

GROWING EDGES

April 2001

In the midst of our “celebrity culture,” as we like to call it, I want to put in a word for the value of **anonymity**. Frankly, all this hankering to get noticed runs at cross-purposes with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Besides, it is all so mindless. Many people, for example, act as if it is some kind of honor to be on television. Unfortunately, today all we have to do is act outrageous, and bingo, the media are there. (And more and more now the key is to be violently outrageous.) Friends, this is no honor; it is a sadness and a disgrace.

My counsel is that we simply turn our back to all the brouhaha of our media-soaked society. It is nothing more than a noisy gong and a clanging cymbal. It is cotton candy. Besides, most of us will never be “important” or “noticed” in terms of human reckoning. Even Andy Warhol’s dictum that each of us gets fifteen minutes of fame is beyond the reach of most of us. And it isn’t worth the reach anyway.



Now, being “important” and “valued” *is* central to our health and well-being. But it is an importance and a value that is worlds apart from the modern gushing over “the ten most sexy men of 2001.” We can and we should give and receive the honest affirmation that comes within the warm context of family and friends. We can and we should rest contented in the experiential knowledge that we are of infinite value to our heavenly Father who loves us utterly. Together these are wholly sufficient.

We are therefore free to live our lives quietly and profoundly. We are at ease in our hiddenness. We have no need for attention because we have learned to do ordinary things with the perception of their enormous value. In saying this I am not referring to the kind of “humble mumble” that pretends not to want attention and all the time is desperately wishing that someone . . . anyone . . . will notice. No, here we are fully satisfied. Truly. And may I just add that this way of living is not just for individuals but for groups and churches as well. To be important from a kingdom perspective we do not have to be the biggest, the best, or the most innovative. We simply do our work faithfully with all our might and we leave the rest in the hands of God. (It’s a good place to be, you know.)

Now, at times God, for his own sovereign purposes, will raise up a person for leadership or to honor in some special way. And, if this happens to us, it is a grace to receive, it is a call to serve, it is a cross to bear. If given a position of leadership, we lead as only we follow . . . follow our Master who leads without guile. If given honor we accept it thankfully as those who have done nothing more than receive a gift of grace. In this way our anonymity is not really given up, only extended.

Peace and joy,

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

Richard J. Foster

GROWING TOGETHER

In this issue of the *Perspective* we are working on the idea of anonymity or hiddenness or, as Dallas Willard calls it, “secrecy”. In *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (p. 172ff) he discusses this crucial Discipline of the spiritual life.

- Question: What is secrecy?
 - Answer: “In the discipline of secrecy we abstain from causing our good deeds and qualities to be known.” It means “placing our public relations department entirely in the hands of God.”
- Question: What is its purpose?
 - Answer: “To help us lose or tame the hunger for fame, justification, or just the mere attention of others.”
- Question: What spiritual virtues result?
 - Answer: “We learn to love to be unknown and even to accept misunderstanding without the loss of our peace, joy, or purpose.” “Secrecy at its best teaches love and humility before God and others.”

Now, if all this good can come from secrecy (or hiddenness or anonymity), let’s consider some practical ways we can enter into this Discipline in the midst of everyday life.

- ① Look for one substantive act of service you can render this month. Then, do it without letting anyone know what you have done, or why. Next, monitor your feelings for the days and weeks that follow. Notice how often you wish others would find out what you have done or the times you hope your act of service might accidentally come up in casual conversation. As you learn to remain silent at such times, this will crucify such feelings and you will experience substantial spiritual progress.

- ② Become aware of the frantic efforts of people to advertise and certify themselves. We see this everywhere in our culture, but give particular attention to religious personages and groups. Watch what such people do to advertise how good they are or how important or how valuable. Be sure that you are observing simply as a way of learning and not with a condemning or judging spirit. Note what a stunning revelation these actions are of people’s lack of substance and faith. Learn quietly by these negative examples, without any need to talk to others about them. Remember that, except for the overwhelming grace of God, what you are observing in others you just may end up seeing in the mirror.
- ③ As a spring and summer discipline intentionally look upon your work associates in the best possible light, even to the point of hoping they will do better and appear better than you. Whenever you are in a competitive situation, pray that they will be more outstanding, more praised, and more used of God than yourself. Pull for them and rejoice in their successes . . . really rejoice. If you will do this faithfully and over an extended time, you will experience the flow of divine love as never before. You will really and truly be learning to “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves” (Phil. 2:3).
- ④ In order to keep from turning this work of hiddenness into an absurdity or, worse yet, into a soul-killing legalism, learn to receive praise and recognition well. Let others speak highly of you without needing to add any self-deprecating comments. When you are complimented, learn to say, “Thank you.” No hemming and hawing, no looking down and shuffling your feet; just “Thank you.” When an honor or award is given to you, receive it gratefully. Since your well-being does not depend upon these matters one way or the other, you can be recognized and awarded as easily as you can remain anonymous.

