

1-1-2011

Listening Life: An Approach to Spiritual Formation at Newberg Friends Church

Stephen D. Fawver

George Fox University, steve@newbergfriends.org

This research is a product of the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program at George Fox University. [Find out more](#) about the program.

Recommended Citation

Fawver, Stephen D., "Listening Life: An Approach to Spiritual Formation at Newberg Friends Church" (2011). *Doctor of Ministry*. Paper 189.
<http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/dmin/189>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Ministry by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolfe@georgefox.edu.

GEORGE FOX EVANGELICAL SEMINARY

LISTENING LIFE:

AN APPROACH TO SPIRITUAL FORMATION

AT NEWBERG FRIENDS CHURCH

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE SEMINARY

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY IN LEADERSHIP

AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION

BY

STEPHEN D. FAWVER

NEWBERG, OREGON

JANUARY 2011

Copyright © 2011 Stephen D. Fawver

All rights reserved

All scripture NIV unless otherwise noted

DISSERTATION ACCEPTANCE CERTIFICATE

STEPHEN D. FAWVER

DATE: MARCH 8, 2011

TITLE:

**LISTENING LIFE:
AN APPROACH TO SPIRITUAL FORMATION
AT NEWBERG FRIENDS CHURCH**

***WE THE UNDERSIGNED CERTIFY THAT WE HAVE READ
THIS PROJECT AND APPROVE IT AS ADEQUATE IN
SCOPE AND QUALITY TO COMPLETE THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY IN
LEADERSHIP AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION DEGREE***

Carole Spencer

SIGNATURE

March 8, 2011

DATE

[Signature]

SIGNATURE

3.8.2011

DATE



GEORGE FOX
EVANGELICAL
SEMINARY

To Diane, Janna, Isaac, my parents,
and the community at Newberg Friends Church

CONTENTS

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| FIGURES | v |
| ABSTRACT | vi |
| SECTION ONE: THE PROBLEM | 1 |
| SECTION TWO: OTHER PROPOSED SOLUTIONS | 8 |
| SECTION THREE: THE THESIS | 24 |
| SECTION FOUR: ARTIFACT DESCRIPTION | 57 |
| SECTION FIVE: ARTIFACT SPECIFICATIONS | 71 |
| SECTION SIX: POSTSCRIPT | 74 |
| APPENDICES | 78 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 94 |

FIGURES

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. Chinese character for listening | 35 |
| 2. Listening Life spiral | 39 |
| 3. Listening Life bookmark | 60 |
| 4. <i>Deep Roots</i> by Amanda Watson | 62 |
| 5. Delight Thyself cartoon by Mike Comfort, November 2000 | 64 |
| 6. <i>Christ Is the Light</i> by Kathy Watson, 2008 | 66 |
| 7. <i>The Wild Goose</i> by Robert Henry, September 2010 | 68 |
| 8. <i>Christ Candle</i> by Kathy Watson, 2008 | 70 |

ABSTRACT

At Newberg Friends Church we have developed a Listening Life approach to spiritual formation based on the call of God recorded in Mark 9:7, “This is my Son, whom I love, listen to him.” A listening life is a holistic life—one that is open to being in a love relationship with God, creating intentional space and time with Christ, and responding to the nudges of the Spirit in the spontaneity of life. This listening is richer when done together with others and more free if it embraces an experimental attitude that holds things loosely as we seek to live out God’s call toward neighborly love at home and around the world.

This dissertation is broken into six sections with the following focus: In section one the ministry problem is named—*Newberg Friends Church has lacked a clearly articulated theology and foundational approach to spiritual formation*. Section two considers some present-day resources in the arena of spiritual formation with special focus on four divergent groups and the unique contribution each offers. Section three then articulates the five theological foundations embraced at Newberg Friends Church and an overview of a Listening Life approach to spiritual growth. Sections four through six are the practical expression of this approach through a description of the web-based resources being developed, appendices, and the bibliography. The Listening Life approach gives us the framework to organize tools, resources, and practices of the spiritual life for groups and individuals and is housed at www.listeninglife.org. In the future this approach will be experienced, refined, and deepened as the Newberg Friends community grows in the ability to listen to Christ more fully, change in the Spirit, and live out love to those in need.

