

Fuller Seminary, Pasadena, CA:

Summer 2012 - Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center.

SPIRITUALITY AND MINISTRY

GM720

June 4-15, 2012

Dallas Willard, Instructor

with

Keith Matthews Co-teaching

This is a two-week seminar in a retreat setting, designed to give understanding and experience of the spiritual life and its disciplines, as defined by the New Testament and the history of the disciplines of Jesus. A special focus is upon spiritual life and disciplines in the context of the Christian Ministry.

There are four main components of the seminar: (1). The study of classics in the field of Christian spirituality, along with some historical and systematic treatments. This is to be substantially completed before the seminar sessions. (2). Sixty hours of lecture/seminar meetings in the retreat setting. (3). Supervised practice of spiritual disciplines in the retreat setting. (4). Written work, designated below.

The aim is to leave students with confident access to the realities of spiritual life following Jesus, from which they minister, and with some facility in the spiritual disciplines and in guiding others into a hopeful practice of them.

**SEMINAR REQUIREMENTS (for 12-unit students):**

1. All books on the 'required' list given below to be read, and a one-page thought response, prior to the seminar. Keep a copy of the response and turn one copy in at the first meeting of the seminar.

2. Participation in the seminar/retreat, from 8:30AM Monday through 12 noon Saturday of the first week, and through noon Friday of the second week.

3. A 20-page exploration of your experience with spiritual disciplines, during the retreat and/or beyond.

4. A 30-page paper either on the role of spiritual disciplines in contemporary ministry or on the life and work of

one of the great exemplars of spirituality in ministry from the past. "Due date" is indicated in the "Academic Information and Policy" section of this notebook. In fairness to the students in the course, papers received after the "due date" will not receive a grade higher than "B".

In both the "exploration" and the paper, you are expected to make a significant and accurate use of the materials on the reading list. For example, use them to provide further interpretation or an alternative view of the topics and experiences you are dealing with.

Remember that the "exploration" is to deal with your experiences with the disciplines for the spiritual life. Include some accounts of specific events in your life.

In grading the instructor considers industry (effort), understanding and creativity evidenced by the text produced. The quality and degree of participation in the class session is also a factor.

Students taking the course for 8 units are required to do a 20 - 25 page paper, under #4.

I regret I will no longer be able to return papers with comments.

## ROUGH OUTLINE OF TOPICS AND SCHEDULE

- June 4 & 5 : Spirituality and the Gospel of Christ. What are they and how are they related?  
What is 'ministry'? Its resources?  
Spiritual Disciplines. Concept and History.
- June 6 : Study of Particular Disciplines for the Spiritual Life in Christ: Scripture, Theory and Practice  
  
Solitude  
Silence  
Fasting
- June 7 : Frugality and Poverty  
Sexuality and Spiritual Life  
Secrecy
- June 8 : Sacrifice and Loss  
Study  
Worship and Celebration-  
Eucharist as Discipline
- \*\*\*\*\*An experiment with Silence 12 noon, June 8 -noon, June 9.  
Free to explore, Saturday noon to Sunday evening.
- June 11 : Prayer  
Service
- June 12 : Fellowship  
Confession  
Submission
- June 13 : Introduction to RENOVARE, a small-group program of shared disciplines  
Wesley's "societies" and "Class meetings."  
Pastoral Direction and Spiritual Disciplines.  
  
Review, Problems, Reflections, Applications
- June 14 & 15 : We will do as much as we can with the following topics:  
  
Physical Labor as Spiritual Discipline.  
Spirituality and Whole Life.  
Your Identity before God, in the Spiritual Context.  
Introduction to Canonical Hours of Christian Past.  
Burnout and Spirituality.  
"Being Righteous Overmuch."  
The Spiritual Significance of Play and Leisure.  
Religious "Experiences" and Spirituality.  
The Charismata or "gifts" of the Spirit and Spirituality.  
Spirituality, Ministry, and Evangelism.

A further look at "Church Growth."  
Spirituality and Healing Ministry.  
Inclusivism/Exclusivism and Christian Spirituality.

#### Re-entry and Panning for Applications

On Monday-Thurs Evenings (7:30 to approximately 9:00) there will be elective gatherings for informal worship, prayer, sharing and mutual ministry — including serious discussion of seminar issues as that seems desirable. Individuals or groups from the seminar participants may be requested to lead (music, readings, etc.) and contribute to these meetings, as they seem led. These usually become times of deep sharing, confession and specific prayer from the group.

How the sessions and the overall schedule actually move is a function of the group's responses to the topics and issues. So please don't be alarmed if we don't seem to be "on schedule." Participants are encouraged to let the Instructors know of any particular topics or issues for which they have a special concern.

## TOPICAL OUTLINES

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### HERE, BASICALLY, IS WHAT THE SEMINAR IS ABOUT

"Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you." (I Tim 4:16)

"Watch over your heart with all diligence, for the sources of your life lie in it." (Prov 4:23)

My hope and prayer for each of you is: THAT YOU WOULD HAVE A RICH LIFE OF JOY AND POWER, ABUNDANT IN SUPERNATURAL RESULTS, WITH A CONSTANT, CLEAR VISION OF NEVER-ENDING LIFE IN GOD'S WORLD BEFORE YOU, AND OF THE EVERLASTING SIGNIFICANCE OF YOUR WORK DAY BY DAY. A RADIANT LIFE AND A RADIANT DEATH.

See Paul's great prayers of Eph. 1:16-23 and Col. 1:9-17. Think of how they applies to your life and mine.

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## SPIRITUALITY, SPIRIT

### THE HUMAN BEING AS A SPIRITUAL BEING

#### 1. The current interest in "spirituality."

Something new on the scene. Why and why now?

Compare to "revival" and its history,

and to "The Renewal" (Is that still around?)

Catholic traditions of spiritual life.

H. O. Old and spirituality in the Reformed tradition (CT 6/20/94, pp 27f)

What is the deeper issue of life here?  
The prospering of the churches or religion?  
Or is it "Spiritual formation"

Compare to Twelve-Step programs--see attached--  
And Secular spiritualities.

## 2. The Biblical concept of the spirit and the spiritual.

"God is Spirit." (John 4:24)

Compare with Exodus 3:14, I Kings 8:27, II Kings 6:15-17,  
II Chron. 16:9 & 20:14-17, Neh 9:5-37, Isa 42:1-9  
& 61:1-3, Jer 23:23-24, John 3:31-36, 7:38-39,  
14:16-26, Acts 1:8, Rom 8:1-16, 14:17, I Cor 3:1-4

You are spirit in your basic nature.

Hebrews 12:9-11 & Acts 17:29

The invisible side of you is were you most intimately  
know what spirit is. "The thoughts and intentions of  
the heart." (Heb. 4:12)

## 3. Spirit is unbodily, personal power. Remember this when trying to think about the Holy Spirit.

Spirit consists of thought, valuation and will (character).  
Self-determined: *partially* in human beings, in God. (Thus  
Ex. 3:14) You are most intimately and forcefully acquainted  
with it in your self.

What the "spiritual" is has been pretty well worked out by  
the history of human thought. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century a  
professor of Philosophy at Harvard University could say with a  
justifiable presumption of being understood: "The word 'spirit',  
even in its lowest uses, signifies something that acts; and when  
acting, is moved of itself and from within. Its opposite is  
matter, something passive and inert. When we inspire a man, we  
give him life and power of action. When we say an animal is  
spirited or spiritless, we mean that he either has or has not  
vital activity. The same thought is in our minds when we call a  
liquor which comes from fermentation 'spirits' or when we talk of  
'the spirit of the age', and thus indicate what *dominant* ideals  
have shaped its activity. Ethics investigates spiritual laws,  
the laws which guide beings conscious, active, and free. But

This booklet is one person's interpretation of Alcoholics Anonymous' Twelve Step Program. The Twelve Steps to Recovery are as follows:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.\*

\* *Alcoholics Anonymous*, published by A.A. World Services, New York, NY, pp. 59-60. Reprinted with permission.

ethics deals with embodied spirits—not with pure spirits, or activities altogether parted from matter.

Accordingly a moral being is something more than a spirit..." (p. 210 of G. H. Palmer, *The Field of Ethics*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1901 (and 1929))

Adam Clark gives the following description of God, the great source of all:

"The eternal, independent, and self-existent Being; the Being whose purposes and actions spring from himself, without foreign motive or influence; he who is absolute in dominion; the most pure, the most simple, the most spiritual of all essences; infinitely perfect; and eternally self-sufficient, needing nothing that he has made; illimitable in his immensity, inconceivable in his mode of existence, and indescribable in his essence; known fully only by himself, because an infinite mind can only be fully comprehended by itself. In a word, a Being who, from his infinite wisdom, cannot err or be deceived, and from his infinite goodness, can do nothing but what is eternally just, and right, and kind." (Quoted on pp. 903-904 of Vol. II of M'Clintock and Strong, Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature, Harper, 1894. See also W. N. Clark's book, The Christian Doctrine of God.)

How careful the biblical revelation is to preserve God's spiritual nature! (See Ex. 20:4 and Deut. 4:1-5:21, especially 4:12-19)

How Jesus so very carefully led his little group from his incarnate, visible presence to experience with his resurrection body and with communications through the Holy Spirit: Resurrection/Ascension/Pentecost and beyond. (Luke 24-Acts 2).

Role differentiation in the Trinity: Logos and Spirit.

The tabernacle and the ark in communications with God in the experience of ancient Israel. (Ex. 29:44-46)

#### 4. The Physical universe requires "another kind of reality"-- Big bangs and "cold dark matter"

The physical universe as we "detect" it requires "another kind of reality—

It cannot exist on its own.  
The "Cosmological" argument.



"Big Bangs" and "Cold, dark matter."

A current scientific conjecture is that as much of 99% 'matter' in the universe is 'undetectable'—But needed to Account for actual galaxy distribution. Is the "cold dark matter" possibly white hot God? "A consuming fire?" Heb. 12:29

THERE IS NO EMPTY SPACE.

From C. S. Lewis, Out of the Silent Planet, Chapter 5:

"But Ransom, as time wore on, became aware of another and more spiritual cause for his progressive lightening and exultation of heart. A nightmare, long engendered in the modern mind by the mythology that follows in the wake of science, was falling off him. He had read of 'space': at the back of his thinking for years had lurked the dismal fancy of the black, cold vacuity, the utter deadness, which was supposed to separate the worlds. He had not known how much it affected him until now—now that the very name 'space' seemed a blasphemous libel for this empyrean ocean of radiance in which they swam. He could not call it 'dead'; he felt life pouring into him from it every moment. How indeed should it be otherwise, since out of this ocean the worlds and all their life had come? He had thought it barren: he saw now that it was the womb of worlds, whose blazing and innumerable offspring looked down nightly even upon the earth with so many eyes—and here, with how many more! No: space was the wrong name. Older thinkers had been wiser when they named it simply the heavens—the heavens which declared the glory...."

"The Whole earth is full of His glory." (Isa. 6:3, Hab. 2:14—see also Jer. 23:24, I Kgs. 8:27, Isa. 66:1, Matt. 5:34-35 & 23:22

The Theology of  $e = mc^2$

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5. And now you: You also are spirit in your basic nature: Heb. 12:9-11 and Acts 17:29.

"We are not human beings having a spiritual experience, but spiritual beings having a human experience." Teilhard de Chardin

You are not your brain any more than you are your heart or your spleen or your blood. You are an embodied spirit. Forgotten in a fallen world obsessed on body. (Rom 1:19ff, Eph 4:17-19)

Statement by Wesley from his sermon What is Man?

"<We consider>...that the body is not the man; that man is not only a house of clay, but an immortal spirit; a spirit made in the image of God; a spirit that is of infinitely more value than the sun, moon and stars put together; yea, than the whole material creation. Consider that the spirit of man is not only of a higher order, of amore excellent nature, than any part of the visible world, but also more durable; not liable either to dissolution or decay."

The C. S. Lewis passage from *The Weight of Glory*.

Compare to J.-P. Sartre: "Man is a useless passion." Or to the currently famous idea that you as a human are really just a few pounds of meat between 'your' ears.

Death abolished by Christ (John 8:51; II Cor 4:16-18, II Tim 1:10, Heb. 2:14-15)

The one who "keeps my word," Jesus said, will not see or taste death. (John 8:51-52, cp. 11:26) What this means: That the *experience* of that person will carry on without interruption through the period of the body's cessation of function.

6. A brief introduction to you: the components of the human person. See the diagram on p. 38 of *Renovation of the Heart*.  
"I am an unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe."

7. Christian faith today *must* confront ontology, the basic questions about the nature of reality—about what it is to exist or be, and what kinds of things there are.

Secularism is not primarily a conspiracy. It is a theory of reality authorized by the historical progression, inch by inch, of the Western intellectual world.

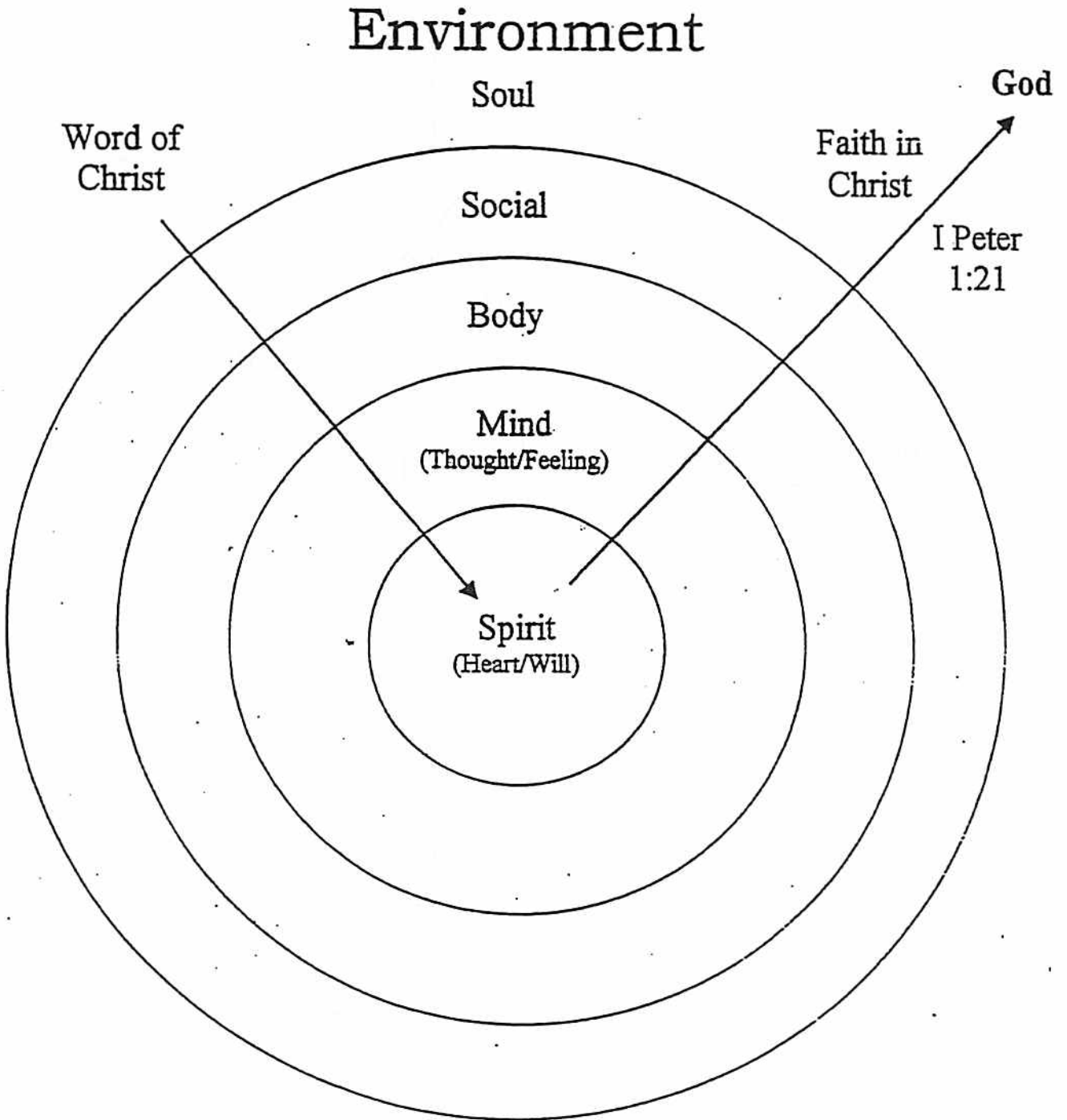
As part of the human project of mastery, self-idolization. The Faustian drive of humanity is rooted in the original sin.

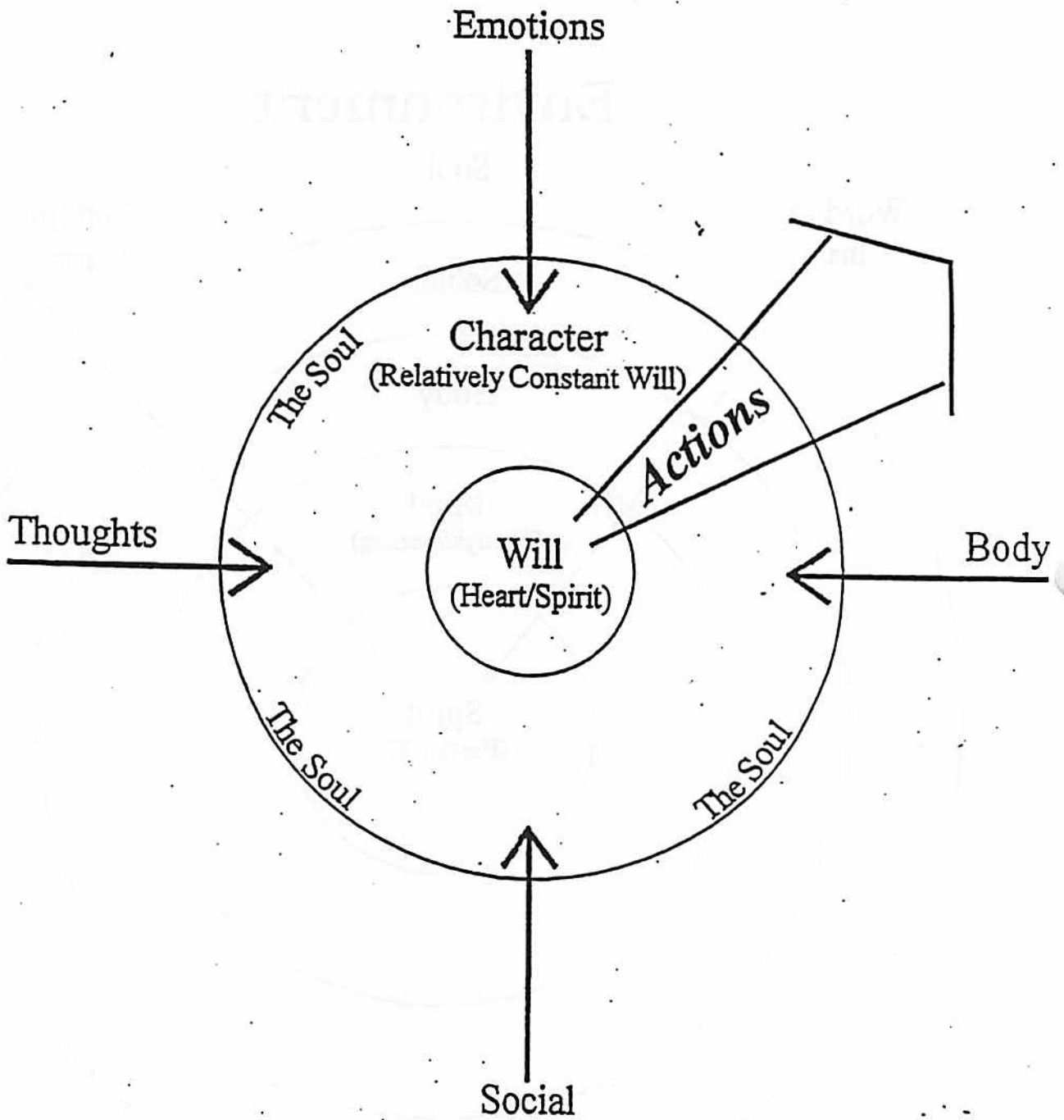
HOW TO BREAK THE FIRST COMMANDMENT: Theology must never bow to Physics ("science") as specifying ultimate reality. That violates the first commandment and is or necessarily involves a form of idolatry. Our accepted intellectual systems today, often called "scientific" or "naturalistic" is in reality idolatry, though usually not intended as such. Education fails us by not teaching us to be intellectual thorough, but to conform.

'Spirituality' without ontology will usually degenerate into legalism and possibly superstition, of which in fact, legalism is one form.

Holiness is not different action but different being

# The Total Human System— All of which is to love God





the New Testament. St. Paul promises to those who love God not, as we should expect, that they will know Him, but that they will be known by Him (1 Cor. viii. 3). It is a strange promise. Does not God know all things at all times? But it is dreadfully re-echoed in another passage of the New Testament. There we are warned that it may happen to any one of us to appear at last before the face of God and hear only the appalling words: "I never knew you. Depart from Me." In some sense, as dark to the intellect as it is unendurable to the feelings, we can be both banished from the presence of Him who is present everywhere and erased from the knowledge of Him who knows all. We can be left utterly and absolutely *outside*—repelled, exiled, estranged, finally and unspeakably ignored. On the other hand, we can be called in, welcomed, received, acknowledged. We walk every day on the razor edge between these two incredible possibilities. Apparently, then, our lifelong nostalgia, our longing to be reunited with something in the universe from which we now feel cut off, to be on the inside of some door which we have always seen from the outside, is no mere neurotic fancy, but the truest index of our real situation. And to be at last summoned inside would be both glory and honour beyond all our merits and also the healing of that old ache.

And this brings me to the other sense of glory—glory as brightness, splendour, luminosity. We are to shine as the sun, we are to be given the Morning Star. I think I begin to see what it means. In one way, of course, God has given us the Morning Star already: you can go and enjoy the gift on many fine mornings if you get up early enough. What more, you may ask, do we want? Ah, but we want so much more—something the books on aesthetics take little notice of. But the poets and the mythologies know all about it. We do not want merely to *see* beauty, though, God knows, even that is

bounty enough. We want something else which can hardly be put into words—to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it. That is why we have peopled air and earth and water with gods and goddesses and nymphs and elves—that, though we cannot, yet these projections can, enjoy in themselves that beauty, grace, and power of which Nature is the image. That is why the poets tell us such lovely falsehoods. They talk as if the west wind could really sweep into a human soul; but it can't. They tell us that "beauty born of murmuring sound" will pass into a human face; but it won't. Or not yet. For if we take the imagery of Scripture seriously, if we believe that God will one day *give* us the Morning Star and cause us to *put on* the splendour of the sun, then we may surmise that both the ancient myths and the modern poetry, so false as history, may be very near the truth as prophecy. At present we are on the outside of the world, the wrong side of the door. We discern the freshness and purity of morning, but they do not make us fresh and pure. We cannot mingle with the splendours we see. But all the leaves of the New Testament are rustling with the rumour that it will not always be so. Some day, God willing, we shall get *in*. When human souls have become as perfect in voluntary obedience as the inanimate creation is in its lifeless obedience, then they will put on its glory, or rather that greater glory of which Nature is only the first sketch. For you must not think that I am putting forward any heathen fancy of being absorbed into Nature. Nature is mortal; we shall outlive her. When all the suns and nebulae have passed away, each one of you will still be alive. Nature is only the image, the symbol; but it is the symbol Scripture invites me to use. We are summoned to pass in through Nature, beyond her, into that splendour which she fitfully reflects.

And in there, in beyond Nature, we shall eat of the tree of

life. At present, if we are reborn in Christ, the spirit in us lives directly on God; but the mind, and still more the body, receives life from Him at a thousand removes—through our ancestors, through our food, through the elements. The faint, far-off results of those energies which God's creative rapture implanted in matter when He made the worlds are what we now call physical pleasures; and even thus filtered, they are too much for our present management. What would it be to taste at the fountain-head that stream of which even these lower reaches prove so intoxicating? Yet that, I believe, is what lies before us. The whole man is to drink joy from the fountain of joy. As St. Augustine said, the rapture of the saved soul will "flow over" into the glorified body. In the light of our present specialized and depraved appetites we cannot imagine this *torrens voluptatis*, and I warn everyone most seriously not to try. But it must be mentioned, to drive out thoughts even more misleading—thoughts that what is saved is a mere ghost, or that the risen body lives in numb insensibility. The body was made for the Lord, and these dismal fancies are wide of the mark.

Meanwhile the cross comes before the crown and tomorrow is a Monday morning. A cleft has opened in the pitiless walls of the world, and we are invited to follow our great Captain inside. The following Him is, of course, the essential point. That being so, it may be asked what practical use there is in the speculations which I have been indulging. I can think of at least one such use. It may be possible for each to think too much of his own potential glory hereafter; it is hardly possible for him to think too often or too deeply about that of his neighbour. The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbour's glory should be laid daily on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken. It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible

gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilization—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendours. This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously—no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption. And our charity must be a real and costly love, with deep feeling for the sins in spite of which we love the sinner—no mere tolerance or indulgence which parodies love as flippancy parodies merriment. Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbour is the holiest object presented to your senses. If he is your Christian neighbour he is holy in almost the same way, for in him also Christ *vere latitat*—the glorifier and the glorified, Glory Himself, is truly hidden.

WHO YOU ARE

AND WHY YOU ARE HERE

YOU ARE A NEVER  
CEASING SPIRITUAL  
BEING

WITH AN ETERNAL  
DESTINY IN GOD'S  
GREAT UNIVERSE

SPIRITUAL

--IN SUBSTANCE

NEVER-CEASING

--IN DURATION

RULING

CREATIVE GOVERNANCE

--IN DESTINY

"AND THIS IS ETERNAL LIFE, THAT THEY MAY KNOW THEE, THE ONLY TRUE  
GOD, AND JESUS CHRIST WHOM THOU HAS SENT." (John 17:3)

"AND THEY SHALL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER." (Rev. 22:5)

8. A widespread strictly human concept of spirituality now in use: Spirituality as our relationship to whatever is most important in our life. (See pp. 3 & 9 of Paul Bjorklund, What is Spirituality, Hazelden Foundation, Plymouth, MN, 1983). Or: "spirituality, which is the process of becoming a positive and creative person." (p. 20 of Leo Booth, When God Becomes a Drug, Tarcher Inc., Los Angeles, 1991) These like much of current spirituality are related to the "12 steps" groups. (See attached)

9. Mixed versions of spirituality: the practice of 'religion,' or more specifically, the practices of some one form of religion. So we have a Benedictine, a Quaker, a Presbyterian, etc. form of spirituality. This may be and often is merely human or "fleshly," but it can be something more, drawing its life not from the outward forms but from divine relationship. The danger is that the "treasure" will be mistaken for the vessel. (II Cor. 4:7)

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### WHAT IS THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

If

IT IS "THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION"

1. THE GOSPEL IS A SPIRITUAL REALITY (John 6:63 <cf. Rom 7:14>)  
ABOUT A SPIRITUAL REALITY (Mark 1:8-15 <cf John 1:32-34>)
2. The Gospel of the availability of life under the rule of the



## heavens.

(Matt 4:17, 10:7-17, 28-33)

The opposition: "Of heaven / of men." (Matt 21:25)

Meaning of "Seek first the rule of God." (Mt.6:33)

No one knows the Father but the Son. (Mt 11:27)

"The sower sows the word." (Mark 4:14 & 27)

The word of *availability of life in Kingdom.*

3. What is the kingdom of God? It is God reigning. It is present wherever what God wants done is done. It is the range of God's effective will. The news that makes lovely feet is: "Your God reigns." (Isa. 52:7)

A. Where is the kingdom of God? All around you. That is the meaning of the phrase, "The kingdom of the heavens." I Chron. 29:11-16 (cp. 28:5 & 9); II Chron. 6:13, 18, 21, 21, 30, 33, 35, 39 (note contrast of dwelling place (heaven) in the above verses and resting place in vs. 41, and cp. Ex. 29:43-46); II Chron. 7:14-16, II Chron. 16:9, II Chron. 20:6, 15 & 17 (Cp. Nehemiah 4:20, 6:16), II Chron. 36:23; Ezra 1:2 (and house of the God of heaven in Jerusalem, vss. 3 & 4, cp. 6:3, 7-8, 22), 5:11-12, 6:10, 7:12 & 13, (The 'hand of our God" directly upon Ezra, 8:18, 21-22, cp. Nehemiah 2:8 & 18); Nehemiah 1:5, 2:4 & 20, 9:5-6 & 27-28; Psalms 11:4, 14:2, 20:6, 33:13-33, 57:3, 73:25, 102:19, 136:26, 145; Isa. 63:15, 65:1; Daniel 2:18, 19, 28, 37, 44, 3:17, 28, 4:17, 26, 27, 5:23, 6:26, 7:14 & 27; Jonah 1:9. Paul: "... He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and are." (Acts 17:27-28)

B. The great inversion under the kingdom of God.

Statements in the Gospels: Matt. 19:30, 20:16, Mark 9:35, 10:31, Luke 13:30 and especially the "Beatitudes" of Matt. 5 and Luke 4:18 & 6:20-26

Song of Moses and Israel, Ex. 15:1-19

"The Lord shall reign for ever and ever!" vs. 18

And Miriam takes over. Vs. 21

Hannah's prayer of celebration. I Sam. 2:1-11.

Psalms 34, 34, 107:31-43, 113.

Ezk. 17:22-24.

Mary mother of Jesus. Luke 1:46-55.

Zacharias, father of John the Baptizer. Luke 1:68-79

Special attention to the "Beatitudes": Blessed are the poor in spirit, etc. etc...."

How does Jesus teach? Colloquially and contextually. Usually

## Key Passages on the Kingdom of God:

Psalms 145:11-13

Isaiah 52:7 (Psalms 96:10, 97:1, 99:1)

Daniel 2:44; 4:3-34; 7:14, 18, 27;

Matthew 4:17; 5:20; 11:11-12; 18:3-4; 21:43;  
24:14

Mark 1:14-15

Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:11; 10:9-11; 11:20; 13:28-30;  
1:16; 17:21

John 3:3, 5; 18:36

Acts 1:3; 8:12; 14:22; 17:7; 19:8; 20:24-25;  
28:21, 23

Romans 14:17

I Corinthians 4:20; 15:24, 50; 6:9

Colossians 1:13; 4:11

# Blessed are The Poor in Spirit



"Blessed are the sat upon,  
Spat upon,  
Ratted on."  
(Simon and Garfunkel)

Jesus takes those ordinarily thought not blessed or blessable and calls them blessed—in the kingdom of heaven. The 1st beatitude is so contrary to man's thinking that English translators of the Bible cannot bring themselves, in most cases, to simply give the meaning of the language here. Matt 5:3 says: Makarioi hoi ptokoi to pneumati hoti auton ostin he basileia ton ouranon. The phrase "hoi ptokoi to pneumati" just means: "the poverty stricken in spiritual things." It refers to the simple-minded, the untalented, the religiously unsophisticated. Christ's twelve apostles were mainly of this sort, as was the multitude before him as he spoke these words. In the sermon on the plains (Luke) the beatitude given reads (6:20): "Blessed are the poor." It is harder to mess up that stark statement in translation. On a review of the various translations of Matt 5:13, the KJV, ASV, RSV and Jerusalem Bible find grace to translate it right. Berkeley, Goodspeed, NEB, Phillips, Good News for Modern Man, The New World Translation, Amplified Bible, Living Bible, all interpolate consciousness of poverty, which draws the sting of the teaching, and leaves us without the depth of Jesus' Gospel. The Greek has the resources to say "Blessed are those who think they are poor" if it means that.

by contradicting assumptions that prevail in the minds of his hearers. See Luke 14: 12 & 26. When someone says, "Good things come in small packages!" are they saying that no good things come in big packages? Or that all things that come in small packages are good? When he says "Blessed are they that mourn," is he saying that no one not mourning is blessed? Or that all people who mourn are blessed?

#### 4. Gospels heard today:

Practically speaking, three "gospels" are normally heard by people at present:

(1). Your sins will be forgiven and you will be in heaven in the afterlife if you believe that that Jesus suffered for your sins. By this is usually understood not just the fact that he did, but the theory about how he did it: that the punishment that

you deserve for your sins fell on him in precise measure, so that every pain deserved was suffered. ("Each drop of blood bought me a million years...") You are off the hook if you will accept this theory about what Jesus did on the cross.

(2). Jesus died to liberate the oppressed, and you can stand with him in that battle. The gospel is all about liberation. It is not about forgiveness, personal purity, or the afterlife. This view is very comfortable with "naturalizing" the "spiritual."

(3). Take care of your church and it will take care of you. Do what your church says and it will see to it that you are received by God—whatever that means. "Gonna fix you up with the Spirit in the sky..."

Compare now:

(4). Put your confidence in Jesus for everything and live with him as his disciple now in the present kingdom of God. (Matt. 4:17 & 6:33, Rom. 8:1-14, Col. 1:13 & 3:1-4, John 3:1-8.) On (4), Salvation is participating now in the life which Jesus is now living on earth. Of course that involves forgiveness and heaven afterward, and much more, including faithful "churchmanship" and efforts of liberation. It is a question of what is primary. Resurrection Life is salvation. Thus: "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins." (I Cor. 15:17—apparently the cross was not enough in Paul's mind!!!)

# The Default Gospel on the Right -

## HEAVEN?

If you were to die, would you go to heaven?

### DID YOU KNOW THAT ...

- **God loves you and wants you to live with Him in heaven?**  
*John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."  
1 John 5:11 - "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."*
- **the Bible teaches us that we are all sinners? Have you ever said, done or thought anything wrong?**  
*Romans 3:10 - "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one."  
Romans 3:23 - "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"  
Galatians 3:22 - "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, ..."*
- **rejecting God's plan of eternal salvation will keep you out of heaven?**  
*Romans 6:23 - "For the wages of sin is death; ..."  
James 1:15 - "... and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."  
John 5:40 - "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."  
John 3:18 - "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."*
- **being honest, truthful, kind, compassionate, loving, generous, unselfish, trying to keep the Ten Commandments and even going to church will not get you into heaven?**  
*Proverbs 14:12 - "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."  
Isaiah 64:6 - "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."  
James 2:10 - "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."*
- **you, like everyone else, will all have to face a judgment day?**  
*Hebrews 9:27 - "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."  
Revelation 20:12 - "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened ..."*
- **God loves you and has made a way to heaven through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ?**  
*Romans 5:8 - "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."  
Ephesians 2:8, 9 - "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."  
Acts 4:12 - "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."  
Romans 6:23 - "... the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*
- **you can go to heaven, no matter how bad your sin is?**  
*Matthew 9:13 - "... for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."  
Luke 19:10 - "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."*

### What does God want you to do?

*John 1:12 - "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."  
Acts 16:31 - "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, ..."  
Romans 10:13 - "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*

### How can you believe?

*Romans 10:9, 10 - "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*

### What can you do to show that you believe?

You can sincerely pray this prayer and tell God that you believe and accept His Son as your Saviour.

*Dear Lord God, I know that I am a sinner. Please forgive me for my sins. I believe that your Son the Lord Jesus Christ died to pay for my sins. I trust Him now as my personal Saviour and Lord. I ask Him to come into my life. Amen.*

### How can you know that you are going to heaven?

**If you have truly accepted the Lord Jesus as your personal Saviour, you can be assured that you are going to heaven.**

*John 14:1-3 - "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."  
John 5:24 - "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."*

### Have you made the right decision?

*John 3:36 - "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."  
1 John 5:13 - "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."*

### You can always be assured of His help.

*Hebrews 13:5 - "... he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."  
Matthew 28:20 - "... lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."*



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5. A closer look at gospels of "sin management": of the Right and of the Left. Personal sins and "structural evils." Obsession with these do not lead to personal transformation. It is not a basis for Apprenticeship to Jesus. What is the positive direction and intention that would also deal with them?

How does the idea of Grace as actually present in the bible draw us into a wider focus: Grace is God acting in our lives to accomplish what we are incapable of on our own. This is what you would get from inductive Bible study of the term.

**IF WE HAD NEVER SINNED WE WOULD STILL NEED GRACE.**

6. The difference between trusting Christ and trusting his death for your sins.

To trust Christ is to believe that he is right about everything, that he is completely reliable and in charge.

Regarding everything about me at all times.

That he is the only proper center for human life and history.

7. The good news is that he invites us to trust him and go into business totally with God, on a whole-life basis.

Renewing and fulfilling the creation covenant of Genesis 1 through the birth "from above." This is the life of Grace

8. No such thing as "part time Christian service." See Wm. Law, Serious Call to a Devout Life, Chapter One, and the opening section of Kempis, The Imitation of Christ.

Bro. Lawrence in the light of this gospel.

9. Now go back to the Gospel and the world of the spirit. The "secret place" (Ps. 91, Matt 6:6) The spiritual is 'seen' only when it wills to be seen. Acts 10:40-41

Faith in Jesus Christ, dependence on him, sets us into living interaction with the invisible Kingdom of the heavens. That interaction is everlasting living, the eternal kind of life. Everlasting life

is now, and is not having a lock on Heaven after death.

"And he was saying, 'The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; and goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts up and grows—how, he himself does not know. The soil produces crops by itself...'." (Mark 4:26-28)

10. In one simple sentence, what is the good news according to you? (Cp. I John 1:1-3, Titus 2:11-12) Wesley's statement: Wesley was asked by a troubled man what religion he preached and what it was good for. He replied that "I do preach to as many as desire to hear, every night and morning. You ask, What I would do with them: I would make them virtuous and happy, easy in themselves, and useful to others. Whither would I lead them? To heaven; to God the judge, the Lover of all, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant. What religion do I preach? The religion of love; the law of kindness brought to light by the gospel. What is it good for? To make all who receive it enjoy God and themselves: to make them like God; lovers of all; contented in their lives; and crying out at their death, in calm assurance, 'O grave, where is thy victory! Thanks be to God, who giveth me the victory, through my Lord Jesus Christ'." (from ¶ 19 of "An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion")  
Does the gospel according to you have a natural tendency to produces apprentices, disciples of Jesus?

11. Why we hear so little about he kingdom of the Heavens from our pulpits. Layer upon layer of scholarly confusion. George E. Ladd's *Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God*, Eerdmanns, 1952, is in my opinion, the best way into the various interpretations. In fighting your way through, keep in mind one simple truth: The kingdom of God is from everlasting to everlasting. It is not an eschatological event. Also: One enters the kingdom of God now, in the attitude of a little child, through the birth from above. These points will steady your studies.

\*

### The Three Kingdoms

"Seek above all the kingdom of God and God's righteousness, and all else you need will be provided." (Matt. 6:33)

1. The Kingdom of God: What is it? It is God in action (reigning), directly or indirectly. It is where what God wants done is done. It is from everlasting to everlasting.

Salvation is "birth" into the Kingdom of God by Grace.

The Church is one manifestation of the Kingdom of God, But it is not the same as the Kingdom.

The instrumentalities of the Kingdom of God are:

- a. God's own direct action: Father, Son (Eternal Logos and Historic Jesus), and Holy Spirit.
- b. Angels—the "hosts" of "Lord of hosts," "Ministering Spirits sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation." (Heb. 1:14)
- c. People acting "with God"—  
Covenant:  
    Jewish people and nation.  
    Christian people  
Non-Covenant—  
    Balaam (Numbers 22)  
    Cyrus (Isa. 44:28, 45:1)
- d. The Written Word of God, the Bible.
- e. Conscience. (Rom. 2:14-16)
- f. Nature. (Psalm 19, 148, 149, Rom. 10:18, Acts. 14:17)

2. The Kingdom of Satan: What is it? Satan in action, directly or indirectly. He is "The Prince of this world." (John 14:30) "The prince of the power of the air, of the spirit now working in the sons of disobedience." (Eph. 2:1) His kingdom is where what Satan wants done is done. (See Scott Peck, *The People of the Lie*)

He comes to steal, kill and destroy. (John 10:10) He is an accuser. (Rev. 12:10, Job 1:9, 2:5). His minions are called "unclean" because they make a mess of everything they can. They lead into sin and suffering, and they like to see men accuse God because of their suffering. ("Where was God on 9/11?!?!")

He particularly likes to harm, confuse and mislead the Church.



The instrumentalities of the kingdom of Satan are:

- a. Ideas and thoughts. (Gen. 3L1-6)
- b. "Feelings—whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa feelings..."
- c. Accepted social practices, "the world"
- d. The flesh—natural human powers on their own.  
Human arrogance and fear, desire...  
"The world, the flesh and the devil." (Eph. 2:2-3).
- e. "Unclean" spirits—lesser devils.  
Vast historical forces.

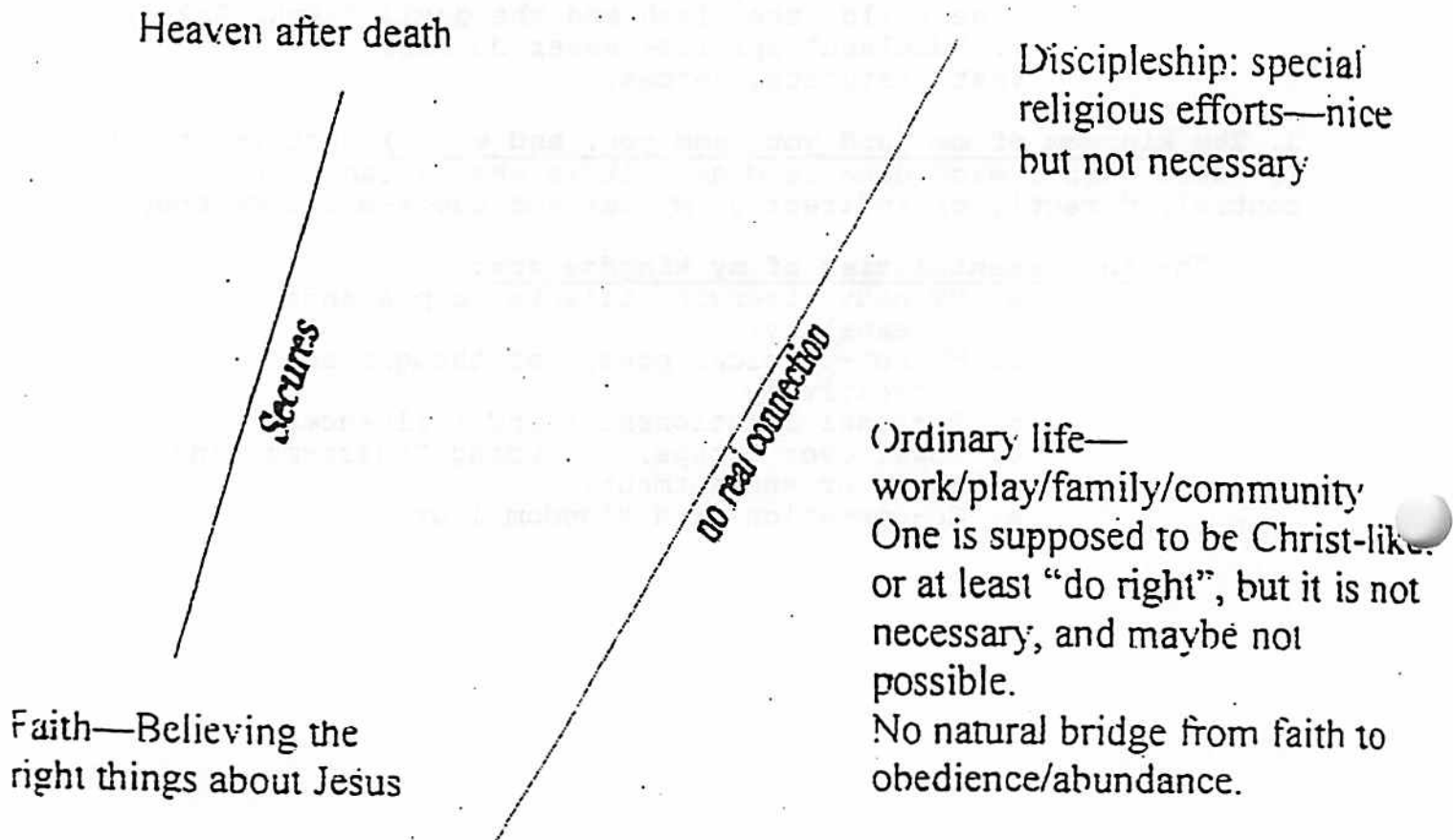
3. The kingdom of me (and you, and you, and you...) What is it? It is where what I want done is done. It is what I can do or control, directly or indirectly. My car and check-book. My body.

The instrumentalities of my kingdom are:

- a. My body—strength, talents, appearance, Sexuality.
- b. My non-physical powers of thought and creativity.
- c. Personal relationships and influences.
- d. Power over groups, including "charisma" and magic or enchantment.
- e. Co-operation with kingdom 1 or 2.

But we must hear His Gospel, not a halfway version. Compare:

I. Conservative "Sin Management" gospel:



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II. Jesus' Gospel of Kingdom Life from above, now

Faith—

Confidence in Jesus & His Present Kingdom naturally leads to:

A. Seeing my whole life as the *Place* of Redemption: Interactive Relationship

B. And to discipleship *as*: Learning from Him how to lead my life as He would lead it if He were I.

Sir Anthony F. Buzzard  
The Coming Kingdom of the Messiah

14 The Coming Kingdom of the Messiah  
Scholars are convinced that Jesus cannot be understood apart from the Kingdom of God. However, they are much less confident about their ability to offer a clear definition of the Kingdom. Theological writings often express uncertainty about whether we can ever recover the meaning which Jesus attached to the phrase "Kingdom of God":

"It is time someone called the bluff of those who think they know exactly what Jesus meant by the Kingdom of God" (Robert Morgan, in *Theology*, Nov., 1979 p. 458).

"Despite various attempts, it is not possible to define 'Kingdom of God' as it is used in the gospels or outside clearer than to say it stands for the sum total of blessing bestowed by God in Christ and consisting in the highest life in which we are yet truly at home" (*The New Century Bible*, Commentary on James, ed. E. M. Sidebottom, p. 41).

Other commentators sense that something is amiss when the phrase which Jesus used constantly is seldom, if ever, heard in Christian circles. Tom Sine points out that "the victory of the future of God was the central theme of the ministry of Jesus." Then he adds: "Michael Green asked during the Lausanne International Conference on World Evangelization in 1974, 'How much have you heard here about the Kingdom of God? Not much. It is not our language. But it was Jesus' prime concern'" (*The Mustard Seed Conspiracy*, pp. 102-3, emphasis added).

The frank admission of Peter Wagner is both disturbing as well as immensely instructive. In his book, *Church Growth and the Whole Gospel* (p. 2), he cites George Eldon Ladd as saying that "modern scholarship is quite unanimous in the opinion that the Kingdom of God was the central message of Jesus." Wagner then comments:

"If this is true, and I know of no reason to

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dispute it, I cannot help wondering out loud why I haven't heard more about it in the thirty years I have been a Christian. I certainly have read about it enough in the Bible. Matthew mentions the Kingdom 52 times, Mark 19 times, Luke 44 times and John 4. But I honestly cannot remember any pastor whose ministry I have been under actually preaching a sermon on the Kingdom of God. As I rummage through my own sermon barrel, I now realize that I myself have never preached a sermon on it. Where has the Kingdom been?"

Michael Green and Peter Wagner have put their fingers on a fundamental problem of Christianity as we know it. Contemporary evangelism and indeed preaching in general, though supposedly based on the Bible, do not sound like the teaching of Jesus. While they continue to use His name, they do not reflect His central theme—the Kingdom of God. This remarkable discrepancy was recognized also by the 19th century German theologian, Richard Rothe, who expressed his uneasiness about received methods of expounding the Bible:

"Our key does not open—the right key is lost and until we are put in possession of it again our exposition will never succeed. The system of biblical ideas is not that of our schools and so long as we attempt exegesis without it, the Bible will remain a half-closed book. We must enter upon it with other conceptions than those we have been accustomed to think the only possible ones" (Quoted by G. N. H. Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom*, p. 21, emphasis added).

<sup>3</sup> The centrality of the Kingdom of God in Jesus' teaching is emphasized in many contemporary sources, for example in *Christian Religious Education* by the Roman Catholic writer, Thomas Groome, pp. 35-55. In footnote 16 to chapter 5, he cites a number of leading contemporary scholars who agree that the Kingdom of God dominates everything that Jesus taught.

Our purpose is to show that the missing key which unlocks the message of Jesus, and indeed the whole Bible, is the Kingdom of God. The key, however, will be ineffective if it is bent out of shape. To make sense of what Jesus taught, we must understand the term "Kingdom of God" as He understood it. If we detach the Kingdom of God from its biblical context and attach to it a new meaning, we shall create a version of Christianity distorted at its very heart.

Without a grasp of the Kingdom, which is the axis around which all of Jesus' preaching and teaching revolves, we cannot hope to understand His message. The candid admissions of the scholars we have quoted suggest that Jesus' principal theme does not hold the central place in the teachings of the churches we call Christian. Indeed it is often omitted entirely! This can only mean that their systems of theology are in need of radical reformation.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> In an article entitled "preaching the Kingdom of God," the British expositor, Dr. I. Howard Marshall of the University of Aberdeen, says: "During the past sixteen years I can recollect only two occasions on which I have heard sermons specifically devoted to the theme of the Kingdom of God.... I find this silence rather surprising because it is universally agreed by New Testament scholars that the central theme of the teaching of Jesus was the Kingdom of God.... Clearly, then, one would expect the modern preacher who is trying to bring the message of Jesus to his congregation would have much to say about this subject. In fact my experience has been the opposite, and I have rarely heard about it" (*The Expository Times*, Oct. 1977, p. 13).

## 2 *The Kingdom Expected by the Prophets*

It must be significant that the Kingdom of God is the substance of the very first thing said about Jesus, even before His birth:

*"The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David and He will reign over the House of Jacob for ever; and His Kingdom will have no end" (Luke 1:32, 33).*

This announcement by the angel Gabriel came as no surprise as a description of the role of the Messiah. What the angel promised was exactly what the faithful were hoping for. If we ask what had prompted this hope, the answer is simply: the message of all the prophets. The recurrent theme of the Hebrew prophets is that the Kingdom of God will be established throughout the world with a rehabilitated Jerusalem as its capital and the Messiah as God's agent administering an ideal government. This promise of perfect government on earth receives the fullest treatment by the Hebrew prophets of the Old Testament. We may cite as typical of their vision of the future a selection from the numerous passages describing the reign of the promised descendant of David in a renewed earth. The expected world-empire would be God's Kingdom administered for Him by His unique representative and vice-regent, the Messiah.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The fact of the future Kingdom promised by the prophets is well known to standard authorities on biblical theology: "A constant feature in the eschatological picture of the Old Testament is Israel's restoration to its own land.... The question

the Epistles of St. Paul, James, Peter, and John. And upon this plan all the Methodists first set out. . . . From the beginning they had been taught both the law and the Gospel. "God loves you; therefore, love and obey him. Christ died for you; therefore, die to sin. Christ is risen; therefore, rise in the image of God. Christ liveth evermore; therefore live to God, till you live with him in glory."

So we preached; and so you believed. This is the Scriptural way, the Methodist way, the true way. God grant we may never turn therefrom, to the right hand or to the left! I am, my dear friend,

Your ever affectionate brother,  
JOHN WESLEY.

### THOUGHTS CONCERNING GOSPEL MINISTERS.

[*Arminian Magazine*, 1784. *Works*, vi, 199, 200.]

