

10-1-1982

Theology, News and Notes - Vol. 29, No. 03

Fuller Theological Seminary

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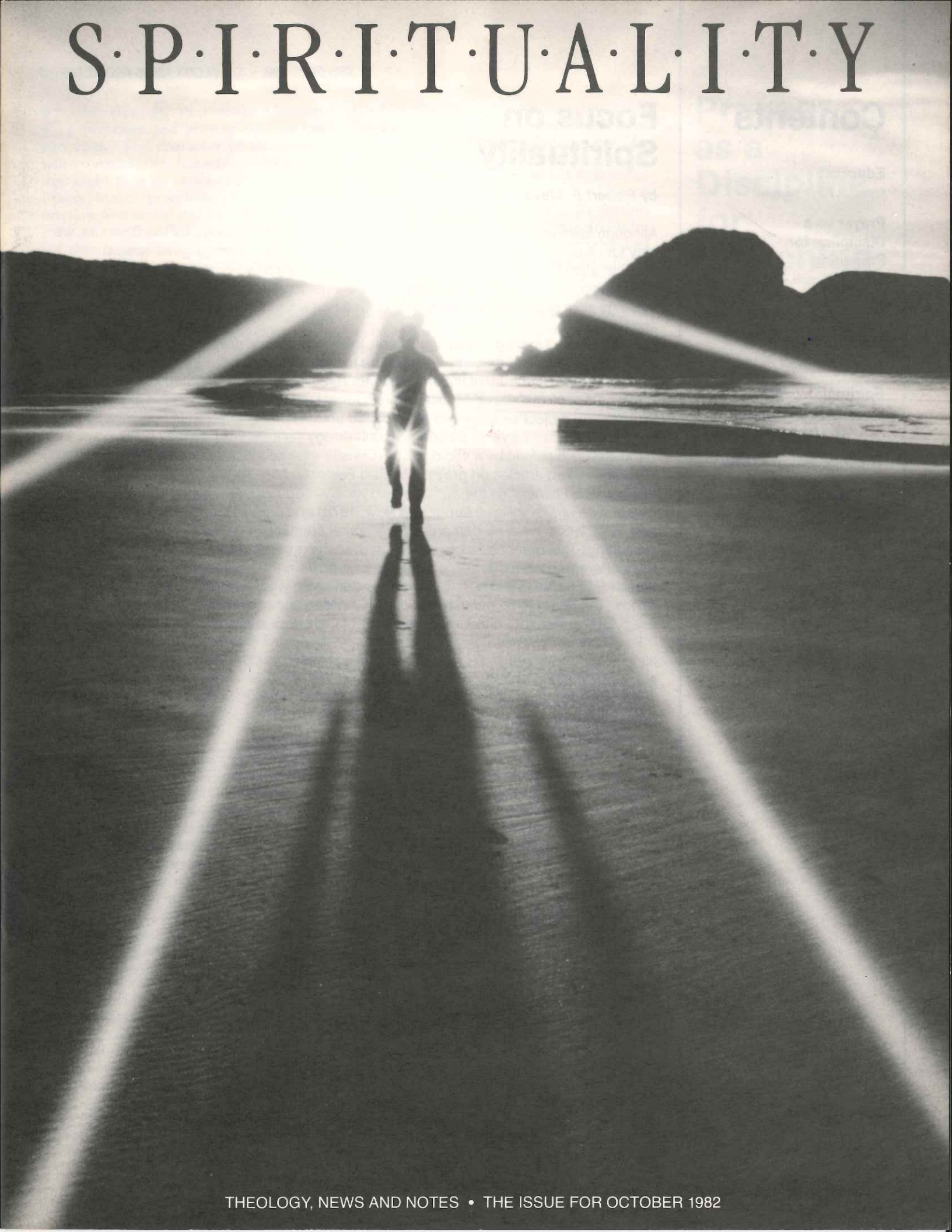
Recommended Citation

Fuller Theological Seminary; Meye, Robert P.; Foster, Richard J.; and Moberg, David O., "Theology, News and Notes - Vol. 29, No. 03" (1982). *Theology News & Notes*. 79.

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Contents

Editorial

Robert P. Meye • page 2

Prayer as a Discipline for Preaching

Richard J. Foster • page 3

Taking the "Measure" of Spiritual Well-Being

David O. Moberg • page 6

Spiritual Growth and Church Renewal

Richard F. Lovelace • page 10

The Problem of Prayer According to Romans 8:26-27

Robert P. Meye • page 12

C.S. Lewis: Soul Friend

Paul Ford • page 17

Alum News

page 23

Focus on Spirituality

by Robert P. Meye

Although spirituality is by definition a pervasive reality and challenge for the Christian, we may focus our attention on spirituality in the same way that theology gives special consideration to the Holy Spirit in its quest for a deepened understanding of God. The special themes of spirituality will vary — but are perennially those matters which keep theology alive to its own understanding of God and keeps Christian devotion Christian and faithful.

This issue of Theology News and Notes, the second issue devoted to Christian spirituality in which it has been my pleasure to bring together a group of colleagues, covers a broad spectrum of important issues. It features an essay by the distinguished Christian sociologist, David Moberg, who in recent years has been involved in an international project dedicated to a deepened understanding of spiritual well-being. Just as philosophy can serve as a handmaid of theology (to a degree), so we can be stimulated and helped by a sociologist's (Christian) perspective on spirituality.

There are two articles on prayer. Richard Foster (D.Min. 1970), has already distinguished himself as the author of two widely-read books on spirituality, *Celebration of Discipline* (Harper and Row, 1978) and *Freedom of Simplicity* (Harper and Row, 1981). Here he demonstrates the vital connection between prayer and preaching. This demonstration, if modern preaching be any index, is sorely needed. I have offered an essay on the 'problem of prayer' from the perspective of Paul's teaching in Romans 8:26-27. The essay underlines divine initiative in prayer, as in all things. The essay is as much a fruit of my Christian experience generally as of exegetical endeavor—although it was the latter which first made the text come alive.

Paul Ford, a recognized expert on the life and thought of C.S. Lewis, has already made his mark on the Christian public with his *Companion to Narnia* (Harper and Row, 1980) and there is more to follow. (Paul is currently hard at work on a followup to this first work.) The essay included herein tells us why devout Christian readers have been perennially attracted to C.S. Lewis: he is a true spiritual director. The shape of that direction is the object of Paul's essay.

Last but by no means least, is a contribution by Richard Lovelace, who from his church history post at Gordon-Conwell Divinity School, has issued a strong call to spiritual renewal in the church; his widely-read study, *The Dynamics of Spiritual Life* (InterVarsity Press, 1979), is making its own contribution to the renewal of Christian spirituality in our time. From that base, Lovelace comments in the present essay on the vital relationship between personal spiritual renewal and corporate spiritual renewal. This call has an apostolic tone and urgency; such should be the case with all aspects of spirituality today. ■



Robert P. Meye
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E. M. Bounds, that great Methodist preacher and pray-er of a century ago, said, "The character of our praying will determine the character of our preaching. Light praying makes light preaching. Prayer makes preaching strong, gives it unction, and makes it stick. Talking to men for God is a great thing, but talking to God for men is greater still. He will never talk well and with real success to men for God who has not learned well how to talk to God for men."

What is it about prayer that links it to preaching? Why would a person like Martin Luther set down as a spiritual axiom that "He who has prayed well has studied well," or a person like Francis Asbury say, "I propose to rise at 4 a.m. as often as I can and spend two hours in prayer and meditation"? What is it that makes prayer so central to any lasting spiritual success in preaching?

PRAYER GETS US IN TOUCH

First, prayer gets us in touch with God, the divine Center. It causes us to swing like a needle to the pointer of the Spirit. It gives us focus, unity, purpose. We discover serenity, unshakableness, firmness of life orientation. Prayer opens us to the subterranean sanctuary of the soul where we hear the *Kol Yahweh*, the voice of the Lord. It puts a fire into our words and compassion into our spirits. It fills our walk and talk with new life and light. We come to live out the demands of our day perpetually bowed in worship and adoration.

And our people can see this and feel it and they are drawn into the joy of it. The central thing prayer does is to usher us into the holy of holies and so transform our spirit. People can sense this life of the spirit, though they may not know what it is they feel. It affects the feeling tones of our preaching. People can sense the difference it makes. They discern that our preaching is not the performance of 30 minutes but the outlook of a life. Such praying makes all the difference in the world. Without it, our exegesis may be impeccable, our rhetoric may be magnetic, but we will be dry, empty, hollow.

All this may sound terribly ethereal and mystical and perhaps in a way it is. But in another sense it is all so reasonable and practical. The whole rationale behind psychocybernetics is the fact that the mind will take on an order conforming to the order upon which it concentrates. When we pray we are simply giving our attention to the Lord, we are entering the milieu of

the Holy Spirit. And as we do a new spirit works its way into our preaching, indeed into all we are. Douglas Steere said, "To pray is to change," and our people can perceive the change as well as know when no change has occurred.

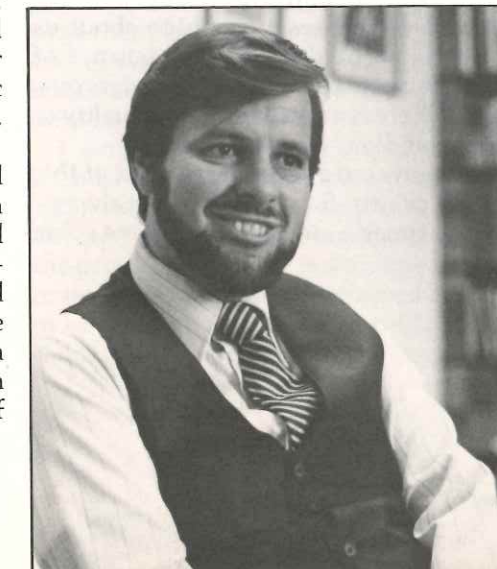
We are told that when the Sanhedrin saw the bold preaching of Peter and John they perceived them to be men who had been with Jesus. Why? Because they had a Galilean accent? Perhaps, but more likely it was because they carried themselves with such a new spirit of life and authority that even their enemies sensed it. And so it is for us. If we have it people will know it; if we don't, no homiletical skills will take up the void.

But what does prayer of this kind look like? What do we do? Intercede for others? Perhaps, but primarily we are coming to enjoy His presence. We are sinking down into the Light of Christ and becoming comfortable in that posture. We are worshipping, adoring. Most of all we are listening. Francois Fenelon counseled,

Be still, and listen to God. Let your heart be in such a state of preparation that His spirit may impress upon you such virtues as will please Him. Let all within you listen to Him. This silence of all outward and earthly affection and of human thoughts within us is essential if we are to hear His voice.

Add to those words this perceptive observation of Soren Kierkegaard, "A man prayed and at first he thought prayer was talking. But he became more and more quiet, until in the end he realized that prayer was listening."

Listening is the key to prayer. It involves a centering down so that we become genuinely present where we are. It is what the devotional masters often called "Recollection." There is the cultivation of a gentle receptiveness to divine breathings, a re-orientation of our mind and body and spirit



FOSTER

Prayer as a Discipline for Preaching

RICHARD J. FOSTER

Richard J. Foster is Assistant Professor of Theology and Writer-in-Residence at Friends University in Wichita, KS and author of *Celebration of Discipline* (Harper and Row, 1978) and *Freedom of Simplicity* (Harper and Row, 1981). During his 20 years of ministry he has fulfilled various leadership roles in the church, including full-time pastorates that range from a small struggling church to "the large church, where it seemed like things went right no matter what I did." His sensitivity to pastor-people relationships is the backdrop for this article on the role of prayer in those relationships.

...as we grow accustomed to His company, slowly, almost imperceptibly, a miracle works its way into us.

to the Living Center of Reference. We do not do violence to our rational faculties, but we listen with more than the mind — we listen with the spirit, with the heart, with our whole being. Like the Virgin Mary, we ponder these things in our hearts.

Perhaps it would be helpful if I share with you one meditation exercise to illustrate how we enter into this mode of centered listening. I call it simply "palms down, palms up." Begin by placing your palms down as a symbolic indication of your desire to turn over any concerns you may have to God. Inwardly you may pray, "Lord, I give to You my anger toward John. I release my fear of the dentist appointment this morning. I surrender my anxiety over not having enough money to pay the bills this month. I release my frustration over trying to find a babysitter for tonight." Whatever it is that weighs on your mind or is a concern to you, just say, "palms down." Release it. You may even feel a certain sense of release in your hands. After several moments of surrender, turn your palms up as a symbol of your desire to receive from the Lord. Perhaps you will pray silently, "Lord, I would like to receive Your divine Love for John, Your peace about the dentist appointment, Your patience, Your joy." Whatever you need, you say, "palms up." Having centered down, spend the remaining moments in complete silence.

