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Perspective

Vol. 16 No. 3

GROWING **E**DGES

October 2006

Dear Friends of RENOVARÉ,

I have A Dream. . . and a Hope

I dream of a day when spiritual formation has so saturated all who follow hard after Jesus that they become known to all as experts in how to live well.

- How to love a spouse well.
- How to raise children well.
- How to study well.
- How to face adversity well.
- How to run businesses and financial institutions well.
- How to form community life well.
- How to reach out to those on the margins well.
- How to die well.



I am thinking of ordinary folk who are not known for particular customs or manner of dress or rituals, but for a particular kind of life. A life that works . . . and works well. They are of all races and classes and kinds. They are in the churches and they are outside of the churches, but they all are the Church, the people of God. Some self-identify as followers of Jesus; others, because of cultural or racial or family barriers, do not come out so publicly, but they follow hard after Jesus nonetheless. Some are followers of "the Way" without fully knowing it, for the Light of Jesus does indeed shine into the darkness and does indeed enlighten every person coming into the world (John 1:5-9). This is the saving Light of Jesus Christ, and those who turn and walk in the Light are given more Light and finally come to see that it is the Jesus Way and the Jesus Truth and the Jesus Life in which they are living.

While denominational structures continue, their distinctions begin to blur and fade as the issue of living well takes center stage. Indeed, the various denominations themselves begin sharing their great treasures into life in such a way that other groups take on these vital convictions as their own. From the Methodists we learn profound lessons about "social holiness." From the Baptists we learn more fully about the stabilizing power of "soul competency." From the Quakers we begin stepping into simplicity of life. From the Roman Catholics we grow in our appreciation of a consistent "culture of life." From the Pentecostals we experience the empowering of the Holy Spirit for all of life's vicissitudes. From the Mennonites we grow in our ability to be loving witnesses for peace in a wartorn world. From the Reformed we broaden in our understanding of our "cultural mandate" to the world. And more. These treasures of faith intertwine with one another to give us a wiser, fuller way of living.

Spiritual formation has so deepened in these folk that they are known for scrupulous honesty. Simply put, their word is as good as their bond. Speaking the truth is as natural to them as growing apples is to the apple tree. They are sought out in business circles because lying and deceiving and cheating is simply not known among them. They can be trusted to do what is right. Always. It is something that can be depended upon. Those in science seek these folk out since it is known that they will not cut corners in research methodology or embellish research findings.

The religious leaders of those who follow hard after Jesus are themselves much sought after because they have built a history of standing up for all people of all persuasions: Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Sikhs, agnostics, atheists even. Having learned to live well these folk are pursued as teachers and nursery care workers because they so manifestly and indiscriminately love children. They are asked to be leaders in social service agencies because their reputation for administering justice for all people alike is legendary.

Community leaders begin to think of these followers of Jesus less and less as simply another cultural group with their own set of distinctive rituals just like any other "group." Instead they begin to think of them as the people who are genuinely good at living. The characteristics are hard to put into words exactly. It is their joy in all things good and true and beautiful . . . their patience under trial and difficulty . . . their ability to love people so completely, so indiscriminately . . . their self-sacrifice for the good of others.

Frankly, these folk are a complete frustration to political leaders who are out to earn votes, because their opinions and motivations simply are not controlled by self-interest. Anglos among them, for example, care more about immigration justice for Hispanics than they do matters of self-preservation. They all care passionately about those who are completely off the political radar screen: native-American peoples, the urban homeless and the Appalachian poor, the very young and the very old, and more.

These folk, having learned to live well, easily and freely "esteem others better than themselves" (Phil. 2:3). They have learned deep down to the marrow in their bones the freeing power of living without guile. Day by day. They rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. Neither selfish ambition nor conceit can be found among them. They have learned the life-giving power of building one another up, and they do so without hesitation. Indeed, they live lives of "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17).

Well, like I said, it's A Dream. . . and a Hope.

Peace and joy,

Richard J. Foster

Pray with Renovaré During a Time of Transition

As you know from reading the July 2006 Renovaré Perspective newsletter, Renovaré is currently engaging a time of leadership transition. Will you pray with us? A six-week prayer guide is available at www.renovare.org/fall_2006_prayer_guide.htm. Or you can call Courtney Cohen at 303-792-0152 and receive a copy via surface mail. Thank you for your partnership and prayer.