SECTION ONE: THE PROBLEM

In this day and age the arena of spiritual formation is so filled with resources that a person can become dizzyingly overwhelmed at times. Books, seminars, classes, web sites, programs, and organizations dot the map on all fronts. How does a church community make thoughtful yet Spirit-led decisions on which resources to use? How does a pastor guide his or her congregation with careful intention? How does a local body develop a sense of parameters and guidance when it comes to helping one another grow in the image of Christ? This is an issue we face at Newberg Friends Church (NFC). In our particular community, we lack a clearly articulated theological foundation and central guiding focus in the area of spiritual formation with adults. Because of this we have not been as effective in helping one another grow in our relationship with God and learn to love with the heart of Christ.

When I moved into the role of pastor of spiritual formation eight years ago, the church leaders gave me no specific guidance as to the foundation, focus, or expectations for this role. Yes, I was handed a job description that named some of the programs, arenas of ministry, and tasks I was charged to oversee, but never did anyone say, “Here are the theological underpinnings and overall heart of spiritual formation at Newberg Friends.” Like many congregations, we have used the term *spiritual formation* for the past fifteen years as a way to describe the reality that humans are both physical and spiritual beings, and that our task as a church is to call people to be intentional about being formed more fully into the image of Christ. Historical terms such as *Christian education*, *discipleship*, and *spiritual growth* can be found in the archives of our pastoral team and various committee minutes filed away in cupboards or in digital form. As a

person scans these documents there are a few indications of a “philosophy of Christian education” or other guiding documents, but for the most part they simply record the events, plans, finances, and personnel under the umbrella of Christian education.

Recently, we have been using the term *spiritual formation* as an attempt to communicate how following God is not simply a set of facts to be learned, practices to be mastered, or programs to be engaged in, but a moment-by-moment relational connection with Christ that brings transformation into all areas of life. However, we still lack specific clarity as to what this looks like in our setting.

Newberg Friends is a Quaker community that has been gathering for more than 135 years in a small town. There has been a deep desire for Jesus Christ and caring for those who are in need. Ministry, mission, evangelism, worship, Bible teaching, education, Spirit-led decision making, peace, concern for children and youth, and passion for those who are hurting have been some of the key marks of this body. Being a Christ-centered Quaker gathering we have a vision to be:

A Growing Community

Listening to Christ

Changing in the Spirit

Living out Love¹

This vision statement best expresses, with passion and a sense of calling, what we discern Christ would have for us at Newberg Friends. Even though we have a clear picture of whom we long to be, a gap still exists between this goal and our daily ministries. It is as if we have a heart focused on Christ, the skin of programs and

¹Newberg Friends Church vision statement approved June 8, 2003. “Newberg Friends Church Beliefs,” <http://www.newbergfriends.org/general/beliefs.html> (accessed May 13, 2010).

ministries firmly in place, but the skeletal and muscular structure of a clarified theology and approach to spiritual formation is weak. While the core values are in place and many of the tools are in hand, not enough time has been set aside to figure out how these two arenas thoughtfully and intentionally connect. Three factors have contributed to make this true-leadership transitions, a program-driven model of ministry, and a tendency to focus on crisis management and response to the most pressing needs at hand rather than taking time to lay a foundation for growth.

Leadership Transitions

The first aspect that has hindered the spiritual development of Newberg Friends Church is pastoral and leadership transitions. Although the list of pastors from 1970 to 2010 actually shows only five senior pastors (plus one interim) and five associate pastors who were released specifically in the area of Christian education or spiritual formation, this still represents many points of transition and change in the community. These forty years also represent multiple volunteer clerks and committee members who have impacted direction and made decisions regarding the formation of adults. On one hand there is a great deal of value in having a variety of voices, styles of leadership, and gifts being used, but on the other, this amount of transition does lend itself to a potential for lack of consistency and clear direction. While searching our archives, the only document I found was a *Philosophy of Christian Education* developed in 1977, which states some core beliefs, but it is hard to find evidence that this set of guidelines was readily used as a filter for ministry and focus. When I started in ministry at Newberg Friends as youth pastor in 1990 no one mentioned this document, and until I began to do research for this dissertation I had never seen it.

