

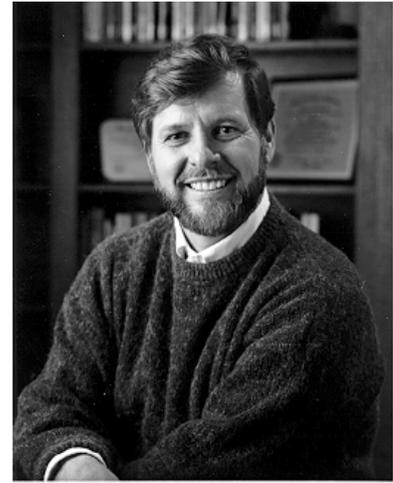
## ***Perspective***

### ***Growing Edges***

January, 1993

#### **In Search of Those Bright Red Kettles**

You will be reading this essay directly after the holidays, but I am writing it right in the middle of this festive season. I seldom go shopping, but at this time of year I am drawn to the stores now and again to secure gifts. While there, I have been observing an interesting phenomenon. I'm not referring to the frantic shoppers or the commercialism of the season—those things are so obvious as to need no additional comment. No, what I keep watching is the way people avoid any and all contact with the bell ringers standing beside the Salvation Army kettles. People will rush past, keeping several feet away as if to avoid entering the space of the bell ringer. They look away or stare straight ahead, being sure never to make eye contact. Some will even go to another entrance. There are exceptions to this, to be sure. Individuals will stop and put in their gift, receiving in return a hearty "Thank you and Merry Christmas"! Overall, however, avoidance rather than contact is the rule.



I do not make this observation in any condemning way for in other years I too found myself slightly uncomfortable as I made my way past this incessant reminder of the needs of the poor. I did not like being reminded of those living out of my sight who were hungry and needy.

But all that has changed since I made a decision some time back to view those ringing bells and red kettles of the Salvation Army as my friends helping me to consider the poor. So nowadays rather than trying to ignore them, I seek them out, always putting something into the kettle both when entering and when exiting the store. At one store especially the bell ringer always speaks out a cheerful "God bless you"—prompting Carolynn to tease me about going to that store just to get another blessing.

Now I know that the total amount that I give in this way is minuscule and that this practice can run the risk of being tokenism, but it can also be a powerful reminder of my commitment to the bruised and broken of this world.

#### **Compassionate Action**

The Social Justice Tradition is one of the dimensions of the spiritual life to which we are committed as disciples of Jesus Christ. This begins with compassion for the poor. This means far more than sentimentality. It means specific acts. It means explicit plans. It means particular people. We know, of course, that our concern for justice goes far beyond compassionate action, but compassionate action must always be at the heart of our commitment. If the red kettles of Christmas can remind us of this, they have served us well. Happy giving!

Peace and joy,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Richard J. Foster". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light-colored background.

Richard J. Foster

## ***Growing Pains***

This part of our newsletter continues to be a place for varied items of interest. We have talked about the content and use of the Devotional Readings, shifts in the structure and location of RENOVARE, the development and purpose of the Spiritual Formation Group Workbook, and noted comments about the October, 1991 National Conference held in Pasadena, California. Today, I would like to celebrate our—and your—successes.

Though we oft times chafe under regulations, they are a necessary evil in a culture striving to keep order. Our contribution to that order, Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, were signed on November 21, 1988, over four years ago!

In the intervening years we received temporary approval as a 501(c)(3), held two National Conferences, helped with two Local Conferences, contracted with two retreat centers for five gatherings, published two products, filled two four-drawer file cabinets with correspondence and papers (and a storeroom with supplies and books!), ad infinitum. We've laughed, agonized, ached, pondered, dreamed, cried. And we did it all without ever going in the red financially!

### **Another Side**

But in the midst of all this busyness and wonderfulness, we have tried to maintain a personal touch and listen to you, our constituency. And when we listen, what we hear is heartening and humbling. Let me share just a few of the many comments we have received over the past two years:

"I was elated to receive the materials about RENOVARE. What a joy to see a concerted effort to bring together under one roof the assorted groups of committed Christians!"

Alyson from Bainbridge Island, Washington

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"RENOVARE has a message which, I believe, needs global dissemination and if one could have a small part in this, one would feel privileged."

Roy from Renfrew, Ontario, Canada

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"The growth and renewal of RENOVARE in my life has been shared with many as they seek a deeper walk with the Father."

Mark from Lynden, Washington

"Please continue your newsletter—it is encouraging to read what in the world is God doing?"

Pat from Modera, California

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"I deeply value the Perspective letters that come to me. Keep up the important ministry to all of us! Thanks"

Alexander from Johannesburg, South Africa

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". . . I am almost finished with your Devotional Readings. I've found them extremely interesting and helpful."

Jean from Bettendorf, Iowa

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(About the Devotional Readings and Spiritual Formation Group Workbook) ". . . the most wonderful thing to come out for the Christian community in a long time. They have revolutionized my life. I mean that with all my heart."

