

The theme of this issue of *Perspective* is “**The Word of God.**” Because of our multi-year work in creating *The Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible*, we have given a lot of attention to the Word of God written, the Scripture. And how vitally important this reality is. Scripture as the Word of God written anchors us by giving a blueprint for how God has spoken to his people throughout biblical history. But the Bible itself uses the Word of God in two other ways as well. There is the Word of God living, the *debar Yahweh*, and there is the Word of God incarnate, Jesus.



The Word of God Living: The Debar Yahweh

The *debar Yahweh*, the living Word of God, brought the universe crashing into existence. God said, “Let there be light,” and light came into being. The same for sky and sea and land and the plant kingdom and the animal kingdom and the human species. God speaks and it is . . . God speaks and it is . . . God speaks and it is. This is the living, acting, creating, forming, transforming Word of God which is sharper than any two-edged sword; capable of dividing soul from spirit, joints from marrow and able to judge the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12).

This living Word of God, this *debar Yahweh*, is the “Thus saith the Lord” of the prophetic tradition. The prophets were not really religious soothsayers or social critics or village cranks. They were ordinary people who encountered face-to-face the One who, as Amos puts it, “made the Pleiades and Orion” (5:8). Old Testament professor Howard Macy says that these “encounters were blind-siding, breath-sucking, gut-jarring; they were full of energy, creativity, and crazy surprise; they intermingled fear and attraction, tenderness and amazement.” Abraham Heschel writes, “To the prophets, God was overwhelmingly real and shatteringly present. They never spoke of Him as from a distance. They lived as witnesses, struck by the words of God . . .” They fed off God’s living word to them. God was shatteringly present to them; the *debar Yahweh* had come to them; and their entire lives became oriented around this stunning reality. As a result they received what Walter Brueggemann calls a “prophetic imagination,” the capacity to see what is yet possible through the power of God, “It is the task of prophetic imagination and ministry to bring people to engage the promise of newness that is at work in our history with God.”

And here is the really shocking news: all Christians are called, in some measure, to prophetic life and witness. Out of the humility and generosity of his great heart, Moses had wistfully exclaimed, “Would that all the LORD’S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit on them!” (Num. 11:29). Well, with the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost God did exactly that. The prophet Joel had promised a day when the Spirit would enable all God’s people to dream dreams, to have visions, and to prophesy, and on that Pentecost day Peter declared that Joel’s promise had indeed come to pass. At Pentecost God initiated a universal, revolutionary community of prophets. In *Inviting the Mystic, Supporting the Prophet* Katherine Marie Kyckman and L. Patrick Carroll write, “All of us Christians, not just some ‘specially chosen’ are called to be deeply united to God in prayer and to speak out of that prayer with some strand of prophetic voice. Everyone is called to be both mystic and prophet.”

What we need to understand is that God is still speaking. The *debar Yahweh* is still active and alive, creating and recreating, forming and transforming. God is “our Communicating Cosmos,” as Dallas Willard puts it. Now, I am fully aware that there are those who feel that with the full Scriptural canon we no longer need the living voice of God, the *Kol Yahweh*. And while I can appreciate such a position I will simply respond with the

words of William Law, an 18th century Anglican writer, in his book *The Power of the Spirit*, “to say that because we now have all the writings of Scripture complete we no longer need the miraculous inspiration of the Spirit among men as in former days, is a degree of blindness as great as any that can be charged upon the scribes and Pharisees.” My friends, God is a continuing, communing, speaking Presence with his people. Here. Now. The Word of God living.

Jesus: The Word Made Flesh

But there is more. Not only is there the Word of God written (Scripture) and the Word of God living (the *debar Yahweh*) there is also the Word of God incarnate, Jesus Christ. This is of enormous importance for our day. People need a living Savior that speaks life into us here and now.

John, in his Gospel, makes a conscious parallel to the creation narrative of Genesis when he declares, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . .and the Word became flesh and lived among us” (Gen.1:1,14). Jesus is the eternal Logos, the Word of God incarnate. And just as in Genesis where God spoke the universe into existence, so in John’s Gospel Jesus brings about his great “signs” by speaking. To the lame man Jesus says, “Stand up, take your mat and walk” . . . and so he does; Jesus calls out to Lazarus in the grave, “Lazarus, come out!” . . . and so he does. God creates by speaking; Jesus creates by speaking.