How frequently do we hear this expression from the mouths of rich and poor, learned and unlearned! Many lament that they have not a Gospel minister in their church, and therefore are constrained to seek one at the meeting. Many rejoice that they have a Gospel minister, and that there are many such in their neighbourhood. Meantime, they generally speak with much displeasure, if not contempt, of those who they say are not Gospel ministers.

But it is to be feared, few of these understand what they say. Few understand what that expression means. Most that use it have only crude, confused notions concerning Gospel ministers. And hence many inconveniences arise; yea, much hurt to the souls of men. They contract prejudices in favour of very worthless men, who are indeed blind leaders of the blind; not knowing what the real Gospel is, and therefore incapable of preaching it to others. Meantime, from the same cause, they contract prejudices against other ministers, who, in reality, both live and preach the Gospel; and therefore are well able to instruct them in all those truths that accompany salvation.

But what then is the meaning of the expression? Who is a Gospel minister? Let us consider this important question calmly, in the fear and in the presence of God.

Not every one that preaches the eternal decrees (although many suppose this is the very thing); that talks much of the sovereignty of God, of free, distinguishing grace, of dear electing love, of irresistible grace, and of the infallible perseverance of the saints. A man may speak of all these by the hour together; yea, with all his heart,

and with all his voice; and yet have no right at all to the title of a Gospel minister.\*

Not every one that talks largely and earnestly on those precious subjects,—the righteousness and blood of Christ. Let a man descant upon these in ever so lively a manner, let him describe his sufferings ever so pathetically; if he stops there, if he does not show man's duty, as well as Christ's sufferings; if he does not apply all to the consciences of the hearers; he will never lead them to life, either here or hereafter, and therefore is no Gospel minister.†

Not every one who deals in the promises only, without ever showing the terrors of the law; that slides over "the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness," and endeavours to heal those that never were wounded. These promise-mongers are no Gospel ministers.

Not every one (very nearly allied to the former) who bends all his strength to coax sinners to Christ. Such soft, tender expressions, as "My dear hearers, My dear lambs," though repeated a thousand times, do not prove a Gospel minister.

\* "Calvinism is not the Gospel."—*Letter to Miss Bishop*, 1778. *Works*, vii, 242.

† "But to speak freely: I myself find more life in the Church prayers, than in any formal extemporary prayers of Dissenters. Nay, I find more profit in sermons on either good tempers, or good works, than in what are vulgarly called *Gospel sermons*. That term has now become a mere cant word: I wish none of our society would use it. It has no determinate meaning. Let but a pert, self-sufficient animal, that has neither sense nor grace, bawl out something about Christ, or his blood, or justification by faith, and his hearers cry out, 'What a fine Gospel sermon!' Surely the Methodists have not so learned Christ! We know no Gospel without salvation from sin."—*Ibid.* *Works*, vii, 242. "But of all preaching, what is usually called Gospel preaching is the most useless, if not the most mischievous: a dull, yea, or lively, harangue on the sufferings of Christ, or salvation by faith, without strongly inculcating holiness. I see, more and more, that this naturally tends to drive holiness out of the world."—*Letter to his Brother Charles*, 1772. *Works*, vi, 674-5.

Lastly. Not every one that preaches justification by faith; he that goes no farther than this, that does not insist upon sanctification also, upon all the fruits of faith, upon universal holiness, does not declare the whole counsel of God, and consequently is not a Gospel minister.

Who then is such? Who is a Gospel minister, in the full, Scriptural sense of the word? He, and he alone, of whatever denomination, that does declare the whole counsel of God; that does preach the whole Gospel, even justification and sanctification, preparatory to glory. He that does not put asunder what God has joined, but publishes alike, "Christ dying for us, and Christ living in us." He that constantly applies all this to the hearts of the hearers, being willing to spend and be spent for them; having himself the mind which was in Christ, and steadily walking as Christ also walked; he, and he alone, can with propriety be termed a Gospel minister.

Let it be particularly observed, if the Gospel be "glad tidings of great salvation which shall be unto all people," then those only are, in the full sense, Gospel ministers who proclaim the "great salvation;" that is, salvation from all (both inward and outward) sin, into "all the mind that was in Christ Jesus;" and likewise proclaim offers of this salvation to every child of man. This honourable title is therefore vilely prostituted, when it is given to any but those who testify "that God willeth all men to be saved," and "to be perfect as their Father which is in heaven is perfect."

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## WHAT THEN IS MINISTRY FOR THE CHRIST-IAN?

1. Ministry is carrying on the work that Jesus himself did. (Matt 10:7-8, Acts 10:38, II Cor 4:16-18) This is a simple thing. Start with *announcing* the availability of life in the kingdom of God now, through confidence in Jesus. Preach what Jesus preached in the manner he preached it. See the first time out for the disciples. Matt. 10:5-15, Luke 9:1-6

The three-fold ministry of Christ: Matt. 4:23, 9:35.

We follow Jesus in ministry by doing what he did in ministry of the kingdom of God. He is in charge of the outcome.

2. It is injecting, by word and deed, the reality, substance, life of the kingdom of the heavens into human life and relationships. (Luke 10:9-11, & 11:20, Rom. 14:17)

3. It is receiving the fulness of God into our bodies, as contact points between the kingdom and the surrounding world. (I Cor 6:12-20, John 7:38, Matt. 9:20-21)

WE MINISTER THE REIGN OF GOD: THE REALITY, TRUTH AND POWER OF GOD'S PERSON AND KINGDOM. WE DO THIS BY DOING WHAT JESUS DID AS HE DID IT, IN RELIANCE UPON HIS PRESENCE WITH US. WE MINISTER FROM COMMUNITY: THE PEOPLE OF GOD, THROUGH TIME AND AT A PLACE AND TIME. WE MINISTER OUT OF OUR OWN EXPERIENCE OF GOD, HIS WORD AND HIS KINGDOM. WE MINISTER IN THE MIDST OF, AND WITH, ANGELS, THE HOSTS OF GOD, AND IN CONFLICT WITH SATAN AND HIS SUBORDINATES, WHO WORK AGAINST US BECAUSE THEY OPPOSE GOD.

4. The 'Great Commission' (Matt 28) in relation to ministry.

"I have been given say over all things in heaven and in earth. As you go, therefore, make apprentices to me, submerge them in Trinitarian reality, and train them so that they do all things I have commanded you. And, look, I'm with you every minute, until the job is done." (Matt. 28:18-20)

The best "church growth" plan on record.

How much of it are we planning for? Realistically?

How does it relate to our 'Job' or what we get paid to do? Is this what we do: Being and making disciples?

The "Great Omission."

**Please note:** To follow the Great Commission requires no special facilities, programs, talents, or techniques. Anyone can do it. It doesn't even require a budget. Just the decision to do it, and the willingness to learn as you go, from the one who "has all say" and who is "with us." This is what the first disciples—a most unspectacular lot—did. With spectacular results. See Wm. Paley's *Evidences of Christianity*, esp. Chap. IX.

**But who, what, is a disciple!?!? Stay tuned.**

5. This understanding of ministry clears the way for simplicity and effectiveness in what we do. See Paul's statements on how he worked. I Thess. 1:4-7, I Cor. 2:1-7, II Cor. 3:12, 4:2 & 10:10, Eph. 4:14-15.

**The curse of performance.**

"The sufficiency of Christ to all is the basis of our efforts in gathering and service....The ministers—pastors, teachers, and others—should, with time and experience, expect to receive from Christ—with them profundity of insight, sweetness and strength of character, and abundance of power to carry out their role in the local group. The minister does not need tricks and techniques, but need only speak Christ's word from Christ's character, standing within the manifest presence of God."

p. 247 of *Renovation of the Heart*.

"The pressure's off." Larry Crabb



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SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES:

CONCEPT AND HISTORY

An indispensable truth: We grow in spiritual life and in ministry by well-directed effort. Nothing else will suffice. Not revivals, not religious experiences, though both may help. Not by being taught the truth.

GRACE IS NOT OPPOSED TO EFFORT, BUT TO EARNING!

2. Introduction to the "golden triangle" of spiritual growth.  
(Article, "Looking Like Jesus" and p. 347 of *The Divine Conspiracy*.)

3. The basic plan for growth into mastery of life, in  
companionship with The Master of life,  
is to follow Him into His practices.

Read Kempis, Imitation of Christ, Opening Chapter

"The Secret of the easy Yoke." Chapter One of *The Spirit of the Disciplines*.

We follow examples set by Him, relying on Him to now be with us. We enter this way by experimentation and experience --

Illustrated by His solitude, secrecy, service, study ("My Father's business" of Luke 2:49, for example. See also John 7:15), etc.

Compare Paul's teaching and example: I Tim 4:7-8, I Cor 9:25-27, II Cor 6:4-10. "Follow me as I follow Christ." (I Cor 11:1)

4. Hence, the SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES, or DISCIPLINES FOR THE SPIRITUAL LIFE, utilized by students or apprentices of Jesus throughout the history of His church, are only a systematization and extension--not always wisely done--of practices followed by Jesus and His earliest friends in New Testament times.

5. A 'discipline' is, in general, an activity within our power that enables us to accomplish what we cannot do by direct effort. Thus, Jesus said to three of his friends: "Watch and pray that you may avoid temptation. You are willing in spirit, but your flesh is weak." (Matt. 26: 41; compare Josh 1:8 as to its disciplinary aspect)

6. Grace does not eliminate the need for disciplines and for planned growth, even though some discipline is imposed by God through circumstances and not chosen except after the fact.

7. The effect of discipline is to enable people to do what needs to be done when and as it needs to be done.

8. Disciplines in Christian life are for those who are disciples or students of Jesus--

THEY ARE LEARNING FROM HIM HOW TO LIVE THEIR LIVES AS HE WOULD IF HE WERE THEY--

e.g. how would Jesus be a truck driver or public school teacher or elected official or clergy?

9. The specific activities that can be proper spiritual disciplines are very dangerous if not practiced in reliance upon Christ and his grace. They can generate false and disappointing expectations, and turn into crushing legalisms, as has often--perhaps usually--happened with them in history.

10. Some remarks about the fate of the 'disciplines' in history and various cultures. See especially Chap. VIII of *The Spirit of the Disciplines*.

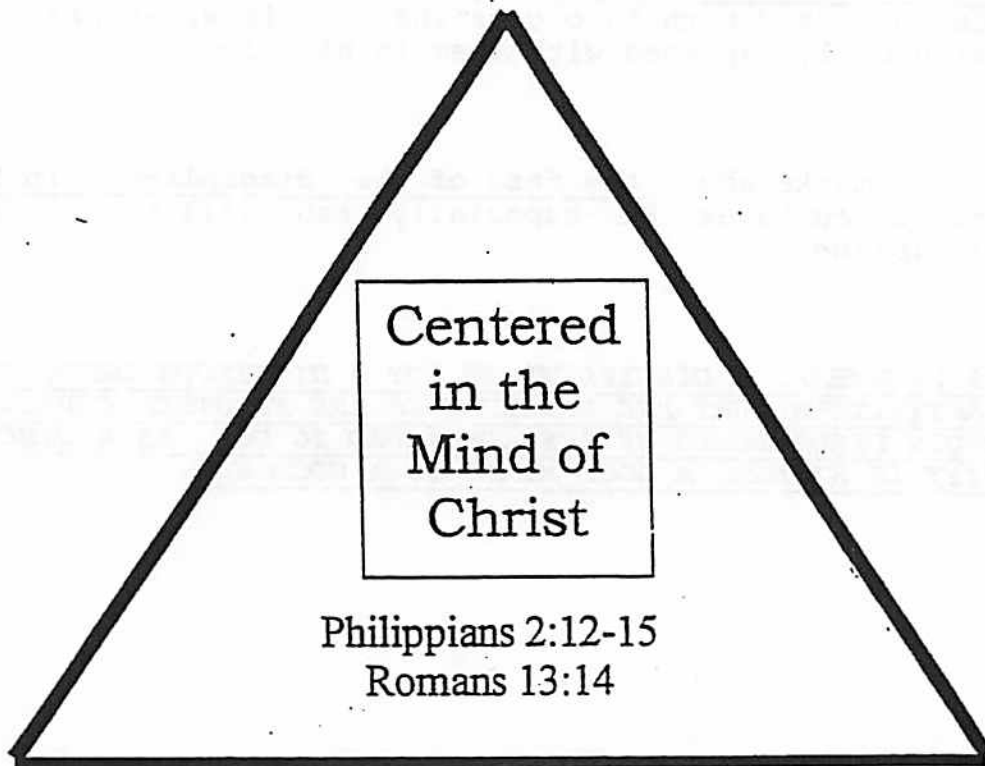
ALWAYS REMEMBER: A DISCIPLINE IS NOT A RIGHTEOUS DEED, THOUGH SOME ACTIVITIES THAT ARE DISCIPLINES ARE IN OTHER CAPACITIES RIGHTEOUS DEEDS--DEEDS WE ARE COMMANDED TO DO. AS A DISCIPLINE AN ACTIVITY IS WISDOM, A GOOD MEANS TO A GOOD END.

# The Golden Triangle of Spiritual Transformation

within which alone we put on the Lord Jesus Christ

## *The Action of the Holy Spirit*

John 3:5 ◊ Romans 8:10-13 ◊ Galation 5:22-26



*Ordinary Events of Life*  
*"Temptations"*

James 1:2-4  
Romans 5:1-5

*Planned Discipline to Put*  
*on New Bowels*

Colossians 3:12-17  
II Peter 1:5-10

Note: This is NOT a phone booth. (Superman)

Further discussion of the "Golden Triangle" in my article "Looking Like Jesus,"  
Christianity Today, August 20, 1990.

# The three main conditions of spiritual growth:

## I. Vision:

1. Of the Kingdom of God and your life in it
2. Character Goals
3. Power—your empowerment

## II. Intention:

To actually fulfill the vision

## III. Means:

For realizing the Vision

Spiritual Disciplines effectively implemented

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**K**eepest the faculty of effort alive in you by a little gratuitous exercise every day. That is, be systematically heroic in little unnecessary points; do every day or two something for no other reason than its difficulty, so that, when the hour of dire need draws nigh, it may find you not unnerved and untrained to stand the test. Asceticism of this sort is like the insurance which a man pays on his house and goods. The tax does him no good at the time, and possibly may never bring him a return. But, if fire does come, his having paid it, it will be his salvation from ruin. So with the man who has daily inured himself to habits of concentrated attention, energetic volition, and self-denial in unnecessary things. He will stand like a tower when everything rocks around him, and his softer fellow-mortals are winnowed like chaff in the blast.

William James, 1912  
*From Talks to Teachers*

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SOME BASIC CONCEPTS  
FOR UNDERSTANDING THE SPIRITUAL LIFE  
IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

As to the meaning of "the spiritual life" and its "disciplines":

A SPIRITUAL LIFE FOR MAN consists in that range of activities in which he, being brought to spiritual birth by God's initiative through the Word, cooperatively interacts with God, and with the spiritual order (Kingdom) deriving from God's personality and action. The result is a new overall quality of human existence with corresponding new powers. This is "the life from above", and makes us "citizens of heaven". (Phil 3:19-21)

A person is a SPIRITUAL PERSON to the degree that his or her life is correctly integrated into and dominated by God's spiritual Kingdom or rule. The "abode in Christ" (1 Cor. 3:1) has spiritual life, but in a largely implicit form. Much in his embodied and concretely socialized personality is not under the effective direction of the Spirit, and the re-integration of his self under God is not yet achieved.

THE DISCIPLINES FOR THE SPIRITUAL LIFE are activities or mind and body purposefully undertaken by the already re-born individual - with such strength as he may have available or as graciously meets our efforts in the act - to bring our personality and total being ever more fully into effective cooperation with the divine order. They enable us more and more to live in a power which is, strictly speaking, beyond us, deriving from the spiritual realm itself, as we "yield ourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Romans 6:13), for "he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you." (Rom 8:11)

There is probably nothing which could pass as a complete and closed list of actions that might serve in spiritual discipline. Whatever actions of mind or body can rightly be undertaken to prepare me indirectly for an interaction with God that more fully confirms me in the likeness and power of Christ: that is a discipline for the spiritual life. But while multitudes of activities might serve given individuals in certain circumstances as disciplines, the following are the ones most commonly recognized and practiced throughout the ages of the Christian Church:

DISCIPLINES OF ABSTINENCE - solitude, silence, fasting, simplicity, frugality, chastity, secrecy, and sacrifice.  
DISCIPLINES OF ENGAGEMENT - study, worship, celebration, service, prayer, fellowship, confession, submission.

These practices, suitably adapted to the individual case by a long course of thoughtful, prayerful experience in interaction with the guiding spirit of Christ, will constitute an effective strategy for growth in the life of God's Kingdom.

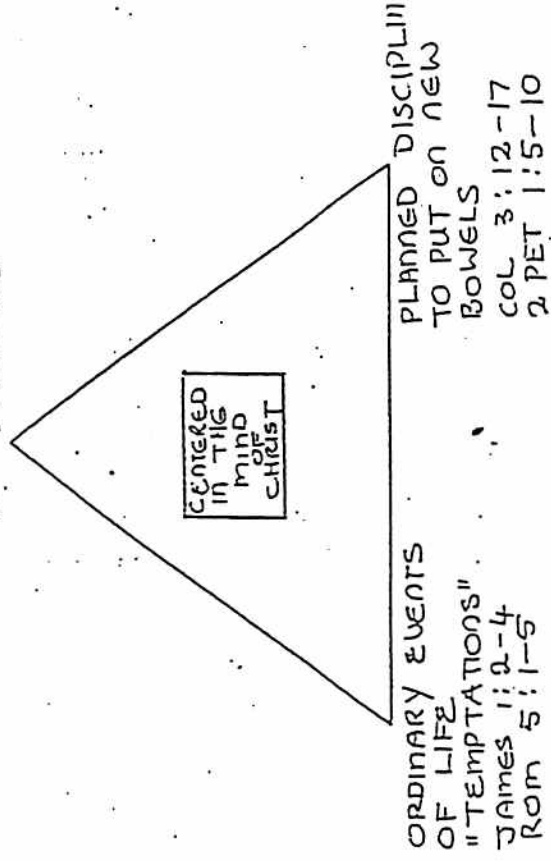
Remember: disciplines are for disciples only - those who have been brought to new life by the power of the Word of the Kingdom and its King, who therefore want above all else to be like Him (Luke 14:33), and who then are quite naturally arranging their affairs so that that will come to pass. Also: a broad range of disciplines must be practiced, for they are mutually corrective. Fasting needs celebration, silence needs fellowship.

As it is not our part to earn salvation, including forgiveness of our sins, so it is not God's part to offer our bodies a living sacrifice. (Rom 12:1) The role of disciplines for the spiritual life in the full redemption of human personality rests upon the nature of the embodied human self. Our part in our full redemption is, through specific and appropriate activities, to "yield" the substance of which we are made - as the bodily and therefore "plastic" beings of the kind we are by creation - to the ways of that new life imparted to us by the "quickening spirit" in the birth from above.

PHILIPPIANS 2:12-15  
ROMANS 13:14

THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE OF SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION  
within which alone we put on the Lord Jesus Christ

THE ACTION  
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT  
JOHN 3:5  
ROM 8:10-13  
GAL 5:22-26



FURTHER DISCUSSION OF THE 'GOLDEN TRIANGLE'  
IN MY ARTICLE "LOOKING LIKE JESUS",  
CHRISTIANITY TODAY 8/20/70

(NOTE: THIS IS NOT A MIONE BEOTH) (SUPERMAN)

(Outline for a study)

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES FOR LIFE IN THE KINGDOM --- NOW!

Jesus uniquely meets the universal human problem: How to live? He invites us to trust, have confidence in Him--Ps. 23

To trust Him is to follow Him, walk with Him, enter His "yoke." (John 8:12, 14:23, Matt 11:28-30, Heb. 13:5-6)

This is the path of salvation, of deliverance. By it we enter the Kingdom of the Heavens which He announced was available in His own person. (Mark 1:15, Luke 4:18-21, Acts 10:38)

Trusting Him thus meets all human needs for:

righteousness  
provision  
purpose ---

}

Matt 5:20 and 6:33, Rom 14:17

through the new life "from above" (John 3, Phil. 3:20, Col. 1:13) that is in us.

The new life--Divine life (II Peter 1:4, Gal. 2:20)--now confronts the tendencies of sin still lurking in our body and its social context. (Rom 7:17-25, Gla. 5:16-18, Gen 4:7)

WE are challenged to put on the new person, to mortify the deeds of the body, to work out our salvation. (Col 3:5-13, Rom 8:13, Phil. 2:12-16) Something for us to do -- not without divine assistance of course. But we must act?

What is our plan? Again and always: to follow Jesus. To follow examples set by Him, relying on Him to now be with us.

To enter this way by experience and experimentation.

--illustrated by His solitude, secrecy, service, study ("My Father's business" of Luke 2:49, see also John 7:15), etc.

And by Paul's teaching and example: I Tim. 4:7-8, I Cor 9:25-27, II Cor. 6:4-10. "Follow me as I follow Christ." (I Cor 11:1) Phil. 3:17 & 4:9.

The SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES, or DISCIPLINES FOR THE SPIRITUAL LIFE, used by disciples of Jesus throughout the history of His church, are only a systematization and extension--not always wisely done--of practices followed by Jesus and His earliest friends in New Testament times.



A 'Discipline' is an activity that enables us to accomplish what we cannot do by direct effort. "Watch and pray that you may avoid temptation. You are willing in spirit, but you flesh is weak." (Matt. 26:41)

<u>Disciplines of Abstinence</u>	
<u>Disciplines of Engagement</u>	
solitude	study
silence	worship
fasting	celebration
frugality	service
chastity	prayer
secrecy	fellowship
sacrifice	confession
watching, etc.	submission, etc.

We begin to PLAN for hearty Christlikeness by making these a regular part of our lives with Jesus. What are your plans for "putting of the old person and putting on the new?" For living fully in the Kingdom with Jesus now? It's your move. If possible, make your "moves" in fellowship with a few like-minded disciples.

power over one another in their actions. Certain thoughts and sentiments in the soul produce such and such motions or actions in the body; and on the other hand, certain motions and actions of the body have the same power of raising such and such thoughts and sentiments in the soul. So that as singing is the natural effect of joy in the mind, so it is as truly a natural cause of raising joy in the mind.

As devotion of the heart naturally breaks out into outward acts of prayer, so outward acts of prayer are natural means of raising the devotion of the heart.

It is thus in all states and tempers of the mind. As the inward state of the mind produces outward actions suitable to it, so those outward actions have the like power of raising an inward state of mind suitable to them.

As anger produces angry words, so angry words increase anger. So that if we barely consider human nature, we shall find that singing or chanting the Psalms is as proper and necessary to raise our hearts to a delight in God as prayer is proper and necessary to excite in us the spirit of devotion. Every reason for one is in all respects as strong a reason for the other.

If therefore you would know the reason and necessity of singing Psalms, you must consider the reason and necessity of praising and rejoicing in God because singing of Psalms is as much the true exercise and support of this spirit of thanksgiving as prayer is the true exercise and support of the spirit of devotion. And you may as well think that you can be devout as you ought without the use of prayer as that you can rejoice in God as you ought without the practice of singing of Psalms. Because this singing is as much the natural language of praise and thanksgiving as prayer is the natural language of devotion.

The union of soul and body is not a mixture of their substances as we see bodies united and mixed together but consists solely in the mutual power that they have of acting upon one another.

If two persons were in such a state of dependence upon one another that neither of them could act, or move, or think, or feel, or suffer, or desire anything without putting the other into the same condition, one might properly say that they were in a state of strict union although their substances were not united together.

Now this is the union of the soul and body; the substance of the

one cannot be mixed or united with the other, but they are held together in such a state of union that all the actions and sufferings of the one are at the same time the actions and sufferings of the other. The soul has no thought or passion but the body is concerned in it; the body has no action or motion but what in some degree affects the soul.

Now as it is the sole will of God that is the reason and cause of all the powers and effects which you see in the world; as the sun gives light and heat not because it has any natural power of so doing; as it is fixed in a certain place and other bodies moving about it not because it is in the nature of the sun to stand still and in the nature of other bodies to move about it, but merely because it is the will of God that they should be in such a state; as the eye is the organ or instrument of seeing not because the skins, and coats, and humors of the eye have a natural power of giving sight; as the ears are the organs or instruments of hearing not because the make of the ear has any natural power over sounds, but merely because it is the will of God that seeing and hearing should be thus received, so in like manner it is the sole will of God and not the nature of a human soul or body that is the cause of this union betwixt the soul and the body.

Now if you rightly apprehend this short account of the union of the soul and body, you will see a great deal into the reason and necessity of all the outward parts of religion.

This union of our souls and bodies is the reason both why we have so little and so much power over ourselves. It is owing to this union that we have so little power over our souls, for as we cannot prevent the effects of external objects upon our bodies, as we cannot command outward causes, so we cannot always command the inward state of our minds because as outward objects act upon our bodies without our leave, so our bodies act upon our minds by the laws of the union of the soul and the body. And thus you see it is owing to this union that we have so little power over ourselves.

On the other hand, it is owing to this union that we have so much power over ourselves. For as our souls in a great measure depend upon our bodies; as we can command our outward actions and oblige ourselves to such habits of life as naturally produce habits in the soul; as we can mortify our bodies and remove ourselves from objects that inflame our passions, so we have a great power over the

exercise our souls, but we must practice and exercise our bodies to all such outward actions as are conformable to these inward tempers. If we would truly prostrate our souls before God, we must use our bodies to postures of lowliness; if we desire true fervors of devotion, we must make prayer the frequent labor of our lips. If we would banish all pride and passion from our hearts, we must force ourselves to all outward actions of patience and meekness. If we would feel inward motions of joy and delight in God, we must practice all the outward acts of it and make our voices call upon our hearts.

Now therefore, you may plainly see the reason and necessity of singing of Psalms; it is because outward actions are necessary to support inward tempers, and therefore the outward act of joy is necessary to raise and support the inward joy of the mind.

If any people were to leave off prayer because they seldom find the motions of their hearts answering the words which they speak, you would charge them with great absurdity. You would think it very reasonable that they should continue their prayers and be strict in observing all times of prayer as the most likely means of removing the dullness and indevotion of their hearts.

Now this is very much the case as to singing of Psalms; people often sing without finding any inward joy suitable to the words which they speak; therefore they are careless of it, or wholly neglect it, not considering that they act as absurdly as he that should neglect prayer because his heart was not enough affected with it. For it is certain that this singing is as much the natural means of raising motions of joy in the mind as prayer is the natural means of raising devotion.

I have been the longer upon this head because of its great importance to true religion. For there is no state of mind so holy, so excellent, and so truly perfect as that of thankfulness to God; and consequently nothing is of more importance in religion than that which exercises and improves this habit of mind.

A dull, uneasy, complaining spirit, which is sometimes the spirit of those that seem careful of religion, is yet of all tempers the most contrary to religion, for it disowns that God which it pretends to adore. For he sufficiently disowns God who does not adore Him as a Being of infinite goodness.

If a man does<sup>99</sup> not believe that all the world is as God's family

inward state of our souls. Again, as we are masters of our outward actions; as we can force ourselves to outward acts of reading, praying, singing, and the like; and as all these bodily actions have an effect upon the soul as they naturally tend to form such and such tempers in our hearts; so by being masters of these outward, bodily actions, we have great power over the inward state of the heart.

And thus it is owing to this union that we have so much power over ourselves.

Now from this you may also see the necessity and benefit of singing Psalms, and of all the outward acts of religion; for if the body has so much power over the soul, it is certain that all such bodily actions as affect the soul are of great weight in religion, not as if there was any true worship or piety in the actions themselves, but because they are proper to raise and support that spirit, which is the true worship of God.

Though therefore the seat of religion is in the heart, yet since our bodies have a power over our hearts since outward actions both proceed from and enter into the heart, it is plain that outward actions have a great power over that religion which is seated in the heart.

We are therefore as well to use outward helps as inward meditation in order to beget and fix habits of piety in our hearts.

This doctrine may easily be carried too far; for by calling in too many outward means of worship, it may degenerate into superstition, as on the other hand, some have fallen into the contrary extreme. For because religion is justly placed in the heart, some have pursued that notion so far as to renounce vocal prayer and other outward acts of worship, and have resolved all religion into a quietism or mystic intercourses with God in silence.

Now these are two extremes equally prejudicial to true religion and ought not to be objected either against internal or external worship. As you ought not to say that I encourage that quietism by placing religion in the heart, so neither ought you to say that I encourage superstition by showing the benefit of outward acts of worship.

For since we are neither all soul nor all body, seeing none of our actions are either separately of the soul or separately of the body, seeing we have no habits but such as are produced by the actions both of our souls and bodies, it is certain that if we would arrive at habits of devotion or delight in God, we must not only meditate and

If therefore you would be so true to your eternal interest as to propose this thankfulness as the end of all your religion, if you would but settle it in your mind that this was the state that you was to aim at by all your devotions, you would then have something plain and visible to walk by in all your actions, you would then easily see the effect of your improvement in piety. For so far as you renounce all selfish tempers and motions of your own will and seek for no other happiness but in the thankful reception of everything that happens to you, so far you may be safely reckoned to have advanced in piety.

And although this be the highest temper that you can aim at, though it be the noblest sacrifice that the greatest Saint can offer unto God, yet is it not tied to any time, or place, or great occasion but is always in your power and may be the exercise of every day. For the common events of every day are sufficient to discover and exercise in this temper and may plainly show you how far you are governed in all your actions by this thankful spirit.

And for this reason I exhort you to this method in your devotion, that every day may be made a day of thanksgiving and that the spirit of murmur and discontent may be unable to enter into the heart, which is so often employed in singing praises of God.

It may perhaps after all be objected that although the great benefit and excellent effects of this practice are very apparent, yet it seems not altogether so fit for private devotions since it can hardly be performed without making our devotions public to other people and seems also liable to the charge of sounding a trumpet at our prayers.

It is therefore answered, first, that great numbers of people have it in their power to be as private as they please; such persons therefore are excluded from this excuse, which however it may be so to others, is none to them. Therefore, let such take the benefit of this excellent devotion.

Secondly, numbers of people are by the necessity of their state, as servants, apprentices, prisoners, and families in small houses, forced to be continually in the presence or sight of somebody or other.

Now are such persons to neglect their prayers because they cannot pray without being seen? Are they not rather obliged to be more exact in them, that others may not be witnesses of their neglect and so corrupted by their example?

where nothing happens by chance but all is guided and directed by the care and providence of a Being that is all love and goodness to all His creatures, if a man do not believe this from his heart, he cannot be said truly to believe in God. And yet he that has this faith has faith enough to overcome the world, and always be thankful to God. For he that believes that everything happens to him for the best cannot possibly complain for the want of something that is better.

If therefore you live in murmurings and complaints, accusing all the accidents of life, it is not because you are a weak, infirm creature, but it is because you want the first principle of religion, a right belief in God. For as thankfulness is an express acknowledgment of the goodness of God toward you, so reprimands and complaints are as plain accusations of God's want of goodness toward you.

On the other hand, would you know who is the greatest saint in the world? It is not he who prays most or fasts most; it is not he who gives most alms or is most eminent for temperance, chastity, or justice; but it is he who is always thankful to God, who wills everything that God willeth, who receives everything as an instance of God's goodness and has a heart always ready to praise God for it.

(All) prayer and devotion, fastings and repentance, meditation and retirement, all sacraments and ordinances, are but so many means to render the soul thus divine and conformable to the will of God and to fill it with thankfulness and praise for everything that comes from God. This is the perfection of all virtues; and all virtues that do not tend to it or proceed from it are but so many false ornaments of a soul not converted unto God.

You need not therefore now wonder that I lay so much stress upon singing a Psalm at all your devotions since you see it is to form your spirit to such joy and thankfulness to God as is the highest perfection of a divine and holy life.

If anyone would tell you the shortest, surest way to all happiness and all perfection, he must tell you to make it a rule to yourself to thank and praise God for everything that happens to you. For it is certain that whatever seeming calamity happens to you, if you thank and praise God for it, you turn it into a blessing. Could you therefore work miracles, you could not do more for yourself than by this thankful spirit, for it heals with a word speaking, and turns all that it touches into happiness.

# Looking Like JESUS



*Divine resources for a changed life are always available.*

DALLAS WILLARD

Some time ago I came to realize that I did not love the people next door. They were, by any standards, dangerous and unpleasant people—ex-bikers who made their living selling drugs.

They had never tried to harm my family, but the constant traffic of people buying drugs, a number of whom sat in the yard while shooting up, began to wear down my patience. As I brooded over them one day, indulging my irritation, the Lord helped me see that I really had no love for them at all, that after "suffering" from them for several years I would secretly be happy if they died so that we could just be rid of them. I realized how little I truly cared for nearly all the people I dealt with through the day, even when on "religious business." I had to admit that I had never earnestly sought to be possessed by God's kind of love, to become more like Jesus. Now it was time to seek.

But is it possible to be like Jesus? Can we actually have the character of the heavenly Father? We know God shows sincere love for everyone and is consistently kind to even the ungrateful. Jesus likewise showed himself to be merciful, freely forgave injuries, and was glad simply to give, expecting nothing back.

It is possible, I now believe, to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 13:14). Ordinary people in common surround-

ings can live from the abundance of God's kingdom, letting the spirit and the actions of Jesus be the natural outflow from their lives. The "tree" can be made good, and the fruit will then be good as a matter of course (Matt. 12:33). This new life God imparts involves both a goal and a method.

#### His heart, our heart

As disciples (literally *students*) of Jesus, our goal is to learn to be like him. We begin by trusting him to receive us as we are. But our confidence in him leads us toward the same kind of faith he had, a faith that made it possible for him to act as he did. Jesus' faith was rooted in his gospel of heaven's rule, the good news of "the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 4:17). *Heaven* is a deeply significant word. From Abraham (Gen. 24:7) onward, it signified to the people of Israel the direct availability of God to his children, as well as his supremacy over all that affects us. From heaven, "the eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous, and his ears toward their cry" (Ps. 34:15; also 1 Pet. 3:12).

Jesus was concerned to pass on to his followers this reality of heaven's rule that undergirded his life. When he sent his 12 friends out on their first mission, he told them it was like sending "sheep in the midst of wolves." It would be butterflies against machine guns. Nevertheless—imagine sheep being told this!—there was no need for them to fear. Two sparrows cost a penny. Yet

not one falls upon the earth "without your Father's will." Heaven is so close that even the hairs on our heads are numbered. "Fear not," Jesus tells us, "you are of more value than many sparrows" (Matt. 10:16, 29-31).

#### Avoiding dreary substitutes

Living under the governance of heaven frees and empowers us to love as God loves. But outside the safety and sufficiency of heaven's rule, we are too frightened and angry to really love others, or even ourselves, and so we arrange our dreary substitutes. A contemporary wording of Jesus' comparison of God's kind of love, *agapē*, and what normally passes for love might be: "What's so great if you love those who love you? Terrorists do that! If that's all your 'love' amounts to, God certainly is not involved. Or suppose you are friendly to 'our kind of people.' So is the Mafia!" (Matt. 5:46-47).

Now reflect: Has your heart gone out in generous blessing to someone who has insulted or humiliated you? Can you work without thought of gain for the well-being of someone who openly despises you, maybe has told you to drop dead? Are you enthusiastically pulling for the success of someone competing with you for favor, position, or financial gain?

A much-used doormat says: "Welcome, friends!" Could yours also genuinely welcome enemies? When you lend a dress, a stereo, a car, or some tools or

# Looking Like JESUS

books, are you able to release them with no hope of seeing them again, as Luke 6:35 suggests we should? I do a good bit of my own mechanical and carpentry work, and I have a good supply of tools—which neighbors soon discover. I am glad for opportunities to lend a chain saw, an ax, a crescent wrench, or pliers, for I see them as a true spiritual exercise in abandonment to God. I am learning to love others in these little things, and it helps me to be ready to trust him in things that truly matter.

**The golden triangle**  
If this life of faith and love from heaven is the goal of the disciple of Jesus, the natural fulfillment of the new life in Christ, how can we enter into it? While it is in one sense a result of God's presence within us, the New Testament also describes a process behind our "putting on" the Lord Jesus Christ. It is repeatedly discussed in the Bible under three essential aspects, each inseparable from the other, all interrelated. This process could be called "the golden triangle" of spiritual transformation, for it is as precious as gold to the disciple, and each of its aspects is as essential to the whole as three sides are to a triangle.

One aspect or side of our triangle is the faithful acceptance of everyday problems. By enduring trials with patience we can reach an assurance of the fullness of heaven's rule in our lives.

James, the Lord's brother, began his message to the church by instructing us to be "supremely happy" when troubles come upon us: "When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives, my brothers, don't resent them as intruders, but welcome them as friends! Realize that they come to test your faith and to produce in you the quality of endurance" (1:2-3, Phillips). When endurance or patience has been given full play in the details of day-to-day existence, it will make us "perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (v. 4).

Certainly James learned this from Jesus, his older brother, during more than 20 years of sometimes rancorous family life (John 7:2-8). We must never forget that for most of his life Jesus was what we today would call a blue-collar worker, a tradesman, an independent con-

tractor. His hands had calluses from using the first-century equivalents of hammers, drills, axes, saws, and planes. He was known in his village

Spirit will enable us to perform some specific function—such as service or healing or leading worship—with effects clearly beyond those of our own making. These gifts serve God's purposes among his people, but they do not necessarily signify the state of our heart.

The fruit of the Spirit, by contrast, give a sure sign of transformed character. When our deepest attitudes and dispositions are those of Jesus, it is because we have learned to let the Spirit foster his life in us. Paul confessed: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). The outcome of Christ living within us through the Spirit is fruit:

love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal. 5:22-23).

Both gifts and fruit are the result, not the reality, of the Spirit's presence in our lives. What brings about our transformation into Christlikeness is our direct, personal interaction with Christ through the Spirit. The Spirit makes Christ present to us and draws us toward his likeness. It is as we thus "behold the glory of the Lord" that we are constantly "transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18, NASB).

## The disciplines of Christlikeness

The third side of our triangle is made up of spiritual disciplines. These are special activities, many engaged in by Jesus himself, such as solitude and study, service and secrecy, fasting and worship. They are ways in which we undertake to follow the New Testament mandate to put to death or "make no provision for" the merely earthly aspects of our lives, and to put on the new person (Col. 3).

The emphasis in this dimension of spiritual transformation is upon our efforts. True, we are given much, and without grace we can do nothing; but our action is also required. "Try your hardest," Peter directs us (2 Pet. 1:5, NEB). We are to add virtue to our faith, knowledge to our virtue, self-control to our knowledge, patience to our self-control, godlikeness to our patience.

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**H**aste has worry, fear, and  
anger as close associates and  
is a deadly enemy of kindness,  
and hence of love.

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simply as "the carpenter."

There James saw him practice all he later preached. We know what it is like to "do business with the public." So did Jesus. Every single thing that Jesus taught us to do was something he had put into daily practice. In the trials of his everyday existence, in family and village life, he verified the sufficiency of God's care for those who simply trust him and obey him. And, at least in retrospect, James understood. Once he saw who his older brother really was, he realized the power of patience in the events of daily life—manifested above all by an inoffensive tongue (James 3:2)—as the path in which God's character is fulfilled in our lives.

## Opening our lives to the Spirit

The second side of our triangle is interaction with God's Spirit in and around us. As Paul points out, the Spirit allows us to "walk in" the Spirit (Gal. 5:25). This all-powerful, creative personality, the promised "strengthened," the *paraclete* of John 14, gently awaits our invitation to him to act upon us, with us, and for us.

The presence of the Holy Spirit can always be recognized by the way he moves us toward what Jesus would be and do (John 16:7-15). When we inwardly experience the heavenly sweetness and power of life—the love, joy, and peace—that Jesus knew, that is the work of the Spirit in us.

Outwardly, life in the Spirit manifests itself in two ways. Gifts of the



brotherly love to our godlikeness, and *agapē* to our brotherly love (vv. 5-7).

In Colossians 3, Paul urges us "as the elect of God, holy and beloved" to renew our inner selves with organs ("bowels" in *KJV*) of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearance, forgiveness, and *agapē* (vv. 12-14). We should not only want to be merciful, kind, unassuming, and patient persons, we are also to *make plans* to become so. We are to find out, that is, what prevents and what promotes mercifulness and kindness and patience in our souls, and we are to remove hindrances to them as much as possible, carefully substituting that which assists Christlikeness.

Many well-meaning people, to give an example, cannot succeed in being kind because they are too rushed to get things done. Haste has worry, fear, and anger as close associates; it is a deadly enemy of kindness, and hence of love. If this is our problem, we may be greatly helped by a day's retreat into solitude and silence, where we will discover that the world survives even though we are inactive. There we might prayerfully meditate to see clearly the damage done by our unkindness, and honestly compare it to what, if anything, is really gained by our hurry. We will come to understand that for the most part our hurry is really based upon pride, self-importance, fear, and lack of faith, and

rarely upon the production of anything of true value for anyone.

Perhaps we will end up making plans to pray daily for the people with whom we deal regularly. Or we may resolve to ask associates for forgiveness for past injuries. Whatever comes of such prayerful reflection, we may be absolutely sure that our lives will never be the same, and that we will enjoy a far greater richness of God's reality in our lives.

In general, then, we "put on" the new person by regular activities that are in our power, and we become what we could not be by direct effort. If we take note of and follow Jesus in what he did when he was *not* ministering or teaching, we will find ourselves led and enabled to behave as he did when he was "on the spot."

The single most obvious trait of those who profess Christ but do not grow into Christlikeness is their refusal to take the reasonable and time-tested measures for spiritual growth. I almost never meet someone in spiritual coldness, perplexity, and distress who is regular in the use of those spiritual exercises that will be obvious to anyone familiar with the contents of the New Testament.

#### Like stars in a dark world

The three sides of the golden triangle of spiritual transformation belong togeth-

er. No one of the three will give us a heart like Christ's without the other two. None can take the place of any other. Yet each, connected to the others, will certainly bring us to ever-increasing Christlikeness.

In Philippians 2 the apostle draws all three together in one grand statement: "You must work out your own salvation in fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you, inspiring both the will and the deed, for his own chosen purpose. Do all you have to do without complaint or wrangling. Show yourselves guileless and above reproach, faultless children of God in a warped and crooked generation, in which you shine like stars in a dark world" (vv. 12-15, *NEB*).

When we accept moment-to-moment events and tribulations as the place where we receive God's provision, we patiently anticipate the action of his Spirit in our lives. In hope we do our best to find the ways in which our inner self can take on the character of the children of the Highest. This is the path of radical change—change sufficient to meet the needs of the world and prepare a people to be the habitation of God. □

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THEORY AND PRACTICE

OF

SPECIFIC DISCIPLINES

Depending on our progress with the foregoing topics, some time during the third day of the retreat we will begin discussion of specific disciplines for spiritual life

With each of the disciplines, our discussion will be guided more or less by the following points:

What it is

Question of its biblical basis

How it relates to the physical body

Illustrated from life of Jesus and others

The specific spiritual benefits achieved through it



Its relation to ministry

Practicalities: How to do it

Dangers

Each discipline will be dealt with in a "workshop" style, with substantial contributions expected from the experience and reading of all retreat participants. This will carry us into or through mid-week of the second week, on the schedule of topics given above.

\*

### DISCIPLINES OF ABSTINENCE

Designed to free us from spiritually hurtful entanglements --  
Especially from overdependence on human interactions and work.

SOLITUDE: Electing to step free from human relationships for a lengthy period of time, in isolation or anonymity, to make room for occupation of our lives by God. To do nothing!

The example of Jesus: Matt 4:1-2; Mark 1: 13; Luke 4:42, 5:16, 6:12, 9:28, etc.

of Moses: Ex. 3:1

Relation of solitude to Law of the Sabbath. (Ex. 20, Lev. 23 & 25)

Possibly involving "Elijah's disciplines" (I Kings 19:4-9)

Achieved by relocating the body in space and time.

Why this is essential.

All the 'spiritual' disciplines are uses of the body to aid the will. Spiritual growth is not just increased "will power."

BENEFITS: Find that we can live without constant interactions with others, and they without us. The world does not rest on our shoulders. We have time to focus on God, and to clear the storm of life and mind for decision and planning. Place is made for the practice of other disciplines, e. g. fasting and study, which cannot usually be learned--though they may, once learned, be practiced--except in solitude. Solitude is the primary spiritual discipline. Why most people succeed little with prayer or study.

In solitude we can find God like the Psalmist: "I have set the Lord always before me. He is at my right hand. I shall not be moved." (Ps. 16:8) Statements by Wm. Penn, Thomas a Kempis.

Solitude and the 4th commandment: sabbath (Deut 5:12-15)

Intensification of Sabbath: Ex. 20:10 (No work),

Lev. 23:27-32, Lev. 25:1-22, esp. vss. 21 & 22

God will not, as a rule, compete for your attention.

How do you seek the face of the Lord? (Ps. 24:6, 27:8)

RELATION OF SOLITUDE TO MINISTRY: Enables clarity and resolution of purpose and strength to avoid distraction. Gives an example of a life in the sufficiency of God and free from human manipulation.

Breaks the power of hurry. Learn to never hurry.

Have some times each week when you do nothing.

C. S. Lewis' statement that only lazy people are busy.

DANGERS: Insensitivity to others dependent on us.

Avoidance of responsibilities and problems.

Introvertive indulgences

Inability to accept doing nothing in solitude.

And turning it into more work.

Practicalities: Getting sufficient time for solitude to work.

Making sure that legitimate responsibilities are  
cared for.



Bettmann

## Sonnet On His Blindness

JOHN MILTON

*(Born December 9, 1608; died November 8, 1674)*

When I consider how my light is spent  
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,  
And that one talent, which is death to hide,  
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent  
To serve therewith my Maker, and present  
My true account, lest He, returning, chide:  
"Doth God exact day labor, light denied?"  
I fondly ask; but Patience, to prevent  
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need  
Either man's work, or His own gifts; who best  
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best. His state  
Is kingly. Thousands at His bidding speed,  
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;  
They also serve who only stand and wait."

Working through expectations as to what is

"supposed to happen."

Developing setting of time and place for  
regular solitude and silence.

Study Correto, Desert in the City for  
inspiration and practical directions.

Now consider also planned practices of:

SILENCE---

Actually, two forms/two disciplines under one title:

(1). To be in quiet, eliminate sounds. Experience perfect silence (as in a recording booth), or only "natural" noise--wind in trees, birds, water running, heart beating, breathing.

Silence is not an absence but a presence: a positive reality. Consider the thought that it is sound that is the absence.

(2). To refrain from speaking (Ch. 6, Rule of St. Benedict)

Comment on Silence and waiting - Isa. 40:31; Ps. 25:3, 5 & 21; 37:7, 34; 62:5; & 69:3

Why and how is it that they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength?

Relation of silence to witnessing/evangelizing

The discipline of not having (taking) the last word.

"Where there are lots of words, sin is not lacking; but those who refrain from speaking are wise." (Prov. 10:19)

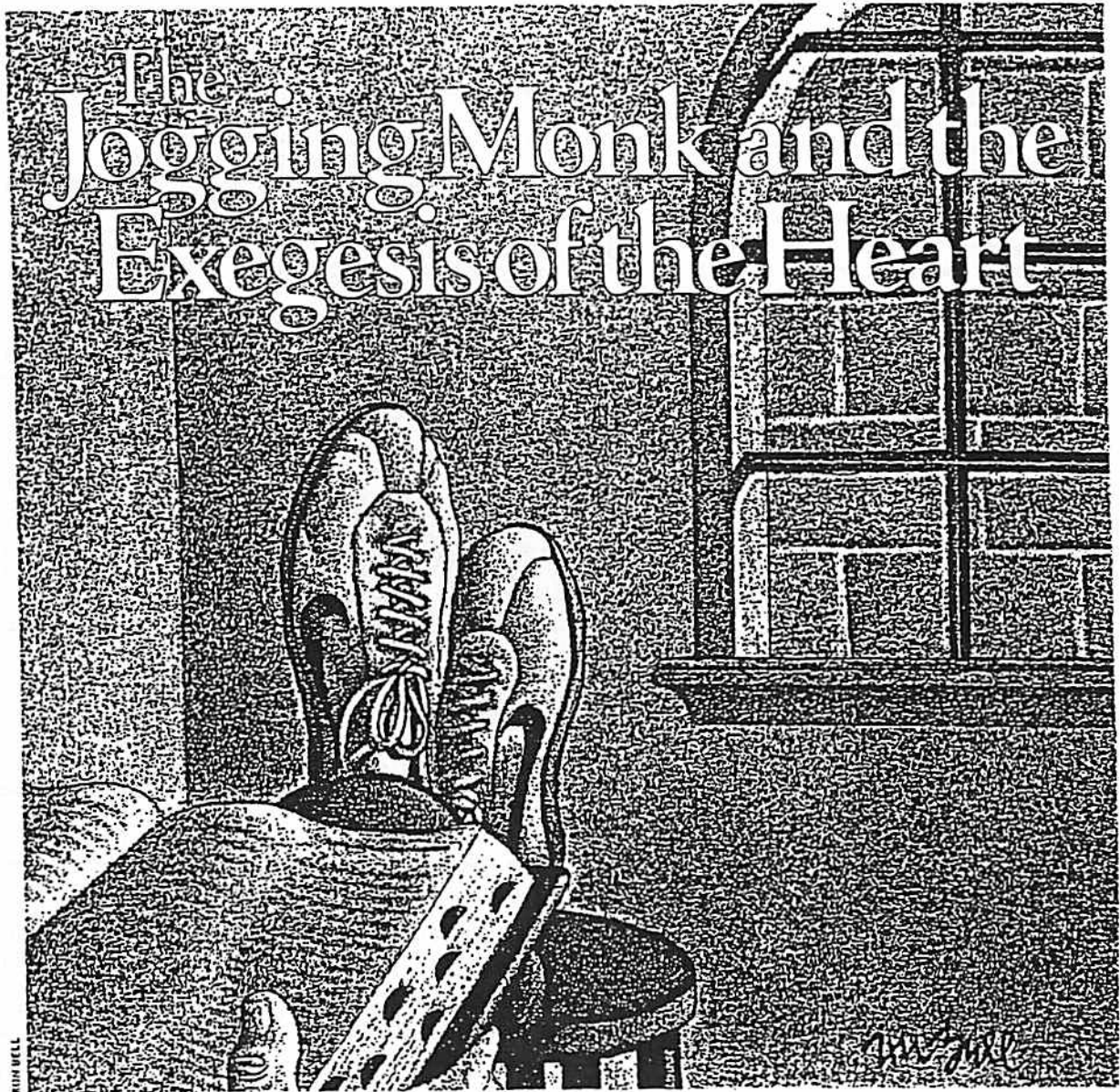
"Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your words be few. For the dream comes through much effort, and the voice of a fool through many words." (Eccl. 5:2-3)

"The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart." (Luke 6:45)

"But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God." (James 1:19-20)

And study 3:1-12 carefully: "If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well." (James 3:2) WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORDS AND ANGER? "The tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity...and is set on fire by hell...No one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison..." (3:6 & 8)

Pascal: "I have discovered that all the unhappiness of men arises from one single fact, that they cannot stay quietly in their own chamber." *Pensées* #136



JAMES B. SMITH

During my second year of seminary, the spiritual moorings of my life came loose. Earlier, before starting seminary, I had asked the spiritual writer Henri Nouwen which seminary would best nurture my spiritual life. "None of them," he responded. "That will be mostly up to you."

After a year and a half, I learned the truth of his words. I decided to go on a five-day silent retreat at an Episcopalian monastery in the Northeast to try to reclaim the spiritual warmth I had somehow lost.