It is interesting to note that the seeds of intentional spiritual formation were planted back in the late 1970's by the Newberg Friends Church pastor Richard Foster, author of *Celebration of Discipline*.² He was teaching, leading, writing, and encouraging the congregation to begin to “practice the spiritual disciplines which set us free from the ingrained habit patterns of living ... and put us in a place where God can work on us.”³ This book was read by some at Newberg Friends and studied in small group settings, but wasn't intended to be a foundational guide for the specific context of NFC. It doesn't deal with issues such as spiritual personality, the value of paying attention to God in the everyday, and naming the underlying theological assumptions that a church community has when considering the overall context of spiritual formation. Richard Foster was writing to the broader Christian community and while important seeds for spiritual growth were planted, there still doesn't appear to be any overall approach as to how to help people practice these disciplines and integrate them into the flow of everyday life. While this book did give some incredible teaching on tools such as meditation, confession, and simplifying life it wasn't written with the goal to offer a clear plan for NFC. Richard Foster left as the pastor of Newberg Friends in 1978, shortly after this book was published, and began to teach, write, and speak to a wide audience. Ten years later he started Renovaré⁴ as a support to churches in the area of spiritual formation.

²Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978).

³November 13, 1977. This is from a teaching series on “Meditation,” which was done just before Richard Foster's book *Celebration of Discipline* was published. He wrote this book while on the pastoral team at NFC from 1974 to 1978. One day I discovered, tucked away in a closet at Newberg Friends, a set of tapes of teaching by Richard Foster in which he outlines the chapters of his book. He was one of my pastors while I was a child at NFC.

⁴Renovaré, “Home Page,” <http://www.renovare.us/> (accessed May 17, 2010).

Transition in leadership with no overall articulated theology of Christian formation or focused approach has continued to be an issue for NFC.

Program-Driven Model of Ministry

Another issue that has caused a lack of a coherent approach to spiritual formation is the tendency to often go with the Christian marketing flow when it comes to programs and ministry. One needs only to take a quick survey of the scene to recognize the plethora of prepackaged programs that can be pulled off of the shelf at many Christian conferences, bookstores, or web sites. Although there is clear evidence that leadership at Newberg Friends has attempted to be discerning over the past forty years as to which direction to go, I think relying on these programs that have been developed by other organizations has been a weakness. Rather than discerning what God is up to in our midst, buying into a consumer mentality has often been the driving focus as we have been attracted to the new and shiny approach that is being sold. When one takes a look at the list of ministries attempted at NFC it is easy to map the ebb and flow of the modern evangelical approaches to evangelism and spiritual growth: *Shepherding Groups*, *Camping Ministries*, *Navigator Series*, *Evangelism Explosion*, *Oversea Missions*, *Seeker-Sensitive Worship*, *META/Small Group Approach*, *Willow Creek Networking*, *Alpha*, *Companions in Christ*, *Celebrate Recovery*. All of these programs have been picked up for a time at NFC and then eventually set down as the congregation embraced a newer approach. Although residual effects of each program continue to flavor the body, it is easy to question how this has impacted the overall health of the community and affected the continuity of spiritual growth that might have taken place. These words are not intended to discount the amazing work, fruit, and ways these programs have impacted

individuals and the church body, but it is appropriate to wonder if a central theology and focus could help Newberg Friends make decisions in the future as to which tools find their way into community life.