On the Mount of Transfiguration God’s voice came out of the cloud saying, “This is my Son, the Beloved . . . **“listen to him!”** (Matt. 17:5; bold added). The writer to the Hebrews tells us that in past days God spoke to his people through the prophets but now he is speaking through his Son (Heb. 1:1). And here is the great, good news: Jesus is alive, he is here to teach his people himself. Jesus functions among us as Prophet, Priest, and King: our Prophet to teach us, our Priest to redeem us, our King to rule us.

When Jesus was among us in the flesh he described himself as the Good Shepherd and that “his sheep follow him because they know his voice” (Jn. 10:4 NIV). And in resurrected form Jesus declares that he is “standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me” (Rev. 3:20).

So, my friend, hearing Jesus’ voice is not all that elusive or complicated. His grace comes right up to the doorstep of our souls. We are not here talking about a complicated exercise for the spiritually elite. No, it is more like just getting up and answering the door.

Meekness Opens the Door

Perhaps more than any single thing meekness of spirit opens the door onto this life of hearing Jesus’ voice and obeying his Word. Meekness is a real preference for God’s will. When this holy habit of mind is in us our whole being becomes so open to God’s impressions that, without any outward sign, there is an inward recognition and choice of the will of God. God guides us, for the most part, not by visible signs but by swaying our judgment. When we wait before God weighing sincerely in the scales every consideration for or against a particular course of action, and in readiness to see which way the preponderance lies, a frame of mind and heart is created in which we can be guided. God then touches the scales and makes the balance to sway as he wills.

The experience and counsel of John Woolman may help us here. These words from his *Journal* were penned, as he put it, on the twenty-eighth day, fifth month, 1772: “O, how safe, how quiet, is that state where the soul stands in pure obedience to the voice of Christ and a watchful care is maintained not to follow the voice of the stranger!”

Correction

In the July 2005 Perspective, the list of the 2005 RENOVARÉ International Conference Steering Committee did not include Donald Wallace of Saint Aidan Celtic Christian Trust. We are sorry, Donald! And thank you for all you did for the event. —ed

Peace and joy,



Richard J. Foster

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An annual, tax deductible gift of \$20.00 is welcome to help cover publishing expenses. If you cannot help, we understand. Some will be able to give more and in this way the unity of the Body of Christ will be maintained.

GROWING TOGETHER

The Word of God presents itself in many forms. One of these is musical worship. George Skramstad, worship leader at many of our RENOVARÉ events, knows this well. For a number of years at RENOVARÉ Regional Conferences he has offered an abbreviated version of "A History of Worship," a look at the development of musical worship from the early Hebrews, to the early Church, through the Reformation, into the modern period. At the June 2005 RENOVARÉ International Conference in Denver George more fully unpacked his thoughts on this topic. An abbreviated text of his work is below, and you can purchase the full 40+ minute presentation on CD or DVD in this issue of *Perspective*.

Excerpts from "A History of Worship" by George Skramstad

The Story of Worship. . .

Early in Genesis we find mention of the first musician. His name is Jubal and considered the "father of all who play the harp and flute." We cannot find record that he led worship, but his music was an indication that music was an integral part of Israel life.

Synagogue Worship

This expanded and developed the use of the voice. With the fall of the temple, instruments fell into disuse, which meant the synagogues were for worship using singers only. Intonation or cantillating of the Psalms and the Pentateuch and perhaps the recitation of prayers were all a part of this process.

In the first century, records show that each book of the Bible had its own mode or formulae when it was read. However, there became a transition from declarative reading into musical reading. The chanting of scripture goes back as far as Ezra in the 5th century B.C. We know that the Psalms were sung in the Temple.

Israelite music was modal. It had much ornamentation or embellishment (depending upon the skill of the singer), it was very rhythmic without regular recurring meters. Its scale included quarter tones that are very foreign to western music. Also, Israelite music was monophonic music . . . music that has a melody line only.

