

GROWING EDGES

April 2002

Let us consider together how Christians are transformed into the image of Christ. That's our destiny as believers according to Romans 8:29. How does this happen in our life? What role does the local church have?

The Process

I see the process of being conformed to the image of Christ as an invitation to participate with the Triune God in making us like Jesus. 2 Peter 1:3 says that his divine power "has given everything needed for life and godliness." But even though everything is available for our transformation, we must cooperate with God in that process. Let me suggest that there are four dimensions to this transforming process—**intentionality**, the **spiritual disciplines**, a **plan or structure**, and **follow-through**.

Revelation 3:20 tell us Jesus wants to come into our lives, but he waits for us to invite him in. That invitation is **intentionality**.

There are the **spiritual disciplines**, tools to help us cooperate with God in our spiritual formation—prayer, fasting, worship, and so on. These tools have been passed down to us through Scripture, the Church's ancient traditions, and the saints, who exemplified their use and value.

Then, just as we need routines to help us accomplish our daily duties, so we need a **structure** to help us implement the disciplines.

Finally, once the structure is in place we need **follow-through**. This is the hard part. Asking God into our lives is not so hard. Even setting up a plan to implement the disciplines can be fun. But carrying out a long-term plan by ourselves is something else.

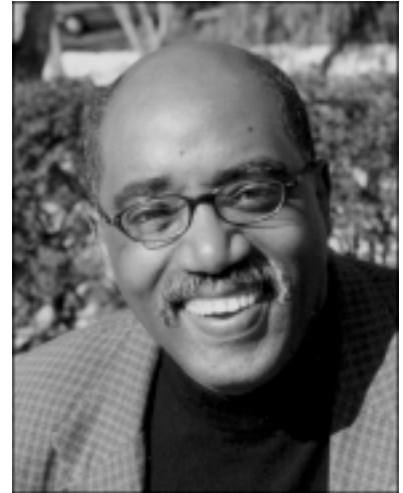
Becoming Like Christ

The good news is that Jesus did not call us to a do-it-yourself Christianity. He gave us each other. Enter the local church parish. Ideally every Christian is involved in a local church where worship, the sacraments, and godly relationships help them "keep the faith." However, in a large church people can get lost in the shuffle. Meetings and responsibilities can divert attention from the real work of the church—making us like Christ.

I have discovered that being part of a small group deepens the effects of corporate worship, helps establish me in Christ, and holds me to my commitments. A recent book published by Upper Room Books, *Companions in Christ: A Small-Group Experience in Spiritual Formation*, provides an excellent structure for small groups which any parish could implement.

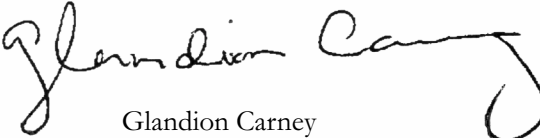
In his new book, *Renovation of the Heart* (to be published by NavPress this month), Dallas Willard outlines three basic goals of the local parish and its small groups:

- Making disciples that are apprentices of Jesus Christ.
- Immersing apprentices at all levels of growth in God's presence.
- Transforming disciples inwardly in such a way that doing the words and deeds of Christ are not the focus, but the natural outcome or side effects.



By this definition, becoming like Christ is the number one priority of Christians and their local church. Everything else is a result. And we are in it together, praise God.

In Christ,



Glandion Carney

INTENTIONALLY GROWING IN GRACE

I accepted Christ as Savior in 1975 when I was 19. I then did what I was told to do—got active in church. I went to graduate school in the fall of 1976 and almost instantly became a college/career Sunday School teacher. This was the beginning of seeking to do what I was led to believe was “The Way” of Christ. Over the many years I’ve worked in church in almost every conceivable capacity: youth director, door-to-door evangelism, royal ambassadors, AWANA, recreation director, teacher, campus minister, elder, deacon, men’s ministry, vacation Bible school, inner-city food distribution . . . and so it goes.

After almost 19 years I realized that I was trying very hard to “do” which, I was told, would lead me into a closer walk with Jesus. But the emperor had no clothes. In 1994 I was at the point that I realized I’d spent all that time doing “holy” work, church work, but it was mostly the same old Jerry doing it on my own—“lead, follow, or get out of my way.” I came to a crisis where I determined that either I would find a path to a vital relationship with Jesus—one like the New Testament describes—or I’d quit this “church thing” altogether. I had no spiritual power, no spiritual strength, little interactivity with Jesus, and my prayer life was almost non-existent.

