

Perspective

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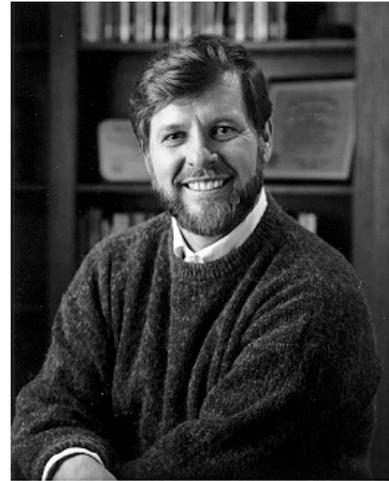
Growing Edges

April 1996

In this issue we are centering on the life of prayer and intimacy with God. And in this regard we can find no better place for help than in the life of Jesus, the Divine Paradigm for conjugating all the verbs of prayer. Like the reoccurring stitch pattern in a quilt, so prayer threads its way throughout Jesus' life.

Living

As he was baptized by John, he "was praying" (Luke 3:21). Before choosing the twelve, he "spent the night in prayer" (Luke 6:12). When Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him "up the mountain to pray," his face changed "while he was praying" (Luke 9:28-29). After an exhausting evening of healing, Jesus got up early in the morning "and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed" (Mark 1:35). Jesus' fiercest anger came when he saw how people had turned the temple, which he said was to be a house of prayer, into a den of robbers (Matt. 22:13). It was after Jesus finished "praying in a certain place" that the disciples asked him to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1).



Teaching

And teach them he did! And teach us he does! Not only the now famous "Lord's Prayer," but teaching piled upon teaching. He teaches us to come to God in the most intimate of way, saying, "Abba, Father" (Mark 14:36). He gives us parables about the "need to pray always and not to lose heart" (Luke 18:1). He teaches us to pray "in secret," to "Pray for those who persecute you," to "forgive, if you have anything against anyone" when praying, to "believe that what you say will come to pass," to ask "the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest," and much, much more (Matt. 6:6, 5:44, 9:38; Mark 11:24-25).

Practicing

And the teachings are matched by continual practice, not only of prayer itself, but of intense times of solitude—an accompanying means to prayer. Arising from the baptismal waters, the Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness for forty days (Matt. 4:1). After learning of the beheading of his dear friend and cousin, John the Baptizer, Jesus "withdrew . . . to a deserted place by himself" (Matt. 14:13). After feeding the five thousand, he immediately "went up the mountain by himself to pray" (Matt. 14:23). When the disciples were exhausted from the pressures of ministry, Jesus told them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while" (Mark 6:31). After the healing of a leper, Luke seems to be describing more of a regular practice than a single incident when he notes that Jesus "would withdraw to deserted places and pray" (Luke 5:16).

How Shall We Then Live?

Doesn't this cursory look at Jesus' living and teaching and practicing stir within you longings for a deeper, richer, fuller experience of prayer? Don't you ache for a steadfast faith, a boundless hope, an undying love? Jesus—who retreated often into the rugged Judean mountains, who lived and worked praying, who heard and did only what he saw the Father hearing and doing—points the way.

Peace and joy,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Richard J. Foster". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Richard J. Foster

Growing Together

When praying, I find *lectio divina*—“spiritual reading”—a wonderful help. We should not think of “spiritual reading” as reading in the normal sense in the same way we should not think that allowing a mint to dissolve in our mouth is eating. Normally, we read quickly—the quicker the better—to amass information or understand some issue. But in spiritual reading, we seek to turn our heart and mind and spirit ever so gently to the Divine Center. We seek to be unified, focused, synoptic. It is prayerful reading in which all of our external and internal senses swing like a needle to the pole star of the Spirit. We become “all ears” to God.

Praxis

How is this done in practice? You might want to begin with a brief Scripture passage or a small reading from one of the recognized masters of Christian devotion. Read slowly, quietly, prayerfully. Pause at any word or phrase where you feel the Spirit’s drawing. Suppose you come to Nehemiah’s wonderful statement, “The joy of the Lord is your strength.” Stop and wait, yielded and still. Perhaps the Spirit will plumb your own feelings of weakness and helplessness, exposing deep reasons for your lack of strength and giving you intense longing for a strength not your own and not dependent upon the winds of circumstances.

You may begin praying this Scripture: “Lord, let me receive your joy. . . . Forgive my hankering to find joy in things that never fully satisfy—food and trivial conversation and other frivolous things. Let me soak in your joy.” The Spirit may teach you about your internal resistance to God’s joy. Perhaps song and dance come. Or joy-filled prayer in a language unknown to your conscious mind. And more.