There is no need for hurry. There is no need for words, for like good friends you are just glad to be together, to enjoy one another's presence.

And as we grow accustomed to His company, slowly, almost imperceptibly, a miracle works its way into us. The frantic scramble of panting feverishness which used to characterize our lives is replaced by a fresh serenity and steady vigor. Without the slightest sense of contradiction, we've become both tough with issues and tender with people. Authority and compassion become twins and infiltrate our preaching. Indeed, it permeates everything about us for we are scented with the fragrance of heaven. It is attractive, winsome, vigorous, strong. There is a new life-giving quality to our lives and our people know it.

I've discovered a secondary result of this listening prayer. Sometimes — not always, but sometimes — ideas for sermons come

flooding into the conscious mind with an unusual freshness and vitality. Carl Jung speaks of the conscious mind, the sub-conscious mind and the creative factor of the mind. I have sometimes wondered if God enters the creative factor of the brain, surfacing to the conscious mind wonderful new combinations of ideas and insights. Many of the world's great discoveries and inventions are produced by the creative factor. The idea for the phonograph came to Thomas Edison in his sleep. Einstein had been sick in bed for two weeks when he got up one morning and wrote on the blackboard the mathematical equation for the Theory of Relativity. Mozart heard whole symphonies in his mind before he wrote them. And sometimes sermon ideas come flooding in as we seek to develop this posture of listening prayer. This is a gracious gift to be received with thanksgiving.

And so prayer gets us in touch with God. I urge us all to take time to listen to God's speech in His wondrous, terrible, gentle, loving, all-embracing silence.

PRAYER GETS US IN TOUCH WITH OUR PEOPLE

Second, prayer gets us in touch with our people. If we care for people we will desire for them far more than it is within our power to give, and that desire will lead us to prayer.

Some of the richest times in my pastoral ministry came when I would go into the sanctuary during the week and walk through the many pews praying for the people who sit there Sunday after Sunday. Often I would do that late in the week when I wanted to work through my sermon for Sunday. Our people tend to sit in the same pews week after week. I knew where they often sat and I would visualize them there and pray for them, lifting them into the Light of Christ. Praying the sermons I would preach on Sunday into them on Friday. Praying for their hurts and fears and anxieties. That does something inside you. It puts you in touch with your people in a deep, intimate way.

In prayer, somehow we get in touch with our people in another dimension. We come into their space and feel their fear, their anger. Like me, I'm sure that you have found it true that through prayer our people become our greatest friends.

In our congregation in Oregon we had a little fellow who had to undergo two very serious brain surgery operations. He spent some six weeks in the hospital. The times

of prayer together that we experienced during those weeks built a bond between us that is like steel. On two separate occasions I stayed in that hospital all day with his mom and dad waiting to see if Davey would live or die. Davey is only five years old and he has Down's Syndrome, but I value him as one of my closest friends. And would he listen to me preach! No Children's Church for him; he would perch himself up on that pew, eager, attentive. I do not know if he ever understood a word I said, but I would preach my heart out because I knew Davey was listening. If we have prayed with our people — really prayed with them — they will listen to us when we preach because they know we love them.

Our people want someone who knows how to pray. We are engaged in desperate warfare. It is hand-to-hand combat and people are dying, marriages are being shattered, children destroyed.

And as Jesus said, some things will not move without prayer. Happy songs will not do it. New building programs will not do it. New exciting worship techniques will not do it. Even great preaching by itself will not do it. For some situations the only appropriate response is fasting and earnest prayer. Then the power of God will come. And nothing will put us in touch with our people and give power to our preaching like praying for them.

PRAYER GETS OUR PEOPLE IN TOUCH WITH US

And then, third, prayer gets our people in touch with us. I want my people to know that they have a ministry of prayer to give me. It has been a great help and blessing to let my people know that I desire for them to come into my office and pray for me. I do not want them to feel that the only time that they can come to my office is when they have some deep need or trying problem. They do not need to come in only when they are angry or upset about something. They can also come when things are going very well and they would like just to slip in and pray for me. I tell them that I would love to have them come and give me a booster shot of prayer. It doesn't need to take more than a few minutes, but it lets them know that they count with me and they can help me.

I do not say that as any put-on. I mean it deeply. I desperately need their prayers.

There have been many times when someone would drop in just for a few moments right at the time when I needed it the most. Oftentimes I found that a few moments like that opens a great reservoir of creativity and sermons come much more quickly and are more on target. Obviously, there are times when we do not want to be interrupted, but there are other times when people should know that we would be delighted if they would come in and pray for us. You just cannot feel lonely and isolated when you are surrounded by such a mighty avalanche of prayer.

People need to sense our confidence and spirit of authority, but they also need to know us in our frailty and fear. They need to know that we hurt too. We need their help. The religion of the stiff upper lip is not the way of Christ. "I am a rock. I am an island." Remember, a rock never cries and an island stands alone. Our Lord knew how to weep. In His hour of greatest trial he sought the comfort and support of the Three and he went through that night in unashamed agony. Many times our stiff upper-lip religion is not a sign of piety but of arrogance. We need our brothers and sisters in Christ. We cannot be the pastor and preacher we want to be without their prayer. We are changed by their prayer. The power of God comes through their prayer. They are priests to us! How dare we think we can get along without their prayer.

Beyond that, it is important to help our people understand the ministry of prayer that they can have for and in our worship services. Teach them to come in 10 minutes early and fill the room with the Light of Christ. Why waste the time in endless chatter when the very air itself could be filled with the life and power of God through their ministry of prayer? When worship has been going on before the service begins, the Shekinah of God is already there. I would teach my people and urge them on in this ministry. I knew when one of them had been praying and later I would tell them in private or in a personal note how helpful it was.

I would meet every Sunday at 8 a.m. with all the platform people and urge them again that the main ministry they would be having that morning would be to pray for the people. They were in a unique situation to see people — those who seemed burdened or hurt or angry — and they could pray for them. They could pray for me. Sometimes I

— to page 26

...nothing will put us in touch with our people and give power to our preaching like praying for them.

Taking the "Measure" of Spiritual Well-Being

DAVID O. MOBERG

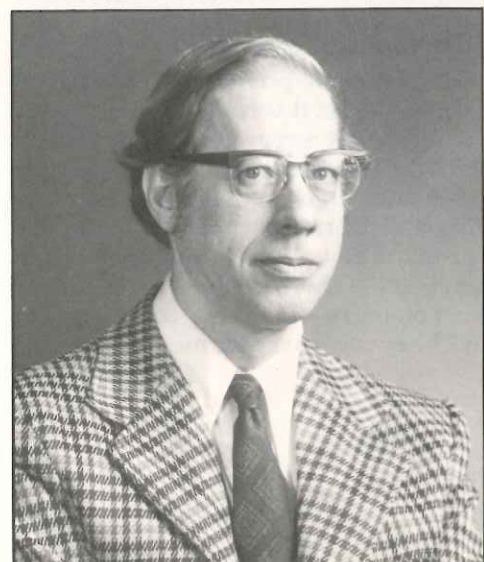
David O. Moberg is Professor of Sociology at Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he also served as Chairman of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology from 1968 to 1977. He was a faculty member at Bethel College, St. Paul, Minnesota, from 1949 to 1968. During sabbatical leaves he was a Fulbright Lecturer in the Netherlands in 1957-58 and in West Germany in 1964-65. He has been a guest instructor in summer sessions of the University of Southern California, Princeton Theological Seminary, Regent College and the Young Life Institute. He has spoken at Fuller Seminary on several occasions, most recently on the subject of this paper in January 1981.

The topic of this article is developed further in a book he edited, *Spiritual Well-Being: Sociological Perspectives*, as well as in his *Spiritual Well-Being: Background and Issues* for the 1971 White House Conference on Aging and numerous articles in professional journals. Perhaps the most significant of these in relationship to this article were a pair of papers on science and the spiritual nature of man which were published in 1967 in *Sociological Analysis* and the *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*.

There is an increasing amount of scientific research related to the spiritual nature and behavior of people. Some of its critics claim that it deals only with a reification or hypostatization, that the "imaginary concept of the human spirit" is treated as if it is ontologically real only because it was socially constructed or invented.

They argue that all evidences for it are properly interpreted as merely the consequences or reflections of emotional, biochemical, hormonal, social, psychological or other phenomena. Their interpretations are reflected in theories, research, publications, lectures, therapies, prescriptions for conduct and even sermons with a secular, this-worldly orientation. To believers in the reality of "the spiritual," such criticisms constitute reductionistic efforts to explain away the ultimate intrinsic nature of humanity itself.

Those who believe that God is, that God in essence is Spirit (John 4:24), that people are created in God's image and that the Scriptures are God-breathed or inspired are not likely to deny the spiritual nature of human beings. *Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible* (22d American edition, Eerdmans, 1970) indicates that the Hebrew *ruach* is translated (KJV) as spirit 240 times, as wind 92 times, as breath 28 times and as 18 other words from one to eight times each. The Greek *pneuma* is translated as spirit 151 times, as Spirit 137 times, as ghost 89 times and as five other words once or twice each. *Pneumatikos*, translated into spiritual or spiritually, appears 28 times and *phantasma*, meaning an apparition, is translated as spirit both times it appears. Frequent references to the spirit of man and of God appear all the way through the Bible, from Genesis 1:2 to Revelation 22:17. To be a "Bible-believing Christian" is to believe in the reality of the spiritual nature of humanity.



MOBERG

But is that spiritual nature so ephemeral, so intangible, so evanescent, so invisible, so ineffable that it is imperceptible, has no empirical manifestations whatever and hence cannot be subjected to any observational methods and techniques of the social and behavioral sciences? Even if we agree that belief in the spiritual is not merely the product of illusory or delusory fantasy, is it so supernatural that no evidences of it are observable?

BIBLICAL NORMS

This problem is compounded by normative statements in Scripture. Can we take literally the admonition to "Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil" (I Thes. 5:21-22)? Or is it impossible to test some things, notably things of the spirit? We also are told to test the spirits according to the criterion of Jesus Christ to find out whether they are the spirit of truth or of falsehood (I John 4:1-6). Similarly, the "fruit" people bear is an observable test of whether they belong to God's kingdom (Matt. 7:15-23; Luke 13:6-9; John 15:1-8; Gal. 5:13-26; Eph. 5:8-14), so "fruit testing" evaluation is advisable.

Yet we can be harmful and hypocritical when we attempt to evaluate the works and lives of others, so we must be very cautious in dealing with their faults (Matt. 7:1-5; Gal. 6:1-5), despite various examples and admonitions to do so (e.g., I Cor. 5:1-6:20; II Cor. 12:20-13:10; Gal. 6:1-5; James 5:19-20). Believers should first of all examine themselves, testing their own actions (Matt. 7:4-5; I Cor. 11:28, 31; II Cor. 13:5-6; Gal. 6:4). This is too easily taken in our society as something that applies only to each person individually, not to people collectively in small groups, congregations, denominations or even the nations that allege that they have "Christian values." We need to regain the sense of togetherness when we evaluate both our fruitfulness and sinfulness, as in Lamentations 3:40, "Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord." Evaluation is not just for individuals qua individuals.

The history of Christendom is rife with the consequences of duplicitous standards, harmful methods, wicked techniques and hypocritical actions associated with evaluating others and fallaciously imposing sanctions that were alleged to uphold the truth. The censorious spirit associated with

closed minds and authoritarian efforts to retain power and wealth under the guise of defending the gospel have resulted in the slaughter of thousands of saints and the agony of millions. Surely we do not want evaluation to return us to such evils. Yet to engage in it does not require that.

CRUDE MEASURES

A great deal of evaluation of spiritual concerns already occurs, but most of it uses only implicit measuring instruments. The anonymous government administrator reporting on "Finding Something Better" in *PGM News* (Feb. 1982) told how he kept records in the Men's Division of Pacific Garden Mission after his conversion, "making statistical reports of how each man was doing as a guide for the PGM staff. . . . In addition, I . . . kept the staff informed as to how each individual was doing spiritually." Regal Books has published several "Measure of" volumes by Gene Getz which identify the characteristics of spiritually mature or godly people (e.g., *Measure of a Man*, *Measure of a Woman*, *Measure of a Marriage*). The January 1982 cover of *Eternity Magazine* carries the words "What Measures Man?" with reference to its excellent editorial and articles on secular and Christian humanism.

