

God, All the Time and Everywhere

Review by Russ Levenson Jr.

The Rev. David Beresford — Episcopal priest, poet, artist, former prison chaplain, retreat leader, and spiritual director — has pulled together his rich variety of gifts to offer readers a beautiful tapestry of comfort and inspiration.

“With God, you are being oriented to a life filled with grace, where your natural gifts are places in the service of your supernatural creator,” he writes. “A goal of our spiritual life is to surrender to God and assent to this new orientation.”

As a fellow pastor once wrote, “If you are looking for God, you will find him; and if you are not, you will still find him.” Beresford gently tugs his reader along to say, “Look, here is God. He’s got you hemmed in on every side.”

Above and Below is a collection of more than 30 meditations, which Beresford wrote while serving at St. Barnabas, Wilmington, and St. Martha’s, Bethany Beach, Delaware. His contagious enthusiasm for the Christian faith is obvious: “I am continually inspired by the world God has created. I hope you will take inspiration and pleasure from reading these reflections.”

The author pours his words into a

rich amalgamation of characters, from William Shakespeare, D.H. Lawrence, and Judy Collins to Luis Buñuel, Cyril of Alexandria, St. Paul, and our Lord. He takes readers into the forest on a hike, into a courtroom where he was

Above and Below

Reflections on the Spiritual Journey

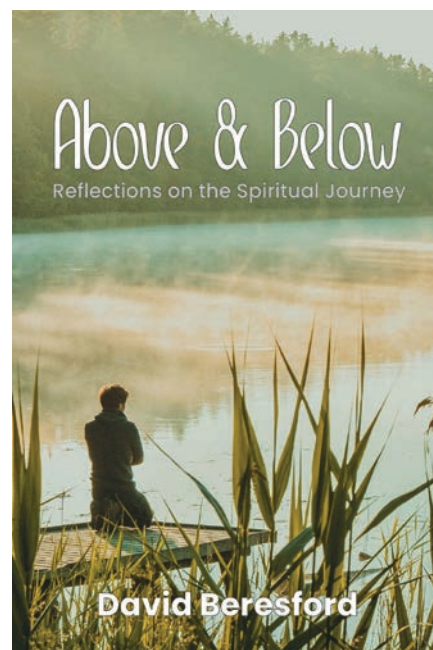
By David Beresford

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welcomed as an American citizen, into a Mexican restaurant, and into his study, where we are introduced to a living icon — his cat named Mani.

Beresford teaches valuable and enduring lessons about the omnipresent nature of the God who created us, redeemed us, and helps us live the fullness of the Christian life, which he describes as “a special kind of freedom, rooted in faith, where we are born aloft by the spirit of God.”

The essays are brief but poignant, and at the end of each you might take a deep breath of gratitude. Here is a



favorite of mine, from a meditation on “Spaciousness”:

One of the insights from my own experience was to see how God was present at a particular time in my life, even though I wasn’t aware of it then. Perhaps in the silence, God was generously sharing his own memory with me? I don’t pretend to understand how it works, but I am reassured by the knowledge that God is present throughout our lives and we are carried through by his unfailing love and care.

That is one word, among many, that the ache of the human heart needs to hear. I commend the time and space you would give to *Above and Below*. It will be time well spent.

The Rev. Dr. Russ Levenson Jr. is rector of St. Martin’s Episcopal Church, Houston.

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