Music In the Early Church

The Jewish converts carried over the musical culture of Jewish worship into the church and Christianity. In this regard, there was no radical break from Judaism in new forms of Christian music. Musicologists doing research have found the similarity of early Gregorian chant and Jewish music. Even the way scriptures were read and prayers were given had many similarities.

Very little can be said about the music of the first three centuries of the church beyond texts used and liturgical forms followed. We know that it was modal and sung without instruments. There are evidences from the historian Bliny in the first century, Justin Martyr in the second century, and Tertullian in the third century of recorded worship practice that implicated chant and use of singing.

In the fourth century Christians were able to worship openly, with Constantine establishing Christianity as a lawful and respected faith. It was then that buildings began to be constructed to house the growing congregations and forms of worship began to be formulated. A missionary to Yugoslavia by the name of Niceta from the Syrian Antiochian church is credited with using hymnody to spread the gospel. Jerome wrote that Niceta spread the gospel among European pagans "chiefly by singing sweet songs of the cross."

By the end of the fourth century the Roman Empire was permanently divided into Eastern and Western Empires. By the seventh century the Eastern Orthodox churches recognized two Byzantine liturgies that are the same today: the Liturgy of St. Basil and the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom. In the sixth century St. Gregory the Great of the Western Church founded the *Schola Cantorum* to standardize and teach the official chant within the church. Music notation was begun and history was made. All liturgy and music was done in Latin for the purpose of bringing uniformity to the Western church so that the same mass and music would be heard in every church. The early church fathers did not like the use of instrumental music in worship because of their association with mystery cults, the Greek theater, and pagan rituals.

From Luther to the Wesleys

The Reformation Movement, however, saw the return of the Bible and the hymn book to the people in their own language through the influence of Martin Luther. He saw that the people were not relating to the formularies of the traditional church. In 1523 he presented his first reformed liturgy. In 1526 the German Mass replaced the historic Latin songs with vernacular hymn versions set to German folk song melodies. The major mode/keys became acceptable and we find a new relaxation of the once prescribed regulations. An example of this is Luther's "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."

With Luther's reformation movement came new freedom in worship. Instruments were allowed and the people began to sing their faith once again. A new strength and purpose was experienced in worship services. The formation of the protestant hymn came into being.

The Reformation was not only evident in Germany and mainland Europe, but also in England. After Henry VIII broke with the Pope in 1534 and assumed leadership of the Anglican Church, the Latin Roman Mass continued to be used without change. After the death of Henry VIII, Archbishop Cranmer set about to devise a truly reformed English liturgy that became a reality with the *Book of Common Prayer*, released in 1549. It was another attempt to bring worship back into the hands of the people.

The Puritan movement gathered increasing momentum during the close of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. In worship, its emphasis was on “scriptural simplicity”—no choral or instrumental music, much after John Calvin’s Geneva. Both in England and in parts of Europe, the Anabaptists attempted to rid the church of music and the arts by the whitewashing of frescoes, removal of sculptures, and the stripping of ornate altars and symbols from places of worship so that God could be worshiped without distraction.

Worship in the English Free Church Tradition led by The Separatists spawned the singing of unaccompanied metrical psalms. Out of this came the Presbyterian, Independent Congregational, and Baptist churches.

Evangelistic hymns in the modern sense were one of the glorious by-products of Britain’s Great Awakening in the eighteenth century. Charles and John Wesley are credited with rescuing hymn singing from the bondage of the two-line meters—common long and short. Their sources were the new psalm tunes, opera melodies, and folk songs of German origin. Charles Wesley wrote the texts for some 6,000 hymns; “O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing” and “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today” are two examples.

The American Scene

The early colonies took their worship and evangelical cues from Mother England. America’s first worship music consisted of metrical psalms, and these were still the norm during the preaching of Jonathan Edwards.