The language of measurement also is reflected whenever we refer to a church congregation as more spiritual than another, a person as more sanctified or dedicated than most, or a Bible study group as clearly "led by the Spirit" in contrast to others which presumably are "less spiritual." If there are discernible differences, why not identify (i.e., measure) them precisely instead of in the crude language of everyday generalities?

There are numerous instances of Christian churches and fellowships which have tests for membership in good standing, to say nothing of screening procedures to determine who is eligible for confirmation, believer's baptism or joining the fellowship. When people search for a congregation to join, they apply criteria which often are so implicit that they cannot even be directly verbalized. Yet the language used to reflect upon such experiences often incorporates the concept of "spiritual." Rightly or wrongly.

The argument that God alone is the appropriate judge of the results of Christian activity has often been an excuse for carelessness and ineffectiveness, a cloak for sins of omission or commission and a source of goal displacement in religious institutions. Evaluation is essential in Christian work. It includes measurement, preferably with reliable instruments, instead of crude, uncontrolled observations.

The errors that have been made by various groups in the past are no valid excuse for not developing systematic measures. For example, many fundamentalists once gave the impression that if a person refrained from such "gross sins" as drinking alcoholic beverages, dancing, swearing, fornicating and going to movies, then one was a good Christian. Bernard Ramm critiqued this approach in a Bethel College chapel address (ca. 1952) as indicating that "The best Christian is a dead horse. He does none of these things."

GOOD MEASURES NEEDED

There are numerous potential uses for instruments to measure the spiritual domain of life. As indicated already, they are needed for evaluation and planning in all groups which aim to enhance the spiritual well-being of people. Too often evaluation currently occurs on the casual committee level of sharing a few anecdotal examples of people helped by a program, verbalizing that if even only one "lost sheep" has been recovered the venture was worth it all and stressing that the Christian's task is merely to remain faithful, leaving all results to God and not questioning the outcomes of sincere efforts. No attempt is made to determine whether the help to one or a few persons was accompanied by harm to others, nor whether equivalent effort and expense in different channels might have accomplished far more. With appropriate measures, before-and-after tests could help to determine whether or not improvements resulted from the program to arouse, renew, or strengthen the spiritual lives of participants.

The social indicators movement to measure the level of well-being of communities and nations has generally ignored religious and spiritual variables. Despite occasional casual references to them, attempts to determine the quality of life of people have almost entirely omitted the spiritual domain from measures of happiness, life satisfaction and morale. Only if there is a reliable, nonsectarian and validated instrument such as an index of spiritual well-being, is it

. . . attempts to determine the quality of life of people have almost entirely omitted the spiritual domain from measures of happiness, life satisfaction and morale.

Only if we clearly distinguish mental from spiritual health will we be able to determine scientifically the ways in which they are related to each other.

likely that the role of religious and spiritual commitment will be recognized in that significant worldwide movement.

Obviously, such an instrument can be used in the research of social and behavioral scientists to discover the relationship between spiritual well-being and such variables as physical health, mental health, addictions, crime, marital success and failure, political involvement and almost any other conceivable subject. Only if we are able to measure the spiritual condition will such research be possible. Many pastors assume that spiritual hunger is the root condition underlying social and personal problems. This can be tested to the satisfaction of a skeptical intellectual community only after developing appropriate measurements.

An index or inventory of spiritual well-being also can be used in pastoral care, clinical counseling, chaplaincies, nursing and other helping professions. As an "intake" instrument, it could quickly identify symptoms of spiritual illness and health. It thus would reduce the initial time needed merely for assessment of client needs, call attention to topics otherwise easily overlooked and enable more efficient use of the therapist's skills.

That it is possible to develop empirical instruments for the measurement of phenomena which are not directly observable is evident in the accomplishments of the behavioral sciences. Sociological and psychological tests have been constructed for the measurement of alienation, anomie, life satisfaction, loneliness, intelligence, motivation and a wide range of other subjects which are just as intangible, even if not as broad, as spiritual well-being. That some of them have been abused is no reason for abandoning the effort. (Is there anything at all that has not been abused by someone?)

PROBLEMS OF MEASURING SWB

There are, to be sure, significant barriers to the development of instruments for measuring spiritual well-being. Even to attempt to do so assumes that the "spiritual" is ontologically real, not just a reification. This may be one of the reasons why

Christians are more likely to work on this topic than are those nonbelievers who reduce all evidences of the spiritual to psychological feelings, social forces or mythical traditions.

Values clearly intrude even more deeply and obviously into this subject than most others which attract the attention of social and behavioral scientists. The variegated theoretical, ideological and socio-psychological schools of thought within each of the many disciplines and professions concerned with the human spirit often deviate so widely that one group considers indicative of wellness is viewed by another as symptomatic of spiritual pathology.

Conceptual issues are complex. Some definitions of "the spiritual" are so broad that they encompass everything related to humanity. Under them it is impossible to distinguish the scope and coverage of the concept from anything else, so all scientific analysis is automatically precluded. Major components of spiritual well-being, and sometimes its very essence, are alleged to be feelings (as of peace, contentment, and satisfaction), mental-emotional states, wholesome relationships with other people, a sense of meaning and purpose for life, autonomy and religious faith, to mention but a few. We have no societal definition; the concept is not a part of everyday communication, even though the word "spiritual" appears often in a wide range of daily contexts.

Definitional confusion increases the pressures for operationalized approaches which clearly specify the boundaries of the term. Only if we clearly distinguish mental from spiritual health will we be able to determine scientifically the ways in which they are related to each other.

Health also is very difficult to define. Most definitions are negative, defining it as the absence of illness. The health professions similarly have been oriented more toward the treatment of ill health than the preservation of good health. At times I wonder whether the same is true of spiritual health: will we be forced to define it operationally as the absence of spiritual illness? We then may risk dealing with it more from the perspective of "curing" than of "preventing" or of "treating" rather than "nurturing."

The concept of spiritual well-being appears to be fairly clear in a Christian frame of reference — it pertains to the "fruit of the Spirit" in contrast to the "works of the

flesh" (Gal. 5:19-26). It is not as easy to "measure" these for research purposes, however, as some church leaders imply ought to be the case. What explicit criteria can we use to determine the absence or degree of presence of each fruit?

Even if there were universal acceptance of the general nature of spiritual well-being, there could be considerable disagreement about the specific indicators, traits or symptoms to use in determining the degree of spiritual wellness. Is its essence internal feelings, emotions and attitudes, or does it consist of objectively observable external actions? Is it primarily religious in nature, or can it be totally secular? Is spiritual health a dichotomous either/or, present/absent phenomenon or is it a continuous variable with a wide range of degrees of wellness and illness?

Furthermore, since it is possible to "fake" the respective components, is it possible for anyone but God really to know whether any given person truly has spiritual well-being? When people know they are under investigation, they often react differently from the way they do in everyday life. Chances are, too, that spirituality is multi-dimensional. When we observe but a few of its many components, we may emerge with different conclusions from those based upon other sets of indicators.

It is likely, indeed, that no single set of criteria of spiritual health and illness will satisfy all ideological and religious groups. It may be necessary to develop sub-indexes for those which insist upon a particular set of criteria, even though we may discover a common central core of indicators upon which all agree. Mere mention of the qualities of a "spiritually-minded person" which are stressed by a fundamentalist Protestant in contrast to those identified by a radical evangelical, to say nothing of the contrasts between traditional and liberation-theology Catholics, Orthodox and Reform Jews and the divergent sects within Islam, is a sufficient reminder of the difficulties researchers of religion face in our religiously pluralistic society.

Actually, reductionism is inevitable in dealing with this subject. It is impossible to understand fully anything at all that we find in God's vast creation. Even if I were to understand some (tiny!) topic just as completely from the sociological perspective as is humanly possible, I still would not fully grasp all of the psychological, economic, anthropological, historical, literary, philosophical, theological, biochemical, physical and numerous other perspectives of that

same subject. In this life, we know only in part. Our "solid knowledge" represents but a poor reflection of multifarious reality.

THE RESEARCH TASK

With the growing interest in "the spiritual" as manifested in daily life, in conventional Christianity, in cultic new religions and in pseudopsychological attempts to develop the human potential, there inevitably will be more and more attempts to "objectify" it for research and therapeutic purposes. Christians from numerous disciplines ought to be on the frontier of such activity precisely because we recognize that whatever we do can reflect only small samples of the total realm of the spiritual in the human universe. Those who recognize that "reductionism" prevails in the study of every complex human phenomenon are more likely to have the humility to realize that their own grasp of the subject represents but part of the total picture. They will not assume that they have the whole thing in hand.

This means, of course, that there are countless potential measures of spiritual well-being. The thousands or millions of components and reflectors of it can be selected in various ways and put together in innumerable combinations. Different measures do not invalidate the research. On the contrary, comparing one's results with those from other instruments helps to validate new tools.

Breaking down the subject analytically may lead to a taxonomy with an accompanying battery of indexes to measure many of those sub-categories. Even though the larger "true reality" behind them is wholistic, the finitude of our minds usually requires us to examine only bits and pieces. For this, the term "index" is more appropriate than "scale," for it conveys the idea of "a collection of indicators" rather than of "measuring the whole thing."

Triangulation is essential on a topic as vast and complex as spiritual well-being. We need to view it from many perspectives, including those of the numerous academic disciplines and helping professions, differently biased persons, divergent methodologies and techniques of investigation, varied foundational postulates, disparate samples of people as subjects of research

— to page 26

...is it possible for anyone but God really to know whether any given person truly has spiritual well-being?

Spiritual Growth and Church Renewal

RICHARD F. LOVELACE

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What connection is there between the personal spiritual growth of pastors and laity and the renewal of the church as a whole? When you and your congregation are making individual spiritual progress, is that promoting renewal in your denomination? And does denominational renewal — and even interdenominational growth in Christian unity — affect your personal spiritual vitality?

I am convinced that the answer to the second and third questions above is "yes." The rest of this brief study will try to answer the first and suggest the reasons why there is such a close connection between individual and corporate spiritual health.

Only a few years ago these questions would have occasioned blank stares in many parts of the church, even among evangelicals. In 1976, when I was writing *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, no Protestants I knew had ever heard of Spiritual Theology and few Catholics were working in the discipline. It seemed that everyone was somehow averting their gaze from a most pivotal factor in the church's life, for spirituality was treated as "the neglected stepchild of the Christian movement . . . often reduced to an emotional frosting spread over the surface of other parts of Christianity which are considered more substantial and important, such as the maintenance of sound doctrine, correct social engagement or institutional policy . . . but seldom recognized to be the indispensable foundation without which all of these are powerless and fall into decay" (*Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, p. 12).

We can be grateful that the climate has warmed in recent years. Protestants have begun to appropriate meditation, spiritual direction and other methods of growth from the treasury of Catholic piety and are again attempting to integrate these on a Reformation base. Some Catholics are

becoming aware of Puritan and Pietist spirituality and are even asking for translations and anthologies of Protestant classics. Even mainline church leaders campaigning for office have to include church growth and spiritual renewal in their slogans! San Francisco Seminary on the West Coast and General Seminary in New York, both have Institutes of Christian Spirituality to supercharge their academic programs. Protestant evangelicals can no longer assume that they have a corner on piety. There is a real possibility that they will stir up the competition to pass them in a cloud of prayer, leaving them grinding away at technical skills in the dust of academia.

But spirituality is terribly easy to mismanage. Just because it has such a crucial role in the church's life, when Christians begin to seek spiritual growth, the world, the flesh and the Devil conspire to dilute spirituality so that it becomes a luminous counterfeit, or rigorize it until it becomes a holy horror. If all this does not make us positively allergic to it, we can very easily fall into the trap of confining it in some private oasis of emotional peace where it has no connection with the world and the rest of the church.

But corporate and individual spirituality are vitally interconnected. If "truth is in order to godliness," godliness in turn is in order to reformation and renewal, to the invigoration of the church's life and thus the transformation of society. In one of Mahler's orchestral songs on a text by Ruckert, the mystical poet says, "I have become lost to the world . . . I live alone: in my song, in my love, in my heaven!" This is a common perception of what it means to be "spiritual," but it has nothing to do with biblical spirituality! We need solitude periodically in order to hear God's voice among all the other voices and converse with Him alone. But the result of meditating on His truth will be the quickening of faith, the kind of faith which conquers kingdoms, enforces justice, receives promises and becomes a terror to the hosts of darkness (cf. Hebrews 10:33). Centering on God imparts a powerful centrifugal force to the lives of saints. Think of Athanasius, Augustine, Bernard, Teresa, Luther, Calvin, Spener, Wesley — Spirit-driven activists whose meditations thrust them outward into the church and the world!