Much like the prodigal, Jesus was just waiting for me to come to my senses. Sometime in late 1993 or very early in 1994, I found on my bookshelf a book I’d owned since 1982, *Celebration of Discipline*, written by Richard Foster. I’d never been able to read it before, though I had tried on several occasions. Now it was as if I’d discovered a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Here was a way of discipleship that opens a life to Jesus.

In early 1994 I heard that Richard Foster had founded a new ministry called RENOVARÉ and was going to speak at a conference in Boulder, Colorado, very close to where Vicky and I were living. We registered, looking on it as a weekend get-away for we stayed at the very nice Boulder Broker Hotel. We feared we would come away from the Conference guilt-ridden, beaten up again by a preacher with more unbearable “oughtta-dos” to “sell.”

But NO! We found people who were living in grace, expressing peace, who clearly thought of themselves as no-big-thing but knew Jesus and could genuinely show us *how* to walk with Jesus in a way that fits into life and produces real spiritual fruit. Peacefulness, gentleness, joy, humor, hope, love—the Fruit of the Spirit—was tangibly present and we were **trained** in how **intentionally** to grow in grace.

Life hasn’t been the same since. Jesus met me in my need. Jesus is the one and only answer to life—all of life. With many starts and stops I have imperfectly and inconsistently put into practice what I was taught, but I started and I will not stop. While I’m still very much a work-in-progress, I at least know where and how to find the One who gives Abundant Life.

We are called to make disciples, teaching everyone who is willing to obey Jesus. This is why I teach. This is what I want for you very much—the Abundant Life which is the obedient life (John 10:10). As you look forward, won’t you invest some time in learning how to grow in grace? The fruit of the Spirit is: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, meekness, gentleness, and self-control. My prayer is, and always shall be, that you grow in grace so that the fruit of the Spirit may ever more abound in you and through you to the glory of Jesus.

Jerry McKamy, Gaithersburg, Maryland (written to his Sunday School class)

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

GROWING TOGETHER

Over the years we have had many people contact us and ask, “Our small group has gone through *A Spiritual Formation Workbook*, and it was wonderful, but what book do we use next?” Our answer: **the “Order of Meeting” which is designed to guide a small group for as long as it exists.** There is no need to go on to another resource or book. We could continue to use the “Order of Meeting” for the rest of our lives and not exhaust all of its potential for (cont’d on page 4)



RENOVARÉ Spiritual Formation Group Order of Meeting

After a few moments of collective silence, the leader for the week reads the Opening Words aloud.

As a group, read the Covenant aloud and in unison.

Beginning with the leader, take turns reading the Common Disciplines aloud until all six disciplines have been read.

Beginning with the leader, each member shares his or her experiences from the previous week. The Questions of Examen (or Reflection Questions) can be used to help focus the discussion. As time permits, encourage each member to answer at least the first question in each set.

I. OPENING WORDS

Welcome to the RENOVARÉ Spiritual Formation Group [or other chosen name]. May God’s Holy Spirit bless us, and may we find fellowship and encouragement during this time together.

Remember, we gather together with one purpose—to become better disciples of Jesus Christ. We do this by encouraging one another to keep Jesus’ word, which, as he said, is what we naturally do when we love him (John 14:23-24). Through the grace of mutual accountability, we strive to inspire one another to love and good works.

Please keep in mind that everything said here is to be held in confidence. Only then can we feel free to share openly and honestly. All hopes and dreams, all fears and failures—even our joys and successes—are to stay within these walls. This is how we help each other.

II. COVENANT

In utter dependence upon Jesus Christ as my ever-living Savior, Teacher, Lord, and Friend, I will seek continual renewal through

- Spiritual exercises
- Spiritual gifts
- Acts of service.

III. COMMON DISCIPLINES

1. By God’s grace, I will set aside time regularly for prayer, meditation, and spiritual reading and will seek to practice the presence of God.
2. By God’s grace, I will strive mightily against sin and will do deeds of love and mercy.
3. By God’s grace, I will welcome the Holy Spirit, exercising the gifts and nurturing the fruit while living in the joy and power of the Spirit.
4. By God’s grace, I will endeavor to serve others everywhere I can and will work for justice in all human relationships and social structures.
5. By God’s grace, I will share my faith with others as God leads and will study the Scriptures regularly.
6. By God’s grace, I will joyfully seek to show forth the presence of God in all that I am, in all that I do, in all that I say.

IV. QUESTIONS OF EXAMEN

1. In what ways has God made his presence known to you since our last meeting? What experiences of prayer, meditation, and spiritual reading has God given you? What difficulties or frustrations have you encountered? What joys and delights?
2. What temptations have you faced since our last meeting? How did you respond? Which spiritual disciplines has God used to lead you further into holiness of heart and life?
3. Have you sensed any influence or work of the Holy Spirit since our last meeting? What spiritual gifts has the Spirit enabled you to exercise? What was the outcome? What fruit of the Spirit would you like to see increase in your life? Which disciplines might be useful in this effort?