Upon arrival I was assigned a monk who would be my spiritual director for one hour each day. He walked into our meeting room with jogging clothes underneath his cowl. I was disappointed. I had been expecting an elderly man, bearded to his knees, who would penetrate my soul with searing blue eyes. Instead, I got "the jogging monk."

My director gave me only one task for the day: Meditate on the story of the Annunciation in the first chapter of Luke's gospel. I walked back to my cell wondering how I would occupy my time with only this one assignment. After all, I thought to myself, I could exegete this entire text in a few hours.

*How I learned  
to listen to God  
in a room  
without a view.*

## The Jogging Monk and the Exegesis of the Heart

What was I to do for the rest of the day—in silence?

Back at my cell I opened my Bible to the passage and began reading. "Birth narrative," I muttered to myself. For the next hour I spliced and diced the verses as any good exegete would do, ending up with a few hypotheses and several hours to sit in silence. As the hours passed the room seemed to get smaller. There was no view to the outside through the window of my room. Other rooms, I would come to find, had a beautiful view of the river that flowed adjacent to the monastery. Without any view to the outer world, I was forced to look within. Despite my hopes of finding spiritual bliss, I never felt more alone.

### What else is there?

The next day I met with the monk again to discuss my spiritual life. He asked what had happened with the assigned text. I told him it was just shy of disaster in terms of profound spiritual revelations, but that I had come up with a few exegetical insights. I thought my discoveries might impress him.

They didn't.

"What was your aim in reading this passage?" he asked.

"My aim? To arrive at an understanding of the meaning of the text. I suppose."

"Anything else?"

I paused. "No. What else is there?"

"Well, there's more than just finding out what it says and what it means. There are also questions, like, What did it teach you? What did it say to you? Were you struck by anything? And most importantly, Did you experience God in your reading?"

He assigned the same text for the next day, asking me to begin reading it not so much with my head, but more with my heart.

I had no idea how to do this. For the first three hours I tried and failed repeatedly. I practically had the passage memorized, and still it was lifeless and I was bored. The room seemed even smaller, and by nightfall, I thought I would go deaf from the silence.

The next day we met again. In despair I told him that I simply could not do what he was asking me to do. It was then that the wisdom beneath the jogging clothes became evident: "You're trying too hard, Jim. You're trying to control God. *You're* running the show. Go back and read this passage again.

But this time, be open to receive whatever God has for you. Don't manipulate God; just receive. Communion with him isn't something you institute. It's like sleep. You can't make yourself sleep, but you can create the conditions that allow sleep to happen. All I want



**L**ike Augustine, who turned to the Scriptures after hearing a voice say, "Take up and read," I had reached the end of my rope and was, for the first time in a long time, in a position to hear.

you to do is create the conditions: Open your Bible, read it slowly, listen to it, and reflect on it."

I went back to my cell (it had a prisonlike feel by now) and began to read. I found utter silence. After an hour I finally shouted, "I give up! You win!" though I am not certain at whom I was shouting. I slumped over in my chair and began to weep. I suspect it was for my failure that God had been waiting.

### Let it be to me

A short time later I picked up the Bible and read the passage again. The words looked different, despite their familiarity. My mind and heart were supple as I read. I was no longer trying to figure out the meaning or the main point of

the passage, I was simply hearing it.

My eyes fell upon the famous words of Mary, "Let it be to me according to your word," her response to God's stunning promise that she would give birth to his son. *Let it be to me.* The words rang in my head. And then God spoke to me. Some might say it was "all in my head" or "just my imagination," but how else does God speak?

It was as if a window had been thrown open and God was suddenly present, like a friend who wanted to talk. What followed was a dialogue about the story in Luke, about God, about Mary, and about me. I wondered about Mary—her feelings, her doubts, her fears, and her incredible willingness to respond to God's request.

This prompted me to ask (or the Spirit moved me to ask) about the limits of my obedience, which seemed meager in comparison to Mary's. "Do not be afraid," said the angel to Mary. We talked about fear. What was I afraid of? What held me back?

"You have found favor with God," the angel told Mary. Had I found favor with God? I sensed that I had, but not because of anything I had done (humility had become my companion in that room). I had found favor because I was his child.

I wondered, too, about the future, about my calling. What was God wanting of me? Mary had just been informed of her destiny. What was mine? We talked about what might be—what, in fact, could be, if I were willing. *If I were willing.*

Like Augustine, who turned to the Scriptures after hearing a voice say, "Take up and read," I had reached the end of my rope and was, for the first time in a long time, in a position to hear. There is much to be said for desperation, as desperation led me to begin praying. My prayer was really a plea: *Help me.* After an hour of reflecting and listening, Mary's "Let it be to me according to your word" eventually became my prayer. The struggle had ended. I had a feeling that I had just lost control of my life, but in that same moment, had finally found my life.

The room that had seemed small now seemed spacious. The fact that there was no view no longer mattered. The view was wonderful from my vantage point. The silence no longer mattered, no longer made me anxious, but rather, seemed peaceful. And the terrible feeling of being alone was replaced by a



sense of closeness with a God who was "nearer to me than I was to myself."

### The Word exposed in the words

Before my retreat, I would have laughed if someone had tried to tell me that my real problem was not prayer or meditation or personal discipline, but that it was my inability to read the Bible. After all, to me, an evangelical with a touch of Wesleyan piety, the Bible was sacred. I had memorized 2 Timothy 3:16 early on as a Christian. When Carl F. H. Henry had come to speak to us at Yale Divinity School on the authority of the Scriptures (Daniel in the lion's den?), I stood by him and championed his cause.

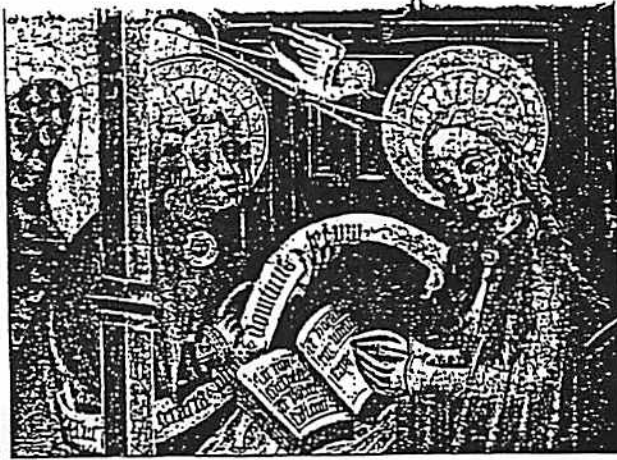
I had studied under brilliant Bible scholars and maintained a high view of authority and inspiration. Even my Bible could attest to the hours I labored to understand it, covered as it was with marginal notes and multicolored "highlighter" markings. Like Paul, I list my achievement to point a finger not at me but at the God who redirected my ways.

Quite simply, I had forgotten that there is much more to reading the Bible than merely understanding the words on the pages. Karl Barth wrote of how "the Word is exposed in the words." It was as if the Word—strong and pure, convicting and yet strengthening—now emerged from the words.

Learning how to study the Bible was an important and essential skill. However, I had lost "the ears to hear" anything beyond that kind of study.

I say "lost" because there was a time when I had ears that heard. I was given my first Bible at the age of 16 and I remember vividly how I read the Gospels with a kind of awe, hearing the words as if they were spoken to me. Somewhere along the way I lost those ears, and it took a monk in jogging shoes and a Jonahlike three days of anguish in the belly of a monastery to get them back.

What I relearned in my room without a view was how the Bible should be read, namely, with an ear to what the text might be saying to me. Simply doing responsible exegesis is not enough, as enlightening as it often is.



**M**ary's "Let it be to me according to your word" eventually became my prayer.

The next steps are listening to the text, reflecting on it, asking not merely what it means, but what it is asking of me, what it is asking me to hear.

What I had been unable to understand was what Søren Kierkegaard called the "contemporaneity" of the Bible. The past does not merely parallel, but actually intersects the present. The Christ who called his disciples to follow him is calling each of us at this moment. I had been reading the Bible as if it were describing a world in which I might find parallels. I now came to understand that when I read the Bible, I am reading about a world that in some sense also now is.

For example, I had been prone to read the story of God's call to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac by saying, "Boy, Abraham sure had a tough decision. I am glad I am not in his shoes." Now I see that I cannot read it only that way. Why? Because I *am* in Abraham's shoes. God sometimes calls me to sacrifice my most precious possession. The story has much to say to the present.

I had to relearn that the Bible is a book aimed primarily at the will of the reader. I was afraid to hear what the Bible might say because I suspected it might ask me to change my life. It did. When I was "running the show," as the monk observed, I could sidestep the contemporaneity of the Bible. Mary was Mary, and I could observe her dilemma and even write a good sermon about it. But now it was my dilemma. Could I—*will* I—say, "Let it be to me"?

Finally, I relearned that reading the Bible requires what the saints of old called "contemplation." It was in soli-

tude and silence that the noise and hurry of the world finally ceased long enough for me to hear. There was not enough silence in my life for me to hear the Word within the words, and I knew that deep down, which is why I went on a silent retreat in the first place. Now I have learned that silence is possible outside the haven of a monastery, but I still have to work to find it.

I also learned that contemplation is more than just silence. The monk's insistence that I stay with the same passage for three days unnerved me. Now I

understand what he was trying to do. Contemplation requires deep reflection, repetition, patience, and persistence. The veil that covered my heart would not be removed by a single reading. I needed then, and still need, to read it slowly, until the words strike a chord within me. Once they strike, I am able to let them resonate.

### A new world opens up

The end of the retreat was much better than the beginning. My "jogging monk" was pleased to see that I had relearned how to read the Bible. He gave me different passages to meditate on for the remainder of the retreat, and like Mary, I was able to "ponder" them in my heart. I felt what an illiterate person must feel on learning how to read. A new world was opened up.

Seminarily, too, became more of a joy. I finished that year and my final year with a new way of looking at the Bible. I found that there can be a happy marriage between textual study and contemplation, viewing them not as competing, but complementary. One without the other feels incomplete. Now, five years later, I feel that any day on which I do not open the Bible and let the words descend from my head into my heart, letting them mold my thoughts and shape my prayers, is wasted.

Unlike the room at the monastery, I now have a beautiful view outside my window. Now and then I close the shades. □

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# Background Noise

CORNELIUS PLANTINGA, JR.

*To a TV-shaped world, silence is as threatening as piety and much more puzzling.*

In one of his sermons, Eugene Laubach tells of a non-Quaker youth who was invited for a meal in a strict Quaker household. The youth was unfamiliar with Quaker piety and, in particular, with the custom of beginning a meal with a silent grace. He later reported his response to it:

"There was this embarrassing silence when we first sat down at the table, and nobody knew what to say, and everybody looked down, so I told a funny story and that seemed to break the ice."

To a TV-shaped world, silence, even relative silence, is as threatening as piety and much more puzzling. So people try to delete it. People haul their boom boxes to the seashore so that they do not have to live in the silence between the rolling of surf and the crying of gulls, and so that no one else can live there either. Years ago a live organist would play pop tunes at mezzo volume between innings at Detroit Tigers' home baseball games. Now the management fills the stadium with a more aggressive, in-your-face form of recorded rock music. Late-afternoon and late-night TV talk shows present hours of lightweight nihilism carried along by a chatter that is sometimes rancorous and sometimes mildly amusing, but that is mostly what the Bible calls "unwholesome talk"—a kind of talk that is foolish, coarse, dismissive, incessant, and vain. ("So he goes, 'You're sexy.' And I'm like, 'Whoa! This guy's sleeping with my Mom!' But he's, like, kinda' cute, so I go . . .") Even contemporary worship, in some church settings, fills in silences with an emcee's patter or with snappy Christian music from which all the rests have been removed.

A loss of silence is as serious as a loss of memory and just as disorienting. Silence is, after all, the natural context from which we listen. Silence is also the

natural context from which we speak. A culture that fills in our silences therefore disorients us, removing the frame, the background, the base of intelligibility for our listening and speaking.

How is silence our natural context? Alternating silence, speech, and silence is the very rhythm of God, as old and deep in the nature of things as creation itself. According to Genesis, God breaks the cosmic silence with a creative word, but he does this only during the days. At nightfall and on the Sabbath, God falls silent. Correspondingly, there is for us, the creatures of God, a natural rhythm not only of work and rest, but also of sound and silence. "There is a time for everything," says Ecclesiastes, "a time to be silent and a time to speak."

But who knows how to tell time in this matter? Who knows when to speak up and when to keep still? Who knows when silence is golden and when it is lazy or even cowardly?

The wise know these things. Wise persons discern the deep grain and pattern of God's world and try to live in ways that go with the grain. These are persons whose speech emerges from, and then re-enters, a thoughtful and disciplined silence. These are persons whose silence offers a roomy and welcoming harbor for the speech of others.

We have all met such persons. The good speakers among them show as much strength in their silences as in their words, and often as much eloquence. (This is also true of good composers; someone once observed that "the greatest music ever written is the silence between the Crucifixus and the Et Resurrexit in Bach's *Mass in B minor*.") Good speakers may say more or less than others, but usually less, and always less that needs to be taken back. Like Updike's *Tothero* in *Rabbit Run*, they

have "the disciplinarian's trick" of pausing before they speak, of judging and considering their words in a way that adds weight to them. In public presentations, their speech has a spare quality: they stop speaking earlier than you expect and, perhaps, earlier than you would like. They give the impression of speaking from silence, from a "still point" at their center, a quiet place in which they are at home with themselves, in touch with God, and hospitable to the voices of others.

When we are in rhythm, we speak from silence. But we also listen there. We listen for the voices of others, trying to hear in them not only facts, but also qualities of heart and spirit. After all, the quaver or desolation or resentment or steel in the voice of another may tell us far more than the speaker's words. But only a quiet soul can absorb and respond to these qualities.

Noisy souls, like boom boxes, drown out the cries of the gulls. It is the quiet soul that can receive the words, the tones, the timbre of another. A stilled soul can listen even to the silence of another.

In Chaim Potok's *The Chosen*, Danny Saunders, who lives under the terrible, disciplined silence of his father, one day says to his friend Reuven: "You can listen to silence, Reuven. I've begun to realize that you can listen to silence and learn from it. It has a quality and dimension all its own. It talks to me sometimes. I feel myself alive in it. It talks. And I can hear it. . . . It has a strange, beautiful texture. It doesn't always talk. Sometimes—sometimes it cries, and you can hear the pain of the world in it."

Saints listen for the sounds and silences of God. They quiet themselves into a kind of absorbercy, a readiness to hear the Word of God, and also the voice of God, and even some of the silences of God. The silences of God—mysterious, exasperating, consoling, pregnant with meaning—require our trust at least as much as does the Word of God. God does not talk all the time, and God's silence is as emphatic as his speech. Hence the force of Jesus' silence before Pilate. To be a faithful creature of God is to learn something of God's rhythm of silence and sound and silence, to respect and trust it, and then to imitate God by speaking and listening from the context that is as old as the world.

We shall not get silence, not even relative silence, at public beaches, or between innings at Tiger games, or on major network TV. But is there a chance, any chance at all, that we might take a cue from the Taizé community and begin to protect small patches of silence in public worship? Wouldn't this be equivalent to protecting our natural environment? And isn't the church as good a place as any to practice ecological sensitivity?

# Sleepless in El Paso

Apartment living today is full of rude awakenings

BY LEON MILETICH

**S**TEPHEN FOSTER'S WORDS TO "BEAUTIFUL DREAMER," "Sounds of the rude world, heard in the day / Lulled by the moonlight have all passed away," belong in another time. On a recent evening, lulled by the moonlight, the city streets department ripped up nine blocks of pavement around my apartment building between 9:30 p.m. and 6 a.m. Compared with what I usually hear at night, the steady roar of heavy equipment was actually soothing.

Night noise to Stephen Foster was an occasional steamboat whistle, or the rattle of a passing buckboard; "life's busy throng" came to a halt for him after dark. Of that I'm envious: Foster didn't have my neighbors. The world has grown ruder.

I've had to share common apartment walls with numerous people for most of my life: The experience has often left me feeling that if the human race were a club, I'd turn in my membership.

Some neighbors use car horns in lieu of doorbells; other residents have barking dogs. A number of people can't seem to hear music unless the beat is vibrating the walls and rattling the windows; and there are those dysfunctional couples who debate by smashing crockery against the walls (passing observation: small apartments contribute to domestic discord). There are helpful souls who keep their televisions so loud that I have no need to use the sound on mine if we're on the same channel.

Growing up, I had to keep my voice down, use an earphone for the radio and stereo, place the TV away from any shared wall, step lightly on the stairs and ease the door closed, all in an effort not to disturb the neighbors. And the neighbors did the same. It was a cardinal rule of apartment living. It was called courtesy and consideration—the neighborly thing to do. What ever happened to that? Do parents ever say, "Don't slam that door" to their children anymore?

My next-door neighbors slam doors at all hours of the day or night. These are heavy iron-framed security screen doors that when slammed reverberate through my place like cannon shots. The kids slam them. Their parents slam. People who visit slam them. I find this crashing incomprehensible.

There's a college kid down the block with a boom car. When he cranks it up, the bass alone sounds like there's a rumbling Sherman tank in my bathroom, a rolling thunderstorm overhead. When he adds music (and "Beautiful Dreamer" is not on his playlist), it can be heard for three blocks in any direction, especially at midnight. The vibrations alone have been known to set off car alarms as he drives past. I hope his ears bleed at night.

In the next building is a 18-year-old girl who likes to blast her stereo at a pulse-pounding level so that it's clearly audible in my place even with the doors and windows closed. I knocked on her front door late one night and found myself facing not a bunch of drugged-out crazoids, as I'd feared, but her middle-aged parents. They seemed distressed and intimidated. They said they couldn't do a thing about the rock music pounding away in the next room, that the girl refused to use her earphones. I was getting a headache just standing at the door. Always in favor of compromise, I

suggested unplugging the stereo and tossing it in the Dumpster. Instead, the mother pulled me inside the sonic maelstrom, pleading with me to reason with the girl. At my approach, the teenager bolted down the hallway, locked herself in the bathroom (slamming the door) and screamed at us for disturbing her.

And friends wonder why I never wanted children.

I've tried seeing things in a wider perspective. I'm sure the people in my paternal grandparents' war-torn, ancestral homeland of Croatia would love to exchange the sound of artillery and snipers for the sound of stereos and televisions, just as people in squalid public-housing areas would cheer the sound of music and sitcoms over the sounds of screams, gunfire and sirens in the street. To the hearing impaired, I'm a fortunate man. But intellectualizing this problem doesn't prevent my yawning all day and nodding off on the bus.

The people currently sharing a thin, hollow bedroom wall with me have been disrupting my sleep for nearly three years through simple, inconsiderate acts that have the cumulative effect of being profoundly irritating. Apart from the door slamming, I have music throbbing through the wall (which, like a drum, seems to amplify low-frequency sounds). Voices chatter throughout the night. If something needs fixing or building in the apartment, no neighborly inhibitions prevail because of the hour. I've been awakened at 1 a.m. by hammering and sawing.

I've tried explaining, in a friendly manner, how thin the wall is and how I have this peculiar habit of needing to sleep at night. I've also tried the time-honored method of noise reduction by pounding on the wall when the decibels reach impossible limits. The return response from next door is to pound right back and increase the volume. I've tried earplugs and sound machines that simulate rain, trains and waves. Nothing can drown out the late-night conversation or the sudden thumps, bumps and rattles in the middle

of the night. I might as well be living next to poltergeists.

When I mentioned to my landlord that professional torturers use sleep deprivation as a way to break people, he was unfazed; after all, he doesn't live here. One day, in response to my last complaint, the landlord's son uttered what must be the defining attitude for this closing decade of the 20th century: "It's the '90s: People don't give a s—."

That, I thought, should be on a T shirt or a bumper sticker. Or maybe it should be the title of Newt's next book.

Bob Dole and the Christian Coalition might think about giving up their fruitless attack on sex and violence in our pop culture and start concentrating on the real-world aural terrorists who stress out our nights. Make consideration a campaign issue, rudeness an etiquette crime. If presidential candidates have a need for a campaign promise that's sure to win votes, they should forget the chicken-in-every pot cliché (or is it now a gun in every car?). Guarantee everyone in America a good night's sleep on a regular basis.

MILETICH, a freelance writer, lives in El Paso, Texas.



*It used to be a cardinal rule that neighbors cared about not disturbing each other.*

### Moving Toward Solitude?

THE PRIMARY WAY WE ACCESS THE LIFE OF GOD IS BY CHOOSING TO RETAIN HIM BEFORE OUR CONSCIOUS THOUGHT AND PRACTICE AT ALL TIMES. "I HAVE SET THE LORD ALWAYS BEFORE ME..." (Psalm 16:8)

GOD WILL NOT COMPETE FOR OUR ATTENTION. PERIOD. IT IS UP TO US TO SEEK HIM. HOW DO WE DO THAT?

OUR HABITS ARE TO ATTEND TO EVERYTHING ELSE BUT GOD.

THESE HABITS CANNOT BE BROKEN BY FORCE OF WILL, BY WILL-POWER, BUT REQUIRE THAT WE CHANGE OUR OBJECTIVE CIRCUMSTANCES, AND FOR SIGNIFICANT PERIODS OF TIME TO BREAK THEIR HOLD OVER US.

SOLITUDE AND SILENCE ARE FUNDAMENTAL SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES—FUNDAMENTAL BECAUSE THEY CUT SO DEEPLY INTO OUR DEPENDENCIES ON EVERYTHING BUT GOD. OUR DESPERATE NEED IS FOR TIMES IN WHICH WE ARE ALONE, IN SILENCE, DOING NOTHING.

IN SOLITUDE WE STEP OUT OF THE RELATIONS TO OTHERS WHICH NORMALLY FILL OUR LIVES. WE ARRANGE TO BE ALONE. WITHOUT WORK TO CATCH UP ON. AT LENGTH. SIMPLY! THAT'S IT. WE MAKE SPACE FOR THE REDISCOVERY OF OUR SOUL BEFORE GOD, FOR GOD TO 'MOVE IN'. WE HOLD OURSELVES THERE.

SILENCE COMPLETES SOLITUDE, AND CAN, WHERE WELL-PRACTISED, COME, IN TIME, TO PROVIDE SOLITUDE WITHOUT LEAVING TOWN FOR THE WILDERNESS.

Example of Jesus: Luke 4:1-2 & 42, 5:16, 6:12, 9:28, 22:39.

Doing it: Arrange time and place, considering others.

Setting: Home? Away? Details.

The experience: What is supposed to happen?

What will count as "success"?

**FASTING:**

To refrain in some significant degree from food, and perhaps all pleasant drink. Extreme: all food and drink.

Fasting is the affirmation and experience of another world. (Deut 8:1-6, Matt 4:4 John 4:32) Fasting is feasting. (Matt 6:16-18) It aligns us with the movements of God's kingdom. In this way it increases the power of what we do. It does not earn anything or corner God and force his hand.

Disciplinary fasting teaches us how to be strong and cheerful under circumstances of deprivation. It accustoms us to not having what we want and being quite comfortable and happy with that.

The picture of the weaned child. Ps. 131:2

"Humbled our souls in fasting." (Deut 8:3; Ps. 35:13 & 69:10; II Chron 7:14)

Two main forms of fasting:

(1) Disciplinary--to achieve above ends.

(2) Functional--"to make your voice heard on high"

(Isa 58:4, Dan 9:3, II Sam. 12:16 & 22)

concerning some specific need. We need to be practiced in fasting so that in functional fasting we will not be thinking about fasting.

Other instructive passages on fasting:

Esther 4:16

Joel 1:14, 2:12 & 15.

Isa. 58:3-7 and Jer. 14:12 pointless fasting

When not to fast. Mark 2:18-20 (Matt. 9:14-15)

Luke 2:36-37 Anna served the Lord with fastings and prayers, night and day.

Paul: Acts 13:2, II Cor. 6:5, 11:27

In marriage: I Cor. 7:5, Conjugal relations interrupted

Learning to fast enables us to deal with gluttony. Gluttony is eating for the sensual pleasure of ingestion. We are a grossly gluttonous society and this has numerous sources: We substitute sensual pleasure for happiness. We are a society that buys much of its food ready-prepared, and those who would sell us food play on the sensuality to sell. "Super-size me!" Yes, and then I turned out to be supersized. So we get a diabetes epidemic to further crush an already hay-wire "health care system." In other respects food is used to manage people and manage life. Food is to be sanctified by the word of God and prayer. (I Tim. 4:5)

Gluttony is associated with other forms of lack of restraint. (Deut. 21:20, Prov. 23:20-21) It is not a small or funny thing, but a primary form of spiritual bondage.

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The following 4 disciplines of abstinence are of a more hygenic nature, with a correspondingly precise focus:

FRUGALITY (AND POVERTY?)

Frugality: To refrain from indulgence of appearance or sensuality or security.

Often dealt with in terms of sobriety or temperance, see Chap. II, "Of Christian Sobriety," in J. Taylor's Holy Living

Trains us to be comfortable without stimulation and gratification of desires.

Prov. 21:17, 23:4, 25:28, I Tim 5:6, 6:7-11 & 17-19,

II Tim 3:4

Poverty is neither a discipline nor a virtue, though it may be used well. Jesus was not poor.

"Those who have the strength to lead simple lives should consider themselves the richest people. For it is better to be able to make do with a little than to have plenty." (p. 15, Rule of St. Augustine)

How well-off a person is should be measured by the number and importance of their unsatisfied desires, not by how much they possess. One of the few reasons I like to go to the Mall is that within a few minutes I can see several hundred thousand things I neither need nor want.

Remember: Do not be stingy, shabby, small, mean. God is not poor. Jesus had enough money to employ a full-time embezzler as his treasurer.

Work through Chapter 10 of The Spirit of the Disciplines, on the question "Is Poverty Spiritual?"

'CHASTITY': SEXUALITY AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE--

The discipline is: To refrain for a lengthy period of time from sexual acts, thoughts and desires, as a way of accustoming oneself to freedom from domination by sex.

Job 31:7-11, Matt 5:27-28, 19:3-12, I Thess 4:1-7

Sex not bad in itself, any more than food or conversation. The biblical and Christian view of sexual desire is that, like all desire, it is *good in its place*. Not elimination but subordination to the good is what is needed.

But as now lived, in our world, sex is a major source of evil, for those in ministry and those they serve. We are operating from broken souls, with devastating results. I John 2:16. The "world" embedded in souls.



Paul's profound analyses of desire in Rom. 1 and Eph. 4:17-19. You cannot deal with desire by trying to satisfy it. It is not self limiting. Only vision and practice of the good can restrain it. See especially verse 18.

Joy and love in life generally is to be cultivated as a bulwark against domination by sexual experiences.

Importance of drama, intimacy, and the giving of pleasure and joy.

*In interactions generally We desire The Desire of the other. Heightened in sex. Sexual significance of face and eyes. Expressions of desire, longing. We don't even want to go to lunch with someone who doesn't want to go to lunch with us.*

*Personal union. Recall C. S. Lewis Selection from The Weight of Glory, above, and the hunger for union.*

We must invest in whole relationships of all kinds, that they may be good and strong. But especially with a marriage partner. Prov. 5:15-20: "Rejoice in the wife of your youth.... Be exhilarated always with her

love." This is for the whole persons involved

Special topics under "Chastity":

1. The place of "looking" in all this.

Rule of St. Augustine, Ch. 4 (pp. 16-9)

Also Ch. 4 of "Feminine Version"

YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOOK. ITS NOT THE LAW OF  
GRAVITY, AFTER ALL.

What "the look" says about you? The look and the soul, the body, the social scene. Remember Job 31:7-11. "Adultery in the heart" (Matt. 5:28) Why it is so serious.

2. Why "Stolen water is sweet and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." (Prov. 9:17) The exclusion of the "real world" produces an intense atmosphere of intimacy and of mastery: powerful sexual stimulants.

The internet's power over people who step in.

Pornography works on the same principles.

3. Masturbation. Scripture says nothing whatsoever on this topic. (Misreadings of Gen. 38:8-10: "Onanism.") However it clearly may involve pornography and using particular people around you in "looking to lust," or other harms. See *Letters to Philip* and *Letters to Karen*, by Charlie Shedd.

4. Homosexual desire and the soul. Homosexual desire is desire for genital union with a person of the same sex. No doubt there is much more to "same sex" co-habitation than that, but that is the only point of contention. Few object to people of the same sex loving, delighting in, living with, and caring for one another. Humans and animals experience homosexual excitation or desire as a natural phenomena. But one who experiences homosexual desire is not thereby a homosexual. A homosexual is someone who in their overall pattern of life devotes themselves to the gratification of homosexual desire. It is a matter of identity. That identity is not usually a choice, but a life posture one drifts into through many choices, of many different kinds, over a long period of time beginning at an early age—often involving some natural predispositions. I did not choose to be heterosexual. But I have made many choices and received many influences thereto. Even so, I would not locate my identity, my character, in terms of my "sexual orientation." That cheapens humanity.

It will be clear to an unbiased, thoughtful

and informed person that homosexual union is unnatural (our bodies are not made for it) and unscriptural. But we now know that anyone who is "out and proud" will find ways around that which satisfy themselves. The intellect will always be enslaved in persons whose primary aim is to gratify their desires. It is pointless, in my opinion, to try to win in an interaction with the 'militant' homosexual. The issues really lie elsewhere, at the level of "repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20:21)

It is the longtime failure to deal with **these** issues that has resulted in churches and denominations having to invest huge energies and resources in dealing with issues around sexuality that should never even come up. Most non-homosexuals today fit Paul's description: "whose god is their belly <their appetites>, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things." (Phil. 3:19; Rom. 16:18) If the battle were fought at this level, everything else would fall in place. We live in an age where sexual desire is perverted into all human connections by many, as a result of the popular culture and of what the intellectual culture

teaches and fails to teach about humankind. The church must stand against this with pure and powerful lives and teachings in love. It must bring healing to the broken souls.

An appropriate practice of CHASTITY will purify our thoughts and allow us to step free of playing the various "games" around sex (and "romance")—"the look," verbal and bodily innuendos and sub-tones, trying for 'perfect satisfaction'. We must regard others as spiritual beings in a world that is spiritual. Sex is a passing mode of human union. (Luke 20:35-36) You are a whole person before God regardless of sex and marriage. (Isa. 56:3-8) Claim it and walk in it.

Dear brother in Christ Jesus,

I pastor a new church plant Community Church (about 2 & 1/2 years old and 140 people). In the past few months I have been tremendously helped through your books, 'The Spirit of the Disciplines' and 'The Divine Conspiracy'. I am 44 years old, and happily married to a wonderful woman for nearly 16 years. No children.

I realize you likely get too much email to write me back, but there is no harm in my writing and attempting to see if you reply.

The point I am most hopeful to receive any counsel from you about has to do with what you refer to as "looking to lust" and "training oneself to use the very 'cues' that until now have served to activate lust to activate thoughts, feelings, and actions that will rule them out. Multitudes have found this to be so." (pg.345 Divine Conspiracy)

I want to be one of the multitudes who have discovered that but am not there yet! When I came to that part of your book, I found myself crying out inwardly for more specific or practical examples or illustrations or strategy in that regard.

"Looking to lust" has always seemed my "thorn in the flesh" as a Christian. I came to faith in Christ in my early 20's after a very sexually immoral adolescence. I was exposed to pornography beginning at about age 12 and my father kept Playboy magazine in the house during my teens years (a constant source for erotic fantasy leading to masturbation). I had many sexual partners and experiences prior to marriage.

Bottom line: I want to never masturbate or look at pornography or look to lust again. Is such a thing possible, realistic, a worthy goal? I'm fearful that if I merely make a resolve to do so, without a strategy, without disciplines, that I will fall again and again. Of course, even having the courage to make such a resolve would be quite something. Honestly, I usually feel pretty "good" if I can go for several weeks without masturbating to lustful images in my mind from my past or some photograph or fantasy. This may sound pathetic, but I don't think it is unusual.

What do you mean "use the cues to activate thoughts, feelings, and actions that will rule them out"? I find for instance that I am often tempted with lustful thoughts when I shower, especially first thing in the morning. Showering has often been the place for masturbation. I am most tempted to go to pornographic internet sites on Sunday evening or Monday (the end of my work week as a pastor). How can I use the very cues that tempt me to sin, to break the habit of sin?

I long to be a shepherd of integrity who can point the way of freedom to other strugglers after holiness and righteousness. I want to be mastered by nothing and no one but Christ Himself.

Grateful for the help your books have been and hopeful but not expecting a reply.

Dear

The key moment is when that appears on your mental (usually visual) horizon that alerts you to an 'opportunity' to engage in cultivating your sexual desire. It varies from person to person, so I suggest you spend a few days discovering what it is for you and writing it down.

Then study your normal response to these (initial cues.) Write them down.

Then find what you can do to stop the process and redirect it. Now you can do this. You are not fighting gravity. BUT at this point you will have to come to grips with whether or not you INTEND to do it--that is, to disrupt and redirect the process. Write it down. Do you or don't you.

As a young man I found that I could place the abouttobe object of my lust BEFORE GOD IN PRAYER FOR HER GLORIFICATION IN CHRIST.

Then you put into practice whatever it is that would disrupt the process, no matter how embarrassing: start to sing a hymn out loud or kneel and pray on the spot. You don't have to throw yourself into a briar patch like St. Benedict did, but you could do worse. You can do this if you intend to. It will take you some effort to reform the spontaneous response to the 'cues' to into a godly one.

Often it is a sense of being deprived or of deserving "more" that betrays people into sinful lusting. Is that true of you? Then you must do what is necessary to remove that.

You must also understand that the thought is not temptation, and temptation is not sin. Otherwise the devil will have you defeated before you actually sin and your strength to resist actual sinning will be undermined. Spend time, study and prayer understanding the difference between these three things.

Understand that you cannot defeat your subtle enemies just by trying. Find out what to do, and I hope that the above will start you on your way. Let me know that happens.

Understand that this is not as big and impossible a thing as it now presents itself to you. It is part of Satan's strategy to make you think that this is a hard matter. Once you get past it you will see. Keep this in mind though it does not now seem so.

Dallas Willard

WITH REFERENCE TO SINNING,

DISTINGUISH:

1. THOUGHT OF SIN ONLY--NO INCLINATION TO DO IT.
2. TEMPTATION--THOUGHT AND INCLINATION, BUT NO RELENTING OF THE WILL.
3. SIN--RELENTING OF THE WILL. A "YES" TO THE DEED, WHETHER ACTUALLY CARRIED OUT OR NOT.



## SECRECY

The discipline is: To refrain from letting our good deeds be known. Matt 6:1-17

Secrecy is not a duty. That is true of any discipline as such. There is nothing wrong with good deeds being known, and sometimes they should be. But there is something wrong with doing them to be known and with drawing our joy from their being known.

A practice of secrecy teaches us to be content without human approval, and that our business with God is not filtered through others of necessity. George Müller's example of secrecy about needs of his life and work with orphans. (See p. 174 of Spirit of the Disciplines)

## SACRIFICE AND LOSS

To surrender that which is necessary, e.g. our money for food, or to accept with joy the loss of what is necessary, to practice the sufficiency of God. Heb. 11:17-19. Note the contrast with frugality.

Even to the laying down of our lives. John 15:13-14

To learn peace and Joy in the midst of disaster.

Ps. 138:7-8

The widow and Elijah, I Kings 17:12-13

This discipline is more often than not the receiving of what is imposed upon us, with faith and joy, than of choosing loss. In smaller things it can be actively practiced and should be. (Recall the statement by William James.)

Madame Guyon was imprisoned by the authorities for some time because of her teaching and practice of following Christ. Out of one period of imprisonment she wrote the following poem:

"A little bird I am,  
Shut from the fields of air;  
And in my cage I sit and sing

To Him who placed me there;  
Well pleased a prisoner to be,  
*Because, my God, it pleases Thee.*

Nought have I else to do;  
I sing the whole day long;  
And He whom most I love to please,  
Doth listen to my song;  
He caught and bound my wandering wing,  
But still he bends to hear me sing.

Thou hast an ear to hear;  
A heart to love and bless;  
And, though my notes were e'er so rude,  
Thou wouldst not hear the less;  
Because thou knowest, as they fall,  
That LOVE, sweet LOVE, inspires them all.

My cage confines me round;  
Abroad I cannot fly;  
But though my wing is closely bound,  
My heart's at liberty.  
My prison walls cannot control  
The flight, the freedom of the soul.

Oh! It is good to soar  
These bolts and bars above,  
To Him whose purpose I adore,  
Whose providence I love;  
And in Thy mighty will to find  
The joy, the freedom, of the mind.

(p. 279 of Thomas Upham, *Life and Religious Opinions and Experience of Madame Guyon*, London: H. R. Allenson, 1908.)

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NOW WE WANT TO PAUSE BEFORE GOING ON TO "DISCIPLINES OF  
ENGAGEMENT AND TO REFLECT UPON THE OBJECTIVE OF  
ROUTINE, EASY OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST:

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CONSIDER IF YOU WILL:

THE HEART THAT JESUS GIVES US--

SEEN IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

"A GOOD TREE CANNOT BRING FORTH BAD FRUIT"

TRUST IN AND DISCIPLESHIP TO JESUS WILL BRING US TO BEING THE  
KIND OF PERSON WHO:

- A. LIVES FREE OF CONTEMPT AND ANGER (Matt 5:21-26)
- B. IS FREE FROM DOMINATION BY SEXUAL LUST AND DISGUST  
(vss 27-32)
- C. IS FREE OF DESIRE TO DOMINATE AND CONTROL VERBALLY.  
(VSS 33-37)
- D. IS FREE FROM GRUDGES, 'FAIRNESS', AND 'PAYING BACK'  
(vss 38-42)
- E. IS ABLE TO LOVE ENEMIES AND BLESS THOSE WHO CURSE,  
ETC., (vss 43-48)
- F. DOES NOT 'PERFORM' FOR HUMAN CREDIT (6:1-18)
- G. DOES NOT TRUST IN PHYSICAL SUBSTANCES (MONEY, ETC.)  
(6:19-34)
- H. DOES NOT MANAGE OTHERS BY CONDEMNATION  
'CONDEMNATION ENGINEERING' (7:1-12)

THE 'COMMANDS' OF JESUS IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT ARE  
INVITATIONS TO BE A CERTAIN TYPE OF PERSON, A PERSON WHO THROUGH  
FAITH AND DISCIPLESHIP TO HIM HAS BECOME INWARDLY TRANSFORMED SO  
THAT HIS BEHAVIORS FLOW NATURALLY (SUPERNATURALLY, OF COURSE)  
FROM WHO THEY NOW ARE AS HIS MATURE BROTHERS AND SISTERS UNDER THE  
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# The Terror of Inbetween-ness

By Mike Yaconelli



*"My whole life I have been tracking God, staring at the leaves and the dirt, never finding God's trail."*

Life is a kind of unraveling of the mystery of ourselves, a never-ending search for clues about the stranger that resides within. The older we get, the more complicated the mystery becomes. Our identity weaves its web into more intricate and sticky patterns. The more we know about ourselves, the less we know ... and yet ... yet there is, at the same time, a new kind of knowing.

I just turned 50.

Oddly, I have been thinking back to my childhood, to the day I was "born again." It was almost 40 years ago, but I can still remember that night. Up in front of the obscure Missionary Baptist Church of Santa Ana, CA, stood Pastor Johnny Womack screaming — shouting (and could he shout!) that we needed to be saved. I believed him. I wanted to be saved, and I was. Driving home in the car with my parents, my heart was filled with a peace that really *did* pass all understanding. It's been 39 years since that night. I am a lot more "sophisticated" than I was back then, but one thing is certain — *whatever happened that night was real*. It was the beginning of a glorious romp through life with God, and I have never regretted it.

A lot of time has passed since then. A lot of water has gone under the bridge. So much has happened in my life — and in my friends' lives — in these last four decades that my faith has truly taken a beating. It's still there, but it doesn't look much like it did in those beginning years of my Christian life.

I have disappointed God so many times ... and I have been disappointed by

so many mentors — Christians who I admired greatly — who stumbled and fell, never again to recover their faith; so many "truths" about the Gospel that turned out to be false; so many casualties, so many losses, so many assumptions that turned out to be just that — assumptions, not truth.

One such assumption, in particular, has haunted me throughout all my Christian experience: the Assumption of the Changed Life. I was taught that if I was a Christian, then people would see a marked difference in my life!!! And further, I was taught that the closer I was to God — the more spiritual I was — the greater and more visible that difference would be.

I have always believed there was a visible sign of the invisible reality of conversion. I believed that Christianity changed you outside ... not just inside.

I don't believe that anymore.

It is (not) that I don't believe that Jesus changes you, it is just that my definition of "change" has changed. Whatever the change is, it is not so much outward as it is inward. This difference that God makes is often visible only to God ... and no one else. It is a new way of looking at God, a new way of understanding God, an inner new-birth that liberates us not only from sin, but from our old way of viewing God. It is intimacy rather than ecstasy; it is seeing rather than speaking; it is loving rather than living; it is dancing rather than believing; it is silence rather than sentences; it is worship rather than wordship; it is playing rather than praying; it is yearning rather than conviction; it is faith characterized more by passion than belief.

Just seeing those words frightens me. It frightens me because the words sound dangerous — like I have abandoned my faith. But I haven't abandoned my faith. I have abandoned a way of *looking* at my faith. Of course we change when we meet Jesus, of course we are never the same, of course people see a difference. Life is different. But what is different is different than I thought.

Let me see if I can explain it another way.

When I was little, I used to listen on the radio to the Lone Ranger and Tonto. I liked Tonto the best. The Lone Ranger was interesting, but he was weird. He wore a mask. I envied Tonto. Tonto was a tracker. He could find anybody. How I wished I could look at dirt and leaves on the ground and read who had been there.

going, just like Tonto did.

I have felt that way about God.

I've read the stories of the great saints of God and of their close relationship with Him. I've struggled through the writings of the mystics — those who seem to have "tracked" God and found Him, those who have "touched" God — and I have envied them. God has seemed so elusive to me. My whole life I have been tracking God, staring at the leaves and the dirt, never finding God's trail.

And then, suddenly I am 50.

I look once again at the disturbed dirt of my life. I stare at the leaves of the past and *my heartbeat quickens! I can see something! I can see the tracks of God!* I am not very close, but I am closer! I am not there, but I know there is a there!

So here I stand, looking at the ground, smelling the faint fragrance of God. Never once did it occur to me that when I found God's trail again, it would ruin my life forever — for once you feel the breath of God on your skin, you can never turn back, you can never settle for what was, you can only move on recklessly, with abandon, your heart filled with fear, your ears ringing with the constant whisper, "Fear not."

Once you find where the trail is, you are faced with a sobering truth — in order to go on, you must let go of what brought you here. You *cannot* go on without turning your back on what brought you to this place.

It is like swinging on a trapeze. Once you have gained the courage to swing, you never want to let go ... and then, without warning (around age 50, for me), you look up and see another trapeze swinging towards you, perfectly timed to meet you, and you realize you are being asked to let go and grab onto the other trapeze. You have to release your grip. You have to reach out. You have to experience the glorious terror of inbetween-ness as you disconnect from one and reach for the other.

This past year has been a time of letting go, one finger at a time, and these last few weeks have been a terrifying weightlessness, a wait-lessness, a paralyzing stretch for the unknown. I haven't reached the other bar yet. I am somewhere inbetween, but I can tell you this: my heart is filled with an exhilaration, an anxious anticipation that just as I get to the other bar, I will not grasp it, but I will instead be grasped by the hand of Jesus.

I can hardly wait ☐

PHILIP YANCEY

# Forgetting God

*Why decadence drives out discipline.*

**O**BSERVING the modern world, French sociologist Jacques Ellul noted a striking trend: As the Christian gospel permeates society, it tends to produce values that, paradoxically, contradict the gospel. I sometimes test his theory while traveling overseas. I ask foreigners about the United States, the world's largest majority-Christian society.

"When I say the words United States, what comes to mind?" I ask. Invariably, I get these responses:

**Wealth.** Representing only 6 percent of the world's population, the United States generates more than a third of the world's economic output and dominates global finance.

**Military power.** We are, as the media constantly remind us, "the world's only superpower." Indeed, our current military budget exceeds the total of the next 23 biggest-spending nations combined.

**Decadence.** Overseas, most people get their images of the United States from Hollywood movies, which seem to them obsessed with sex and crime.

European nations, with their Christian roots, tend to manifest similar characteristics, which run counter to the teachings and example of Jesus, whose life was marked by poverty, self-sacrifice, and purity. No wonder followers of other religions, such as Islam, puzzle over Christianity, a powerful faith that nonetheless produces the opposite of its ideals in society at large. What accounts for this strange development?

I found a clue in the writings of Gordon Cosby, the founding pastor of Church of the Savior in Washington, D.C. He noted that high-commitment Christian communities begin with a strong sense of devotion, which expresses itself in a life of discipline. Groups organized around devotion and discipline tend to produce abundance, but ultimately that very success breaks down discipline and leads to decadence.

Cosby termed this pattern the "monastic cycle"—with good reason, for the movements led by idealists such as Francis of Assisi and Benedict of Nursia repeatedly demonstrate the cycle. In the sixth century, early Benedictines worked hard to clear forests and cultivate land, investing their surplus in drainage, livestock, and seed. Six centuries later, according to historian Paul Johnson, "Benedictine abbeys had virtually ceased to be spiritual institutions. They

had become collegiate sinecures reserved very largely for members of the upper classes." The abbots absorbed about half the order's revenue in order to maintain their luxurious lifestyles, becoming "unenterprising, upper-class parasites."

Dominicans, Jesuits, and Franciscans duplicated the cycle: an initial burst of devotion and discipline, a resulting period of abundance, then a drift toward indulgence until

some reformer came along to revive the ideals of the founder. Protestant reformers faced the same challenge. John Wesley warned upwardly mobile Methodists:

I do not see how it is possible, in the nature of things, for any revival of religion to continue long. For religion must necessarily produce

**'I do not see how it is possible for any revival of religion to continue long.'**

—John Wesley

both industry and frugality, and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches.

As the Old Testament shows, entire nations can fall into the same pattern. Hebrew prophets sounded the loudest alarms during times when ancient Israel appeared to be thriving. Whenever the economy boomed and peace prevailed, the Israelites attended less and less to spiritual matters and looked instead to military power and alliances for their security. In the prophets' phrase, they forgot God.

Perhaps we should call this trend the "human cycle" rather than the "monastic cycle," because it applies to individuals as well as to religious movements and nations. Beginning with Adam and Eve's brief sojourn in Paradise, people have shown an inability to handle prosperity. We turn to God out of need and forget God when things go well.

Americans who go on short-term mission trips to third-world countries often return with glowing reports about the fervency they found among believers. Eager faith in the midst of poverty and oppression contrasts sharply with the complacency and self-centeredness in our land of plenty.

Observing this trend in numerous countries, I better understand why Jesus warned against wealth and called the poor and persecuted "blessed." Out of sheer desperation, the needy may turn to God. Meanwhile I worry about my own society, which relies mainly on its wealth and power and fills every vacant space with entertainment options. Can we, in a time of abundance, find a way to break the "monastic cycle"? On the answer to that question, our future health may hinge. ©

In the early 1970s, Malcolm Muggeridge was surprised to hear that members of the intellectual elite in the Soviet Union were experiencing a spiritual revival. Anatoli Kuznetsov, living in exile in England, told him there was scarcely a single writer or artist or musician in the USSR who was not exploring spiritual issues. Against all government policy, the most favored children of the regime were abandoning hope in a kingdom on earth and turning instead toward belief in transcendence.

Muggeridge writes, "I asked [Kuznetsov] how this could have happened, given the enormous anti-relig-

But these ideals inevitably shatter against the grim reality of actual human behavior.

In my profession, I experience a constant, unresolvable tension over this issue. As a journalist, I observe up close the spectacular and petty failures of Christian leaders. And when I turn to more personal concerns, I find that I write about the spiritual disciplines far better than I practice them. What Christian has not felt a similar twang of dissonance? We are called to strive for ideals that we know will never be attained. I felt this dilemma most keenly during adolescence, when I was haunted by the Sermon on the Mount. I would read a book like Charles Sheldon's *In His Steps*, solemnly vow to act "as Jesus would act,"

"Golden Rule," but stated in a more limited, negative form: "Don't do to others what you wouldn't want them to do to you." Jesus expanded the rule into the unbounded command, "In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you." How can we even respond to such impossible ideals?

This cognitive dissonance kept me in a state of spiritual restlessness for many years. If the Sermon on the Mount sets forth God's standard of holiness, I concluded then I may as well resign from the start.

Ultimately, I found a way to address this conflict, not in the works of great theologians, but rather in the writings of the nineteenth-century Russian novelists!



# Be Ye Perfect, More or Less

**PHILIP YANCEY**

*Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and the impossible Sermon on the Mount.*



ious brainwashing job done on the citizenry, and the absence of all Christian literature, including the Gospels. His reply was memorable; the authorities, he said, forgot to suppress the works of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, the most perfect expositions of the Christian faith of modern times."

At a crucial time in my Christian pilgrimage, these two Russian novelists became for me, too, spiritual directors. They helped me come to terms with a problem that vexes every thoughtful Christian, namely, the huge gap between life as it should be and life as it is. New Testament passages, most notably the Sermon on the Mount, spell out lofty ethical ideals: Give to everyone who asks you, Love your enemies, Welcome persecution.

and turn to Matthew 5-7 for guidance. What to make of such advice! Should I mutilate myself after a wet dream? Offer my body to be pummeled by the motorcycle-riding "hoods" in school? Tear out my tongue after speaking a harsh word to my brother?

Now that I am an adult, the crisis of the Sermon on the Mount still has not gone away. Though I have tried at times to dismiss it as rhetorical excess, the more I study Jesus, the more I realize that the statements contained here lie at the heart of his message. The absolutist quality of Jesus' teaching leaves me gasping. "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect," he said, his statement tucked almost casually between commands to love enemies and give away money. Be perfect like God? Whatever did he mean?

Other religions teach variations of the

have called my spiritual directors. My understanding of the Sermon on the Mount, and its mosaic of law and grace, now consists of one-half Tolstoy and one-half Dostoevsky.

In the long history of literature, no one has exceeded Leo Tolstoy's ability to portray the full-bodied truth of things as it actually is. He once summarized his goal in a letter to a friend

ILLUSTRATIONS BY HOWARD JUTLIER



My writer's aim does not consist in resolving the questions posed, but in instilling a love of life in all its innumerable and inexhaustible manifestations. If someone were to tell me that it lay in my power to write a novel explaining every social question from a particular viewpoint that I believed to be the correct one, I still wouldn't spend two hours on it. But if I were told that what I am writing will be read in twenty years' time by the children of today, and that those children will laugh, weep, and learn to love life as they read, why then I would devote the whole of my life and energy to it.

Some 70 years after Tolstoy's death, the great-great-grandchildren of his day are still laughing, weeping, and learning to love life as they read his writings. By anyone's standards, his fiction has succeeded monumentally, and it has succeeded because of his unsurpassed skill at rendering the unvarnished reality of daily existence. Can anyone match his account of love, lust, and infidelity in *Anna Karenina*, or of honor, pride, and ambition in *War and Peace*?

Still, I cannot take Tolstoy's "mission statement" too seriously. Although it is his fiction that most remember him by, he also wrote tracts, essays, commentaries on the Gospels, and other polemical works. While he never forsook fiction entirely, his energies as a writer shifted from the novelistic toward the didactic. And that shift was prompted by the example of Jesus. The ideals Tolstoy encountered in the Gospels attracted him like a flame; his failure to live up to them ultimately consumed him.

