



mmct communiqué

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*The Focus for this Communiqué: **Spiritual Formation***

Dear Friends,

This issue's focus is Spiritual Formation. Author M. Robert Mulholland Jr., in his classic, [Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation](#), defines Spiritual Formation as “the process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others.”

Dallas Willard in his article, [“Spiritual Formation in Christ: A Perspective on What it is and How it Might be Done”](#), expands further on this definition.

In [Keeping the Heart](#), John Flavel, a 17th-century English Puritan, claims that the "greatest difficulty in conversion, is to win the heart to God; and the greatest difficulty after conversion, is to keep the heart *with* God. ... Heart work is hard work indeed." We trust that these resources might assist you with this hard work.

Note: Tyndale Seminary in Canada has many free resources available in their [Spiritual Formation Reading Room](#) which uses Google Books and allows access to many resources mentioned in this Communiqué.

If you notice a key resource is missing, [please send us](#) the information so we can add it to the archived edition stored on [our website](#). We envision Communiqués as “living” documents and welcome your additions.

The next Communiqué will focus on Burnout. If you have a recommendation to share, please [send an email](#) as we hope to send another issue to you soon. Thanks!

May God help us keep our hearts *with* Him.

The Mobile Member Care Team

NOTE: The latest version of [Adobe Reader](#) is needed for users of Mozilla Firefox and recommended for all others. For best viewing choose “View” then “Full Screen Mode”.

opportunities

The OM [Face to Face](#) Course is designed by and for missionaries with a focus on spiritual formation and personal development.

[Renovaré](#), offered in the US, [UK](#), [Brasil](#) and [Korea](#), is a community of Christians seeking continual spiritual renewal in Christ. Founded in 1988 by [Celebration of Discipline](#) author Richard Foster, Renovaré (a Latin word meaning “to renew”) promotes personal and spiritual renewal. Conferences and retreats are offered in each of these countries.

[Charis Training](#) reflects the teaching and training ministry of Tony Horsfall. Tony and his wife, Evelyn, worked as missionaries in Malaysia before returning to the UK. Tony is now involved mainly in running retreats and quiet days for spiritual formation. He is also involved in cross-cultural training and gives pastoral care to MAF workers in Africa.

If pilgrimage interests you, these two books may be helpful guides: [The Way is Made by Walking: A Pilgrimage Along the Camino de Santiago](#) by Arthur Paul Boers and [Sacred Travels: Recovering the Ancient Practice of Pilgrimage](#) by Christian George. Both authors recount their personal experiences with pilgrimage, reflect on their growth as a result and share tips for those who may want to follow in their steps.

At [Penhurst](#), 10 miles from the coast in the UK, you can choose to be silent, to talk to or pray with someone, to just rest or sleep... or you can choose from a variety of retreats, short courses and workshops on their [programme](#). Or you can ask for an [individually guided retreat](#).

Bible Reading Fellowship, in the UK, hosts Quiet Days and Teaching Day Conferences. See the [BRF programme](#) for dates and venues.

Part of The Transforming Center, Ruth Haley Barton's ministry, is [A Transforming Community](#)®. This community is a group of pastors and Christian leaders who commit themselves to nine quarterly retreats over a two-year time frame for the purpose of experiencing deeper levels of spiritual transformation.

blogs/newsletters

The Transforming Center also offers a [blog](#) and a free subscription newsletter, [eReflections](#).

Associated with the Conversations journal mentioned below, the [Conversations blog](#) and [newsletter](#) keep the conversation going during the year between the two journal issues.

The Henri Nouwen Society offers a free daily [Meditation and Reflections](#) email subscription. Drawn from a wide range of Nouwen's writings, these short meditations will inspire and guide your heart and mind.

apps

The [Examine App](#) from Headington Institute is a unique personal reflection tool that can help you monitor your personal spirituality over time. By asking searching questions and collating your responses, it provides a map of your spiritual wellbeing. This app is free and available for iPhone and iPad devices.

tools or training

Renovaré offers an [Institute for Spiritual Formation](#): Over the course of two years, students read more than 24 books and over 100 articles, participate in a variety of Spiritual Formation activities, develop a spiritual community with a small group of co-learners and experience 28 days of teaching and formation activities built around key Renovaré concepts.

The Bible Society in the UK has a special section on its site called [lyfe](#) that provides resources for hearing God, through the Bible, in the company of others.

Developed by Pastor Randy Frazee, the [Christian Life Profile Assessment Tool Training Kit: Discovering the Quality of Your Relationships with God and Others in 30 Key Areas](#), is a very practical, comprehensive tool that equips small groups to work towards Spiritual Formation together. Includes videos, workbooks, a training guide for leaders, assessment tools, etc.

Through the [Apprentice Series](#), which includes *The Good and Beautiful God*, *The Good and Beautiful Life* and *The Good and Beautiful Community*, James Bryan Smith, a “disciple” of Dallas Willard, has made Willard’s ideas a bit more accessible. He helps us discard the flawed narratives of our hearts and replace them with the truths God reveals in his word about himself, the Christian life and his Church. IVP offers [free downloads of Apprentice Resources](#) including Leader’s Guides.

