P. T. McCain).

Luther made it possible for the people to go back to the TRUTH of the Bible and discover faith. He also gave people the ability to realise once again that they are “freed” by the grace of God from sin, death and hell. He discovered once again the truths of Scripture that the Word of God give us **life and set** us free to live in a relationship with Him. He discovered in the Letter to the Romans that God, who is the Father of the Crucified Jesus, is merciful and

gracious. All human beings have now access to the mercy and grace of God through faith alone. No more works, no *Ordo salutis* (Order of salvation) or the indulgences of the POPE are necessary to impress or gain access to God (cf Lohse 1999:274–282). To Luther it was a quite discovery to realise that God declared the sinner righteous through the cross of Jesus Christ and that all humans by His grace, can live in the freedom of His love and live to love God, him/herself and his/her neighbour. According to him in his commentary on Romans 4:7, the human being is *simul iustus et peccator – both a sinner and a righteous man*”(see Trueman 2006:75).

The Reformed/Presbyterian churches have since the Reformation followed 5 principles namely:

- Sola Scriptura – The Word of God alone
- Sola gratia – through grace alone
- Sola Fide – through faith alone
- Solus Christus – Jesus Christ’s redemption, ascension must be central
- Sola Deo Gloria – to God be the Glory!

All of the Reformers however stressed the importance for the Christian church to keep “reforming” according to God’s word, to obey His teachings and live a life of gratitude. Later Karl Barth (1953:787) would use a phrase from Latin “**ecclesia** semper Reformanda” to stress the importance of the church’s ongoing reformation (cf Buitendag 2008, Horton 2009, Koffeman 2015)

So in summary to answer the question that Ware (1995:1) poses in her book (to which I referred to at the beginning of my lecture) namely: What is the spiritual profile of my worshipping group?, we need to emphasise that we are in a Presbyterian/Reformed congregation, who embrace the principles of the Reformation. If we assess the type of Spirituality that prevailed and is still part of our heritage, I think it is fair to say that the emphasis in the Reformed/Presbyterian tradition is first intellectual (studying the Bible), heartfelt (prayer and devotion), and intuitive (God can only be known through His revelation). But individually, if we assess our own Spiritual types, we will all have different preferences of how we engage/meet with God within a Presbyterian/Reformed tradition.

Can our understanding of Spirituality and Spiritual types help us to move forward in a Christian environment in a non-judgemental and inclusive way?

We need to understand that our own Spiritual type is not a mean to an end – every meeting with God will be special and unique to us and the special moment/s we share when God enters our existence. This is only possible through faith in and through Jesus Christ when His Holy Spirit moves us.

In the light of how uniquely special every encounter with God is – I do not think we can honestly define these “moments/experiences/encounters” by categorising them into “spiritual types”. I think when we do, we tend to narrow down and rationalise/over think these special moments. However, I do agree that different people will have different preferences of how they will meet with God, either intellectually (through reasoning and Bible study), intuitively (through special candlelight ceremonies/special places of worship), practically (by helping others) and “spiritually” (through prayer and worship). But it can never be an “intellectual”, dogmatic, tick-box exercise. It can only happen when we humble ourselves before God and ask Him to enter our existence through the “comforter” - His Holy Spirit.

I think when we focus on how unique and special each encounter with God is, then we also should understand not to **exclude** people who may prefer to meet with God in a totally different way - a way that is maybe alien to us. Why do I say this? We have to accept that we live in a secular, post Christendom (cf Murray 2004) where we have to come to terms with the fact that:

1. Younger people find it difficult and alien to meet with God in a Sunday church setting, or any church setting,
2. We live in an ever changing (see Bauman 2000) “cyber world” where people want to meet with God in cyber space, sometimes without any contact/fellowship with other people as described by Keith Ross in his master’s dissertation.
3. We live in a world where apathy and anonymity are the replacement to committed Christian believers being involved in all aspects of church life,
4. We are in a church setting where we deal with hostility, exclusion and persecution from secularists, paganism, humanists, Islamist extremism and angry fundamentalist atheists (such as Dawkins and others);

How will we cope with these challenges and motivate others to meet with/encounter GOD? WHY do we bother?

