

Perspective

Vol. 2, No. 1

Growing Edges

I must tell you of a recent experiment in prayer. I had just finished a major manuscript—Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home—and had sent it off to the publishers. After completing this task of several years duration, I found that I could not pray. "Could not" is not exactly correct . . . "did not want to" is more to the point. In part, I was experiencing the very natural let down that comes after such an all-consuming project.

But, regardless of the causes, the clear fact was that I had no heart for prayer. I struggled on for a couple of weeks, trying to make myself do what I had no desire or motivation to do.

My Friends Had Become My Prayer

Finally I shared with my Spiritual Formation Group what was going on inside me. These three men listened with quiet understanding. They extended grace and mercy to me. Their only requirement was that I end work a little earlier each day and give that time to physical exercise.

That evening as I was jogging, I decided on a course of action that I shared with my SFG in a letter. In the relevant passage I wrote, "I have decided that it would be good for me to rest from any attempts at prayer for one week. Instead, I will seek to walk/jog an hour each day and see where I am come next Wednesday. If any of you feel drawn to `pray in my stead' for this week, that would be great. Also, remembering our family and covering us with your prayers would be helpful. I will let you know next Wednesday how things are going. Peace & joy. RJF." Almost immediately I felt release, knowing that my friends had become my prayer.

The next morning I woke up wanting to pray! Glad for the renewed desire, I did, however, stick to my plan and went throughout my days sustained by the prayers of others. Every evening I would jog at a nearby park, not trying to pray, but simply to observe the world around me: the trees budding out too early for their own good, the prairie grasses dry and brown from the winter frosts, the numberless ducks swimming and playing and quacking for my attention, and the magnificent Canadian geese which winter on the small lakes in the area. The week went by quickly.

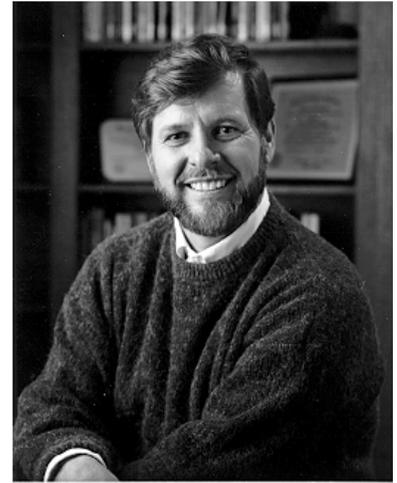
Following My Best Prayers

By the next Wednesday I was ready to pray again. My friends had helped me let go of my tight-fisted hold on life and had sustained me by their intercessions. Once I relaxed, I could experience the meaning of grace and follow my best prayers. Through it all I came to appreciate better the words of Madame Jeanne Guyon, "Rest. Rest. Rest in God's love. The only work you are required now to do is to give your most intense attention to His still, small voice within."

Peace and joy,



Richard J. Foster



Growing Pains

It is hard to put into words the events and challenges that have faced us since the last Perspective. But God continues to bless us through your prayers, support, and encouragement. And for that we are thankful.

Nine hundred seventeen precious people registered for the Second RENOVARÉ National Conference on Personal Spiritual Renewal in Pasadena last October. All of the speakers, from Sister Bernard to Dallas Willard, were in prime form. The counselors prayed for people who received physical, emotional, and spiritual healing. We have received many, many positive comments and helpful suggestions. What a blessing!

Then, more than one hundred people pledged over \$12,000.00 in response to Richard's letter mailed in November. A total of \$7,000.00 has already been received. Thank you, thank you, thank you. That was blessing number two!

Blessing number three?! We sold all of the RENOVARÉ Spiritual Formation Workbook first run by January 1 and had to reorder. They continue to sell well. And we continue to receive good reports from groups who are using them. Hallelujah!

On January 2-3, Richard, Jim Smith, and Lynda Graybeal visited the good folks at HarperSanFrancisco in the "City by the Bay." They agreed to publish the Spiritual Formation Group Workbook and the Devotional Readings with pub dates set for September 1992 and April 1993 respectively. This will provide needed income for salaries and operating expenses and fund development of more products. That was blessing number four!!!!

Next, Reg Boothe, a prominent Wichita businessman offered RENOVARÉ 1,500 square feet of office space. (The building will be completed about August 1.) Hence, while thanking God, and, as the saying goes, not wanting to look a gift horse in the mouth, we accepted! We plan to stay in Wichita for the two-year term of the lease but will continue to explore relocation in the summer of 1994. Blessing five.

Number six . . . After visiting with the Director of Glen Eyrie Christian Conference Center in Colorado Springs, we have scheduled

four RENOVARÉ retreats there (Nov. 12-14 in 1992 and March 11-14, July 26-30, and July 30-Aug. 1 in 1993). Owned and operated by the Navigators, this concept is a new venture for both of us. And it will need your prayer support. We're hoping one hundred people will attend each event from which our share of the proceeds will give us more financial stability.

Can there be any more? Yes. During the first week of March Richard and Lynda took four days to reflect on RENOVARÉ, looking at what had happened in the past three years and what could take place in the next twenty-one months. It became clear that we should proceed with the Local Conferences. So we have set aside seventeen dates for those to happen (see back page). Over the past two years we have been contacted by numerous people who want to be involved in these events in one way or another. We are now following up on that interest.