There are several reasons why the development of spirituality can so easily become what the world (and socially concerned Christians) often say it is: sanctified egoism, emotional introversion, a Christian

version of the cult of human potential. The most obvious is the subtle but powerful gravity of indwelling sin, which warps and bends even renewed life in Christ into self-centered patterns. As John of the Cross points out, there are "spiritual" forms of all the deadly sins — and gluttony for spiritual experience, or pride in having it, or envy because we lack it, are all means of short-circuiting the whole purpose of grace, which is to turn us outward in loving God and others.

A second reason why so many Christians remain trapped in spiritual self-concern, unconcerned about issues in the church and society, is that a concentration of methods of spiritual growth can divert is from the source of all spiritual power; simple faith centered on Christ. The technology of piety can be intimidating! But why is it that we never hear much about the devotional exercises of the spiritual giants in Scripture? The power of the Spirit seems to come upon them simply as a consequence of believing prayer, sweeping them along in the purposes of God — and often when they are with others, not involved in lonely ascetic labors. "Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith?" asks Paul. "Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith?" (Gal 3:2, 5 RSV). It is not difficult to create whole congregations of spiritual hypochondriacs who will never want to hear any sermon that does not apply to their immediate personal needs if we make spiritual health seem complicated and hard to achieve. But the purpose of spiritual renewal is to help us get out of ourselves and on with the work of the Kingdom!

And there is good evidence that if we do not go this route we will never find real spirituality. The figure of the body of Christ in the New Testament is no loose metaphor; it is an accurate description of the church as a spiritual organism. Christians are interdependent in their spiritual vitality. Maturity and stability come "when each part is working properly," so that "speaking the truth in love" to one another, we can "grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Eph. 4:15, 16 RSV). This means that a healthy congregation is full of persons who are looking out

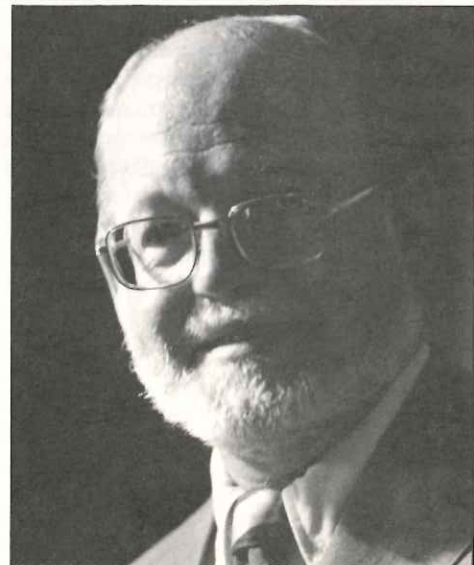
for one another's spiritual growth. It also means that a local church should be helping and praying for the spiritual health of other congregations in its area (instead of unconsciously competing with these, following the gravity of party spirit, which is corporate self-interest). It means that congregational leaders should be earnestly concerned for the spiritual health of their denomination and its local judicatory — not just ignoring it until it becomes debilitated and then splitting away in anger.

And I am increasingly convinced that one of the reasons local churches fail to display more of the spiritual vitality of the early church is that Christians are so divided from one another today — in our homes, our congregations, our communities, our nation and our world. The church described in the New Testament was *together*, despite all its pressing weaknesses (heresy in Galatia, immorality and disorder in Corinth) and despite these problems — or perhaps in order to solve them! — it was suffused with the power of the Spirit. Is our personal spiritual vigor weaker because the whole body is weakened by its divisions? Is that the reason that when we pray with others, even with (or at least for) our enemies, we sense an increase in spiritual strength?

The last thing that most evangelicals connect with spirituality is "the ecumenical movement." But how much the work of the Spirit today seems to involve Christians gathering together — not only in the great globe-circling networks of communities with similar gifts and outlook (the Lausanne affiliates with their concern for evangelism, the charismatics with their concern for spiritual renewal and the World Council with its concerns for justice) — but in mixtures that break across these lines, in which members of the body who have seldom spoken together begin to share their gifts with one another in love! I publish a newsletter, *Renewal*, which has been surveying spiritual awakening in the mainline churches. The more I have examined these, the more clearly a pattern of convergence is apparent — the coming together of parts of each church which have been alienated from one another, in new awareness of one another's gifts and the increasing convergence also of the denominations themselves. Real spiritual awakenings are centripetal: they pull the separated parts of Christ's body together. For God has designed us not just as temples of the Holy Spirit; he is building us together

— to page 26

...the purpose of spiritual renewal is to help us get out of ourselves and on with the work of the Kingdom!



LOVELACE

The Problem of Prayer According to Romans 8:26-27

ROBERT P. MEYE

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Dean Meye is author of *Jesus and the Twelve* (Eerdmans, 1968) and a contributor to *Birth Control and the Christian*. (Tyndale House, 1969). He has also had articles and reviews published in numerous religious and scholarly journals.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

Hidden, for all practical purposes — or so it seems, at least — in the middle of what is often heralded as the banner chapter of the Bible is a passage which merits new attention. I say hidden, for the truth which this passage conveys is all too seldom factored into Christian teaching concerning prayer. Hidden also, for that matter, because this supposedly obscure text has been lost in the greater attention given to the many well-known passages from this single chapter.

Romans 8:26-27 offers a fairly straightforward statement:

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (RSV)

There is little about the Greek text which gives the scholar an edge over the layperson in "cracking open" this passage. Neither the meaning of words, nor grammar, nor textual apparatus, hold any secrets which could be said to provide a key to understanding. (These assertions can easily be verified by reviewing all the standard commentaries on the text.)

As we shall see, the key to understanding Romans 8:26-27 is rather to see it lodged in its context, in Romans 8, in Romans generally and in the Pauline corpus otherwise. The proverbial saying, "All roads lead to Rome" may be adapted: the theological thoroughfares of Paul and Romans, not to mention the NT otherwise, pass through this station. If Romans 8 is seen as the heartland of the great truths which govern Christian faith and devotion, then Romans 8:26-27 lies in the heart of the heartland. This text conveys strong hope to the weary pilgrim; we need to stop at this station, be quiet and listen daily to its relatively simple,



MEYE

but "strange" and powerful word.

At the expense of prolonging "Introduction," let me note a typical pattern of thought, prevalent in Christian devotion, which needs reexamination in light of this passage. Prayer is often viewed as an 'act of last resort.' The slogan, "When all else fails . . . pray," is not just a notion floating around on the periphery of the Christian world. No, there are too many Christians for whom this is frequently a controlling principle. Coupled to this "philosophy" (theology would not be an adequate description of the perception) is another perception that rather sees prayer as the quintessence of our best self and effort. It is not only (properly) recognized as a quintessential spiritual act; it is also recognized as the standard by which we can measure the progress of our Christian pilgrimage.

Father Richard Hauser, in an autobiographical note on his own spiritual pilgrimage in his very helpful book, *In His Spirit: A Guide to Today's Spirituality*, tells a story which is surely the story of countless Christians who will see themselves in his story:

My personal understanding of prayer has not always respected the centrality of the Spirit. I believe that I, and many Christians I knew, were led to a misunderstanding of prayer by not adequately grasping two common definitions of prayer we were taught. We understood them both as being accomplished without the Holy Spirit, in a self-outside-God model of the person. I was taught that prayer was "conversation with Christ." I erroneously understood this to mean that as in ordinary human conversation my role was to compose the script, and if the script was well-composed and contained appropriate words, thoughts, images, feelings and resolutions, Christ would reward me with an experience of his presence. But the outcome of the prayer was "raising my heart and mind to God." Again I erroneously understood this to mean that it was solely by my own effort that my heart would be raised and that if I did this well, God would make his presence known. In both misunderstandings, I saw myself as initiating all movement to God; God's role was to reward me with personal consolation. In both I saw prayer as primarily verbal and depending on correct use of my intellectual powers; I was anxious if there was too much silence and would eagerly begin a new string of thoughts to achieve my goal of consolation.

Here we encounter a severe problem — for our best efforts too seldom offer any pattern of Christian devotion that one would like to present to God as his/her best effort. Indeed, the library shelves of the devout are populated with books on prayer, which stand as silent and dust-covered witnesses to failure — as well as yearning. Romans 8:26-27 suggests that we need to come at the problem of prayer from another angle.

The present essay will devote itself to what is clearly said in Romans 8:26-27 in its larger setting. It can only offer a beginning statement about one of the most important issues in the world for the Christian life — prayer. Prayer is critical — of course. The Psalms bear their massive witness to that fact; so does the Lord's Prayer bear its persistent witness in the liturgical life of the Church. And all the literature on Christian spirituality underlines the essential role of prayer in Christian life. Just because of the importance of prayer, we need always to be clear and Christian, i.e., biblical, in our perspective. To that end, this essay only wants to say one thing: Romans 8:26-27 calls us to view prayer in *theological* perspective first, last and always. At the same time, it is a warning to abandon the perspective of a "theology from below." If the eighth chapter of Romans is the Bible's great statement of the sovereignty of God, then Romans 8:26-27 is a witness to the sovereignty of God in prayer, wherein God securely — and lovingly — enfolds us into his own divine life. To the text!

THE CONTEXT OF ROMANS 8:26-27

The importance of seeing Romans 8:26-27 in context has been underlined. We can only give limited attention to that context; additional time and space would greatly multiply testimony. The order here will be to attend first to the larger context of Romans as a whole and then to focus on the eighth chapter itself.

In one sense, Paul's argument in Romans concerns the way in which the power of God offers the gracious context for coping with human need — the great need being the human need of divine justification in light of the history of personal and corporate sin. Only God is able to set things

right. Hence, Paul begins with clear statements about the *power of God* manifest in the resurrection of Christ "according to the Spirit of holiness" (1:4). In the same introductory manner, Paul underlines God's *message* of salvation, his apostolic treasure, as "the power of God for salvation." This sets the stage for the Pauline witness to the power of God as Creator (1:18ff.), Judge (2:1ff.) and Redeemer (3:21ff.). In contrast, the race is viewed in its inability, its weakness. It is captive to sin, incapable of the righteousness to which it knows itself to be called and ultimately subject to death and dying (1:18-3:20; 5:12-21). In contrast, Abraham, the great paradigm of faith, who reckoned his body to be as good as dead, did not weaken in faith, "fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised" (4:21). Abraham believed in the God "who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist" (4:17). The love of God in Christ is revealed in that he gives himself sacrificially on the cross for those who are "weak" (5:6), sinners and enemies.

Paul knows — and so reminds the Christians at Rome — that we are still subject to weakness after faith. In Romans 6 and 7, Paul reviews the struggle of faith. Chapter 7 especially — disputed though its message is in the history of interpretation — could not offer a clearer statement of human weakness in the struggle of faith. (Even the arguments of those who do not see Romans 7 as a description of *Christian* existence leave one with some feeling of the "weakness" of the human situation, short of the consummation of all things.) And Romans 8 begins with its own note on the weakness of the flesh (8:3), which note is heard throughout the chapter — thankfully *not* as the dominant note! The power of God in righteousness and salvation and the weakness of humankind in sin and death provides the prior setting for Romans 8. And Romans 9-11 continues this pattern. For example, using the image of God as potter, Paul declares that it is the *power of God* which is made known in his patient endurance of perishable vessels of wrath (9:22ff.).

We may now focus our attention on Romans 8, which is a discrete unit in the structure of Romans. We can best understand the movement of Romans 8 in continuity with the opening statement of Paul in Romans 1, wherein Paul underlines the manifestation of the power of God in raising Jesus from the dead according to

... our best efforts too seldom offer any pattern of Christian devotion that one would like to present to God as his/her best effort.

Like the disciples in the garden, we grow weary in prayer precisely in the face of eschatological urgency.

the Spirit of holiness, thus designating him "Son"; the Gospel then, is described by Paul as "the Gospel concerning his Son" (1:3). This same note is lifted up in the eighth chapter, but now the believer is drawn into this pattern. Anyone who is in Christ is in the Spirit and the Spirit in him (see esp. 8:9-11). This Spirit makes us alive in the present moment (8:5-13) — and will give life to our mortal bodies in the resurrection (8:11). This same Spirit of power places on our lips the cry, "Abba, Father" (8:15), thus bearing witness to the fact that we, in faith, have been made children of God and heirs with Christ (8:16-17). Because of this, we will be glorified with Christ (8:17). The thrust of Romans 8 is proclamation of a glorious and powerful filial existence on the part of those who are in Christ Jesus.