The Invisible God

Maybe you are meditating on Paul’s great confession in 1 Timothy 1:17: “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.” Perhaps the word “invisible” stands out in bold relief. “Lord,” you pray, “I have failed to appreciate this reality about you. I’ve wanted a god I can verify with

scientific tools so I can be certain you exist. But you are invisible, pure Spirit not controlled by human realities. In trying to get you down to manageable size, maybe I’ve created my own graven image. Forgive me.

“I notice in Scripture how those who were obsessed with your physical manifestations were also trapped in a hopeless localization of your presence. How much better to know that time and space never confine you. Thank you for being the God who is invisible.

“Is your ‘invisibleness’ tied closely to your omnipresence? What if you weren’t invisible, and I awoke every morning, staring into your face. It would probably kill me! Moses was nearly done in by merely glimpsing the backside of your glory. Thank you for being the God who is invisible.”

A Paean of Praise

Perhaps you are drawn toward the great prayer St. Francis gave to Brother Leo. “You are holy, Lord, the only God, and your deeds are wonderful. You are strong. You are great. You are the Most High. You are Almighty. You are love. You are wisdom. You are humility. You are endurance. You are rest. You are peace. You are joy and gladness. You are justice and moderation. You are beauty. You are gentleness. You are our courage. You are our haven and our hope. You are our faith, our great consolation. You are our eternal life, great and wonderful Lord, God almighty, merciful Savior.” You may want to take one attribute a day and settle into it.

“You are justice and moderation” may cause you to consider this unique combination of attributes; how justice leads to moderation and how moderation makes justice possible. Contemplating on “You are gentleness” may bring you to experience God’s gentleness, who, Jesus says, is like a mother hen gathering chicks under her wing. Then, you may bring these insights to bear while meditating on “You are strong” on another day.

Lectio divina is a rich mine for prayer. You are free to dig up its treasures to your heart’s delight.

Richard J. Foster

Prayer Evangelism

by Loran Long

(About a year ago my dear friend, Richard Foster, asked me to share some of our experience with Prayer Evangelism from our involvement in planting a new Hispanic church. I hope our story helps you understand some of its principles and methods.)

After serving almost ten years in Costa Rica, my wife and I returned to San Diego, California, to work with the Hispanic Ministerial Alliance and to initiate a Christ for the City (CFC) ministry. In 1994 College Avenue Baptist Church asked us to help them start an Hispanic ministry. The church is located in a transitional neighborhood, and its membership sincerely desires to share the good news of Jesus Christ with their Hispanic neighbors. As we began to study the area, we stumbled onto City Heights, an area of low rent and high crime, less than two miles west of College Avenue. It is home to high concentrations of African Americans, Somali, Nigerians, Vietnamese, Chinese, Laotians, and Hispanics . . . and a few Anglos.

At about the same time, I was reading Ed Silvoso's book, *That None Should Perish*.¹ The title is taken from 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is patient, . . . *not wanting anyone to perish*, but everyone to come to repentance" (emphasis added). It seemed as if God was speaking to me out loud, "I don't want the people of City Heights to perish!" And I continue to hear these words, "that none should be lost . . . I don't want them to perish . . . that none should be lost" . . . Oh, God, that none should be lost! Even as I think and write these words, emotion wells up within me.

What is Prayer Evangelism?

I want to make it clear that very few of these principles and methods are original with me. John Huffman, International Director of CFC, an affiliate of Latin America Mission, introduced me to the concept of Prayer Evangelism. My wife and I have been privileged to participate in very successful Prayer Evangelism efforts in Costa Rica and Colombia, South America. And we are heavily indebted to Ed Silvoso's seminal contributions.

The idea behind Prayer Evangelism is to apply the principles of biblical spiritual warfare through prayer *before* we share the gospel; *then* we use the more traditional evangelistic methods. By praying first we:

Let the Lord indicate where he desires to move in blessing, power, and salvation;

Discover which ***portion*** of the "field white unto harvest" is the ripest;

Discern ***when someone is crying out*** to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, though perhaps in a distorted way;

Receive a particular mandate or call from the Lord to respond where he desires.²

Much of the success of Prayer Evangelism in our church has been because of God's timing. We began praying for the Hispanic community, and God answered by saying, "Look over here at City Heights. Throw your nets on this side of the boat." We did, and, at times, we feel like the nets are not adequate. We are also realizing that we are engaged in fierce spiritual warfare. I agree with Ed Silvoso when he says, "What we did not know at the time was how little we knew about spiritual warfare. In retrospect, I can see that we were foolishly overconfident because we had BB guns tucked under our belts, not realizing that the noise behind the bush ahead of us was made by a mad, charging rhino!"³

