

# DENVER SEMINARY

M A G A Z I N E

## SPIRITUAL *Formation*



  
DENVER SEMINARY  
EQUIPPING LEADERS

SUMMER 2006 • VOL. 2 NO. 2

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p. 15 Consider attending the *Raising More Money* event at Denver Seminary on Sept. 8, 2006, which will help you build sustainable funding for your mission.

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## defining spiritual transformation: IMITATORS OF GOD



Dr. Craig Williford, President

“The Bible clearly teaches us that **only the Holy Spirit** can produce the depth and breadth of change in our character that must occur for us to become more like Christ. Yet the Bible also teaches us that God expects us to be an **active participant** in the Holy Spirit's work of moving us toward spiritual maturity.”

Recently a young friend asked me to define spiritual formation, a phrase he had heard frequently but did not fully understand. I explained that spiritual formation refers to the life-long process of being transformed by the Holy Spirit into a person like Christ. The Apostle Paul referred to it as being made new in the attitude of our minds, putting on the new self created to be like God in true holiness and righteousness and being imitators of God in all we think and do. (Ephesians ch.4-5.)

No programs or human-designed formulas—although sometimes helpful—will fully accomplish what God has taken upon Himself to do on our behalf and for His glory. The Bible clearly teaches that only the Holy Spirit can produce the depth and breadth of change in our character that must occur for us to become more like Christ. Yet, the Bible also teaches that God expects us to be an active participant in the Holy Spirit's work of moving us toward spiritual maturity and to express this maturity through our service for Him.

Many leaders burn out or fail because they do not know how to serve out of the depth of an abundant life with Christ. At Denver Seminary, we try to provide the types of experiences and opportunities where the Holy Spirit can transform the character of our students into the godly leaders they will need to be as they serve. Through mentoring relationships, chapels, spiritual formation groups, learning contracts, informal conversations with students about life in Christ and many other initiatives, we attempt to create opportunities for these transformative experiences to take place. We provide intentional opportunities for students to encounter Christ and be changed into His image by the Holy Spirit.

As a senior leader of a seminary that stresses spiritual formation, how can I call our students to a life of spiritual formation if I do not model that commitment myself? I must faithfully place transformative experiences into my life where the Holy Spirit can continue to build Christ into my mind and soul. One of the ways I try to demonstrate the value of spiritual formation in my life is through a commitment to faithfully practice the spiritual disciplines. For me, a lifestyle of consistent participation in personal and community worship services, reading scripture, prayer, silence and journaling have proven to be the most effective ways of creating spaces where the Holy Spirit can guide my journey for Christ. As a “morning person,” I enjoy starting my days very early with at least 90 minutes alone before our offices open and the noise of the day begins. In the quiet of these times, God has significantly changed and empowered me to serve in my role as a leader. Of course I am not perfect and plenty of work lies ahead; however, the changes are remarkable—and I know that without these transformative experiences in my life I would have given up as a leader long ago.

Godly leaders can serve effectively over a long period of time only from the foundation of an abundant relationship with Christ, not their strengths, talents, gifts or learned techniques. It is all about Christ. In this edition of *Denver Seminary Magazine*, I hope you will find some practical ways to live a life of spiritual formation.

For His glory alone,

  
Craig



Dr. Robinson with Senior Professor Gordon Lewis and his wife, Willa Lewis.

## Haddon Robinson Day Honors Former President

On May 11, 2006, the Seminary community honored and recognized one of its beloved presidents, Dr. Haddon Robinson, who served from 1979 to 1992. The day started with breakfast at the Downing House, hosted by Jerry Lewis. A morning reunion was hosted by Dr. Vernon Grounds in the Grounds Reading Room, where many reunited with Haddon and his wife Bonnie, as well as long-time administrator and faculty member Don Orvis. Another special guest was Dr. Elias Husni, a medical doctor and one of the many community leaders who have been impacted greatly by Dr. Robinson. Dr. Husni had previously launched the Haddon W. Robinson Chair for Biblical Preaching and was happy to be a part of the day's events where others were invited to help support this fund. The evening's events were hosted by President Craig Williford and homiletics professor Scott Wenig, where more than 100 alumni and friends heard from a panel of today's students who represent tomorrow's preachers in discussing "Big Idea" preaching. The keynote message was delivered by Dr. Robinson, who challenged listeners to "use it or lose it" in regard to their God-given strengths and gifts. This was a memorable reunion among many Seminary friends who had the opportunity to reconnect with the Robinsons and again be challenged by the piercing words of Scripture spoken from one of the country's most well-known and greatly loved preachers.

## Seminary Hosts Fifth Annual Mentoring Conference

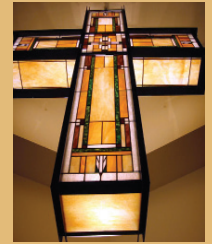
Denver Seminary hosted its fifth National Conference on Mentoring March 30-April 1, 2006, attracting nearly 130 attendees from as far away as Great Britain. In keeping with the conference theme, "Mentoring as Christian Ministry," attendees looked at some of the unique resources, challenges and opportunities that confront them as they minister through mentoring. Plenary sessions were offered by Dr. James Houston, former president of Regent College in Vancouver; Elisa Morgan, president of MOPS International; and Ted Travis, founder and director of Neighborhood Ministries. In addition, 14 workshops addressed a wide range of basic to advanced mentoring topics and skills. Time was also provided to connect with other participants with similar interests in mentoring or in similar ministry contexts. "As conference attendees shared mentoring resources, ideas and 'best practices,' God provided a compelling vision of how powerfully He transforms lives through mentoring relationships," said Don Payne, Associate Dean and conference coordinator.



Elisa Morgan delivers a plenary session.

## Denver Seminary in the News

Want to know what Dr. Blomberg says about the Gospel of Judas?  
 Want to hear what our professors are saying about the Da Vinci Code?  
 Was June 6, 2006 really a day of reckoning?  
 Keep up with what our professors and alumni have to say about current events.  
 Visit our media archives page at [www.denverseminary.edu/events/press](http://www.denverseminary.edu/events/press)



## Chapel Cross Dedication Ceremony +

The Seminary community gathered March 16, 2006 to dedicate a beautiful 8.5' x 6' stained-glass cross in the Hazel Harriet Simpson Chapel. The cross hangs from the ceiling, providing an inspirational addition to the sacred space. The Seminary commissioned local artist Brian James to design and produce this piece. "When the Art Committee began to envision an overall plan for enriching the built environment of the campus, we quickly and unanimously agreed that the installation for the chapel, whatever that might be, would take priority," said committee member and Professor of Theology Dr. David Buschart. "As we arrived at this decision, we were aware that this priority would echo the architectural plan of the campus." In keeping with that idea, the cross is designed in Frank Lloyd Wright prairie style. In Buschart's address during the dedication ceremony, he expressed the most important aspect of this piece. "Within the overall design of the campus, the cross is centrally located, and rightly so. For Jesus is the center, the Prominent One, the heart of Christianity. May He be so for us. And may this cross be a focal point, a prompter for meditation, an orienting point, a reminder of our First Love. May it become for this community a window to the cross." We encourage you to make a special trip to the campus to view what has already become a treasured addition to the chapel.



2006 graduates Benjamin Newton, Jennifer Foutz, Kyle Van Arsdol.

## 144 Graduate at 2006 Commencement Ceremonies

Denver Seminary's 2006 Commencement ceremony was held Saturday, May 13, 2006. The 144 graduates, commissioned by President Craig Williford and the Board of Trustees, included 126 master's level candidates, seven doctoral candidates, and 11 certificate candidates. The ceremony was held at Southeast Christian Church in Parker, Colo., and was attended by numerous family and friends. Dr. Jim Beck, retiring Counseling department chair, gave the commencement address titled, "When All is Said and Done," based on the text of John 14:1-4, in which Jesus comforts the disciples with the words, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me."

Numerous awards were also conferred, including the Raymond McLaughlin preaching award, awarded to Dave Gunnlaugsson. The Training and Mentoring department awarded both Vaun Swanson and Don Bachman with an Excellence in Mentoring Medallion, in recognition of their outstanding and continued service as mentors. Horace Lo was the student recipient of the Excellence in Mentoring Medallion. Join us in wishing the graduating class of 2006 Godspeed!

## Seminary Completes Second Hurricane Relief Trip

A team of 16 Denver Seminary staff and students chose to spend their spring break traveling to New Orleans, La. This was the second relief trip taken by a Seminary group since the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

One team worked on a 140-year-old Victorian style home owned by a man named Charles, who lives in a FEMA trailer parked in the driveway. The team worked on gutting the house and enjoyed several conversations throughout the week with the owner, who deeply appreciated their hard work.

The second team invested their time in a house in the 9th Ward, the area hardest hit by the hurricane. Ellen Gordon, a remarkable woman of faith, was the owner of the house, which had been filled to the ceiling with water. The team cleared out refrigerators, computers, clothing and other household items the first day. They finished gut-

ting the house in another day-and-a-half before moving on to another house in the 9th Ward.

