

Perspective

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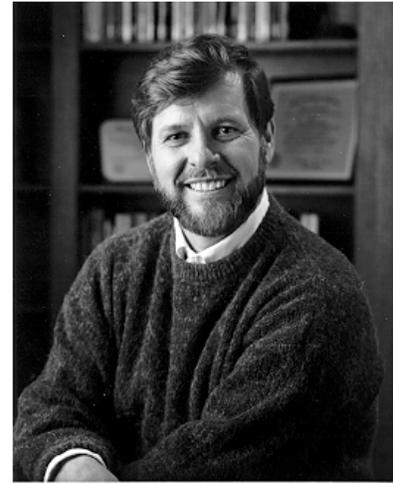
Growing Edges

September 24, 1992

The RENOVARÉ Mission

The RENOVARÉ mission is exceptionally simple to state and infinitely complex to convert into reality. **RENOVARÉ is committed to working for the renewal of the Church of Jesus Christ in all her multifaceted expressions.** Such renewal begins with every one of us as individuals and extends all the way to organizations and institutional structures. We want to fan the flames of renewal everywhere we can. Our goal is, like Sampson, to light the tails of the foxes and let them go!

We want Christians everywhere to live lives patterned after Jesus Christ--to do the kinds of disciplines Jesus did and to live the kind of life Jesus lived. In short, we want to convert Christians to the way of Christ!



Dynamic Spiritual Movements

And I believe God is raising up dynamic spiritual movements that are pleasing to him. People are thirsting as never before for a perpetual life of prayer and intimacy with the Abba of Jesus. They are seeking deeper purity of heart and life. They are living by a constant inner infusion of life and power from the Spirit of God. They are serving their neighbors out of the "may I" of love rather than the "must I" of duty. They are once again discovering Scripture as "warm bread" fresh from the oven, and are sharing their faith with others as the Spirit opens the way.

That is the kind of thing I want to be a part of, don't you! There are hundreds, if not thousands, of manifestations popping up everywhere and we at RENOVARÉ want to encourage them all. Student movements, couples movements, singles movements, church-based movements, parachurch-based movements, missions-based movements. May God bless each of them and may they always know Christ as their life!

Connecting With the Movement of God

The RENOVARÉ covenant--with its accompanying disciplines and examination questions--is our way of helping people begin connecting with the movement of God. We view commitment to the covenant as a cross-roads decision, a sacred altar call. If you have never made that commitment, I urge you to do so today. Further, I encourage you to begin meeting regularly with one or two others to nurture and encourage one another in your covenant commitment. God can use this simple act to help build Paul's words into your life, "inwardly we are being renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16).

Peace and joy,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard J. Foster".

Richard J. Foster

Going Deeper

I was listening to Henri Nouwen speak about spiritual growth a few years ago, and he said something that has stayed with me ever since. Though I must paraphrase, the essence of what he said was this: "My spirituality is not for me, but for me to give to others. My spirituality is for you."

As a student of spirituality for a number of years I was stunned when the truth of that statement hit me. Sometimes we can look at something for a long time and then suddenly see something so real, so obvious, and so true that we wonder how we missed it in the first place.

Practicing the spiritual disciplines became central in my life nearly eleven years ago. Like Paul who can boast with humility, I am pleased to say that God has truly shaped and changed my life. A few years ago I wouldn't be able to write that because it sounds prideful, but I have learned to give thanks to God for developing (ever so slowly!) the fruit of the Spirit in my life.

But for a long time I simply developed fruit for my own little fruit salad. I relished my ability to love the unlovely, to have joy in the midst of sorrow, to have patience in the midst of tedious tasks, etc. It was only after I heard Henri Nouwen that this began to change.

My spirituality is God's gift to those around me. In like fashion, the spiritual growth that others have developed is God's gift to me. I am blessed by what God has done in the lives of many of my family and friends.

My brother and sister, along with their spouses, have experienced tremendous spiritual growth in the last few years. This past year my wife, Meghan, has grown very close to God. Her daily times of solitude, Scripture reading, and prayer are a testimony to me. Even my mother and father-in-law, who have always been dedicated church-goers, have experienced dramatic spiritual

growth in the last couple of years. They have been on "Tres Dias" and "The Walk to Emmaus" in the past year, and their spiritual depth is evident to those around them.

I boast of these family members and friends not to lift them up, but to point to the blessing they are to me. I think of what God is doing in their lives and I am filled with joy. Their spirituality is a gift to me. Nouwen was so right.