GROWING **T**OGETHER

One of the, if not the, primary Renovaré pursuits is to resource the **A Dream and a Hope** that Richard Foster articulates in the lead essay of this edition of the *Perspective*. As such, with the remainder of this issue we focus on new and available written resources: a selection from *The Great Omission* by Dallas Willard; an interview with Emilie and William Griffin about their current work bringing back into print the devotional writings of the Church; and an announcement about *The Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible*.

A SELECTION FROM THE GREAT OMISSION

In The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship, a collection of articles, talks and interviews, Dallas Willard offers insights on the practical application of a Christian life. Faith in Christ and regular church attendance, he explains, are simply not enough. With an increasing emphasis on Christian tradition and church institution, the concept of living a Christ-like life is often, simply omitted, argues Willard. The Great Omission is an important resource, from a renowned author and philosopher on how to live life as a follower of Jesus Christ. Here is a selection from Chapter 8, "The Spirit Is Willing, But...:The Body as a Tool for Spiritual Growth."—Marian Euler

Probably the least understood aspect of progress in Christ-likeness is the role of the body in the spiritual life. Almost all of us are acutely aware of how the incessant clamorings of our bodies defeat our intentions to "be spiritual." The Apostle Paul explains that "what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want" (Galatians 5:17). And Jesus's words, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41), are generally accepted as a *final* verdict on what human life must be like until we escape the body through death.

On the other hand if the body is simply beyond redemption, then ordinary life is too. Many Christians seem prepared to accept this—at least in practice. But then spiritual formation really becomes impossible. That would be a defeat of major proportions for Christ's cause and could never be reconciled with the call to godly living that both permeates the Bible from end to end and resonates with the deep-seated human need to live as one ought.

We are glad, then, to find scriptural teachings about the body and its flesh running directly contrary to the "hopeless" view. Jesus is the primary witness to the unity of flesh and spirit before God. Long before his entry into history, however, the Psalmist spoke of his body longing for God (Psalm 63:1), of his "heart and flesh sing [ing] for joy to the living God" (84:2), and he called upon all flesh to "bless his holy name forever and ever" (145:21).

The prophet Joel foresaw the time when God's Spirit would be poured out upon all flesh (Joel 2:28-29). That prophecy began to be fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16-21). Thus, the picture of the body and of the flesh found in the writings of Paul stand in the sharpest of contrasts with the hopeless views of the body. The body is presented as a temple inhabited by the Holy Spirit. It is not meant to be used in sinning, but is meant for the Lord, and "the Lord for the body" (1 Corinthians 6:13).

Through the power of God which raised Christ from the dead, Paul tells us, "your bodies are members of Christ" (1 Corinthians 6:15). Our bodies do not even belong to us, but have been bought by Christ, who gives them a life "from above" and opens the way for us "to glorify God in [our bodies]" (1 Corinthians 6:20).

Thus, we can "present [our] bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God," this being our "spiritual worship" (Romans 12:1).



Dallas Willard is a professor at the University of Southern California's School of Philosophy. His bestselling books *The Divine Conspiracy* and *The Spirit of the Disciplines* forever changed the way thousands of Christians experience their faith.

INTERVIEW WITH EMILIE AND WILLIAM GRIFFIN BY COURTNEY COHEN

In this unique interview with William and Emilie Griffin, we asked both of them about their interest and passion for writing. Here they share their experience and interest in historic Christian texts and spiritual formation. Both William and Emilie are free lance writers with a storied history in the publishing industry.



Emilie Griffin

William Griffin

Perspective: There seems to be a growing interest in historic Christian texts. How would you explain this return to the "classics"?

Emilie Griffin: It seems to me that this is a natural outgrowth of the growing interest in spiritual formation and transformation. Renovaré has shown tremendous leadership in teaching people a deeper way of living their Christian faith, one which includes not only the practice of spiritual disciplines, the importance of prayerful Biblical study, but also tapping into the great Christian devotional books.

William Griffin: In the case of the historic church, the Catholic church, there has been continued interest in the writings of the Fathers of the Church, as they've been called, right from the start. Priests have been reading passages from them in their daily devotional for a good number of centuries. The emergence of the Bible and evangelical churches relegated these early writings to the library bookshelf where ministers were concentrating their interests on the Scriptures and ignoring everything else down to, but not including, their own founding. It is in the classroom that the discovery of the historic devotional works has begun.