(Cont'd from page 3)

forming, conforming, and transforming us into the image of Christ. For those who may have lost their copy of the "Order of Meeting" or who have never tried using it in their small group, it is reproduced here in the size and format identical to that found in the back of the *Workbook*. We suggest that you trim 3/4 inch from each side and the top at the top edge of the grey box (finished size = 7" wide by 9-1/8" long). Next get it laminated. It will then be the right size to slip into the *Workbook* as you are using it and will last for years.

RENOVARÉ Spiritual Formation Group Order of Meeting



4. What opportunities has God given you to serve others since our last meeting? How did you respond? Have you encountered any injustice to or oppression of others? Have you been able to work for justice and *shalom*?
5. Has God provided an opportunity for you to share your faith with someone since our last meeting? How did you respond? In what ways have you encountered Christ in your reading of the Scriptures? How has the Bible shaped the way you think and live?
6. In what ways have you been able to manifest the presence of God through your daily work since our last meeting? How has God fed and strengthened you through the ministry of word and sacrament?

V. LOOKING AHEAD

On which area or areas would you like to work this week? What specific exercise or exercises would you like to try?

Beginning with the leader, allow time for each member to share his or her plans for the coming week. These questions may be used as guidelines. Use copies of the Worksheet found in A Spiritual Formation Workbook (James Bryan Smith, San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, ©1993, 1999) to record what you and the other members have chosen to do. Writing these commitments down will help you remember what others are doing and give you a chance to pray for them.

VI. THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in Heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever.
Amen.

After each person has had a chance to share, the leader asks if anyone in the group has a particular need or knows of situations that would benefit from prayer. Members record these concerns on their Worksheets so that they can pray for them over the coming days. In addition, the leader invites someone to lead the group in prayer for those concerns. When the prayer is finished, members join hands in a circle and pray the Lord's Prayer aloud and in unison.

VII. CLOSING WORDS

Please remember that what we have said and heard in this gathering was spoken in confidence and should remain here when we leave. May the love, peace, and power of God be with us during this week. Amen.

At the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, the leader ends the meeting by reading the Closing Words aloud and then asking for a volunteer to lead the next meeting.

CONFERENCE DATES AVAILABLE!

Dates in 2003 available for RENOVARÉ Regional Conferences:

March 14-15, 2003

led by Glandion Carney and James Bryan Smith
and

October 3-4, 2003 ♦ October 31-November 1, 2003

led by Richard Foster, George Skramstad, and one other RENOVARÉ Team Member

Regional Conferences are sponsored by 6 to 12 churches and Christian organizations which encourage their own constituencies and those from fellowships throughout their region to attend. They are held on Friday evening from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for typically 400 to 600 people.

**To explore holding a RENOVARÉ Regional Conference in your area, contact Lyle SmithGraybeal
Phone: 703-836-7880 ♦ Fax: 703-836-7879 ♦ E-mail: renovare@compuserve.com**

Dates in 2002 available for RENOVARÉ Local Conferences:*

September 21 ♦ October 5 ♦ October 19 ♦ November 2

Speakers Available:

Glandion Carney ♦ Roger Fredrikson ♦ Marti Ensign ♦ Emilie Griffin ♦ Donn Thomas

Local Conferences are sponsored by 1 or 2 churches which invite the community to participate. They are held on one day (Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or Sunday from 1:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.) for typically around 150 people. Costs include speaker's fees and travel expenses, registration materials, and RENOVARÉ overhead.

**To explore holding a RENOVARÉ Local Conference in your area, contact Joan Skulley (Thursdays & Fridays)
Phone: 303-792-0152 ♦ Fax: 303-792-0146 ♦ E-mail: renovare@compuserve.com.**

*Dates are negotiable based upon availability of speakers

GROWING PAINS

Thank you for your generous gifts toward the start up of the English expression of RENOVARÉ and the "New Projects Director" position. Funds were forwarded to England the first week in January and the remaining monies were retained to underwrite the new position. We feel the response indicates that the time is right to expand our staff so that we can develop new resources and programs. We're hoping to promote Lyle SmithGraybeal to "New Projects Director" and hire a Conference Coordinator around July 1 which will give them time to work together before the fall schedule starts.

Prior to the conference in Wheaton, Maryland, held on March 8-9, Dallas Willard led the Thursday Bible Study for White House staff and then met with other key staff over lunch. Felicia and Lyle SmithGraybeal attended the Bible Study and felt that Dallas' teaching was well received.

