

### Growing Edges

April 1999

RENOVARÉ is not an organization. It is not an organism. It is not even a movement, traditionally understood. Often people struggle with this. When I tell them, for example, that our organizational chart is to do like Sampson in the Hebrew Scriptures—to light the tails of the foxes and let them go—many simply don't know what to make of it. Some, thank God, do get the idea and almost instantly become flaming witnesses within the given structures of their lives. But many people, you see, are looking for an institution, a hierarchy, a flow chart, a CEO, at the very least a sweat shirt with the RENOVARÉ name emblazoned upon it. But RENOVARÉ has none of these.

So, if RENOVARÉ is *not* an organization, what is it? It is a vision. It is an idea. It is a message.

And what is that message? Jesus cryptically—and powerfully—summed it up in his oft repeated words, “The kingdom of God is at hand; repent” (Mark 1:15 and many other places). That is to say, “Reevaluate the whole way you are living in light of this great fact; in and through the person of Jesus the kingdom of God, with all of its attendant life and powers, is now available and accessible to every person who wants to step into it.”



#### Training in Righteousness

Now, the instant we turn and step into the kingdom of God we are born from above, as Jesus said, and we enter into a vast array of experiences in the Holy Spirit. These experiences are glorious glimpses into heavenly realities—comfort and care, strength and hope, guidance and prophetic witness, baptism in the Spirit and fillings with the Spirit, and more. But right here we face a genuine danger: these experiences can be so blessed and so wonderful that we are tempted to simply stay in the experiences. But we were not brought into the kingdom of God for the sake of experiences, but for the sake of training in righteousness, and we must never try to replace training with experiences.

So in our turning into the kingdom of God we are also enrolling as disciples, or apprentices, to Jesus Christ. We will be in this apprenticeship all our lives for this is the most basic posture in our training in righteousness. Jesus says, “Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:28-29). We become yoked to Christ, allowing him to teach us how to live our lives as he would live our lives if he were us.

This training in righteousness most surely involves spiritual disciplines appropriate to our situation and our need: solitude and silence, prayer and fasting, study and service, and so much more. These disciplines are the main way we offer our bodies up to God as a living sacrifice. We are doing what we can do with our bodies, our minds, our hearts. God then takes this simple offering of ourselves and does with it what we cannot do, producing within us deeply ingrained habits of love and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

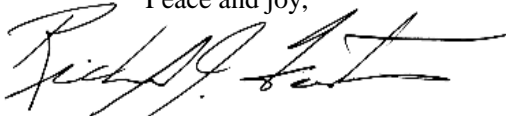
#### The Blessed Community

We are not meant to enter this life and training in the kingdom of God on our own. We join with others—by ones and twos, tens and twenties, hundreds and thousands—in giving to one another a loving, accepting, nurturing accountability. But right here we face another great danger: we may desire such community life so badly that we try to force it into existence—lamenting that our given church structures fail to give us such community life and demanding that it happen now. But that is not how these things work in the kingdom of God. How then does it work?

Well, to begin with, the divine community that is under God's care and direction is already in existence and it is doing quite well—it always has and it always will. While it may interface with human structures of one kind or another, this community is never dependent upon any human structures. It is, in fact, a divine community which involves a whole lot more of God's created reality than human beings, and we are invited to participate in it.

So, first, with the eyes of faith we join in the joyous community of the angels and the archangels, the cherubim and the seraphim, the living creatures and the elders, and all the hosts of heaven. Then too—and this also with the eyes of faith—we enter the great communion of saints with those who have gone before and who cheer us on. And finally—and even this is done through the eyes of faith—we prayerfully watch for others who are living and walking in the life and powers of the kingdom of God. They, I might add, may well be found in the most unlikely of places. Then we simply slide alongside of them and journey together as part of this all-inclusive community of loving persons, and God is at the heart of this community as its prime sustainer and most glorious inhabitant.

Peace and joy,



Richard J. Foster

## ***Growing Together***

**TOP TEN Reasons You Should Attend the RENOVARÉ  
International Conference on Spiritual Renewal  
June 30-July 3, 1999  
Houston, Texas USA**

10. If Texas is “a whole other country,” then Houston is “a whole other city.”
9. Enjoy *warm* Southern hospitality!
8. Arrive at George R. Bush Intercontinental Airport where you just might bump into the former President and Barbara.
7. Eat Tex-Mex at every meal; take a Rolaid at every break.
6. Hear teaching more nourishing than a Texas T-bone and more inspiring than the Fourth of July.
5. Experience worship that has greater lift than any rocket ever guided by NASA's Mission Control.
4. Fellowship with Christians from many different backgrounds.
3. Find out how to live a life *with God* at home, at school, at work—indeed in all our relationships.

2. Learn from Conference presenters *what a life with God looks like* as informed by Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount.
1. Take advantage of a *once-in-a-lifetime opportunity* to glean from Dallas Willard in person how we can move into the fullness of God's kingdom.

More specifically, the International Conference is going to do much to train us in kingdom living. In *The Divine Conspiracy* Dallas Willard presents us with the marvelous potential for “The Eternal Kind of Life,” and we are going to fill out this vision even further at the Conference. Listening to Dallas and the other speakers will be akin to sitting down with John Wesley or Francis of Assisi and sharing together about the kingdom, or perhaps discussing *The Institutes* with John Calvin or *The City of God* with Augustine of Hippo.