Tolstoy strove to follow Jesus' teaching literally, and his intensity sometimes caused his family to feel like victims of his quest for holiness. For instance, after reading Jesus' absolute command to the rich man, Tolstoy decided to free his serfs, give away his copyrights, and dispose of his vast estate. He wore peasant clothes, made his own shoes, and began working in the fields. His wife, Sonya, seeing the family's financial security about to vaporize, protested until he made some concessions.

As I read Tolstoy's diaries, I see flashbacks of my own lunges toward perfectionism. The diaries record many struggles between Tolstoy and his family, but many more between Tolstoy and himself. His desire to reach perfection led him to devise ever new lists of rules. He gave up hunting, smoking, drinking, and meat. He drafted "Rules for developing the emotional will. Rules for developing lofty feelings and eliminating base ones." Yet he could never achieve the self-discipline necessary to keep these rules. More than once Tolstoy took a public vow of chastity

and asked for separate bedrooms. He could never keep the vow for long, though, and much to his shame, Sonya's 16 pregnancies broadcast to the world that inability.

Sometimes Tolstoy managed to accomplish great good. For example, at the age of 71, after a long hiatus, he wrote one last novel, *Resurrection*, in support of the Doukhobors, an Anabaptist group undergoing persecution by the czar, donating all proceeds to finance their emigration to Canada. And Tolstoy's philosophy of nonviolence, lifted directly from the Sermon on the Mount, had an impact that long outlived him, in ideological descendants like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Yet, by any measure, Tolstoy's quest for holiness ended in disappointment. Frankly, he failed to practice what he preached. His wife put it well (in an obviously biased account):

There is so little genuine warmth about him; his kindness does not come from his heart, but merely from his principles. His biographies will tell of how he helped the laborers to carry buckets of water, but no one will ever know that he never gave his wife a rest and never—in all these thirty-two years—gave his child a drink of water or spent five minutes by his bedside to give me a chance to rest a little from all my labors.

Tolstoy's ardent strides toward perfection never resulted in any semblance of peace or serenity. Up to the moment of his death, the diaries and letters kept circling back to the rueful theme of failure, exposing the vast gap between the high ideals of the gospel and his own life. Too honest for self-deception, he could not silence the conscience that convicted him. In the end, Tolstoy fled from his fame, his family, his estate, his identity; he died like a vagrant in a rural railroad station.

What, then, do I learn from Tolstoy's tragic life? I have read many of his religious writings, and without fail I come away inspired by his deep respect for God's inflexible, absolute ideal. I have learned that, contrary to those who say the gospel solves our problems, in many areas—justice issues, money issues, race issues, personal issues of pride and ambition—the gospel actually adds to our burdens. Tolstoy faced this uncomfortable truth. A man willing to free his serfs and give away his possessions in simple obedience to Christ's command is not easy to dismiss. If only he had consistently lived up to those ideals—if only I could live up to them.

In a pivotal passage, Tolstoy made this

distinction between Christ's approach and that of all other religions:

The test of observance of external religious teachings is whether or not our conduct conforms with their decrees. [Observe the Sabbath. Get circumcised. Tithes.] Such conformity is indeed possible.

The test of observance of Christ's teaching is our consciousness of our failure to attain an ideal perfection. The degree to which we draw near this perfection cannot be seen; all we can see is the extent of our deviation.

A man who professes an external law is like someone standing in the light of a lantern fixed to a post. It is light all round him, but there is nowhere further for him to walk. A man who professes the teaching of Christ is like a man carrying a lantern before him on a long, or not so long, pole: the light is in front of him, always lighting up fresh ground and always encouraging him to walk further.

Despite the nuggets of wisdom in such individual passages, Tolstoy's religious writings in the main seem erratic and unstable. He saw "the extent of his deviation" and little else. As he stepped outside himself, looking inward to diagnose his own inner workings, he was filled with disgust. He saw moral failure and hypocrisy and faithlessness. Perhaps for this reason few people today read his spiritual musings. As a counselor, he offers more discouragement than hope. If Tolstoy could hardly help himself, how could he be expected to help the rest of us?

One passage, taken from a personal letter, shows how Tolstoy responded to such critics toward the end of his life. It stands as a summary of his spiritual pilgrimage, at once a ringing affirmation of the truth that he believed with all his heart and a plangent appeal for grace that he never fully realized.

"What about you, Lev Nikolayevich, you preach very well, but do you carry out what you preach?" This is the most natural of questions and one that is always asked of me: it is usually asked victoriously, as though it were a way of stopping my mouth. "You preach, but how do you live?" And I answer that I do not preach, that I am not able to preach, although I passionately wish to. I can preach only through my actions, and my actions are vile. . . . And I answer that I am guilty, and vile, and worthy of contempt for my failure to carry them out.

At the same time, not in order to justify, but simply in order to explain my lack of consistency, I say: "Look at my present life and then at my former life, and you will see that I do attempt to carry them out. It is true that I have not fulfilled one thousandth part of them [Christian precepts], and I am ashamed of this, but I have failed to fulfill

them not because I did not wish to, but because I was unable to. Teach me how to escape from the net of temptations that surrounds me, help me and I will fulfill them; even without help I wish and hope to fulfill them.

"Attack me, I do this myself, but attack me rather than the path I follow and which I point out to anyone who asks me where I think it lies. If I know the way home and am walking along it drunkenly, is it any less the right way because I am staggering from side to side! If it is not the right way, then show me another way; but if I stagger and lose my way, you must help me, you must keep me on the true path, just as I am ready to support you. Do not mislead me, do not be glad that I have got lost, do not shout out joyfully: 'Look at him! He said he was going home, but there he is crawling into a bog!' No, do not gloat, but give me your help and support."

I feel sad as I read Tolstoy's religious writings. The x-ray vision into the human heart that made him a great novelist also made him a tortured Christian. Like a spawning salmon, he fought upstream all his life, in the end collapsing from moral exhaustion.

Yet I also feel grateful to Tolstoy, for his relentless pursuit of authentic faith has made an indelible impression upon me. I first came across his novels during a period when I was suffering the delayed effects of "biblical child abuse." The churches I grew up in contained too many frauds—or at least, that is how I saw it in the arrogance of youth. When I observed the huge gap between the ideals of the gospel and the flaws of its followers, I was sorely tempted to abandon those ideals as hopelessly unattainable.

Then I discovered Tolstoy. He was the first author who, for me, accomplished that most difficult of tasks: to make good as believable and appealing as evil. I found in his novels, fables, and short stories a Vesuvian source of moral power.

A few years ago a friend of mine, a literature professor, received a frantic cry for help from a former student then serving in a squalid refugee camp in Indochina. Every day she was interviewing boat people who had escaped Cambodia and Vietnam, listening to their stories of brutality and evil. She could hardly believe in human goodness any more, she said. She could hardly believe in God. Could he send her a few books that might help resuscitate her faith? My friend chose five books, and first among them was Leo Tolstoy's *Resurrection*.

A biographer of Tolstoy, A. N. Wilson, remarks that Tolstoy suffered from a "fundamental theological inability to understand the Incarnation. His

religion was ultimately a thing of law rather than of grace, a scheme for human betterment rather than a vision of God penetrating a fallen world." With crystalline clarity, Tolstoy could see his own inadequacy in the light of God's ideal. But he could not take the further step of trusting God's grace to overcome that inadequacy.

Shortly after first reading Tolstoy, I discovered his countryman Fyodor Dostoevsky. These two, the most famous and accomplished of all Russian writers, lived and worked during the same period of history. Oddly, they never met, and perhaps it was just as well—they were opposites in every way. Where Tolstoy wrote bright, sunny novels, Dostoevsky wrote dark and brooding ones. Where Tolstoy worked out ascetic schemes for self-improvement, Dostoevsky periodically squandered his health and fortune on alcohol and gambling. Dostoevsky got many things wrong, but he got one thing right. His novels communicate grace and forgiveness with a Tolstoyan force.

Early in his life, Dostoevsky underwent a virtual resurrection. He had been arrested for belonging to a group judged treasonous by Czar Nicholas I, who, to impress upon the young parlor radicals the gravity of their errors, sentenced them to death and staged a mock execution. The conspirators were dressed in white death gowns and led to a public square where a firing squad awaited them. Blindfolded, robed in white burial shrouds, hands bound tightly behind them, they were paraded before a gawking crowd and then tied to posts. At the very last instant, as the order, "Ready, aim!" was heard, and rifles were cocked and lifted upward, a horseman galloped up with a prearranged message from the czar: he would mercifully commute their sentences to hard labor.

Dostoevsky never recovered from this experience. He had peered into the jaws of death, and from that moment, life became for him precious beyond all calculation. "Now my life will change," he said: "I shall be born again in a new form." As he boarded the convict train toward Siberia, a devout woman handed him a New Testament, the only book allowed in prison. Believing that God had given him a second chance to fulfill his calling, Dostoevsky pored over that New Testament during his confinement. After ten years, he emerged from exile with unshakable Christian convictions, as expressed in one famous passage: "If anyone proved to me that Christ was outside the truth . . . then I would prefer to remain with Christ than with the truth."

Prison offered Dostoevsky another

opportunity as well. It forced him to live at close quarters with thieves, murderers, and drunken peasants. His shared life with these people later led to unmatched characterizations in his novels, such as that of the murderer Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*. Dostoevsky's liberal view of the inherent goodness in humanity could not account for the granitic evil he found in his cellmates. Over time, though, he glimpsed the image of God in even the lowest of these prisoners. He came to believe that only by receiving love is a human being capable of love; "We love because he [God] first loved us," as the apostle John says.

I encountered grace in the novels of Dostoevsky. *Crime and Punishment* portrays a despicable man who commits a despicable crime. Yet the soothing balm of grace enters Raskolnikov's life as well, through the person of the converted prostitute Sonia, who follows him all the way to Siberia and leads him to redemption. In the magical novel *The Idiot*, Dostoevsky presents a Christ figure in the form of an epileptic prince. Quietly, mysteriously, Prince Myshkin moves among the circles of Russia's upper class, exposing their hypocrisy while also illuminating their lives with goodness and truth.

Finally, *The Brothers Karamazov*, perhaps the greatest novel ever written, draws a contrast between Ivan, the brilliant agnostic, and his devout brother, Alyosha. Ivan can critique the failures of humankind and every political system designed to deal with those failures, but he can offer no solutions. Alyosha has no answers to the intellectual problems Ivan raises, but he has a solution for humanity: love. "I do not know the answer to the problem of evil," said Alyosha, "but I do know love."

I call these two Russians my spiritual directors because they helped me accept a central paradox of the Christian life. From Tolstoy I learned the need to look inside to the kingdom of God that is within me. I saw how miserably I had failed the high ideals of the gospel. But from Dostoevsky I learned the full extent of grace. Not only the kingdom of God is within me, Christ himself dwells there. "Where sin increased, grace increased all the more," is how Paul expressed it in Romans.

There is only one way for any of us to resolve the tension between the high ideals of the gospel and the grim reality of ourselves: to accept that we will never measure up, but that we do not have to. We are judged by the righteousness of the Christ who lives within, not our own. Tolstoy got it halfway right: Anything that

makes me feel comfort with God's moral standard, anything that makes me feel, "At last I have arrived," is a cruel deception. But Dostoevsky got the other half right: Anything that makes me feel discomfort with God's forgiving love is also a cruel deception. "There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus", that message, Leo Tolstoy never fully grasped.

Absolute ideals and absolute grace: after learning that dual message from Russian novelists, I returned to Jesus and found that it suffuses his teaching. In his response to the rich young ruler, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, in his comments about divorce, money, or any other moral issue, Jesus never lowered God's ideal. "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect," he said. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." No one—not Tolstoy, not Francis of Assisi, not Mother Teresa—has completely fulfilled those commands.

Yet the same Jesus tenderly offered absolute grace. Jesus forgave an adulteress, a thief on the cross, a disciple who had denied ever knowing him. He tapped that traitorous disciple, Peter, to found his church, and for the next advance, turned to a man named Saul, who had made his mark persecuting Christians. Grace is absolute, inflexible, all-encompassing. It extends even to the people who nailed Jesus to the cross. "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" were among the last words he spoke on earth.

I read passages such as the Sermon on the Mount with a different spirit now than in my adolescence. Jesus did not proclaim these exalted words so that, Tolstoy-like, we would furrow our brows in despair over our failure to achieve perfection. He proclaimed them to impart to us God's ideal toward which we should never stop striving, but also to show that none of us will ever reach that ideal. The Sermon on the Mount forces us to recognize the great distance between God and us, and any attempt to reduce that distance by somehow moderating its demands misses the point altogether.

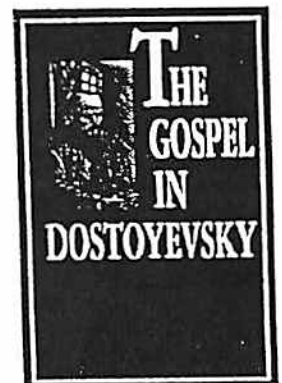
The worst tragedy would be to turn the Sermon on the Mount into another form of legalism; it should rather put an end to all legalism. Legalism like the Pharisees' will always fail, not because it is too strict, but because it is not strict enough. Thunderously, inarguably, the Sermon on the Mount decrees that before God we all stand on level ground: orderers and temper-throwers,



Joseph Frank's study of the life and works of Dostoevsky has been hailed as one of the greatest literary biographies of the twentieth century.

**Dostoevsky: The Miraculous**

**Years, 1865-1871** (Princeton University Press, 523 pp.; \$35, hardcover), the fourth volume of a projected five, covers the period in which Dostoevsky wrote *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, and *The Devils*. Also worth particular attention is **The Gospel in Dostoevsky** (Plough Publishing House, Spring Valley, Farmington, PA 15437-9506; 258 pp.; \$12, paper), edited by the Hutterian Brethren, a selection of excerpts from Dostoevsky's writings. "In the passages selected here," comments J. I. Packer, "a super-sensitive giant of the imagination projects a uniquely poignant vision of the plight of man and the power of God."



adulterers and lusters, thieves and coveters. We are all desperate, and that is, in fact, the only state appropriate to a human being who wants to know God. Having fallen from the absolute ideal, as Tolstoy did, we have nowhere to land but with Dostoevsky, in the safety net of absolute grace. □

Some of this material will appear in different form in *The Jesus I Never Knew*, to be published by Zondervan in August. Quotations from Tolstoy's religious writings are taken from the translations in *The Lion and the Honeycomb*, a compilation by A. N. Wilson, published in 1987. *8c*

## EUSEBIUS

Eusebius (c. 260-c. 340) was the Bishop of Caesarea and the "father of church history." A prolific but rather unpolished writer, he is our principal source for the history of the Christian faith from the apostolic age down to his own day. He is a particularly valuable witness because he lived through such historic experiences as the Diocletian persecution (A.D. 302-310), the "conversion" of Constantine (A.D. 312), and the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325), which gave us the Nicene Creed.

His main work is his Ecclesiastical History but the following reading is from a shorter treatise, Demonstration of the Gospel, which attempts to "prove" the Christian faith from the Old Testament. The passage illuminates the rise of a two-tier view of calling: the spiritual life of contemplation is set against the secular life of action. This unfortunate view dominated the medieval world until the time of the Reformation and is still alive today in such notions as "full-time Christian service."

### The Demonstration of the Gospel

*That the Christian Life is of Two Characters*

The one wrote on lifeless tables, the Other wrote the perfect commandments of the new covenant on living minds. And His disciples, accommodating their teaching to the minds of the people, according to the Master's will, delivered on the one hand to those who were able to receive it, the teaching given by the perfect master to those who rose above human nature. While on the other the side of the teaching which they considered was suitable to men still in the world of passion and needing treatment, they accommodated to the weakness of the majority, and handed over to them to keep sometimes in writing, and sometimes by unwritten ordinances to be observed by them.

Two ways of life were thus given by the law of Christ to His Church. The one is above nature, and beyond common human liv-

ing; it admits not marriage, child-bearing, property nor the possession of wealth, but wholly and permanently separate from the common customary life of mankind, it devotes itself to the service of God alone in its wealth of heavenly love! And they who enter on this course, appear to die to the life of mortals, to bear with them nothing earthly but their body, and in mind and spirit to have passed to heaven. Like some celestial beings they gaze upon human life, performing the duty of a priesthood to Almighty God for the whole race, not with sacrifices of bulls and blood, nor with libations and unguents, nor with smoke and consuming fire and destruction of bodily things, but with right principles of true holiness, and of a soul purified in disposition, and above all with virtuous deeds and words; with such they propitiate the Divinity, and celebrate their priestly rites for themselves and their race. Such then is the perfect form of the Christian life.

And the other more humble, more human, permits men to join in pure nuptials and to produce children, to undertake government, to give orders to soldiers fighting for right; it allows them to have minds for farming, for trade, and the other more secular interests as well as for religion; and it is for them that times of retreat and instruction, and days for hearing sacred things are set apart. And a kind of secondary grade of piety is attributed to them, giving just such help as such lives require, so that all men, whether Greeks or barbarians, have their part in the coming of salvation, and profit by the teaching of the Gospel.

From *Demonstration of the Gospel*, Book I, Chapter 8

### Questions

1. What is the fundamental contrast Eusebius portrays between the two ways of life?
2. Do you know examples of the same contrast expressed and continued today?

Two ways of life were thus given by the law of Christ to His Church. The one is above nature, and beyond common human living; it admits not marriage, child-bearing, property nor the possession of wealth, but wholly and permanently separate from the common customary life of mankind, it devotes itself to the service of God alone in its wealth of heavenly love!

—Eusebius ✓

And the other more humble, more human, permits men to join in pure nuptials and to produce children, to undertake government, to give orders to soldiers fighting for right; it allows them to have minds for farming, for trade, and the other more secular interests as well as for religion; and it is for them that times of retreat and instruction, and days for hearing sacred things are set apart. And a kind of secondary grade of piety is attributed to them, giving just such help as such lives require, so that all men, whether Greeks or barbarians, have their part in the coming of salvation, and profit by the teaching of the Gospel.

—Eusebius

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Imagine there's no countries,  
It isn't hard to do,  
Nothing to kill or die for,  
No religion too,  
Imagine all the people  
living life in peace...

Imagine no possessions,  
I wonder if you can,  
No need for greed or hunger,  
A brotherhood of man,  
Imagine all the people  
Sharing all the world...

You may say I'm a dreamer,  
but I'm not the only one,  
I hope some day you'll join us,  
And the world will live as one.

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Written by: John Lennon  
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# Coming to Grips With a Persistent Failure

- 1. Understanding the “Failing Act:”**
  - What exactly happened?
  - e.g. responding in a hostile fashion to a family member
- 2. Recognizing its Approach**
  - Nothing happens in a moment
- 3. Analyzing its Background Factors**
  - What is different when I don’t do the “Failing Act”?
- 4. Neutralizing Those Factors**
  - Underlying anger, worry, etc.
- 5. Pacifying the Context**
  - Deal with the anger, worry, etc.
- 6. Living With a Broad Horizon**
  - Kingdom/Kingdom vision
  - A whole life plan

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## DISCIPLINES OF ENGAGEMENT

Designed to re-connect us with the kingdom of the heavens

**STUDY:** In study, our minds engage with an objective order and takes that order into itself, enabling us to be "in sync" with reality.

Study of the Logos in Bible, Nature, History, Individuals.  
Study of the Trinitarian God.

The absolute centrality of the Bible: "But one who will not learn to handle the Bible for himself is not an evangelical Christian." Bonhoeffer, Life Together, p. 45.

But even more, he has robbed himself and those around him of the absolutely indispensable truths that God has made available on a "need to know" basis, truths that cannot be obtained by man on his own in his present state.

Centrality of Josh. 1:8 (Ps. 1)

Meditation and memorization.

Memorize lengthy passages: Rom. 8, Col. 3, I Cor. 13,...

Read entire books of the bible, repeatedly, in a short period of time. Intensity yields great gains in spiritual growth. Most people read their Bible like someone who tries to get a shower with one drop of water every five minutes.

What, in essence, the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius are: Use of Bible in Image and Meditation. Using imagination to concretize and make real.

Read the Exercises and ask what a serious program of formation of the human spirit might look like in your world and your church or fellowship.

Psalm 143;5-6.

**MASTER THE MASTERS:** Especially Kempis, Law, Wesley, Teresa of Avila and others of that quality. These, under the Bible, constitute basic knowledge of life in God. To ignore them is like not knowing the multiplication tables or how to count in arithmetic.

See Richard Peace, *Contemplative Bible Study*.

For information on a memorization program to be implemented in your group, contact: Scripture Memory Fellowship, P. O. Box 411551, St. Louis, Mo., 63141

## WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION

Worship: ascribing worth to God. Often, putting our bodies into it. Shouting, dancing. But also silent. Admiring God. Meditation as worship. The uses of Art.

Worship fills us with joy and hope in the vision of God.

Ps. 16:8, Rom 15:13.

"Worship without study is fluff; study without worship is sin." Haddon Robinson. See Romans 1:21-26.

Celebration: rejoicing over what He has done for me and mine --- The discipline of remembering Ps 143:5-6

Celebration makes me thankful to be me, thankful for my life, thankful for my parents and circumstances. Some studies have shown 70% of pastors to have a damaged self-image.

Be sure to read *Spirit of the Disciplines*, 179-181.

<EUCHARIST AS DISCIPLINE>--"Celebrate the Lord's death 'til he come."

1. John 6, live by eating Christ.
2. Reformed tradition in America. (see attached)



See Ch. V of Nouwen, Creative Ministry, pp. 95-96.

The Place of Joy. Deut. 14:22-29. (See pages on Joy below.)  
Relate to Laughter (C. J. Kuschel, Laughter: A  
Theological Reflection, Continuum, 1994.)

Sometimes Waiting and worshiping is met by a special manifest presence of God. As Isa. 6:1-8, or the following in John Wesley's experience:

"Mon. Jan. 1, 1739. -Mr. Hall, Kinchin, Ingham, Whitefield, Hutchins, and my brother Charles, were present at our love-feast in Fetter Lane, with about sixty of our brethren. About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of his Majesty, we broke out with one voice, 'We praise Thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord'." (p. 170 *The Works of John Wesley*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, complete and unabridged, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., Peabody, MA., 01960, Reprint of 1986, from the 1872 edition issued by Wesleyan Methodist Bookroom.)

Contemporary degradation of "Worship" into "praise" songs in rock concert style.

Worship in the public reading of the Bible.

The Sermon as occasion of worship. "My soul doth magnify the Lord." (Luke 1:46) Sermon as Magnificat.

A. W. Tozer: "It is my opinion that the Christian conception of God current in these middle years of the twentieth century is so decadent as to be utterly beneath the dignity of the Most High God and actually to constitute for professed believers something amounting to a moral calamity."

PRAYER

To stay in action with God by asking and waiting.

Prayer as talking to God about what we are now doing together. Prayer as action. (C. S. Lewis, attached)

Removes habit of self-reliance and the despair that comes from the "mind of the flesh." Rom 8:6-7

God's responses makes us know that the humanly impossible can be done. Engages our will throughout God's world. The point of the "total" promises, such as Mark 11:24 and John 15:7, is to assure us about "smaller" things.

Prayer trains us to reign with him eternally, and immerses us in his undying life.

Prayer as psychokinesis (Larry Dossey)  
and as personal transaction.

See Martin Luther's Quiet Time, Walter Trobisch (attached)

The "Nine Ways of Prayer" of St. Dominic. (attached)

So-called "Mental" or "Contemplative" prayer. Not everything you do in praying is prayer.

Learning to pray without ceasing. (I Thes. 5:17)  
Frank Laubach's method.  
Learning to consciously involve God in each thing we do. Forming the habit.

For success with your own ministerial undertakings:

Focus on exactly what you want to happen.

Specificity is crucial.

Enlist others in the prayer cause on regular basis.

Stick with it. Don't quit. Luke 18:1-8

Prayer must be practiced if it is to serve as a discipline, but if it is to be practiced it must make sense. For most people it frankly does not. Their theology prevents it.

The centrality of "the Lord's prayer."

(a study outline):

WHY PRAYER, AND HOW IT WORKS?

MAKING SENSE OF A LIFE OF PRAYER.

We begin from the reality of a personal walk with a God who is a person--who is personality in the highest degree as trinitarian personality: I, You, He/She in one.

The trinitarian witness on earth in the redeemed community: "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou has sent me, and hast loved them, as thou has loved me." (John 17:23)

This is the underlying reality supporting the astonishing promises concerning the disciple's prayer: John 15:7-8, 16:23-24, Mark 11:22-26, Eph. 3:20, I John 3:22, etc. etc.

WHAT THEN IS PRAYER?

It is communication with God about what we are doing together. It is fundamentally asking (Matt 7:7-12, Rom 8:32, Phil. 4:6, Heb. 4:16), but of course only as a part of an overall walk with God in which our business is His business and His business our business. Thus we ask "in Jesus name," or on the behalf of Jesus.

In asking I recognize and welcome God's presence with me, and I make myself present to Him. This is ASKING. It is one of the most powerful forces in the universe. (Luke 11:1-13, 18:1-8)

Yet it very carefully leaves room for our:

freedom

significance.

God's intent to balance power with freedom is the explanation of this very strange PRAYER arrangement at the very heart of the universe. It is the WHY of prayer. (See Paul Billheimer, Destined for the Throne, especially chapters 2 & 3)

\*\*\*\*\* People who do not pray in all things are those who:

Do not actually believe in God, or  
Do not take Him to be part of what they are doing, or  
Do not believe that their prayers influence Him, or  
Simply have not broken the sinful habits of self  
-reliance.

\*\*\*\*\* Steps toward a life of prayer: \*\*\*\*\*

- Reviewing your faith, what you actually believe
- Revising your faith, receiving the faith of Jesus
- Learning to use the prayer Jesus gave His students
- Breaking the habit of prayerlessness by a life organized around the disciplines for the spiritual life

Suggestion: Use the following version of "the Lord's prayer" from time to time:

DEAR FATHER ALWAYS NEAR US,  
MAY YOUR NAME BE TREASURED AND LOVED,  
MAY YOUR RULE BE COMPLETED IN US---  
MAY YOUR WILL BE DONE HERE ON EARTH  
IN JUST THE WAY IT IS DONE IN HEAVEN.  
GIVE US TODAY THE THINGS WE NEED FOR TODAY,  
AND FORGIVE OUR SINS AND IMPOSITIONS ON YOU  
AS WE ARE FORGIVING ALL WHO IN ANY WAY OFFEND US.  
PLEASE DON'T PUT US THROUGH TRIALS,  
BUT DELIVER US FROM EVERYTHING BAD.  
BECAUSE YOU ARE THE ONE IN CHARGE,  
AND YOU HAVE ALL THE POWER,  
AND THE GLORY TOO IS ALL YOURS -- FOREVER --  
WHICH IS JUST THE WAY WE WANT IT!

C. S. Lewis

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## WORK AND PRAYER

**E**VEN IF I GRANT YOUR POINT AND ADMIT THAT ANSWERS to prayer are theoretically possible, I shall still think they are infinitely improbable. I don't think it at all likely that God requires the ill-informed (and contradictory) advice of us humans as to how to run the world. If He is all-wise, as you say He is, doesn't He know already what is best? And if He is all-good won't He do it whether we pray or not?

This is the case against prayer which has, in the last hundred years, intimidated thousands of people. The usual answer is that it applies only to the lowest sort of prayer, the sort that consists in asking for things to happen. The higher sort, we are told, offers no advice to God; it consists only of 'communion' or intercourse with Him; and those who take this line seem to suggest that the lower kind of prayer really is an absurdity and that only children or savages would use it.

I have never been satisfied with this view. The distinction between the two sorts of prayer is a sound one; and I think on the whole (I am not quite certain) that the sort which asks for nothing is the higher or more advanced. To be in the state in which you are so at one with the will of God that you wouldn't want to alter the course of events even if you could is certainly a very high or advanced condition.

But if one simply rules out the lower kind two difficulties follow. In the first place, one has to say that the whole historical tradition of Christian prayer (including the Lord's Prayer itself) has been wrong; for it has always admitted

## WORK AND PRAYER

prayers for our daily bread, for the recovery of the sick, for protection from enemies, for the conversion of the outside world, and the like. In the second place, though the other kind of prayer may be 'higher' if you restrict yourself to it because you have got beyond the desire to use any other, there is nothing specially 'high' or 'spiritual' about abstaining from prayers that make requests simply because you think they're no good. It might be a very pretty thing (but, again, I'm not absolutely certain) if a little boy never asked for cake because he was so high-minded and spiritual that he didn't want any cake. But there's nothing specially pretty about a little boy who doesn't ask because he has learned that it is no use asking. I think that the whole matter needs reconsideration.

The case against prayer (I mean the 'low' or old-fashioned kind) is this. The thing you ask for is either good — for you and for the world in general — or else it is not. If it is, then a good and wise God will do it anyway. If it is not, then He won't. In neither case can your prayer make any difference. But if this argument is sound, surely it is an argument not only against praying, but against doing anything whatever?

In every action, just as in every prayer, you are trying to bring about a certain result; and this result must be good or bad. Why, then, do we not argue as the opponents of prayer argue, and say that if the intended result is good God will bring it to pass without your interference, and that if it is bad He will prevent it happening whatever you do? Why wash your hands? If God intends them to be clean, they'll come clean without your washing them. If He doesn't, they'll remain dirty (as Lady Macbeth found)<sup>1</sup> however much soap you use. Why ask for the salt? Why put on your boots? Why do anything?

We know that we can act and that our actions produce results. Everyone who believes in God must therefore admit (quite apart from the question of prayer) that God has not chosen to write the whole of history with His own hand. Most of the events that go on in the universe are indeed out of our control, but not all. It is like a play in which the scene and the general outline of the story is fixed by the author, but certain minor details are left for the actors to improvise.

<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, V, i, 34-37.

## GOD IN THE DOCK

It may be a mystery why He should have allowed us to cause real events at all; but it is no odder that He should allow us to cause them by praying than by any other method.

Pascal says that God 'instituted prayer in order to allow His creatures the dignity of causality'. It would perhaps be truer to say that He invented both prayer and physical action for that purpose. He gave us small creatures the dignity of being able to contribute to the course of events in two different ways. He made the matter of the universe such that we can (in those limits) do things to it; that is why we can wash our own hands and feed or murder our fellow creatures. Similarly, He made His own plan or plot of history such that it admits a certain amount of free play and can be modified in response to our prayers. If it is foolish and impudent to ask for victory in a war (on the ground that God might be expected to know best), it would be equally foolish and impudent to put on a mackintosh—does not God know best whether you ought to be wet or dry?

The two methods by which we are allowed to produce events may be called work and prayer. Both are alike in this respect—that in both we try to produce a state of affairs which God has not (or at any rate not yet) seen fit to provide 'on His own'. And from this point of view the old maxim *laborare est orare* (work is prayer) takes on a new meaning. What we do when we weed a field is not quite different from what we do when we pray for a good harvest. But there is an important difference all the same.

You cannot be sure of a good harvest whatever you do to a field. But you can be sure that if you pull up one weed that one weed will no longer be there. You can be sure that if you drink more than a certain amount of alcohol you will ruin your health or that if you go on for a few centuries more wasting the resources of the planet on wars and luxuries you will shorten the life of the whole human race. The kind of causality we exercise by work is, so to speak, divinely guaranteed, and therefore ruthless. By it we are free to do ourselves as much harm as we please. But the kind which we exercise by prayer is not like that; God has left Himself a discretionary power. Had He not done so, prayer would be an activity too dangerous for man and we should have

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## WORK AND PRAYER

the horrible state of things envisaged by Juvenal: 'Enormous prayers which Heaven in anger grants.'<sup>2</sup>

Prayers are not always—in the crude, factual sense of the word—'granted'. This is not because prayer is a weaker kind of causality, but because it is a stronger kind. When it 'works' at all it works unlimited by space and time. That is why God has retained a discretionary power of granting or refusing it; except on that condition prayer would destroy us. It is not unreasonable for a headmaster to say, 'Such and such things you may do according to the fixed rules of this school. But such and such other things are too dangerous to be left to general rules. If you want to do them you must come and make a request and talk over the whole matter with me in my study. And then—we'll see.'

<sup>2</sup> *Satires*, Bk. IV, Satire x, line 111.

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Martin Luther had a barber. His name was Peter Beskendorf. One day Master Peter must have taken the liberty of asking his world-famous customer and doctor of theology, "Dr. Luther, how do you pray?"

And Martin Luther answered. It was not beneath him to write a long letter to his barber—a letter of forty printed pages! It was published in the spring of 1535 under the title *A Simple Way to Pray, for a Good Friend*.

It is a precious letter. Not only does it give us deep insight into Martin Luther's personal spiritual life, but at the same time it is a classic example of counseling—competent spiritual

again he shares without pretense his own struggle of being distracted by "foreign business and thoughts" and his often-experienced fruitlessness in praying. He says, "We have to watch out so that we may not get weaned from prayer by fooling ourselves that a certain job is more urgent, which it really isn't—and finally we get sluggish, lazy, cold and weary. But the devil is neither sluggish nor lazy around us."

We feel "understood" as Master Peter must have felt "understood." Who of us does not know periods when our quiet time has become an empty, meaningless duty, dreaded and even hated, but in any case boring. And boredom is the deadly enemy of the Holy Spirit.

What suggestions does Luther offer to help us escape from the kingdom of satanic coldness in order to experience anew the atmosphere of the Holy Spirit with its warmth and joy?

Luther believes in a period of "warming up." The expressions "to warm up the heart" until it "comes to itself," "feels like it," "gets in

the mood" occur several times in his letter. Actually the whole letter is nothing but detailed and practical instruction on how to "warm up the heart" before the Bible study starts, and it ends with the statement, "The one who is trained [in this warming-up practice] will well be able to use a chapter of Scripture as a lighter [Feuerzweig—the same word used in modern German for a pocket lighter] to kindle a fire in his heart."

For such a "warming-up prayer," the bodily posture seems to be important to Luther. Evidently he does not believe in sitting down. "Kneel down or stand up with folded hands and eyes towards the sky." Then he warns, "Watch out that you don't take too much upon yourself, lest your spirit get tired. A good prayer need not be long or drawn out, but rather it should be frequent and ardent."

And its content? Your personal needs and concerns? Oh no! Luther answers: Start with the commandments! Luther prays the Ten Commandments! Not that he rattles them off one by one. As a former Catholic priest, he has a lot to say against "heaping up empty

phrases" (Mt. 6:7), against chattering, babbling and prattling. He calls it *zerklappern*, which means literally "to rattle something to pieces."

To avoid this danger, Luther takes just one commandment at a time, "in order that my mind becomes as uncluttered as possible for prayer." To formulate a free prayer in his own words, he shares with Master Peter his personal method:

Out of each commandment I make a garland of four twisted strands. That is, I take each commandment first as a teaching, which is what it actually is, and I reflect upon what our Lord God so earnestly requires of me here. Secondly, I make out of it a reason for thanksgiving. Thirdly, a confession and fourthly, a prayer petition.

Then Luther takes the trouble—and the time—to go through all ten commandments and to write out for his barber such a "garland of four twisted strands" as an example for each commandment. What a counselor!

For example, Luther writes the following about the seventh commandment, "You shall

not steal":

First I learn here that I shall not take my neighbor's property nor possess it against his will, neither secretly nor openly; that I shall not be unfaithful or false in my bargaining, my service and work lest what I gain should belong to me only as a thief; but I shall earn my food with the sweat of my brow and shall eat my own bread with all those who are faithful. At the same time I shall help my neighbor so that his property is not taken away from him through such actions as mentioned above. . . .

Secondly, I thank God for his faithfulness and goodness in that He has given me and all the world such a good teaching and through it protection and shelter. For unless He protects us, not one penny nor one bite of bread would remain in the house.

Thirdly, I confess my sin and ungratefulness, there where I have wronged someone and cheated him or where during my life, I was unfaithful in keeping my word.

Fourthly, I ask that God may give grace so that I and all the world might learn His

commandment and think about it and improve. I pray that there may be less stealing, robbing, exploiting, embezzling and injustice. I also pray that such evils may soon end when the day of judgment comes. This is the goal to which the prayers of all Christians and of all creation are directed (Rom. 8:22).

This is praying according to Martin Luther. We see that it is not just petitioning, reciting and speaking. It is learning, meditating, searching and thus acquiring the perspective of eternity.

What next? When you are through with the commandments, Luther says, take the Lord's Prayer and do the same thing. Take one petition at a time—and maybe one is enough for a day—and twist the four strands for your garland. Again he describes to Master Peter how he does it petition by petition.

In this context, Luther calls the Lord's Prayer the "greatest martyr on earth, tortured and abused by everyone." But when he prays it in his garland-way, he says, "I suck on it like a nursing baby and I drink and eat it like an aged man and can never become satis-

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are able to do is God's work, His creation, as you confess it here with your mouth. This is why you have nothing to boast about before God, except that you are nothing and that He is your creator and He is able to annihilate you at any time. Reason in itself does not arrive at such insight. Many learned people have tried to understand what heaven and earth, man and creature are. They have found nothing. Here however it says: The creed teaches that God has created everything out of nothing. Here is the paradise of the soul where it may go for a walk in God's creation. But it would take too long to write more about this.

Secondly, one should give thanks here that through God's goodness we have been created out of nothing and we are kept alive daily out of nothing as a delicate creature which has body, soul, reason, five senses etc. . . . And He has made us lords over the earth, fish, the birds, the animals. This refers to Genesis 1, 2 and 3.

Thirdly, one should confess and be sorry about our unbelief and ungratefulness, be-

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and one word of His sermon is better than thousands of our own prayers. Therefore I have often learned more in one prayer than I could have obtained from much reading and thinking.

Thus we see that to Luther praying does not mean just talking. It also means being silent and listening. To him prayer is not a one-way road. It works both ways. Not only is he talking to God, but God is talking to him—and the latter is the most important part of prayer.

This is exactly what we should expect to happen in our Bible study—that God talks to us. Bible study is prayer. Therefore what Luther says about prayer can be applied to our Bible study and provide us with a tremendously helpful method for making a Bible passage meaningful to our personal life. The suggestion is to proceed verse by verse and make out of each verse a garland of four twisted strands.

By changing the order a bit and putting that which God requires at the end, many Christians are enriched in their quiet time by

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fied."

And when he has "time and leisure" after the Lord's Prayer, Luther continues by taking up the Apostles' Creed statement by statement, praying it in the same way.

Concerning the "first article about creation," Luther writes:

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth. First of all, if you allow it to happen, a great light shines here into your heart and teaches you in a few words something which could never be expressed in all languages, nor described in many books, namely: what you are, where you come from, where heaven and earth come from. You are God's creature, God's making and work. This means by yourself and in yourself you are nothing—you can do nothing, know nothing and are not able to do anything. For what were you a thousand years ago? What was heaven and earth six thousand years ago? Absolutely nothing, just as that which will never be created is nothing. Therefore, everything you are, everything you know and everything you

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cause we have not thought about them nor really recognized them. So we have actually done worse than the animals who have no reason.

Fourthly, we should pray for the right and certain faith so that in the future we can seriously believe in the dear God and hold Him up as our Creator, as this article teaches.

It is obvious that Luther finds the Creed a helpful touchstone for meditation and for worship. These thoughts he shares with his barber may serve well as a model for our own.

At one point, however, Luther interrupts his explanation and shares with his counsellor the following experience:

It often happens that I lose myself in such rich thoughts [literally, "that my thoughts go for a walk"] in one petition of the Lord's Prayer and then I let all other six petitions go. When such rich good thoughts come, one should let the other prayers go and give room to these thoughts, listen to them in silence and by no means suppress them. For here the Holy Spirit himself is preaching

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asking themselves these four questions about a text:

1. What am I grateful for? (Thanksgiving)
2. What do I regret? (Confession)
3. What should I ask for? (Prayer concerns)
4. What shall I do? (Action)

Again let us heed Luther's warning:

Don't take too much upon yourself lest the spirit should get tired. . . . It is sufficient to grasp one part of a Bible verse or even half a part from which you can strike a spark in your heart. . . . for [and this is one of the deepest insights Luther shares with his barber] the soul, if it is directed towards one single thing, may it be bad or good, and if it is really serious about it, can think more in one moment than the tongue can speak in ten hours and the pen can write in ten days. Such a dexterous, exquisite and mighty instrument is the soul or spirit.

Therefore the quantity of Bible verses one reads is not decisive. It may be more fruitful to take a passage of a few verses and shake each verse like the branches of a tree until some fruit falls down. This will change Bible

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study from a boring duty to an exciting adventure.

It is advisable to apply each question strictly to the text at first. What is in this text which makes me thankful? What is in this text which corrects me, challenges me to change and leads me to repentance? Which prayer concerns does the text—not my own wishes—offer me? What is in this text which causes me to take action?

An answer will not be found every time to all these questions. Often the answers are interlocked. That which calls me to repentance may become my main prayer concern for the day and even may call me to an action of restitution or apology.

On the other hand, while the text should be a feeder for our thoughts, it should not be a restriction or boundary line for them. In thinking through these questions again, we can extend them into the experiences of our daily life, thinking also of the small things which make us thankful—a day of sunshine, a friendly greeting, a beautiful flower or a good letter which we have received. We may

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talked to you about the Lord's Prayer: If the Holy Spirit should come when these thoughts are in your mind and begin to preach to your heart, giving you rich and enlightened thoughts, then give Him the honor, let your preconceived ideas go, be quiet and listen to Him who can talk better than you; and note what He proclaims and write it down, so will you experience miracles as David says: "Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (Ps. 119:18).

Indeed, those who get used to the discipline of having their quiet time write in a notebook are not likely ever to give it up. What makes our devotional life so unattractive and boring is the fact that each day, every one of us has just about the same kind of general, vague pious thoughts. This causes monotony. Our thoughts remain distant and abstract and do not come to grips with our concrete daily life. The writing down, as Luther suggests, is a form of the incarnation of God's Word. It becomes tangible, visible and concrete. It forces us to be precise, definite and

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out at first. But if you have patience and let it run long enough, clear water will appear.

We can experience the same thing in our quiet time. If our praying changes from talking into being silent and our being silent changes into listening, the voice of the Good Shepherd will come through unequivocally, unambiguously and plainly.

The Spirit will and must grant this, if your heart is conformed to God's Word.

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think of something which we should not have said. People may come to our minds for whom we should pray especially on this day. In answering the fourth question, we can plan the schedule of the day ahead of us and thus discover a very practical answer to the problem with which so many Christians struggle in vain—the problem of how to find God's guidance.

From Luther's testimony in this letter, it is evident that he believed firmly that God would speak to him through his thoughts, when the "heart is warmed up" and "has come to itself in the atmosphere of the commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed." "The Spirit will and must grant this and will go on teaching in your heart if it is conformed to God's Word and freed from foreign concerns and thoughts."

However, he gives a practical advice to his friend which should not be forgotten. He tells Master Peter to have his quiet time with pen and paper at hand to note down what God tells him:

I repeat again what I said above when I

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particular. Monotony is replaced by variety and surprise. Taking notes enables us also to check whether we have carried out what we planned in the morning. A Chinese proverb says, "The palest ink is stronger than the strongest memory."

Writing down what God has told us is also a great help in sharing when meeting with our prayer partner—also for decision-making in marriage. My wife and I agree on the same text for daily Bible study. This is especially helpful in periods when we are separated. When we meet again we can read to each other what we have written down in our quiet times—and experience "wondrous things."

It may take a little practice. Just as in preparing for a sports event, a warming-up is necessary in order to do one's best, so also is a "warming-up training" of the heart indispensable for our spiritual life. Martin Luther uses precisely these terms. It takes training and practice to discern our own ideas from God's thoughts. When you open the faucet in a new building, brownish liquid may come

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For further reading by the same author

**LOVE IS A FEELING TO BE LEARNED**

Explores the mystery of love—its tension and fulfillment, its deep longing and hostility, its beauty and burden. paper

**MY BEAUTIFUL FEELING**

Walker and Ingrid Trobisch, in a series of actual letters, counsel Ilona in the area of masturbation, a constantly recurring issue in the Trobisches' ministry. paper

**I LOVED A GIRL**

Presents a private correspondence between two young Africans and their pastor in which the long, hard struggle for integrity and idealism finds its focus in the area of sexual behavior. paper

**I MARRIED YOU**

Describes four action-packed days in which the author becomes involved in the tensions and agonies of several men and women as he tries to help them find solutions to their problems through deeper understandings of the divine purpose in sex and marriage. paper

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*Sandy Dominicos, ed. Sinner's Reginald*

## ST. DOMINIC

### The Nine Ways of Prayer of St. Dominic

The holy teachers Augustine, Leo, Ambrose, Gregory, Hilary, Isidore, John Chrysostom and John Damascene and Bernard<sup>141</sup> and other devout teachers, both Greeks and Latins, have spoken extensively about prayer, recommending it and describing it, telling us how necessary and useful it is, how to do it and how to prepare for it, as well as indicating the obstacles that may arise. In addition to these, the renowned and glorious teacher, brother Thomas Aquinas<sup>142</sup> and brother Albert<sup>143</sup> of the Order of Preachers in their books, and brother William in his treatise on the Virtues,<sup>144</sup> have expounded the subject nobly and systematically, devoutly and attractively.

However, what we must say something about here is the way of praying in which the soul uses the members of the body in order to rise more devotedly to God, so that the soul, as it causes the body to move, is in turn moved by the body, until sometimes it comes to be in ecstasy like Paul,<sup>145</sup> sometimes in agony like our Saviour,<sup>146</sup> and sometimes in rapture like the prophet David.<sup>147</sup> The blessed Dominic used often to pray like this.

We find, in fact, that the holy men of the Old and New Testaments sometimes prayed like this. This manner of praying stirs up devotion, the soul stirring the body and the body stirring the soul. Praying this way used to make St. Dominic dissolve utterly into weeping, and it so kindled the fervour of his good will that his mind could not prevent his bodily members from showing unmistakable signs of his devotion. So, by the sheer force of his mind at prayer, he sometimes rose up in petitions and entreaties and thanksgiving.

Apart from the common ways of prayer in the celebration of the Mass and in the prayer of psalmody in the canonical Hours, which he practised very devoutly both in choir and when he was travelling, and during which he often seemed suddenly to be caught up above himself... speak with God and the angels, his ways of praying were as follows.

### THE FIRST WAY OF PRAYER

First of all, bowing humbly before the altar as if Christ, whom the altar signifies, were really and personally present and not just symbolically.<sup>148</sup> As it says, "The prayer of the man who humbles himself pierces the clouds."<sup>149</sup> He used sometimes to say to the brethren the text from Judith, "The prayer of the humble and meek has always been pleasing to you."<sup>150</sup> It was by humility that the Canaanite woman obtained what she wanted,<sup>151</sup> and so did the prodigal son.<sup>152</sup> Also, "I am not worthy to have you come under my roof."<sup>153</sup> "Lord, humble my spirit deeply because, Lord, I am utterly humbled before you."<sup>154</sup> So the holy father, standing with his body erect, would bow his head and his heart humbly before Christ his Head, considering his own servile condition and the outstanding nobility of Christ, and giving himself up entirely to venerating Him.

He taught the brethren to do this whenever they passed before a crucifix showing the humiliation of Christ, so that Christ, who was so greatly humbled for us, should see us humbled before his greatness.<sup>155</sup> Similarly he told the brethren to humble themselves like this<sup>156</sup> before the whole Trinity whenever the *Glory be to the Father* was recited solemnly. This way of prayer, as illustrated in the picture, was the beginning of his devotion: bowing deeply.

### THE SECOND WAY OF PRAYER

St. Dominic also often used to pray by throwing himself down on the ground, flat on his face, and then his heart would be pricked with compunction, and he would blush at himself and say, sometimes loudly enough for it actually to be heard, the words from the gospel, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner."<sup>157</sup> And with great devotion and reverence he would recite the words of David, "It is I who have sinned and done unjustly."<sup>158</sup> He would weep and groan passionately, and then say, "I am not worthy to look upon the height of heaven, because of the greatness of my sin; I have provoked your anger and done evil in your sight."<sup>159</sup> He would also say, emphatically and devoutly, the verse from Psalm 43:25, "My soul is laid low in the dust, my belly is stuck to the earth."<sup>160</sup> And again, "My soul is stuck to the floor, make me come alive according to your word."<sup>161</sup>

Sometimes, wanting to teach the brethren with what reverence

they ought to pray, he would say to them, "The Magi, those devout kings, entered the house and found the child with Mary his mother.<sup>162</sup> Now it is certain that we have found him too, God and man, with Mary his handmaid, so come, let us fall down and worship before God, let us weep before the Lord who made us."<sup>163</sup>

He exhorted the young men too, saying to them, "If you cannot weep for your own sins, because you have none, still there are many sinners to be directed towards mercy and love, for whose sake the prophets and apostles groaned in distress, and for their sake too Jesus wept bitterly when he saw them, and similarly the holy David wept and said, 'I saw the half-hearted and I pined away.'<sup>164</sup>

### THE THIRD WAY OF PRAYER

For this reason, rising up from the ground, he used to take the discipline with an iron chain, saying, "Your discipline has set me straight towards my goal."<sup>165</sup> This is why the whole Order determined that all the brethren, out of respect for the memory of St. Dominic's example, should take the discipline on their bare backs with sticks of wood every ferial day after Compline,<sup>166</sup> saying the *Miserere* or the *De Profundis*. They were to do this either for their own sins or for those of others whose gifts supported them. So no one, however innocent, should withdraw himself from following this holy example.

### THE FOURTH WAY OF PRAYER

After this, St. Dominic, standing before the altar or in the Chapter Room, would fix his gaze on the Crucifix, looking intently at Christ on the cross and kneeling down over and over again, a hundred times perhaps; sometimes he would even spend the whole time from after Compline till midnight getting up and kneeling down again, like the apostle James,<sup>167</sup> and like the leper in the gospel who knelt down and said, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean."<sup>168</sup> and like Stephen who knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them."<sup>169</sup> And a great confidence would grow in our holy father Dominic, confidence in God's mercy for himself and for all sinners, and for the protection of the novices

whom he used to send out all over the place to preach to souls. And sometimes he could not contain his voice, but the brethren would hear him saying, "O you, Lord, I will cry, do not turn away from me in silence, lest in your silence I become like those who go down into the pit,"<sup>170</sup> and other such words from sacred scripture.

At other times, however, he spoke in his heart and his voice was not heard at all, and he would remain quietly on his knees, his mind caught up in wonder, and this sometimes lasted a long time. Sometimes it seemed from the very way he looked that he had penetrated heaven in his mind, and then he would suddenly appear radiant with joy, wiping away the abundant tears running down his face. At such times he would come to be in an intensity of desire, like a thirsty man coming to a spring of water, or a traveller at last approaching his homeland. Then he would grow more forceful and insistent, and his movements would display great composure and agility as he stood up and knelt down.

He was so accustomed to genuflecting that, when he was on a journey, both in a hostel, after the toils of the road, and on the road itself, while the others were sleeping or resting, he would return to his genuflections as to his own special art and his own personal service. This way of prayer he taught more by the example of his practice than by what he said.

### THE FIFTH WAY OF PRAYER

Sometimes, when he was in a convent, our holy father Dominic would stand upright before the altar, not leaning on anything or supported by anything, but with his whole body standing straight up on his feet. Sometimes he would hold his hands out, open, before his breast, like an open book, and then he would stand with great reverence and devotion, as if he were reading in the presence of God. Then in his prayer he would appear to be pondering the words of God and, as it were, enjoying reciting them to himself. He had made his own the Lord's practice which we read about in Luke 4:16, "Jesus went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, as he was accustomed to do, and stood up to read." And it says in Psalm 105:30, "Phineas stood and prayed and the pestilence stopped."