We have hired a consultant to redesign our home page (www.renovare.org). The new look should be on line around May 1, so check it out! Long-range plans include adding the capabilities of ordering resources, filling out Covenant Cards, updating mailing addresses, making contributions, and finding a spiritual formation group.

Felicia SmithGraybeal will be graduating from seminary in Virginia on May 23, and she and Lyle will be moving back to the Denver area the next week.

Gayle Beebe, Richard Foster, Lynda Graybeal, and Dallas Willard continue to meet regularly with the other General Editor of the Bible project, Thomas Oden, and the publisher, Steve Hanselman. It has taken longer to conceptualize the project than originally planned, but we are confident that the publication date of mid-summer 2004 can be met. Watch future *Perspectives* for exciting plans connected to the release of the Bible!

GOING DEEPER

Among the resources featured below are books that have stood the test of time, practical books, and new or newly revised books. All have one thing in common: they can be used for personal spiritual formation or in the context of a small group or congregation. In the Christian community believers nurture one another in becoming more Christlike. These resources will help make that a reality.

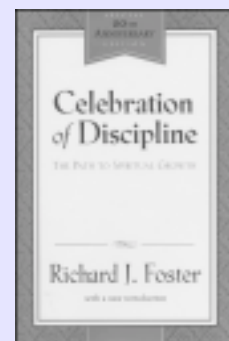


***A Spiritual Formation Workbook*, James Bryan Smith with Lynda L. Graybeal**

A beginning workbook for spiritual formation groups that provides guidelines for starting a group, study plans for the first nine sessions, and a questionnaire that maps the way ahead. The *Workbook* introduces users to the six streams or traditions of RENOVARE in a user-friendly, interactive format that takes each person beyond the specific lesson into applying the truths that they learn. The “Order of Meeting” in the back can be used by an individual for the remainder of life in a variety of settings.

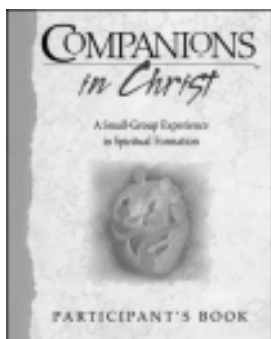
***Celebration of Discipline*, Richard J. Foster**

Names twelve Spiritual Disciplines and offers critical insights into how to integrate meditation, prayer, fasting, study, simplicity, solitude, submission, service, confession, worship, guidance, and celebration into our life. In print for over two decades, it is used in many undergraduate schools and seminaries in spiritual formation and discipleship classes, and was named by *Christianity Today* as one of the top ten Christian books of the twentieth century.



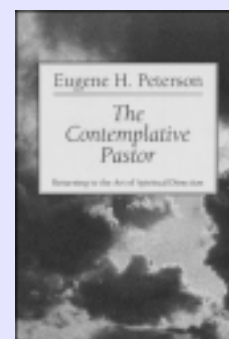
Companions in Christ Participant's Book* and *Companions in Christ Leader's Guide

The *Participant's Book* is a 28-week small-group guide that includes individual reading and reflection as members participate in community sharing and explore common stories, questions, and discoveries about their relationship to Jesus Christ. It provides settings for learning the Spiritual Disciplines of prayer, Scripture, study, worship, ministry, and Christian conversation. With the accompanying *Leader's Guide* this would be a way to introduce a group to some of the Spiritual Disciplines before or after they read *Celebration of Discipline* and before they take up *A Spiritual Formation Workbook*.



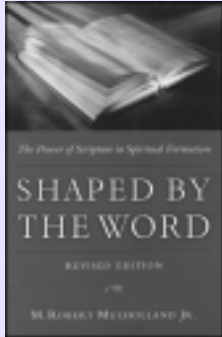
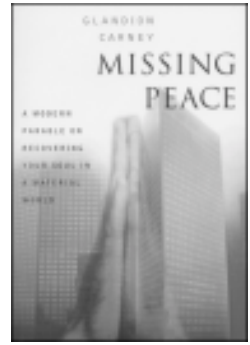
***The Contemplative Pastor*, Eugene Peterson**

Any pastor who needs to get back to the spiritual basics will do well to read and absorb this book. Known to many as “a pastor’s pastor,” Eugene Peterson speaks words of wisdom and refreshment for pastors caught in the busyness of preaching, teaching, and “running the church.” To get at the often-overlooked essentials of ministry, Peterson redefines the meaning of *pastor* through three vivid, strengthening adjectives—*unbusy*, *subversive*, and *apocalyptic*—and then focuses on pastoral ministry and spiritual direction “between Sundays.”