Warren from Scott City, Kansas

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"I have been praying to God for several years to lead me to the kind of small group that would enable me to grow spiritually and to support others in their spiritual journey at this kind of deep level. I praise God and rejoice in this answer to prayer!"

David from St. Louis, Missouri

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"I'm so thankful for the way God is using you in the life of the Church. . . . We have started a small RENOVARE group of four couples."

Garry from Beaumont, Texas

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"Perhaps someone is telling you that RENOVARE isn't needed, but it is. . . . Don't let anyone discourage you!"

Jan from Simi, California

### **Catalysts and Challenges**

Do you see what I mean? Comments like these can't be measured or manufactured. And they serve as catalysts to help us face challenges in the future—1993 and beyond. But you, our supporters, our messengers from God—from whom we love to hear—are there, and that increases our faith, and joy, and hope. And God is there to be our life, our strength, and our reason to go on. We bless each one of you. And we bless God for making all of this possible. Have a wonder-filled new year.

Lynda Graybeal

## *Going Deeper*

### **A New Resource Just Released**

Richard Foster and Kathryn Yanni have combined efforts to produce a Journal Workbook to accompany Celebration of Discipline. Published by HarperSanFrancisco under the title Celebrating the Disciplines, this new resource helps readers find fresh ways to reflect on, experience, and integrate the Spiritual Disciplines into their lives. Designed to be interactive for use by individuals, couples, and groups, it features spiritual reflections, questions for journal writing, and exercises for one full year.

The Journal Workbook has an interesting genesis. Last spring, just before going to a creative staff meeting, Mark Brockering of HarperSanFrancisco called Lynda Graybeal, wondering if she had any ideas for possible products. In the course of the conversation, Lynda mentioned that over the years our office had received many requests for suggested resources in journal writing. Mark made the comment that HarperSanFrancisco was having great success publishing new format workbooks that accompany best-seller books. They agreed that he needed to explore further a product in which a person reads Celebration of Discipline while working through a journal/workbook over the course of a year.

It is our hope that this product, coming out of that ten minute, seemingly insignificant telephone call, will enable people to better integrate the Spiritual Disciplines into their lives.

Commenting on the new Journal Workbook, Richard Foster says, "I am genuinely pleased with the creative work that Kathy Yanni brought to this project. Her superb understanding of the workbook and journal formats has made this an extremely useable resource. I am delighted with the result. I hope every single person who has read Celebration will secure and use Celebrating the Disciplines."

### **Another Close Out**

Our "Dog Days Sale" last quarter was such a huge success that we have another special. We have over one hundred RENOVARÉ Spiritual Formation Group T-shirts and sweat shirts. They're excellent quality and a good price. Please remember to circle the size, and for T-Shirts, circle the color, too.

## *Going Places*

### **with RENOVARÉ**

**February 19-20**—Local Conference, Santa Barbara, CA; Lee Sankey at (805) 683-1548

**March 5-6**—Local Conference, Grand Rapids, MI; John Steigenga at (616) 454-7204

**March 11-14**—Celebrating the Spiritual Disciplines Retreat, Colorado Springs, CO; Marlyn at (719) 596-8080

**April 16-17**—Local Conference, Dallas, TX; Richard Copeland at (214) 686-6208

**April 30-May 1**—Local Conference, South Hamilton, MA; Bob Freeman at (508) 468-7111

### **with Richard J. Foster**

**January 10-12**—Malibu Presbyterian Church and Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA

**January 22-23**—Church of the Savior, Wichita, KS

**January 28-February 1**—VISN, New York City; Evangelical Association of New England, Boston, MA; Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

**February 5-6**—Shame & Grace Conference, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CO

**February 15-24**—Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, CA

**March 5**—Seminar for Pastors and Spouses, Paraclesis Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI

**March 26-29**—VISN, New York City; Bryan Memorial United Methodist Church, Coconut Grove, FL

**April 1-4**—Aqueduct, Chapel Hill, NC

**April 24**—United Methodist Clergy, Springfield, MO

**April 28-30**—Regent University and "The 700 Club", Virginia Beach, VA; Pastor's Seminar, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA

**May 10-19**—Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, CA

**June 23**—American Baptist Churches 1993 Biennial Meeting, San Jose, CA

**June 24-July 17**—Trip to Hong Kong and Singapore

### **P.S. New Year's Greetings**

The faces behind the voices (back row, left to right): Jana Rea, Greg Shannon, Richard Foster, Lynda Graybeal. (Front): Jim Smith and Jacob.

People keep asking us how many Spiritual Formation Groups there are and we have to say, "We don't know. They're like toadstools in rainy weather, popping up all over the place!" Please send **Jim Smith** a post card or 3 X 5 card listing names, longevity, and contact person with address to **P. O. Box 879, Wichita, KS 67201-0879.**