At other times, he joined his hands and held them tightly fastened together in front of his eyes, hunching himself up. At other

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times he raised his hands to his shoulders, in the manner of a priest saying Mass, as if he wanted to fix his ears more attentively on something that was being said to him by somebody else. If you had seen his devotion as he stood there erect in prayer, you would have thought you were looking at a prophet conversing with an angel or with God, now talking, now listening, now thinking quietly about what had been revealed to him.

When he was travelling, he would steal sudden moments of prayer, unobtrusively, and would stand with his whole mind intently concentrated on heaven, and soon you would have heard him pronouncing, with the utmost enjoyment and relish, some lovely text from the very heart of sacred scripture, which he would seem to have drawn fresh from the Saviour's wells.<sup>171</sup>

The brethren used to be greatly moved by this example, when they saw their father and master praying in this way, and the more devout among them found it the best possible instruction in how to pray continuously and reverently, "as the eyes of a handmaid are on the hands of her mistress and as the eyes of servants are on the hands of their masters."<sup>172</sup>

## THE SIXTH WAY OF PRAYER

Sometimes, as I was told personally by someone who had seen it, our holy father Dominic was also seen praying with his hands and arms spread out like a cross, stretching himself to the limit and standing as upright as he possibly could. This was how he prayed when God restored the boy Napoleon to life at his prayer at San Sisto in Rome, both in the sacristy and in the church during the Mass in which he rose from the ground, as we were told by that devout and holy sister, Cecilia, who was present, with a great crowd of others, and saw it all.<sup>173</sup> Like Elijah when he raised the widow's son, he stretched himself out over the boy's body.<sup>174</sup>

He also prayed in the same way when he rescued the English pilgrims near Toulouse when they nearly drowned in the river, as has been related elsewhere.<sup>175</sup>

And this was how the Lord prayed when he hung on the cross, his hands and arms stretched out, when, with great cries and weeping, his prayer was heard because of his reverence.<sup>176</sup>

The holy man of God, Dominic, did not use this kind of prayer

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regularly, but only when, by God's inspiration, he knew that some great wonder was going to occur by virtue of his prayer. He neither forbade the brethren to pray like this nor did he encourage it.

When he raised the boy from the dead, praying standing with his arms and hands stretched out like a cross, we do not know what he said. Perhaps he used the words of Elijah, "Lord my God, I beseech you, let the soul of this boy return within him,"<sup>177</sup> just as he followed his manner of praying. But the brethren and the sisters and the cardinals and the rest who were there were paying attention to his manner of praying, which was unfamiliar and remarkable to them, and so they did not take in the words he spoke. And afterwards they could not ask the holy and extraordinary man, Dominic, about it, because in this deed he had shown himself to be an object of awe and reverence to them all.

However, he did sometimes recite, seriously, deliberately and carefully, the texts from the Psalms which refer to this manner of praying: "I cried to you, Lord, all day long I have stretched out my hands to you" (*Ps. 87:10*) and "I have stretched out my hands to you, my soul is like soil without water before you, speedily hear me, Lord" (*Ps. 142:6-7*).

This makes it possible for any devout man of prayer to understand the teaching of this father, praying in this way when he desired to be extraordinarily moved towards God by the power of his prayer, or rather, when he felt himself being moved by God in a particularly expansive way, through some hidden inspiration, in view of some special grace for himself or for somebody else. He can base himself on the teaching of David, the symbolic expression of Elijah, the love of Christ and the devotion of Dominic.

## THE SEVENTH WAY OF PRAYER

He was also often found stretching his whole body up towards heaven in prayer, like a choice arrow shot straight up from a bow. He had his hands stretched right up above his head, joined together or slightly open as if to catch something from heaven. And it is believed that at such times he received an increase of grace and was caught up in rapture, and that his prayer won from God for the Order he had founded the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and, for himself and his brethren, such delight and enjoyment in putting the Beatitudes into prac-

tice, that each one would consider himself blessed in the most profound poverty, in bitter grief, in severe persecution, in great hunger and thirst for righteousness, in all the cares and worries of mercy, and that they would all consider it a pleasure to observe the commandments with devotion and to follow the evangelical counsels. At such times the holy father seemed suddenly to enter the Holy of Holies and the third heaven. And so after this kind of prayer, he bore himself like a prophet, as has been related in the *Miracles*,<sup>178</sup> whether he was rebuking or dispensing or preaching.

To give just one example, briefly, for edification's sake,<sup>179</sup> once at Bologna, after praying like this, the holy master Dominic asked the advice of some of the senior brethren about some decision that had to be made. This was his normal practice because, as he said, something may be shown to one good man which is not shown to another, as can be seen in the prophets. The sacristan then came and called one of the people taking part in this council to go to the women's church to hear a confession, I think, and stupidly added, though not loudly enough to be heard by the holy master Dominic, "A beautiful lady is asking for you! Come at once." The Spirit came upon St. Dominic then and he began to be disturbed in himself, and the councillors looked at him with fear. Then he told the sacristan to come to him, and he asked him, "What did you say?" He replied, "I was asking for a priest to come to the church." And the father said, "Reproach yourself and confess the sin which came to your lips. The God who made all things made me aware of what you thought were your secret words." And he disciplined him there severely and long, so that those who were present were moved to compassion because of his bruises. Then he said, "Now, my son, go your way. Now you have learned how to gaze at a woman in the future: make sure you don't judge of her appearance. And you too should pray that God will give you chaste eyes." In this way he knew what was hidden, rebuked the brother's folly, and punished him and taught him, as he had foreseen it all in prayer. And the brethren were amazed that this was what he said had to be done. And the holy master said, "Our judgments, by comparison with those of God, are nothing better than filth."<sup>180</sup>

So the holy father did not remain long in this kind of prayer, but returned to himself as if he were coming from far away, and at such times he seemed to be a stranger in the world, as could easily be seen from his appearance and his behaviour. While he was praying he was sometimes clearly heard by the brethren saying, as the prophet did,

"I hear the voice of my supplication while I pray to you, and while I lift up my hands to your holy temple."<sup>181</sup>

And the holy master taught the brethren to pray like this both by his words and by his example. He quoted the verses from Psalm 133:2, "At night lift up your hands to the holy place," and Psalm 140:2, "The raising of my hands like an evening sacrifice."

### THE EIGHTH WAY OF PRAYER

The holy father Dominic also had another beautiful way of praying, full of devotion and grace. After the canonical hours and the grace which is said in common after meals, the father would go off quickly on his own to a cell or somewhere, sober and alert and anointed with a spirit of devotion which he had drawn from the divine words which had been sung in choir or during the meal; there he would sit down to read or pray, recollecting himself in himself and fixing himself in the presence of God. Sitting there quietly he would open some book before him, arming himself first with the sign of the cross, and then he would read. And he would be moved in his mind as delightfully as if he heard the Lord speaking to him. As the Psalm says, "I will hear what the Lord God is saying in me."<sup>182</sup> It was as if he were arguing with a friend; at one moment he would appear to be feeling impatient, nodding his head energetically, then he would seem to be listening quietly, then you would see him disputing and struggling, and laughing and weeping all at once, fixing his gaze, submitting, then again speaking quietly and beating his breast. If anyone was inquisitive enough to want to spy on him secretly, he would find that the holy father Dominic was like Moses, who went into the innermost desert and saw the burning bush and the Lord speaking and calling to him to humble himself.<sup>183</sup> The man of God had a prophetic way of passing quickly from reading to prayer and from meditation to contemplation.<sup>184</sup>

When he was reading like this on his own, he used to venerate the book and bow to it and sometimes kiss it, particularly if it was a book of the gospels or if he was reading the words which Christ had spoken with his own lips. And sometimes he used to hide his face and turn it aside, or he would bury his face in his hands and hide it a little in his scapular.<sup>185</sup> And then he would also become anxious and full of yearning, and he would also rise a little, respectfully, and bow as if he

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were thanking some very special person for favours he has bestowed. Then, quite refreshed and at peace in himself, he would continue reading his book.

### THE NINTH WAY OF PRAYER

This way of prayer he used to observe when he was going from one country to another, especially when he was in a lonely place. He disported himself with his meditations in his contemplation. And sometimes he would say to his travelling companions, "It is written in Hosea, 'I will lead her into the wilderness and speak to her heart.'"<sup>186</sup> So sometimes he went aside from his companion or went on ahead or, more often, lingered far behind; going on on his own he would pray as he walked, and a fire was kindled in his meditation.<sup>187</sup> And a curious thing about this kind of prayer was that he seemed to be brushing away ashes or flies from before his face; and because of this he often defended himself with the sign of the cross. The brethren thought that in this kind of prayer the saint acquired the fulness of sacred scripture and the very heart of the understanding of God's words, and also a power and boldness to preach fervently, and a hidden intimacy with the Holy Spirit to know hidden things.

And so it happened once, to mention just one story out of many which we leave out,<sup>188</sup> that the devil came to the church of the Friars Preachers in Bologna, in the form of a young man of frivolous, licentious character, and asked for someone to hear his confession. Five priests were brought to him, one after the other. This was because the first confessor was so viciously disturbed and enflamed by his words that he got up from listening to his confession and refused to hear such dreadful things through to the end. The second did the same, and so did the third, the fourth and the fifth. But they went away without saying anything, and they were not prepared to reveal this confession because, as far as they were concerned, the confession they had heard was a sacramental confession, even though this was not how the devil saw it. Then the sacristan approached St. Dominic, who was in the convent at the time, complaining about these priests, because five of them had not been able to hear one sinner's confession. "It's scandalous!" he added; "the priests preach penance and then they refuse to give penance to sinners." Then the holy r Dominican got up from his reading and prayer and contem-

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plation, not, I think, unaware of what was afoot, and went to hear the devil's confession. When he entered the church, the devil came to him and at once the holy father recognised him and said to him, "You evil spirit, why do you tempt the servants of God under this veil of piety?" And he rebuked him severely. The devil disappeared at once, leaving the church reeking of sulphur. And the sacristan was appeased and stopped being angry with the priests.

Along with the next 4 disciplines, see the 12 steps of humility in The Rule of St. Benedict, chap. 7:---

SERVICE

The discipline: To engage ourselves for the good of others--

With no regard to what our reward shall be.

Phil. 2:1-11.  
Matt. 20:27, 23:11

Servanthood is not a technique of leadership or a path to greatness. It is leadership, greatness..

Enables us to love effectively and frees us from self-obsession, giving vast peace.

Serving is a way of forgiving and of loving enemies.  
The meaning of Romans 12:20-21.

Envy and jealousy is one of the besetting sins of ministry. F. B. Meyer was an established minister in London when Spurgeon came to town. Spurgeon's crowds grew. His sermons were printed in Monday's paper. Meyer had to deal with "the green monster." He dealt with it by praying for Spurgeon's success. His own church grew from the effects of Spurgeon's powerful ministry.

Jack Hayford and First Baptist Van Nuys.

Define your "Parish" and serve the other ministers in that area. Rightly understood, the most important part of your ministry is to other ministers. The idea of the Pope as "the servant of the servants of God." Not bad.

FELLOWSHIP:

To be with others. Simply that. But especially in common enterprise of worship, learning and service.

To know Christ in others without regard to their human 'qualifications' and to be received on the same basis.

Confirms us in the reality of Christ with us. Makes us see the grace of God concretely and allows us to practice justice, mercy and humility in God's presence. Gives us a few "enemies" to love. Modeled on the 12 Apostles around Jesus

I Cor 1:26-2:5, Micah 6:8

"Live together in harmony on your way to God." (St. Augustine)

See early Methodist statements. (attached)

What is usually called "fellowship" in contemporary congregations isn't fellowship at all, but brief periods of carefully calibrated distance.

Screwtape on the local assembly. Especially the 2<sup>nd</sup> ¶ in the II<sup>nd</sup> Letter.

Spiritual Directors actually meet needs for fellowship of a kind that cannot now (usually) be met in our congregations.

Ministers especially should explore "Spiritual Direction" if they find themselves "alone" in the midst. The difficulties of Fellowship, Confession, and Submission for ministers and leaders generally causes great harm in their personal lives.



against them. Many dignitaries of the Church were above measure enraged at this new way, and zealous in opposing it. "Some clergymen," says Wesley, "objected to this 'new doctrine,' salvation by faith; and, because of my unfashionable doctrine, I was excluded from one and another church, and at length shut out of all." In many places, too, Wesley and his associates were treated as disturbers of the peace, and subjected to annoyance and persecution. They were reviled, mobbed, imprisoned. They bore everything with patience. "Not daring to be silent," says Wesley, "it remained only to preach in the open air; which I did at first not out of choice, but necessity. I have since seen abundant reason to adore the wise providence of God herein, making a way for myriads of people who never troubled any church, nor were likely so to do, to hear that Word which they soon found to be the power of God unto salvation."

The result of these labors was not only the conversion of many souls, but the formation of religious societies. The young converts, neglected, and in many instances treated contemptuously by the established clergy, were as sheep having no shepherd. They naturally longed for the fellowship of kindred spirits. At their own request, they were united together for mutual comfort and edification. Wesley gives the following account of the origin of what was then called simply "the United Society." (The rules) which were drawn up for them are to the present day recognised, with two or three very slight alterations, as the *General Rules* of all branches of the great Methodist family in England, in the United States, and elsewhere:

"1. In the latter end of the year 1739 eight or ten persons came to me in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired (as did two or three more the next day) that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to free from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That we might have more time for this great work, I appointed a day when they might all come together; which, from thenceforward, they did every week, viz. on Thursday in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them (for their number increased daily), I gave those advices from time to time which I judged most needful for them; and we always concluded our meetings with prayer suitable to their several necessities.

"2. This was the rise of the United Society, first in London, and then in other places. Such a society is no other than a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness; united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation."

"3. That it may the more easily be discerned whether they are indeed working out their own salvation, each society is divided into smaller companies, called classes, according to their respective places of abode. There are about twelve persons in every class; one of whom is styled the Leader. It is his business,

"(L) To see each person in his class once a week, at least, in order

"To inquire how their souls prosper;

"To advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require;

"To receive what they are willing to give towards the support of the Gospel;

"(2.) To meet the ministers and the stewards of the society once a week, in order

"To inform the minister of any that are sick, or of any that walk disorderly, and will not be reprov'd;

"To pay to the stewards what they have received of their several classes in the week preceding; and

"To show their account of what each person has contributed.

"4. There is one only condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies; viz. 'a desire to free from the wrath to come, and be saved from their sins.' But wherever this is really fixed in the soul, it will be shown by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

"First, by doing no harm, by avoiding evil in every kind; especially that which is most generally practiced. Such as

"The taking the name of God in vain;

"The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work thereon, or by buying or selling;

"Drunkenness; buying or selling spirituous liquors; or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity;

"Fighting, quarrelling, brawling; brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing; the using many words in buying or selling;

"The buying or selling uncustomed goods;

"The giving or taking things on usury, viz. unlawful interest;

"Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; particularly speaking evil of magistrates or of ministers;

"Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us;

"Doing what we know is not for the glory of God; as,

"The putting on of gold and costly apparel;

"The taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus;

"The singing those songs or reading those books which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God;

"Softness, and needless self-indulgence;

"Laying up treasure upon earth;

"Borrowing without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

"5. It is expected of all who continue in these societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

"Secondly, by doing good, by being in every kind merciful after their power, as they have opportunity; doing good of every possible sort, and as far as is possible to all men:

"To their bodies, of the ability that God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by helping, or visiting them that are sick or in prison;

"To their souls, by instructing, reproofing, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with: trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine of devils, that 'we are not to do good, unless our hearts be free to it.'

"By doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be: employing them preferably to others, buying one of another, helping each other in business; and so much the more, because the world will love its own, and them only.

"By all possible diligence and frugality, that the Gospel be not blamed.

"By running with patience the race that is set before them, denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily; submitting to bear the reproach of Christ; to be as the filth and offscouring of the world; and looking that men should say all manner of evil of them falsely, for the Lord's sake.

"6. It is expected of all who desire to continue in these societies that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

"Thirdly, by attending upon all the ordinances of God: such are

"The public worship of God;

"The ministry of the word, either read or expounded;

"The supper of the Lord;

"Family and private prayer;

"Searching the Scriptures; and

"Fasting or abstinence.

"7. These are the general rules of our societies: all which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written Word—the only rule, and the sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice. And all these we know his Spirit writes on every truly awakened heart. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be made known unto them who watch over that soul, as they that must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways: we will bear with him for a season. But then, if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls."

The "societies" thus formed increased so rapidly that very soon there arose a necessity for additional ministerial service. As the leaders in this wonderful revival of religion had been led providentially into the practice of field-preaching, and into the formation of religious societies, so they were induced in the same manner to accept the assistance of preachers who had not been educated for the ministry, nor ordained to that service. This was at that time regarded by many as the most heinous of their offences. The Wesleys themselves at first hesitated at what seemed so monstrous an innovation; and the elder brother, when he first heard that a layman had taken a text and preached a sermon, hastened to London to put a stop to the irregularity. The man, Thomas Maxfield by name, had been left in charge of the little flock during the absence of the ordained ministers, had prayed with them, read to them passages of Scripture, attempted an exposition of a verse or two, and found himself preaching almost before he was aware of it. Happily for the interests of the new sect, and happily, too, for the cause of Christ, Wesley was met by his mother before he had time to censure the young preacher, or publicly to denounce this innovation. Mrs.

declared to those whom God gave into my hands, the faith as it is in Jesus: As I did next day to a young man I overtook on the road, and in the evening to our friends at Oxford. A strange doctrine, which some, who did not care to contradict, yet knew not what to make of; but one or two, who were thoroughly bruised by sin, willingly heard, and received it gladly.

In the day or two following, I was much confirmed in the "truth that is after godliness," by hearing the experiences of Mr. Hutchins, of Pembroke College, and Mrs. Fox: Two living witnesses that God can (at least, if he *does* not always) give that faith whereof cometh salvation in a moment, as lightning falling from heaven.

*Mon. MAY 1.*—The return of my brother's illness obliged me again to hasten to London. In the evening I found him at James Hutton's, better as to his health than I expected; but strongly averse from what he called "the new faith."

This evening our little society began, which afterwards met in Fetter-Lane. Our fundamental rules were as follow:—

In obedience to the command of God by St. James, and by the advice of Peter Böhler, it is agreed by us,

1. That we will meet together once a week to "confess our faults one to another, and pray one for another, that we may be healed."
2. That the persons so meeting be divided into several *bands*, or little companies, none of them consisting of fewer than five, or more than ten persons.
3. That every one in order speak as freely, plainly, and concisely as he can, the real state of his heart, with his several temptations and deliverances, since the last time of meeting.
4. That all the bands have a conference at eight every Wednesday evening, begun and ended with singing and prayer.
5. That any who desire to be admitted into this society be asked, "What are your reasons for desiring this? Will you be entirely open; using no kind of reserve? Have you any objection to any of our orders?" (which may then be read.)
6. That when any new member is proposed, every one present speak clearly and freely whatever objection he has to him.
7. That those against whom no reasonable objection appears, he, in order for their trial, formed into one or more *disinct bands*, and some person agreed on to assist them.

8. That after two months' trial, if no objection then appear, they may be admitted into the society.

9. That every fourth Saturday be observed as a day of general intercession.

10. That on the Sunday seven-night following be a general love-feast, from seven till ten in the evening.

11. That no particular member be allowed to act in any thing contrary to any order of the society: And that if any persons, after being thrice admonished, do not conform thereto, they be not any longer esteemed as members.

*Wed. 3.*—My brother had a long and particular conversation with Peter Böhler. And it now pleased God to open his eyes; so that he also saw clearly what was the nature of that one true living faith, whereby alone, "through grace, we are saved."

*Thur. 4.*—Peter Böhler left London, in order to embark for Carolina. O what a work hath God begun, since his coming into England! Such an one as shall never come to an end, till heaven and earth pass away.

*Friday and Saturday* I was at Blendon. They now "believed our report." O may "the arm of the Lord" be speedily "revealed unto them!"

*Sun. 7.*—I preached at St Lawrence's in the morning; and afterwards at St. Katherine Cree's church. I was enabled to speak strong words at both; and was, therefore, the less surprised at being informed, I was not to preach any more in either of those churches.

*Tus. 9.*—I preached at Great St. Helen's, to a very numerous congregation, on, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" My heart was now so enlarged, to declare the love of God, to all that were oppressed by the devil, that I did not wonder in the least, when I was afterwards told, "Sir, you must preach here no more."

*Wed. 10.*—Mr. Stonehouse, Vicar of Islington, was convinced of "the truth as it is in Jesus." From this time till Saturday, 13, I was sorrowful and very heavy; being neither able to read, nor meditate, nor sing, nor pray, nor do any thing. Yet I was a little refreshed by Peter Böhler's letter, which I insert in his own words:—

8. Do you desire that every one of us should tell you, from time to time, whatsoever is in his heart concerning you?

9. Consider! Do you desire we should tell you whatsoever we think, whatsoever we fear, whatsoever we hear, concerning you?

10. Do you desire that, in doing this, we should come as close as possible, that we should cut to the quick, and search your heart to the bottom?

11. Is it your desire and design to be on this, and all other occasions, entirely open, so as to speak everything that is in your heart without exception, without disguise, and without reserve?

Any of the preceding questions may be asked as often as occasion offers; the four following at every meeting:—

1. What known sins have you committed since our last meeting?
2. What temptations have you met with?
3. How were you delivered?
4. What have you thought, said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not?

## DIRECTIONS

### GIVEN TO THE BAND-SOCIETIES,

DECEMBER 25, 1744.

You are supposed to have the faith that "overcometh the world." To you, therefore, it is not grievous,—

1. Carefully to abstain from doing evil; in particular,—
1. Neither to buy nor sell anything at all on the Lord's day.
2. To taste no spirituous liquor, no dram of any kind, unless prescribed by a Physician.
3. To be at a word both in buying and selling.
4. To pawn nothing, no, not to save life.
5. Not to mention the fault of any behind his back, and to stop those short that do.

## RULES OF THE BAND-SOCIETIES,

DRAWN UP DECEMBER 25, 1738.

The design of our meeting is, to obey that command of God, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed."

To this end, we intend,—

1. To meet once a week, at the least.
2. To come punctually at the hour appointed, without some extraordinary reason.
3. To begin (those of us who are present) exactly at the hour, with singing or prayer.
4. To speak each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our souls, with the faults we have committed in thought, word, or deed, and the temptations we have felt, since our last meeting.
5. To end every meeting with prayer, suited to the state of each person present.
6. To desire some person among us to speak his own state first, and then to ask the rest, in order, as many and as searching questions as may be, concerning their state, sins, and temptations.

Some of the questions proposed to every one before he is admitted among us may be to this effect:—

1. Have you the forgiveness of your sins?
2. Have you peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ?
3. Have you the witness of God's Spirit with your spirit, that you are a child of God?
4. Is the love of God shed abroad in your heart?
5. Has no sin, inward or outward, dominion over you?
6. Do you desire to be told of your faults?
7. Do you desire to be told of all your faults, and that plain and home?

6. To wear no needless ornaments, such as rings, ear-rings, necklaces, lace, ruffles.

7. To use no needless self-indulgence, such as taking snuff or tobacco, unless prescribed by a Physician.

II. Zealously to maintain good works; in particular,—

1. To give alms of such things as you possess, and that to the uttermost of your power.

2. To reprove all that sin in your sight, and that in love and meekness of wisdom.

3. To be patterns of diligence and frugality, of self-denial, and taking up the cross daily.

III. Constantly to attend on all the ordinances of God; in particular,—

1. To be at church and at the Lord's table every week, and at every public meeting of the Bands.

2. To attend the ministry of the word every morning, unless distance, business, or sickness prevent.

3. To use private prayer every day; and family prayer, if you are at the head of a family.

4. To read the Scriptures, and meditate therein, at every vacant hour. And,—

5. To observe, as days of fasting or abstinence, all Fridays in the year.

## MINUTES

OF

### SOME LATE CONVERSATIONS

BETWEEN

THE REV. MR. WESLEYS AND OTHERS.

#### CONVERSATION I.

MONDAY, *Jan<sup>y</sup> 25<sup>th</sup>, 1744.*

THE following persons being met at the Foundry,—John Wesley; Charles Wesley; John Hodges, Rector of Wenvo; Henry Piers, Vicar of Bexley; Samuel Taylor, Vicar of Quinton; and John Meriton; after some time spent in prayer, the design of our meeting was proposed; namely, to consider,

1. What to teach;
2. How to teach; and,
3. What to do; that is, how to regulate our doctrine, discipline, and practice.

We began with considering the doctrine of justification: The questions relating to, with the substance of the answers given thereto, were as follows:—

Q. 1. What is it to be justified?

A. To be pardoned and received into God's favour; into such a state, that, if we continue therein, we shall be finally saved.

Q. 2. Is faith the condition of justification?

A. Yes; for every one who believeth not is condemned; and every one who believes is justified.

Q. 3. But must not repentance, and works meet for repentance, go before this faith?

A. Without doubt; if by repentance you mean conviction of sin; and by works meet for repentance, obeying God as far as

# INTRODUCTION



## What is *RENOVARÉ*?

*RENOVARÉ* (a Latin word which means "to renew") is committed to the renewal of the Church. It is an "infra-church" movement. *RENOVARÉ* is focused on the renewal of existing churches, not an institution designed to replace the Church.

*RENOVARÉ* provides individual churches with a balanced, practical, effective small group strategy for spiritual growth. The aim of the program is to give depth to our desire for God. The end result of the program is a substantial increase in the level of discipleship. While it is impossible to measure spiritual growth, those who have been a part of the Spiritual Formation Groups for a six month trial period have described a marked increase in the area of spiritual discipline. One woman noted, "Since I started a group with one other woman in my church, my life of discipleship has grown one hundred percent."

A pastor of a large, inner-city church has been developing Spiritual Formation Groups in his church since 1989 because he feels, "they are an indispensable tool of discipleship for the end of the twentieth century." His goal is to have every member of his church become a part of a Spiritual Formation Group by the end of the decade.

## Why does it work?

The secret of the program is the combination of three very important ingredients. The first is *balance*. To be spiritually healthy we need to have a well-balanced spiritual life, just as to be physically healthy we need a well-balanced diet and exercise. *RENOVARÉ* is founded upon the five major areas of discipline found in the life of Christ, and the five corresponding traditions seen in the history of the Church. *RENOVARÉ* is a program of balance.

The second ingredient is *knowledge*. For most of us, the reason we are unable to become active disciples is a lack of information: how to do the spiritual disciplines. We can dream about being a true follower, imagine ourselves being a committed disciple, but what will we do tomorrow? What steps can we take? What activities can we engage in that will help us grow closer with God? It is as if we are looking across a great chasm, longing for the other side, discontent with where we are now, and yet unable to bridge the gap because we do not have the knowledge of how to start. *RENOVARÉ* provides the knowledge we need: what to do and how to do it.

Emphasize

The third ingredient is *mutual encouragement and accountability*. Once we have obtained a balanced program and a knowledge of how to implement it, the only thing left for us to do is to begin doing it. Unfortunately, for most of us this is the hardest part. Ingrained habits keep us from changing the way we are. The secret to making the change is the strength found in joining forces with others who have a similar mission. They provide the encouragement we need to get on the path and the accountability we need to keep us there. *RENOVARÉ* utilizes the God-given strength we obtain from each other.

CONFESSION:

To allow ourselves to be known, selectively and wisely.

Enables us to drop the burden of pretense and be truly humbled before man and God. To prepare for the time when we will be known to the whole universe as we really are. (Luke 12:2) Relief from hypocrisy, training in trusting God rather than in our manipulations of our appearance to others. Goodbye to pride and good riddance.

See role of confession in Goforth, 'By My Spirit'

Prov. 28:13, Luke 12:1-5

Confession is not just an act, but a spirit of openness and transparency.

An indispensable condition of intimacy—desired but feared—and without which fellowship is impossible. It is a part of bearing one another's burdens.

Confession often goes hand in hand with huge spiritual breakthroughs because it amounts to forsaking our "kingdom" and abandoning ourselves to God.

Do not confess everything to everybody.

Learn to allow others to confess to you. Just receive it. Confession should be a "natural" occurrence in a fellowship with Christ in the midst.

SUBMISSION:

The discipline: Doing what others think best. To practice setting aside our own ideas as supreme and our own will as ultimate. Totally eliminates self-promotion. See chap 5 of St. Benedict's Rule.

Not to assign our responsibility to others, abandon our judgment generally, or allow others simply to dictate to us.

Gla 6:1-5, Heb. 13:17, James 3:1-2, I Peter 1-8, Matt 7:15-16 & 23:1-12.

Applies the Cross in our life. Frees us from the burden of having our own way and of being all wise in our own eyes. Permits us to benefit from council. Prov. 11:14, 12:15, 15:22, 20:5 & 18, etc. etc

See St. Benedict's Rule, Chap. 3

The mutual submission taught by St. Paul is only in the larger teaching about the community of love.

CHAPTER XXV

OF FOUR THINGS BRINGING GREAT PEACE

SON now shall I teach thee the way of peace and of very liberty.

Lord, do as thou sayest for that is agreeable to me to hear.

(Study, son, rather to do the will of another than thine own. Choose evermore rather to have less than more. Seek ever the lower place and to be under all. Desire ever to pray that the will of God be all and wholly done. Lo, such a man entereth into the coasts of peace and quiet.

Lord, this word of thine is greatly short but it containeth in itself much perfection. It is little in saying but full of wit and plenteous of fruit. And if this might be truly kept by me a light disturbance should not so soon spring up in me; and as oftentimes as I feel me displeased and grieved I find that I have gone from this doctrine. But thou canst (do) all things and ever lovest the profiting of man's soul. Increase in me more grace that I may fulfil thy word and make perfect mine own health.

*Thomas à Kempis*



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What other planned practices might be wisely used as disciplines?

Journaling?

Pilgrimage?

The enjoyment of beauty in art and nature?

Spiritual reading

Attendance on church services

Having a 'spiritual director'?

See Goodacre article on pp. 114-115 of Wakefield,  
The Westm. Dict. of Christian Spirituality

How 'spiritual director' differs from 'pastor'

How being under spiritual director differs from  
submission or obedience

For perspective, the importance of distance

The Silence of God.

Memento mori--Sir Thomas More and Bishop Velimirovic  
(attached)

Etc.?

Why I do not include meditation as a separate discipline--  
It is a way of engaging in most disciplines.

The harm in vacuous ('transcendental') meditation. "Nature  
abhorreth a vacuum."

From The Illumined Heart, by Frederica Mathewes-Green

Our daily temptations and irritations are so minor compared with what the great saints have borne. We resent forgiving friends and family, while Jesus told us to love even our enemies. We have far to go. Those who have gone further on this road can teach and inspire us.

One such example is Nikolai Velimirovic, who was a Serbian bishop in the last century. He spoke out courageously against Naziism until he was arrested and taken to Dachau. He knew about forgiving those who had hurt him. Here is a prayer we can reflect on when we sit at a dinner table feeling irritable.

Bishop Nikolai wrote:

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.

Enemies have driven me into Your embrace more than friends have. Friends have bound me to earth, enemies have loosed me from earth and have demolished all my aspirations in the world.

Enemies have made me a stranger in worldly realms and an extraneous inhabitant of the world. Just as a hunted animal finds safer shelter than an unhunted animal does, so have I, persecuted by enemies, found the safest sanctuary, having ensconced myself beneath Your tabernacle, where neither friends nor enemies can slay my soul. Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.

They, rather than I, have confessed my sins before the world.

They have punished me, whenever I have hesitated to punish myself

They have tormented me, whenever I have tried to flee torments.

They have scolded me, whenever I have flattered myself

They have spat upon me, whenever I have filled myself with arrogance.

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.

Whenever I have made myself wise, they have called me foolish.

Whenever I have made myself mighty, they have mocked me as though I were a dwarf.

Whenever I have wanted to lead people, they have shoved me into the background.

Whenever I have rushed to enrich myself, they have prevented me with an iron hand.

Whenever I thought that I would sleep peacefully, they have wakened me from sleep.

Whenever I have tried to build a home for a long and tranquil life, they have demolished it and driven me out.

Truly, enemies have cut me loose from the world and have stretched out my hands to the hem of Your garment.

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.

Bless them and multiply them; multiply them and make them even more bitterly against me:

so that my fleeing to You may have no return;

so that all hope in men may be scattered like cobwebs;

so that absolute serenity may begin to reign in my soul;

so that my heart may become the grave of my two evil twins: arrogance and anger;

so that I might amass all my treasure in heaven;

ah, so that I may for once be freed from self-deception, which has entangled me in the dreadful web of illusory life.

Enemies have taught me to know what hardly anyone knows, that a person has no enemies in the world except himself.

One hates his enemies only when he fails to realize that they are not enemies, but cruel friends.

It is truly difficult for me to say who has done me more good and who has done me more evil in the world: friends or enemies.

Therefore bless, O Lord, both my friends and my enemies.

A slave curses enemies, for he does not understand. But a son blesses them, for he understands.

For a son knows that his enemies cannot touch his life. Therefore he freely steps among them and prays to God for them.

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.

A godly instruction,<sup>10</sup> written by Sir Thomas More Knight, within a while after he was prisoner in the Tower of London in the year of our Lord 1534.

Bear no malice nor evil will to no man living. For either the man is good or nought.<sup>11</sup> If he be good, and I hate him, then am I nought.

If he be nought, either he shall amend and die good, and go to God, or abide<sup>12</sup> nought, and die nought, and go the devil. And then let me remember that if he shall be saved, he shall not fail (if I be saved too, as I trust to be) to love me very heartily, and I shall then in likewise love him.

And why should I now then hate one for this while<sup>13</sup> which shall hereafter love me for evermore, and why should I be now, then, enemy to him with whom I shall in time coming be coupled in eternal friendship? And on the other side, if he shall continue nought and be damned, then is there so outrageous eternal sorrow towards<sup>14</sup> him that I may well think myself a deadly cruel wretch if I would not now rather pity his pain than malign his person. If one would say that we may well with good conscience wish an evil man harm, lest he should do harm to such other folk as are innocent and good, I will not now dispute upon that point, for that root hath mo<sup>1</sup> branches to be well weighed and considered than I can now conveniently write (having none other pen than a coal). But verily thus will I say, that I will give counsel to every good friend of mine, but if<sup>2</sup> he be put in such a room<sup>3</sup> as to punish an evil man lieth in his charge by reason of his office, else leave the desire of punishing unto God and unto such other folk as are so grounded in charity, and so fast cleave

10. lesson.      11. wicked.      12. remain.      13. period of time.  
14. facing.      1. more.      2. but if: unless.      3. position.

INSTRUCTIONS AND PRAYERS

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to God, that no secret, shrewd,<sup>4</sup> cruel affection,<sup>5</sup> under the cloak of a just and a virtuous zeal, can creep in and undermine them. But let us that are no better than men of a mean<sup>6</sup> sort ever pray for such merciful amendment in other folk as our own conscience showeth us that we have need in ourself.

4. malicious.      5. inclination.      6. inferior.

A godly meditation, written by Sir Thomas More Knight while he was prisoner in the Tower of London in the year of our Lord 1534.<sup>7</sup>

Give me Thy grace, good Lord,  
To set the world at nought;<sup>8</sup>

To set my mind fast<sup>9</sup> upon Thee,  
And not to hang upon the blast<sup>10</sup>  
of men's mouths;

To be content to be solitary;  
Not to long for worldly company;

Little and little utterly to cast off the world,  
And rid my mind of all the business<sup>11</sup> thereof;

Not to long to hear of any worldly things,  
But that the hearing of worldly fantasies<sup>12</sup> may  
be to me displeasing;<sup>13</sup>

Gladly to be thinking of God,  
Pitiously to call for His help;

To lean unto the comfort of God,  
Busily to labor to love Him;

To know mine own vility<sup>1</sup> and wretchedness,  
To humble and meeken myself under the  
mighty hand of God;

7. This heading is from the 1557 *English Works*, but the text of the prayer given here is taken directly from More's handwritten version in the margins of a book of hours he had with him in the Tower (*Thomas More's Prayer Book*, ed. Louis Martz and Richard Sylvester, London and New Haven, 1969, pp. xxxvii-xxxviii, 3-21).

8. *set* . . . *nought*: have no esteem for the world.      9. firmly.

10. utterance.      11. activity.      12. delusions.

13. disagreeable.      1. baseness.

To bewail my sins passed;  
For the purging of them patiently to  
suffer adversity;

Gladly to bear my purgatory here;  
To be joyful of tribulations;

To walk the narrow way that leadeth to life,  
To bear the cross with Christ;

To have the last thing<sup>2</sup> in remembrance,  
To have ever afore<sup>3</sup> mine eye my death that is  
ever at hand;

To make death no stranger to me,  
To foresee and consider the everlasting fire of hell;

To pray for pardon before the judge come,  
To have continually in mind the passion that Christ  
suffered for me;

For His benefits uncessantly<sup>4</sup> to give Him thanks,  
To buy<sup>5</sup> the time again that I before have lost;

To abstain from vain confabulations,<sup>6</sup>  
To eschew light<sup>7</sup> foolish mirth and gladness;

Recreations<sup>8</sup> not necessary—to cut off;  
Of worldly substance, friends, liberty, life and all,  
to set the loss at right nought<sup>9</sup> for the  
winning<sup>1</sup> of Christ:

To think my most<sup>2</sup> enemies my best friends;  
For the brethren of Joseph could never have done  
him so much good with their love and favor as  
they did him with their malice and  
hatred.

2. *last thing*: last judgment. 3. before. 4. continually.  
5. redeem. 6. conversations. 7. frivolous.  
8. pleasurable employments. 9. *right nought*: absolutely nothing.  
1. gaining. 2. greatest.

These minds<sup>3</sup> are more to be desired of every man  
than all the treasure of all the princes and kings,  
Christian and heathen, were it gathered and  
laid together all upon one heap.

3. attitudes.

"As We Forgive"

O Lord, remember not only the men and women of good will, but also those of ill will. But do not remember all the suffering they have inflicted on us; remember the fruits we have bought, thanks to this suffering—our comradeship, our loyalty, our humility, our courage, our generosity, the greatness of heart which has grown out of all this, and when they come to judgment let all the fruits which we have borne be their forgiveness.

Prayer written by an unknown prisoner in Ravensbrück concentration camp and left by the body of a dead child. From *The Oxford Book of Prayer*.

A devout prayer, made by Sir Thomas More Knight after he was condemned to die, and before he was put to death, who was condemned the Thursday, the first day of July, in the year of our Lord God 1535, and in the twenty-seventh year of the reign of King Henry the Eighth, and was beheaded at the Tower Hill at London the Tuesday following.<sup>4</sup>

*Pater noster, Ave maria, Credo.*<sup>5</sup>

O holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—three equal<sup>6</sup> and coeternal persons, and one almighty God—have mercy on me, vile, abject, abominable, sinful wretch, meekly acknowledging<sup>7</sup> before Thine high majesty my long-continued sinful life, even from my very childhood<sup>8</sup> hitherto.

In my childhood in this point and that point, etc.<sup>9</sup>

After my childhood in this point and that point, etc., and so forth by every age.

Now, good gracious Lord, as Thou givest me Thy grace to knowlege them, so give me Thy grace, not in only word but in heart also, with very sorrowful contrition to repent them and utterly to forsake them. And forgive me those sins also in which by mine own default,<sup>10</sup> through evil affections<sup>11</sup> and evil custom, my reason is with sensuality so blinded that I cannot discern them for sin. And illumine, good Lord, mine heart, and give me

4. The prayer is both More's personal expression and a devotion intended for use by others.

5. This rubric indicates one should say the Our Father, Hall Mary, and the Creed.

6. equal. 7. confessing. 8. childhood.

9. Here and in the next sentence, one should think of one's own sins.

10. misdeed. 11. feelings.

my sweet Savior hadst at the Mount of Olivet before Thy most bitter passion, and in the meditation thereof to conceive ghostly<sup>7</sup> comfort and consolation profitable for my soul.

Almighty God, take from me all vainglorious minds,<sup>8</sup> all appetites of mine own praise, all envy, covetise,<sup>1</sup> gluttony, sloth and lechery, all wrathful affections, all appetite of revenging; all desire or delight of other folks' harm, all pleasure in provoking any person to wrath and anger, all delight of exprobration<sup>2</sup> or insultation<sup>3</sup> against any person in their affliction and calamity.

And give me, good Lord, an humble, lowly, quiet, peaceable, patient, charitable, kind, tender, and pitiful mind, with all my works, and all my words, and all my thoughts to have a taste of Thy holy blessed Spirit.

Give me, good Lord, a full faith, a firm hope, and a fervent charity, a love to Thee, good Lord, incomparable<sup>4</sup> above the love to myself, and that I love nothing to Thy displeasure, but everything in an order to<sup>5</sup> Thee.

Give me, good Lord, a longing to be with Thee, not for the avoiding of the calamities of this wretched world, nor so much for the avoiding of the pains of purgatory, nor of the pains of hell neither, nor so much for the attaining of the joys of heaven, in respect of mine own commodity,<sup>6</sup> as even for a very<sup>7</sup> love to Thee.

And bear me, good Lord, Thy love and favor, which thing my love to Thee-ward<sup>8</sup> (were it never so great) could not but of Thy great goodness deserve.

And pardon me, good Lord, that I am so bold to ask so high petitions, being so vile a sinful wretch and so unworthy to attain the lowest. But yet, good Lord, such they be as I am bounden<sup>9</sup> to wish, and should be nearer the effectual desire of them if my manifold sins were not the let.<sup>1</sup> From which, O glorious Trinity,

7. spiritual. 8. attitudes. 1. covetousness.  
2. reproaching. 3. insult. 4. incomparably.  
5. in . . . to: for the sake of. 6. benefit. 7. genuine.  
8. to Thee-ward: toward Thee. 9. obliged. 1. hindrance.

Thy grace to know them and to knowledge them, and forgive me my sins negligently forgotten, and bring them to my mind with grace to be purely confessed of them.

Glorious God, give me from henceforth the grace, with little respect unto the world, so to set and fix firmly mine heart upon Thee that I may say with Thy blessed apostle Saint Paul, *Mundus mihi crucifixus est, et ego mundo. Mihi vivere Christus est et mori lucrum. Cupio dissolvi et esse cum Christo.*<sup>12</sup>

Give me the grace to amend my life and to have an eye to mine end without grudge of death,<sup>1</sup> which to them that die in Thee (good Lord) is the gate of a wealthy<sup>2</sup> life.

Almighty God, *Docce me facere voluntatem tuam. Fac me currere in odore unguentorum tuorum. Apprehende manum meam dexteram, et deduc me in via recta propter inimicos meos. Trahe me post te. In chamo et freno maxillas meas constringe, cum non approximo ad te.*<sup>3</sup>

O glorious God, all sinful fear, all sinful sorrow and penitiveness, all sinful hope, all sinful mirth and gladness take from me. And on the other<sup>4</sup> side, concerning such fear, such sorrow, such heaviness,<sup>5</sup> such comfort, consolation, and gladness as shall be profitable for my soul, *Fac mecum secundum magnam bonitatem tuam Domine.*<sup>6</sup>

Good Lord, give me the grace in all my fear and agony to have recourse to that great fear and wonderful agony that Thou

12. Gal. 6 : 14 and Phil. 1 : 21-23. "The world is crucified to me, and I to the world. For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain. I wish to be dissolved and be with Christ."

1. *grudge of death*: reluctance to die. 2. possessing well-being.  
3. Ps. 142 : 10 (AV, 143 : 10), Cant. 1 : 3, Ps. 72 : 24 (AV, 73 : 23), Ps. 26 : 11 (AV, 27 : 11), Ps. 31 : 9 (AV, 32 : 9). "Teach me to do your will. Make me run in the scent of your unguents. Take my right hand, and lead me in the right path because of my enemies. Draw me after you. With a muzzle and bridle restrain my jaws when I do not draw near to you."

4. other. 5. grief.  
6. Cf. Ps. 118 : 124 (AV, 119 : 124). "Deal with me according to your great goodness, O Lord."

vouchsafe of Thy goodness to wash me with that blessed blood that issued out of Thy tender body (O sweet Savior Christ) in the divers torments of Thy most bitter passion.

Take from me, good Lord, this lukewarm fashion, or rather key-cold<sup>2</sup> manner, of meditation, and this dullness in praying unto Thee. And give me warmth, delight, and quickness<sup>3</sup> in thinking upon Thee, and give me Thy grace to long for Thine holy sacraments, and specially to rejoice in the presence of Thy very blessed body, sweet Savior Christ, in the holy sacrament of the altar, and duly to thank Thee for Thy gracious visitation therewith, and at that high memorial, with tender compassion to remember and consider Thy most bitter passion.

Make us all, good Lord, virtually<sup>4</sup> participant of that holy sacrament this day, and every day make us all lively<sup>5</sup> members, sweet Savior Christ, of Thine holy mystical body, Thy Catholic Church.

*Dignare Domine die sine peccato nos custodire.*<sup>6</sup>

*Miserere nostri Domine, miserere nostri.*<sup>7</sup>

*Fiat misericordia tua Domine super nos, quemadmodum speravimus in te.*<sup>8</sup>

*In te Domine speravi, non confundar in aeternum.*<sup>9</sup>

*Ora pro nobis, sancta Dei genetrix, ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi.*<sup>1</sup>

2. apathetic.      3. vitality.      4. with spiritual effect.
5. living.
6. "Deign, O Lord, on that day to preserve us without sin."
7. Ps. 122 : 3 (*AV*, 123 : 3). "Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us."
8. Ps. 33 : 22 (*AV*, 33 : 22). "Let your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, just as we have hoped in you."
9. Ps. 30 : 2 (*AV*, 31 : 1). "In you, O Lord, have I hoped, let me not be confounded forever."
1. "Pray for us, holy mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ:" (from the prayer *Salve regina*).

*Pro amicis.*<sup>2</sup>

Almighty God, have mercy on N.<sup>3</sup> and N., etc., with special meditation and consideration of every friend, as godly affection and occasion requireth.

*Pro inimicis.*<sup>4</sup>

Almighty God, have mercy on N. and N., etc., and on all that bear me evil will, and would me harm; and their faults and mine together, by such easy tender merciful means as Thine infinite wisdom best can devise, vouchsafe to amend and redress, and make us saved souls in heaven together, where we may ever live and love together with Thee and Thy blessed saints. O glorious Trinity, for the bitter passion of our sweet Savior Christ, Amen.

Lord, give me patience in tribulation, and grace in everything to conform my will to Thine, that I may truly say: *Fiat voluntas tua, sicut in caelo, et in terra.*<sup>5</sup>

The things, good Lord, that I pray for, give me the grace to labor for. Amen.

2. "For friends."

3. The liturgical abbreviation for the Latin *nomen* ("name"), providing for one to add names appropriate to one's own prayer.

4. "For enemies."

5. Matt. 6 : 10. "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."



The 2nd century Christian, Justin the Martyr, who was thrown to beasts in Rome in 167, said this to fellow Christians who might try to save him:

"I give injunctions to all men that I am dying willingly for God's sake, if you do not hinder it. I beseech you, be not an unseasonable kindness to me. Suffer me to be eaten by the beasts, through whom I can attain to God.... Rather entice the wild beasts that they may become my tomb, and leave no trace of my body, that when I fall asleep I be not burdensome to any.... I long for the beasts that are prepared for me.... Let there come upon me fire and cross [crucifixion], struggles with wild beasts, cutting and tearing asunder, rackings of bones, mangling of limbs, crushing of my whole body, and cruel tortures of the devil, if so I may attain to Jesus Christ!"

Quoted p. 611 of Will Durant, The Story of Civilization, III, Caesar and Christ Simon and Schuster, New York, 1944 [See also Loeb Lib. Apost. Fathers I, p. 23]

Earlier, Ignatius, 3rd Bishop of Antioch (in Syria) was transported in chains to Rome for his martyrdom, sometime in the first decades of the the 2nd Century AD. He wrote ahead to the Roman Christians:

"...I am glad to go to my death for God's sake, if only you would do nothing to stop me. Please do not be an unseasonable kindness to me: let me be the food of the beasts, through whom I can attain to the presence of God. God's wheat am I and I shall be ground by the teeth of the beasts, that I may become the pure bread of Christ. Rather coax the beasts to become my supulcher and have no trace left of my body, so that when I fall asleep I shall cause inconvenience to no one. Truly then shall I become a disciple of Jesus Christ when the world will not even see my body....

"From Syria to Rome by land and sea, night and day, I am fighting the beasts, bound to ten leopards--that is, to a squad of soldiers--and they get worse the better you treat them. Because of their cruelty I am becoming a disciple more and more, but not by this am I justified. I pray I may enjoy the animals that are ready for me and that I may find them quickly. Indeed, I am going to coax them to consume me as soon as possible--and I won't be like those whom they were afraid to touch; even if they do not want to I will force them to--Pardon me, I know what's good for me; I am just beginning to become a disciple. May nothing visible or invisible begrudge my attaining to Christ Jesus. Burning, crucifixion, wrestling with wild animals, the crushing of my whole body, the Fiend's foul tortures--come what may, if only I can attain to Christ Jesus!..."

Quoted from p. 76 of The Fathers of the Primitive Church, Herbert A. Musurillo New American Library, N.Y. 1966

INTRODUCTION TO THE RENOVARE PROGRAM OF SMALL GROUP  
MEETINGS--

COMPARED TO THE EARLY METHODIST SOCIETIES--

AND TO THE PATTERN OF COMMUNAL LIFE IN MONASTICISM, ETC.--

St Augustine

Benedict

St. Philip Neri, (1515-1595) Founder of The  
Congregation of the Oratory. (See V. J.  
Matthews, St. Philip Neri, Tan Books, Rockford

Bonhoeffer, Life Together

Nicholas Ferrar of Little Gidding, A. L. Maycock  
Eerdmans, 1980 (S. P. C. K., 1938)  
Anglican, non-Monastic experiment

Mennonite and other similar models

MOST OF THESE WILL HAVE ONLY PARTIAL RELEVANCE TO OUR SITUATION  
TODAY.

Etc. of interest to the group.

## PASTORAL DIRECTION AND SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

### 1. The role of the pastor

Pastor as CEO (the Willimon and Hauerwas interview, pp 10f)

As 'gofer' or servant of the congregation or board  
Understanding "servant leadership"

Pastor as pasturer: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters."

Pasturer arranges for the sheep to find their food and safety. Leads them to it.

### 2. The second and third clause of the "great commission." (Matt 28:19-20)

3. Leading our people into spiritual disciplines, as explained above, is the utterly indispensable condition of "teaching them to observe (to do) all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

Concept of disciplines in the gospel

Practical direction

### 4. The elephant in the church house: undisciplineship as business as usual.

5. Our practice of appropriate disciplines engages on our behalf the "all say has been given to me....Look, I am with you every moment, to the end of the age," clauses of the commission.

### 6. Rewriting our congregational contracts.

7. Spiritual leadership is essentially a matter of being able to induct others into the spiritual life and guide their development therein. It is not merely a matter of being mighty in the spiritual oneself and having astonishing effects. Consider Sampson and Saul. How often today a Sampson is chosen over a Paul. Consider I Cor. 11:1

8. There are always some who are ready. Attend to them. Endure the others with love and some humor.

9. Teach the law, the commandments. This is absolutely basic.

# WILLIAMSON

when the interview was over, there were tears in the eyes of the interviewers.