At the recent conference called “The global impact of the Reformation: relevance for continuing Reformation” in Wittenberg these challenges and others facing the Christian church today, were addressed by theologians from over the world. They all agreed that the Christian church finds itself once again at the church door in Wittenberg like it was 500 years ago – facing a strange and alien world. Any Christian believer who wants to meet/encounter the God who revealed Himself in and through Jesus Christ, must be prepared to suffer alienation and possible persecution (the reality of about more than a million Iranians Christian believers and others around the world facing daily persecution were emphasised by three scholars, Thomas Schirrmacher, Christine Schirrmacher and Bernhard Reitsma).

It is important for us and others to meet with God because in **that** moment and afterwards no one can and will be the same again. He only needs one second to change our lives for the better. He is the only ONE who can break down each barrier or difficulty we face on this earth. We need to return to God and His Holy word and proclaim the Good news in all ways possible without compromise whether it is with;

- the written word through articles in newspapers and magazines/on blogs/through twitter/messages on walls that people can see in clear view/posters/rolling television screens,
- Spoken word through the sermon/Bible reflections/music/children’s addresses/bible-studies/chat after the service,
- Reflective listening word through prayers/periods of silence/the witness of others,
- Cyber word through live streaming of the services,
- Contextual word where we witness as people of Jesus Christ and proclaim His Good news to our community,
- Words of justice addressing social inequality, poverty in all its forms;
- Words of peace where we proclaim Jesus’ words “Blessed are the peacemakers...”

Closing remarks

I think we have to stop focussing on the **how** we meet/encounter God with the **that** we enter into a living relationship with God. It is no longer about **me** and how **I** feel – but about the ONLY God who can enter our existence even when do not feel “spiritual” or ready to have an encounter with HIM. Let us recall how the God met Saul on the way to Damascus. God did not only change his name to Paul but his whole life for the advancement of His kingdom.

We need to focus, witness and proclaim to each and every one, the/our need to meet/encounter the living God – the God who healed the broken world and who is with His believers, present through his Word and His Holy Spirit. I do not agree with Corinne Ware that a “spiritual preference” is to blame, when people do not feel that God is not speaking to them, or feeling alienated in a worship service or feeling that they do not belong within a Christian fellowship. I am convinced that it is not so simple. It is more about our relationship with God at any given time. Just like any other relationship on earth – there will be times that we feel we do not “connect” with the other party. When life is tough, it is hard and difficult to understand where God is in all of this. When we hear and face disasters/illness/violence/evil etc, it is difficult **not** to doubt God. All of these factors and those that I have not even mentioned, can play a part in our journeys of faith. But the Bible teaches us to keep on reading God’s word and obey/glorify HIM because He will give us life and nourish our souls. We need to encourage each other to hold on to our faith in and through Jesus Christ. We need to remember that we are saved not by and through our good works but through faith alone by the sole grace and mercy of God. We have been declared righteous in the eyes of God. We are free like Luther said to love God, our neighbours and ourselves.

We need to pray remembering that as Calvin said, that “Jesus Christ speaks by virtue of what he has been and what he has suffered in obedience and faithfulness to his Father; and we pray as it were through his mouth inasmuch as he enables us to draw near and be heard, and he intercedes for us. Thus, in truth, our prayer is already made even before we formulate it. When we pray we can only go back to that prayer which was uttered in the person of Jesus Christ and is constantly repeated because God is not without man. God is the Father of Jesus Christ, and that man, Jesus Christ, prayed and is praying still. Such is the ground of our prayer in Christ. This means that God has made himself surety for our requests, that he has himself willed to answer our prayers, because all our prayers are summed up in Jesus Christ; God cannot fail to answer because it is Christ who prays.”

We need to remember that as believers we are and will always be “the living community of the living Lord Jesus Christ” (Barth)

I thank you for listening.

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