Some provisos — which are not really provisos — are attached to this affirmation. From Romans 8:17 through Romans 8:27 Paul comments successively on the present limitations on the full revelation of divine glory and power. (The two are linked!) Here he speaks of a three-fold groaning: (1) The *creation* itself groans, being in bondage to decay (8:19-23a); (2) We ourselves groan in like travail — waiting for the adoption of sons, the resurrection of the body (8:23b-25) (note the nexus of resurrection and Sonship, as in Romans 1); (3) When we come to the third groan, it turns out to be the groaning of *God himself*, i.e., the groaning for us of *God the Spirit* (8:26-27). The Pauline word concerning the third groaning reveals how God himself enters into our own situation and makes common cause with us. Before commenting in detail on the significance of this groaning, we need to see it in relation to the remainder of chapter 8.

In Romans 8:28-30, Paul shows how God works everything for good with those who love him. The total existence of the believer is governed by a divine plan which will not fail. Then, in Romans 8:31-39, Paul comments in further detail how "God is for us" (8:31). The relationship of God the Father to the divine Son is lifted up as the sign of God's ultimate concern for us; the important point to be noticed here is that the Son

is at the right hand of God interceding for us (8:34). God is for us. Christ is for us. The Holy Spirit is for us. *Can we avoid the conclusion that the One who is for us in all things is also, in his own sovereign way, for us in our prayer?* The only real question has to do with the way in which we understand this, i.e., how God is for us in our prayer? We are now in a position to return to Romans 8:26-27, to explore its own promise concerning God's prayer for us. The word "promise" is well used here — for Romans 4 makes the great point (using Abraham as paradigm) that Christian life is life lived in promises. That surely covers the reality of prayer.

THE MESSAGE OF ROMANS 8:26-27

Now that we have listened, albeit briefly, to the larger context of Romans 8:26-27, we are in a position to listen to the text itself. In doing so, there are few major problems that need detain us. Our observations, briefly framed and aligned seritiam, can be used as theses for further discussion:

1. *We are weak in our praying.* Paul declares that we are weak in our praying — but in the midst of a chapter which otherwise speaks of the operation in us of the life-giving and powerful Spirit of God. Therefore, this emphasis on our weakness needs to be received with the more attentiveness. Actually, Paul begins by noting that the Spirit helps us *in our weakness*, but the second part of 8:26 makes it clear that the weakness in question is *our praying*. Paul no more exempts himself from this weakness than from the weakness detailed in Romans 7; hence, we understand this to be a comprehensive statement regarding Christian life. It is true of us no matter where we stand in our Christian pilgrimage. No one is permitted to "boast" in his/her prayer-life. Here, as everywhere, we remain children of the God of *grace*.

2. *Our weakness in prayer is that we do not know how we ought to pray.* The translation here suggested "how we ought to pray"; is aptly ambiguous, for the Greek text allows the idea of *content*, as well as *manner* — as the varied translations suggest. Both our knowledge and our sense of priority are deficient. Like the disciples in the garden, we grow weary in prayer precisely in the face of eschatological urgency (Mark 14:37, 41). And, also like the disciples of old, we need to be led by Jesus in the very content of our

prayer. The Lord's Prayer — and the entire Scripture — is abiding witness to this fact. Indeed, it was precisely in their encounter with the One who prayed as the True Son that the disciples were humbled to seek guidance in praying — in spite of their long history of prayer. We all know ourselves to be "weak" in both respects; the gathering of books on prayer on our corporate devotional bookshelf is witness to our weakness.

3. *God the Spirit anticipates and cares for the weakness manifest in our prayer.* The translations "how" and "what," already suggested as alternate possibilities, are substantiated by Paul's concrete description of the Spirit's ministry on our behalf. In the first place, the Spirit groans, paralleling the urgent groaning of a creation subject to death and yearning for redemption. However weak we may be, we can trust that the prayer of the Spirit always has about it this eschatological urgency. The One who knows the end from the beginning knows how to intercede for us in light of the consummation of all things. At the same time, the Holy Spirit knows *what* to pray (8:27). He intercedes according to the *will of God*. God is privy to the unspoken desires of his own Spirit who dwells in us and knows us better than we know ourselves. The Spirit links the heart of the child of God and the heart of God in the moment of prayer, as in all things.

4. *We are aided in prayer, both in the fact of the Spirit's prayer for us, and also in our knowledge and experience of that selfsame prayer.* We know our "Abba, Father" prayer to be the work of the Spirit in us (8:15-16). And so we also know all prayer to be the work of God in us. We know that the Spirit of God is active above, and beyond and at the end of our prayer with all its weakness. The knowledge of the Spirit's prayer for us functions in the same way as our knowledge of God's active love for us; that knowledge provides the occasion for and stimulus to the exercise of love in our own otherwise loveless life.

We are left with one exegetical question to which we must address ourselves. Oscar Cullmann and Ernst Kaesemann, who otherwise represent decidedly different theological perspectives, both understand the prayer of the Spirit, the "sighs too deep for words," as glossolaly.¹ As interesting and attractive as this thesis is (with its promise of unraveling a difficult expression) it does not seem required by the text for the following reasons:² (1) There is no hint otherwise in Romans of any problem in the area of glossolaly at Rome similar to that dealt with by Paul in Corinth. (2) In spite of Kaesemann's argument to the contrary, it would need to be shown that Paul thought of glossolaly as the *Spirit's* utterance rather than the ecstatic speech of the Christian person (see I Cor. 14:2, 4-6, 9, 13, 14, 23, 26). (3) The term *alaletos*, though subject to varied interpretations, rather seems to speak of that which is not articulated publicly. Verse 27 offers some support of this contention, i.e., in the quiet, searching activity there described. (4) Most of all, whereas glossolaly was viewed by Paul as an activity of some Christians, Romans 8:26-27 speaks of Christians without exception — and that is what lends the text its hope-giving power. One must be careful not to prove *too* much. Christian speaking in tongues does not happen apart from the work of the Spirit; that is clear in Acts 2 and in I Corinthians 12 and 14. However, nowhere in I Corinthians does Paul present the Holy Spirit as the one who speaks; on the other hand, the whole point of Romans 8:26-27 is that the Spirit himself (*alla auto to pneuma*; 8:26) is the one praying for us — and that with "inarticulate groans" (*stenagmois aleletois*; 8:26), wherein it is not at all clear that Paul means to designate audible speech. Even if the thesis represented by Cullmann and Kaesemann is rejected, it does have the particular value of drawing attention to the role of the Spirit in prayer; that point cannot be overstated.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

We have spoken of the sovereign *love* of God for us, which not only sustains us, but actually precedes us in prayer. How do we now avoid deterministic and mechanistic notions of prayer which leave us unfree and, if unfree, unable really to love or to pray? Paul himself provides the critical key in connecting prayer to adoption and *sonship*.

We know that the Spirit of God is active above, and beyond and at the end of our prayer with all its weakness.

...our prayer life, which may appear all but dead, is subject to this life-giving power of God. This is our hope...

The Spirit's prayer for us is perhaps best understood through the parable of the natural relationship of parent and child in the natural order of things. Every parent wishes for a child that the child will, just as its parent, be able to communicate with other persons fully over the whole range of human discourse and need. Deficiencies of hearing, speaking and reasoning are severe blows to parental concern (but at best new stimuli to human effort and love). The parent shares information, assists in articulation and actively enters into the child's speaking and hearing. Have you ever seen a parent bent over a child, anxiously assisting that child in communicating the desires of its heart? In this picture it is clear that the parent has made the desires of the child's his or her own heart's desire. One could easily speak of the parent groaning in seeking to bring the desire of the child to expression. Indeed, both internally and audibly the parent formulates what it is that the child wishes to say. That is a parable of the prayer of the Spirit, catching up our own deepest longings in accord with the will of God. It is, however, a parable of our weakness, as well as of the power of God.

Of course, there is a gulf separating the children of God from the transcendent Father. And parables must not be pressed too far (nor made the subject of apology when they fail to represent the whole truth perfectly!) The divine-human filial relationship differs from the purely human filial relationship in that God has the *power* to effect in us the desires that he is planting in us. And all this is the work of His Spirit! The extent of that power is signalled by the connection of that filial tie to the resurrection. God is working in us with a power that gives life to the dead (Romans 4:27); even our prayer life, which may appear all but dead, is subject to this life-giving power of God. This is our hope — founded on the promise of God in Romans 8:26-27.

What is the problem of prayer? Perhaps the chief problem of prayer is our failure to realize when we kneel down to pray or don't know how to pray, that the loving heavenly Father is there aiding us even as we pray. The one who has adopted us in the Son places his own name on our lips in the power of the Spirit — "Abba, Father."

NOTES

1. Richard J. Hauser, S.J., *In His Spirit: A Guide to Today's Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1961). See especially chapter 3: "The Holy Spirit and Personal Prayer."

2. Oscar Cullmann, "Prayer according to the Pauline Epistles," an unpublished paper given by Dr. Cullmann on April 16, 1978, at The Ecumenical Institute for Advanced Theological Studies in Tantur, by Bethlehem in Israel; Ernst Kaesemann, *Perspectives on Paul*, "The Cry for Liberty in the Worship of the Church," in *Perspectives on Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), pp. 12-137; also Kaesemann's brilliant *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmanns, 1980), pp. 239-243.

3. See also the arguments against Kaesemann offered in C. E. B. Cranfield's *magnum opus*, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. I, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Limited, 1977), pp. 420-424.

4. A further, and most helpful, meditation on prayer, with special reference to Romans 8:26-27, may be found in the work of Kornelis H. Miskotte, *The Roads of Prayer* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1968), esp. pp. 117-129. Father Hauser's book (Note 1) is also very helpful in detailing a spirituality which consciously attends to the work of the Holy Spirit in all spirituality. ■

C.S. Lewis as apologist, as defender of the Christian faith, is a familiar figure. Indeed he is quoted everywhere in Christian periodicals and pulpits. Whether he actually said or wrote what is attributed to him, the phrase, "As C.S. Lewis says," has become the guarantee that what follows it is not only orthodox but also wise and often humorous. The life and writings of the mid-life convert from atheism to Christianity have many parallels to that and those of St. Augustine of Hippo, not the least of which is a solid claim at the title, "Father of the Church."

Another topic is also ubiquitous in the Christian press: from *The Wittenburg Door to Leadership to Theology, News and Notes* (March 1979) a stream of articles on spirituality, prayer, spiritual direction, and the like has been growing to full spate. After the desert of the past two decades, a tremendous thirst for the experience of God is present in our culture and in the Church. So it was only a matter of time before someone was to link the person of C.S. Lewis with the topic of spirituality. But this was inevitable for a more profound reason: the reason why Lewis's books sell annually in the five and six-figure range almost 20 years after his death is that, more than providing knowledge about God and a defense of Christian belief and practice, they give both direction in the ways of going to God and, through the imagination, the experience of how God actually loves us and works in our lives. More than explaining that belief in heaven is reasonable, Lewis gets us excited about going there.

I have two tasks, then, in this essay: explaining the theme of spiritual direction and more specifically the meaning of the term "soul friend," and expanding our experience of the Oxford apologist to include this wider vision of his role in the life of the Church over the past 40 years (and likely for many more years to come). To do the first, let me imitate a main feature of Lewis's method and tell a story.

An early Irish saint, Comgall, was visiting a monastery one day and joined the monks in singing the psalms. After the liturgy, he told the monks that he had seen a vision in which all of them appeared to be headless bodies. Asked by the frightened monks what he thought the vision might mean, Comgall replied that "a seeker after holiness who has no *anmchara* is 'a body with no head.' And his vision had shown that none of the monks had an *anmchara*, i.e., a soul-friend."

This story is told by Donald Nicholl in his excellent book, *Holiness*. Nicholl goes on to define "soul-friend" in this way:

Everyone needs a soul-friend, someone who loves you so much that he will never allow you to stray from the path of holiness without both rebuking and encouraging you. . . . The inestimable service that a soul-friend renders to his friend is twofold: first to lay bare any self-deception or lying-to-oneself that the friend might be prone to; second, to lift his friend out of depression by giving him heart, which is what the word "encouragement" literally means — giving heart . . .¹

One can recognize in this passage several New Testament themes central to an understanding of the biblical foundation for Christian spiritual direction: the model shepherding that our Lord exhibits toward his apostles and St. Paul demonstrates to congregations and individuals alike; the instruction in prayer which punctuates our Lord's teaching throughout the Gospels and which crowns St. Paul's letters; the criteria for distinguishing God's will and Spirit from our own and from demonic wills and spirits, criteria which are never far away from the attention of the Master or his "Thirteenth Apostle";² and everywhere the *paraklesis*, the encouragement which is always exhortation at the same time.