And then there was Will Willimon. Quiet. Soft. Words as smooth as a slip of Jack Daniels. His words sneak up on you, catch you by surprise. He's just talking like southern people do — easy, rambling, mingled with stories ... parables, really; and when he is done, there is silence because you know you've just heard the truth in a way you've never heard it before. You can see the twinkle in his eye 'cause he knows you've been had. Us California boys just got snookered by a southerner.



We thought he was answering our questions — instead, he was telling us things we didn't know how to ask. When we were all done, we could feel our souls laughing because Will Willimon had spoken the truth. As we said earlier, there were tears in the eyes of the interviewers. Oh, yeah. Stanley is professor of theological ethics at the Divinity School, Duke University. Will is minister to Duke University and professor of the practice of Christian ministry at the Divinity School. They've written lots of books.

sensitivity. And yet. And yet ... you realize this is a man who is so in love with the Gospel — so in its grip — that he must say what he says or the rocks will say it for him. There is such clarity about Stanley Hauerwas. You have no doubts about what he thinks, about what he believes. And, there is no question in our minds that his clarity often leaves him alone, isolated from those whose ideas are of the mind and not of the heart. There were times when he spoke that a kind of holiness filled the room and you knew you were hearing the words of a prophet, and



**WILL WILLIMON and STANLEY HAUERWAS.** How does one describe them? Cary Grant and Arnold Schwarzenegger? The southern gentleman and the son of a bricklayer? Close, but no cigar. Stanley is a loud, blustery, locomotive of passion for the Gospel; his eyes deep, intense, penetrating, full of sparkle and fire; his discourses passion-filled, sputtering with expletives, crashing into everyone else's opinions in the room, his thoughts thundering into your consciousness — sometimes against your will, often making you angry at his lack of ... well ...

THE DOOR INTERVIEW

# HEARD BRAWLS

restaurant and the woman asked him, "Do you find me attractive?" He said, "Yes." She replied, "Really? Then why haven't I gone to bed with you?" He said, "What? I don't even know you yet. I don't know anything about you. What are you talking about?" She studied him for a moment and asked him what she meant by that. He said, "Yes, I'm OK." And then she said, "It's so odd because this is the first time I have ever been out with anyone more than two times and we haven't slept together." He looked at her and said, "That's crazy! That's nuts! Don't do that to yourself." Bewildered she said, "Do you not feel that is OK?" "Of course not!" he replied. "You don't have sex with people you don't even know!" "Why do you feel that way?" she asked. He told her that he had no idea why he said this, but he told her, "I'm an Episcopalian." She said, "What's that?" He said, "It's like a church." She then asked, "So how do Episcopalians feel about sex?" He replied, "We just don't do it with people we haven't made promises to. They continued talking, one thing led to another, and she ended up going to church with him. She ended up being baptized, and now she is at the church every night and they are no longer seeing each other.

**WILLIMONT:** Isn't that weird? Just one person running loose in Southern California who can say "no" can cause a revival. You don't have to be all that good of a Christian to make other Christians. You can just be a little Christian running around saying, "No, we don't do that." It used to be that going to church on Sunday was kind of a middle-class, bourgeois thing to do. At Duke, we have succeeded at even making even that interesting again. Going to church at Duke is like making some kind of stand! When you have to be shocked that somebody else is a Christian, that's good news because overnight we're back in the New Testament where you had to be a Christian.

**DOOR:** We are definitely off the subject here, but since you see the scarcity of Christians on the secular campus as an opportunity to make an impact again, which is better for

**DOOR:** What does it mean to be a "resistant alien" in this culture? **WILLIMONT:** It means that the Gospel is weird and, if you believe the Gospel, you feel yourself in collision with the most widely held and deeply affirmed values of this society. I remember a story Jim Wallis (editor of *Solomon's Magazine*) told about his childhood. His parents were Fundamentalists and did not want Jim to go to movies. When he had been a teenager awhile, he scatched the movie guide trying to find a suitable movie to break the ice. He invited a girl from his church youth group to go with him to see *The Sound of Music*. He announced this to his parents and they said nothing. He thought he was home free. As he was leaving for his date to see *The Sound of Music*, his father stood in the door and said, with tears streaming down his face, "Please don't do this to us. This is against everything we believe in." Jim Wallis went to his movie anyway. What stands out in his mind is how silly the whole movie business was, especially in view of what is going on today. He believes there really are things to stand in the door over. A "resistant alien" is someone who stands in the door of culture. If we don't do that, then it's a little nibble here and a little nibble there, and one day you wake up and you are at the Republican National Convention. Stanley and I do believe in the peculiarity of the Gospel. Being on a university campus, I am continually amazed at how the simplest little everyday Christian stuff is considered radical and weird.

**DOOR:** How do you mean? **WILLIMONT:** Like we don't have sex with people we aren't married to. That may seem minor to some people, but on the campus of a secular university, just a little thing like that becomes a radical witness. You have to explain yourself. I was at an Episcopalian evangelism conference—

**DOOR:** Sounds like an oxymoron. **WILLIMONT:** I know. I would say "c-VAN-gel-ism" and they would say "EU-char-ist." Anyway, I met this Episcopal layperson in his late 20s who told me that he had taken a woman out on a date. They had a great first date, so they went out again. At about 10:30 PM on the second date, they were at a

confronting injustice wherever you find it, until you ask how they would know injustice if they found it. Political injustice is very different than real injustice. We are Christians, and the Christian story says you can't kill people in the name of universal human rights. You can't do that.

**DOOR:** From what you have just said and from reading your book, it sounds like you are saying that the Church should quit trying to influence society through the government. **WILLIMONT:** What we are saying is that when you work with the government, you should do it like porcupines make love...very carefully. Remember, it was the politicians that killed Jesus...and Paul. I think the New Testament way of dealing with politicians is to take them as a joke. Politicians are good to laugh at. Remember Jesus and the question about paying taxes. Jesus' response about rendering to Caesar is best read as a kind of joke. Jesus is saying "Well, go! If he loves money enough to put his picture on it, he must really want it, he must need it. Let him have it, I don't care. You get that kind of narcissism with little people." What we are saying is that it is very dangerous for the Church to get involved in politics.

**DOOR:** One of the criticisms of your book is that it is socially irresponsible to suggest that the Church quit trying to influence the government. **WILLIMONT:** Politicians love words like "responsibility." But once you accept something like the Gulf War in the name of political responsibility, then everything else goes down easier. We are the Church, and maybe the most "responsible" thing we could have done in the war with Iraq is to have said, "Here is a country ruled by a despot. We'd better make that a major area of evangelism this year, so we are going to send 1,000 missionaries to Iraq." That would have screwed up things beautifully. The government would have said "How are we going to bomb Iraq with all those damn missionaries running loose?" And we would have said, "That's your problem. But if you hit one of our missionaries, there's going to be hell to pay." That is political responsibility from the viewpoint of the Church.

**DOOR:** The Church thumbs its nose at the government?

**WILLIMONT:** The Church doesn't understand the government. A few months ago, President Clinton was approached by a black woman who said, "Please save black males for us." He said he would do what he could. Save black males? How is he going to do that? Does he have some kind of program for that? We don't understand this business of Caesar going down in the ghetto and saying, "It's OK, people, we've got you under control. I am going up to the White House in Washington and I'm going to work on some stuff for you." That is what we don't understand. That is what we don't want to have any part of.

**DOOR:** So you want Christians out of politics. **HAUERWAS:** No problem with Christians being in politics, as long as they are there as Christians. **DOOR:** Now you sound like Jerry Falwell. **HAUERWAS:** I like a lot of what Jerry Falwell says. I do. He just happens to be an idolater when it comes to America. He's just screwed up about what a Christian politician is, but other than that, he has some good stuff.

**DOOR:** Falwell and crew have to be licking their wounds after this last election. **HAUERWAS:** What killed the evangelical right is they thought they had won. But I want to go back to what Will was saying about Caesar. When George Bush appointed Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court, he had to say that Clarence Thomas was the most qualified person he could find. Everyone knew that was a lie. The deep paths of people like George Bush is that they do not any longer have souls substantive enough to reach the status of being a liar, because they no longer know what would count as a lie. Everything is kind of an illusion. **George Bush should have come before the American people and said that he was going to appoint someone like Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court because America is a racist society, and the way we try to serve one another is by puffing blacks in positions of power where they can protect other blacks. If he would have said that, he would have alienated a**

whole lot of his supporters. But that is what Christians would have said, should have said and, if Bush had said it, the churches should have said to him, "You want to support someone who tells the truth." We want politics to be concerned about truth. That is not a bad thing.

**DOOR:** We don't know much about politics, but we know enough to know that no politician can be elected in this country if they tell the truth. **HAUERWAS:** My feeling about Washington is like my feeling about the Vatican. Try to ignore it. Someday it will topple by its own weight.

**DOOR:** This is getting depressing. **HAUERWAS:** You ought to be depressed. **WILLIMONT:** One of the things the Church does is to help people name their pain. We say to people, "You're depressed? Good news! Why, there are a whole lot of people who think this is a great place to live, but you're intelligent, you're very perceptive, and therefore you are depressed. That's a beginning. We can work with that." Who said depression was something we ought to minister to, anyway?

**HAUERWAS:** One of the deepest sentimentalities of liberalism is the presumption that you can have children without having them suffer for their convictions. People get very upset by the idea that their children might have to suffer. Well, why in the hell are you having children? You want them to be Christians, don't you? If they are going to be Christians, they are going to suffer. That is what life is about. Life is not about freedom. Freedom sucks. It has absolutely no place in the Christian life. Christians are called to faithfulness and obedience so we can be free from the tyranny of those who would enslave us in the name of freedom. Salvation isn't what liberals or conservatives in this country think it is. It's about getting my life straight. It's not about ultimate significance. Salvation is about an adventure that was made possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, through which I am made part of a community who will tell me who I am. You are not free to make up your life as a Christian. Your life is not like a gift,

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your life is gift. That is a very important grammatical point. Until you learn to receive your life gift, you are lost. And people are lost.

**DOOR:** You're getting worked up here, Stanley.

**HAUERWAS:** Of course I'm getting worked up. What's wrong with that? I tell my classes in Christian Ethics - they have all seen *Dead Poets Society* where there is this wonderful teacher helping these 18- to 19-year old young males learn how to make up their own minds.

**DOOR:** We loved that film.

**HAUERWAS:** I say the worst thing you can possibly do to 18- or 19-year old males in this society is to tell them that they have minds worth making up! What you need to tell them is that they are corrupt, that all they can think about is their own penis, and they are not interesting people.

**DOOR:** Now that you mention it, there were some flaws in the film. Apparently you are not real fond of adolescents.

**HAUERWAS:** I am more fond of truth. I tell my students that I don't want to teach them in a way that they can make up their own minds. What I want is - after I have trained them well - then they may have some views worth having. I have to face them from the capitalist presupposition that ideas are just another consumer item they get to pick and choose from.

**DOOR:** Because some ideas are better than others?

**HAUERWAS:** Yes. When liberals say ideas are all equal, then there is nothing at stake in ideas. Time and time again on the university campus, you are told that freedom of ideas is the most important idea. It never occurs to them that there is a body of people out there called Christians who are not interested in freedom. We find freedom boring. Freedom is the great illusion. There are no free people. Everyone is enslaved to something. The goal of faith is to make you enslaved to the right stuff. We are amused at these people running around talking about how free they are. It just means they are so dumb they don't know they are being jerked around by their parents, Wall Street, and the government. Christians exist to denounce to our culture that true freedom is being yoked to what is true - Jesus.

**DOOR:** What is so interesting about what you are saying is the intensity of your remarks. You really are trying to convert kids into a new way of thinking. You are so deliberate, so blunt, so straightforward about the Gospel.

**WILLIMON:** Look, we are in a battle for people's souls. Christians act like they are the only people preaching conversion. That's not true. We are not the only people who want to put the make on you and change your life. As someone who is in the conversion business, I am in awe that the law school, for example, has found a way to take 12 average people off the streets, show them a video tape of politician beating a man to death, then turn it off, have a discussion and then say, "It really didn't happen, did it?" That is an amazing epistemological transformation our legal system did, and frankly, I am in awe. I wish we could do that. The tragedy is that we have all been converted into the mentality that produced the first Rodney King verdict - we've forgotten we've been converted.

**HAUERWAS:** The Church has spent 16 centuries trying to sell the Gospel on the grounds that it will give you the power to be in control of your civilizations so you can make them come out all right. We believe that Christians have to learn to live in a world out of control and out of their control. Christians must face up to the issue of how you train your children and yourself to live in a world that does not support your primary practices. This society is not going to support lifelong, monogamous fidelity. We live in a society that supports serial polygamy. What does it mean to live in a social order where people think they ought to cure for mentally handicapped children? Christians think we should do that, the social order doesn't. What does it mean to live in a social order that feels responsible for its homeless?

**WILLIMON:** There was a six-page article in *The Christian Century* a number of months ago on homelessness in America, which is a long article for that magazine. Never once did the article mention the Church. Homelessness has become a purely governmental issue.

**HAUERWAS:** I was speaking at a banquet in New York. Ed Koch was

here, and I was seated next to the Episcopal bishop of New York, Bishop Moore. The bishop told me that Ed Koch had called him to ask if each Episcopal Church in the Manhattan area could take in seven homeless people every night. Certainly will be responded by saying, "I certainly will not do that for you, mayor. That is just trying to relieve your responsibility as the mayor to provide public housing for these people. We are certainly not going to take the monkey off your back." I told Bishop Moore that he missed the voice of Jesus in Mayor Koch, that Christians have an obligation of hospitality, and Mayor Koch was just trying to remind Bishop Moore of that. I told the Bishop that the real reason he told the mayor "no" probably had more to do with the fact that most Anglican churches in Manhattan don't want to have homeless people with them at night.

**DOOR:** Why do we have the feeling you are not one of the Bishop's favorite people?

**HAUERWAS:** He turned his back and wouldn't talk to me the rest of the evening.

**DOOR:** What a surprise! Let's change gears here for a while. What about the Church and Jesus? We see a lot of churches taking responsibility for a number of social ills, but what about the churches' spiritual lives? What about their relationship with Jesus? We haven't heard either one of you address that issue.

**WILLIMON:** The question of Jesus has become an interesting question again. When you have ministers running around with briefcases and daytimers, the question of intimacy with Jesus is a very appropriate question. Countless laypeople have said to me, "We want a spiritual leader." I ask them what they mean by that, and they tell me very directly. They are tired of their minister talking only about the weather and sports. They are frustrated when the minister comes to visit you after you have been told 10 minutes talking about how you are doing and then leaves. People want a minister who talks about God -

who loves to talk about God.

**HAUERWAS:** I was sick a couple of years ago, and a minister visited me and said very nicely, "How are we doing today?"

**DOOR:** Uh-oh.

**HAUERWAS:** I grabbed him and said, "I am hurting like hell, and if you don't pray for me right now, then get out of this damn room." I needed a person of power who was ready to claim the power of God for me. [If I'm in the hospital, I don't need some kind of "tingling mass of availability" who hasn't the slightest idea why he is there. The reason there is so much adultery amongst ministers today is that they are so lonely. They need to feel some power. Adultery is a form of going to continue as long as ministers don't trust God. God transforms people's lives. The Eucharist is the most powerful thing anyone could ever do. The Eucharist empowers ministers. If you call on God, God will be there, and it will frighten the hell out of you.]

**WILLIMON:** I have had pastors admit that some of the most horrifying moments in their ministry came when God really did show up. In a sense, that is what ministry really is - it is invoking the Holy Spirit to show up. You preach, and some carpenter who doesn't know any better staggers out of church and says, "Thank you pastor, I now know that I must sell everything that I have - my pick up truck and my house - and go to Haiti as a missionary." As a minister you think to yourself, "Are you crazy? You must have misunderstood me!" He is not crazy. The Holy Spirit showed up.

Fred Craddock tells a great story about a little pastor visiting an old lady who is near death. Her mouth is gaping open and she's drooling out the side. He says, "Mrs. Jones, before I leave, is there anything you would like me to say or do?" She told him she would like him to pray. He asked if there was something specific she would like him to pray for. "I'd like you to pray for my healing of course," she answered. He thought to himself, "Oh God." So he prayed that, if it was God's will, to please heal her and, if it was not His will, then to help everyone to adjust to the situation. Amen.

With that, she sits up in bed and says "Wow!" She throws her feet over the side of the bed, stands up, flexes her muscles and says, "This is unbelievable! I feel wonderful!" Then she walks down the hall and calls out to the nurses station, "I think I'm well!" I think I'm well!" The pastor leaves the hospital, gets into his car and says to God, "Don't you ever do that to me again."

That is a funny story, but the training I received in seminary did try to make damn sure something like that never happened.

I had a person come to me with a sexual dysfunction. I couldn't understand why he had come to me. We have people here who are trained to deal with problems like that. I told him I was just a minister. And then he began to tell me about this relationship he was in. They were having sex and they weren't married. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that he had come to the right place. I told him that the more he talked, the more I realized there was a God issue going on here. He didn't understand so I said to him, "You would have to know God as well as I do, but this is starting to sound like the low, nasty kind of thing that God would do if he were trying to get your attention." He looked bewildered.

You're kidding. You mean God might have something to do with my sexual dysfunction?" I told him, "It's not beyond God at all. The Bible's full of stories like that. Pillar of salt? Getting knocked stone dead? I don't even know you, but the more we're talking, my professional opinion is that for some secrecy reason God's got some other plans for you." That was a change for me, because I was trained to act like a therapist instead of a person who knows God.

**DOOR:** He didn't need a urologist, in other words.

**WILLIMON:** No. He needed someone to tell him that God only puns people through torment like sexual dysfunction if he has big plans. I told him I thought he was being called.

**DOOR:** We have to admit, we feel something like resident aliens ourselves. Both of you talk about Christianity very uniquely.

**WILLIMON:** We take Christianity very seriously. We tell pastors in *Resident Aliens*, "You baptize people,

for heaven's sake. You could kill people that way. You serve the Eucharist. And if people mess up the Eucharist, they get sick and die, Paul says."

**DOOR:** Any final comments? **WILLIMON:** Yes. I keep saying to people that all it takes is someone blowing the whistle. All it takes in our churches is for someone to say, "I know we've been called to more than this."

A woman told me about a vestry meeting in her upscale, little Episcopal church. During the middle of the meeting, the priest stood up and said he was leaving. The vestry was shocked. They asked if he was leaving the church or leaving the ministry. He said he was leaving the ministry. The vestry asked him why. He replied, "I can think of a lot of theological reasons for my decision but, frankly, I'm bored. I'm 35, and I don't want to give the rest of my life to this. I'm just not going to die for this." The oldest member of the vestry stood up. She was 78 years old. She looked at him sternly and said, "Didn't I ever occur to you that many of us are bored? Did you ever ask any of us about it?" He said he hadn't. Then she started in, "The Church is the body of Jesus Christ, and boredom is blasphemy against that. How could the body of Christ be boring? The way we do it is boring." The vestry began a heated discussion and began to ask questions more like the body of Christ? Again the minister said he didn't know. The vestry then replied, "Maybe we ought to pray about it." The vestry meeting lasted until 2:00 AM, and the woman who told me the story said they were all "born again." The whole vestry and then the whole church. The minister stayed, half the people left the church, but they added on the same amount.

**HAUERWAS:** One of the deep tragedies in the Church is the transformation of ministers of the Gospel into CEOs of our turn ministers managers. We have to turn ministers back into spiritual leaders.

**DOOR:** We have to turn ministers back into spiritual leaders.

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REVIEW AND SUMMARY OF THE VERY IDEA OF DISCIPLINES  
IN SPIRITUALITY AND MINISTRY

PROBLEMS, REFLECTIONS, APPLICATIONS

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A little fun:

My wife, Jane, discovered a "prayer rock" offered for sale in a Christian book store some time ago. It had this poem attached:

'PRAYER ROCK'

I'm your little prayer rock. and this is what I'll do.	Then when you are finished just dump me on the floor,
Just put me on your pillow Til the day is through,	I'll stay there thru nighttime to give you help once more.
Then turn back the covers and climb into your bed	When you get up next morning "Clunk," I'll stub your toe
And "whack," your little prayer rock will hit you on the head.	So you will remember your morning prayers before you go.
Then you will remember as the day is through	Put me back upon your pillow when your bed is made
To kneel and say your prayers as you wanted to.	And your clever little prayer rock will continue in your aid.

Is this a discipline, or what?

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A NUMBER OF SPECIAL TOPICS RELEVANT TO  
SPIRITUALITY AND MINISTRY

PHYSICAL LABOR AS SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

The idea that physical labor is not 'spiritual'

Your body as your field of awareness and nurture

Labor as a kind of knowledge of God, and an exercise of your God-appointed dominion. (Gen. 1:26)

Nourishment and joy from order in matter

The creative covenant: production of value  
(Cooking a meal, painting a room, and sense of self.)

The first person described as filled with the spirit of God in the Bible. (Ex. 35:31)

Labor contrasted to sports and entertainment  
--involves making enduring goods, service

Labor protects you against your job as minister  
--and against the image of "stuffed shirt"

The temptations of labor--to build self-worth and acceptance.

--In place of enjoying God in His creation.  
Or to let it interfere with legitimate responsibility

Physical labor can help you establish a sense of a life of your own, of identity, outside your concrete role and its functions.

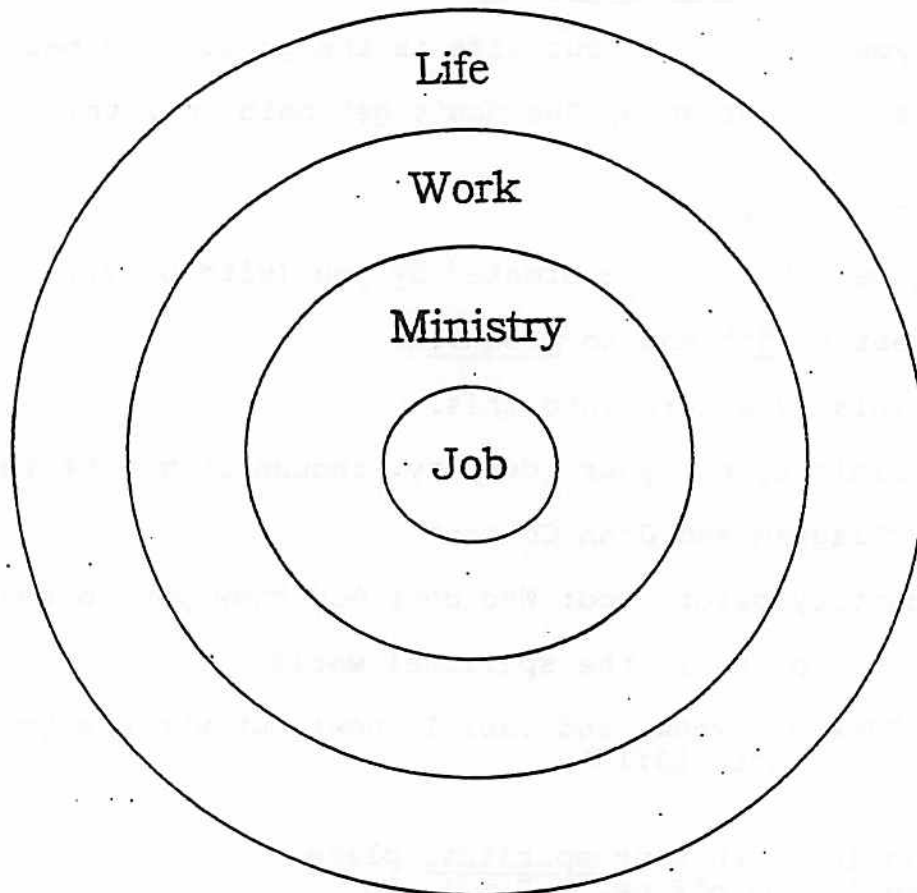
This in turn is fundamental to your spiritual life, in preventing your job from coming between you and God,  
To live from Whom is spiritual life.  
St. Benedict's Rule, Chap 48



## SPIRITUALITY AND WHOLE LIFE

1. Your call is to live your life in God and to His glory  
What you get out of your life is the person you become. But, one participant said, "We don't get paid to live."
2. Your work in life:  
The totality of value created by you (with God?).  
Contrast to job and to position.  
How ministry enters into this.  
Your ministry not your identity, though it may be part.  
<Diagram and John Cotton>
3. Your identity before God: Who does God know you to be?  
Your place in the spiritual world.  
"Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"  
(Acts 19:15)
4. Claiming in faith your spiritual place.  
"I magnify my office." Rom 11:13  
"Christ shall be magnified in my body." (Phil 1:20)  
"My soul doth magnify the Lord." (Luke 1:46)
5. Ordering your life to this end  
The model of **the canonical hours** in communal life.  
Adapted to our individual cases
6. Looking at your days, weeks, months, years in the light of your spiritual identity in your whole life.  
**DEVELOP A LARGE SCALE CALENDAR: 5 YEAR AND MORE**
7. "Burn out" foiled by the "whole life spirituality" approach to our jobs and positions

Aspects of me that I am in great danger of confusing:



Job= What I am paid to do, how I earn a living.

Ministry= That part of God's special work in my time that He has specifically allotted to me.

Work= The total amount of lasting goods which I will produce in my lifetime.

Life= Me. My experiences and who I am.

God works from Life to Job. We are prone to put the emphasis exactly in reverse.

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## JOHN COTTON

*John Cotton (1584–1652) was an eminent seventeenth-century minister and the architect of New England congregationalism. Born in Derby, England, he was educated at Trinity and Emmanuel Colleges, Cambridge, where he was deeply influenced by the great Puritan thinkers William Perkins and Richard Sibbes. In 1630, after twenty years as a minister in Boston, Lincolnshire, he preached his famous farewell sermon "God's Promise to his Plantation" to the passengers of the Arbella. In 1633 he departed for the New World himself and became teacher of the First Church of Boston, Massachusetts.*

*Cotton's great evangelical preaching and writing gave him enormous authority and made him the father of New England congregationalism. According to Roger Williams, most colonists "could hardly believe that God would suffer Mr. Cotton to err."*

*The following passage on Christian calling is a clear statement of the Puritan conviction about purposeful living that has put its stamp on the character of America. Later secularized and distorted in such themes as "manifest destiny" and "the American Dream," America's characteristic sense of purpose and mission was originally rooted in Puritan teaching on calling such as Cotton's—especially in the extraordinary combination of ideas expressed in his notion of "diligence in worldly businesses, and deadness to the world."*

### "Christian Calling"

We are now to speak of living by faith in our outward and temporal life. Now, our outward and temporal life is twofold, which we live in the flesh: it is either a civil or a natural life; for both these lives we live, and they are different the one from the other. Civil life is that whereby we live as members of this or that city or town or commonwealth, in this or that particular vocation and calling.

*"Civil life is that whereby we live as members of this or that city or town or commonwealth, in this or that particular vocation and calling."*

—John Cotton

Natural life I call that by which we do live this bodily life. I mean, by which we live a life of sense, by which we eat and drink, and by which we go through all conditions, from our birth to our grave, by which we live and move and have our being. And now both these a justified person lives by faith.

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"A true believing Christian, a justified person, he lives in his vocation by his faith. Not only my spiritual life but even my civil life in this world, all the life I live, is by the faith of the Son of God: He exempts no life from the agency of His faith..."

—John Cotton

To begin with the former. A true believing Christian, a justified person, he lives in his vocation by his faith. Not only my spiritual life but even my civil life in this world, all the life I live, is by the faith of the Son of God: He exempts no life from the agency of His faith; whether he lives as a Christian man, or as a member of this or that church or commonwealth, he doth it all by the faith of the Son of God. Now, for opening of this point, let me show you what are those several acts of faith which it puts forth about our occasions and vocations, that so we may live in God's sight therein:

First: faith draws the heart of a Christian to live in some warrantable calling. As soon as ever a man begins to look towards God and the ways of His grace, he will not rest till he find out some warrantable calling and employment... (1. It hath a care that it be a warrantable calling, wherein we may not only aim at our own, but at the public good. That is a warrantable calling.... 2. Another thing to make a calling warrantable, is, when God gives a man gifts for it, that he is acquainted with the mystery of it and hath gifts of body and mind suitable to it... 3. That which makes a calling warrantable is, when it is attained unto by warrantable and direct means, when a man enterprises not a calling but in the use of such means as he may see God's providence leading him to it....)

Secondly: another work of faith about a man's vocation and calling, when faith hath made choice of a warrantable calling, then he depends upon God for the quickening and sharpening of his gifts in that calling, and yet depends not upon his gifts for the going through his calling but upon God that gave him those gifts; yea, he depends on God for the use of them in his calling. Faith saith not, give me such a calling and turn me loose to it; but faith looks up to heaven for skill and ability. Though strong and able, yet it looks at all its abilities but as a dead work, as like braided wares in a shop, as such as will be lost and rust unless God refresh and renew breath in them. And then if God do breathe in his gifts, he depends not upon them for the acting his work but upon God's blessing in the use of his gifts. Though he have never so much skill and strength, he looks at it as a dead work unless God breathe in him; and he looks not at his gifts as breathed only on by God, as able to do the work, unless also he be followed by God's blessing....

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"Though he have never so much skill and strength, he looks at it as a dead work unless God breathe in him..."

—John Cotton

Thirdly: we live by faith in our vocations, in that faith, in serving God, serves men, and in serving men, serves God. The Apostle sweetly describes it in the calling of servants (Eph. 6:5-8): "Not with eye service as man-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart with good will, as unto the Lord, and not unto men, not so much man or only man, but chiefly the Lord," so that this is the work of every Christian man in his calling. Even then when he serves man, he serves the Lord; he doth the work set before him, and he doth it sincerely and faithfully so as he may give account for it; and he doth it heavenly and spiritually: "He uses the world as if he used it not" (1 Cor. 7:31). This is not the thing his heart is set upon; he looks for greater matters than these things can reach him, he doth not so much look at the world as at heaven. And therefore—that which follows upon this—he doth it all comfortably, though he meet with little encouragements from man, though the more faithful service he doth, the less he is accepted; whereas an unbelieving heart would be discontented that he can find no acceptance, but all he doth is taken in the worst part....

Fourthly: another act of faith about a man's vocation is this: It encourageth a man in his calling to the most homeliest and difficultest and most dangerous things his calling can lead and expose himself to. If faith apprehend this or that to be the way of my calling, it encourages me to it, though it be never so homely and difficult and dangerous. Take you a carnal, proud heart, and if his calling lead him to some homely business, he can by no means embrace it; such homely employments a carnal heart knows not how to submit unto. But now faith having put us into a calling, if it require some homely employment, it encourages us to it. He considers, "It is my calling," and therefore he goes about it freely; and though never so homely, he doth it as a work of his calling (Luke 15:19): "Make me one of thy hire servants." A man of his rank and breeding was not wanted to be hired servile work, but the same faith that made him desirous to be in a calling made him stoop to any work his calling led him to; there is no work too hard or too homely for him, for faith is conscious that it hath done the most base drudgery for Satan. No lust of pride or what else so insolent but our base hearts could be content to serve the Devil and nature in it; and therefore what drudgery can be too homely for me to do for God?...

Fifthly: another act of faith by which a Christian man lives in his vocation is that faith casts all the failings and burthens of his calling upon the Lord: that is the proper work of faith; it rolls and casts all upon Him.

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"This is not the thing his heart is set upon; he looks for greater matters than these things can reach him, he doth not so much look at the world as at heaven. And therefore—that which follows upon this—he doth it all comfortably, though he meet with little encouragements from man..."

—John Cotton

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"If faith apprehend this or that to be the way of my calling, it encourages me to it, though it be never so homely and difficult and dangerous."

—John Cotton

Now there are three sorts of burthens that befall a man in his calling:

1. Care about the success of it; and for this faith casts its care upon God....

2. A second burthen is fear of danger that may befall us therein from the hand of man....

3. Another burthen is the burthen of injuries which befalls a man in his calling....

Sixthly: faith hath another act about a man's vocation, and that is, it takes all successes that befall him in his calling with moderation; he equally bears good and evil successes as God shall dispense them to him. Faith frames the heart to moderation; be they good or evil, it rests satisfied in God's gracious dispensation: "I have learned in what estate soever I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. 4:11, 12). This he had learned to do: if God prosper him, he had learned not to be puffed up; and if he should be exposed to want, he could do it without murmuring. It is the same act of unbelief that makes a man murmur in crosses which puffs him up in prosperity. Now faith is like a poise: it keeps the heart in an equal frame; whether matters fall out well or ill, faith takes them much what alike; faith moderates the frame of a man's spirit on both sides.

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"Now faith is like a poise: it keeps the heart in an equal frame; whether matters fall out well or ill, faith takes them much what alike; faith moderates the frame of a man's spirit on both sides."

—John Cotton

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"Faith with boldness resigns up his calling into the hands of God or man; whenever God calls a man to lay down his calling when his work is finished, herein the sons of God far exceed the sons of men."

—John Cotton

Seventhly: the last work which faith puts forth about a man's calling is this: faith with boldness resigns up his calling into the hands of God or man; whenever God calls a man to lay down his calling when his work is finished, herein the sons of God far exceed the sons of men. Another man when his calling comes to be removed from him, he is much ashamed and much afraid; but if a Christian man be to forgo his calling, he lays it down with comfort and boldness in the sight of God and man....

A man that in his calling hath sought himself and never looked farther than himself, he never comes to lay down his calling, but he thinks it is to his utter undoing. A swine that never did good office to his owner till he comes to lie on the hurdle, he then cries out; but a sheep, who hath many times before yielded profit, though you take him and cut his throat, yet he is as a lamb dumb before the shearer. So a carnal man that never served any man but himself, call him to distress in it and he murmurs and cries out at it; but take you a Christian man that is wonted to serve God in serving of men, when he hath been faithful and useful in his calling, he never lays it down but with some measure of freedom and boldness of spirit....

This is the comfort of a Christian: when he comes to lay down his calling, he cannot only with comfort look God in the face but all the sons of men. There is never a Christian that lives by faith in his calling but he is able to challenge all the world for any wrong done to them; we have wronged and defrauded no man (Acts 20:26; 2 Cor. 12). We have done most there, where we are least accepted; that is the happiness of a Christian: those who have been the most weary of him have had the least cause.

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"This the comfort of a Christian: when he comes to lay down his calling, he cannot only with comfort look God in the face but all the sons of men."

—John Cotton

### Questions

1. Of John Cotton's seven main points, which did you find the most striking or helpful?
  2. Taking this passage as typical of early Puritan themes, where do you see their stamp on American character and where do you think we have changed beyond all recognition?
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## BODY, BURN-OUT AND SPIRITUALITY

1. Our body as God's appointment: a part of the image of God.

Finitude the occasion of faith, but  
Faith becomes presumption when it involves denial

2. "Burn-out" occurs when the body is stretched beyond its capacities and is not supernaturally sustained.
3. A false spirituality arises when denial of genuine need is combined with a real lack of supernatural support and with the assumption of work others should do.

WE ARE SET UP FOR COLLAPSE AND FAILURE.

4. A true spirituality is honest about human limitations and about God not intervening in the given case
5. Being "righteous overmuch" is a response of false spirituality--a 'spirituality' supported by fleshly strength and devices only.

"There is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness....Do not be excessively righteous, and do not be overly wise. Why should you ruin yourself." (Eccl 7:15-16 NASB)

This normally bases self-acceptance on performance.

6. Play and leisure as remedy of excessive 'righteousness'

Did Jesus ever play?

Play is the space of non-productive behavior.

When play becomes work: When it is engaged in to produce a value that remains after the activity.  
Play is in the presence of grace.

(See J. Pieper, Leisure: The Basis of Culture)

How do you play? What activities are play for you?



## JOY

1. JOY IS SENSE OF OVERALL WELL-BEING. It IS A PRIMARY FOUNDATION OF KINGDOM MINISTRY, FLOWING FROM VISION, PEACE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS AND REINFORCING THEM. IT IS A GIFT AND A DUTY. IT NEEDS TO PERVADE YOUR BODY. IT IS NOT OPTIONAL FOR A MINISTER.

It is our first line of defense against weakness, failure and disease. Keep a merry heart. (Prov. 15:13 & 15, & 17:22)

Neh. 8:10, Ps. 90:14-17, 92:4, 97:11-12, John 15:11, Phil. 3:1 & 4:4, etc. etc.

Joy is bound up with hope: "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 15:13)

2. You have every justification not to be full of joy.

But you can also choose a life of joy, and change the things that keep it from you.

BASICALLY, WE CAN STOP TRYING SO HARD, AND DIRECT OUR MIND TO GOD AND TO OUR PLACE IN HIS WORLD, NOW AND FOREVER.

3. Things that destroy joy:

Our sins and failures. Looking backward.

Ans: Accept that you are a failure.

Fear of what will happen to us. Looking forward.

Ans: Set the Lord before us. (Ps 16:8, 55:22)

Pressure of our work, responsibilities. Looking inward.

Ans: Realize that God is fair and merciful.

**Note:**

--In the nature of our calling, we tend to promise too much, often to keep people thinking well of us, but also because of a legitimate desire to serve. But all promises must be "under God," recognizing our limits, And with the wisdom of saying "no"--in kindness and love. (Prov. 3:3-4)

--Remember: Running on promises is like living on credit, for the 'bill' always comes due.

--Technique: never promise on the spot, only on a re-contact. Never make a promise to get someone "off your back"

Carry even legitimate commitments only with resignation--with acceptance of not getting it done.

--Enlist two or three family or friends to hold you accountable for your calendar.

--Give the next hour to God and delight in what he gives. Delight in the work at hand now.

**BEING HARASSED IS A CHOICE!**

"They that believe shall not make haste." (Isa 28:16)

"In quietness and confidence shall be your strength."

(Isa 30:15)

<The William Martin statement>

Andy Stanley, *Choosing to Cheat*.

If you fill your calendar with important appointments  
you will have no time for God.

If you fill your spare time with essential reading  
you will starve your soul.

If you fill your mind with worry  
about budget and offerings,  
the pains in your chest and the ache in your shoulders  
will betray you.

If you try to conform to the expectations  
of those around you  
you will forever be their slave.

Work a modest day  
then step back and rest.  
This will keep you close to God.

## Observations

One's daily planner tells plenty about one's spiritual formation. It reveals volumes about the pastor's spiritual condition, values, fears and ambitions. It tells who your bosses are, who your lover is, and how much value you place on your soul. If you are working more than 50 hours a week, you're not doing it for God no matter how eloquent your rationalizations.

Take a long, prayerful, meditative look at your calendar. Who are you trying to impress? God? Give me a break. The congregation? Possibly. Yourself? Bingo! Now cut some big chunks out of each week for family, rest, meditation, prayer and flower sniffing. When you've done that you will be more sensitive to the path of God.

Peterson, Eugene. *The Contemplative Pastor*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1989.  
171 Pages.

## Chapter II The Unbusy Pastor

*I am busy because I am lazy.* I indolently let others decide what I will do instead of resolutely deciding myself. I let people who do not understand the work of the pastor write the agenda for my day's work because I am too slipshod to write it myself... (page 18)

It was a favorite theme of C. S. Lewis that only lazy people work hard. By lazily abdicating the essential work of deciding and directing, establishing values and setting goals, other people do it for us; then we find our-selves frantically, at the last minute, trying to satisfy a half dozen different demands on our time, none of which is essential to our vocation, to stave off disappointing someone.

... How can I lead people into the quiet place beside the still waters if I am in perpetual motion? (page 19)

The trick is to get to the calendar before anyone else does. I mark out the times for prayer, for reading, for leisure, for the silence and solitude out of which creative work can issue. I find that when these central needs are met, there is plenty of time for everything else. (page 23)

*I am busy because I am lazy.* This statement hit me right between the eyes. I thought busyness and laziness were polar opposites. After all, some see me as a *Type A*, driven, and perhaps borderline workaholic personality, how could I possibly be accused of laziness. I am so busy that I don't know where to turn. I am so consumed by the needs of others and of the church that I don't even take time to adequately care for my own spiritual, relational, physical, and emotional needs. I feel like a pinball bouncing around out of control because of all the external demands and forces of my environment. God help me, I am a busy person!

\* What an amazing concept, that I can gain the driver's seat of my life, make the decisions, and establish parameters and boundaries which will help give sanity to this existence. I need to understand the work of the pastor in new terms -- it is not defined simply as meeting the needs (whims) of all the people. What does God and God's Word have to say about today's priorities and activities? I need to set the agenda. Instead of just working harder and longer, I need to work smart. I need to focus on doing that which is essential for the pastor to do in order to produce fruit. I need to delegate some things to others and equip volunteers to take on responsibilities. I also need to be comfortable with choosing that some things will not get done as well or simply not get done at all.

I need to spend more time in prayerful planning, deciding and directing, establishing values and setting goals. I need to *get to the calendar before anyone else does. To mark out the times for prayer, for reading, for leisure, for the silence and solitude out of which creative work can issue.* I want to get in the driver's seat, plan for the important so that it will not be squeezed out by the urgent.

Coleridge in an essay entitled "On Method," makes the following remarkable statement:

If the idle are described as killing time, he [the methodical man] may be justly said to call it into life and moral being, while he makes it the distinct object not only of the consciousness, but of the conscience. He organizes the hours, and gives them a soul; and that, the very essence of which is to flee away, and evermore to have been, he takes up into his own permanence, and communicates to it the imperishableness of a spiritual nature. Of the *good and faithful servant*, whose energies, thus directed, are thus methodized, it is less truly affirmed, that he lives in time, than that time lives in him. His days, months, and years, as the stops and punctual marks in the records of duties performed, will survive the wreck of worlds, and remain extant when time itself shall be no more. . . .

prayers and psalmody, as a pretext for exemption from work. But we must remember that, as Ecclesiastes says, "There is a time for every-thing",<sup>1</sup> and each particular task has its own particular time. However, every time is appropriate for prayer and psalmody, as for many other things, and so while our hands are busy with our work, we praise God with our thought, when possible . . . or, if not, in our heart, giving thanks to him, who has given us the strength of hand to work, and the cleverness of brain to understand our craft . . . and we pray that the work of our hands may be directed towards our aim of pleasing God. *reg. sis. 37*

(iv) The Hours of Prayer

However, we must not suppose that because we are commanded to give thanks 'at all times'<sup>2</sup> we should therefore neglect the prescribed times of prayer . . . which are as follows:

[Prime]

First, at dawn, so that the first activities of soul and mind should be consecrated to God, and that we should not admit any other concern into our thoughts until we have been delighted by thoughts of God . . . [Ps. 28. 3; Ps. 5. 2, 3.]

[Terce]

Next at the third hour we must arise to prayer, and assemble the brotherhood, even if they happen to be dispersed at their various occupations. Remembering the giving of the Spirit to the Apostles at the third hour, we must all join in united worship so that we too may be made worthy to receive sanctification. . . . Then we resume our work. If any should find themselves too far away to attend, owing to the nature of the work or of the locality, they are under a strict obligation to fulfil the general ordinances where they are, without fail; for 'where two or three are assembled . . .' [Matt. 28. 20.]

[Sext]

We have decided that prayer is necessary at the sixth hour, following the example of the saints who said, 'At evening and morning and at

<sup>1</sup> Eccles. 3. 1. <sup>2</sup> Ps. 34. 1.

DISCIPLINE

noon, I will tell my tale, I will proclaim, and he will hear my voice';<sup>1</sup> and at the same time the 90th psalm is said that we may be delivered 'from mishap and the mid-day demon'.<sup>2</sup>

[None]

The ninth hour is enjoined on us as a necessary time for prayer by the Apostles themselves, in Acts, where we learn that Peter and John went up to the Temple at the ninth hour of prayer.<sup>3</sup>

[Vespers]

When the day is over there comes thanksgiving for what we have been given during the day and for our achievements; and confession of our failures, our voluntary or involuntary misdeeds, and those perhaps unknown to us, whether in word or deed or in the heart itself, asking God's mercy for all through our prayers. For a review of the past is a great help against falling again into similar faults. Hence the saying, 'What you say in your hearts, feel compunction for upon your beds'.<sup>4</sup>

[Compline]

Then again at the beginning of night there comes the petition that our rest may be free from offence and from phantasies,<sup>5</sup> and we are again obliged to recite the 90th psalm.

[Nocturns]

Paul and Silas have set a precedent for observing midnight as an obligatory time for prayers . . . [Acts 16. 25; also Ps. 119. 62.]

[Lauds]

And again we have to rise for prayer before dawn, to 'anticipate dawn',<sup>6</sup> so that the day does not catch us sleeping in bed . . . None of these times may be neglected by those who have chosen to live by regular observance to the glory of God and his Christ. And I

<sup>1</sup> Ps. 34 (35). 17. <sup>2</sup> Ps. 90 (91). 6. <sup>3</sup> Cf. Acts 3. 1. <sup>4</sup> Ps. 4. 4 (LXX). <sup>5</sup> Cf. the Latin hymn in Compline: *Procul recedant somnifera nocentia phantasmata, / Non tuncque nostrum compingit / ne pollutantur corpora.* <sup>6</sup> Ps. 118 (119). 148.

# Family NEWS

## Widen Your Margins

by Richard A. Swenson, M.D.

When flying from New York to San Francisco, we need more than three minutes to change planes in Denver. A much greater margin of error is needed. But if we make such allowances in our travels, why don't we do it in our living? Life is a journey, not a race. Do yourself a favor and slow down. Here are some ideas for restoring sanity to our schedules:

- **Expect the unexpected.** If you are chronically late, try adding an extra 20 percent time margin to your schedule.

- **Learn to say no.** Saying no is not just a good idea—sometimes it is an absolute necessity. If there are 100 good things to do and you can do only 10 of them, you will have to say no 90 times.

- **Turn off the TV.** The average adult would gain 30 hours a week.

- **Prune activities and commitments.** It is much harder to stop something than start it. Periodically, it is important to get the clippers and prune away activities that you are no longer interested in.

- **Practice simplicity and contentment.** We all consume lots of time buying and maintaining things. But if we had fewer possessions, we would have less to take care of.

Recognize that unnecessary possessions are stealers of divine time. Every day we are given opportunities that have eternal significance—to serve, to love, to obey, to pray. But we squander our time on things that very soon will leave us forever.

- **Enjoy anticipation, relish the memories.** Calendar congestion and time urgency have robbed us of the pleasure of anticipation. Without warning, the activity is upon us. We rush to meet it; then we rush to the next, and the next. In the same way, we lack the luxury of reminiscing. On we fly to the next activity.

Have fun planning your family outings months in advance. And when the activity is over, remember. Tell stories. Frame a picture. Mount a fish. Make a special effort to remember funny happenings.

- **Create buffer zones.** If you have a busy schedule with nonstop appointments, consider creating small buffer zones between some of the obligations. a kind of coffee break for the spirit. Even 10 or 15 minutes can allow you to catch up, make phone calls, close your eyes, pray, call your spouse, re-orient your priorities, or defuse your tension.

- **Plan for free time.** If God were our appointment secretary, would He schedule every minute of the day? I think not. Christ's lifestyle—His teaching, healing, serving and loving—was usually spontaneous. If He chose spontaneous living, isn't that a signal to us?

- **Be available.** Margin exists for the needs of the Kingdom, for the service of one another, for the building of community. It exists, just as we exist, for the purpose of being available to God.

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*This article is adapted from Dr. Richard Swenson's new book, Margin, published by NavPress and offered this month by Focus on the Family. See pages 12-13 for more details.*



A Workshop: HOW TO GET THE URGENT OFF YOUR BACK

Texts on the beautiful life in God: Isa. 26:3-4 & 7, 28:16, 30:15, 35:10, 40:31, 43:2-3, 50:10, 51:11.

What is hurry? Dictionaries use phrases such as "excessive haste," "a recurrent agitation of sound," "a state of eagerness or urgency." In its verb form: "to carry or cause to go with haste," "to impel to greater speed, or prod," "to perform with undue haste." "Hurry" is associated with words such as "hurl," "hurry-skurry," "hurdle," "hurly-burly" <meaning uproar or tumult>, "Hurrah" and "hurricane." You can almost feel it.

I would say hurry is a state of frantic effort one falls into in response to inadequacy, fear, and guilt.

We should take as our aim to live our lives entirely without hurry. The peace and joy and strength which God intended for human life, the well-being and health of mind and body, is inconsistent with living in hurry. (Of course occasional bouts of hurry may be unavoidable in such a world as this. But chronic hurry is not.) Balanced, continuous use of the disciplines will keep hurry away. John Wesley said: "I am always in haste, but never in a hurry."

The simple essence of hurry is: TOO MUCH TO DO! But is a result of our decisions. God and nature do not keep our calendar. Remember Lewis: "Only lazy people are busy."—unwilling to put forth the effort of decision-making.

The good of avoiding hurry is not just pleasure, but enablement to calmly and effectively do the things that are truly important, with joy and strength, and heart lifted to God.

To get the urgent off our backs we must:

1. Form a clear intention to live without hurry. Do it for one day. How did it go?
2. Cultivate a mental picture of your place in the world before God: What is God doing and where do you fit in.? Write it down. Note: God never gives anyone too much to do.

On the basis of that:

3. Begin to eliminate things you 'have' to do. Don't be afraid of "doing nothing." Plan such times.
4. Deal honestly with why you have a hard time saying "No." Is it because you are unclear about your purpose in life? And are you really just drifting? No matter your position? Or is it because you fear rejection. A "man pleaser"? Or fear that others may outshine you?
5. Deal with the panic of not being busy. That is only a habit, as are most of the feelings that dominate human choices. Allow yourself to be in the panic, feel it roll over you, and don't go for the fix. Let it subside. Adrenalin addiction is real!
6. Develop a realistic, whole-life plan of spiritual disciplines.





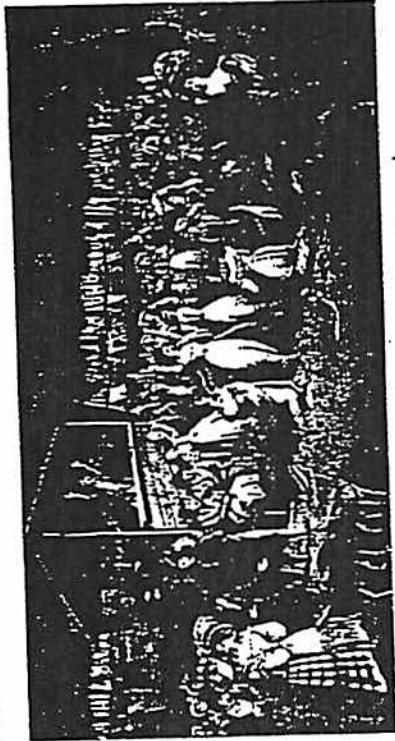
© 1992, 1994 LEO CULLUM

*"It's come to my attention that you have a  
life outside the church."*

## RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES AND SPIRITUALITY

1. What "Experiences" are in the context of spirituality.  
E. g. feelings and visions and 'words'
2. Experiences as nodal points, quantum leaps, in spiritual life and pilgrimage:-- a transformation not by growth or by conscious effort
3. The book: Deeper Experiences of Famous Christians.
4. Experiences not to be sought, but to be expected.
5. The problem of "standardization."
6. God and good are to be sought. "If with all your heart you seek me..." (Jer. 29:13) "He who comes to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of those who seek him." (Heb. 11:6)
7. "Experiences" are given at the discretion of God. Never forced.
8. The experiential nature of the exercise of Charismata.  
'Incommensurability' again, but now in reliable regularity.  
Contrasted with "fruit." (Gla 5:22-23)
9. But gift and fruit not normally what is understood by an "Experience" in this context. They do not usually involve transformation, but are effects (or causes) of transformation.
10. Current tendencies to substitute experiences for growth and character. Sampson and Saul: Power without character.