Mindy Caliguire’s IVP series, [Soul Care Resources](#), includes four study guides: *Discovering Soul Care*, *Spiritual Friendship*, *Simplicity and Soul Searching*. Recommending them highly, Richard Foster describes these four guides as “practical, well-grounded wise books that help us cultivate a life of robust soul-health.” Well suited for small group study.

[New Way Ministries](#), led by Larry Crabb, offers a [School of Spiritual Direction](#) which aims to equip selected people to engage in meaningful, powerful, soul-shaping conversations with folks who long to move through life’s challenges into a deeper relationship with God.

podcasts, dvd’s and audio tapes

New Way Ministries also offers a 12-lesson DVD course, [The SoulCare Experience](#) that provides “insight into Spiritual Formation and the real battle in the human soul.”

[A five-part Spiritual Formation Lecture Series with Dr. John Coe](#) of BIOLA provides an in-depth integrative theology of Christian spiritual formation and soul care. Included are audio files, papers and projects with stimulating exercises and questions.

The audio CD's for the Christian Spirituality and Soul Care Lecture Series: [The Depths of Sin and the Power of Spiritual Formation](#) are available for purchase through BIOLA University Media Services.

[Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God](#), one of Dallas Willard's classics, addresses how God communicates with his people. Each lecture by Willard, a very clear and plain spoken communicator, is introduced by John Ortberg. A conversation between Willard, Ortberg and Richard Foster follows each lecture. A small group discussion guide is also provided to go with the DVD set.

articles/journals

[The Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care](#), from the Talbot School of Theology Institute for Spiritual Formation, comes out twice a year. However, several excellent [free articles](#) are offered online as well as back issues. The major intent of the editors is to place before the Christian community writing that will foster the field of spiritual formation and soul care as that has been understood and developed within historic Christianity.

The purpose of [Conversations](#) is to provide spiritual accompaniment and honest dialogue for those who long for radical transformation in Christ. It stimulates hunger and illuminates the path by drawing on classical wisdom and practice, exploring the vital role of community and illustrating the journey with realism and hope. One can subscribe to the two issues per year or access many back issues or separate articles [electronically](#).

Click to access the results for [Spiritual Formation in the archives of the Navigators' Discipleship Journal](#).

Christianity Today featured an article by Dallas Willard entitled "[How Do We Assess Spiritual Growth.](#)"

John Ortberg talks about Spiritual Formation as something that happens in community in his article, "[The 'We' We Want to Be](#)". He says, "Part of what is needed for our formation is membership in, submission to and compassion for a community larger than our individual selves" and then goes on to talk about how the Body of Christ functions and brings spiritual health and formation.

In his article, [Spiritual Formation Agenda](#), Richard Foster speaks prophetically into the need for the church community to re-form spiritually. He comments on some of the obstacles to this in our modern evangelical sub-culture but refers to historical examples of how this reform has happened in the past and inspires us to make spiritual formation our vision for our church community life and cultural engagement.

books

[Godly Servants: Discipleship and Spiritual Formation for Missionaries](#), by David Teague, is the outgrowth of seminars on spiritual formation for missionaries presented around the world and contains abundant, practical applications that are relevant to the missionary life. Click [here](#) for more info.

Developed by the Pioneers Member Development Team, the [Spiritual Survival Handbook](#) combines insight from cross-cultural church planters with contributions from theologians in the area of spiritual formation and leadership. The handbook explores the world of identity and then works outward to the practical topics of spiritual warfare, relationships, leadership and team-building. Also available on [Amazon Kindle](#).

[The Practice of the Presence of God](#), a timeless classic by Brother Lawrence, a monk in the 1600's, has inspired and taught many generations of Christians to purposefully enjoy God's presence in their lives.

In his classic [Celebration of Discipline](#), Richard Foster instructs and encourages us in the inward disciplines of meditation, prayer, fasting and study; the outward disciplines of simplicity, solitude, submission and service and the corporate disciplines of confession, worship, guidance and celebration. Consider other books by Foster as well such as [Life with God: Reading the Bible for Spiritual Transformation](#).

Bible Reading Fellowship in the UK offers two simple yet profound books by Tony Horsfall, [Working from a Place of Rest: Jesus and the Key to Sustaining Ministry](#) and [Rhythms of Grace: Finding Intimacy with God in a Busy Life](#) both of which are also available from Amazon.

[Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ](#), by Dallas Willard, is not lightweight and compels the reader to take in the concepts slowly. Following an introduction to spiritual formation, he outlines the avenues through which transformation takes place: thoughts, feeling, choices, social context, the body and the soul. Each chapter concludes with questions for reflection.

[Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice: Experiments in Spiritual Formation](#), by Willard and Jan Johnson, is a distillation of the main ideas from Renovation of the Heart with exercises.