So from New Testament times down to the present has flowed a stream of spiritual companionship, sometimes the more formal relationship between a specially trained, often clerical master and the disciple, newly commenced in seminary or recently come to Christ and sometimes the earnest friendships between Christians, one only slightly farther ahead on the Christian way than the other, and most often layperson to layperson. Wherever the emphasis in any particular age or in any particular relationship falls, the basic description of this Christian companionship is always the same: it is a gift from God given to persons

C.S. Lewis: Soul Friend

PAUL F. FORD

Paul F. Ford is a special lecturer in theology at Fuller Theological Seminary and a graduate student in the School of Theology. He has assisted Dean Robert Meyer for five years in teaching New Testament Spirituality. He received his B.A. in philosophy and M.A. in religion from St. John's Seminary, Camarillo, California, where he studied (but has not been ordained) for the Roman Catholic priesthood. He was a Benedictine monk for five years at St. Andrew's Priory, Valyermo; the Benedictines sent him to Fuller to begin his doctoral studies in 1975. Leaving the monastery in 1978, he worked at Franciscan Communications, Los Angeles, where he was editor of *the good news*, a weekly Bible study guide for Catholics.

He has read C.S. Lewis for 20 years, is founder and first director of the Southern California C.S. Lewis Society (which meets monthly at Fuller Theological Seminary), and is author of *Companion to Narnia* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980). The following is his first written contribution to his chosen field: ecumenical spirituality. It is a synopsis of his dissertation and second book: *C.S. Lewis: Soul Friend*.



FORD

If anyone loved the "just-two-people-talking atmosphere" of ideal spiritual direction, it was Jack Lewis.

that they might grow in their relationship with God and that they might better know what is his will for them in order that they may better do the work of his kingdom. Of the relevance of spiritual direction for Christian mission, Alan Jones writes:

An evangelism fed by the fire of contemplation is a real power of the Holy Spirit. . . . Effective evangelism comes only from those who know that outward action flows from inner vision, and that vision sees the oppressive power of political and social structures as well as the pettiness that enslaves individuals. St. John of the Cross speaks of the contemplative preacher: "What we have joyously harvested with the sickle of contemplation in solitude, we must thresh on the floor of preaching, and so broadcast." In the end this is what Christian companionship is all about. It is for mission. It is for renewal.³

With this sketch of spiritual direction in view, it is time to look again at the picture we have of C.S. Lewis and see him against this new background, not standing at a rostrum before a meeting of the Socratic Club or sitting at a BBC microphone, but walking at one's side or seated across from one in his study, either reading or corresponding or chatting. If anyone loved the "just-two-people-talking atmosphere" of ideal spiritual direction,⁴ it was Jack Lewis. It is the central message of this essay that, indirectly and directly, C.S. Lewis experienced spiritual direction, wrote about it and practiced it.

LEWIS' EXPERIENCE OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Every thoughtful Christian has probably had what Alan Jones has called the "sense of inner direction" in an "encounter with the minds of others through their writing."⁵ Lewis' earliest, most profound, and longest abiding experience of spiritual direction was in the companionship of Christian authors. In his essay "On the Reading of Old Books," Lewis warned that a steady diet of only the latest books was bad for one's spiritual and theological digestion:

A new book is still on trial and the amateur is not in a position to judge it. . . . The only safety is to have a standard of plain, central Christianity ("mere Christianity" as Baxter called it) which puts the controversies of the moment in their proper perspective. Such a standard can be acquired only from old books. It is a

good rule, after reading a new book, never to allow yourself another new one till you have read an old one in between. If that is too much for you, you should read one old one to every three new ones.⁶

Lewis proceeds to list and briefly describe the classics that should be part of every Christian's mental library. He notices that publishers are more inclined to reprint books of devotion and comments:

Now the layman or amateur needs to be instructed as well as exhorted. In this age his need for knowledge is particularly pressing. Nor would I admit any sharp division between the two kinds of books. For my own part, I tend to find the doctrinal books often more helpful in devotion than the devotional books, and I rather suspect that the same experience may await others. I believe that many who find that "nothing happens" when they sit down, or kneel down, to a book of devotion, would find that the heart sings unbidden while they are working their way through a tough bit of theology with a pipe in their teeth and a pencil in their hand.⁷

Of this very experience of the singing heart Lewis once wrote *his* soul-friend, Sister Penelope, after a week's reading holiday in Wales: "So I have loved . . . in one of those delightful *vernal* periods when doctrines which have hitherto been only buried seeds begin actually to come up — like snowdrops on crocuses."⁸ It is the music and the fragrance of these ancient authors and of the doctrines they celebrate, enhanced by Lewis' own gifts for rhythm and redolence, which move people to reread Lewis' own books again and again.

A comprehensive list of Lewis' favorite old books and the reasons why he chose them and often reread them himself would be beyond the scope of this essay, but many names and titles appear on nearly every list and to these we turn our attention. Lewis would always send new Christians to the New Testament and the Psalms (indeed he was asked so many questions about how to understand and pray the Psalter that he left us *Reflections on the Psalms* as one of his last books).⁹ Meditating on the Passion of Christ, especially on the Gethsemane scene, was so frequently fruitful for Lewis that his writings and letters are full of such references, and it is easy to trace the heart of Lewis' spirituality — exemplified in "Nice People or New Men"¹⁰ — to the matrix of St. Paul's spirituality — the schema of the old and new humanity.¹¹

Many of the motifs of Lewis' own spiri-

tuality — longing, hope, the two loves: self or God, God as the fountain of life and love — find their source in St. Augustine, and Lewis invariably commends his *Confessions* to new converts.¹² Lewis often paired the "astringent" *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis with the "joyous" *Centuries of Meditations* by Thomas Traherne, situating in between the *Theologica Germanica*, the anonymous fourteenth-century treatise that was Luther's favorite, after the Bible and St. Augustine, of course. And Lewis frequently mentioned Richard Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, *The Temple* by George Herbert, William Law's *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, and Francis de Sales's *Introduction to the Devout Life*.

In a category all by themselves stand two authors, George MacDonald and G.K. Chesterton. The first must be said to be the human agent most responsible for the conversion of Lewis' imagination; the second, for the conversion of his intellect. Not enough has been made of the following journal entry Lewis made while he was yet eight years from his commitment to Christ (in 1931, when he was almost 33): "After this I read MacDonald's *Phantastes* over my tea, which I have read many times and which I really believe fills for me the place of a devotional book."¹³ Lewis was modest about sending people to his own books but he never hesitated to suggest *George MacDonald: An Anthology*, his tribute to the author he most cherished for (by then) over 30 years.

Lewis began to be influenced by the penetrating intellect of Chesterton when he was given a book of the latter's essays as he lay in bed in an army hospital in France, recovering from trench fever. But the goodness of the man did not persuade him to try to be good himself for another eight years.¹⁴ What, in 1925, made the difference? Lewis read Chesterton's newly-published rebuttal to H.G. Wells' entirely secular history of the world; and from then until his dying day he urged any who would listen to read *The Everlasting Man*.

Indeed it was the "breezy outdoor Chestertonian Christianity of Lewis"¹⁵ that helped him keep his balance when the powerful and first direct spiritual influence of Charles Williams came into Lewis' life. Williams, 12 years Lewis' senior, was an

editor with Oxford University Press in London and a novelist, poet and lay-theologian with a small but devoted following, who befriended the young Oxford don, first by mail and occasional shared meals, and then (in 1939) on a several-times-a-week basis. Lewis swept Williams into his circle of friends, the Inklings, and was himself swept away by the sheer goodness and even holiness of the man. Williams was basically orthodox, but his enthusiasms for some rather gnostic areas in theology and spirituality only brought out the debater in Lewis; as he once wrote another dear friend with whom he often disagreed, Owen Barfield: "Don't imagine I didn't pitch into Charles Williams for his obscurity for all I was worth."¹⁶ Williams' motto, "This also is Thou; neither is this Thou" and his Doctrine of Substituted Love are two of the central bequests he left Lewis' theology when he died suddenly in 1945.¹⁷

Another source of spiritual companionship in Lewis' life were the Inklings, a group of friends linked together by their love of Lewis (more than by any other identifiable cause).¹⁸ Let Lewis himself speak of their significance:

We met . . . theoretically to talk about literature, but in fact nearly always to talk about something better. What I owe to them all is incalculable. Dyson and Tolkien were the immediate human causes of my conversion. Is any pleasure on earth as great as a circle of Christian friends by a good fire?¹⁹

The "something better" was *piety* or *life* because, for Lewis, good conversation was always about "books, or life, or friends" and a perfect meeting of the Inklings was one "almost equally compounded of meritment, piety, and literature."²⁰

Finally, Lewis experienced the friendship of the soul in Sister Penelope Lawson, C.S.M.V., an Anglican nun with whom he began a lifelong correspondence in 1939, at whose recommendation he began the practice of a monthly confession to a Cowley (Oxford) father (a priest of the Society of St. John the Evangelist) commencing in the fall of 1940. In Sister Penelope, Lewis found a theologically and spiritually literate woman friend, only eight years older than himself. For her translation of Athanasius' treatise *On The Incarnation* Lewis wrote the introduction that was later reprinted as *On the Reading of Old Books*. And to her, sometimes monthly, he wrote of the matters on his mind and heart.

. . . for Lewis, good conversation was always about "books, or life, or friends. . ."

...Lewis' writing simplifies itself into two stages: what does he say about discernment and what does he say about prayer.

LEWIS' WRITING ABOUT SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Surely the most helpful and original aspect of Alan Jones' superb book, *Exploring Spiritual Direction: An Essay on Christian Friendship*, is its emphasis on spiritual direction as a work of the imagination.

One of the most wonderful gifts we receive from . . . a friend of the soul is that of a new perspective. He or she is able to stir up our imagination so that we not only view the past differently, but also allow the future to be pregnant with new and exciting possibilities. . . . There is . . . a struggle for true perspective in each one of us: a battle of images. What kind of images want to take possession of my imagination?²¹

Perhaps no Christian writer was more aware of this truth than was C.S. Lewis. From the time of the "baptism of his imagination" by the reading of *Phantastes* as an adolescent, but explicitly from the time of his conversion, Lewis knew how important it was to bring his thoughts and his imagination into the captivity of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). Richly blessed with great powers of intellect and fantasy, he set about to use them to translate Christian doctrine into language his "unbelieving" (and I would add, believing) "fellow countrymen . . . would attend to and understand."²²

Picking examples just of how Lewis portrayed the need for Christian companionship, one recalls from Lewis' first Christian work *The Pilgrim's Regress*, the guardian angel Slikisteinsauga (meaning "sleekstone-seeing-eyes" or "he-of-the-finely-honed-vision") who serves as guide to the pilgrims, John and Vertue, after their conversion, outfits them in armor and sets for them their tasks of confronting the dragons to either side of the narrow way that leads to the Landlord's Country. In *The Great Divorce* the ghost of C.S. Lewis, on holiday from Hell, is met by the shining spirit of George MacDonald who teaches the meaning of all that they see. In the Space Trilogy, Dr. Elwin Ransom, the reluctant Oxford philologist (modeled on Tolkien), is trained to be the director of the Christian community, St. Anne's-on-the-Hill; by the time of *That Hideous Strength*, Ransom (now acting more like Charles Williams) undertakes the spiritual training of Jane Studdock (and the reverse model, of infernal spiritual direction, is shown in Wither and Straik, Frost and Mark Studdock of the N.I.C.E. at Belbury). At various times, Puddleglum, Trufflehunter, Reepicheep, many of the English children and Aslan himself demon-

strate, through the Narnian stories, the process of "nurture and confrontation," the "rhythm of wounding and blessing," which authentic Christian companionship always is.²³ And in Lewis' masterpiece, *Till We Have Faces*, the queen in her last vision is led by her closest counselor (converted by his own vision of the truth on the other side of death) to see the deepest meaning of her life and loves.

To sort out Lewis' direct writing about Christian spirituality, an organizing principle can be found in Romans 12:1-2 (verses which deserve to be called the epicenter of Christian holiness).

So then, my brothers (and sisters), because of God's great mercy to us I appeal to you: offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship you should offer. Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God — what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect. (T.E.V.)