# THE Surprising



## Jonathan Edwards on revival, then and now.

A time when critics are attacking intellectual weakness, theological decline, and worldliness among evangelical Christians, there are also rumors of revival. Tens of thousands of men attend rallies and rededicate their lives to Christ and recommit to their marriages. Students in Christian colleges line up to testify and confess their sins. In Toronto, a congregation nestled among airport hotels becomes a jet-age version of the frontier camp meetings, drawing its attendance not just from the next county, but from other continents. Are events like these the overture to another great awakening—or even just a small one?

Jonathan Edwards, the Puritan theologian who has been called the greatest mind produced by America, was also the greatest theologian of revival. When we talk about renewal in the contemporary church, Edwards's writings provide us with the best standards available to help us judge what is genuine, what is spurious, and what is a mistake waiting to be purified.

### THE UNCOVERED EVANGELIST

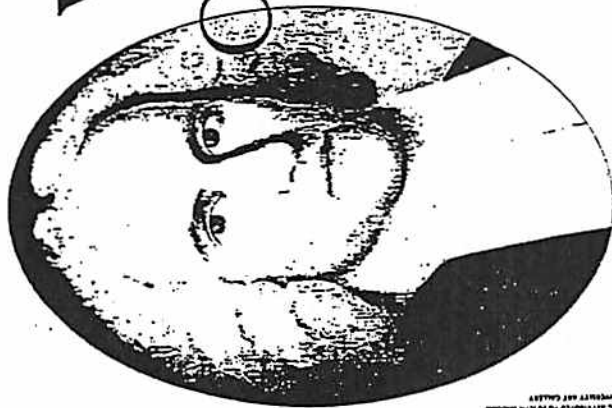
Early in his pastoral career, Edwards had to grapple with what it would mean for his congregation to be revived. His church was solidly orthodox and had experienced several harvests of conversions under Edwards's grandfather, Solomon Stoddard. In the 1730s, however, the church's

orthodoxy was merely "notional," as Puritans would say. Parishioners knew their catechism and could rattle off the elements of Christian faith, but few of them cared deeply about Christ. They were absorbed and fascinated by business and everyday life, and they gave little attention to God.

In 1734, Edwards preached "A Divine and Supernatural Light," advancing a new theory of religious experience. Professing Christians who have had truth drilled into them by others can talk a good game even when they are totally out of touch with supernatural reality. They can move pieces of theology around like markers on the map of a territory they have never visited.

Real Christianity requires encounter with truth, but that truth must be illuminated by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Only this can produce "a true sense of the divine excellency of the things revealed in the word of God." One of the effects of this encounter will be a delight in the glory of God. The convert "does not merely rationally believe that God is glorious, but he has a sense of the gloriousness of God in his heart . . . there is a sense of the lovefulness of God's holiness." Biblical Christianity is therefore a Spirit-illumined orthodoxy that transforms the heart and reorients the whole life to focus on God and seek his will.

It is clear from Edwards's *Personal Narrative* that he is describing his own experience in these passages. When he



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN BROWN FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

A scene from an eighteenth century camp meeting. Left: Jonathan Edwards at the age of 41, shortly and shortly times at the Twenty-Ninth, right.

first encountered the Scripture under the illumination of the Holy Spirit, his life began to change:

My mind was greatly engaged to spend my time in reading and meditating on Christ, on the beauty and excellency of his person, and the lovely way of salvation by free grace in him. . . . I walked abroad alone, in a solitary place in my father's pasture, for contentment. . . . There came into my mind to sweet a sense of the glorious majesty and grace of God, as I know not how to express. . . . I seemed to see them both in a sweet conjunction; majesty and meekness joined together: it was a sweet, and gentle, and holy majesty, and also a majestic meekness; an awful sweetness; a high, and great, and holy gentleness.

A part of this new, Spirit-driven concern in the young Edwards was a fervent interest in revival and the extension of Christ's kingdom.

I had great longings for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world. . . . If I heard the least hint of any thing . . . that appeared to have a favorable aspect on the interests of Christ's kingdom, my soul eagerly caught at it, and it would much animate and refresh me. I used to be eager to read public news-letters, mainly for that end; to see if I could not find some news favorable to the interests of religion in the world.

Edwards may not have suspected that his own congregation would be one of the major foci of the revival for which

# WORKS OF GOD

RICHARD F. LOVELACE



he was praying. He was an intellectual introvert who had deconverted John Locke at 14 and could not manage the small talk needed for parish visitations. He spent 14 hours a day in his study. He read his sermons from manuscript on Sunday morning, starting intermittently at the bell rope. He was the last person to know "How to Promote and Conduct a Revival," to use R. A. Torrey's phrase.

But in 1734, revival broke out in his Northampton, Massachusetts, congregation. It began among the young people, who had been drifting away from the church but who now wanted to meet with Edwards to discuss his sermons. Most moderate pastors would be willing to settle for this as revival enough; but as often happens, the awakening spread to the adults. Edwards stresses that spiritual things lead become so pressingly real to these that it cured their addiction to the world:

A great and earnest concern about the great things of religion, and the eternal world, became universal in all parts of the town. . . . All other talk but about spiritual and eternal things, was soon thrown by. . . . Other discourses than of the things of religion, would scarcely be tolerated in any company. The minds of people were wonder-

love, a slavish fear of God, intense religiosity, a God that is really focused on self, assurance of salvation, and even pleasing other people persons.

If there are not adequate signs of spiritual renewal, then what is Edwards' answer that the heart (the inner center of the personality) must be touched by the Holy Spirit. This healing touch generates affections (driving motives that inflame and direct the mind and will) flowing out of love for God himself, not just gratitude for his gifts. These affections are responses to God's own beauty; not merely to his power or greatness. They do not bypass the mind, they illuminate and transform it. They make faith more certain, but they also create humility. They change our nature, producing a meek and gentle spirit and a tender sensitivity to sin. They do not foster self-centered nominalism but rather a vigorous social conscience that cares for bodies as well as souls. They lead

## In any awakening, the first person to wake up is the Devil.

Inevitably to the practice of Christian charity.

By the time the *Treatise on the Affections* was published in 1746, Edwards was discouraged over the revival. In 1742, he had warned against the Devil's strategy of sowing tares among the wheat in order to divert the whole crop:

We may observe that it has been a common device of the devil, to invert a revival of religion; when he finds he can keep men quiet and secure no longer, then he divides them to excess, and excites powers. . . . Though the devil will do his diligence to stir up the open enemies of religion, yet he knows . . . that, in a time of revival, his main strength shall be tried with the friends of it; and he will directly exert himself in his attempts to subvert them. One truly zealous person . . . may do more . . . to hinder the work, than a hundred great, and strong, and open opposers.

In 1747, Edwards assisted a project of Scottish Presbyterians, asking for quarterly concerts of prayer for spiritual awakening in *A Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement in United Prayer for the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom*. At this point, he felt that the errors of revival leaders had temporarily derailed the revival. Still, he was confident that united prayer for the kind of spiritual awakening he had described in his writings could prevail. He argues that when the church is at its worst and weakest, it may be closer to revival, as it is drawn to God in greater dependence:

The church's extremity has often been God's opportunity for increasing his power, mercy and faithfulness, towards her. The increase of vital piety has long been in general decaying, and error and wickedness prevailing; it looks as though the disease were now come to a crisis. . . . When his church is in a low state, and oppressed by her enemies, and cries to him, he will swiftly fly to her relief, as birds fly at the cry of their young.

If Edwards could return to America today, how would he evaluate the spiritual situation?

CHRISTIANITY TODAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1995 31

Holy Scriptures; it lifts up sound doctrine; and it produces love to God and man.

Edwards was convinced that there could be a lot of immaturity in a genuine revival. "In the rising innumerable thousands and young fruits appear flourishing and big fair, that afterwards drop off and come to nothing. . . . So a slower cause matures suddenly and comes to spring up, as well as good plants to grow. . . . (In the spring of the year when the birds sing, the frogs and toads also croak.)"

**THE DEVIL'S TURN OF TRICK**

In subsequent writings, Edwards turns more and more from defending the revival to critiquing its defects. In *Thoughts on the Revival in New England* (1742), after opening with a strong portrayal of the revival's power, he offers a searching critique of carnal religiosity. He is concerned that revival leaders have begun to confuse their own hunches and impulses with God's leading. Above all, he laments the prevalence of spiritual pride, "the main door by which the devil comes into the hearts of those who are zealous for the advancement of religion. . . . the main handle by which the devil has laid hold of religious persons. . . . to clog and hinder a work of God." Pride is so serious an impediment because it diverts Christians from repentance and makes them contemptuous:

Spiritual pride is very apt to suspect others; whereas a humble saint is most jealous of himself; he is so apprehensive of nothing in the world as he is of his own heart. . . . The only humble Christian has as much to do at home . . . that he is not apt to be very busy with other hearts. . . . He is apt to esteem others better than himself, and is ready to hope that there is nobody but what has more love and thankfulness to God than he.

Spiritually proud Christians, on the other hand, are quick to censure others and quick also to separate from them if their beliefs or behaviors do not measure up. They can manifest a carnal spirituality that sets others' teeth on edge, a self-assurance and untimely boldness, and a dogmatic inflexibility that either argues continually or will not even dialogue. Spiritual pride "often disposes persons . . . to affect a singular way of speaking." It "takes great notice of opposition and injuries that are received." It preens itself, while it neglects others.

In the early 1740s, Edwards longed for revival leaders who were not pompous and contentious, who were more humble Christians:

Christians who are not fellow-swimmers, ought at least to treat one another with as much humility and gentleness as Christ . . . treats them. The eminently humble Christian is as it were clothed with lowliness, mildness, meekness, gentleness of spirit and behavior. . . . Pure Christian humility has no such thing as roughness, or contempt, or fierceness, or bitterness in its nature; it makes a person like a little child . . . or like a lamb, destitute of all bitterness, wrath, anger, and clamor.

In the *Treatise on the Religious Affections* (1744), Edwards trained his critical powers almost exclusively on his own party. He was concerned that pure Christian spirituality was being drowned in counterfeits. "Tis by the mixture of counterfeit religion with true, not discerned and distinguished, that the devil has had his greatest advantage against the cause and kingdom of Christ."

As in *Distinguishing Marks*, Edwards starts by listing a series of "involuntary signs" that neither discredit nor validate a revival movement: intense religious enthusiasm, involuntary bodily effects, talkativeness, self-oriented forms of

awakenings that would ultimately lead to the church's millennial glory.

The ebb and flow of spiritual warfare accounts for the typical sine curve in the history of revivals. If we graph the military history of World War II, we see that ground is gained, then lost, then regained and expanded. The Stannary invasion is the equivalent of a major spiritual awakening, which raises the church to a new level of purity and influence. The history of the kingdom of God begins as a point of light on a fallen planet, which expands, contracts, and expands again, liberating territory until all the earth is full of light, full of the glory of God, as the waters cover the sea.

But Edwards's model of revival and decline, based on the ebb and flow of spiritual warfare, implied that an awakening might be more like a street fight than a spring morning. A revival movement might be diluted, disfigured, or even invoked by the resisting forces of sin and Satan.

Edwards saw this happen first in 1735 when one of his parishioners heard a persistent voice telling him to cut his own throat, and finally did so. Edwards comments that during the height of the revival, "Satan seemed to be unusually restrained" by the freeing of persons afflicted by depression and temptations; but that with the subsiding, "Satan seemed to be more let loose, and raged in a dreadful manner."

Edwards evidently believed that infecting spiritual and disfiguring elements into a revival is a main part of demonic strategy. He would certainly agree with J. Edwin Orr that in any awakening, the first person to wake up is the Devil.

Edwards soon saw more evidence of this, in the explosive period of revival in New England from 1739 to 1742. The great evangelistic rallies at which George Whitefield preached were powerfully effective in securing conversions, but they were disfigured by Whitefield's unguarded suggestions that his opponents were not real Christians. Gilbert Tennant's "The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry" split the Presbyterian Church for 17 years, and James Davenport's praying for the conversion of local ministers, by name, from the pulpit, brought chaos to churches on Boston's North Shore. (Tennant would later heal the breach in his church by admitting that the Philadelphia Presbytery was probably just asleep, not dead. Davenport later confessed that he did not know what spirit drove him during the revival.)

Edwards was suddenly faced with a storm of criticism, often focused on real problems in the revival. His first response was almost purely defensive. *Distinguishing Marks of the Spirit of God* (1741) begins by stating that there are many elements in the revival that are neither sure signs of the Spirit nor marks of the flesh or the Devil, but that are simply indifferent—a kind of accidental package surrounding the real core of spiritual awakening.

It proves nothing that revivals emerge from protracted meetings or that they seem to cause strange bodily effects. Strong preoccupation with religious or imaginative visions prove nothing either way. If revival phenomena seem to spread by contagion or imitation, this is again inconclusive, impudence and irregularity, satanic deceptions, and even the subsequent apostasy of some converts do not disprove the real activity of the Spirit in a revival. More positively, Edwards finds five biblical marks of a genuine revival: it exalts Jesus Christ; it attacks the powers of darkness; it exalts

fully taken out from the world, it was treated amongst us as a thing of very little consequence. They seemed to follow their worldly business, more as a part of their duty, than from any disposition they had to it; the temptation now seemed to lie on that hand, to neglect worldly affairs too much, and to spend too much time in the immediate exercise of religion.

Intense conviction of sin was nearly universal among those responding to the Northampton revival. Deeper sins like pride and envy were the focus. Some were even convicted that they were not more convicted.

Though their catechetical training should have shown most parishioners the way out of the shadows of conviction, most had to come to Edwards in his study to be led to the Savior. The pastoral calling Edwards had always avoided was now being done in reverse!

Two other additional aspects of the Northampton revival should be noted. First, congregational worship was convulsed. Parishioners were now no longer working outly from theological maps; they were in touch with the territory of divine reality.

Our public assemblies were then beautiful, the congregation was alive in God's service, every one earnestly intent on the public worship, every hearer eager to drink in the words of the ministers as they came from his mouth; the assembly in general were, from time

to time, in tears while the word was preached; some weeping with sorrow, and distress, others with joy and love, others with pity and concern for the souls of their neighbours.

Second, personal witnessing was enlarged on a scale unprecedented among Puritans. Lay witnessing rose to a new prominence. The slaying of the gospel, which was previously directed mainly from clergy to laity, now flowed in new channels—from wives to husbands, and even from children to parents: "The town seemed to be full of the presence of God; it never was so full of love, nor of joy, and yet so full of distress, as it was then. . . . It was a time of joy in families on account of salvation being brought unto them; parishioners repining over their children as new-born, and husbands over their wives."

## Spiritually proud Christians are quick to censure others and quick also to separate from them.

Edwards did not think of the Northampton revival as something apart from God's aims in the rest of the church. In the 1739 sermons on *The History of Redemption*, he indicates that sacred history alternates between periods of spiritual decline, relentless as the gravity of sin, and eras of grace, in which the Holy Spirit is poured out on the people of God, enabling them for spiritual warfare that will take ground from the flesh, the world, and the Devil. This spiritual force is evident in the generation that conquered of Canaan, in Pentecost and the subsequent Christianizing of the Roman Empire, and in the Protestant Reformation. Edwards projected a future alternation of declines and

**WAVES OF REVIVAL**

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First, he might be surprised by the degree of activism, organization, and promotion in evangelistic efforts, resulting from Charles Finney's influence during the last work of the Pentecost. Finney had been reluctant to intrude upon the work of the Holy Spirit, avoiding evangelistic invitations and all efforts to engineer spiritual response, except through presentation of biblical truth. The Edwardsian strategy was to pray for God to change the weather in human hearts. Finney, on the other hand, counseled against this passive/dependent approach with a stress on active planting of the seed, using weeks of extended meetings, invitations, lay exhortations, and other tactical innovations.

Edwards never doubted that God worked through human efforts, but he valued spontaneous stirrings among the laity, the churches, and a variety of leaders. He would be impressed by the huge rallies of laymen now gathering to respond to Scripture, often with a minimum of promotional hype.

For Edwards, the primary human catalyst for revival was always dependent prayer. He would be delighted with movements like David Bryant's Concerts of Prayer, which is

### It is in the Devil's interest to make people weird.

based on his own writings. He would be especially happy that prayer movements are now focused on broad-scale empowering of the Holy Spirit and not just on support for individual ministries and campaigns.

For Edwards, as for Calvin, conviction of sin was the usual result of an awakening encounter with God. He would be impressed by the public confessions of baby sinners in Christian schools. Sharing on this level was restricted to pastor's studies and small groups during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, though it became almost a public sacrament in modern movements like the East Africa Revival. In any case, Edwards would conclude that young people do not show such extraordinary candor unless God is moving them. The normal result of college revivals—for example, the Yale revival under Edwards's grandson Timothy Dwight—is a decades-long refreshing of the church's leadership.

What about the Toronto Blessing and its impact through other Vineyard churches? Edwards, Wesley, and other revival leaders also encountered fainting or prostration as the Holy Spirit dealt with individuals. Edwards's concern would be to verify that the experience involved real illumination and transformation of the heart, with lasting fruit in Christian faith and life, and not just transient bodily effects.

But he would be impressed by the Vineyard's study of his own writings and their growing grasp of the full implications of revival for evangelism and social transformation. He would be delighted with their optimism of grace, which insists that the church must become more visibly the glorified body of Christ before the end of history.

# "Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God."

A young minister, Bob Pierce, wrote these words on the flyleaf of this Bible over 40 years ago. It was during the Korean War, and he was deeply moved by the suffering of the children he saw there.

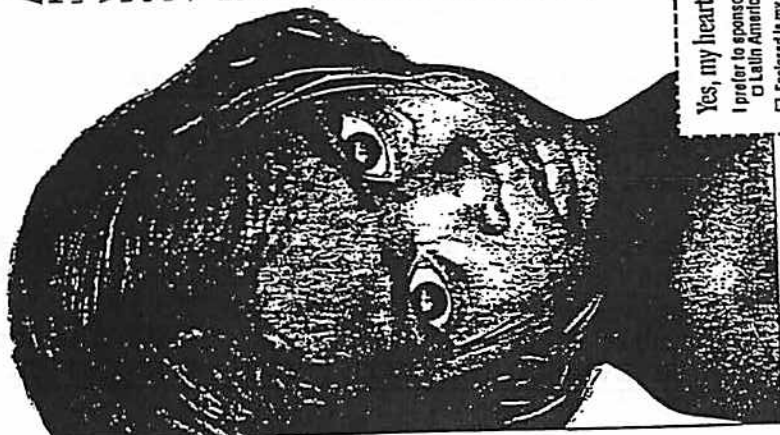
When he returned home, he couldn't stop thinking of those little ones. Motivated by Jesus' example of compassion toward children, he began recruiting friends, relatives and acquaintances to sponsor needy children.

That is how World Vision was born. For over 40 years, the malnutrition, the carping, and the love, have never changed. In every hungry child's eyes, and in every sick child's cry, Jesus calls us.

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Let your heart be broken... respond to the needs of an innocent child. Become a Child Sponsor today.



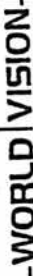
Bob Pierce, founder of World Vision

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Enclosed is my first monthly payment of \$20.  Check (payable to World Vision)  Bill my monthly sponsorship payment to my credit card:  VISA  MasterCard  American Express  Discover

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## SPIRITUALITY AND EVANGELISM

1. Primary problem of current evangelism in our culture:

PEOPLE THINK THEY HAVE ALREADY HEARD THE GOSPEL  
AND HAVE REJECTED IT  
OR ACCEPTED IT ----

BUT THEY HAVE NOT.

2. They have not heard, with understanding, the gospel of life in the kingdom of the heavens, of the eternal kind of life now. They have not heard discipleship evangelism.

3. Our first main objective must be to "evangelize the church," As Jesus came to Israel. "To the Jew first."

Because they are prepared, though many may not know that.  
-- Of course many have heard and accepted the 'real thing'  
Our aim is to serve the church, the body of Christ.

Many who will "make the cut" have not "made the turn."

PLEASE DO NOT CONFUSE EVANGELISM WITH 'SOUL-WINNING' OR  
GETTING DECISIONS!

4. Evangelization with Christ is only the proclamation of the availability of new life in the kingdom through reliance upon Him.

"And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent."  
(Luke 4:43)

We cannot evangelize with any other message. We must be sure that we announce just what Jesus did. That is the message that will be backed by God's action and provide the context for spiritual life and spirituality.

5. The disciplines for the spiritual life are a part of this gospel, for they are the place where we are with Jesus to learn from him how to live our lives in the kingdom.

6. "Church growth" as growth of the redeemed in spiritual substance. The only sure route to world evangelism. (John 17:21 & 23)

7. Need for imaginative ways of invading the 'secular' realm--  
But preaching remains primary, intentional, under anointing.

Rule: If evangelism or "soul winning" is dreadful to you, don't do it. You'll do more harm than good.

CREATIVE MINISTRY TODAY MUST AIM TO  
TRANSFORM SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS THROUGH CHRISTLY LEADERSHIP

1. The church, merely in its capacity as church and as understood in recent history, cannot cope with Christ's call to teach disciples to do "all things commanded" in a mass society that is organized in terms of sub-Christian principles and aims.

WE HAVE BEEN TRYING TO DEAL WITH WORLD EVANGELISM

WHILE PLOUGHING AROUND NON-CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP  
IN SOCIETAL INSTITUTIONS

2. Human society in the contemporary age demands Christian leadership and standards in all of its institutions. Christianity is not one thing and business/government another. Only as Christians can we succeed. The best leader is the Christlike leader, for nothing less than Christian vision and character will suffice as the substance of organizational life.

3. How much of organizational resources are lost to dealing with evil, or with what is less than Christlike faith/love?

SIN AND UNFAITH ARE LUXURIES WHICH OUR PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS  
AND SOCIAL DEMANDS CAN NO LONGER AFFORD.

4. Of course we need organizations that run, not on our current forms of "cultural Christianity," but on the reality of Christ's kingdom.---

WHERE THE REALITY OF ADMINISTRATOR'S LIVES CORRESPOND  
TO COLOSSIANS 3:1-4:5

You see the point if you imagine our institutions, from armed forces to banks, from hospitals to schools, operating on such principles. The number one organizational problem is sin. The problems of organizational life are rarely technical, and generally appear to be technical because evil character is simply assumed. Leadership is supposed to 'cope' with it, not erase it.

VITAL MINISTRY TODAY SHOWS LEADERS HOW TO ERASE IT.

### SPIRITUALITY AND HEALING MINISTRY

1. The embodied human self is a system open to the realm of the God who is love. All of created reality is constantly upheld by the Word of God and is subject to His will and purpose. (E. S. Jones, Is the Kingdom of God Realism, & Morton T. Kelsey, Healing and Christianity)

2. Healing is "natural" in the context of the kingdom of the heavens, though not inevitable or universal.

A primary manifestation of the presence of the kingdom. Matt. 4:23, 9:35, 10:7-8

The difference from John the Baptizer. (John 10:41, Matt 11:11:15, Luke 16:16)

3. Because it is an act of love,  
Not a proof of faith or power.

When we pray/act for healing it is a movement of love that prompts us. Not desire for a feat of faith.

4. It functions mainly through the body--

TOUCHING, ANOINTING -- From a body full of God.  
Your faith must reach toward this.

5. High rate of success for the gathered body of Christ--

James 5:13-18

6. Low rate of success for individuals with a "healing ministry," or so it seems from testimonies of those involved in such ministries --

Kuhlman, Wimber, McNutt  
Still: Love constrains us to try, and to learn how.

7. We should approach each case:

Peacefully, exploratively--listening and waiting--and ready to give time, repeatedly.

Don't schedule. Don't "dive bomb." Stay with it.  
(MacNutt, Healing, is best practical guide.)

See also P. Wagner, How Any Church Can Have a Healing Ministry, Regal, 1988)

Try not to go alone.

8. Your reputation or how you look is not what is at stake here.



## DIVINE HEALING

It is possible to lose this great blessing. Many have lost it, and, like Simon Peter, who could not swim as formerly after he had once begun to walk on the water, they find their former remedies and reliances fail them and they are, of all men, most miserable.

The more valuable your blessing the more will your great enemy try to steal it from you, and the *more diligently must you guard your sacred treasure.*

### Keep Right With God

1. Disobedience will rob you of it, a condemning conscience will blight your confidence, any tolerated sin will become a cloud between you and Christ, and you will find yourself unable to trust Him as before. Indeed, you will find that after knowing Christ as your Healer, He will hold you to a closer walk and to a more sensitive responsibility to all His will; and when you fail to understand and obey Him, a cloud will come upon your spirit and your communion will be interrupted. Therefore, if you would keep in touch with Him, keep right with God.

### Keep Reckoning

2. You begin your life of faith, not by feeling, but by *reckoning*; not by going according to your impressions and symptoms, but by *counting upon God, feeling or no*

*feeling. Now keep reckoning.* Often your symptoms will change, and if you watch them, you will get into bondage. Keep out of your self and just expect the Lord to take care of you and to be true to His Word, whether the skies be bright or the clouds return. Every sailor knows what "dead reckoning" is. It is to take an observation when the sun is shining and then sail according to the bearing taken in that observation. The sun may not shine again for weeks, but that moment fixed their longitude and latitude, and they go by dead reckoning. Look back to the moment when you trusted Christ and *took Him in you, for which you claim Him, and reckon upon Him, whether it rains or shines, whether your senses encourage or alarm you.* He is the same, and faith sails on through clouds and storms, like Christ, the "same yesterday, and today, and for ever."

### Keep Receiving

3. Your communion with Christ is the source of your life. Abide in Him and draw life from Him every moment, as the root draws its nourishment from the soil, as the branch takes its life from the vine, as the lungs drink in oxygen from the atmosphere. *Faith is a sensitive organ that feeds upon God,* even as our physical organs feed upon our appropriate nourishment.

Speaking of the Holy Spirit, the apostle uses the figure of drinking. He says, "We have been made to drink into that one Spirit." It is not enough to receive the Infilling of the Spirit by an act of faith, but we must draw the life of the Spirit by a *constant habit of receiving.* God will teach you this. It is an instinct of the new nature and cannot be taught by set rules. It is just learned by living. It is an instinctive reaching out of the spiritual organs to God. *It will find its exercise in prayer and silent communion, and if new trials arise they furnish new occasions to take more from Him.* You may not get your healing all to come like a flash, but *more frequently it will come breath by breath, as you keep taking the Lord Himself for new life.*

I remember a remarkable testimony given by Ethan Allen. He told how a terrible cancer had fastened upon his face, and his friends were all alarmed, but he calmly took it to the Lord in prayer and committed it to Him. "But then," he said, "I had to keep taking life from God constantly." And many times a day he would lay his hand upon the suffering place and just claim that, at the moment, the *very life of Christ was imparted to the diseased tissues, and was withering the malignant poison that had fastened upon them.* In such times he was conscious of a current of life

actually flowing into him from heaven. After a few weeks, of thus taking the Lord, he said, *the cancer had quite withered away* and left a faint trace in the form of a harmless scar to show where it had been.

The writer himself has had many similar experiences, and at one time a threatening attack which had fastened upon his lung was held up to God in this way for more than a year, *until it gradually melted away. Keep receiving.*

Keep Out of Yourself

4. Don't watch your feelings. *Don't superintend God.* Don't note the ups and downs of your case, but like the farmer of whom Christ tells us, who sowed seed in his field and then slept, and awoke night and day, while the seed sprang up, *he knew not how; just let God work out His own plan,* and you keep busy with Him and for others and pass on to the next thing in life's unselfish ministry; and you will find as you are occupied with God and for God, He will be occupied for you. Get saved from all your bad feelings. *Keep out of yourself.*

5. A flash of temper, a cloud of despondency, an impure thought or desire will *poison your blood,* inflame your tissues, disturb your nerves and interrupt the whole process of God's life in your body.

On the other hand, the spirit of cheerfulness, freedom from anxious care and worry, a generous and loving heart, the stimulus of joy, the sedative of peace, the uplifting influence of hope and confidence will exercise the most benignant influence over your physical functions, and make it true in a literal as well as spiritual sense, *"the joy of the Lord is your strength."*

I remember a man who was given up by physicians to die and was expected to die that night, but who was converted to God in his illness and was filled with such an ecstatic joy that for several hours, he just poured his heart out in the rapturous expressions of love and devotion. To the surprise of everybody next morning, *we found him almost well,* and he lived for many years afterwards as a happy Christian. The physician could only explain it as the result of an *extraordinary stimulant that his new happiness brought into his system,* which acted as no medicine could have done and lifted him above the ordinary laws of physiology. Solomon said, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine and there is no joy like the joy of the Lord."

How to Receive

and Keep

Divine Healing



A. B. SIMPSON

INCLUSIVISM/EXCLUSIVISM  
FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

1. How dare we think we are right and others are wrong?

That we are superior to others!

2. If we disagree about which Europeans first arrived on the North American continent, one of us may be right and the other wrong. But the one right is not necessarily a superior person to the one who is wrong. Right and superior are different issues.

3. No doubt superiority has been assumed by Christians in the past, and possibly at present. Most cultures assume superiority.

4. But life in the kingdom of the heavens is not a question of culture, but of reality.

5. And reality, as opposed to our views about it, is not created by culture --- Contrary to the "sociology of knowledge."

6. Reality is what you run into when you are wrong. It is what you can count on. Not "just words."

7. The Christian stands today on Mt. Carmel with Elijah. We cannot appeal to our culture, but to God alone, to bear witness to Himself in the midst of the life of faith in Christ.

Do not allow others to define "spirituality."

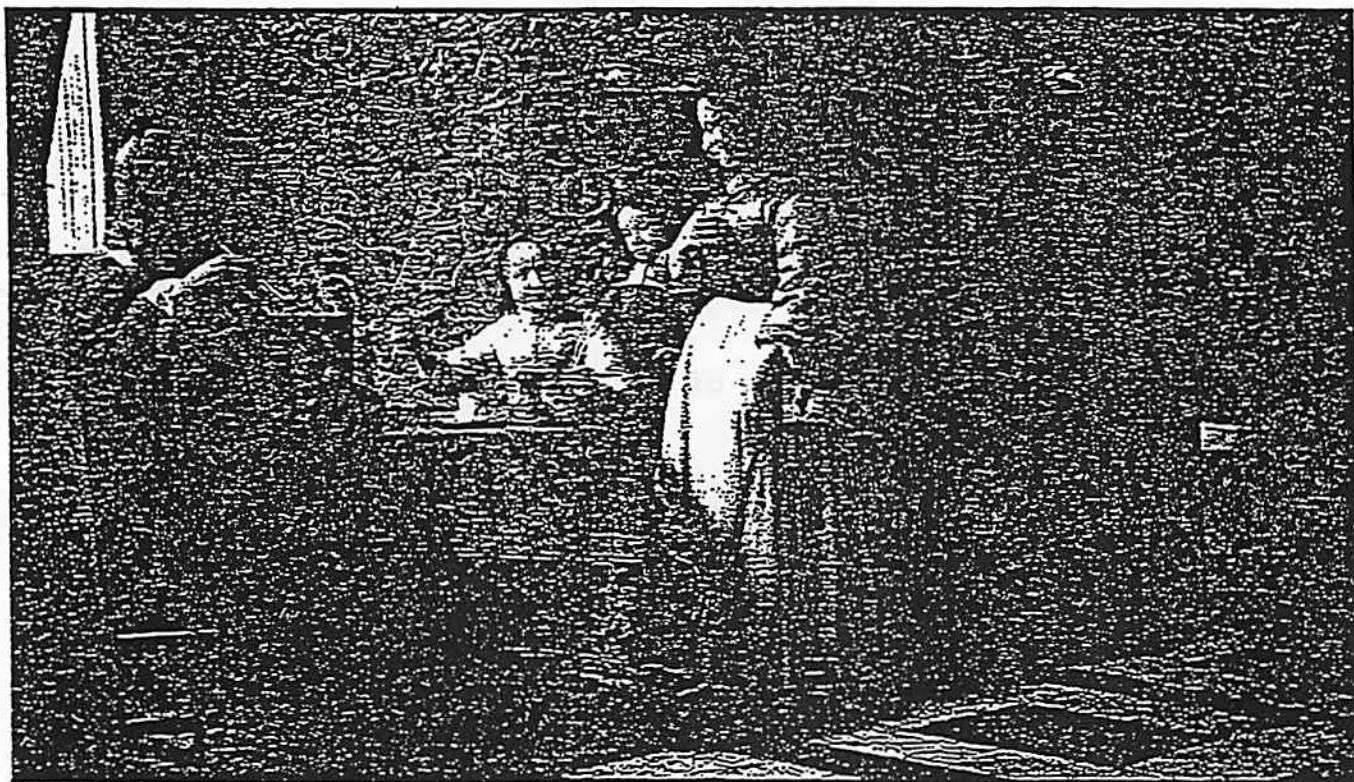
8. Carlo Carretto on the joint Ashram with Buddhists and Muslims in Bangkok: What to write on the monument to Jesus?

"This is Jesus who, by rising from the dead, announced to men their own resurrection." (The Desert in the City, p.98)

By the reality of this alone we stand or fall. This alone is the principle of exclusion: The reality of Christ.

# RESCUING SPIRITUALITY FROM THE CLOISTER

HUGHES OLIPHANT OLD



*How the Reformed tradition revolutionizes  
our approach to the spiritual life.*

Spirituality is a buzz word these days. But sometimes the impression is left that Catholicism, with its long tradition of spiritual formation, is the only game in town. A well-known series of the "classics" of Western spirituality, notes Presbyterian pastor and scholar Hughes Oliphant Old, omits many of Protestantism's most important figures. Some might conclude that there is no such thing as a Protestant spirituality.

As Old demonstrates, nothing could be further from the truth. Here he assesses the rich insights the Reformed tradition brings to piety and prayer. This is the first in an occasional series on how varied traditions can enrich our understanding of God and the spiritual life.

**T**he Protestant Reformation was a reform of spirituality as much as it was a reform of theology.

For millions of Christians at the end of the Middle Ages, the old spirituality had broken down. Spirituality had been cloistered behind monastery walls for centuries. To be serious about living the Christian life had meant leaving the world and joining a religious community. At the heart of it all was a celibate, ascetic, and penitential devotion.

With the Reformation, the focus of the

Christian life changed. Rather than separating from society, Christians began to conceive of devotion as living *everyday* life according to God's will (Rom. 12:1-2). Spirituality became a matter of living the Christian life with family, out in the fields, in the workshop, in the kitchen, or at one's trade.

Those in the tradition of Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, John Knox, and the English Puritans therefore came to speak of the doctrine of the *Christian life* when discussing what Roman Catholics call "spiritual theology." Traditionally they have preferred the word *piety* over

*spirituality*. In broadest strokes, a Reformed spirituality must be defined in terms of the Christian life in this world. What are some of its distinctives?

#### FED BY THE WORD

Reformed spirituality is first a spirituality of the Word. While it received renewed emphasis in the Reformation, a spirituality of the Word is nothing new to Christianity. Already in the Gospel of John we find it, especially in its opening verses (John 1:1-18), but also sprinkled throughout the text. Jesus is presented as the Word, the revelation of the Wisdom of God. The Christian life is a matter of hearing this Word and receiving it by faith. In this John was heir to the wisdom theology found primarily in Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon, and many of the Psalms. Israel's wisdom writers developed a piety centered in the Bible. It was a piety of those charged with caring for the Sacred Book and teaching its precepts, a scholar's piety that emphasized studying the Bible, copying its manuscripts, preserving the history of its interpretation, and preparing and preaching sermons. The foundation of its educational system was the memorization of Scripture.

The rabbis of Jesus' day kept alive this bookish kind of piety, as did the earliest Christian church. Luke undoubtedly had this in mind when he told us that the apostles devoted themselves to prayer and to the ministry

of the Word (Acts 6:4). The study of the Word of God stood at the center of the apostolic ministry. From the beginning, Christianity was a religion of the Book, and its piety was a piety of the Book.

At the time of the Reformation, this spirituality of the Word gave a prominent place to both the public preaching of the Word and the personal study and meditation on the Word. Early in the Reformation, preachers such as Martin Bucer, Zwingli, Calvin, and Knox set aside the lectionary and began to preach through books of the Bible. This was called preaching the *lectio continua*. It was

a systematic approach to the interpretation of Scripture in worship. It aimed to explain the text of Scripture as the authoritative Word of God rather than give the preacher's view on a variety of religious subjects. And every serious Christian was expected to study the Scriptures systematically at home.

#### NOURISHED BY THE PSALTER

Reformed spirituality is also a spirituality of the Psalter. It has been nourished by praying the Psalms—singing and meditating on them, both at church and at daily family prayers.

Why sing the Psalms? They are the fundamental prayers of the church. Jesus constantly prayed the Psalms, as every good Jew in his day did. The church continued the practice in ancient times, rejoicing in the way the Psalms had been fulfilled in Christ. The earliest Christians understood the Psalms as the prayers of the Holy Spirit and therefore were honored as a primary component of the prayer of the church (Acts 4:23-31).

Calvin had a profound sense of the Psalms as prayer. In the preface of the *Genevan Psalter* of 1542 he wrote that the

Psalms are valuable for prayer because they are the prayers of the Spirit; they thereby teach us to pray as we ought, even when we are not sure how (Rom. 8:26). Isaac Watts, the English Congregationalist, wrote many hymns based on the Psalms that are still popular

today. Charles Wesley produced a particularly fine collection of metrical psalms. And Christian hymn writers today produce very singable psalm versions.

It is my firm conviction that nothing would help us recover the life of prayer more than rediscovering the Psalms. Protestant spirituality is a singing spirituality. For Reformed Protestantism, a good part of that singing is going to be Psalm singing.

#### RECOVERING THE LORD'S DAY

The spirituality of the Lord's Day forms another cardinal feature of Reformed

piety. While the beauty of the Christian understanding of the Lord's Day has often been obscured by Sabbatarian legalism, there is something profound about the early Christian sign of the eighth day, the first day of the New Creation (John 20:1, 26). It was Jesus himself who interpreted the old Sabbath and established the Lord's Day by meeting with his disciples for worship on the first day of the week (John 20:19, 26).

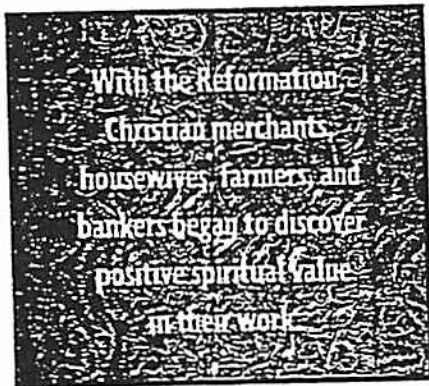
A few years ago I discovered *A Treatise Concerning the Sanctification of the Lord's Day*, a work of early eighteenth-century Scottish minister John Willison. His writing showed me the spiritual vitality of the observance of the Lord's Day as our spiritual ancestors understood it. Part of their secret was focusing on what they were to do on the Lord's Day rather than what they were not to do. They saw it as a day devoted to prayer and meditation on God's Word, a day for public and private prayer.

More recently some Christians have argued that we should replace this emphasis on the Lord's Day with a spirituality of the liturgical calendar. But the observance of Lent and Advent is antithetical to a Reformed piety. It puts the emphasis on seasons of fasting rather than the weekly observance of the resurrection of Christ. Lent and Advent become the "religious" seasons of the year while the observance of the 50 days of Easter and the 12 days of Christmas become anticlimactic. A true Reformed piety could never drape any Lord's Day with penitential purple! To the contrary, it sees the service of the Lord's Day as a foretaste of the worship of heaven (Rev. 1:10). That our worship occurs on the first day of the week, the day of resurrection, gives it a joyful, festive mood.

This was not just understood in narrow spiritual terms, either. The Reformed manuals of devotion always include a humanitarian dimension in the Lord's Day observance. They speak of how Jesus made a point of healing on the Sabbath, how it was a day of releasing people from burdens (Luke 13:16). It was a day for relieving the poor.

#### THE SACRED MEAL

A Reformed spirituality finds in the celebration of the Lord's Supper a sign and



seal of the covenant of grace. Participation in the sacred meal seals the covenantal union between us and our God. Not only does the sacrament bring us into communion with God, it brings us into the Christian community. Communion may only be celebrated a few times a year in most Reformed churches, but when celebrated it is traditionally given a great amount of time.

Preparatory services before Communion have played an important role in Reformed sacramental piety. Churches in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Scotland customarily held a week of services before the observance of the sacrament and followed it with several thanksgiving services. These Communion seasons were the mountaintop experiences of the Christian life. As we discover from the Communion meditations of Matthew Henry (1662-1712), minister of the Presbyterian Church in Chester, England, preparation for the Lord's Supper was a time for the most serious devotional meditation.

Christians in those days also approached Communion as the wedding feast of the Lamb. God's redemptive love formed a recurring theme, and the Communion sermon would often take a text from the Song of Solomon. In New

Jersey in the late 1730s we find Jacobus Theodorus Freylinghuysen and Gilbert Tennent preaching the same kind of sacramental piety as they led the Great Awakening. They invited their congregations to the Lord's Table to experience the consummate love of Christ and to pledge their love to him in return.

#### SACRALIZING THE ORDINARY

Stewardship is yet another major theme of a Reformed spirituality. Reacting against the asceticism of the Middle Ages, the Reformers took the parables of Jesus concerning the good stewards and their talents as the basis for a new Christian understanding of the use of wealth (Luke 12:42-48 and Matt. 25:14-30). In the centuries that followed, Christian merchants, artisans, housewives, farmers, and bankers began to discover positive spiritu-



al value in their work. They found in their industry, labor, and professions a true vocation. Family life, the raising of children, the support of the elderly, and the care of a home were more and more regarded as sacred trusts.

This new approach to life was beautifully expressed by the seventeenth-century Dutch painters. Vermeer, de Hooch, Hobbema, and Rembrandt showed the sacredness of everyday life as they painted the kitchens, courtyards, and country lanes in which the Dutch lived out their Christian lives.

The Puritans in both England and America gave family life a new dignity by making daily family prayer a primary spiritual discipline. Every Christian home is a little church, Puritan Richard Baxter said. In such classics as Baxter's *Christian Directory*, we find a great deal on the subject of Reformed spirituality and how it functioned in the life of the family.

Part of the Reformed understanding of stewardship is what some have called the Protestant work ethic. As maligned as it was in the 1960s, it was an essential part of the spirituality that has repeatedly delivered Protestants from poverty. Now that the sixties are long past, it is time to take another look at how a Reformed spirituality contributed to the rise of capitalism. It may well be a more positive contribution than the Marxists wanted us to believe.

#### THE MYSTERY OF PROVIDENCE

Finally, we consider the place of meditation on the mystery of divine providence. English Puritan John Flavel wrote the classic on this subject. He tells how the Christian, confident that God's providence embraces all the events of our lives, gains understanding by thinking about how God is speaking to us, warning us, encouraging us, leading us through life, guiding us in his service, and finally bringing us to himself. The thoughtful

Christian thinks over what Providence has brought about, he said, and, listening carefully to the Word of God, tries to discern God's leading.

Most Christians are aware that Calvin's theology gave great attention to the doctrines of providence and election, but many do not realize how much he absorbed these themes from the Scriptures themselves. The lives of Abraham,

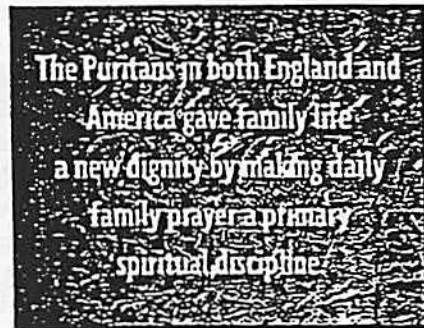
Joseph, and David, Calvin said, give us constant examples of how God shapes our lives. Abraham was called to a land that is described simply as a land that God would show him (Gen. 12:1).

Joseph was sold as a slave into Egypt, and yet the Bible is clear that God had led him through those difficult days so that he might be a blessing to both the Egyptians and his own family (Gen. 45:7). David was anointed by Samuel to be king over Israel while he was still a boy. God alone could have ordered his life so that eventually he would ascend the throne and fulfill God's purpose for his life (Ps. 138:8). The life of Christ, even with his passion and resurrection, was part of God's plan for our salvation (Acts 2:23-24). The apostles saw even their own ministry as the unfolding of God's plan (1 Pet. 2:4-10).

English Baptist Charles Haddon Spurgeon preached one of his greatest sermons on the spiritual application of the doctrine of providence. His sermon on Queen Esther shows that each of us has a divinely appointed destiny, a purpose in life. The devout life is one dedicated to fulfilling that purpose.

That fulfillment, the Reformers stressed, will find fullest expression not on the mountaintops of the spiritual elite, but in the daily lives of every believer. ■

*Hughes Oliphant Old is a Presbyterian minister and a member of the Center for Theological Inquiry in Princeton, New Jersey. He is the author of Themes and Variations for a Christian Doxology and The Shaping of the Reformed Baptismal Rite in the Sixteenth Century (Eerdmans). This article was adapted with permission from Perspectives.*



## The Little Gate to God

**I**N the castle of my soul  
Is a little postern gate,  
Whereat, when I enter,  
I am in the presence of God.  
In a moment, in the turning of a thought,  
I am where God is.  
This is a fact.

The world of men is made of jangling noises.  
With God is a great silence.

But that silence is a melody  
Sweet as the contentment of love,  
Thrilling as a touch of flame.

When I enter into God,  
All life has a meaning.

Without asking I know;  
My desires are even now fulfilled,  
My fever is gone

In the great quiet of God.

My troubles are but pebbles on the road,  
My joys are like the everlasting hills.

So it is when I step through the gate of prayer  
From time into eternity.

When I am in the consciousness of God,  
My fellowmen are not far off and forgotten,  
But close and strangely dear.

Those whom I love

Have a mystic value:

They shine as if a light were glowing within them.

So it is when my soul steps through the postern gate  
Into the presence of God.

Big things become small, and small things become great.

The near becomes far, and the future is near.

The lowly and despised is shot through with glory.

God is the substance of all revolutions;

When I am in him, I am in the Kingdom of God

And in the Fatherland of my Soul.

WALTER RAUSCHENBUSCH

# The Shield of St. Patrick

Attributed to St. Patrick  
Paraphrased by Cecil Frances Alexander

**I bind unto myself today the strong Name of the Trinity,  
By invocation of the same, the Three in One, the One in Three.**

**I bind this day to me forever by power of faith Christ's  
incarnation,  
His baptism in the Jordan river, His death on the cross for my  
salvation;  
His bursting from the spiced tomb, His riding up the heavenly  
way,  
His coming at the day of doom I bind unto myself today.**

**I bind unto myself today the power of God to hold and lead,  
His eye to watch, His might to stay, His ear to harken to my  
need,  
The wisdom of my God to teach, His hand to guide, His shield to  
ward,  
The Word of God to give me speech, His heavenly host to be my  
guard.**

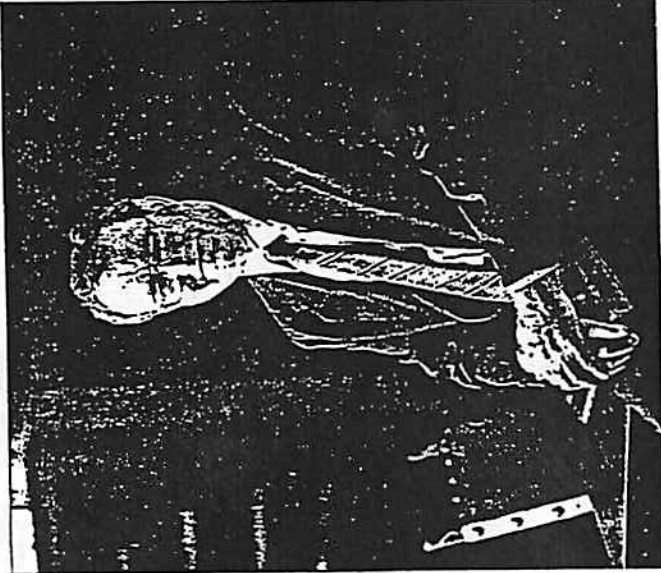
**Christ be with me, Christ within me,  
Christ behind me, Christ before me,  
Christ beside me, Christ to win me;  
Christ to comfort and restore me;  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,  
Christ in hearts of all that love me,  
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.**

**I bind unto myself the name, the strong name of the Trinity,  
By invocation of the same, the Three in One, and One in Three,  
Of whom all nature hath creation, eternal Father, Spirit, Word;  
Praise to the God of my salvation, salvation is of Christ the  
Lord!**



# What Makes Spirituality Christian?

Dallas Willard  
thinks it is as  
important to live the  
truth as it is to  
believe it.



Dallas Willard leads two lives. In academic circles, he is known for teaching philosophy at the University of Southern California, where he has been since the sixties. However, in the evangelical community, he is best known for his work in the area of spirituality. An ordained Southern Baptist minister and an adjunct professor of spirituality at Fuller Theological Seminary, he has been addressing the subject of the spiritual disciplines throughout his adult life. He has also been a mentor to many in this area, including noted author and minister Richard Foster.

Willard's 1988 book *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (Harper/SanFrancisco) generated fresh thinking on spirituality among evangelicals and led to the 1993 republication of his earlier work *In Search of Guidance* (Harper/SanFrancisco). Here Willard talks about the state of spirituality today and its meaning for the church.

**What do you make of the current widespread interest in spirituality?**

People hunger for no more than just believe the right things. There is a hunger for some experience of God in their lives. Whether or not this new interest in spirituality leads to much good remains to be seen. There is a dan-

ger of spirituality becoming "the new religion" of our day, so that one of the criteria for advancement in our society will be that you must "be spiritual."

But there are two directions spirituality can take: Christian or general human interest. A great question in our day is whether it will be defined as Christian or non-Christian spirituality.

**How are they different?**

Much modern thinking views spirituality as simply a kind of "niceness"—the idea that there is an invisible to the human being, and that this is the place where contact is made with the transcendental. In this view, spirituality is essentially a human dimension.

Christian spirituality is centered in

ures in that time, you will find that they did not separate their daily life from their faith in the way that has evolved in the twentieth century.

As liberal theology began to degenerate into a mild form of social ethics, the fundamentalist-evangelical movement came to stress the notion that if you believe the right things, it will get you into heaven. So in an effort to preserve the faith, we came to emphasize that what really matters is what you profess. This left believers very little help on how to actually enter into the life that Jesus himself modeled and taught.

**Most churches at least offer an occasional class on spirituality.**

But it's still in the category of the optional. I believe this reflects a widespread misunderstanding about the true nature of the gospel. What has come down for us historically is that the center of the gospel is sin. With the manner in which we treat the gospel, you'd almost get the idea that if we were not for sin, we'd have no use for God.

It also reflects a misunderstanding about faith. Faith has been redefined by social and historical processes so that you can profess to believe in Christ while being deeply doubtful about the wisdom of what he says. This is really central to the whole issue of spirituality. If you see faith as merely a mental shift in your mind that God sees, and thereby determines you will get into heaven, then spirituality has no simply. Once you see that faith is not simply believing certain things about Jesus but also believing that what he taught about life was right, then you see that faith is much more than taking advantage of a convenient accounting procedure to get into heaven.

**What is a "spiritual discipline?"**

It is a practice undertaken with the aid of the Spirit to enable us to do what we cannot do by human effort. And that's the essence of Jesus' teachings, because if you succeed in obeying Christ, it's a manifestation of grace. You can never do that on your own.