In 1800 the Camp Meeting Movement began with an outbreak of revival in an outdoor encampment in Caine Ridge, Logan County, Kentucky. The music that characterized the camp meetings was very simple with much repetition, very emotional, and frequently improvised. The “brush arbor” meetings continued on and characterized this free style of worship expression. It is said that both the African American and the Caucasian worshiped together during this time. Ralph Hudson’s “At the Cross” was one of the hymns to emerge from the camp meetings.

Beginning in the 1840’s, the Sunday school hymns of William Bradbury and others had the same musical form as camp meeting songs and were picked up eventually by the adults, which gave us our first “gospel hymns” such as “Jesus Loves Me.”

It was the evangelistic missions of Moody and Sankey in Great Britain and America that launched the gospel song on its century-long career. Many music educators wrote gospel songs as well for the singing schools across our land. Towner, Bliss, Root, and Fanny Crosby are part of this generation of contributors. The blind Fanny Crosby, author of perhaps 9,000 gospel song texts, is a sterling example of faith and skill. Fanny wrote the words while Phoebe Palmer Knapp composed the music for songs like “Blessed Assurance.”

Billy Graham began his ministry with Youth for Christ in 1949. His approach with worship leader Cliff Barrows was a refreshing one, but shunned the sensational and overemotional worship music. They used music from Fanny Crosby, Charles Gabriel, Lillenas, John Peterson, and finally, Bill Gaither. In the 70’s and 80’s it was the Gaither’s that captured the imagination and the approval of much of the evangelical public. As in all experience songs, the new gospel music reflects the patterns of our day. A modern person’s need of God is not well expressed in such frontier language as “I’ve wandered far away from God; now I’m coming home.” Sin and lostness must be redefined for each succeeding generation. We’ve had worship for centuries and we shall continue worshipping. The Bible teaches that God alone is worthy of our worship.

... And The Story Continues

There are so many contemporary examples of how telling God’s Story continues on through worship. John Michael Talbot in the Roman Catholic Tradition. Jack Hayford with “Majesty,” Rich Mullins and “Our God is an Awesome God,” Don Moen composing “Open the Eyes of My Heart, Lord,” Andre Crouch performing “My Tribute,” Darlene Zschech and Hillsong’s “Shout to the Lord.” Michael W. Smith. Marcus Dewitt and Latino Promise Keepers. The story goes on . . .

Keep telling the story. It is this calling that gives me greater purpose and understanding in the days ahead, as together we worship a God of all nations, of all peoples, of all styles, of all forms, and of all creation!

(Material was collected from many sources, especially from the complete “Library of Christian Worship,” editor Robert Webber.)

Hearing and Viewing the Word: Movies for Spiritual Formation

While the Word written easily impacts the mind, often it takes the Word spoken to move the heart. We witness this in Christian worship, through reading Scripture and in sermons. Also valuable in sharing the Word are movies and other video presentations. Below are a few selections that can be helpful for the purpose of Christian spiritual formation, both in their immediate emotional impact and as discussion starters for small groups. Pleasant viewing.

Babbette's Feast

Set in late 19th Century Denmark, this is the story of Babbette, a Parisian war refugee who moves in with two single and sober sisters living in the midst of an austere village. Sensing the need for some enjoyment, Babbette proposes a feast. The results are delectable, spinning a tale of celebration and the goodness of the everyday.



Brother Sun, Sister Moon

On Francis of Assisi, this is a window into the life of one of Western civilization's universally admired figures. Though 1970's director Franco Zeffirelli keeps with the times in presenting Francis for flower-power relevance, movingly present are the reasons why Francis and Clare and the early Franciscans are so appealing.

Groundhog Day

Phil Connors is a cynical, self-centered weatherman from Pittsburgh covering the annual Groundhog Day festivities in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. Phil is forced to continue to live Groundhog Day over and over until he learns to be a kind, compassionate person. The movie showcases our proclivity to selfishness and the possibility for transformation.



Hanged on a Twisted Cross

This documentary presents Dietrich Bonhoeffer's life. Of note is the presentation of the social setting of the day, how the Nazi Government and Reich Church conspired to persecute and conquer. Plenty of lessons for the American Church as we balance supporting secular government with a prophetic posture.