Richard J. Foster

The RENOVARÉ Perspective is published quarterly by the not-for-profit corporation RENOVARÉ, Inc. Organized under the laws of the State of Kansas, it is registered in Colorado as RENOVARÉ Ministries, Inc. Permission to duplicate this newsletter for free distribution is granted. Any quotations or references to it should give proper credit to RENOVARÉ, 8 Inverness Drive East, Suite 102, Englewood, CO 80112-5624 USA.

An annual, tax deductible gift of \$15.00 is welcome to help cover publishing expenses. If you cannot help, we understand. Some will be able to give more and in this way the unity of the Body of Christ will be maintained.

SPECIAL NOTICE

We are looking to add an extra feature to the *Perspective* called “The Healing of Human Hurts.” Often, following our Regional Conferences and other events, we hear many faith-building reports of God touching hearts and healing wounds of all kinds. This is especially so after the times of anointing with oil and the prayers for the healing of human hurts. So we thought it would be wonderful to get at least a few of these stories in print so that you could hear them too and be encouraged. So here is the idea: if God has touched you in a significant way during or following a RENOVARÉ event, we encourage you to write it out and send it to us. We cannot promise to print everything that comes in, but we will do our best to give a representative sampling. Here are a few guidelines.

- ❶ Keep your account brief and to the point—around 300 to 500 words. We will need to reserve the right to edit for clarity and/or space but we will always seek to convey your intent as accurately as possible.
- ❷ We want these to be stories of all kinds of healing: physical, emotional, spiritual; heart, mind, body, soul. And remember, God works in many ways: by divine fiat, through medical doctors, through skilled counselors, by words of wisdom and faith, through simple affirmation and acceptance, and more. Healing can be instantaneous or gradual, in a single event or by multiple means. Healing can even come when God does not cure the specific need of the moment and instead heals the deeper needs of heart and mind, giving courage and endurance

in trial. And God at times brings us ultimate healing in death, for we should learn to die well. You get the point I am sure: we want to hear the manifold dealings of God with his children.

- ❸ Please reserve the word “cured” to situations where there is medical confirmation. You can speak of the disappearance of pain or symptoms, but a situation is “cured” only when a medical doctor has confirming evidence. This guideline, of course, is easier to follow when the condition is strictly physical. Emotional, psychological, and spiritual healing is harder to confirm in these kind of objective terms, but do your best. The concern here is for us not to claim more than is actually the case. God will get all of the glory he needs from what actually happens.
- ❹ Include your name and a way for us to contact you even if you want us to print your story anonymously. This will allow us to clear up any necessary matters directly with you. Do let us know if you want your name printed or would prefer the piece to be anonymous.
- ❺ Fax your story to 303-792-0146;
E-mail it to “The Healing of Human Hurts”
renovare@compuserve.com;
Mail it to “The Healing of Human Hurts”
RENOVARÉ
8 Inverness Dr E Ste 102
Englewood CO 80112-5624.

GROWING PAINS

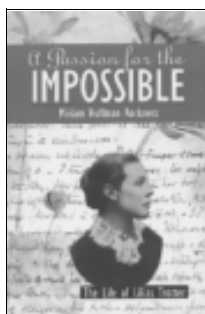
We have expanded the selection of books and tapes available through our mail order service. The catalog along with an order blank is on our web site (www.renovare.org) listed under “Resources” on the home page.

Thank you to everyone who contacted us about holding Regional and Local Conferences. We have some open dates for **Regional Conferences** in spring 2002 led by Jim Smith and Dallas Willard, or any date of your choice for Conferences led by other team members. For information e-mail Lyle SmithGraybeal at renovare@compuserve.com or call him at 703-836-7880.

Due to increased conference attendance and a larger mailing list, our data base work has been piling up, so Marian Euler, our “Girl Friday”, has agreed to start working one more day per week on an as needed basis. Besides doing our bookkeeping, Joan is working with Local Conference sponsors, and has added a half day per week. We can now say that we have five employees—three full-time and two half-time. (Joan and Richard are half-and-half!)

September 22 and November 3, 2001, are available for **Local Conferences**. Call Joan Skulley at 303-792-0152 Thursday and Fridays or e-mail her at renovare@compuserve.com for information.