Both teams worked with Urban Impact, an inner-city ministry staffed by Seminary alumnus Scott Lundeen. The group cleaned the streets in a neighborhood near Castle Rock Church. The goal was not only to clean, but also to meet neighborhood residents and invite them to the church. "The New Orleans experience was awesome and well worth any sore muscles!" said former Dean of Students Phyllis Clerihue. "The highlight was meeting folks like Ellen and Charles, the homeowners, and the staff of Urban Impact and Castle Rock Church. Urban Impact and Castle Rock Church are truly making a difference in the city of New Orleans. So many teams of Christians are coming to New Orleans to serve, and God is using their experience to impact the Church all across America."



Ministry leaders Keith Becker, Smokey Ridgley, Brad Meuli and Chris Piehl

## Pastors' Masters Draws 120 to Pine Creek Golf Club

More than 120 pastors, lay leaders and parachurch ministry leaders came together for the inaugural Denver Seminary Pastors' Masters at Pine Creek Golf Club in Colorado Springs on May 15, 2006. The two-fold purpose of this event was to help leaders understand ways the Seminary exists to serve their ministry needs and to help raise funds for the Vernon Grounds Chair of Pastoral Ministry and Societal Ethics. Morning round winners were Larry South and Scott Bailey from Majestic Baptist Church and Jason Pffaf and Doug Pffaf from Denver First Church Nazarene. Afternoon round winners were Sid Huston, Zach Huston, Matt Rauh and Dan Baccera from Springs Community Church. Dr. David Osborne shared about our

D.Min. programs and professor Howard Baker invited pastors to be part of spiritual formation groups. For more information on these and related resources for pastors, contact Brian Fort at 303.762.6924 or [brian.fort@denverseminary.edu](mailto:brian.fort@denverseminary.edu).



## THE HAUNTING CHALLENGE OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION: An Interview with Dr. James Houston

by Sandy Widstrom

*Dr. James M. Houston is a retired Board of Governors' Professor of Spiritual Theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. He is recognized around the world as a leading figure in educating laity for effective ministry and helping to restore spirituality to Evangelicalism. Dr. Houston received his M.A. from the University of Edinburgh and M.A., B.Sc., and D.Phil. degrees from Oxford University. He is the author of numerous books, including The Transforming Power of Prayer: Deepening Your Friendship With God; In Pursuit of Happiness: Finding Genuine Fulfillment in Life; and his newest book to be released this fall, Joyful Exiles: Life in Christ on the Dangerous Edge of Things. Recently, Dr. Houston participated in the National Conference on Mentoring held at Denver Seminary and took a few minutes to share his thoughts on spiritual formation.*

### **Christian formation, or spiritual formation, is a term that is pervasive, but what does the term mean exactly?**

I think in the history of our colleges and seminaries, it really originates from clerical or priestly formation, something that has been traditionally done in Catholic seminaries. The idea began to develop in the 1970s in the Protestant world among American seminaries—that we should take the analogy and apply it to evangelical seminaries in terms of Christian formation or spiritual for-

mation. So I think that is how it developed; it's partly a reaction against simply having a cognitive or propositional faith that is not shaping one's character.

Spiritual formation teaching must be life-changing. One of the problems that we have in seminary education is that in doing all this objective study of the Bible, or indeed even our prayer life, many students lose their devotional life. Instead of it being enriched and enhanced, it seems to disappear. And

so this concern for spiritual formation is to make the communication of the data expressive of a change—it should be more than data, it should be a life that is changed. So then purposefully we may have courses in spiritual formation that deliberately do this. I think the whole ethos in the seminary should be itself spiritual formation, not just a particular course.

### **It seems that there has been resurgence in interest and promotion of the idea of spiritual formation. Why do you think, either in the seminary or at large, this is so?**

Because of alienation, people feel that data is not enough. I think it was expressed by T.S. Elliot, "Where is the wisdom that we have lost in knowledge, where is the knowledge that we have lost in information?" The cycle of 20 centuries has taken us farther from God and nearer to the dust. And so the utility of an information society simply col-

lecting knowledge without having relationships lies at the heart of a great deal of desire in the culture. Within the Christian world it is so easy for us to become what you call Christian Gnostics—journalists about the Word. Even our own teaching of theology can be a form of theological journalism. It's reporting but it's not actualizing. So this haunting challenge of this Word that became flesh and dwelt among us should give us awareness; *this* should be shaping us.

### **What role does mentoring or spiritual direction play in the formation process?**

The problem is that we can use words that become very popular, and they become buzzwords. And so “mentoring” or “spiritual formation” can themselves become kinds of buzzwords. The danger is to become too self-conscious. Without being self-conscious, we of course will not take it more seriously—so we're on the edge of a watershed; we can slip down one side by not taking it seriously enough. We can make it over-serious and then get over-conscious about what we are doing, and that is also a disservice. A natural self-forgetfulness about what we are doing, and at the same time being skilled about what this should be, is very helpful. Essentially, a mentor is an older, wiser Christian, somebody who has had more experience with life, enabling someone who is a prodigy to be protected and sheltered. It is two processes. As someone has put it: A mentor is someone who provides shadow in the midday sun for the mentee to shelter under. So you have that guiding, sheltering, guarding, protecting, nurturing model that covers all these different aspects. . . .but it's all leading to personalizing, not just simply factualizing.

### **You teach a class called *Prayer Lives of Great Saints and Scholars of the Church*, and you wrote a book called *The Transforming Power of Prayer*. How does God use prayer in Christian formation?**

Prayer is not a tool; prayer is a relationship. And so when the publisher, without my permission, changed the original title [*The Transforming Friendship: A Guide to Prayer*], it was skewing what I was saying. I wasn't talking about empowering prayer, but the transforming friendship of prayer—it's a relational category, not an instrumental category. Just as we live in the technological world, prayer can be skewed to that mindset as well. So, for me prayer is simply practicing the presence of the Lord; it is celebrating the fact that His character is to be Immanuel who is always with us. Prayer is celebrant of God's presence.

### ***The Transforming Power of Prayer* notes that prayer transcends into our human relationships. Can you speak to that aspect of prayer with regard to the spiritual journey?**

I suggested in the book that prayer is the breath of friendship. So that as we have this love relationship with God, He inspires us to love others; it is love of God and love of neighbor. So prayer is very significantly expressive of the life of God in the soul of man as Henry Scougal expressed it. We've made it a big thing—that prayer is an isolated category of the Christian life. We should see it as all-comprehensive of the environment of Christian life and involve the relationships of the Christian life. If I have intimacy with God and I am in love with God, I will take that relationship seriously enough to have a

spiritual discipline about it. But if on the other hand I think that by having a spiritual discipline, I will have friendship and intimacy with God, I've got the wrong end of the telescope. So I can become a Stoic by that spiritual discipline but not a Christian. A lot of our focus on spiritual disciplines is “give me the tools and I'll do the job.” It's a technical mindset, even in our life of devotion. I think that sometimes what we need to teach young Christians is: “take a sabbatical from devotional life. You may have to stop praying.”

### **So, we need not be so caught up in the “doing?”**

That's right.

### **But as followers of Christ, our tendency is to want to “do” something to speed up the process of our spiritual formation. What then is our responsibility in the process, if any?**

Well, I think the vocabulary is wrong, because it's all part of living in a technological society. And so processes, procedures, programs are all, in a sense, technical devices or technical mindsay for fixing things. So we want to fix things quickly. But the very nature of integrity is that we have a speed that is appropriate to what we are doing. The speed of gaining information is very fast, but the speed of godliness is very slow. Or the speed of making a friend is very slow in comparison with other forms. So we lose integrity when we use the wrong mindset or the wrong speed at which we're operating. My problem is that I can think faster than I can speak, I speak faster than I can act, I've got more acts than I've got character for. . . .so maintaining integrity is acting appropriately.

### **How can we approach spiritual formation that is not self-centered?**

It is this unconscious self-forgetfulness. . . .“Oh, you have no idea of how you helped me. . . .” “Really did I—well I'm so glad the Lord used that.” You know, that kind of iconic approach that is really reflective of another reality. So we're living in the reality of God's presence; we're always attributing whatever positive things are coming from His presence. . . .from His Spirit. We're not idolatrously worshipping ourselves. I get very nervous when I hear people talking about “my” ministry—perhaps the test of how sacrificial and selfless we are about our ministry is how willing we are to share it with somebody else. How many authors are prepared to share co-authorship. . . .or how many professors are prepared to have a co-teacher in what they're doing? Some years ago in our summer school and then fulltime, I was teaching a course on the Trinity. I said it was ridiculous for me to teach this course—we need three. So we had three specifically there—symbolically—to see the multifaceted mystery of God's triune being. It was to be a shared ministry.