Prayer Evangelism Steps We Use

Mobilize intercessors to "stand in the gap." Isaiah 59:16 and Ezekiel 22:30 describe how God is seeking an intercessor, someone to stand in the gap, to plead for mercy so he will not have to judge. There are many examples in Scripture of intercessors who were willing to stand in the gap: Moses (Exod. 32:9-14), Abraham (Gen. 18:16-33), Nehemiah (Neh. 1:1-11), Esther (Esther 4), Daniel (Dan. 9), Paul (Rom. 9:1-5; 1 Thess. 1:2-5, 2:8-12). When we intercede for others, we become advocates for them before the throne of God. We also become active participants in the process that opens people's eyes, that leads them out of the darkness into the light and from Satan's kingdom into the kingdom of God through forgiveness (Acts 26:18).

"Map" and Pray. We ask each church member to draw a map of the houses on the block where they live, their "Jerusalem." They then begin to pray for the family or occupants of each home. We have "prayer gatherings"—where brothers and sisters visit one another to pray together for each other's block—and "prayer walks"—a time to walk around an area that has been mapped or chosen and to pray specifically for the occupants of each home or building. It is also a time to wait upon God for

special information or guidance he may provide concerning the occupants of each home.

Four-pronged Strategy

In the prayer gatherings and walks, we use a four-level modification of the CFC Prayer Program.

Preparation and Blessing. In prayer, we claim for the kingdom of God those who are now active, voting members of another kingdom. The first hour we pray for each other. After this time of intercession, we pray for the general blessing of the target area (1 Tim. 2:1-6). We pray for the peace, grace, and mercy of God to rest upon every person; for the Lord's protection; for God's word to be heeded; for the Holy Spirit to do his work; and more.

Spiritual Warfare. Next, we ask for angelic protection from Satanic attack, exposure of the territorial and ruling spiritual forces present in the area, courage for those directly confronting the enemy, and the binding of the spiritual powers that rule over the city. In this kind of prayer it is important to use Scriptures which break all Satanic and spiritual bondage, convict of sin, and bring an awareness of our spiritual authority (John 17:15; Eph. 6; Acts 26:18; etc.).

Where Are You Cornelius? Acts 10 tells us about a devout and God-fearing soldier who gave generously to those in need and prayed regularly. The Lord brought this man and his family to a knowledge of himself in a wonderful way. We believe there are still many such people to whom the Lord wants to reveal himself. We ask him to lead us to any such people within the area for which we are praying. We pray for their conviction of sin, that we may be led to those whom the Lord has already prepared, and that their "spiritual eyes" may be opened.

Prayer for Special Groups (elderly, youth, children, disabled, homeless, drug addicts, prostitutes, and others). The Church, as the body of Christ, is the hands, eyes, and feet of the love of God. We ask him to deepen our capacity to respond with his love, mercy, and compassion to the cry of those who have nowhere else to turn. While we pray for such situations, it is possible for the Lord to call some of us to respond to these needs in concrete ways.

We now feel prepared to share the gospel, depending upon God to provide the harvest.

What Is God Doing in City Heights?

This week we celebrate one year of ministry and prayer. We started with six people, four of whom were workers. Now, Sunday attendance is close to one hundred

with about forty-five people attending during the week. Eighty percent of the members are Cuban refugees. Many lives have been committed to Jesus Christ. Marriages have been salvaged. People have been healed. A convict has been wonderfully saved. Discipleship is taking place. We even made a trip to Cuba to visit and witness to the families of those in our church who have come to Christ. All of this happened because we began to pray for City Heights.

I need to be honest here and confess that the blessing of God we have experienced in City Heights probably has not been *because* of our efforts but *in spite of* them. We often feel inadequate and frequently do not know how to pray and what to say. But as we continue to pray for City Heights, our "Jerusalem", by March of 1997 we envision:

Twenty-five prayer cells that intercede for each part
of the city;
Celebrations of unity with other churches—Black,
African, Oriental, Hispanic, Anglo;
A day when every home will be visited and every
inhabitant will hear God's voice;
Hundreds saved, rescued, and cleansed in the
blood
of Jesus;
Daily additions to God's Church of those who
believe.

God has a day for City Heights. It may well be this year. What about your city? "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

1. Ventura, CA: Regal, 1994.
2. John Huffman, *Manual of Participatory Missionary Prayer* (San José, Costa Rica: Christ for the City), p. 3.
3. *That None Should Perish*, p. 42.