Focus on Crisis Response

In pastoral ministry, it is often a challenge to have time to consider the big picture or overall direction of a spiritual community when urgent needs press in on every side. Divorce, moral failure, major health crises, and broken relationships flood over people all the time. There is a tendency to spend a great amount of energy helping people just stay afloat in life. At Newberg Friends the pastoral staff and other leaders are often stretched thin trying to care for people as the waves of sickness, job loss, and personal addictions break into life. In the midst of these challenges our pastoral staff has found it difficult to create enough space to step back and develop an overall approach to spiritual formation at NFC.

When the tyranny of the urgent demands our attention, the long-term view gets relegated to the back seat or even placed into the trunk. How can a leader consider the flow of spirituality, the need for balance, or the necessity of clearly considered theology when time, energy, and resources are expended at an alarming rate? This is an issue that I know is not unique to our situation, but I believe is important for all congregations to explore. I am grateful to the elders at Newberg Friends for having seen the need and releasing me to do this important work as a part of the DMin of Spiritual Formation and Leadership at George Fox University. Because the leadership at NFC realizes this is important work and ministry, I have been granted much needed time to help the

community tend the soil that will bear fruit as we nurture, name, and support the roots of a clearly articulated theology and focus of spiritual formation.

Conclusion

Once again, the key problem being considered is that we lack a clearly articulated theological foundation and central guiding focus in the area of spiritual formation with adults at Newberg Friends Church. As a result, we have not been as effective as we can be in helping one another grow in our relationship with God and learn to love with the heart of Christ. Since this challenge appears to break down into two main sections, one being the articulation of the theology and the other being a central focus for spiritual formation, these will be addressed more thoroughly in the following sections. I am grateful for the amazing community of faith called Newberg Friends, as it has been a nurturing place for me since I was a child, as a youth pastor for more than twelve years, and now as a pastor with adults for the past eight years. My wife and I also marvel at so many caring adults who are speaking into our two children's lives and shaping them in deep ways. Since I do care deeply for this community, I hope to be a voice that can call us to a focus on Christ with clarity, intentionality, and thoughtfulness as we learn to listen to his voice and respond to him with all of our lives.

SECTION TWO: OTHER PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Because it is obvious that Newberg Friends (NFC) is not the only Christian community attempting to stay centered and focused on Christ, it is helpful for us to consider some of the wisdom and perspectives of our brothers and sisters on this journey of faith. What have other individuals and congregations discovered when it comes to the specifics of spiritual formation? How has Christ been emerging in the daily milieu of life, as the Church in past centuries as well as in the present, seeks to pay attention to his leadership and guidance? Although our goal is to be faithful to the Holy Spirit's specific callings in our context and not just default to picking up the latest attractive tool, value can be found in taking time to consider what Christians are offering one another as we seek to be formed into the image of Christ. What can we learn from the broader body of Christ that might be relevant to the area of Newberg and what Christ is attempting to do in and among us in our specific setting?

At Newberg Friends we need to be aware of the many resources and approaches to spiritual formation available as we move toward articulating the theological foundation and central guiding focus specifically for our setting. What messages are heard from individuals, floating on the airwaves of Christian culture, coming from the think-tanks and ivory towers, or being recorded in print or digital form that might offer solutions to our needs at NFC? It is important to name typical responses given when people are posed with the question "How do we help each other be formed like Christ?" and consider representative organizations or movements engaged in providing potential framework to answer this question.

Typical Responses

The thirteen statements below represent some of the common responses and initial replies as to how we might help people grow and become more like Jesus. These ideas have been gathered as I have had both formal and informal discussions, noticed general patterns, and read a variety of sources focused on spiritual growth. Although they may lack depth, substance, and the power of persuasion, it is essential to name them because they, like the tip of an iceberg, are being thrust upward out of the ocean of Christianity. They represent deep assumptions and patterns of thinking that lie below the surface. When an individual or group speaks simple statements such as these, the ideas do not stand alone, but come with deeply embedded implications for ministry. The following are typical answers to the question: *What must we do to help people be more fully formed spiritually as followers of Jesus?*

—“We just need to teach the Bible! Get people into the Word and they will grow.”

—“You need to get people doing spiritual practices or disciplines. Have you heard of the book *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster?”