# a ministry of presence



Debbie Swanson, M.A. in  
Christian Studies student

“God met me in the study of theology in Dr. Buschart’s Theology 501 class,” said Debbie Swanson, a current student pursuing an M.A. in Christian Studies with an emphasis in spiritual formation and leadership. This comment might garner a quizzical look from anyone hearing that statement out of context. But for Swanson, it was a turning point. Taking the theology class with a close friend in 2005 helped her sense God’s calling her to be equipped in spiritual formation. “I came into that class asking God, ‘What is my purpose?’ and He answered me when we studied the doctrine of the *imago dei*. Our purpose is to be Christ revealers in the circumstances in which He places us. We don’t reveal Christ only by what we do; it must flow from who we are.” From that point on, Debbie felt called to make it her life purpose to live this concept out, and to help others do the same.

In truth, for the past 20 years, Debbie has been intrigued by the concept of spiritual formation. It was 20 years ago that her struggle with depression led her to take a hard look at her own journey. “The gentleman who counseled and mentored me really did spiritual formation for me,” said Debbie. “I saw the value in it personally, and I saw

the power in helping people view their circumstances from God’s perspective.” During her depression, many asked her “Where have you sinned?” instead of “What is God doing in your life at the moment?” Her mentor’s ability to ask the latter made a world of difference. Ultimately, “the Holy Spirit is the Counselor, and He knows what He’s going after,” said Debbie. “It’s just our response to cooperate with what He’s doing.” Having experienced real freedom following this experience, Debbie knew that spiritual formation was what she “needed to be doing.”

And God allowed her opportunities to do so through many venues: teaching Bible Study Fellowship, leading a young adults’ class at church and walking with her children through their own spiritual journeys. However, her ministry of spiritual formation went to a deeper level when the pastor of her church, Riverside Baptist in Denver, Colo., was killed in an automobile accident in 2002. Debbie, who was employed by the church at the time, found herself thrust into the middle of a situation that made little sense from a human perspective. She recognized God’s appointment as a “ministry of presence” to this pastor’s widow, also her best friend.

Now, five years later, Debbie considers herself a freelancer in the spiritual formation realm. Her plans after finishing her degree? “It’s God’s appointed journey,” she acknowledges. “What I love to do is walk alongside people who are going through crises or are at a transitional time in their life and want to discern what God is doing.” She added, “Along this journey, God gave me John 13, the chapter in which Jesus washed the feet of the disciples. God said, ‘Debbie, this is what I want you to do.’ What I saw was that Jesus stripped Himself to His basic garments, and in the process, He took the messy stuff of people’s lives onto Himself, and that was my call into the ministry.” Debbie felt God saying to her, “I want you to take the pain and to walk with people to receive it into yourself and to give it to me.” She explains, “If we’re going to walk in a similar path as our Lord, we too will get dirty or take the pain, we will have to feel what others feel, enter into that moment with them, to be present with people in that moment, in their pain, in their sorrow, even their joy. I have to believe that because Christ indwells us as believers, hopefully God is giving them Himself through the vessel of my life.”

# restoration

## AND HOLY RHYTHMS

*Alumnus Robert Blahnik on Sonscape Ministries*

In April, my wife Jeanne and I took a scenic drive on the mountain backroads between Woodland Park and Denver. We were shocked to see that the beautiful views of pristine mountain forests had given way to the ugly scars from the great Hayman wildfire of 2002. New houses looked out of place amongst the wasteland of thousands of naked trees rising out of the ground—as if God had spilled a gigantic tube of “pick-up-sticks” from the sky. The fire became the largest wildfire in Colorado history as 138,000 acres of heaven-on-earth were reduced to a hellish scene of smoldering ashes. People who reside in Colorado know very well that wildfires, blown by fierce

winds, can greatly damage our world and our lives.

There’s another kind of wildfire that can also damage our world, our lives, and our churches. The fire is already burning and will only grow in its destructive potential if we don’t recognize it and do everything we can to put it out. The church in America is hurting today because it is facing a wildfire that is consuming its leadership—the pastors of our churches are under attack and many of them are burning up and burning out.



Robert and Jeanne Blahnik at Sonscape Ministries in Woodland Park, Colo.

By God’s grace, we are able to use the excellent theological and counseling training we received at Denver Seminary to help God’s servants douse the ministerial wildfires and re-plant the seeds of rest, renewal, refreshment and re-creation.

Who pastors the pastors? Who guides them in their spiritual formation? Where can the pastors and missionaries go when the fires of burnout lap at the heels of their hearts? Obviously, they can go to God, but where can they go to find God with “skin on?” In August 2001, I found such a place. That place was SonScape Re-Creation Ministries.

I graduated from Denver Seminary in 1989 with an M.Div. in Counseling and set out to fulfill my calling to preach the Word and share the Good News of Christ near Chicago. We were called to a church hurting from a nasty three-way split. We went with the vision of healing the church and seeing it become an evangelistic lighthouse in the community. After 11 years of faithfully serving the church, I found myself weary, exhausted and spiritually dry. Trying to meet the needs and expectations as a senior pastor of a large church left me smelling smoke and feeling the wildfires of burnout and depression.

Thankfully, through a summer sabbatical and a referral from Focus on the Family, Jeanne and I attended a spiritual formation retreat at SonScape Ministries in Woodland Park, Colo. It was a “safe” place where we could openly share our struggles and find help. It was a “sympathetic” place where we found love, grace and acceptance. It was a “silent” place where we found rest, renewal, and the re-creating of our hearts, our marriage and our ministry. It was a “spiritual” place where we learned how to “be still” and, once again, find out that God IS Almighty God.

In June 2005, Jeanne and I joined the SonScape staff as retreat leaders, using what God did in our lives to help our fellow pastors and missionaries. Although we live in Indianapolis, we regularly travel to Colorado, Georgia, Seattle and Tennessee to lead the retreats. At SonScape, we help pastors, missionaries and spouses get back to discovering the “holy rhythms” of the spiritual life

through teaching, counseling and applying the spiritual disciplines of simplicity, solitude, meditation and prayer. To fight the wildfire of expectations, we utilize various personality inventories to help our retreat guests know who

they are, to like who they are, and to be who they are. We also remind God’s choice servants that there is a Savior, and they’re not Him!

We have found that Isaiah 28:12-13 captures the essence and purpose of SonScape:

*This is the resting place, let the weary rest;  
This is the place of repose—  
but they would not listen.*

*So then, the word of the LORD to them will become:*

*Do and do, do and do, rule on rule, rule on rule;  
a little here, a little there—  
So that they will go and fall backward, be injured and snared and captured.*

Sadly, these verses capture why many face depression, burn out and leave the ministry. Too often we become “human doings” instead of “human beings.” God intended for us to follow Jesus’ example of regularly pulling away and working to build and maintain our spiritual formation. By God’s grace, Jeanne and I are able to use the excellent theological and counseling training we received at Denver Seminary to help God’s beloved servants douse the ministerial wildfires and re-plant the seeds of rest, renewal, refreshment and re-creation. *For more information, visit [www.sonscape.org](http://www.sonscape.org).*



The Blahniks with a group of retreat attendees.



Apostle Paul



Teresa of Avila



Martin Luther

## SPIRITUAL FORMATION: Fleeting Fad or Return to Roots?

by Dr. Bruce Demarest, Professor of Christian Formation

### WHERE ARE WE?

We evangelicals are deeply committed to the Gospel, evangelism and missions. Rumor has it, however, that spiritual hunger is endemic in the church. Lay people testify that the pressures of earning a living in a globalized world tear them from relationship with God and others. Seminarians acknowledge that the rigors of academic life test their spiritual mettle. And clergy lament that promoting the church and ministry tasks challenge their personal formation. The evangelical church has not been suffering from a lack of effort; but our regimens of sanctification may be too programmatic, activist and fast. We engage in considerable religious activity with uncertain levels of transformation.

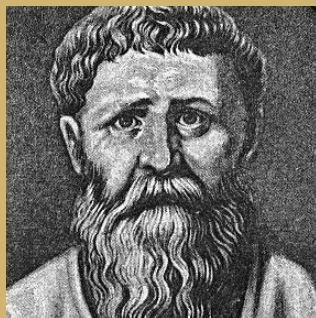
Research shows that only half of Christians are making some effort to grow spiritually, and many of these achieve only limited results. Other studies reveal that one-third of born-again Christians lament that they are still searching for meaning in life. A. W. Tozer (d. 1963) observed that “for millions of Christians, God is no more real than He is to non-Christians.” Many saints remain infants in Christ (1 Cor 3:1), ‘doing church’ without ‘being church.’ A recent study of two dozen evangelicals who left the church found that while most had been active in church programs, many were starving on the inside. We have learned about Christ, but have we “learned Christ”? (Eph. 4:20).