Missing Peace, Glandion Carney

Fictional story about Joan who is financially and professionally successful but whose life is empty at the core, and the correspondence with Brother Theodore that helps her discover real fulfillment. A good example in a readable format of a practice largely abandoned in the twentieth-century—spiritual direction via the written word rather than face-to-face.



Shaped by the Word, M. Robert Mulholland Jr.

Explains how to listen for the voice of God in the Bible, move from *informational* reading to *formational* reading of the Bible, and give up “control” over the text and let God lead the reading and understanding. The methods Mulholland explores that bring us into a more vibrant relationship with God are classic Christian paths to spiritual formation through Scripture reading, methods that have been overshadowed by a bias in our time for analytical Bible study.



ORDER FORM

Name or Company	Attention	Street Address	
City	State	Zip	Telephone ()

Quantity	Item	Sugg. Donation Each		Total
	<i>A Spiritual Formation Workbook</i> , James Bryan Smith with Lynda Graybeal		\$ 12.00	
	<i>Celebration of Discipline</i> , Richard J. Foster		\$ 22.00	
	<i>Companions in Christ Participant's Book</i>		\$ 20.00	
	<i>Companions in Christ Leader's Guide</i>		\$ 17.00	
	<i>The Contemplative Pastor</i> , Eugene Peterson		\$ 16.00	
	<i>Missing Peace</i> , Glandion Carney		\$ 14.00	
	<i>Shaped by the Word</i> , M. Robert Mulholland Jr.		\$ 12.00	
Shipping & Handling (based on value of books)		\$ 1.00-\$ 20.00 = \$ 6.00	\$ 50.01-\$ 100.00 = \$ 8.00	Shipping & Handling
		\$ 20.01-\$ 50.00 = \$ 7.00	\$ 100.01+ = \$ 9.00	TOTAL

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** or fax to **303-792-0146**. Allow 6-8 weeks for delivery. If 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
19-20 April 2002	Jacksonville, FL Local Conference	Deermeadows Baptist Church 9780 Bay Meadows Road Jacksonville, Florida	Roger Fredrikson	Steve Cooper 904-287-3528
19-20 April 2002	Folsom, CA Living in the Kingdom of God Conference	Oak Hills Church 1100 Blue Ravine Road Folsom, California	George Skramstad James Bryan Smith Dallas Willard	Kristi Hardey 916-983-0104 kristi.hardey@oakhills.org
3-4 May 2002	San Jose, CA Regional Conference	First Baptist Church 800 Ironwood Drive San Jose, California	George Skramstad James Bryan Smith Dallas Willard	Betsy Anderson 408-291-0464 betsy5th@yahoo.com
4-5 Oct. 2002	Columbus, OH Regional Conference	Meadow Park Church 2425 Bethel Road Columbus, Ohio	Richard Foster George Skramstad Siang-Yang Tan	Craig Yoder 614-365-2231 cyoder@crowechizek.com
21-23 Oct. 2002 <i>This conference is primarily for people who speak Korean.</i>	Los Angeles, CA Pastor's and Leader's Conference	Site TBA	Richard Foster Brian Kang George Skramstad	Brian Kang 909-860-5584 bkangms@yahoo.com
8-9 Nov. 2002	McPherson, KS Regional Conference	McPherson College 1600 East Euclid Street McPherson, Kansas	Glandion Carney James Bryan Smith	Keith Funk 785-754-3630 kfunk1956@hotmail.com
8-9 Nov. 2002	Atlanta, GA Regional Conference	Northbrook United Methodist Ch. 11225 Crabapple Road Roswell, Georgia	Richard Foster George Skramstad 3rd Team Member TBA	Julie Turner 770-992-6011 julieturner@mindspring.com
31 Jan.-1 Feb. 2003	Jacksonville FL Regional Conference	Deermeadows Baptist Church 9780 Baymeadows Road Jacksonville, Florida	Richard Foster George Skramstad 3rd Team Member TBA	Michael Riley 904-642-2200
7-8 February 2003	Scranton, PA Regional Conference	Ladore Conference Center 380 South Street Waymart, Pennsylvania	Glandion Carney James Bryan Smith	Mickey Mosher 570-488-6129 mmosher@use.salvationarmy.org
21-22 February 2003	Rolling Hills Estates, CA Regional Conference	Rolling Hills Covenant Church 2222 Palos Verdes Drive North Rolling Hills Estates, California	Richard Foster George Skramstad Dallas Willard	Carol Houston 310-521-2518 chouston@rhcc.net

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

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