One thing that has helped facilitate this growing interest is the realization that the Catholic church doesn't "own" these writings; Christianity "owns" them. The Catholic church was left standing sentinel over these treasures over the centuries, but the door to that great library has never been locked. All Christians are welcome. All non-Christians are welcome. All this having been said, these works, as indeed all other created things, have been in and out of fashion over the centuries and will continue to be so in the centuries to come.

P: Emilie, you have been working on a series of books lately. Can you tell us a bit about the series and why this material gained your interest?

EG: Yes, it is called *The HarperCollins Spiritual Classics*, a 16 volume series. I was approached by some of the HarperCollins people at a Renovaré Board Meeting about four years ago. Richard Foster and I had already collaborated on the Renovaré Resource Book, *Spiritual Classics*, featuring about fifty different devotional classics. So they knew about my interest in these kinds of works, and how they can be used devotionally.

P: What sort of process does it require to conquer a task like this?

EG: I had a certain input at the beginning on what texts might be on the list, and also I made some suggestions about who would write the prefaces and introductions. But I was working in a team situation, and the Harper editors really set up the rules: "Give us a book of about 160 pages, without footnotes, not intimidating"....they licensed the translations and texts from the Paulist Classics of Western Spirituality series, and then it was my job to abridge the texts, to trim them down into readable length, and to choose the passages and chapters with the greatest interest and spiritual profit for the modern reader. In order to do that, I had to become knowledgeable enough about each author (his or her life-story) to choose wisely. In general, also, I brought a peace-making spirit to the choices I made. I tried to work against the stereotypes. As I said at a Renovaré conference last year, I was surprised to discover how much I liked John Calvin. No one had ever told me that Calvin was so tender-hearted! I especially wanted to include passages that showed Calvin's pastoral side.

P: William, obviously you have a gift and great interest in translating Christian texts into English. Can you explain how you determine which books you want to translate?

WG: I'm afraid I have no master plan. I wandered into *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis. Then I translated four other works of his simply because they were there in the Latin, and nobody had done it over the five hundred years since his death. Then I moved on to Augustine of Hippo (St. Augustine), doing his

Christmas sermons. From there it was a hop, skip, and jump to his *Confessions*. And I've done many more.

P: How do you hope these classic resources will contribute to the Church at large?

EG: I really hope that the HarperCollins books I have worked on will appeal to readers who maybe haven't tried this kind of literature before. They've heard about it, maybe, but they haven't quite dipped in. Sometimes at conferences I hear people ask, "Well, do you think I can read Teresa of Avila for myself? Or will it be too difficult?" Of course, if you were going to do a scholarly paper about her, you might need to do research. But just to read her for yourself is wonderfully refreshing. She has depth and lightness of heart. She obviously has a close friendship with the Lord, but also she is willing and eager to share this friendship. She invites you to know Jesus better...and, surprisingly, she is very approachable! I believe also that in some cases, it can also bring people back to the practice of their faith, people who may have wandered far away.

In the HarperCollins edition of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, Tim Farrington tells, in his preface, how he had run away from the Catholic faith of his childhood and was living in California in a Buddhist House of Studies. And there, surprisingly, he came across a copy of *The Cloud of Unknowing*. He began to read it, and immediately he was struck with the clarity and wisdom of this 14th century Christian text. He knew he was in the hands of a master, one who understood the spiritual life thoroughly and had the knowledge to teach a wayward beginner, like himself. Farrington says the reading of that one book was the beginning of his return to Christian faith. In other words, these great teachers of the past–John and Charles Wesley, the great Quaker writers, John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila–all of them have something to say to us now, and will show us the depth and breadth and living heart of our long Christian tradition.

P: Would you both tell us a bit about your background with this type of literature?

EG: I owe a lot to this kind of literature in my own spiritual life. When I began to practice the spiritual life in earnest, I began to read some of the great writers from the past, especially the Catholic and Anglican mystics. I was also very influenced by a modern English writer, Evelyn Underhill, who more or less made these great figures approachable for me. Then, a few years later, I did formal graduate studies in theology and philosophy, wanting to deepen my background as a Christian writer. Well, when you do seminary work, they always expect you to read the texts directly, not just summaries or analyses about them. I read Luther, Aquinas, and Augustine...and I found out I could! This way a person's real voice speaks to you across the centuries.