Ken Sande of Peacemaker Ministries reports that “23 percent of all current pastors in the U.S. have been fired or forced to resign in the past.” The average pastoral career lasts only 14 years—less than half what it was not long ago. Moreover, “1,500 pastors leave their assignments every month in the U.S. because of discouragement, burnout or moral failure.” Perhaps Oswald Chambers was right when he

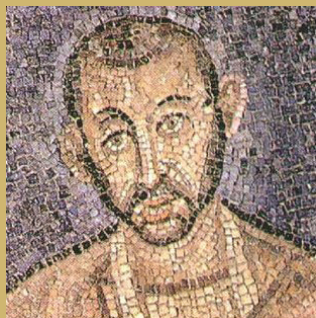
wrote, “The greatest competitor to devotion to Christ is service for Christ.” Adrian Van Kaam, who helped Corrie Ten Boom shelter Jews and Christians from the Nazis during World War II, observes, “The art of living in Jesus has been lost by many. We have become less sensitive to the gentle presence of the Holy One in our midst. Fascinated by the lights of this earth, we have become blind to the light that is Jesus.”

### ENTER THE WORLD OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION

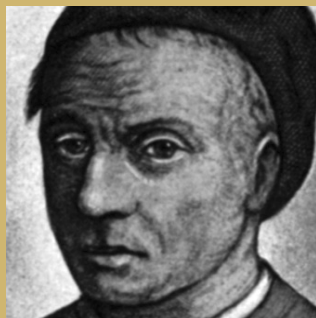
The past few decades have witnessed the stunning resurgence of a cluster of emphases known as spiritual formation. The latter has emerged from the broader Christian world to challenge our conventional ways of growing the spiritual life. I define spiritual formation as the shaping of the Christian’s character after the pattern of Christ by the power of the Spirit and the living out of the Savior’s values in service to others. The apostle Paul put it this way: “We all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:18; cf. 4:16). Spiritual formation is the goal of the great commandment, enlarged by Jesus. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” And “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:30-31). Spiritual formation requires that we supplement right knowing (orthodoxy) and right doing (orthopraxy) with right being (orthopathy). Spiritual writer Evelyn Underhill (d. 1941) put it well: “We spend most of our time conjugating three verbs: to want, to have, and to do. Our greatest need is simply to be.” Spiritual formation involves a turn to the heart (leb, kardia), the integrating center of the person (Ps. 9:1; Mt. 18:35) and the core place where God is engaged. Moreover, formation involves the committed, life-long pursuit of holiness, for “without holiness no one will see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14).



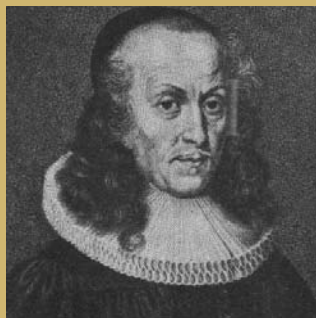
Augustine



Ambrose of Milan



Thomas a Kempis



Philipp Spener

## RETURN TO ROOTS

Increasingly, evangelical Christians are practicing spiritual disciplines, taking retreats and consulting with spiritual directors. Classical Christian paths of spiritual growth are being revisited. Formation is facilitated by a discerning return to Christian spiritual roots preserved in writings known as the spiritual classics. Believers who read classics of the spiritual life report that they are introduced to neglected dimensions of Christian faith and life. Reading allows us to enter into conversation with the great personalities of our Christian heritage. As Furr and Freeman observe, "In this story we meet a host of faithful witnesses: martyrs and confessors, desert mothers and church fathers, scholastics and mystics, reformers and radicals, Puritans and Pietists. These and more are our spiritual heritage, too."

The spiritual classics represent graced commentaries on the spiritual life. They help recapture the transcendent perspective lost in the modern technological age, and their writings speak to the heart in a way that often is foreign to us. Spiritual authority Dallas Willard comments: "The Christian past holds a huge store of information on spiritual formation. We must take the trouble to know it and own it in ways suitable to today." Do you fear self-disclosure? Then read Augustine's *Confessions*. Do you hunger for deeper intimacy with God? Then reflect on Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle*. Do you yearn to become more like Christ? Then ponder Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*. Do you aspire to a greater experience of community? Then read Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Life Together*. Do you want a more experiential faith? Then read the *Theologia Germanica* — a work highly valued by Martin Luther. As we reconnect with the Christian story through the ages, we discover rich resources for spiritual transformation.

As we wade into the waters of our spiritual tradition, we will keep straight our theology—the revealed knowledge content of the Christian faith. Our strategy will be to embrace the vitamins while rejecting any toxins we encounter. We will integrate into our evangelical belief system all that is renewing and empowering, for such honors the Spirit's work in the church through the centuries. Our quest for spiritual renewal will be enhanced as we return, in the words of J. I. Packer, to "an historic Christian emphasis—Patristic, Medieval, Reformational, Puritan, Evangelical—with which the Protestantism that I know has largely lost touch." Or as Asian theologian Simon Chan notes, "An openness to the Christian past is one important sign of a genuine Christian spirituality."

## HEALTHY SPIRITUAL HABITS

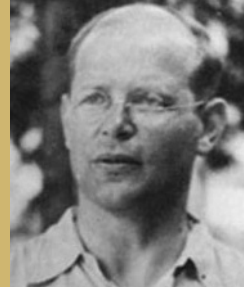
Formation requires spiritual training not unlike the conditioning needed to run a marathon (1 Cor. 9:24-27). Spiritual disciplines are practices regularly undertaken that train the spirit in godliness—that gyroscopically return us to the right path when we stray. As we form healthy spiritual habits through repeated practice, we discover that they draw the heart to affective engagement with the transforming Holy Spirit. Spiritual formation involves the synergy of God's gracious initiative and our active response (Phil. 2:12-13; 2 Peter 1:3, 5-8). God has chosen to work through, not apart from, human means. Augustine (d. 430) simply but forcefully said, "Without God we cannot;



C.S. Lewis



A.W. Tozer



Dietrich Bonhoeffer



Evelyn Underhill

without us God will not." We form disciplines, and disciplines form us. A legitimate asceticism (cf. the Greek *askein*, to train, discipline) is required of growing disciples (1 Tim. 4:7-8; Heb. 5:14). Spurious disciplines that lead away from God must be replaced by biblically-based disciplines that open the soul to the Spirit's formative operations.

The reading and memorization of Scripture are primary means of spiritual formation. Orthodox Christians concur with Ambrose of Milan (d. 397) that "The reading of sacred Scripture is the life of the soul." Vital prayer likewise constitutes the lifeblood of growing Christians. But we must not view prayer merely as lifting our grocery list of requests to God, for He knows our needs. Rather, we should pursue holistic prayer: prayer entered by composure (quieting the heart before God); prayer experienced as communion (dwelling in His presence); and prayer expressed as conversation (dialoguing with God). We do well to supplement prayer of the lips (praise, petition, intercession) with prayer of the heart (contemplation, adoration). As C. S. Lewis (d. 1963) noted, "Petition is a small part of prayer. Confession and petition are its threshold, adoration its sanctuary, the presence, vision and enjoyment of God its bread and wine. In prayer God shows Himself to us." Francis of Sales (d. 1622) said it well: "Prayer is the perfume of heaven bringing Jesus to us."

The classical discipline of *lectio divina* ("sacred reading") helpfully unites attention to Scripture and prayer. This meditative, prayerful approach to the Word involves five steps: *lectio*, attentive reading of a selected biblical text; *meditatio*, thoughtful reflection on what is written; *oratio*, praying what is read back to the Father; *contemplatio*, attending to the voice of the Spirit through the biblical text; and *incarnatio*, living out all that God has laid on one's heart.

Additional disciplines of abstinence (e.g., fasting, frugality, simplicity, chastity) and of engagement (e.g., study, worship, service, submission) could be unfolded. But an important, neglected discipline will be mentioned: the dual discipline of solitude and silence. Ours is a busy, noise-saturated culture. Bill Hybels comments that "God is constantly trying to get through to us, but too often all He gets is a busy signal." Solitude is that state of interior stillness that disposes the heart toward God. It creates space in our cluttered lives for God to speak and touch us. Thus the psalmist wrote, "I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me" (Psa. 131:2). Solitude can be achieved by withdrawing from the crowd, as Jesus often did (Mark 6:31-32; Luke 5:16), or simply by entering that quiet place amidst one's daily activities. Henri Nouwen (d. 1996) goes so far as to say, "Without solitude it is impossible to live a spiritual life." Silence involves limiting one's speech in order to intensify listening to God and others. The biblical order is solitude/silence/hearing/obedience/action.