A strong case can be made for linking a true worship of a self-sacrificial offering and a mind completely changed to be able to know God's will with the traditional goals of spiritual direction . . . prayer and discernment. As Sandra Marie Schneiders put it:

What do people mean when they talk about seeking "spiritual direction"? If we listen attentively to these seekers we hear two recurring themes: prayer and discernment . . . that is, for organization and structure in the being and action dimensions of the spiritual life.²⁴

And when we realize that Oscar Cullmann calls discernment the key to New Testament morality,²⁵ the task of arranging Lewis' writings simplifies itself into two stages: what does he say about discernment and what does he say about prayer.

Though Lewis' "strictly apologetical" works (*The Problem of Pain*, *Mere Christianity*, and *Miracles*) all end with profound insights on the meaning of holiness, five books are particularly devoted to spirituality issues: the pair on discernment (*The Screwtape Letters* and *The Great Divorce*), the pair on prayer (*Reflections on the Psalms* and *Letters to Malcolm, Chiefly on Prayer*), and treatise on ordering our affections (*The Four Loves*).

On Discernment — In structuring *The Screwtape Letters*, Lewis did not set out to find an exact demonic equivalent to the classic

three stages of the spiritual life (purgative, illuminative and unitive). Nevertheless, *Screwtape* directs Wormwood's attack on the progress of his "patient" in three discreet phases: Letters I-XII are about *preventing* Christianity from taking root in the patient's life; Letters XIII-XXII are about *removing* it once it has taken root; and Letters XXIII-XXXI are about *corrupting* this well-rooted faith-experience. Very significantly Lewis suggests (in the penultimate paragraph of the preface to the paperback edition) that "Ideally, *Screwtape's* advice to Wormwood should have been balanced by archangelical advice to the patient's guardian angel. Without this, the picture of human life is lopsided." In his modesty Lewis claims that he has neither the spiritual insight nor appropriate style for the job ("Mere advice would be no good; every sentence would have to smell of Heaven.") But, though this preface was written nearly 20 years after writing both the books, who of the many who admire *The Great Divorce* can forego to guess that, in it, Lewis might just have attempted to write such a companion volume to *The Screwtape Letters*? For this reason alone they should always be studied together. And though no elaboration of the doctrine of discernment in the two books would fit the size of this essay, the following pattern can be seen: if the goal of Hell is demonization and absorption and its strategy is by seduction and confusion, the goal of Heaven is divinization and individuated interdependency by a process of invitation and clarification. Where Satan would prevent, remove, and corrupt, God would plant, nurture, and harvest.

On Prayer — Lewis' fiction abounds in scenes of pageants, tableaux, dances and processions, but in real life, he was uncomfortable with anything liturgical and was regrettably almost hostile to hymns and hymn-singing. His first "letter" to his fictitious friend Malcolm bears this out. Still, if one were to look anywhere in Lewis for his spirituality of liturgical prayer, one would find it in *Reflections on the Psalms*. Because this book is the fruit of his public and private praying of the Psalter, especially as it is laid out in the Book of Common Prayer, it must be read as the counterpart to *Letters to Malcolm*. Both books, taken together with several other essays and poems, would comprise Lewis' whole theology of prayer, perhaps most admirably summed up thus:

"Prayer is . . . a personal contact between embryonic, incomplete persons (ourselves) and the utterly concrete Person. Prayer in the sense of petition, asking for things, is a small part of it; confession and penitence are its threshold, adoration its sanctuary, the presence and vision and enjoyment of God its bread and wine. In it God shows Himself to us."²⁶

On Our Affections — *The Four Loves* might be viewed as the confluence of Lewis' theology of discernment and prayer. Learning to love, learning to forget ourselves and to move out of ourselves toward others and to see all others as rivulets from the Fountain, is the ultimate task of life, sustained every step of the way (steps illumined by the light of discernment and taken only with the grace given in prayer) by the One who bids us to take these steps, however faltering, and to learn the Great Dance of Love Himself.

LEWIS AS SOUL FRIEND

If the general rule is that "effective spiritual directors are discovered by the Christian community," that "they do not put themselves forward without first having others seek their help,"²⁷ then Lewis was such a spiritual director. Though the full extent of his personal companionship is yet to be known, two other areas of his direction are already well attested to: his letter-writing and the continuing popularity of his books.

As Lewis discovered that he was an influence in the conversion of many people to Christ, he made himself increasingly more available to them, both in person and by mail. We can be sure that Sheldon and Jean Vanauken were not the only ones to take Lewis up on his invitations to call on him.²⁸ From the man who found interference of any kind the most hated thing in his life,²⁹ Lewis became a man who made himself available; and more than any single thing he did for people, his continual prayer for them was perhaps, from the perspective of eternity, his greatest contribution to their lives. With the humility characteristic of Lewis in later life, he spoke and wrote of himself as a "fellow patient."³⁰

If there isn't enough evidence yet compiled to gauge the extent of Lewis' personal direction, his prodigious devotion to letter-writing is already well-known. Lewis wrote an estimated 20,000 letters in his life, perhaps half of which were letters of direction. Only the totality of his patient correspondence with "an American Lady" has been published; but all of his letters to

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Sheldon Vanauken and of those to "a Lady" already published can be studied with great profit. Everywhere in these correspondences Lewis' familiar themes resound, but their strongest note is perhaps obedience, doing one's duty whether or not one's feelings lend their support. And everywhere Lewis' humor and gift for images are at play. Lewis fulfilled the role of ideal director summed up in this 12th century text:

Let him be inclined to correct kindly and to bear the weight himself. He must be gentle and affectionate, merciful to the faults of others. He shall act with discernment in different cases. Let him aid his penitent with prayer, alms and other good works. He is to help him by calming his fears, consoling him, giving him back hope and, if need be, by reproving him. Let him show compassion in his words and teach by his deeds. Let him take part in the sorrow, if he wishes to share in the joy. He must inculcate perseverance.³¹

Finally, Lewis is soul friend to the tens of thousands of readers who turn and return to his science fiction, fantasies, allegory, novel, poems, apologies, books of spiritual direction and collections of letters. In all these works they receive what Lewis himself received: the *paraklesis* passed down from hand to hand, heart to heart, down through the Christian centuries from the Helper and Soul Friend Himself (2 Cor. 1:3-7).

Notes

1 Donald Nicholl, *Holiness* (New York: Seabury, 1981) p. 116. I can't recommend this book too strongly, though I usually advise readers to skim the first three chapters (Preliminaries) and to dig into chapters four through nine (Practice).

2 The shortest and solidest treatment of the whole matter of discernment can be found in Jacques Guillet, et al., *Discernment of Spirits* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1970), Section 1: "Sacred Scripture."

3 Alan W. Jones, *Exploring Spiritual Direction: An Essay on Christian Friendship* (New York: Seabury, 1982) p. 125. Jones, an Episcopal priest and director of the Center for Christian Spirituality at General Theological Seminary in New York, has here written a treatment of spiritual direction which is both evangelical and catholic, not in a muddled blend but keeping both agenda brightly burning (to borrow an image from *Orthodoxy* by G. K. Chesterton).

4 William A. Barry and William J. Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* (New York: Seabury, 1982), p. 67, 122. Fathers Barry and Connolly, Jesuit priests, are founders of the Center for Religious Development in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where they have worked for 11 years. Their's is the most practical book in this field yet written.

5 Jones, p. 8.

6 *God in the Dock*, Walter Hooper, ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970) pp. 201-202.

7 *ibid.*, p. 205.

8 *Letters of C.S. Lewis*, W.H. Lewis, ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966) p. 194. (Lewis' emphasis)

9 The Bible was Lewis' own daily bread: he read the Psalms and prayers from the Book of Common Prayer at matins every morning during term with his fellow dons; his own copy of the Prayer Book is full of notes on the Psalms and prayers. For an hour each evening he meditated on the Bible and said his prayers and he never liked to put off his "devotions" any later in the day because he might feel too sleepy to say them properly. His was a familiar figure pacing the garden outside the senior common room every evening before dinner; when interrupted, he would reply quite kindly that he was saying his prayers. And any unoccupied moment during the day, especially when he was waiting or travelling, and any time when he was awakened at night would find him at prayer.

10 The title of Chapter 10 of Book IV of *Mere Christianity*.

11 Louis Bouyer, *The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers (A History of Christian Spirituality)*, Vol. 1, (New York: Seabury, 1963) p. 63.

12 Lewis published his list of the 10 books which most shaped his vocational attitude and philosophy of life in *The Christian Century* (June 6, 1962). They are Boethius' *On The Consolation of Philosophy*, MacDonald's *Phantastes*, Chesterton's *The Everlasting Man*, Vergil's *Aeneid*, Herbert's *The Temple*, Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, Otto's *The Idea of the Holy*, Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, William's *Descent into Hell*, and Balfour's *Theism and Humanism*.

13 *Letters of C.S. Lewis*, p. 84.

14 or to bring him to Christ for another 14 years.

15 Humphrey Carpenter, *Inklings* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978) p. 155.

16 *Letters of C.S. Lewis*, p. 212.

17 For the motto, see Charles Williams, *Descent of the Dove* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972) p. viii; for more on this subject, see the entry "Deeper Magic" in my book, *Companion to Narnia*.

18 This is the whole argument of Carpenter's book, mentioned above, especially Chapter Four, "A fox that isn't there" and eloquently summed up by Dr. Robert Havard, Lewis' physician, friend and fellow Inkling, on p. 252.

19 *Letters of C.S. Lewis*, p. 197.

20 The same, pp. 173 and 176.

21 Jones, op. cit., p. 83.

22 "Rejoinder to Dr. Pittenger," *God in the Dock*, p. 183.

23 Jones, op. cit., pp. 3 and 85. A similar paradox exists in Lewis' advice to Sheldon Vanauken in which he talks about "the severe mercy"; see below.

24 "The 'Return' to Spiritual Direction" *Spiritual Life*, XVIII, no. 4, Winter 1972 pp. 272, 274.

25 *Christ and Time* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964) p. 228.

26 "The Efficacy of Prayer," *The World's Last Night and Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1960) p. 8.

27 Barry and Connolly, op. cit., p. 121.

28 Sheldon Vanauken, op. cit., pp. 91, 102, 106, 110, 135, 191, 225, 228, 229, and 232.

29 *Surprised by Joy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1956) pp. 116-117, 171-172, and 228; *A Severe Mercy*, p. 89.

30 *A Severe Mercy*, p. 134.

31 Paul of Hungary, cited in Kenneth Leech, *Soul Friend: The Practice of Christian Spirituality* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980) p. 55.

Alum News

Marriages

Paul Ford (M.Div. '81) married Julie LeClear (X'81) on January 16, 1982 in Pasadena, CA.

Births

Philip Behrens was born on Oct. 21, 1981 to Joyce and Eric B. Behrens (M.Div. '74). Eric is an attorney in Berkeley, CA.

Scott Walker Blake was born on April 26, 1982 to Ginger and Ed Blake (M.Div. '76).

Eric Steven Blocher was born to Janelle and Steven Blocher (M.Div. '78) in June 1982. The Blochers have two other children — Ryan Andrew, age 3 and Kristin Alisan, age 2. Steven, who has been associate pastor at First Presbyterian Church, Anchorage, AK, has accepted a call at First Presbyterian Church, Bakersfield, CA.

Stephanie Danielle was born in June 1982 in Coshocton, Ohio. She is the second daughter of Missy and Stephen D. Crane (M.Div. '81). Steve became pastor of the First Baptist Church, Coshocton on June 18, after serving for over eight months as pastor of The Church of the Exceptional, Chester County, PA.

Evan Michael Doty was born April 10, 1982 to Vernetta and John Doty (D.Min. '76). John is pastor of Community Baptist Church, Kodiak, AK.

Ethan Michael Everts was born to Jenny (M.Div. '77) and Peter Everts (M.A. '77; Ph.D. '78) on April 26, 1982 in Memphis, TN.

Kristin Leigh Greenslit was born May 3, 1982 to Amy Treneer (M.Div. '79) and Larry P. Greenslit (M.Div. '78) in Plumville, PA. Larry is now pastor of Plumville United Presbyterian Church and Amy is on maternity leave from her job as case management supervisor at Indiana County Community Action Program.

Chad Alan Long was born May 14, 1982 to Patti and Michael Long (M.Div. '79) in Ventura, CA.

Noel Robert Paul was born Dec. 4, 1978 and Alexander Jacob Paul was born June 28, 1981 to Suzi and Bob Paul (M.Div. '76). Bob is associate pastor of Rose Hill Presbyterian Church, Kirkland, WA.