Loran Long was formerly the director of the Spanish Language Institute in San José, Costa Rica. His wife's name is Jean.

Going Deeper

A *Spiritual Formation Journal* is the perfect companion to individual contemplation and spiritual formation group participation. Jana Rea, a former RENOVARÉ employee in Wichita, says in the introduction: "This resource grew out of my experience in one such group when I recognized the need for a good tool to track our spiritual journeys from week to week. The journal brings focus to the events of the week and helps each member prepare to share."



Part of the RENOVARÉ Resources for Spiritual Renewal collection, *A Spiritual Formation Journal* emphasizes the five traditions and is designed to complement *A Spiritual Formation Workbook* as well as our other books. It offers inviting space for written reflection and prayer, inspiring quotes, thought-provoking questions, evaluation exercises, and group worksheets. Those who want to record their own, unique

life story (as I should start doing!), a legacy to leave their family, will cherish this book. Jana and her family (Ed, Chad, and Beth) now live in Lawrence, Kansas.



The subtitle *Devotions for the Daily Journey of Faith* aptly describes *Seeking the Kingdom*. Richard Foster offers these selections for those inspired to continue on the path to spiritual growth started by *Celebration of Discipline* and to pursue the disciplines in daily life.

Containing key passages from Richard's best-selling books along with thoughtful reflections, *Seeking the Kingdom* presents his counsel and direction concerning the challenges and rewards of Christian life. He explores three movements of the spiritual life: inward to personal transformation, upward to intimacy with God, and outward to minister to others. I have seen many devotional books, but this one ranks among the best for content, execution, and application.

Lynda L. Graybeal

Order Form

Name _____ Street Address _____

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Quantity	Item	Sugg. Donation Each	Total
	<i>A Spiritual Formation Journal</i> (Jana Rea)	18.00	
	<i>Seeking the Kingdom: Devotions for the Daily Journey of Faith</i> (Foster)	15.00	
TOTAL			

Make checks out to RENOVARÉ (U.S. Funds only, please) and mail to **RENOVARÉ, 8 Inverness Drive East, Suite 102, Englewood, CO 80112-5609**. Allow six to eight weeks for delivery. Those living outside the U.S., please send additional monies for shipping.

Going Places

Date	Event	Location	Staff	Contact & Phone
4/17/96	RENOVARÉ Local Conference	Cascade Div. Salvation Army Officers Sun Valley, ID	Roger Fredrikson	
4/19/96- 4/20/96	RENOVARÉ Regional Conference	Southland Christian Church Lexington, KY	Richard Foster Donn Thomas	Charles Madinger—606- 224-1625 (Sec.-Kathy)
5/3/96- 5/4/96	RENOVARÉ Regional Conference	Grace Fellowship Church Timonium, MD	Richard Foster Jim Smith	Franklyn Miller— 410-239-8280
5/4/96	RENOVARÉ Local Conference	Broadway Baptist Church Kansas City, MO	Emilie Griffin	Kathy Jaros— 816-561-3274
5/17/96- 5/31/96	Academic Teaching in South Korea	Azusa Pacific University	Richard Foster	
9/13/96- 9/14/96	RENOVARÉ Regional Conference	First Church of the Nazarene Pasadena, CA	Richard Foster Jim Smith	Doug Taylor— 818-584-5516

Growing Pains

We continue to expand the number and types of Conferences. So far in 1996, eight groups have scheduled Local Conferences. We also have eight Regional Conferences scheduled and plan to do the same number in 1997. We still receive a number of inquiries, but they have slowed. ***If you would like to organize a Local Conference or help sponsor a Regional Conference, call Lynda Graybeal at 303-792-0152.***

Four people are writing books that are in various stages of completion. Emilie Griffin is writing a book on retreat. Richard Foster has a good start on *Streams of Living Water* which explains the historical background and theological foundation of the traditions. Bill Vaswig

has finished the first draft of three chapters for a Bible study book. And Lyle Graybeal has five chapters done of a book which introduces new Christians and mature teenagers to the spiritual disciplines and RENOVARÉ. Let us know any ideas you might have about possible products or ways to make our books more user friendly.

This is a year of transition in the office. First, we are upgrading our accounting, word processing, and data base software. Second, Joan has computerized our Rolodex so that we can update it quickly. Third, we have an e-mail address. Fourth, we bought a new notebook computer which is capable of running Windows. Fifth, to be compatible with the office, Richard is upgrading his personal computer and software. Thank you for your gifts that make it possible for us to be current for at least five years *if* the technology doesn't change too fast!

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