Continued on page 11



Frances de Sales

continued from page 10

When practicing healthy spiritual habits we will avoid potential perils. We will eschew the legalism that seeks to render oneself acceptable to God by fulfilling the letter of human regulations. We will flee Pharisaism whereby one gives merely the appearance of being spiritual. We will renounce perfectionism that believes the moral ideal can be fully realized in this life. We will renounce elitism that believes that the disciplines are intended solely for monks and ministers. And we will forego the idealism that believes that disciplines are ends in themselves rather than means God employs for growth. So-called formation disciplines such as soul yoga, mandala explorations, Wiccan and Druidic rituals and the like must be roundly rejected as anti-thetic to Christian faith.

### SOUL CARE

In our day God is providentially engineering a significant revival of the neglected ministry of soul care. By this I mean the ministry in which a gifted and experienced Christian helps another person grow in relationship with and obedience to God by following Christ's example. Another source defines soul care as the gift to be sensitive, present and supportive to the spiritual journey of another believer. The spiritual director assists the directee to identify the path on which the Lord is leading and encourages him or her faithfully to follow that path.

Soul care was practiced by many biblical figures, including Nathan, Naomi, Elizabeth, Barnabas, Paul and Jesus himself. The care of souls has been a core ministry of the church through the centuries. The soul friend helps the disciple catch the scent of the Spirit, identifies resistances to growth, guides in the practice of spiritual disciplines, facilitates listening to God and encourages the life of prayer. Someone has said, "One pound of spiritual direction is made up of eight ounces of prayer, three ounces of theology, three ounces of common sense and two ounces of psychology." Willard succinctly summarizes the history of this ministry. Soul care, or spiritual direction, "was understood by Jesus, taught by Paul, obeyed by the early church, followed with excesses in the medieval church, narrowed by the Reformers, recaptured by the Puritans and virtually lost in the modern church." The intentional care of souls rightly practiced is a necessary resource for our sanctification. As Aelred of Rievaulx (d. 1167) pointed out, "The Gospel life with all its twists and turns is too much for us to handle alone. We need the counsel, guidance and support of others who will tread the path with us."

### WHAT IS GOD DOING?

The revival of Christian spiritual formation represents a providentially directed movement of God's Spirit.

Through graced resources God is turning the hearts of professing Christians to their first love, deepening relationships with the Savior and renewing saints in the image of His Son. A Doctor of Ministry student whom I had the privilege of mentoring realigned his church along a spiritual formation model. When asked why he chose this emphasis, the pastor replied, "I don't want my people to be shocked when they meet Jesus."

A second thing God is doing is bringing the body of Christ together. The spiritual formation movement is restoring a new spirit of togetherness and trust among God's blood-bought people. An egregious fault of Christendom is its painful divisions. Before leaving this earth, Jesus fervently prayed to the Father that His people might be united in love rather than divided with rancor (John 17:20-23). The Lord indicated that only as Christians overcome their prideful divisions would the unbelieving world trust him (John 17:23). True Christians who find it difficult to come together theologically are discovering that they are growing in trust and love for one another on the common ground of devotion to Christ. The Pietist, Philipp Spener (d. 1705), rightly judged "that the fractured pieces of the body of Christ could not be brought about until they were spiritually renewed."

Denver Seminary has been actively working in this field where God is at work. Eight years ago it launched a six-course Certificate in Evangelical Spiritual Guidance, recently reconfigured as a Certificate in Christian Formation and Soul Care. A year ago, a Doctor of Ministry program was begun in Community Spiritual Formation. The seminary anticipates further upgrading its offerings in this crucial area.

### IN SUM

Sanctification, or spiritual formation, is the goal of the church. Only as God's people are transformed into Christlikeness will they be equipped to glorify Him and extend His kingdom. Personal and corporate transformation is the *sine qua non* for fulfilling the Great Commission. The typical evangelical protocol for growth has not been without success. But we must acknowledge blind spots and imbalances in our schemes of Christian nurture. We have not always got in right proportion intellect and affections, theology and experience, prayer of the lips and prayer of the heart, and structure and spontaneity in worship.

Canadian theologian John Stackhouse concludes: "There is widespread discontent in North American Christianity. Many of us are being asked by churches to settle for life-support Christianity instead of thriving Christianity. We should be saying, 'Are we missing out on something?'" Life-changing spiritual formation is that missing piece.

*"Sanctification, or spiritual formation, is the goal of the church. Only as God's people are transformed into Christlikeness will they be equipped to glorify Him and extend his kingdom."*

The 2005-2006 "Entering Student Questionnaire," produced by the Association of Theological Schools, ranks **spirituality** in the top five reasons that seminarians choose a particular institution (ATS Newsletter, Spring 2006, Number 18).

## The CHRISTIAN FORMATION CURRICULUM

By God's grace, Denver Seminary is a front-runner in the area of spiritual Christian formation among evangelical seminaries. Beginning in the fall of 1998, the core curriculum for all entering students changed to include an introduction to spiritual formation class and participation in a spiritual formation group consisting of up to 10 students and a faculty or adjunct faculty mentor. The groups meet weekly over the course of three to five semesters depending on the degree program. In addition, learning contracts focused on formation or character development are designed by each student in conjunction with their mentors.

Numerous developments in the church at large demonstrate this increased need for training that is rooted in the Scriptures and sound theology. These include, but are not limited to, the following: a renewed interest among Christians going deeper in following Jesus; the creation of church and parachurch staff positions in Christian formation; renewed interest in spiritual direction; the proliferation of literature in the area of Christian formation; the incredible response to national conferences like the Spiritual Formation Forum; and churches desirous of seeing their communities have a more specific focus on formation.

Denver Seminary is working to meet this need through our various curriculum offerings. This would include a certificate program in Christian Formation and Soul Care, which is designed to be embedded in masters level degree work, as well as a stand-alone certificate for those in our community desiring special equipping for specialized ministry. We have awarded 33 certificates in Christian Formation and Soul Care since the inception of the program in 1998.

In addition, our D.Min. in Leadership in Community Spiritual Formation was launched in January 2006 and equips pastors to develop a community where environments of grace help everyone become spiritually formed more like Jesus. Though spiritual formation involves individual experiences, it is typically a community activity. Environments of grace where people feel safe are essential for people to be open and transparent so they can receive support for growth. The many "one another" passages in scripture require mutual support. Without community help no one has the support needed for growth.

Denver Seminary has also launched the research and design phase of a Master of Arts in Christian Formation and Soul Care degree to complement our certificate in Christian Formation and Soul Care and our D.Min. in Leadership with a concentration in Community Spiritual Formation. **Dr. Bruce Demarest** and instructor **Howard Baker**, authors of *Satisfy Your Soul* and *Soul Keeping* respectively, will provide guidance and leadership in the design of the new program. They bring many years of leadership in Christian formation through their ministry with a wide variety of organizations and local churches.

All of these aspects of our educational programs represent the means. The end is to help our students more clearly reflect the person of Christ, and—in keeping with the Seminary's vision—to equip leaders who think biblically, live faithfully and lead wisely for a lifetime.

*"I am again in the pains of childbirth  
until Christ is formed in you."*

Galatians 4:19 (NIV)



Dr. Bruce Demarest



Howard Baker

### D.Min. in Leadership COMMUNITY SPIRITUAL FORMATION CONCENTRATION

#### Courses include:

- Leadership in Community Spiritual Formation
- Integrating Spiritual and Leadership Principles
- How to Develop a Biblically-Based Spiritual Journey
- Spiritual Mentoring: The Ministry of Evangelical Soul Care
- Ministry Effectiveness Through Personal Growth in Christian Spirituality
- Interpersonal Spiritual Formation
- Independent Study, Leadership in Community Spiritual Formation



# CHRISTIAN formation

## Weary Wandering or Joyful Journey?

*Instructor Howard Baker reflects on the spiritual journey, including his own.*

As I reached the trailhead my watch displayed 5:30 a.m. on a clear, crisp Colorado morning. I had planned the night before to get an early start in order to watch the sun rise over the Rocky Mountains. Somehow I hoped the clarity and brightness of the morning would burn away the hazy fog that had clouded my mind and heart. But just the reverse occurred. Shortly after beginning the trek up Monte Cristo Gulch I found myself scrambling over rocks and through brush with no trail in sight. My internal confusion was now externally visible. The invigorating morning hike I had imagined devolved into frustration and weariness. When I had given up hope of finding the trail and was about to turn back, there it was. A short, steep climb placed me back on the marked path for the remainder of the ascent. Though still strenuous, the hike now had a completely different “feel.” I was motivated and energized. The beauty of the mountain dawn, hidden by earlier frustration, now captivated me. This is what I had hoped for!

What was it that transformed my trip up the mountain from a weary wandering into a joyful journey? The awareness that I was on the path changed everything. Secure in the knowledge that I was headed somewhere, I was set free to enjoy the journey.

Let me say it up front as clearly as I can: we are on a journey; this journey is what life is about; this journey is all that life is about. That is the reality. But awareness of the journey is another matter and a decisive one at that. Not knowing the path creates the weary frustration that leads us to give up the journey entirely, as I was about to give up my morning hike. Knowing the path gives a comprehensive and transforming vision for life that is described by the Apostle Paul, “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.” Indeed, everything we have hoped for!

