

In the Beginning Part II: This Time It's Personal [Deeper Sheet 1.11.09]

There isn't a corner of creation that isn't pulsating with energy. The ground is alive with ants frantically scurrying with food three times their size. The jungle is an explosion of life that a woman braves to find a water filter because water means life. Even in the womb something, someone, is being knit together. Creation is happening. Let there be "*zoe*".

For many, the Presence that creates, animates, and sustains the world remains distant and impersonal. John, however, tells the story of a God who has come near and taken on flesh and blood because creation is in serious trouble. There's a rebellion underway, an abuse of creative power amid God's good creation, and it pervades every inch of the world. John is retelling the creation story, where once again God comes near to create: The powerful becomes personal and shines into the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Despite this, there are those who have come to know God as personal but not powerful. Religion can become enamored the illusion—God can be analyzed and categorized and mapped out until before long, the story stops being about God and starts being about us. And the charge remains: "I have set before you life and death. Now choose life" [Deuteronomy 30v19].

So we affirm life. We seek what Henri Nouwen called the movement from "illusion to prayer...from false certainties to true uncertainties, from an easy support system to a risky surrender, and from the many safe gods to the God whose love has no limits." Anywhere we find a trace of God's powerful and personal presence, we celebrate it in all its beauty and mystery. The last word has not been spoken. New Creation is happening. Let there be *zoe*.

Why does removing yourself from a world made of human hands help one come into contact with the life-giving Presence that brought the world into being?

What brings you life? Where do you see *zoe*?

What makes the story of the woman in the jungle so captivating?

In what ways is it possible for you to live, here and now, with the same kind of tenacity as was demonstrated by the woman from the village?

How has your relationship with God been personal?

How do you keep from believing that we've God figured out?