Annsley Marie Scruton-Wilson was born on June 7, 1982 to Rita and John Scruton-Wilson (M.A. '77) in St. Charles, IL.

Daughter Tanya Jean was born July 24, 1982 to Brenda and Douglas Toffland (M.Div. '78), pastor of Rose Hill Mennonite Brethren Church, Munich, ND

Publications

Janet and Stephen Bly (M.Div. '74) have been named Writers of the Year at the Mount Hermon Writers' Conference in California. The Blys are co-authors of *Radical Discipleship*, *Devotions With a Difference* and *Questions I'd Like to Ask*. Two other books, *God's Angry Side* and a juvenile adventure, *The President's Stuck in the Mud*, will be released this fall. Stephen is pastor of Winchester Community Church, Winchester, ID.

Bruce Rowilson (B.D. '66) has authored *Creative Hospitality*, published by Green Leaf Press.

Foster H. Shannon (M.Div. '58) is author of *God is Light*, published by Green Leaf Press. He is pastor of Immanuel Presbyterian Church in San Jose, CA.

Lars Wilhelmsson (M.Div. '73) (D.Min. '74) is author of *Making Forever Friends* and *Vital Christianity*, both published by Martin Press.

Deaths

Luke John Wainwright, 5-year-old son of Carol and Robin Wainwright (M.Div. '69) died March 23, 1982.

The '50s

Ruth and Richard Sturz (Th.M. '59) are serving in Sao Paulo, Brazil with Consultation of Evangelicals in Latin America (CONELA).

A. Ron Treibel (M.Div. '53) is serving as Navy Chaplain aboard the U.S.S. Okinawa, stationed in San Diego, CA. He has been chaplain since 1967.

Fred E. Velders (X'50) has retired as a postal clerk and is serving weekly with Emmanuel Baptist Rescue Mission, a skid-row ministry and at Whitehall Convalescent Hospital in El Monte, CA.

Lorraine and John Winston (B.D. '50) are serving as directors of the French Evangelical Seminary, Vaux-sur-Seine, France. Before coming to France, the Winstons served for 15 years at Brussels Bible Institute, Belgium.

The '60s

Ron Allison (B.D. '66) has accepted a call to become minister of the American Church of London, England. Allison served as pastor of University United Methodist Church in Irvine, CA since 1972.

Ronald F. K. Ching (M.Div. '66) is sponsoring a National Clergy Conference in Transactional Analysis in Honolulu, Hawaii. A certified clinical member in the International Transactional Analysis Association, Ching is pastor of Kaimuk Evangelical Church in Honolulu.

William A. Dyrness (M.Div. '68) succeeds **W. Ward Gasque** (also a FTS alum) as president of New College for Advanced Christian Studies, Berkeley, CA. Dyrness has been serving on the faculty of Asian Theological Seminary, Manila, The Philippines.

Howard King (M.R.E. '69) is serving as senior pastor at First Christian Church, Kennewick, WA.

Douglas James Miller, (B.D. '66) is serving as professor of Christian Social Ethics at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, PA.

Wilson Gene Parks (M.R.E. '66) is serving as pastor of the Congregational Church of Chatsworth, CA.

Philip E. Reed (X'67), is serving as director of news and public affairs for KBIG radio, Los Angeles, CA.

Forest Riecken (M.Div. '64) is serving as counselor at Lake Avenue Congregational Church and at the Christian Counseling Center, Pasadena, CA.

Alan Rosenberg (M.Div. '62) is serving as pastor of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church, San Bernardino, CA.

Leland E. Wilshire (B.D. '60) (Th.M. '62) is serving as associate professor of history and church history at Biola University, La Mirada, CA.

The '70s

Marvin Backstrom (M.Div. '72) is serving as educational director of the International School of Languages, Beverly Hills, CA.

LeRoy Bechler (M.A. Miss. '79) is serving as interim pastor of Faith Chapel, Westminster, CA.

Bob Britton (M.Div. '78) is serving as pastor of Bible Baptist Church of Moorpark, Moorpark, CA.

Lance Clenard (M.Div. '79) is serving as associate pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Arlington Heights, IL.

Kenneth Fordyce (X'73) is serving as manager of corporate productivity, Continental Corporation, Neptune, NJ.

Kaarina A. Ham (M.A. Theo. '78) is serving as a missionary to Eastern Europe with the Slavic Gospel Association. She was commissioned for her work in May at Peoples' Evangelical Congregational Church, South Ashburnham, MS., her home church. Ham also completed her M.A. in counseling at Fitchburg State Graduate School, MS. in May 1982. She is living in Vienna, Austria.

Samuel Jeanrenaud (M.Div. '72) is serving as pastor of Martinsville Christian Fellowship, Martinsville, IN.

Karen L. Kiser (M.Div. '77) is serving as pastor of First Presbyterian Church, El Monte, CA.

Stephen G. Meyer (Ph.D. '76) is serving at Associated Psychologists of Diamond Bar, Diamond Bar, CA.

Claude Ragan (Ph.D. '76) is practicing clinical psychology in Greensboro, N.C. He was a 1982 guest lecturer at Reformed Theological Seminary.

Brian A. Reed (B.D. '71) is serving as pastor of First United Presbyterian Church, Ephrata, WA.

Kenneth A. Schmidt (X'77) is serving as a licensed marriage and family therapist in Ventura, CA.

Tom Waddell (M.Div. '79) is serving as pastor of Trinity United Presbyterian Church, Clarksburg, PA. beginning in September.

Stuart D. Young (M.Div. '78) is serving as associate pastor at Walteria United Methodist Church, Torrance, CA.

The '80s

Meredith Campbell-Risen (D.Min. '81) is serving as co-pastor of South Gate Community Presbyterian Church, South Gate, CA.

Patricia Dickson (M.Div. '81) is serving as pastor of Bethany Covenant Church, New Britain, CT.

Constance A. Dorn (M.Div. '81) is serving as pastor of Adirondack Presbyterian Parish, Saranac Lake, NY.

Tom Ryan (M.Div. '82) is serving as assistant pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Lawrence, KS.

Douglas Shaw (M.A. '81) is serving as director of church relations, World Relief Corporation, Wheaton, IL.

Placement Opportunities

Minister of Youth and Christian Education— The First Baptist Church of Sunnyside, CA, a large church located near San Jose, is seeking a full-time associate pastor with primary responsibilities being for youth and C.E. programs. This person should be college and seminary trained and experienced in teaching, C.E. administration, leadership development, youth evangelism and youth program planning.

Director of Christian Education— Geneva Presbyterian, Modesto, CA is looking for either an ordained or an un-ordained person with expertise in the field of C.E. to provide administration and direction, to encourage vision for the ongoing ministry of C.E., to develop and implement programs which will meet the needs of the congregation in line with the stated goals for C.E. at Geneva.

Pastor— Cherrydale Baptist Church, Arlington, VA is seeking a pastor sound in doctrine and strong in applying the truths of God's Word to the daily life and walk of the believer. A sound pastoral background is important, but they are concerned with substance, quality and effectiveness of the candidate's ministry.

Assistant Pastor— Westview Community Church, Manhattan, KS wants an assistant who will primarily work on equipping the believers, developing and facilitating the "Care-Group" concept within the church (a small group fellowship under the direction of a lay leader); assisting in the development and facilitation of strong family-oriented ministries.

Senior Minister— the First Church of Christ in Lynn, MA is looking for a mature person whose effectiveness areas are: ability to instill enthusiasm and rebuild church from the present low to a high point; worship and pastoral care skills; be a good teacher/preacher; able to work well with church members from various denominational backgrounds.

Pastor— College Church in South Bend, IN is a fifteen-year-old member congregation of the Missionary Church. Worship services are held in the Hall of Science at Bethel College. The congregation owns no land— yet, using the campus, members' homes for meetings. Pastoral duties are to provide spiritual ministry, to assist other officers toward fulfilling the church's mission, to provide initiative, inspiration and counsel.

Pastor— Faith Fellowship of Troy in Troy, MI (independent) is a fellowship that has been in existence for just over 7 years. They are eager to talk with any person who could be excited about working with a new church and have the following qualifications: -needs to be an objective student of scripture willing to consider opposing sides of an issue. -needs to be a self-motivated individual who could build his/her own job description. -needs to feel comfortable teaching in an informal, casual atmosphere.

Church Educator— St. James Presbyterian Church in Bellingham, WA wants this person to coordinate, supervise and direct the church school, the youth fellowship programs, and the adult programs; help recruit, train and support the volunteer staff; order, receive, distribute and maintain resource materials, equipment, etc; be familiar with current curriculum and educational developments in C.E.; plan and implement new programs.

Pastor— The Presbyterian Church of the Covenant in Bala-Cynwyd, PA is looking for a person with these qualifications: experience in liking people who are diverse, the ability to make a congregation cohesive with the end result being a strong and unified witness to the gospel, a strong long-range dedication to this church's edification.

Associate Pastor— Chinese Bible Church, Oak Park, IL is looking for someone for its English-speaking members. This is an independent, non-denominational church consisting of a Chinese and an English-speaking congregation. The candidate must be of evangelical faith; must speak fluent English; ability to speak Cantonese and/or Toisanese preferred; must have knowledge and experience of expository preaching; must be a seminary graduate or equivalent; 30 years or older preferred.

...the church cannot be reunified unless every part of it is being spiritually revived, as Spener said, but neither can it be revived without being reunited.

Prayer as a Discipline...

— from page 5

would have people sit on the platform for no other reason than to pray. They did not officiate or read Scripture or have any formal responsibility. They were there simply to pray. I had one dear brother who every Sunday would sit through both worship services bathing the people in prayer; praying for me, praying of the power of Christ to conquer, praying for Truth to prosper. When you know someone is doing that you can really preach.

Prayer is an essential discipline for preaching because it gets us in touch with God, it helps us get in touch with our people, and it helps people get in touch with us. I conclude with the stirring words of John Wesley: "Give me 100 preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God and I care not a straw whether they be clergy or laymen; such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. God does nothing but in answer to prayer." ■

Taking the Measure...

— from page 9

and diversified sets of indicators of spiritual wellness and illness.

As a consequence of such richly diverse research, we will gain increased insight into the nature, scope, and significance of the spiritual life for all areas of human experience, as well as improved services to cultivate it and expanded opportunities to communicate its root source to people who are members of a spiritually hungry generation in a technologically-oriented society.

Many believers will be critical of our attempts to evaluate the sublime. Non-believers will scoff at giving attention to "mere social constructions of reality." Ideologues of whatever stripe (traditionalists, hyperfundamentalists, Marxists, etc.) will argue that we have missed the central core of spiritual well-being. Nevertheless,

we can and must move ahead in our investigations of this complex topic. Their criticisms must not be ignored: they might alert us to important facets of the subject and they will help to keep us working at the highest level of good scholarship. Extending this significant new research frontier can help us to understand better the nature of the abundant life which the Good Shepherd offers to his flock. ■

Spiritual Growth...

— from page 11

as living stones in a larger edifice which must be united in order for him to dwell in it most fully. Granted that the church cannot be reunified unless every part of it is being spiritually revived, as Spener said, but neither can it be revived without being reunited.

This is the thrust of the 133rd Psalm, which heaps up images of the Spirit's anointing and blessing in connection with the blessedness of brethren dwelling together in unity. Spurgeon comments,

No wonder that brethren dwell in unity when God dwells among them, and finds his rest in them . . . Christian unity is good in itself, good for ourselves, good for the brethren, good for our converts, good for the outside world . . . O for more of this rare virtue! Not the love which comes and goes, but that which dwells; not that spirit which separates and secludes, but that which dwells together in unity. Never shall we know the full power of the anointing till we are of one heart and of one spirit; never will the sacred dew of the spirit descend in all its fullness till we are perfectly joined together in the same mind; never will the covenanted and commanded blessing come forth from the Lord our God till once again we shall have "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (*The Treasury of David*). ■

Published for the Fuller
Theological Seminary Alumni
OCTOBER 1982
Volume XXIX, Number 3
USPS 627220

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A publication of Fuller
Theological Seminary, 135 North
Oakland Avenue, Pasadena,
California 91101. Published four
times a year in March, June,
October and December. Second
class postage paid at Pasadena,
California.

The editorial content of Theology,
News and Notes reflects the
opinions of the various authors
and should not be interpreted as
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Seminary trustees and faculty.

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POSTMASTER: Send change of
address to Fuller Theological
Seminary, 135 North Oakland
Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101.