GOING DEEPER

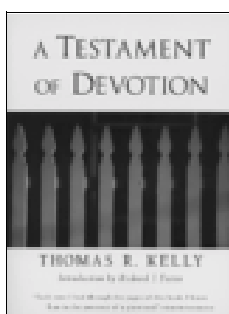


***A Passion for the Impossible: The Life of Lilius Trotter*, Miriam Huffman Rockness**

Raised in an English Victorian home amid art, society, and leisure, Lilius Trotter was proclaimed by a well-known art critic to be potentially one of the best artists of the nineteenth century. But she left that life behind and moved to Muslim North Africa to found a missionary work among people who were so intolerant that they diligently tried to destroy all that she hoped to accomplish.

This is the biography of a woman who chose anonymity over fame under circumstances that seemed unbearably hard, and whose life inspired the hymn “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus.” The book includes a sixteen-page color section of Trotter’s art, as well as journal and diary pages—most published for the first time and possibly the last as the book is now out-of-print—and is being sold on a first come, first served basis until the supply we have reserved runs out.

***A Passion for the Impossible* (quality paperback) \$ 15.00**

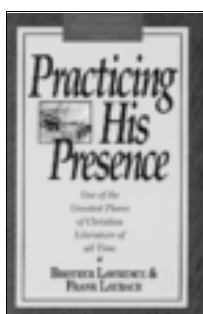


***A Testament of Devotion*, Thomas Kelly**

Thomas Kelly didn’t want to be anonymous. Born to a devout Quaker farm family, Kelley attended and taught at Quaker colleges and worked among German Christians before he enrolled at Harvard University with the hope that it would open doors to teach at a prestigious school in the East. It was not to be; he failed his oral exam, and his version of scholarly achievement and recognition went unfulfilled.

However, from the furnace of intense disappointment emerged a life that was whole, adequate, and unstrained. Kelly writes, “But there is a deeper, an internal simplification of the whole of one’s personality, stilled, tranquil, in childlike trust listening ever to Eternity’s whisper, walking with a smile into the dark.” Ironically, after his death *A Testament of Devotion* brought Kelly the wide-spread recognition he had so yearned for early in his career.

***A Testament of Devotion* (quality paperback) \$ 12.00**



***Practicing His Presence*, Frank Laubach & Brother Lawrence**

What do a twentieth-century American, Protestant missionary laboring among the Muslims of Mindanao in the Philippines and a French, Roman Catholic brother washing dishes in a monastery during the 1600s have in common? Both wrote dynamic accounts that chronicle the reality of walking continually in the awareness of the presence of Christ.

Practicing His Presence contains portions from Frank Laubach’s *Letters by a Modern Mystic* and *Game With Minutes* and all of Brother Lawrence’s *The Practice of the Presence of God*. When read together, the journal entries and letters help us realize that walking in the awareness of Christ, as he walked in the constant awareness of his Father, is obtainable

and desirable for you and for me.

***Practicing His Presence* (quality paperback) \$ 9.00**



***Showings*, Julian of Norwich**

“He Keeps All That Is Made”

“He showed me a little thing, the size of a hazelnut, in the palm of my hand, and it was as round as a ball. I looked at it with my mind’s eye and I thought, ‘What can this be?’ And answer came, ‘It is all that is made.’ I marvelled that it could last, for I thought it might have crumbled to nothing, it was so small. And the answer came into my mind, ‘It lasts and ever shall because God loves it.’ And all things have being through the love of God.”

“ In this little thing I saw three truths. The first is that God made it. The second is that God loves it. The third is that God looks after it.”

Julian, an anchoress who lived in solitude and anonymity in Norwich, England, in the late fourteenth century, received sixteen “showings” or revelations of God’s love in a series of visions. *Showings* is her account of the visions in which she vividly details the humanity of Christ and describes the all-embracing fullness of divine love.

Showings (quality paperback) \$ 20.00

The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, Translated by Benedicta Ward

The fourth-century ascetic flight to the desert indelibly marked Christianity. The faithful who did not embrace the austerity of the desert admired those who did and sought them out for counsel and consolation. The ‘words’ the monks gave were collected and passed around among those too far away or too feeble to make the trek themselves—or who lived generations later. *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers* makes accessible these ‘words’ in their entirety in English.

“Abba Anthony said, ‘Whoever hammers a lump of iron, first decides what he is going to make of it, a scythe, a sword, or an axe. Even so we ought to make up our minds what kind of virtue we want to forge or we labour in vain.’”

“Abba Joseph said to Abba Nisterus, ‘What should I do about my tongue, for I cannot control it?’ The old man said to him, ‘When you speak, do you find peace?’ He replied ‘No.’ The old man said, ‘If you do not find peace, why do you speak? Be silent and when a conversation takes place, it is better to listen than to speak.’”