WG: As a high school student and later as a seminarian studying for the priesthood, I came across these works and was able to read many of them in their original languages. Many of them are quite spectacular. I count these historic authors as my friends, enjoy their work immensely, and have no doubt that they've influenced my spiritual life in many profound ways.

P: What projects are you working on right now?

WG: Emilie and I are working on a book about friendship that includes two classic works not easily available in English. She's translating, from the Latin, Cicero's essay on the subject and I'm translating Aelred of Rievaulx's essay on spiritual friendship, which is really a commentary of Cicero's essay some 1300 years before.

EG: I am also working on a Lenten guide for Paraclete Press. I'm writing a meditation for each day of Lent and for the Sundays within Lent as well, along with an essay on how the Lenten tradition brings us closer to Christ Jesus.

P: To wrap it up, if a person had to read one book from this era, what would you recommend?

EG: That's not such an easy question, because it's a matter of each person's personal wave-length. I love everything by John of the Cross, so perhaps that is what I would recommend. But other good choices might include The Sacrament of the Present Moment by Jean-Pierre de Caussade. On the Protestant side, there are many fine spiritual writers. One of my favorites is Thomas Kelly's A Testament of Devotion.

WG: I haven't a clue. Hopefully, one of my translations. But I have found that a book once recommended is a book never enjoyed. Reading experiences, especially good ones, are rarely transferable to others. Browse, that's the best way to find out what books from the immense Christian library one would want to curl up and read.

Prayers for Renovaré Korea

In early August, Brian Kang, Director of Renovaré Korea, and family moved to Seoul, South Korea, to lay a foundation for the work of Renovaré in Korea.

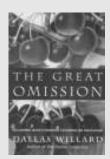
Would you pray with Brian? Particular concerns include:

- The Kang family as they adapt to Korea, including wife Yoon and children Samuel, Deborah, and Danielle.
- Holy Seed Church, the church Brian pastored in Southern California, as it merges with another congregation.
- Brian's meetings with people who are interested in Renovaré and thirsty for knowing Jesus Christ.
- Four Renovaré Regional Conferences to be held in late October and early November 2006.
- Planning for a Renovaré International Conference scheduled for October 2007.

This final prayer request is of special concern. Many Christians are wanting to see and hear both Richard Foster and Dallas Willard, and the International Conference will provide an opportunity to come and hear what God has done through these wonderful servants of the Lord. Scheduled for October 14-17, 2007, on Jeju Island, a place known as the Hawaii of Asia, it will be attended by Korean Christians and others from throughout Southeast Asia, Oceania, and even North America. While it is a venture fraught with risk, this event could do much to help establish and further the work of Renovaré in Korea, the rest of Asia, and beyond. For updates on this event, please visit www.renovare.org/2007ic.htm in December 2006 and after.

Thank you for your prayers.

GOING DEEPER



The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship by Dallas Willard

"The word disciple occurs 269 times in the New Testament," writes Dallas Willard in *The Great Omission*. "Christian is found three times and was first introduced to refer precisely to disciples of Jesus.... The New Testament is a book about disciples, by disciples, and for disciples of Jesus Christ." Here Willard boldly challenges the thought that we can be Christians without being disciples, or call ourselves Christians without applying this understanding of life in the kingdom of God to every aspect of life on earth. He calls on believers to restore what should be the heart of Christianity—being active disciples of Jesus Christ. In the school of life, we are apprentices of the Teacher whose brilliance encourages us to rise above traditional church understanding and embrace the true meaning of discipleship. HarperSanFrancisco, hardcover, 256 pages.

John of the Cross: Selected Writings with an Introduction by Emilie Griffin

John of the Cross was a sixteenth-century Spanish Carmelite monk, mystic, and contemporary of Teresa of Avila who became one of Christianity's foremost spiritual teachers. He is most famous for his lyrical poetry, in which he beautifully describes a tender, loving God. This volume contains his most stirring works, including the classic *The Dark Night*, in which John expands on the role of darkness in the spiritual journey. "It remains to be said, then, that even though this happy night darkens the spirit, it does so only to impart light concerning all things. And even though it humbles persons and reveals their miseries, it does so only to exalt them," writes John. *John of the Cross* is part of the HarperCollins Spiritual Classics Series, which is overseen and edited by Emilie Griffin. HarperSanFrancisco, softcover, 146 pages.