It also became clear that we should continue with the National Conferences every other year. Our preferred date is November 9-12, 1993, and the area of choice is the Boulder/Denver/Colorado Springs region. Like the Local Conferences, we are following up with contacts to explore this possibility.

Are there any more blessings? Yes, each and every one of you who seeks God, and we want to bless you in that pursuit. We also ask for your continued prayers and support. We will need resources for office furnishings and equipment. Extra energy to do all of the details and work involved in setting up a new venture will be required. And we'll need continued wisdom to make sound decisions. So with this blessing we make known our needs and our reliance upon God's grace and mercy.

Lynda Graybeal

P.S. Over the past two years Richard has received invitations from several foreign countries. In the process of going through them, we felt strongly that the time was right to say yes to some. We are in conversation with people in Singapore, Taiwan, and Hong Kong (1993); England, Scotland, and Sweden (1994); and Australia and New Zealand (1995) about these opportunities. We have strong indications from the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Australia that the time will be right to establish local expressions of RENOVARÉ.

Going Deeper

This month we are featuring two books: *How to Pray* by Jean Nicholas Grou and *A Testament of Devotion* by Thomas Kelly. Below are short descriptions and an order form.

How to Pray

My first reading of *How to Pray* took about six months. It was one of those books that I needed to absorb slowly over a period of time. I didn't want to just read the words, but let the experience of prayer enter and teach my heart as well. Not many books have taught me in this way.

Sometimes when we read great texts on prayer, we want to imagine the authors as living a "removed" life, something with less gritty reality than our own. Grou lived through the calamity of the French Revolution when all of Europe was in upheaval. During it, he fled Paris, taking residence with an English family. The writings in *How to Pray* are full of practical suggestions: how to pray with children, how to arrange one's day for prayer, counsels for those who get discouraged.

Grou's main theme is that true prayer is a gift from God. He initiates our impulse to pray and, as Paul instructs, "the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express" (Rom. 8:26). We are taught that prayer is simple; all we must do is to relinquish our need to control God

and let the Spirit teach us. Grace and prayer are intertwined as we begin to pray communally, continually, and when called by God to do so.

Carol Mullikin

A Testament of Devotion

This enduring, much-loved classic has now been issued in a hard cover gift edition with a new Introduction by Richard J. Foster. It is a collection of simple and profoundly moving devotional essays.

In *A Testament of Devotion*, Thomas Kelly clears a path through our day-to-day worries and frustrations. Each reading reveals an unexpected facet, a new shade of meaning, another surprising recognition of eternal truth.

"I know that often the genuinely significant issues are decided in the small corners of life," writes Richard in the Introduction, "And one of the greatest gifts that Thomas Kelly brings to us is an ability to see the Holy in the most common of places and the most unexpected of events. . . . Each time I leaf through [these] pages, . . . I know I am in the presence of a giant soul. I am better for the encounter. I'm sure you will be too."

Emphasizing the centrality of devotion and Christian obedience to holiness, *A Testament of Devotion* is the ideal companion to . . . the lifelong conversation between God and his creatures.

From the Fly Leaf of *A Testament of Devotion*

Going Places with Richard J. Foster

April 8--Bible Institute, Tabernacle Baptist Church, Wichita, KS

May 2--Commencement, Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, CA

May 15--Address, Religious Booksellers Exhibit, Carol Stream, IL

May 29-31--Founder's Fellowship, Denver, CO

June 27--Keynote Address, Logos Bookstore Conference, Dallas, TX

June 28-July 2--Christian Booksellers Association, Dallas, TX

August 1--In New Offices!!

Future Events: Local Conferences (also see Growing Pains; sites will be listed later)

1992--

September 18-19

October 2-3

October 30-31

November 20-21

1993--

January 15-16

February 5-6

February 19-20

March 5-6

March 26-27

April 16-17

April 30-May 1

May 14-15

June 4-5

September 10-11

September 24-25

October 8-9

October 22-23

November 9-12, 1993 (Tentative)—National Conference, Denver, CO

A further word about the **Local Conferences**.

Several things are important:

- Desire for spiritual renewal
- Time and energy to help organize

- Vision for what God can do in your life, church, city, region
- Knowledge of others desiring spiritual renewal
- Ability to initiate cooperation between diverse groups

Richard and one other team member will lead the Conferences. With a six-month lead time, a Steering Committee will oversee the details. If you are interested in having a Local Conference in your area, call Lynda Graybeal at (316) 261-5870 to explore the possibility. She will then send you basic information which can be used to contact others in your area. She is anxious to work with you.

Some Final Words

Since RENOVARÉ has operated under the aegis of Friends University from its inception, we own very little office equipment and furnishings. Listed below are some items we will need by August 1 when we move out on our own.

Should you feel led to donate any of these items or provide money for us to purchase them, please call Lynda at (316) 261-5870 to make arrangements. Anything donated must have the freight, postage, or delivery charge prepaid.

3 Executive Desks	3 Credenzas
3 Executive Chairs	3 Office Bookcases
6 File Cabinets	1 Secretarial Desk
8 Sidearm Chairs	14 Storage Shelves
2 Computers	Facsimilie Machine
Work Station	Typewriter & Stand