—“Groups, groups, groups ... It’s all about community. You know, as ‘iron sharpens iron,’ and the ‘*one another verses*.’ These are the key.”

—“I went to a conference recently and the worship was amazing. I think the answer for us is to try to recreate this type of feeling because it is all about finding ways to just help people experience God.”

—“Nothing, absolutely nothing ... God is the one who does it all! Anything more is just a self-righteous and works form of Christianity.”

—“We’ve got to get people out into the community serving those in need. When we spend time with the poor we will see Jesus and be transformed. Just call people and provide opportunities to minister, serve the vulnerable, and ‘love thy neighbor.’”

–“We are already doing all we can. We have Sunday morning worship, follow the Lectionary, invite people to tithe, and teach church history. If people aren’t growing there is something wrong with them.”

–“I have no idea what to do ... but have you noticed what the church just across the street is doing? It sure seems to be working for them. Why don’t you give it a try? It seems very successful!”

–“People are just not praying enough. We need to invite people to pray more.”

–“We need a pastor of spiritual formation who can create more programs, retreats, conferences, and options for us. We just need more options and things to do that will help us out.”

–“Remember that Jesus told us to spread the gospel. We must come up with some new ways to do evangelism. If people are challenged to share their faith they will grow more.”

–“People will not grow if they don’t know how to behave. Morality is at an all time low. How about if we do more teaching on behaving like Jesus and challenge people to do what is correct?”

–“Have you heard of all the 12-step groups available? We need to look at what they are doing, bring this into the church, and help people deal with sin and addictions in life because, as you know, we all deal with pain, patterns, and pickles—at least we are often in one!”

Considering these responses it is easy to recognize a kernel of wisdom in each one—scripture, spiritual disciplines, community, prayer, ministry, and the other concerns lie at the heart of these remarks. Each is essential to a healthy approach to spiritual formation. We do need to listen to those in our communities and in other churches and evaluate the words they offer. But the focus tends to remain narrow with a propensity to suggest a quick-fix solution rather than considering a holistic approach that is broader in scope. All areas such as spiritual disciplines, worship, healing, community, serving the poor, and sharing the love of Christ must be a part of the mix. The specific emphasis for NFC will emerge as we listen to Christ and his emphasis for us rather than focusing on

the individual voice that screams the loudest. Simply following what the church around the corner is doing or pushing people into groups may not fit our specific context at Newberg Friends. The questions for NFC are: What is Christ speaking to us in regard to following his leadership right here, right now? How do we discern what God is saying to us in the midst of the wide and very diverse views and perspectives on spiritual growth? How can we hear God's specific call, while at the same time be open to learn, grow, and allow him to teach us through other Christ followers?

Four Key Organizations or Movements to Consider

This section considers some of the resources that are being developed in the area of spiritual formation for local church communities as well as a brief perusal of a few present day movements that are impacting the imagination of many. Countless individuals and groups are carefully considering Christian spiritual growth and postulating ideas, models of ministry, and leadership training—each with a specific emphasis. Historically, the Church has been blessed by waves of reformation as groups such as the Benedictines, Carmelites, or Methodists sensed God's movement and followed a specific calling that impacted the broader Christian world. This still continues as small communities with prophetic voice push forward into uncharted waters and set a course for others to follow. Who are these voices at present?

This thesis will consider the following groups—*Renovaré*, *Upper Room Resources*, *Purpose-Driven* approach, and the *New Monasticism* movement. Respectively, each of these four organizations is unique in focus and practice: one non-profit and ecumenical, one a wing of a specific denomination, one connected with a mega-church, and one an association of small communities who share similar values and core beliefs. These are not

the only resources, but have been chosen because they have had broad impact, are representative in nature, and bring diversity to this discussion of spiritual formation at the present time.