### **JOURNEY: A METAPHOR FOR CHRISTIAN FORMATION**

How then do we become so aware of the path to which we are called that our lives are transformed as a result? The Biblical and classical image of “journey” provides a robust metaphor to frame this life of following Jesus and to order our imaginations around. It captures the

attributes of movement, purpose and destination that comprise the process of Christ being formed in us (Galatians 4:19). If this is a new concept to you, it may be helpful to think in terms of the relationship of a wedding to the marriage. The wedding is not the goal. It is the beginning. Thirty-one years ago I couldn’t wait to grab my new bride, leave that reception and begin our life together. In the same way, trusting Christ is not an arrival, but the starting point of an eternal journey of union and communion with Jesus that begins here and now.

The journey image especially helps us as we move through the changing seasons of life. When we experience doubt, apathy, disillusionment or depression, our first reaction is, “What did I do wrong?” The fact that my spiritual development is a journey explains these conditions as normal passages through which I move. They are more often “providential permissions” rather than personal failures.

Think of the many examples of Biblical heroes who were placed in positions of hardship and emerged from them transformed: Moses in the Midian wilderness; Joseph in the Egyptian prison; David hiding in caves; Daniel in the lions’ den; Ruth on the threshing floor; Jonah in the belly of a fish; Job in the pit of despair; Jeremiah beaten and put in the stocks; Mary pregnant and unwed; Jesus on the cross. Can you think of your current situation in this light? Is it possible that what you are experiencing at this very moment is part of a journey that is being guided by your loving Father? Could it be that God is as interested in developing your faith as He was in developing Moses’, Joseph’s, Ruth’s and all the rest?

The story of St. Sarapion, a desert father of fourth century Egypt, illustrates how we are each on an individual journey. Sarapion, on a pilgrimage to Rome, heard of a celebrated recluse, a woman who never left her one small room. As an incessant wanderer, Sarapion was skeptical of her way of life. He visited her and asked, “Why are you sitting here?” To which she replied, “I am not sitting. I am on a journey.”

Whether “wanderers” or “sitters,” it is helpful to realize that growing in Christ is a journey with many surprising twists and turns rather



than a linear progression that can be controlled and predicted. It's a roller coaster, not a merry-go-round. The Scriptural and historical reality is that we move on in the spiritual journey when God wants us to, since "it is God who causes the growth." I had to learn this through a painful crisis in my own journey of formation.

### A "JOLT" IN THE JOURNEY

In the famous words of Dante's *Inferno*, I had come to the middle of life and "I found myself astray in a dark wood." Success no longer seemed to satisfy. Failure created deep disillusionment. I was forced to look inward. There was a gnawing emptiness that refused to be filled by what had always worked before. For two years everything I tried had the rotten smell of yesterday's manna.

The journey of becoming like Jesus from the inside out will for most of us include some sort of crisis or maybe several. It could be external, such as the loss of a job or a marriage. It could be the internal loss of faith, purpose or meaning. In either case, it is a crisis of limitation. The old resources we depended upon no longer work. I came to the end of my rope and resources.

This can be a dark and painful phase of the journey punctuated with losses. John of the Cross described an intense version of this stage as a "dark night of the soul." Few of us will be led into those depths, but we will all be led by the Spirit, at some point, to turn inward and rediscover the love and power of the indwelling Christ.

For me this crisis lasted for a couple of years. The light began to break through while on a four-day silent retreat. My whole life was turned upside down as the result of experiencing the reality of Jesus and His unchanging love for me. My new passion was intimacy with God rather than service for Him. I surrendered my ego need for success and significance. It was like a second conversion.

### THE JOURNEY'S END

"Begin with the end in mind" is a more important proverb for the spiritual journey than it is for project management. Having a clear picture of my destination allows me to make sense of my journey. Times of dryness or darkness are always difficult and challenging, but if I understand how they help me arrive at my ultimate destination I can welcome them as normal and necessary parts of my journey with Christ. Or, as Bernard of Clairvaux put it in the 12th century, "when you have heard what the reward is, the labor of the climb will be less."

So what is that reward? Is it the "good life" or "being blessed" or "going to heaven" or a life of purpose and significance? While these may be part of our experience as followers of Jesus, they are also examples of inadequate and less-than-biblical notions of the journey's end.

The true goal of the journey is captured succinctly by the Apostle John: "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is" (1 John 3:2).

Seeing Jesus face-to-face and becoming like Him are the two dimensions of our destination—communion and union. Likeness is the result of communion. I become like Jesus by being with Him. Living my life with Him transforms me from the inside out. Unlike a physical journey in which you are either at your destination or not, the goal of the journey of spiritual formation is progressively realized.

According to Romans 8:28-29 God is working "all things together" to conform us to the image of His Son. The "good" that Paul refers to in this passage is God's purpose of conforming us to the image of Christ. Therefore, when I am clear about the destination of my journey, I can view every circumstance as an opportunity for spiritual formation in Christ. I can have the settled confidence that there is nothing outside the reach of God's redemptive hand. The courageous young Christian with cerebral palsy embodies the intent of these verses by saying with a smile, "I would rather have [cerebral palsy] and know Christ than to be in perfect health and not know Him."

With that perspective and vision I receive God's grace and strength to stay on the journey with Christ and to Christlikeness no matter how steep or rocky the path becomes.

*Portions of this article also appear in Howard's chapter in the recently released compilation, Transformation of a Man's Heart, InterVarsity Press, 2006.*

## GET TO KNOW...

### HOWARD BAKER

Chaplain and Instructor  
in Christian Formation

#### 2005-06 Spiritual Formation

#### classes taught at Denver Seminary:

Biblical and Historical Foundations of Formation and Soul Care, Principles and Practices of Spiritual Formation, Soul Care Practicum

#### Book on your nightstand right now:

*Eat This Book*, by Eugene Peterson

#### When you became an instructor at Denver Seminary

1995

#### Person you'd most like to have a cup of coffee with:

John Wesley

#### Favorite Colorado outdoor activity:

Golf

#### Favorite movie:

*Les Misérables*



# CAMPAIGN COMPLETED!

**June 2003**

The Board of Trustees unanimously votes to launch a three-year comprehensive campaign with an estimated goal of \$15-17 million for the New Campus, Seminary Fund and Endowment.

**February 2004**

Campaign reaches \$7,192,180 with 41 givers

**May 2004**

Land was purchased for \$3 million in cash

**July 2004**

Broke ground and started construction

**September 2004**

Groundbreaking dedication ceremony

**October 2004**

Campaign total of \$10,415,064 with 1,174 givers

**July 2005**

Seminary relocates to new campus; classes begin

**September 2005**

Ribbon Cutting and New Campus Dedication

**November 2005**

Campaign total of \$12,599,261 with 1,769 givers

**December 2005**

Closed on the sale of the old property, paid off construction loans

**March 2006**

Campaign total of \$15,121,818 with 1,833 givers

**May 2006**

Grounds and Robinson Endowed Chairs completed

**June 2006**

We exceeded our \$17,000,000 goal in gifts and pledges!



New campus **completed.**

Seminary Fund **goals met** each year.

Endowment **strengthened.**

## 4TH ANNUAL DENVER SEMINARY golf tournament

October 2, 2006 • Fossil Trace Golf Club

### SCHEDULE:

- 11:00 a.m. Registration and lunch
- 12:30 p.m. Shotgun start
- 6:30 p.m. Dinner, silent auction, awards

Our goal is to raise over \$40,000 for the Seminary Fund to benefit our 900 students as well as provide a venue for sharing the mission and vision of Denver Seminary with long-time friends and new ones.

**Registration by Sept. 18, 2006.** Contact Brian Fort at 303.762.6924 or [brian.fort@denverseminary.edu](mailto:brian.fort@denverseminary.edu)



**Raising More Money:** Sustainable Funding for your Mission with Terry Axelrod

**September 8th, 2006 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Simpson Leadership Center Rm. 103**

Alumni, pastors and parachurch ministry leaders are invited to join us for this special event, which introduces you to a model for building sustainable funding for your mission. Learn to leave a legacy of passionate lifelong individual donors as you tailor the *Raising More Money Model®* to your organization. Participants are encouraged to bring other staff, board and volunteers to engage them in this practical and effective new approach. The *Raising More Money Model®* was developed by founder Terry Axelrod, author of *Raising More Money—A Step-by-Step Guide to Building Lifelong Donors*, *The Point of Entry Handbook*, and *The Ask Event Handbook*. To register, contact Melanie Eagar at 303.762.6949 or [melanie.eagar@denverseminary.edu](mailto:melanie.eagar@denverseminary.edu).

