

HEART TO HEART

March, 1994

A Pastoral Letter from Richard J. Foster



Dear Friends,

So much has happened since I last wrote a pastoral letter to you back in November that it is hard to know where to begin. Best, I think, to begin with some of what I am learning in my Scripture study. This year I am using a pattern of reading a Gospel, then an Epistle, then back to another Gospel, then an Epistle, Gospel, Epistle, Gospel, Epistle, and so forth. In this way I will have read the four Gospels several times by the time I make my way through the New Testament. This keeps the life of Jesus consistently before me.

I recently finished John's Gospel, and in this Lenten season of examination it might be helpful to lift up for your meditation a few of the penetrating queries Jesus poses to people of his day. Perhaps they can be questions of examen for you and me as well. How do you answer these questions?

1:38 — "What are you looking for?"

5:6 — "Do you want to be made well?"

5:44 — "How can you believe when you accept glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the one who alone is God?"

5:47 — "If you do not believe what Moses wrote, how will you believe what I say?"

6:66-67 — "Because of this (Jesus' hard sayings about the spiritual life) many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, 'Do you also wish to go away?'"

8:46 — "If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?"

10:32 — "Jesus replied, 'I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?'"

11:25-26 — "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?'"

14:1-2 — "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?"

14:9 — "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?' Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?"

20:15 — "Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?'"

21:15, 16, 17 — "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

SOJOURNING HERE AND THERE

I have been traveling a lot these days, and it is always good to learn and grow from those I meet. Two very wonderful local RENOVARÉ Conferences have been held in Boulder, Colorado, and San Angelo, Texas. They were among the most diverse gatherings in terms of denominational representation that we have ever had. In both cases the warmth of the people and the eagerness to know God and grow in grace were moving experiences.

At San Angelo we had a time for the healing of human hurts, and I think eighty percent of the people came forward to be anointed with oil and receive prayer. In Boulder we received several useful insights about what we could be doing better which will help us be more effective in the days ahead.

Both local Steering Committees did fantastic jobs, working as they did for many months, and I especially want to thank committee chairs Valerie Hess of Boulder and Virginia Chase of San Angelo. We thank God for the good work he has begun in people and pray with confidence that he will bring this work to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.

I have also led six retreats for various constituencies of the Azusa Pacific University family (i.e. students, staff, faculty, etc.), as well as speak at schools and churches, and "the power of the Lord has been over all" as George Fox often said. I leave soon for meetings in England, Sweden, and Germany—your prayers for these gatherings will be appreciated.

Via the two-minute radio spots I have been traveling to some of you while staying at home. These have been going well and are being aired over the Morning Star

Network on some fifty stations around the country. We have taped about a hundred spots, though only about half have aired so far.

This period of travel and speaking will be coming to an end in the spring of 1995. Then for several months I hope to sequester myself for a major writing project.

THE WRITTEN WORD

That is not to say that I haven't been writing during this time of travel and activity. I have completed a book, *Prayers From The Heart* as well as a prayer journal, *Coming Home*. Both will be published in September.

Four RENOVARÉ Resource projects are at various stages of completion: Jim Smith is nearly done with a book on how Spiritual Formation Groups can enhance their efforts, Carol Mullikin is writing a book about retreat, Janet Janzen is doing a book on music and the devotional life, and I am working on a book on the five traditions. All of these projects still need final approval from HarperSanFrancisco, but the prospects look good. I don't even want to venture a guess as to when these Resources will be published, but we will keep you posted.

ON TO DENVER

We continue to work on relocating our RENOVARÉ offices to Colorado. Many details need to be worked through, not the least of which is office space for RENOVARÉ and affordable housing for Lynda, our office manager, and her husband Phil.

Last Wednesday we had a marvelous Spirit-led Board of Trustees meeting about these matters. Their conclusion: "Like Abraham's servant, Eliezer, we should load up the camels and go in search of the guidance of the Lord." (Lynda wanted to know if this meant that she should be looking for a bride for her son, Lyle. What a literalist!) The next day Lynda went to Denver to see what she could find, and wonderfully some Christian business leaders agreed to help us cover the rent for office space in or around the Tech Center. This is a fantastic gift and opens up all kinds of new options, not the least of which is more affordable housing in that area for Lynda and Phil.

One of the most difficult issues facing us in the move is a home for the Graybeals. Housing costs are nearly double in Denver over what they are here in the Wichita area, and because of Lynda and Phil's limited income and resources we are trying to find ways to make this move work for them. One possibility the Board considered is co-investing in their housing (i.e. RENOVARÉ would own, say, twenty-five percent of the home by paying that percentage of the purchase price). We have looked into the legal

ramifications of this step to be sure that it will not involve us in "personal inurement" (an individual benefiting from a non-profit ministry) and have been assured that this will not be the case if it is done properly, following the necessary guidelines. The Board has approved this step.

I want you to know that throughout this process we have considered many other options, but I feel strongly that keeping our team intact is vital to the long-term health of RENOVARÉ and our ability to fulfill our mission. The Board has concurred in this conviction—emphatically so!

All of this to say we need your financial help. For almost three years we have prayerfully considered relocation and believe moving to Denver is the right decision. We believe that it will position us in a place and in a way that will help us be of the most service to the most people. We also know that, even after our most careful planning, there will be hidden costs that we could never anticipate. If you possibly can, I hope you will help us take this important step.

Peace and joy,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Richard J. Foster", written in a cursive style.

Richard J. Foster

P.S. RENOVARÉ is on solid financial footing thanks to prudent financial planning and the generosity of many. We have never gone into debt to finance any ministry effort and never intend to. Our financial reports are available to anyone who requests them.

RJF

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