If you have the means to attend the Conference and it is only an issue of taking the time, then we urge you to clear your calendar of any activity less important than training for eternity! (**See the coupon on the back for a special discount on registration.**) If it is a matter of means, please contact the RENOVARÉ office and we will see what we can do to assist you. Finally, if you have the resources but cannot attend, we urge you to make a special gift to our scholarship fund so we can help another person with registration, housing, and/or travel costs. See you in Houston

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.

## Going Deeper

In keeping with our emphasis upon the kingdom of God, we are offering four books that approach the topic from different perspectives.

*Theology Today* notes that *The Kingdom of God* by John Bright is "one of the most satisfactory books on biblical theology to appear recently in America . . .

a passionate appeal to the Church to be the Church." Bright writes in the preface that "the concept of the Kingdom of God involves the total message of the Bible," and he seeks to trace the history of this concept while suggesting its contemporary relevance. The University of Chicago Press calls his style "clear and arresting. Ancient situations are made more understandable to the general reader by apt comparisons with American history and religious life."

In *The Upside-Down Kingdom* Donald Kraybill writes: "The 'kingdom of God' permeates all of Jesus' ministry, giving it unusual coherence and clarity. It is the core, the very essence of his ministry." Kraybill goes on to examine the notion that "the kingdom of God points to an inverted, or upside down, way of life," and says that we are to foster it by favoring those suffering at society's margin. Not only does this notion contrast with the prevailing social order of Jesus' time, but ours as well, and it challenges us to live these upside-down values. *The Upside-Down Kingdom* is designed for individual or group use.

George Eldon Ladd was a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary (Pasadena, California) for many years and gives us a scriptural study of the kingdom of God in *The Gospel of the Kingdom*. Oswald J. Smith writes in the Introduction that Ladd "conceives of the

Kingdom as the rule, the reign, the government of God in this age in the hearts and lives of those who yield themselves to Him, and in the next age over all the world."

Particularly outstanding are Ladd's

interpretations of Jesus' parables and the Sermon on the Mount, interpretations that are both evangelistic and scriptural. But he doesn't shortchange the importance of making a decision to become a disciple of Jesus and the inherent cost of discipleship: willing submission to God's rule. Since Ladd's death, *The Gospel of the Kingdom* has become a classic.

The relationship between the kingdom of God and the Church as we know it is probed by Howard Snyder in *The Community of the King*. He posits that the Church is part of God's dramatic plan to reconcile all things in heaven and on earth to himself and underscores that the New Testament calls this reconciling work the kingdom of God. Pleading for a model of the Church which emphasizes the God-given gifts of all members, Snyder sets forth his theology of the Church and gives practical guidelines for those concerned about church life and growth. Snyder wrote out of frustration and hope about the contemporary Church; his book should help those who feel the same.

Lynda L. Graybeal

## Order Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Quantity	Item	Sugg. Donation Each	Total
	<i>The Kingdom Of God</i> , John Bright	\$ 21.00	
	<i>The Upside-Down Kingdom</i> , Donald Kraybill	\$ 20.00	
	<i>The Gospel Of the Kingdom</i> , George Eldon Ladd	\$ 17.00	
	<i>The Community Of the King</i> , Howard Snyder	\$ 19.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>			

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 \_\_\_\_\_

# COUPON

## *International Conference Registration Special for RENOVARÉ Perspective Recipients*

**Receive the Regular Registration Price Through June 1, 1999**  
(Individual — \$105.00, Couple — \$200.00, Student — \$85.00)

**Return This Coupon With Completed Registration**

### *Going Places with RENOVARÉ*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Staff</i>	<i>Contact &amp; Phone</i>
4/30/99- 5/1/99	Regional Conference	Memorial High School 2608 California Road Elkhart, IN 46514	Richard Foster George Skramstad Glandion Carney	Marvin Grooms— 219-293-0482
5/2/99	Preach at Sunday Worship	Trinity United Methodist Ch. 2715 East Jackson Boulevard Elkhart, IN 46515-5099	Richard Foster	Toni Carmer— 219-294-7602
5/8/99	Pre-Regional Conference Breakfast for Leaders	Site To Be Announced Lynden, WA 98264	Marti Ensign Luci Shaw	Carolynn Wynstra— 360-354-5346
6/30/99- 7/3/99	International Conference on Spiritual Renewal	George R. Brown Convention Center 1001 Avenida de las Americas Houston, TX 77010	Entire RENOVARÉ Staff and Board of Trustees	Lyle SmithGraybeal, RENOVARÉ Confer- ence Coordinator— 303-792-0152
7/3/99- 7/5/99	Board of Trustees Annual Meeting	Camp Allen Navasota, TX 77868	RENOVARÉ Board of Trustees, Staff, and Guests	
9/24/99- 9/25/99	Regional Conference	First Baptist Church 901 Trinity Street Austin, TX 78701	Glandion Carney Richard Foster George Skramstad	Ann Butterfield— 512-476-2625
10/8/99- 10/10/99	Focus On the Family Counseling Team	Estes Park, CO	Richard Foster	
10/15/99- 10/16/99	Regional Conference	Sonlight Community Church 8800 Bender Road Lynden, WA 98264	Richard Foster George Skramstad Siang-Yang Tan	Carolyn Wynstra— 360-354-5346
11/5/99 11/6/99	Regional Conference	Northern Baptist Theological Seminary 660 East Butterfield Road Lombard, IL 60148	Richard Foster George Skramstad Dallas Willard	Ian Chapman— 630-620-2101

***Growing Pains***—Pray with us for the RENOVARÉ International Conference on Spiritual Renewal.