**How does one begin the pursuit of the spiritual disciplines?**

First, you must have a clear definition of faith. To trust Christ is to believe that he was right. This has much deeper implications than merely believing certain things about Jesus—though, of course, that is important, too.

Second, you must have a working definition of what makes a discipline:

One whose goal is to live the way Jesus would if he were confronted with your circumstances.

Third, you must realize that the Bible simply does not recognize a separate category of "Christian" over against "disciple."

**People sometimes equate deep interest in spirituality with the absence of solid theology. What is the role of theology in spiritual life?**

It depends on how you approach theology. Students in my philosophy classes know that their task is to get the right answer. If you were to ask them if they actually believe the things they wrote on the test or if you were to say, "I'm going to give you a C on this test because you didn't believe this," they'd think you had lost your mind. They're not geared for believing, just for getting the right answers.

Likewise, if we're studying theology so that we will know what the right answers are, it is of very little relation to spirituality. If I study a subject like the Virgin Birth so that I'll know the right answer to give on a test, God probably won't be very impressed. But if I'm interested in it because I realize that believing in it totally changes the meaning of human history and life, that's the difference. Being able to give the right answer is not particularly important if, at the level of your "mental map," you don't actually believe it's true.

**What about arguments that focusing on spirituality leads to a lack of concern about social issues?**

There actually is a connection between spirituality and concern for social issues. If you look at the journals of someone like Walter Rauschenbush—father of "the social gospel"—you will see that he thought of personal spiritual concerns and social concerns as inseparable. An authentic spiritual life always pushes one back into the world.

**How has response to your work on spirituality changed over the years?**

In the sixties, evangelicals thought of my work as dangerous: Teachings on the spiritual disciplines were thought to be teetering on the edge of Catholicism and salvation by works. Today there is an enormous hunger for this material, and I believe it is evidence of the church's hunger for the reality of God.

*By John Ortberg, a pastor at Willow Creek Community Church in suburban Chicago.*

# dallas willard's view

LET'S JUST PUT IT THIS WAY: THERE IS NO REASON DALLAS WILLARD IS A PROFESSOR IN THE SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY AT ONE OF THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS UNIVERSITIES IN THE WORLD - USC. HE IS SMART. WE THOUGHT WE WOULD SAY HIM WITH SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT EDMUND HUSSERL'S DEEP DEN. BEHOLD! HERE HE IS. BUT IT TURNS OUT HE WROTE HIS DOCTORAL DISSERTATION ON HUSSERL. JUST OUR LUCK. SO WE QUICKLY CHANGED THE SUBJECT TO EDMUND SCHMUCK. A GUY WHO WORKS AT McDONALD'S IN YREKA, CA AND SAYS SOME GREAT THINGS DURING HIS BREAK. DALLAS HAD NEVER HEARD OF HIM.

DALLAS WILLARD HAS AN AUTHORITY ABOUT HIM. IT IS NOT HIS WORDS AS MUCH AS IT IS THE POWER OF HIS WORDS. THERE IS A WISDOM, A KNOWINGNESS ABOUT DALLAS, AND YOU GET THE FEELING THAT JESUS IS SOMEONE HE KNOWS WELL. LIKE A FRIEND OR SOMETHING. ANYWAY WE MET HIM IN THE DARK CAVERNS OF THE PHILOSOPHY LIBRARY AT USC. WE HAD READ HIS BOOK THE SPIRIT OF THE DISCIPLINES (CHAPTER AND ROW) AND WANTED TO ASK ABOUT SPIRITUALITY. WE DID. HE STARTED TALKING AND, ONCE HE DID, WE DIDN'T WANT HIM TO STOP. AFTER YOU READ HIS INTERVIEW WITH IINK YOU'LL SEE THE SAME WAY.

DALLAS HAS BEEN TEACHING AT USC SINCE 1965. AND WE ALMOST FORGOT THIS BAPTIST MINISTER!

**DOOR:** *The Spirit of the Disciplines* has sold very well. Are you surprised?  
**WILLARD:** Yes.

**DOOR:** Why do you think people are so anxious to read about spirituality?  
**WILLARD:** We are not only saved by grace, we are paralyzed by it. We have lost any coherent view of how spiritual growth occurs. Our churches are dominated by a consumer religion that has nothing to do with spiritual growth. But within those churches, there's a huge number of people who are hungry for spiritual growth.

**DOOR:** What do you mean that we're paralyzed by grace?  
**WILLARD:** We have been taught that grace means "you can do nothing to be saved." Such thinking has been extended to "you can do nothing to have spiritual growth." So spiritual transformation occurs, according to this thinking, in one of two ways - inspiration or information. Inspiration means that in one golden moment, one great experience, you will be transformed. I don't want to criticize experience. I have had many wonderful experiences with God, but they don't transform you. The other view, information, is the means whereby you pour truth into your head and suddenly you are transformed. Inspiration isn't going to do it and information isn't going to do it. The only way human character is transformed with grace is by discipline and activity.

**DOOR:** But we've read your book. You spend a lot of time suggesting that people do nothing - like silence and solitude.

**WILLARD:** There is nothing that requires more energy for the typical American Christian than the discipline of doing nothing. The hardest thing you can get anyone to do is to do nothing. We are addicted to our world, addicted to talk. Talk is the primary way we have of managing our lives for ourselves and for others. You may have a perfectly intelligent person who is alone and, when they do something stupid, they will talk to themselves and explain to themselves why they did that. Believe it or not, controlling our tongue is very important. James said that "anyone who can control their tongue is perfect." How do you control it? You get it to stop. You discover that you can breathe without

talking. You discover that life goes on. The problem with solitude is not being alone, it is convincing ourselves that we are un- necessary, that the world will not collapse if we go away. Solitude is the discipline of letting go of our self-importance, letting go of our belief that we are necessary for the world to continue.

**DOOR:** You are right. The more you talk about it, the harder spirituality sounds.  
**WILLARD:** The interesting thing about spirituality is that it is self-verifying. If you can get people to try the disciplines for a while, they'll never turn away from them. The problem is, as I mentioned earlier, grace. People believe there is something essentially wrong with any kind of energetic involvement in the process of spiritual growth. People think of religion as a little something you add on to your normal life. Add a little God to your life. But Christ says throw your life away. Forget about it. He can give you a new one. You can't grow if you give God a little bit of your life.

**DOOR:** Forgive us if we sprinkle a little snow dust in the tent here, but is sin the problem?

**WILLARD:** I call that kind of thinking the "sin-management" model of the Gospel which, interpreted, means that if it weren't for sin, we wouldn't need God. Of course we need our sins forgiven. The question, however, is not whether we need our sins forgiven or even if the forgiveness of sins is essential to the Gospel. The question is, "Is that the Gospel?" Jesus never preached that if it weren't for sin we wouldn't need God. Never preached that.

**DOOR:** What did He preach?  
**WILLARD:** That He came to give us life.

**DOOR:** But there are so many interpretations of what "life" means.  
**WILLARD:** You know the real problem? The real problem is that people in the Church do not believe we can have the kind of spiritual reality they had in the New Testament.

**DOOR:** Maybe they don't believe it's possible but, if the sales of your book are any indication, they still want it. We see a real hunger for spirituality in this culture with the increased popularity of writers like Richard Foster, Henri Nouwen, Brennan Manning, and Sue Monk Kidd.

**WILLARD:** You've mentioned the good people, but there is a lot that worries me about this hunger for spirituality. There is

no doubt in my mind that spirituality is a big thing. What is most significant about human beings is not physical, it's spiritual. There is a spiritual world that is very big. It's bigger than materially, much bigger. The trouble with Evangelicals is that we have defined spirituality carefully within the confines of Christianity. Shirley MacLaine was raised in a Texas Baptist church, and she reacted against that narrow view of spirituality. Now she thinks she has found something else ... and she probably has. A radical feminist lesbian comes along and wants to teach us about her spirituality. She probably has a spirituality. We had better recognize that there is a spirituality. The fundamental thing about non-Christian spirituality is that it is all inclusive. The kind of spirituality - Joseph Campbell, Shirley MacLaine, Father Leo Booth - we see diffusing around us is a human project. Spirituality is not a set of practices. You can run a set of practices without any spirituality at all. For the Christian, spirituality means a new kind of life that is given through the word of the Gospel and the person of Christ. The goal of Christian spirituality is conformity to Christ - not togetherness, or meditation, or acceptance. The issue is discipleship. Discipleship is learning from Jesus Christ how to live my life as He would live it if He were me. The New Testament describes it as "putting off corruption and putting on immortality." Paul calls it "the mortification of the flesh."

**DOOR:** Now there's a catchy phrase.  
**WILLARD:** Don't hear it too much. There is a reason for that. Churches and Christians, by and large, embrace the principle that you ought to be able to do what you want - human desire is good. So it is it any wonder in our churches that the copulating statistics are no different among youth within the Church than youth outside the Church? Once you accept that human desire is good, then anything goes. The prevailing accepted belief in our society is that genetics determine action. I do not believe that. Genes don't determine action. But try getting up in church next Sunday and telling everyone that their desires are bad.

**DOOR:** All desires are bad?  
**WILLARD:** Desire itself is not bad. God has desires. Even angels have desires. But in human beings they have been malformed and twisted so that you must always be suspicious of desires - even desires for holiness. We live in a world

living against the wild claims of Jesus on us. Trusting Jesus means that whenever I say, "He's right and I'm wrong," When we actually begin to live like that, we learn. We progress. It isn't trying that gets us there, it's training that gets us there. As we try, we will have His assistance, as He said in John 14: "Obey my commandments and I will send the paraclete and he will help you." He didn't say, "I'll send you the paraclete and then you will obey my commandments."

We want the help before we try, but it doesn't work that way. That is characteristic of all Jesus' work. He says to the man with the withered hand, "Stretch forth thy hand." The man might easily have protested, "It's withered, I can't." And if he had said that, he would still have a withered hand.

Real faith in Christ means we choose His way and we take what comes with that. That's what we call sowing to the Spirit, and of the Spirit we reap everlasting life. That's the Gospel. **■**

so just let us worship and keep your mouth shut." They wanted a nice, safe contact with the prophets and, of course, the prophets didn't cooperate.

**DOOR:** But aren't ministers and leaders encouraged to make these contracts in seminary?

**WILLARD:** Seminary traumatizes people. Most ministers and leaders rarely get free from the voices that still ring in their head from that period. So much of seminary education is crowding out the things a person really needs to know in order to live before God and have others do the same.

**DOOR:** What things?

**WILLARD:** At the least, a person in seminary ought to know how to pray, how to keep from lying. That is all covered by Jesus in the Great Commission, "Teach them to do everything I have commanded you." Honestly, I don't know of a single service, or no-lime Christian service? Tragically, if anyone wants to get serious about what Jesus said, they are shunned off to seminary. It takes more grace to drive a truck for Jesus than it does to teach Hebrew in a seminary.

**DOOR:** When you get the chance to speak to ministers and leaders of the Church, what do you tell them?

**WILLARD:** I ask them "What are you trying to do to people? What is the outcome of your ministry in terms of its effect on your people? The hardest thing for the minister to deal with is the contract or expectations the people have of their minister."

you, so when you show up at the prayer gates, they won't be able to find a reason to keep you out. That is the version that is preached today. You can understand why, in an age where people are not worried about their sins, that kind of "Gospel" doesn't have much effect. The odd thing about this "sin-management" view of the Gospel is that even though they talk about sin, what they are really talking about is people's needs. Strangely, evangelism today is centered on people's needs, not their sins—believe that Jesus died for your sins, and your needs will be met. God is supposed to meet your needs because you believe He died for your sins? That is the contract most people have in mind. If that is nice, but it's not required. But if they still persist, they can go into full-time Christian service. I want to ask this: What have they been in? Part-time Christian service, or no-lime Christian service? Tragically, if anyone wants to get serious about what Jesus said, they are shunned off to seminary. It takes more grace to drive a truck for Jesus than it does to teach Hebrew in a seminary.

I was with a number of ministers in South Africa, and the people there believe that the minister should come to visit them every so often. He should sit and talk with them, read a little scripture, pray, and go. The minister was expected to do that.

In our country, of course, most people would prefer that their minister not visit them. These "contracts" are the hardest part to get past.

If you read the Old Testament and watch how the Jewish people responded to God throughout their history, you will see the same thing. The people had contracts. You see it especially in Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Isaiah, where the prophets are debating these contracts with the people. They are saying, "We are the people of God. We come here and worship. It is very difficult to interrupt our adultery and murder to do this, but we do it. This worship cuts into our slaving time, but we are worshipping.

that the mega-church meets people's needs. We now have "full-service" churches. These churches have dating services, employment agencies, counselors, child-care facilities. What we are talking about is a need-based religion.

**DOOR:** Isn't that what it's all about—meeting people's needs?

**WILLARD:** The deepest need of the human soul, from the viewpoint of the New Testament, is to get rid of our needs. Just get rid of them and say, "Lord, you know what I need and I am going to leave all that up to you." That is what I would define as a need-based religion. But that isn't what most people mean. What they mean by need-based religion is a religion that responds to whatever I feel I need. Most people suggest that you need good music in your program. What would a service be without music? To be honest, it wouldn't matter if your church was non-instrumental because the problem is not music, it's putting on a performance. They are performing to satisfy the people. Growth is understood in terms of an increase in numbers. I have never heard a church-growth advocate suggest that you might have a congregation of 55 people with no new members, no budget increase, and yet the church is growing because these people are becoming prayer powerhouses. What if who are already there grow?

**DOOR:** That's a novel idea. Your indictment of a need-based religion, a performance-oriented religion, a religion of oppression seems so... right. It also seems so ignored. How do we call people back to what the Church was intended to be?

**WILLARD:** We have to reformulate their thinking. Jesus said in John 14, "If you love Me, you'll keep My commandments. The one who doesn't keep My commandments doesn't love Me." If you say to the ordinary congregation, "How many of you love Jesus?" Every hand goes up. Then if you ask, "How many of you keep His commandments?" Well, the response is a little different. We've set up a system where you have trusting Jesus over here and obeying Jesus over there, and no connection between the two. Evangelicals have cut the Gospel down to mean simply believing that Jesus died for your sins. That is the Gospel, they say. And what they mean is that if you believe that Jesus died for your sins, then enough merit will be transferred from His account to

where the pursuit of desire is conceived as good. No civilization has been able to prosper on that principle. All of the great civilizations have been suspicious of desires. Great civilizations have been able to set limits and say "no" to desire. The only can't say no to anything today. The only thing we can say no to is saying no.

**DOOR:** At first you said desire was not good. Then you said it was good but twisted. It sounds like you lean in the direction of "total depravity"—the idea that man is basically bad, even though desire is good. Do you believe in total depravity?

**WILLARD:** I believe in enough depravity.

**DOOR:** Uh... what does that mean?

**WILLARD:** There is enough depravity where no one will ever be able to say "I did it." God will not pour holiness upon our heads. God will cooperate with us, but we cannot make it on our own. Total depravity means there is nothing we can do about evil. That is not true. There is just enough depravity so that we must cooperate with God.

**DOOR:** What is your opinion of the condition of the Church today?

**WILLARD:** We live in a period where the Church is desperately floundering around for something to make it go. Most churches are going under. One phenomena contributing to the decline of the Church is the mega-church.

**DOOR:** Why?

**WILLARD:** The mega-church drains off people from the smaller congregations around. We are going to see a withering of the small congregation. They can't survive. The mega-church says, "We've got a better show on Sunday." The smaller congregation cannot compete on the basis of entertainment. Really, the mega-church is the swan song of a system—an economic and social system—that really has nothing to do with Christianity. It has to do with owning property, running programs, and exercising influence in the community. The small church can't do that anymore. The demands on them financially and socially are so different now. Thirty years ago, churches didn't have to worry about being sued out of their existence. Now they do. Church was a simple matter of people who lived fairly close together; counting together to worship and to help one another.

**DOOR:** The decline of the small church and the rise of the mega-church seems so sad.

**WILLARD:** The argument, of course, is

**TURNING IT ON**

God strode across the boiling chaos,  
The vacuum howled around Him  
A ringing in His ears.  
He stood like an actor  
At the center of a barren stage  
And snapped His fingers  
"Lights!" He said.  
And the entire universe exploded into fire.

**BY JEFFREY EERNISSE**

## The Soul of the World

"A DISCIPLE OF THE APOSTLES" is how the anonymous author of the "Letter to Diognetus" describes himself. That document, from which this excerpt is adapted, probably dates to the early second century, soon after the time of the apostles.

Our role on earth isn't easy—but it is essential.

Christians are distinguished from other people neither by country, nor language, nor the ethnic customs they observe. They do not inhabit cities of their own or use a unique form of speech.

The everyday course of conduct they follow has not been devised by some philosophical program or agenda. Neither do they, as some do, proclaim themselves the advocates of any merely human ideology. Instead, inhabiting cities of every nation according to the circumstances in which they find themselves, they follow the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct.

### A Paradoxical Life

Nevertheless, in a different sense Christians display a remarkably distinctive way of life that is admittedly paradoxical.

As citizens of their countries, they share in all things with their fellow citizens, yet they endure all things as if "aliens and strangers" (Heb. 11:13).

They marry and bear children as others do. But they do not abort their unwanted children as others do. They have a common table (Acts 4:34-37) but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live "according to the flesh" (Ro. 8:4, RSV).

They pass their days on earth, but their "citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20). They obey the laws of the land (Titus 3:1) and at the same time surpass the requirements of the laws by their conduct. They love all men and are persecuted by all (Lk. 21:12).

They are unknown, yet condemned; they are put to death, yet restored to life. They are poor, yet make many rich. They lack all things, yet abound in all (2 Cor. 6:9-10). They are dishonored, yet in their dishonor are glorified (Ro. 5:3, Eph. 3:13, RSV). They are slandered, yet they are justified; they are reviled, yet bless; they are insulted and repay the insult with honor; they do good, yet are punished as evildoers (Lk. 6:22-23, 28). When punished, they rejoice as if restored to life (Acts 5:40-41). They are rejected by their



ILLUSTRATION BY RICHIE AS WILTON

Jewish brothers as if they were Gentiles, and they are persecuted by the Gentiles. Yet those who hate them are unable to identify any reason for their hatred.

### Here for a Reason

To sum it up: What the soul is in the body, Christians are in the world. The soul is dispersed through all the parts of the body, and Christians are scattered through all the cities of the world. The soul dwells in the body, yet it is not of the body; Christians dwell in the world, yet they are not of the world.

Though the flesh suffers no injury from the soul, it hates the soul and wars against it (1 Pet. 2:11) because the soul restrains the flesh from enjoying illicit pleasures. In the same way, even though the world is not injured by Christians, it hates them because they "say 'No' to . . . worldly passions" (Titus 2:12). The soul loves the flesh that hates it; Christians likewise love those who hate them.

The soul is the captive of the body, yet preserves the very body that is its captor. Christians are captives of the world, yet they are the preservers of the world.

The soul is immortal but dwells in a mortal body. Christians too dwell as sojourners in a decaying world, looking for a dwelling in the heavens that will never decay (Heb. 11:14-16).

The soul, when denied food and drink through fasting, becomes stronger. In the same way, Christians, though subjected daily to punishment for their faith, increase the strength of their numbers.

In all these ways, Christians find their relationship to the world difficult. But it would be wrong for them to flee from it. For this is the position to which God has assigned them—and it is glorious. ☸

Outline for a presentation on:

UNDERSTANDING THE WILL, CENTER OF HUMAN PERSONALITY:  
THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY IN ITS CULTIVATION AND PERVERSION

by: Dallas Willard

I. Introduction to the topic:

The chaos in current thinking about the will. How this undermines family stability and health. Which in turn produces people with weakened, confused wills. Who are unwilling to sustain healthy personal relationships. The case of divorce and unmarried as central, though those words do not capture the personal disaster.

II. The Delusion of Causation in Behavior---Seeking or Attributing Causes where Choice is at work.

a. Saying "I can't!" when the truth is "I won't!" This deception--often a self-deception, though buttressed by sophistical theories--underlies nearly every social and personal failure in human life and relations.

b. Once "I can't" enters, I am relieved of responsibility for finding the way "I can." I evade the pain of effort. I escape the burden of doing things I don't want to do and of not doing things I want to do.

<By contrast, successful people, in any domain, are those who choose to do what they do not want to do in the time and manner it need to be done.>

c. To surrender causation means to surrender control over the behavior of others. To acknowledge choice independence.

Co-dependency is ensnared in causation and rejects choice. It is in fact a form of helplessness.

III. Behavior has conditions (circumstances without which it cannot occur), but not causes (circumstances in which it MUST occur).

Illust.: You must have liquor available to get drunk. It is a condition of drunkenness. But available liquor does not cause one to drink.

You can prevent wrong action if you can remove its conditions, but you cannot reliably produce right action by manipulating conditions. The will must be trained and formed rightly if good actions are to be the reliable outcome.

IV. What the Will is:

THE ABILITY--UNIQUE TO PERSONS--TO ORIGINATE OR REFRAIN FROM ORIGINATING PROSPECTIVE REALITIES. It is the capacity for radical or underivative origination of events and things. It is the core of who and what we are as individuals, for what it does is us alone. "Our consents and non-consents," as Wm. James said, "are the measure of our worth as men...the one strictly underivative and original contribution which we make to the world."

This is the nature of spiritual, the self-determined. It is absolute in God ("I am that I am." Ex. 3:14, John 5:26), and very limited though real in man. Its primary form in man is the power to select what we will think on, and how intently, from which our actions then flow.

Functionally, will is the executive center of the self from which the whole is meant to be directed. It corresponds closely to the "heart" in biblical terminology. (Prov. 4:23, Mark 7:21) Will is not character, but is formed into character as it becomes habitual and 'automatic'.

V. How Will is Formed into Character. (Will Formed = Character) We distinguish will into two levels, the first necessary to human life, the second necessary to good life:

A. Vital will: patterns of willing-oriented to attractive objects without reference to other possible willings or life as a whole.

Will at this level is formed by two factors:

1. Immersion in the life of another--usually the parent, usually the mother. The mother literally pours soul substance into the child by her attitudes, actions and contacts bearing upon it. "Bonding" is really giving substance. The first willings of the child come in the form of attention to someone attending to it. Simple looking, then motions and postures built thereupon.
2. Actions in response to desires, hopefully soon in a context of training by a soul-giver who is good, with a well-ordered will him/herself.

If the will does not develop beyond this stage it will become identified with the person. Modern thought encourages the identification of the person with the will rather than the subordination of the will to the whole person in God's world. Thus "I want to" or "It pleases me" is widely regarded as an overriding reason for doing something, when in fact it should NEVER function alone as a reason for acting. Human well-being--including of course, family life--cannot be achieved by doing what I want or what pleases me. Marriage, for example, is not for fun, but for the creation of a life together and the nurturing of persons. Thus we must go beyond vital will to a second level of will-formation, that of:

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By: Appropriate teaching about the nature of these passions in the context of life as God intended.  
Eliciting the intention to be free of them.  
Showing the way, the means, to be free of them.

This makes it possible, with God's ever-ready grace, to do and be the good we intend. The "I can't's" and "I must's" that now makes family life miserable, and leads multitudes to degrade, desert or avoid it will be replaced by joyous and thankful strength to bless our circle of love and life.  
Adult wills well-formed in grace and truth will generally lead children into the same development, as they give life to them and train and model and teach them.

VII. Understanding of the human will in Christ's Kingdom enables us to cling to God while simultaneously possessing a robust individuality in our life circumstances.  
The family is secured in its highest form through wills trained to mutual submission in the power of God. (Eph 5:21)

Some sources for further study on the will:

1. Roberco Assagloli, The Act Of Will. (Watch out for the 'transpersonal' psychology! But otherwise extremely helpful.)
2. Leslie Farber, The Ways of the Will.
3. William James, chapter on Will in Vol. II of his Principles of Psychology.
4. Robert Karen, Becoming Attached.
5. Abraham A. Low, Mental Health Through Will-Training.

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D. Reflective will. Here will is oriented toward what is good for the person as a whole, not toward the merely desired. Two factors are also involved in the formation of reflective will:  
1. Conscious identification with a model person whose choices are dominated by reflection on what is good and right on the whole.

2. Internalization, from teaching and independent thinking, of proper ideas and practices bearing upon human well-being and well-doing.

We assume that Jesus Christ is the best model and has the best information on these matters. Life in his Kingdom, through faith in him, is simply the best possibility of human existence.

His teaching about liberation from desire: "He that tries to save his life will lose it, and whoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." (Matt 16:25; cf. Luke 14)

The biblical picture of the weaned child. "I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother; my soul within me is like a weaned child." (Ps. 131) What it means to "break the will" of a child.

VI. The Primary Problem for the Family Today: The Deformation of the Adult Will. Often from the Lack of Soul Substance or from the Deformed Soul Substance that was passed to it by the Parent. Lack of appropriate and effectual training, the failure of models and lack of internalization of the good are usually piled on top of that. The result is classically stated by Paul: "I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not what I do." (Rom. 7:19)

This is the adult condition generally today, and remains so among most professing Christians. They are in bondage to their own desires.

The primary problem for the family today is not how to raise children, but how to redeem adults. Desire dominated adults will raise desire dominated children who are incapable of producing healthy families capable of producing healthy children.

VII. How Can We Start to Train the Will that Can Support Family Life as God Intended and Every Sensible Person Desires?

In the context of Christ's Gospel, we can help people eliminate  
Fear,  
Anger, and  
Undisciplined Desire from their lives.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME IN INDUSTRY:  
GOD BE IN MY HANDS AND IN MY MAKING.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY; LORD GOD OF HOSTS;  
HEAVEN AND EARTH ARE FULL OF THY GLORY.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME IN THE ARTS:  
GOD BE IN MY SENSE AND IN MY CREATING.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY; LORD GOD OF HOSTS;  
HEAVEN AND EARTH ARE FULL OF THY GLORY.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME IN COMMERCE:  
GOD BE AT MY DESK AND IN MY TRADING.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY; LORD GOD OF HOSTS;  
HEAVEN AND EARTH ARE FULL OF THY GLORY.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME IN GOVERNMENT:  
GOD BE IN MY PLANS AND IN MY DECIDING.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY; LORD GOD OF HOSTS;  
HEAVEN AND EARTH ARE FULL OF THY GLORY.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME IN EDUCATION:  
GOD BE IN MY MIND AND IN MY GROWING.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY; LORD GOD OF HOSTS;  
HEAVEN AND EARTH ARE FULL OF THY GLORY.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME IN THE HOME:  
GOD BE IN MY HEART AND IN MY LOVING.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY; LORD GOD OF HOSTS;  
HEAVEN AND EARTH ARE FULL OF THY GLORY.

{Coventry Cathedral Prayer (built 1043, destroyed 1940)}

To believe in God is to believe in the salvation of the world. The paradox of our time is that those who believe in God do not believe in the salvation of the world, and those who believe in the future of the world do not believe in God.

Christians believe in the end of the world, they expect the final catastrophe, the punishment of others.

Atheists in their turn invent doctrines of salvation, try to give a meaning to life, work, the future of humankind, and refuse to believe in God because Christians believe in him and take no interest in the world.

All ignore the true God: he who has so loved the world! But which is the more culpable ignorance?

To love God is to love the world. To love God passionately is to love the world passionately. To hope in God is to hope for the salvation of the world.

I often say to myself. that in our religion, God must feel very much alone: for is there anyone besides God who believes in the salvation of the world? God seeks among us sons and daughters who resemble him enough, who love the world enough that he could send them into the world to save it.

from—

In the Christian Spirit

by Louis-Evelyn



THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

# 560 May the Mind of Christ My Savior

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. Phil. 2:5

1. May the mind of Christ my Sav - ior live in me from day to day,  
2. May the Word of God dwell rich - ly in my heart from hour to hour,  
3. May the peace of God my Fa - ther rule my life in ev - ery - thing,  
4. May the love of Je - sus fill me as the wa - ters fill the sea,

by 'his love and power con - trol - ling all I do and say.  
so that all may see I tri - umph on - ly through his power.  
that I may be calm to com - fort sick and sor - row - ing.  
him ex - alt - ing, self a - bas - ing - this is vic - to - ry.

5. May I run the race before me,  
strong and brave to face the foe,  
looking only unto Jesus  
as I onward go.

6. May his beauty rest upon me  
as I seek the lost to win,  
and may they forget the channel,  
seeing only him.

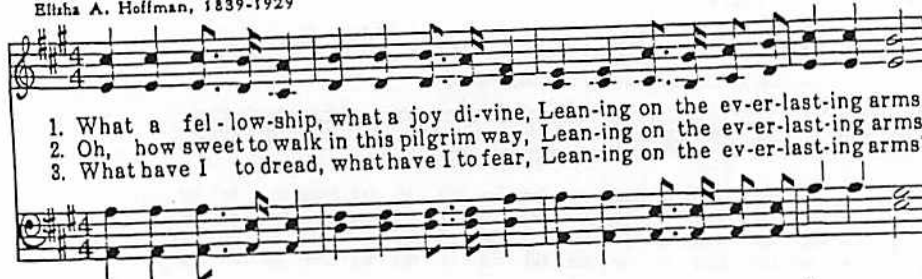
WORDS: Kate B. Wilkinson, 1925  
MUSIC: A. Cyril Barker-Could, 1925

ST. LEONARD  
1731

# Leaning on the Everlasting Arms 366

Eliha A. Hoffman, 1839-1929

Anthony J. Showalter, 1858-1924

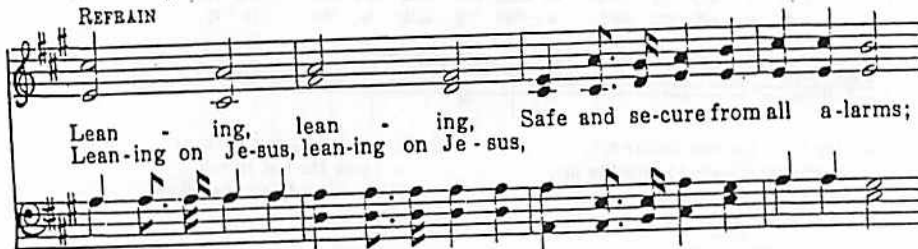


1. What a fel-low-ship, what a joy di-vine, Lean-ing on the ev-er-last-ing arms;  
2. Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way, Lean-ing on the ev-er-last-ing arms;  
3. What have I to dread, what have I to fear, Lean-ing on the ev-er-last-ing arms?

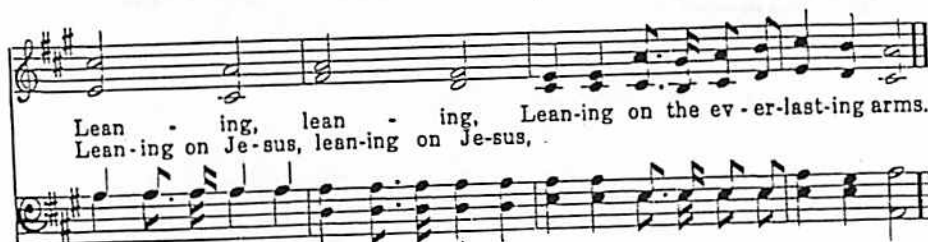


What a bless-ed-ness, what a peace is mine, Lean-ing on the ev-er-last-ing arms.  
Oh, how bright the path grows from day today, Lean-ing on the ev-er-last-ing arms.  
I have bless-ed peace with my Lord so near, Lean-ing on the ev-er-last-ing arms.

## REFRAIN



Lean - ing, lean - ing, Safe and se-cure from all a-larms;  
Lean-ing on Je-sus, lean-ing on Je-sus,



Lean - ing, lean - ing, Lean-ing on the ev-er-last-ing arms.  
Lean-ing on Je-sus, lean-ing on Je-sus,

## How Tedious and Tasteless.

John Newton

De Fleury. 8s. G/D

Lewis Edson



1. How te-dious and taste-less the hours When Je-sus no lon-ger I see!
2. His name yields the rich-est per-fume, And sweet-er than mu-sic His voice;
3. Con-tent with be-hold-ing His face, My all to His pleas-ure re-signed,
4. Dear Lord, if in-deed I am Thine, If Thou art my sun and my song,



Sweet prospects, sweet birds, and sweet flow'rs, Have all lost their sweetness for me.  
His pres-ence dis-pers-es my gloom, And makes all with-in me re-joice:  
No chang-es of sea-son or place Would make an-y change in my mind:  
Say, why do I lan-guish and pine, And why are my win-ters so long?



The mid-sum-mer sun shines but dim; The fields strive in vain to look gay;  
I should, were He al-ways thus nigh, Have noth-ing to wish or to fear;  
While blest with a sense of His love, A pal-ace a toy would ap-pear;  
Oh, drive these dark clouds from my sky; Thy soul-cheer-ing pres-ence re-store;



But when I am hap-py in Him, De-cem-ber's as pleas-ant as May.  
No mor-tal so hap-py as I; My sum-mer would last all the year.  
And prisons would pal-a-ces prove, If Je-sus would dwell with me there.  
Or take me un-to Thee on high, Where winter and clouds are no more. A-MEN.



# I've Found a Friend, oh, Such a Friend 261

FRIEND. 8. 7. 8. 7. D.

JAMES G. SMALL, 1817-1888

GEORGE C. STEBBINS, 1846-1945

1. I've found a friend, oh, such a friend! He loved me ere I knew Him;  
 2. I've found a friend, oh, such a friend! He bled, He died to save me;  
 3. I've found a friend, oh, such a friend! All pow'r to Him is giv - en,  
 4. I've found a friend, oh, such a friend! So kind and true and ten - der.

He drew me with the cords of love, And thus He bound me to Him;  
 And not a-lone the gift of life, But His own self He gave me;  
 To guard me on my on-ward course, And bring me safe to heav - en:  
 So wise a coun - se - lor and guide, So might - y a de-fend - er!

And round my heart still close - ly twine Those ties which naught can sev - er,  
 Naught that I have my own I call, I hold it for the giv - er;  
 Th' e - ter - nal glo - ries gleam a - far To nerve my faint en-deav - or;  
 From Him who loves me now so well What pow'r my soul can sev - er?

For I am His, and He is mine, For - ev - er and for - ev - er.  
 My heart, my strength, my life, my all Are His, and His for - ev - er.  
 So now to watch, to work, to war, And then to rest for - ev - er.  
 Shall life or death or earth or hell? No; I am His for - ev - er.

## Immortal, Invisible


JOANNA 11. 11. 11. 11.

WALTER CHALMERS SMITH, 1824-1908


Welsh Hymn Melody



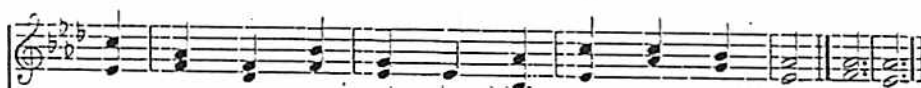
1. Im - mor - tal, in - vis - i - ble God on - ly wise,  
 2. Un - rest - ing, un - hast - ing, and si - lent as light,  
 3. To all, life Thou giv - est— to both great and small;  
 4. Great Fa - ther of glo - ry, pure Fa - ther of light,



In light in - ac - ces - si - ble hid from our eyes,  
 Nor want - ing, nor wast - ing, Thou rul - est in might;  
 In all life Thou liv - est, the true life of all;  
 Thine an - gels a - dore Thee, all veil - ing their sight;



Most bless - ed, most glo - rious, the An - cient of Days,  
 Thy jus - tice like moun - tains high soar - ing a - bove,  
 We blos - som and flour - ish as leaves on the tree,  
 All praise we would ren - der; O help us to see



Al - might - y, vic - to - rious, Thy great name we praise.  
 Thy clouds which are foun - tains of good - ness and love.  
 And with - er and per - ish— but naught chang - eth Thee.  
 'Tis on - ly the splen - dor of light hid - eth Thee! A-MEN.

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FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
GM720 SPIRITUALITY AND MINISTRY  
Doctor of Ministry Program  
June 2009

SEARCHING FOR A GOSPEL THAT REALLY TRANSFORMS

Keith J. Matthews, D. Min.  
Associate Professor of Church and Culture

Through lecture and discussion we will seek to re-discover the nature and power of the gospel of the Kingdom of God, proclaimed and manifested in Jesus Christ. Our goal in these hours together is to re-think and re-develop a working theology and practice of Christian Spiritual Formation using a "transformational discipleship approach" which then can be implemented within the local congregation.

I. In Search of Real Transformation- Is it Really possible to be different?

*"Our world is hungry for genuinely changed people . . . Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people."*

Richard Foster

*"If your understanding of God is radically false, then the more devout you are the worse it will be for you."*

William Temple

*"We all live at the mercy of our ideas."*

Dallas Willard

Key Truth: PRACTICE MAKES \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ PERFECT!

- The wisdom writings of the Old Testament attest to the reality that life is neither \_\_\_\_\_, nor \_\_\_\_\_. Much of life is "vanity," yet the writer of Ecclesiastes sums up humanities bottom line for living when he writes, "Here is my final conclusion: fear God and obey his commands, for this is the entire duty of man." (Eccl. 12: 13 LB)

*"If you don't know where you are going you're, you're probably not going to get there."*

*"The chief reason people don't grow in their spiritual life is because they give too big a place to indifferent things." John Joseph Surin*

There are two reasons why people seek life change or transformation:

1. The level of \_\_\_\_\_ of their current condition propels them to seek change.
2. A new, \_\_\_\_\_ for a different reality of life propels them to seek change.

### Ten Truths about Spiritual Transformation-

Spiritual Transformation . . .

1. Is an expected, non-optional requirement of all Christ Followers.
2. Is primarily a process, not an event.
3. Is God's work, but requires my participation.
4. Involves those practices, experiences, and relationships that help me live intimately with Christ and walk as if he were in my place.
5. Is not a compartmentalized pursuit. God is not interested in just my spiritual life; He's interested in my life—all of it!
6. Can happen at every moment. It is not restricted to certain times or activities.
7. Is not individualistic, but takes place in community and finds expression in serving others.
8. Is not impeded by a person's background, temperament, life situation, or season of life. It is available right now to all who desire it.
9. The means of pursuing spiritual transformation will vary from one person to another. Christ followers are handcrafted, not cookie-cut.
10. Is ultimately gauged by an increased capacity to love God and other people. Superficial or external checklists cannot measure it.

- Discussion on Methods and Message-

It is critical to develop a clear, simple mission, vision, or purpose statement that everyone can remember and recite . . .

THE PURPOSE OF CEDAR RIDGE COMMUNITY CHURCH IS . . .  
"TO BE AND MAKE DISCIPLES, IN AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY FOR THE  
GOOD OF THE WORLD AND THE GLORY OF GOD."

## II. Jesus and the Gospel of the Kingdom of God-

Discussion- Does the gospel we preach have a natural tendency to produce disciples, or consumers of religious goods and services?

*"Our current, contemporary church programs and practices are perfectly designed to produce the results we are getting."*

Dallas Willard

As a group, make some brief bullet-point statements about these scriptural passages:

- What do these scriptures tell you about Jesus?
  1. John 10: 10
  2. Matt. 1: 28-30
- What do these scriptures tell you about the Kingdom of God?
  1. Matt. 6: 33
  2. Matt. 13: 44-45

### A. Jesus . . . King of the Kingdom (this is the Gospel!)-

- Mark 1: 14-17
- Luke 4: 14-21; 42-44
- Matt 6: 33; 28:18-20

### B. Kingdom Continuity beyond the gospels-

- Acts 1: 3; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:24,25; 28: 23,31
- Romans 14:17
- I Cor. 4: 20; 6: 9; 15:24, 50; Col. 1: 13-14, 4: 11

### C. Defining the Gospel of the Kingdom of God-

- The Kingdom of God/Heaven- The present, available, direct rule of God offered to humanity in the life of Jesus. It pervades the whole human universe, including planet earth. The Kingdom of God has always been a constant theme in the Bible, but God's revelation of



accessing it has changed, particularly in the coming of Jesus. The invitation to "all" now supercedes the limited ethnic availability through the Jewish people.

- The gospel of the Kingdom of God- The news of the present, available rule of God, as never experienced before, but now revealed in Jesus. A common misunderstanding of the Gospel might look like this (the default gospel of the right). . . "Just accept Jesus into your life so you can be forgiven of your sins, so you can now be assured of heaven." This understanding, however, makes the gospel passive because there is nothing left to do (no requirement to be a disciple!) but die or wait for Christ to return. This limited version of the gospel eliminates Jesus' primary message and his call to the kingdom—the surrender (call for repentance) to his rulership for living life. Understanding the primary message of this gospel brings true freedom, and in exchange, we receive his new life birthed within us, which now begins to change us into his likeness.
- The real question is not "if you were to die tonight would you be able to enter heaven?, but "if you knew you would live forever what kind of person would you like to be?"
- Entering the Kingdom- Matt. 11: 11-12
  - John 3: 1-8
  - Matt. 18: 1-5
  - Matt. 5: 20

## EMBRACING A THEOLOGY OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL FORMATION

*"Spirituality wrongly understood is a primary source of human misery and rebellion against God."* Dallas Willard

Definitions: Christian Spiritual Formation is the process through which those who love and trust Jesus Christ effectively take on His character. When this process is what it should be, they increasingly live their lives as He would if He were in their place. Their outward conformity to His example and His instructions rises toward fullness as their inward sources of action take on the same character of His. They come more and more to share His vision, love, hope, feelings, and habits.

This process of "conformation to Christ," as we might more appropriately call it, is constantly supported by grace and otherwise would be impossible. But it is not therefore passive. Grace is opposed to *earning*, not to *effort*. In fact, nothing inspires and enhances effort like the experience of

grace. Yet . . . [it must truly be understood] that *becoming Christlike never occurs without intense and well-informed action on our part*. This [action] in turn cannot be reliably sustained outside of a like-minded fellowship [church].

The Mandate & the Model of the Church- Mt 28: 18-20; Acts 2: 41-47

A. Invite and Enfold them into the "Trinitarian Fellowship" of Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Or, simply put . . . CALL THEM INTO THE FAMILY!

B. Teach them to obey all that I have commanded.

Or, simply put . . . TEACH THEM HOW TO LIVE AND LOVE IN THE FAMILY!

*"Spirituality without a proper understanding of the nature of being (ontology) will usually degenerate into legalism and possibly superstition."*

Dallas Willard

- Understanding Spirit, Soul, and Body- I Thess. 5: 23, 24; Lk. 10: 27
- The critical understanding of our human-ness: Spirit, Soul, Body

*"Spirituality without a proper understanding of the nature of being (ontology) will usually degenerate into legalism and possibly superstition."*

*"Holiness is not different action, but different being."*

- Can Life Really Be Different? Yes!!!!!!!

Who are you . . . Really?

"YOU ARE A \_\_\_\_\_ BEING WITH AN  
\_\_\_\_\_ IN GOD'S GREAT UNIVERSE!"

The substance of humans:	Spiritual
The duration of humans:	Never-ceasing
The destiny of humans:	Made to Rule (creative governance)

Key Scriptures: Gen. 1:27, 28; I Cor. 6: 1-6; Luke 10: 27; I Thess. 5: 23, 24.

Proper Subordination: God—Human spirit—Soul—Body

Improper Subordination: Body—Soul—Human spirit—God

Freedom has come in Jesus: The Great Invitation . . . The Kingdom of God!  
The ministry of Jesus was . . .

Proclamation, Demonstration and Teaching about life in the Kingdom of God!

- Once we enter the kingdom of God we must then learn how to live in it.  
Our learning is through Apprenticeship to Jesus.  
Discipleship to Jesus Christ is about Character Formation-

A Disciple as Apprentice-

- Jesus taught about the Kingdom through the means of instruction and correction: Mt. 5: 27,31,33,38, 43. "It has been said . . . but I tell you . . ."
- Schooling Model: Knowledge = Competence
- Apprenticeship Model:  
Knowledge with Understanding + Experience = Competence (Mt. 10)

The Portrait of a Disciple (Learner/Apprentice):

A Disciple is one who . . .

1. Desires above all else to be like Jesus, and intends to be so.
2. Arranges the affairs of one's life to bring #1 to pass. In other words, one develops a personal strategy to become like Jesus.

AS A DISCIPLE OF JESUS, I AM LEARNING TO LIVE MY LIFE AS HE  
WOULD LIVE MY LIFE, IF HE WERE ME!

The fruit of our life in the Kingdom is the kind of people we become!

- Colossians 3 is a passage about discipleship, and a pivotal verse is found in Col. 3:17.

Colossians 3: 17- Doing something "in the name of someone" meant two things:

1. Doing something in that person's \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Doing something in the \_\_\_\_\_ of that person.

Key Truth: Salvation is both an event and a process. Deliverance (salvation) begins at conversion (a new nature is given) and continues through discipleship (Christlike character formation).

**KEY TRUTH-**

**WHILE GOD IS IN THE BUSINESS OF GETTING US INTO HEAVEN, HIS GREATEST COMMITMENT IS TO GET HEAVEN INTO US!**

(Rom. 9: 28, 29; Phil. 1:3-6; I Jn 3: 1, 2)

**THE GUTS OF REAL TRANSFORMATION**

- The call of Jesus- " \_\_\_\_\_ Mk. 1: 14-18
  - Three "Streams" of understanding Conversion:
- 

- The "Coin of Salvation"- Embracing Event and Process in Salvation-

The Conversion Process:

Luke 14: 25-35

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

- Cooperating with God's Grace-

This transformation into a new life is not something we can manufacture, earn or achieve, but is something we receive as a free gift, and yet something we must cooperate and participate in. Eph. 2: 8-10. Jesus said "apart from me you can do nothing," But it is also true that if we do nothing it will surely be apart from him as well."

Therefore we must understand the obstacles that prevent us from receiving this grace.

Nine obstacles to living life in God's Kingdom-

1. Our own \_\_\_\_\_ . Active and Passive

2. The constant demand of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Our inability to manage \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Our radical addiction to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Faulty \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Our fear of Critical \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Our misunderstanding of \_\_\_\_\_.

*Spiritual disciplines are a means intended to engage a radical personal encounter with God.*

8. Our expectation for \_\_\_\_\_.

*Discipleship has often centered on giving Biblical answers while Spiritual Formation begins with asking questions, questions about ourselves, God and our world.*

9. Due to guilt and shame we lack of confidence that God *really* will \_\_\_\_\_ to us.

#### Key Truth's:

1. GOD IS NOT OPPOSED TO \_\_\_\_\_, BUT TO EARNING!
2. TRYING IS \_\_\_\_\_, BUT \_\_\_\_\_ IS REIGNING!

### UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

*"... train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come." I Timothy 4: 7, 8*

*"Run in such a way as to get the prize ... we do it to get a crown that will last forever ..." I Cor. 9: 24-27*

**A Discipline:** An activity within our power that enables us to accomplish what we cannot do by direct effort.

## SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES/HABITS/EXERCISES

### DISCIPLINES OF ABSTINENCE

1. Solitude
2. Silence
3. Fasting
4. Frugality
5. Chastity
6. Secrecy
7. Sacrifice

### DISCIPLINES OF ENGAGEMENT

1. Study
2. Worship
3. Celebration
4. Service
5. Prayer
6. Fellowship
7. Confession
8. Submission

- While all the disciplines are important, the primary disciplines of Solitude and Silence are truly the critical foundations from which all the other disciplines follow.

Helpful Resources on the Disciplines:

*Celebration of Discipline*

By Richard Foster

*The Spirit of the Disciplines*

By Dallas Willard

*The Life You've Always Wanted:  
Spiritual Disciplines for Ordinary People*

By John Ortberg

*The Way of the Heart*

By Henri Nouwen

Faith in Christ has two active components: Beliefs and Trust. Without beliefs we distort the integrity of Christ's person, but without trust we deny the intimacy of the relationship. Or, no life! (Jn. 15: 4)

## Understanding Spiritual Maturity-

*"Over the course of more than twenty years in the ministry, I have become convinced that one of the most important things any of us can do as a Christian is to grow up before we grow old." John Wimber*

- Most of us would acknowledge that maturity is the goal, but how does that occur and what does it look like?
- Spiritual maturity for the disciple/apprentice of Jesus is measured by "competence." In other words, Are spiritual activities really integrated into my daily life? Listed below is a questionnaire to test your spiritual maturity, based on "Competence."

### THE SUPER SEVEN

(Rate from 1-10)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Rate your basic Confidence and Faith in God in all things.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Rate your life witness as a fact (not words).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Rate your life in the area of confident, expectant prayer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Rate your life as a conduit of God's Power.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Rate your level of freedom from worry, anxiety, and fear.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Rate your level of mercy and compassion for those in pain or suffering injustice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Rate your committed participation and service to the body of Christ.

- Taking a Macro-view of ordering your life-

Key Insights:

1. As leaders we are called to cultivate a "well ordered heart," whereby we learn to love and do the *right things*, in the *right way* at the *right time* for the *right reasons*.
2. The key to our life is being intentional, developing a plan or arranging our lives to include relationship with God. Listening (relationships) can't be done in a hurry!
3. As leaders we must understand how we are wired. Seek to understand yourself. What are your natural pathways to God? Intellectual; Relational; Service: Worship; Activism; Beauty: Art, Nature, Music, etc.

Understanding the order of LIFE, MINISTRY AND JOB . . . the circles of a disciples life . . .

Key verses: Col. 3: 17; I Tim. 4: 16; Heb. 13: 7

Questions for self-reflection or discussion-

- What would it mean for you as a leader to have someone "imitate your faith?" (Heb. 13: 7)

Practical Stuff-

- Milestones, Rituals, Rights of Passage
- Developing "tracks or roadmaps" VS. "Cafeteria Approach"
- Induction.....Orientation Class  
Transformation.....Teaching Practices  
Transmission.....Service Opportunities  
Multiplication.....Leadership Development



## RENOVARE: THE JESUS WAY CONFERENCE

Workshop: *Why the Good News Is Great News: Searching For a Gospel That Truly Transforms*

Keith J. Matthews, D. Min.

*"Our world is hungry for genuinely changed people . . . Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people."*

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Words, Words, Words . . . they really mean something!

"Spirituality"

Spiritual Formation

Christian Formation

Discipleship    Learner  
                         Student  
                         Apprentice

= Character Formation  
(like Jesus in Attitude and action)

Understanding:    Christian (3 x's)    vs    Disciple (264 x's)

The Paradigm Shift:    "Sunday to Sunday" vs. "Monday to Monday"

Question- What were the conditions in your life that provoked change or transformation?

Willow Creek Survey: 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_

- Theory of Transformation or Change

There are two reasons why people seek life change or transformation:

1. The level of \_\_\_\_\_ of their current condition propels them to seek change.
2. A new, \_\_\_\_\_ for a different reality of life propels them to seek change.

Freedom has come in Jesus: The Great Invitation . . . The Kingdom of God!

We begin with Jesus and His Invitation to Life under His rule or Life in the Kingdom of God- See John 17:1-3; Luke 4: 42-43; Matt. 11:11-12; Luke 16: 16

A Disciple is an Apprentice-

- Jesus taught about the Kingdom through the means of instruction and correction: Mt. 5: 27,31,33,38, 43. "It has been said . . . but I tell you . . ."
  - Schooling Model: Knowledge = Competence
  - Apprenticeship Model:  
Knowledge with Understanding + Experience = Competence (Mt. 10)
  - Faith in Christ has two active components: Beliefs and Trust. Without beliefs we distort the integrity of Christ's person, but without trust we deny the intimacy of the relationship. Or, no life! (Jn. 15: 4)
- 
- The question in a "conversion centered" gospel is . . .  
"If you were to die tonight would you be able to enter heaven?"
  - The question in a "discipleship centered" gospel is . . .  
"If you knew you would live forever, what kind of person would you like to become?"