This is the real benefit of my Spiritual Formation Group. Each meeting is, for me, a little like receiving gifts. As I listen to the joys--and even the struggles--of my fellow members I am encouraged to see how God is at work. Their spirituality, what they bring to the group, is God's gift to me. And the opposite is true: what God has and is continuing to do in my life is not for my own benefit, but for their benefit.

In one of the early sessions of the Spiritual Formation Workbook each member is asked to write a letter to God, and if they feel comfortable, to read that letter at the beginning of the next session. I remember vividly how my group was blessed by this exercise. The letters we wrote revealed hope and pain, successes and failures, but most of all, the letters reflected a passion for God. Though none of us were trying to impress the others with eloquence or dramatic style, the letters were very moving simply because they witnessed to the ways God had shaped each of us, the dreams God had planted within us.

Nouwen was right. All that God has done in my life--my spirituality--is not for me to hoard and savor, it is for those around me. Likewise, all that God has done within you is a gift freely given to those around you. More than any other single thing, Spiritual Formation Groups have allowed my spirituality to burst out of the wrapping and ribbons and into the hearts of my friends--right where it belongs.

James Bryan Smith

Going Deeper II

Since we were in the middle of moving during August, we were not able to participate in the annual "dog days" sales in many of the stores and malls. So we decided to have a little fun and conduct our own "dog days" sale two months late!

We have some books that we need to sell; some are out of print, some are ugly, some are a little "dog" eared, some just need to be sold.

Could you help us move these items? The titles and the contribution we would like to receive for each item are listed below. Our supply of some of the books is limited, but we will fill your request by getting more from the distributor or buying from a retail store if necessary. For the hardback that is out of print, we will substitute the softback when our stock of originals is gone.

Here are brief descriptions of what we have available:

The Church That Refused to Die, Roger Fredrikson--The story of First Baptist Church, Wichita. Stock left from a promotion.

The Confessions of Augustine--A classic but this edition has a real ugly cover. A steal at \$6.00.

How to Pray, Jean-Nicholas Grou--Featured in the January Perspective, we had to reorder from England and now have some stock left.

"Money, Sex & Power Audio Tapes"--We have too many. One case is a little tattered but still a good companion to the book.

People in the Presence of God, Barry Liesch--Inventory left over from the California conference. Still in new condition and helpful for worship leaders.

The Spirit of the Disciplines, Dallas Willard--This hardback is now out of print so buy it while we still have a supply. It should be in every church library in the country.

A Testament of Devotion, Thomas Kelley--Nothing wrong with this book except that it has been superceded by the new gift edition from Harper's.

Going Places

--with RENOVARÉ

October 2-3--Local Conference, San Francisco, CA

October 24-25--Board of Trustees Retreat, Azusa, CA

October 26-28--Local Conference, Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, California

November 12-14--Retreat, Glen Eyrie, Colorado Springs, CO

Future Events (1993):

February 19-20--Local Conference, Santa Barbara, CA

March 5-6--Local Conference, Grand Rapids, MI

March 11-14--Retreat, Glen Eyrie, Colorado Springs, CO

April 16-17--Local Conference, Dallas, TX

April 30-May 1--Local Conference, South Hamilton, MA

--with Richard J. Foster

October 4--Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church, Walnut Creek, CA

October 10-12--Caroline Church & Stoney Brook School, Long Island, NY

October 13-14--Eastern College, St. Davids, PA

October 23--Perspectives Seminar, Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, CA

November 6-7--King of Glory Lutheran Church, Dallas, TX

November 17--Association of Church Secretaries, Wichita, KS

November 21-22--Riverside Community Church, Troutdale, OR

Growing Pains

We moved on August 8 and started answering the telephones the following Monday, even though callers occasionally had to wait while we tried to find a note pad or secure an answer. The only other major purchase left is a computer. After we buy it, we'll network the computers and move them around a little, equipping a work station for volunteers. If you are ever in the area, please feel free to drop by 7570 West 21st Street N., Wichita, KS, for a visit. We would love to show you around.

The retreat at Glen Eyrie on November 12-14 is totally full and even has a waiting list for which we praise God. A brochure for the 1994 retreats in Colorado Springs is at the printers and should be sent out soon.

Jim and Richard revised the Devotional Readings--now retitled Devotional Classics--and the Spiritual Formation Group Workbook this summer. Our next responsibility is to look over the first pass (line editing). From that stage we'll go to page proofs and then to final publication in February. Jim is already working on the next product; a book to train members of Spiritual Formation Groups to be leaders of new groups.

The Board of Trustees members plan to gather in Azusa, California, in October for refreshment and long-range planning. Pray that they will have spiritual insight and discernment. And thank you for all of the financial support and prayers over the past few months. We never would have made it without them.