# SPIRITUAL formation and stewardship

by Gary Hoag, Vice President of Advancement



Practicing stewardship is a vital aspect of spiritual formation. By stewardship, I am referring to much more than just our giving. Part of our growth as followers of Jesus is learning our role and carrying out our responsibilities as stewards in His Kingdom. I believe we are stewards entrusted with spiritual gifts and material goods for the purpose of glorifying God, serving others and making known the eternal gospel! As the theme of this issue is spiritual formation, I want to suggest an outline for practicing stewardship which could contribute to personal spiritual formation in this vital area.

## (1) Discern your gifts.

In 2 Timothy 1:6, Paul challenged Timothy to “fan into flame” the gift God had given him. How has God gifted you? If you are not sure, take a spiritual gifts test. I encourage my students to use the tool found at [www.thecallonline.com](http://www.thecallonline.com), a website of Focus on the Family. This is one of many great tools for helping you discover your giftedness. It has helped my wife and me understand one another and work well together.

## (2) Assess your activities.

Carve out some time for solitude with the Lord regarding your giftedness. Are your gifts smoldering or stoked? Paul reminds us that the gifts of the Spirit are given for “the common good” in 1 Corinthians 12:7. How are you employing your gifts to edify the body of Christ? Often a mentor or close friend can help you identify areas for potential growth.

## (3) Take inventory of your goods!

Most people don’t realize how much stuff they have until they list it. Don’t just include your bank account(s), put down your house(s), your car(s) and any other assets you may have. You don’t need an accountant for this exercise but you may need a few sheets of paper. Now take a moment to give thanks for the things which God has provided for you to enjoy and share (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

## (4) Fast and pray about how your stuff may have a hold on you.

In Luke 16:13b, Jesus said plainly, “You cannot serve God and mammon.” Jesus knew that for many people, their possessions possessed them. In what way may this be true for you? Fasting and prayer can serve as a refreshing retreat from our materialistic society and help you evaluate your relationship with your stuff from a Kingdom perspective.

## (5) Intentionally allocate the resources in your stewardship!

To ensure you are found faithful in your stewardship (1 Cor 4:2), consider using the Stewardship Portfolio below to map out a plan for investing for eternal returns. Rather than

merely exhorting you to serve with your gifts and tithe your goods, this tool helps you strategically offer yourself to God as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2), amounting to far more than giving a percentage of your time and money.

## Practicing Stewardship

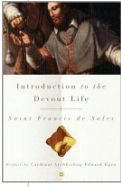
I have come to the conclusion that if I ever think I have “arrived” when it comes to my stewardship, I may at that moment be like the steward scorned for burying his talents (cf. Luke 19 or Matthew 25). Stewardship is a process, not a destination. By taking these steps and using a tool such as the stewardship portfolio, my prayer for each of us is that we will be formed spiritually and found faithful in using our gifts and giving our goods to make known the grace of God!

# THE STEWARDSHIP PORTFOLIO\*

This tool can help you allocate your gifts and goods to participate in the work of evangelism, discipleship and mercy in your Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Complete the chart as an individual or if you are married, fill it in with your spouse. Sample ministries are listed to help you get rolling. \*Inspired by the book *Eternity Portfolio* by Alan Gotthardt and conversations with Todd Harper of *Generous Giving*.

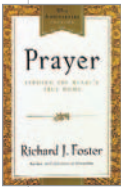
	Evangelism	Discipleship	Mercy
Jerusalem	YOUR LOCAL CHURCH		
Judea & Samaria	MINISTRIES IN YOUR REGION		
Ends of the Earth	MINISTRIES AROUND THE WORLD		

✚ **The recommended resources on this page are used in the Seminary's Spiritual Formation classes, including two books written by professor Bruce Demarest and instructor Howard Baker.**



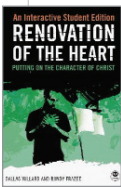
**Introduction to the Devout Life**  
**Francis de Sales (Knopf Publishing Group, 2002)**

A relevant treasure of devotion for nearly 400 years. As Bishop of Geneva in the first quarter of the 17th century, de Sales compiled these instructions on how to live in Christ. He leads the reader through practical ways of attaining a devout life without renouncing the world and offers prayers and meditations to strengthen devotion in the face of temptation and hardship.



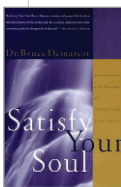
**Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home**  
**Richard Foster (HarperCollins Publishers, 1992)**

Prayer confronts us with great mysteries: Why is some prayer apparently unanswered? How can a finite person communicate with an infinite God? Isn't prayer merely psychological manipulation? As Foster guides you in understanding, experiencing and practicing prayer in all its forms, Foster also helps you learn to be comfortable with its mysteries.



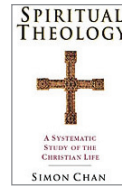
**Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ**  
**Dallas Willard (NavPress Publishing Group, 2002)**

We aren't born again to stay the way we are. We can experience significant growth in our Christian walk, shed sinful habits and increasingly take on the character of Christ. Dallas Willard calls it "the transformation of the spirit"—a divine process that "brings every element in our being, working from inside out, into harmony with the will of God or the kingdom of God."



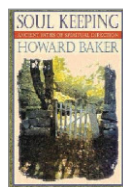
**Satisfy Your Soul: Restoring the Heart of Christian Spirituality**  
**Bruce Demarest (NavPress Publishing Group, 1999)**

Find solid, biblical direction and personal insight in Dr. Bruce Demarest's study of the life-long process of inner transformation. Discover the timeless spiritual guidance of the Christian classics to help us develop an authentic relationship with God today. Gain a balanced, biblical understanding of Christian practices such as silence, meditation, contemplation, journaling and spiritual direction. Discover the path of inner transformation that will lead you to know God as an intimate Friend.



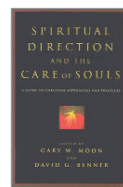
**Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life**  
**Simon Chan (Inter-Varsity Press, 1999)**

Post-Enlightenment theology has tended to divorce spirituality from systematic theology. Now, respected theologian Chan strives to reunite them as he explores the connections between Christian doctrine and Christian living. Covering the topics of sin, salvation, the church and God, he offers illuminating reflections on the implications of these key concepts for the spiritual life.



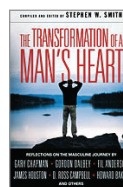
**Soul Keeping**  
**Howard Baker (NavPress Publishing Group, 1998)**

Soul keeping is a metaphor for living a fulfilling, passionate life in Christ. You'll rediscover life in the kingdom of God as practiced by saints and martyrs, prophets and psalmists. The paths they walked are for the weary and worn, the bruised and battered, the disillusioned and despairing, the hurting and the hopeless.



**Spiritual Direction and the Care of Souls: A Guide to Christian Approaches and Practices**  
**Gary W. Moon and David G. Benner, Eds. (Inter-Varsity Press, 2004)**

Representatives of each major Christian tradition—Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Reformed, Wesleyan-Holiness, Social Justice and Pentecostal/Charismatic—give their take on how to bring people to deeper maturity through the role of a spiritual director. Features expert contributors.



**The Transformation of a Man's Heart**  
**Stephen W. Smith, including chapter from adjunct professor Howard Baker (InterVarsity Press, 2006)**

*The Transformation of a Man's Heart* is a book of stories: twelve men write from their hearts about their own journey toward transformation.

**CrossTalk: Christian Leader's Soul Care** Thursday, September 21, 2006 9:00-11:30 a.m.

Front Range pastors and ministry leaders told us through surveys they would like to have:

- Regularly scheduled events just for pastors and vocational ministry leaders with a half-day format that fits into busy schedules
- Opportunities to meet and network with other pastors, talking informally about the challenges they face and just becoming friends
- Practical teaching sessions on matters of "felt need" with plenty of time for Q & A.

We invite you to join us for our opening *CrossTalk*, the first of many scheduled events that we hope will meet all three needs! Because you told us that a topic of great concern to pastors is their own personal spiritual formation, our inaugural session will feature two well-respected authors and leaders, Howard Baker and Dr. Bruce Demarest, on the Christian leader's soul care. You will have the chance to hear their expertise on the topic, ask questions and dialogue with others. For more information call 303-762-6902.



Dr. Vernon Grounds

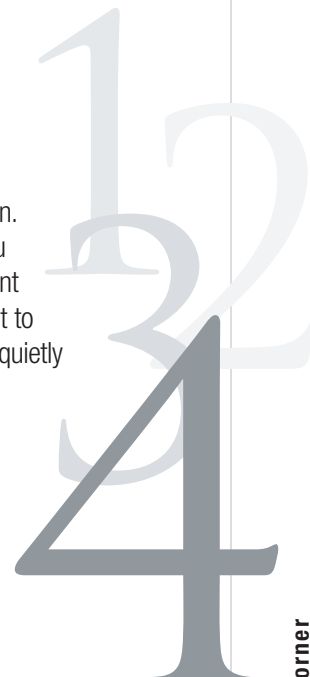
## Every Christian's Ambition

Though a typical preacher's story, it's an anecdote that can make us engage in self-examination. Four college students are talking together in some depth about their life ambition. "What do you want to be?" is their focusing question. One says, "I want to be a lawyer." A second says, "I want to be a biologist." The third says, "I want to be a doctor." The fourth, a Christian, seems hesitant to disclose his ambition, but the three who have responded wait in silence. Eventually, almost as if expecting to be ridiculed, he quietly admits, "I want to be a saint."