It's a Wonderful Life

After Uncle Billy loses money and causes trouble for their business, George Bailey considers killing himself for the insurance money. George then sees what life would be like without him. The personal/relational subtext: a loving heart leads to self-sacrificial choices, which nurtures individuals and communities in ways unimagined.



Jesus of Nazareth

This Zeffirelli epic contains many Gospel stories presented with power and creativity. For example, Matthew, a tax collector, and Peter, a fisherman, are pictured as not getting along until meeting Jesus. They are reconciled, showing how Jesus destroys social barriers and class by his actions.

The Mission

Set in 18th Century Paraguay, this is a story of violence, repentance, and forgiveness. After murdering his brother, Rodrigo Mendoza abandons himself to Father Gabriel as a penitent. Mendoza is eventually released from guilt by a native Guarani Indian, not only for his brother's death but for his trading of Guarani slaves.



Smoke Signals

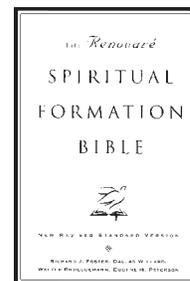
This tells the journey of Victor and Thomas, two Native Americans from northern Idaho, to claim the ashes of Victor's father, who has just died outside Phoenix. Arnold, Victor's father, was an alcoholic, emotionally distant, and physically abusive. Highlighted is the need for forgiveness so that we might find peace.

—Lyle SmithGraybeal

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The release of *The Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible* is going well, and will be encouraged further through purchases at Borders, Barnes and Noble, and other local bookstores. These transactions help insure *Renovaré Bible* visibility and it being a featured item Fall and Christmas Season 2005.

Would you help keep the release of *The Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible* strong by visiting your local bookstore and purchasing a copy for you, for your pastor, for a friend, as a gift?



GOING DEEPER

Below are resources that address the topic of the Word of God on many levels: worship, teaching, discerning, proclaiming. We hope one or another will help you gain a fresh and fuller sense of God's Word.



God Views Video Curriculum by LifeSprings

In this first installment of the Curriculum of Christlikeness series, Curt Cloninger, a gifted teacher and comedian, guides us to better understand the nature of God. By looking at both common misconceptions and at his true nature, we can come to more thoroughly know our Creator, our Father. Ideal for a group-study setting, the Curriculum includes a 93-minute DVD containing 12 dramatizations, one leader's guide, four participant's guides, and a CD-ROM to help further enhance the presentation of this video.

God Views Video Curriculum \$90.00 each

Renovation of the Heart Video Curriculum by LifeSprings

Through the second installment of the Curriculum of Christlikeness series, Dallas Willard takes us through his book, *Renovation of the Heart*. He teaches on the six components within every person and how transformation into Christlikeness occurs. This video curriculum includes a DVD containing thirteen presentations by Dallas and conversations with Larry Crabb and John Ortberg, one leader's guide, two participant's guides, one copy of Dallas' book, *Renovation of the Heart*, and a CD-ROM with resources to make your group time truly effective.



Renovation of the Heart Video Curriculum \$ 130.00 each



Celebration of Discipline Video Curriculum by LifeSprings

In the third installment of the Curriculum of Christlikeness series, Richard Foster reveals the joy of spiritual disciplines and teaches us that these time-honored traditions are still valuable today in our experience of God and all the blessings he has for us. Accompanying Richard are RENOVARE Team Members Margaret Campbell, Glandion Carney, George Skramstad, and Dallas Willard. This resource includes a DVD containing thirteen teaching sessions, one leader's guide, two participant's guides, and one CD-ROM.

Celebration of Discipline Video Curriculum \$ 125.00 each

Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God by Dallas Willard

"Hearing God is simply the best book on divine guidance I have ever read," writes Richard J. Foster. In terms of our *Perspective* theme, "The Word of God," this book and CD will aid us in learning how to distinguish the voice of the true Shepherd from merely human thoughts or even the voice of the Enemy of our souls. Especially helpful is the chapter, "The Still Small Voice and Its Rivals."



