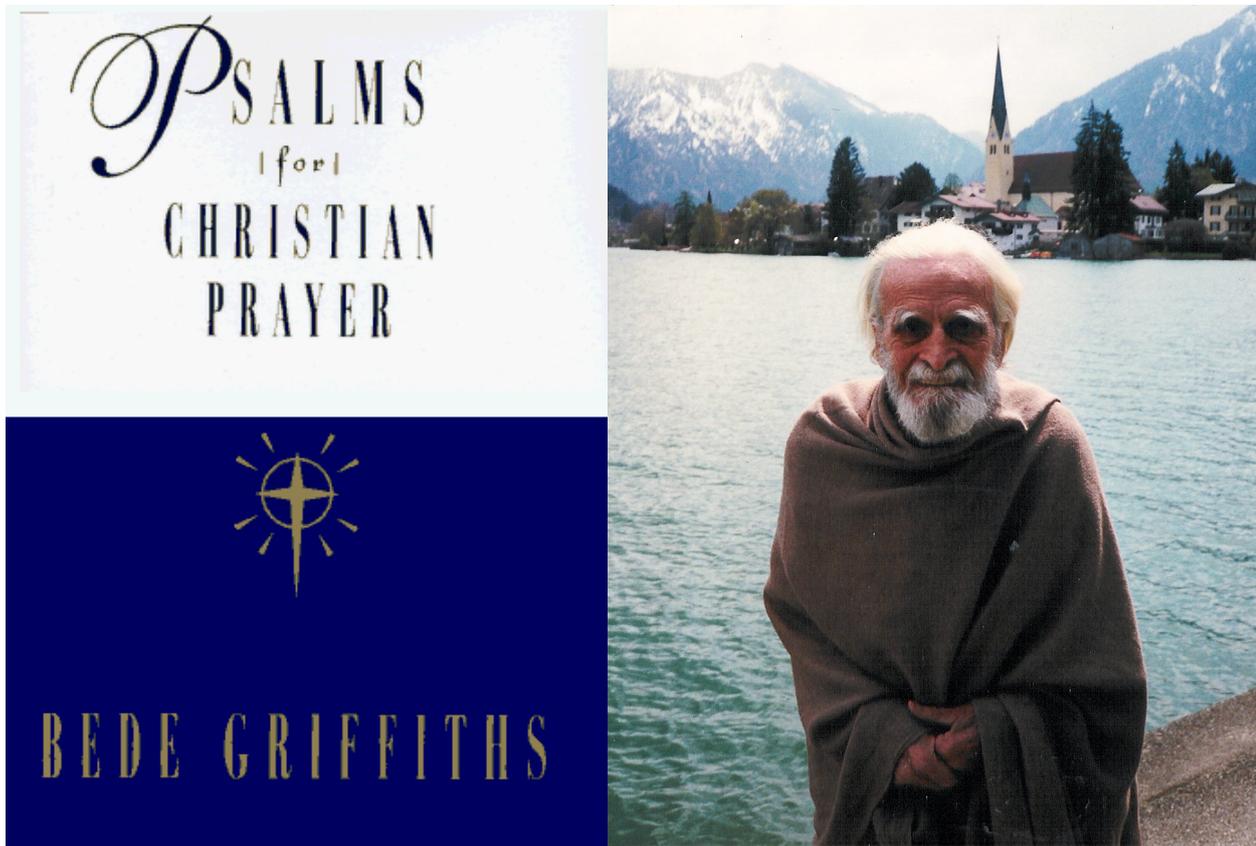


ROLAND R. ROPERS

“Taken in their literal sense many of the Psalms express feelings of anger, hatred and revenge against one’s enemies which are entirely opposed to the teaching of the Gospel on love of one’s enemies...”

(Bede Griffiths – 30th March 1992)



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edited by Roland R. Ropers
160 pages

Words like revenge and hatred lead to separation

The Benedictine monk, mystic and sage **Bede Griffiths** (1906 – 1993) always used a language of poetic beauty which brought everyone who entered into his aura into an immediate feeling of reconciliation and oneness. When **Dom Bede** joined the Benedictine order he was trained with the weekly routine of praying all **150 Psalms** of the **Old Testament**. The more he became conscious of the deeper meaning of words he felt that

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these prayers need to be revised. No one ever in history had the courage to positively manipulate the psalms which are being prayed more or less unconsciously.

In the spirit of the witness of **Jesus Christ** to peace and neighbourliness, **Bede Griffiths** edited 95 of the Psalms for use in Christian prayer and liberated all texts from words that could badly influence man's sub-consciousness.

Inspired by the beautiful nature in the *Bavarian Tegernsee Lake District* **Bede Griffiths** wrote on **30th March 1992** in **Kreuth/Germany** – viewing the *Blue Mountains* (Sanskrit: *Nil Giri*) – his courageous introduction to his new book *Psalms for Christian Prayer*:

“From the earliest times the songs of the Hebrew Psalter have been held in veneration by the Christian Church. They were considered to have been inspired by GOD and to have been the prayer of Jesus himself. St. Benedict in his rule was careful to arrange for the whole Psalter to be sung every week in choir, and declared that the holy fathers were wanted to recite in a single day what we tepid monks may only sing in a week. If there were any problems about the sentiments expressed in some of the Psalms, the difficulty was overcome by interpreting them in an allegorical sense... The symbolic understanding has been continued until the present day, but as we come to attend more closely to the literal meaning of the Psalms, which for an educated person today is almost inevitable, it becomes more and more difficult to accept many of them as Christian prayers. Taken in their literal sense many of the Psalms express feelings of anger, hatred and revenge against one's enemies which are entirely opposed to the teaching of the Gospel on love of one's enemies... We have to remember that ancient Israel grew up in a dualistic culture in which GOD was considered to be separate – the word 'holy' originally means separate – from humanity and the created world. Human beings were separate from GOD and one another from the surrounding world. Israel was a 'holy' nation separate from the other nations of the world. As a result Israel was surrounded by 'enemies' who were hostile to GOD and to the people of GOD. The good were separate from the wicked, the righteous from sinners, and the end was conceived to be the destruction of the 'wicked' and all the 'enemies' of Israel. The Messiah was to conquer their enemies and subdue them under his feet. This was the perspective of the Psalmist and it was precisely this dualism which Jesus came to overcome. He broke down the dividing walls between Jews and Gentiles... The Psalms still retain their value

and can be used in Christian prayer. We can praise GOD for all the work of creation, thank him for his providence over human life, ask for mercy and forgiveness and look forward to the joy of reconciliation..."

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd

*The LORD is my shepherd.
There is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
Where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me.
To revive my drooping spirit.*

*He guides me along the right path.
He is true to his name.
If I should walk in the valley of darkness
No evil I would fear.
You are there with your crook and your staff.
With these you give me comfort.*

*My head you have anointed with oil.
My cup is overflowing.*

*Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
All the days of my life.
In the LORD's own house shall I dwell
For ever and ever.*