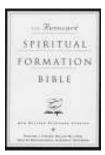
The Great Omission \$ 16.49 each



John of the Cross \$ 9.79 each



Meeting the Master in the Garden by Thomas à Kempis; trans. by William Griffin



Name or Company

The Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible Now Available With or Without Deuterocanonical Books

The Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible is now available with or without the Deuterocanonical/Intertestamental Books. While all of the material for the Old Testament and New Testament in both versions is the same, both are being repackaged with thinner paper for lighter weight. Order now to receive in December 2006. HarperSanFrancisco, hardcover, 2,048/2,448 pages. Visit www.renovare.org for sample readings.

RENOVARÉ SPIRITUAL FORMATION GUIDES SERIES Complements Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible Themes

Connecting with God and Learning from Jesus are the first installments of the Renovaré Spiritual Formation Guides series. These books draw inspiration from the 15 expressions of The With-God Life as articulated in The Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible. Formatted for individuals and groups in a style similar to A Spiritual Formation Workbook, the combination of readings, reflection questions, exercises, and activities makes them valuable guides for interacting with The Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible and moving from traditional Bible study/devotional reading to broader spiritual formation themes and ideas.

Connecting with God takes inspiration from "The People of God in Individual Communion" expression of The With-God Life. It provides practical advice for communing on a deeply personal level with God, uncovering new places to look for God, while reinvigorating communication with God through such traditional areas as prayer and Bible study. Learning from Jesus unpacks "The People of God with Immanuel" expression. It furthers our discipleship by studying everything from Jesus's interactions with those around him to the revolutionary wisdom recorded in the Gospels. HarperSanFrancisco, softcover, 144/160 pages. Visit www.renovare.org for sample readings.

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all of these resources can be ordered on-line at www.renovare.org

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Going Places with Renovaré								
Date	Event	Location	Staff	Contact & Info				
6-7 October 2006	Charleston, West Virginia Regional Conference	Christ Church United Methodist 1221 Quarrier Street Charleston, West Virginia	Richard Foster Juanita Rasmus George Skramstad	Lee Williams leewilliams@intelos.net 304-583-6066				
2-3 March 2007	St. Augustine, Florida Regional Conference	Anastasia Baptist Church 1650 A1A South Street St. Augustine, Florida	Richard Foster John Ortberg George Skramstad	Bobby Crum bobby.crum@anastasiabaptist.org				
23-24 March 2007	Camphill, Pennsylvania Regional Conference	Camp Hill United Methodist Church 417 South 22 nd Street Camp Hill, Pennsylvania	Richard Foster Juanita Rasmus George Skramstad	Marri Lamoureaux formation1@earthlink.net 717-240-0678				
27-28 April 2007	Roseville, California Regional Conference	Adventure Christian Church 6401 Stanford Ranch Road Roseville, California	Richard Foster George Skramstad James Bryan Smith	Kris Glass kris@valleysprings.org 916-786-7940 x 130				
11-12 May 2007	Long Beach, California Regional Conference	Bethany Church 2250 Clark Avenue Long Beach, California	Richard Foster Renované Team Member George Skramstad	JoAnn Wall joann@gspc.org 562-493-2553 x 104				
14-15 September 2007	Indianapolis Metro Area Regional Conference	Site To Be Announced Fishers, Indiana	Richard Foster Renované Team Member George Skramstad	Patty McCaulay pmccaulay@insightbb.com 317-577-5713				
9-10 November 2007	Fredericton, New Brunswick Canada Regional Conference	First Wesleyan Church 131 Duncan Lane Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada	Richard Foster Renovaré Team Member George Skramstad	Karl Ingersoll karl@firstwesleyan.ca 506-458-9232				
1-2 February 2008	DATES AVAILABLE Regional Conference	Site to be Announced	Richard Foster Renovaré Team Member George Skramstad	Norma Kelley norma@renovare.org 303-792-0152				

For information or to help organize one of the above conferences, please call or e-mail the contact person.

Check out our Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible group resources or Formation Bible at www.renovare.org.

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