

wise traveller



loss

© Scripture Union 2007

First published 2007

ISBN 978 1 84427 311 9

207–209 Queensway, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK2 2EB, UK
www.wisetraveller.org.uk

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, photocopy, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Efforts have been made where appropriate and possible to secure permission to reproduce quoted material from copyright holders (see acknowledgements), but we apologise in the event of any oversights or omissions in this regard.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data: a catalogue record of this book is available from the British Library.

Cover image and text illustrations by Andrew Gray © 2007

The *Wise Traveller* logo (created by Andrew Gray)

© Scripture Union 2007

Andrew Gray has asserted his right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, to be identified as the illustrator of this work.

Cover and internal design and layout by x1.ltd.uk

Printed and bound by Henry Ling Ltd, Dorchester, England

Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	5
Griever.....	10
Revealer.....	14
Opportunity-taker	18
Consoler	22
Fellow traveller	26
Truth-teller	30
Sacrificer.....	34
Transformer	38
Restorer	42
Voyager.....	46
Uprooter	50
Home-comer	54
Seeker.....	58
Simplifier	62
Loser.....	66
Purifier	70
<i>Background notes</i>	74
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	78

Introduction

Many of us want a more spiritually satisfying life. This book is about catching hold of those moments of divine intensity that come our way in the midst of everyday living. As David Adam, a writer who draws on the inspiration of the ancient Celts, puts it, 'We need to walk with awe and wonder, we need to be aware of the deep mystery and power that flows through all things. ... We need to discover again that there is an adventure to be lived in our world, a personal discovery to be made of the presence and the life that dances in all things.' And so this book is also about celebrating life as a journey, one which we 'walk with awe and wonder', recognising that there is something about the travelling, as well as the arriving, that should be treasured.

It's not always a popular theme, but by way of contrast to the hedonism of modern life is the view that worthwhile things take time, that process is important, and that taking the long way round cultivates traditional benefits such as patience and perseverance. This is what the journey can do for us. As we walk in solitude or in company we discover the power of the journey to prepare us, resource us and change us in ways

that enhance our appreciation of the significant ‘arrival’ moments in our lives. Sure, it might be easier to drive straight to the packaged tourist experience, but the journey via the coastal path will have many compensations: the changing light on the ocean; the colour and contours of the cliffs; the seabird colonies perched precariously; the white sand draped like a scarf around the bay.

The *Wise Traveller* series offers wisdom for the journey; wisdom drawn from the spiritual classics of the Christian tradition alongside original reflections – stories, poems and meditations – that engage with the spiritual, emotional and, sometimes, brutal realities of life. As Proverbs 24:3,4 (TNIV) says: ‘By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.’

This book has been written and compiled by people who would identify themselves as Christian in the broadest understanding of that term. These are people who have wrestled with what it means to live fully and who, time and time again, have turned to the Bible to find the wisdom, inspiration and guidance they need to carry

on. At the back of the book you'll find notes that offer suggestions for further reading, showing where ideas and themes explored in the book originate in these ancient biblical writings that the Christian tradition has always recognised as sacred and God-inspired.

For many of us, seeking deeper fulfilment in life means increasing our sense of peace. This book offers opportunities to nurture stillness through contemplation. As you read, you may find it helpful to pause and reflect on your thoughts and feelings using the 'litany' or devotional pattern provided, a line of which appears on the first page of each chapter, accompanied by a woodblock-style illustration for those of us who find art a stimulus to meditation. The litany is inspired by the famous Celtic prayer, 'St Patrick's Breastplate', whose author, understanding Jesus to be the Son of God, calls upon him to be his companion and friend on each step of the journey:

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,

Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

Whatever your spiritual convictions and hopes, I hope
this collection blesses you on life's journey.

Phil Andrews

Series Editor

Other titles available
in the *Wise Traveller* series:

Happiness

Relationships

Yet to be published:

Forgiveness

Growing

Hope



Griever



I see the path ahead of me...

Affliction makes God appear to be absent for a time, more absent than a dead man, more absent than light in the utter darkness of a cell. A kind of horror submerges the whole soul.

During this absence there is nothing to love.

What is terrible is that if, in this darkness where there is nothing to love, the soul ceases to love, God's absence becomes final.

The soul has to go on loving in the emptiness, or at least to go on wanting to love, though it may only be with an infinitesimal part of itself. Then, one day, God will come to show himself to this soul and to reveal the beauty of the world to it, as in the case of Job.

But if the soul stops loving it falls, even in this life, into something which is almost equivalent to hell.

Simone Weil (1909-1943)

Though I walk more and more slowly
Though some days I can't be bothered to walk at all
Though I sleepwalk as if it's all a bad dream
Though I walk and trip and fall and wonder if I will
Ever get up again
Though I walk as if these are the last steps I will ever take
Because I will never walk with you again
Though I walk with a limp
Dragging along this leaden heart, this heavy life
Though I walk on an earth where I will never hold you or
be held by you
Never call you or be called by you
Though I walk through a valley from which all light has
been evacuated
Where familiar paths have disappeared, lost from view

Still

God is with me

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow

Where despair encircles like hounds

Where darkness seems my only companion

Still

God is with me, I will fear no evil

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow

Surely goodness and mercy

Shall follow me

Surely they can't be far behind

Surely they will catch me up

Surely they will bring me home

Martin Wroe

wise traveller

meditations for life's journey

Loss, in all its forms, seems to characterise the human experience. It breaks us and re-shapes our lives in ways we would not choose. What can help us survive this process, even if we've no hope left inside?

Life is not neat or painless, but is instead stuffed full of meaning, mystery, beauty and sacred encounters; all shaped by our relationships with people, places, ideas and stories. The *Wise Traveller* series brings original reflections together with spiritual writings from across history to offer pathways and turning points for those seeking a more authentic way of living.

www.wisetraveller.org.uk

ISBN 978 1 84427 311 9



9 781844 273119