According to Scripture, that actually ought to be every Christian's ambition. Disciples of Jesus may pursue all kinds of lifestyles and vocations, but their controlling ambition ought to be growth in grace, increasing conformity to Christlikeness, steadfast commitment to—this theological term sums up the process—sanctification.

So while we who in the New Testament are repeatedly called saints because of our spiritual position in Christ, our God-assigned task is to become more and more holy, making sainthood a flesh-and-blood embodiment. And that requires us to utilize whatever sanctifying resources are available.

Is that requirement being fulfilled in our lives?



### Howard Baker

July 14-15 Phoenix, Ariz.  
Fuller Seminary Southwest, M.Div. Cohort Retreat, speaking  
Aug 4-10 Black Forest, Germany  
Military Community Youth Ministry (MCMY) / Malachi Ministries Staff Conference, speaking  
Sept. 15-16 Littleton, Colo.  
St. James Presbyterian Church, teaching

### Craig Blomberg

July 18-21 St. Andrews, Scotland  
Conference on the Epistle to the Hebrews. Giving paper on Hebrews 2:5-9.  
July 25-29 Aberdeen, Scotland  
Society for New Testament Studies Conference, paper on Parables and Oral Tradition.

### David Buschart

Sept. 28-Oct. 1 Indianapolis, Ind.  
Wabash Center workshop for educational consultants

### Bruce Demarest

July 1-5 Pecos, N.M.  
School for Spiritual Direction, teaching  
July 16 Plattsburgh, N.Y.  
North Country Alliance Church, teaching and preaching  
Sept. 14-17 Minneapolis, Minn.  
Theological and Cultural Thinkers Group (TACT)  
Sept. 27 Deerfield, Ill.  
Inaugural Lecture, Carl F. H. Henry Center for Theological Understanding (present lecture)  
Sept. 28 Bannockburn, Ill.  
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School Chapel

### Danny Carroll R.

July 2 and 30 Englewood, Colo.  
Preaching at Cherry Creek Presbyterian Church

### Heather and Fred Gingrich

July 23 – Aug. 5 Manila, Philippines  
Continuing work (advising, dissertation defenses, etc.) with the 11 Doctor of Education (Counseling) students of the Asia Graduate School of Theology

### Rick Hess

July 9, 23, 30; Aug. 13, 20, 27 Highlands Ranch, Colo.  
Teaching at Cherry Hills Community Church on the Da Vinci Code, 9 a.m. service  
July 16 Littleton United Methodist Church, Littleton, Colo.  
What Did the Ancient Israelites Really Believe? 9:45 a.m.  
Aug. 4 Denver, Colo.  
International Society of Bible Collectors, Ancient Manuscripts of the Bible and Modern Translations  
Aug. 18-19, Sept. 22-23 Colorado Springs, Colo.  
Christian Leadership Institute, Old Testament Survey

### LaVerne Jordan

July 15 Denver, Colo.  
Colorado Counseling Association Governing Board  
Sept. 15-16 Longmont, Colo.  
Colorado Counseling Association Conference, presenting pre-conference workshop of supervision of counselors

### Randy MacFarland

July 28 Denver, Colo.  
ServiceMaster Prayer Breakfast  
Aug. 4-11 Chiang Mai, Thailand  
International Council for Evangelical Theological Education

### Jan McCormack

Aug. 3-5 Denver, Colo.  
ABCRCM Board  
Sept. 1-3 Fontana, Calif.  
NASCAR Race  
Sept. 22-24 Denver, Colo.  
ABC Pastor's Training

Sept. 29-Oct. 1 Kyle, Texas  
NASCAR Race

### Don Payne

Sept. 22-23 Springfield, Va.  
Seminar on "A Theology of Mentoring and Discipleship" for the C.S. Lewis Institute Fellows Program  
Sept. 25-27 Birmingham, Ala.  
Panel discussion at the "J.I. Packer and the Evangelical Future" conference at Beeson Divinity School

### Elisabeth Suarez

July 26 – Aug. 5 Managua, Nicaragua  
Missions Trip  
Sept. 22 Longmont, Colo.  
Annual Conference of the Colorado Counseling Association

### Brad Widstrom

July 24-28 Bailey, Colo.  
Camp Idrachaje, Collegiate Peaks Wilderness Area, Teach Introduction to Wilderness Ministry course  
Aug. 16-19 Denver, Colo.  
Presenter at "Reaching into the Hurt" Pastors and Caregivers Conference

### Craig Williford

Aug. 4-11 Chiang Mai, Thailand  
International Council for Evangelical Theological Education

# faculty travel: summer 2006

# Denver Seminary's PASTORS AND CAREGIVERS CONFERENCE:

*"Equipping local and regional pastors, caregivers, counselors, care professionals and students to better identify and minister to the hurt that people endure."*

# REACHING R INTO THE HURT

August 16-19, 2006

Denver Seminary:  
6399 S. Santa Fe Dr. · Littleton Colorado 80120

## COURSE OFFERINGS:

### August 16-17

9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"Pastoral Critical Incident," an International Critical Incident Stress Management Course

Rev. Kevin Grenier

### August 18 (Choose two morning and two afternoon thematic workshops in addition to plenary)

9 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

- Setting Ministerial Boundaries*
- Caring for the Caregiver*
- Counseling the Trauma Survivor*
- Ministry in Times of Grief and Loss*

Dr. Jonathon Olford  
Rev. Rich Van Pelt  
Dr. Heather Gingrich  
Donna Cassil

- Brief Counseling Skills for Hurting People*
- Addressing Pornography & Sexual Addiction*
- Church: A Safe Place?*
- When All Hell Breaks Loose: Helping in a Major Crisis*

Rev. Dr. Jan McCormack  
Jason Martinkus  
Rev. Mike Beresford  
Rev. Rich Van Pelt

12 to 1:30 p.m.

Plenary and Lunch: "A Dangerous Opportunity: Celebrating His Presence in Crisis"

Rev. Rich Van Pelt

1:30 to 4:45 p.m.

- Dealing with Self-Inflicted Harm*
- Youth Ministry as a Safe Place for Students*
- Divorced Families: Now What? (offered 2X)*
- The Shocking Shape of Teen Sex*

Dr. Jonathon Olford  
Rev. Rich Van Pelt  
Rev. Dr. Chris Miller  
Brenda Snailum

- Juvenile Delinquency: Voices from Behind the Wall*
- Preempting Pornography & Sexual Addiction*
- Lessons From Columbine: Ministry of Presence in Crisis Response*
- You Can Be a Lifesaver: Helping Suicidal Adolescents*

Stephen Kopanos  
Jason Martinkus  
Dr. Brad Widstrom  
Rev. Rich Van Pelt

### August 18-19

Aug 18: 7 to 9 p.m.

Aug 19: 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (incl lunch)

"His Presence In Crisis: Appropriate Evangelism Training"

Dr. Jonathon Olford, Rev. Dr. Jan McCormack and Rev. Mike Beresford

Registration may be completed either online at [www.denverseminary.edu](http://www.denverseminary.edu) or by mail to:

Luanna Traubert, August Conference  
Denver Seminary • 6399 S. Santa Fe Dr. • Littleton, CO 80120

## REGISTRATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_ Hm Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## REGISTRATION STATUS

- Student at \_\_\_\_\_  Caregiver at \_\_\_\_\_
- Clergy at \_\_\_\_\_  Care Professional at \_\_\_\_\_
- Church Laity at \_\_\_\_\_  Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Counselor at \_\_\_\_\_

I am registering by the Early Bird Registration Date of July 15, 2006

I am registering after the Early Bird Registration Date

I am registering for:

### Aug 16 and 17 "PCI" 2 day ICISF Workshop only

Early Bird:  Students: \$ 50  Others: \$75 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Regular:  Students: \$ 75  Others: \$100 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Aug 18 "Thematic" Workshops & Plenary Lunch only

Early Bird:  Students: \$ 25  Others: \$50 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Regular:  Students: \$ 50  Others: \$75 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Aug 18 & 19 "His Presence In Crisis..." Workshop only

Early Bird:  Students: \$ 25  Others: \$50 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Regular:  Students: \$ 50  Others: \$75 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Cost:

### Any two Workshops

Early Bird: Mark above & add costs together \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Regular: Mark above & add costs together \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### All three Workshops

Early Bird:  Students: \$ 100  Others: \$165 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Regular:  Students: \$ 165  Others: \$240 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Cost:

**TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

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