Hearing God Softcover Book \$ 12.00 each

Hearing God Unabridged CD \$23.00 each



An Evening With Madamo CD by Marti Ensign

Madamo Marti Ensign leads us through her experiences and discusses her time as a missionary in Africa in this engaging collection of stories. Marti speaks and her stories come alive with words of inspiration. Her compelling reflections center on the concept of our life with God.

An Evening With Madamo CD \$ 8.00 each

The Greatest Thing in the World CD by Henry Drummond

This powerful homily by Henry Drummond (read by Paul Eggington) is an inspirational insight into Paul's exhortation regarding love. Drummond reveals to us why love is "the supreme good" since all good things emerge from it. He leads us in a wonderful in-depth look at Paul's thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians. Love for God and for others, he shows, is truly the greatest thing.



The Greatest Thing in the World CD \$ 11.00 each

GOING PLACES WITH *RENOVARÉ*

Date	Event	Location	Staff	Contact & Info
5-15 October 2005 <i>Primarily for speakers of Korean</i>	Southern California RENOVARÉ Pastors and Leaders Retreat	Serra Retreat Center Malibu, California	Richard Foster Brian Kang Joshua Choon Min Kang Dallas Willard	Brian Kang 714-529-9190 kang@renovare.org
28-29 October 2005	Regional Conference Portland, Maine	Site To Be Announced	Richard Foster Marti Ensign George Skramstad	Dave Taylor westwind1@adelphia.net 207-318-9884
11-12 November 2005	South West Bay Area Regional Conference	Menlo Park Pres. Church 950 Santa Cruz Ave. Menlo Park, California	Richard Foster John Ortberg George Skramstad Dallas Willard	Eff and Patty Martin 650-233-1422 eff.martin@sngwd.com
18-19 November 2005	Greenland, New Hampshire Local Conference	Bethany Church 500 Breakfast Hill Rd Greenland, New Hampshire	Glandion Carney William Vaswig	Linda Graves 603-431-3646
17-18 February 2006	Washington State Regional Conference	Mountain View Ch. of Nazarene 940 Israel Rd. Southwest Tumwater, Washington State	Richard Foster Marti Ensign George Skramstad	Kathy Rule Kathyrule@comcast.net 206-232-1887
3-4 March 2006	Gahanna, Ohio Regional Conference	Shepherd Church of the Nazarene 425 S. Hamilton Rd. Gahanna, Ohio	Richard Foster George Skramstad RENOVARÉ Team Member	Greg Rosser grosser@shepnaz.org 614-471-3368
24-25 March 2006	Winchester, Virginia Regional Conference	Braddock Street UMC 115 Wolfe Street Winchester, VA	Richard Foster Emilie Griffin George Skramstad	Cynthia Zirlott formationbsumc@adelphia.net 540-667-3366
5-6 May 2006	DATES AVAILABLE Regional Conference	Site To Be Announced	Todd Hunter George Skramstad RENOVARÉ Team Member	Norma Kelley norma@renovare.org 303-792-0152
16-20 July 2006	RENOVARÉ Covenant Retreat "Solitude and The Way of the Heart"	YMCA of the Rockies Snow Mountain Ranch Winter Park, Colorado	Richard Foster Gayle-Anne Drury Roy Searle Jeff & Jill Sutheran	Norma Kelley norma@renovare.org 303-792-0152
22-23 September 2006	Austin, Texas Regional Conference	Site To Be Announced	Richard Foster Emilie Griffin George Skramstad	Margaret Campbell mscampbell@houston.rr.com
6-7 October 2006	Charleston, W Virginia Regional Conference	Site To Be Announced	Richard Foster George Skramstad RENOVARÉ Team Member	Lee Williams leewilliams@intelos.net

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Dates also available in 2006/2007 for **RENOVARÉ** Local Conferences

based on Team Member availability

Local Conferences are sponsored by 1 or 2 churches. They are one-day events (usually on Saturday) and are effective ways to generate interest in the processes of spiritual formation and renewal within your church.

To explore holding a **RENOVARÉ Regional or Local Conference contact:**

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norma@renovare.org
303-792-0152
www.renovare.org for info