“Amma Syncletica said, ‘It is written, “Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matt. 10:16). Being like serpents means not ignoring attacks and wiles of the devil. Like is quickly known to like. The simplicity of the dove denotes purity of action.’”



The Sayings of the Desert Fathers (quality paperback) \$15.00



ORDER FORM

Company or Name _____ Attention _____ Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Telephone (____) _____

Quantity	Item	Sugg. Donation Each	Total
	<i>A Passion for the Impossible</i> , Miriam Huffman Rockness	\$ 15.00	
	<i>A Testament of Devotion</i> , Thomas Kelly	12.00	
	<i>Practicing His Presence</i> , Frank Laubach & Brother Lawrence	9.00	
	<i>Showings</i> , Julian of Norwich	20.00	
	<i>The Sayings of the Desert Fathers</i> , Translated by Benedica Ward	15.00	

Shipping & Handling	\$ 9.00-\$ 20.00 = \$ 6.00	\$ 50.01-\$ 100.00 = \$ 8.00	Shipping & Handling
(based on value of books)	\$ 20.01-\$50.00 = \$ 7.00	\$ 100.01+ = \$ 9.00	

Make checks out to RENOVARÉ (U.S. Funds on a U.S. bank only, please) and mail to RENOVARÉ, 8 Inverness Drive East, Suite 102, Englewood, CO 80112-5624 USA. Allow six to eight weeks for delivery. Those living outside the U.S., please send additional monies for shipping.

Credit Card # _____

Expiration Date _____

GOING PLACES WITH RENOVARÉ

Date	Event	Location	Staff	Contact & Information
30 Mar.-17 Apr. 2001	Meetings in England	Spring Harvest, Skegness	Richard Foster	www.springharvest..org
27-28 Apr. 2001	Kansas City Metro Regional Conference	The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection 13720 Roe Avenue, Leawood, Kansas	Richard Foster George Skramstad James Bryan Smith	Jim Christensen 816-373-6841 jchristens@aol.com
28 Apr. 2001	Birmingham Local Conference	Brook Highland Community Church 7160 Cahaba Valley Road Birmingham, Alabama	Glandion Carney	Mike Riggs 205-991-6221 conductormichael@hotmail.com
5-6 Oct. 2001	Denver Metro Regional Conference	Cherry Hills Community Church 3900 East Grace Boulevard Highlands Ranch, Colorado	Richard Foster George Skramstad Dallas Willard	Geoff Cragg 303-475-3689 maximumimpact@compuserve.com
6 Oct. 2001	Wooster Local Conference	Central Christian Church, 407 North Market Street, Wooster, Ohio	Glandion Carney	David Stout 330-262-4652
12-13 Oct. 2001	Northern Minnesota Regional Conference	Greenway High School 308 Roosevelt Street Coleraine, Minnesota	Richard Foster Emilie Griffin George Skramstad	Linda Pierson 218-245-2218 lpierson@uslink.net
20 Oct. 2001	Seattle Local Conference	First Free Methodist Church Seattle, Washington	Marti Ensign Jim Smith	David Hicks 206-281-2240
9-10 Nov. 2001	San Antonio Regional Conference	Alamo Heights United Methodist Church San Antonio, Texas	Glandion Carney Richard Foster George Skramstad	Kathy Orr 210-226-0215 kathyo@fpcsat.org
1-2 Feb. 2002 <i>Date tentative</i>	Waco Regional Conference	Baylor University Waco, Texas	George Skramstad James Bryan Smith Dallas Willard	Howard Williams 254-710-3522 howard_williams@baylor.edu
22-23 Feb. 2002	Phoenix Regional Conference	North Phoenix Baptist Church Phoenix, Arizona	George Skramstad James Bryan Smith Dallas Willard	Clark Youngblood 602-589-2543 cyoung@grand-canyon.edu
8-9 March 2002	DC Metro Regional Conference	First Baptist Church Wheaton, Maryland	George Skramstad James Bryan Smith Dallas Willard	Ed Williams 301-949-6585 fbcw@tidalwave.net
19-20 April 2002	Regional Conference	TBA	George, Jim, Dallas	
3-4 May 2002	Regional Conference	TBA	George, Jim, Dallas	

For more information or to help organize a conference, call or e-mail the contact person.

8 INVERNESS DRIVE EAST, SUITE 102
ENGLEWOOD, CO 80112-5624 USA

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

 **RENOVARÉ**, Inc.

NON-PROFIT ORG U.S. POSTAGE PAID WICHITA, KS PERMIT NO. 1148