[Jan Johnson](#) has authored many articles and several other books, including the Spiritual Disciplines Series. Some of her books are also on audio CD's and some are translated into Chinese, Indonesian and Korean.

[Living the Lazarus Life: Spiritual Transformation for Ordinary People](#), by Stephen W. Smith, uses the story of Lazarus' resurrection as a lens through which we can see the dynamics of the spiritual journey out of our deadness into resurrection life. A “must read” for those mentoring others in spiritual transformation. Some [free related resources](#) are also available.

[The Transformation of a Man's Heart: Reflections on the Masculine Journey](#), edited by Steve Smith, offers men a unique way to explore their own journey toward being transformed men. Through the stories of twelve men, the book and four unique study guides explore the masculine journey toward being Christian and male.

[The Pursuit of God with Study Guide](#), by A.W. Tozer, is a classic best-seller in which Tozer reminds us that man's emptiness and restlessness are from the Divine and that peace can only be found in Him.

Tom Ashbrook, in [Mansions of the Heart: Exploring the Seven Stages of Spiritual Growth](#), offers a step-by-step guide through a spiritual formation road map based on Teresa of Avila's seven mansions. It will also help as we discern our place in our spiritual journey and help others to grow as disciples of Christ.

In [Devotional Classics](#), Richard Foster and James Bryan Smith, sift through works from the great spiritual writers of the past as well as reading from contemporary spiritual leaders to create a guide towards a deeper and more balanced spiritual life.

In [Opening to God: Lectio Divina and Life as Prayer](#), David Benner uses the four movements of lectio divina, and explores prayer as attending, pondering, responding and being. He says, “Prayer is not just communication with God; it is communion with God. As we open ourselves to him, God does the spiritual work of transformation in us.”

[Spiritual Direction and the Care of Souls: A Guide to Christian Approaches and Practices](#), edited by Gary Moon and David Benner, offers the reader a unique perspective on the ways eight different Christian traditions understand and practice spiritual companionship, as well as elucidating the relation of this historic spiritual practice to modern pastoral counseling and psychotherapy.

Two books by Ruth Haley Barton, [Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation](#) and [Invitation to Solitude and Silence: Experiencing God's Transforming Presence](#), pick up on the monastic tradition of creating a "rule of life" and invite the reader to cultivate space and practices that lead to spiritual formation.

[Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us](#), by Adele Calhoun explains many of the disciplines, giving history and modern thought on them as well as a list of books for each.

Anything Henri Nouwen has written is geared toward some aspect of spiritual formation, but two in particular address this topic directly: [Spiritual Formation](#) and [Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith](#).

Tony Campolo and Mary Albert Darling present a call to combine spiritual formation and missional thinking and show the link between Christian mysticism and activism, social justice and evangelism in [The God of Intimacy and Action: Reconnecting Ancient Spiritual Practices, Evangelism and Justice](#).

Jo Swinney set herself a challenge: to trial one spiritual discipline per month. [God Hunting: A Journey of Spiritual Discovery](#) is her diary of discovery. She invites the reader to join in the hunt for God through prayer, fasting, Bible study, worship, solitude and simplicity.

In [Sacred Pathways](#), Gary Thomas presents nine temperaments, each of which has natural ways to commune with God: the naturalist, sensate, traditionalist, ascetic, activist, caregiver, enthusiast, contemplative and intellectual. He provides practical ways to test ourselves at the end of each chapter and the final chapter gives practical suggestions on how to nurture one's spiritual personality which consists of one or more temperaments and the interplay between them.

[Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation](#) by Ken Boa is a textbook covering many facets of spiritual formation. Incredibly thorough, it has both an academic and devotional feel.

In [The Life You've Always Wanted: Spiritual Disciplines for Ordinary People](#) John Ortberg calls readers back to the dynamic heartbeat of Christianity – God's power to bring change and growth. With humor and stories, John presents the disciplines as exercises that build strength and endurance for the road of growth.

J.I. Packer says this about [Signature Sins: Taming our Wayward Hearts](#) by Mike Mangis, "Drawing wisdom from the worlds of both psychotherapy and spiritual direction, this introductory overview of vital disciplines for the Christian's inner life is clear, strong and robustly down-to-earth. Especially salutary is Mangis's stress on finding and fighting one's own core sin."

With [Anatomy of the Soul: Surprising Connections between Neuroscience and Spiritual Practices that can Transform Your Life and Relationships](#), psychiatrist Curt Thompson, helps better understand how God wired our brains and how spiritual practices improve our relationships with God and other people.

In [Space for God: the Study and Practice of Prayer and Spirituality](#), Don Postema uses the artwork of Van Gogh, words of hymns, poetry and the writings of Calvin, Merton, Nouwen, Lewis and others to offer a series of meditative readings and spiritual exercises to deepen our faith.

[The Imitation of Christ](#) is said to be the most influential spiritual work for Christians other than the Bible. This contemporary translation of the 15th century Latin text by Thomas a Kempis renders this classic's timeless wisdom available to modern readers who want to learn to live like Jesus.