Renovaré Group

In 1988, ten years after writing *Celebration of Discipline*,⁵ Richard Foster noticed a growing interest in spiritual renewal as he interacted with churches and individual followers of Christ. In response, he moved forward in establishing a nonprofit group known as Renovaré. It is possible to see the original intent of this organization by considering the initial application for nonprofit status more than twenty years ago:

The purpose of Renovaré is to work among Christian churches, parachurch organizations, and other Christian groups to nurture Christian growth and maturity. At present we are not operational; we hope to be so fall of 1989. We anticipate issuing a press release announcing the beginning of Renovaré on July 1, 1989.

Our activities will involve lectures, discussion groups, seminars, forums, and panels and retreats for the nurturing of Christian spirituality. We anticipate holding our first annual conference in Wichita, Kansas, on November 9-12, 1989. We also plan several publishing activities such as a fifty page *Renovaré Covenant Commentary* and a quarterly issued letter *Renovaré Perspectives* for our entire constituency. The first issue of *Renovaré Perspectives* will be January 1, 1990.⁶

Since that time this organization has provided resources, conferences, training of leaders, and a coordination of people across a broad spectrum of Christianity. Their mission is to “seek to resource, fuel, model, and advocate more intentional living and spiritual formation among Christians and those wanting a deeper connection with God ...

⁵Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*.

⁶Renovaré, “Application for Nonprofit Status,” <http://www.renovare.us/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=k%2f7ZuzIEoko%3d&tabid=2359> (accessed May 17, 2010).

Renovaré is Christian in commitment, ecumenical in breadth, and international in scope.”⁷ The ecumenical emphasis is a key concern and has even prompted much writing about the need for a balance in the often divergent and contentious *streams*⁸ of the Christian faith traditions. *Renovaré*, the Latin word for *be renewed*, has been a loud voice calling Christ followers to unify and learn to appreciate and even celebrate the various expressions of God’s kingdom among us.

One of the practical implications of this call to diversity is the gathering of various individuals from a wide spectrum of denominations who come together to write, teach, and lead the Church in “seeking continual renewal through spiritual exercises, use of spiritual gifts, and acts of service.”⁹ Although Richard Foster (Quaker) and Dallas Willard (Baptist) tend to be the most prominent names associated with this group there are many others such as James Bryan Smith (United Methodist), Todd Hunter (Anglican), Emilie Griffin (Roman Catholic), and Gayle Withnell (CMA) who are a part of the ministry team.¹⁰ Although the actual staff is relatively small they coordinate a large group of individuals all around the world.

⁷Renovaré, “What Is Renovaré,” <http://www.renovare.us/WHOWEARE/WhatisRenovaré/tabid/2475/Default.aspx> (accessed May 12, 2010).

⁸Richard J. Foster, *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998). This presents six major *streams* of the Christian faith—Contemplative, Holiness, Charismatic, Social Justice, Evangelical, and Incarnational. This has become a foundational resource for many in teaching and practicing spiritual formation.

⁹Taken from the *Renovaré Covenant*—“In utter dependence upon Jesus Christ as my ever living Savior, Teacher, Lord, and Friend, I will seek continual renewal through: Spiritual Exercises, Spiritual Gifts, and Acts of Service.” This statement is presented to individuals as they are invited to commit to these things. Renovaré, “Covenant,” <http://www.renovare.us/SPIRITUALRENEWAL/TheRenovaréCovenant/tabid/2370/Default.aspx> (accessed May 17, 2010).

¹⁰Renovaré, “Ministry Team,” www.renovare.us/WHOWEARE/MinistryTeamandStaff/Renovar%8EMinistryTeam/tabid/2367/Default.aspx (accessed May 17, 2010).

I had the opportunity to spend three days with Richard Foster and the Renovaré staff in December of 2007 and was intrigued by what I noticed and heard as I dialogued with them. Although they do have some excellent resources, which have proven to be useful for many individuals, they still expressed discouragement that they haven't discovered how to get them into the local church more effectively. Right now their audience is most often a handful of people from a congregation who happen to read a book by Dallas Willard, go to a national training conference, or commit to practicing the spiritual disciplines. Still, the scope is fairly limited. I dialogued with them about the persistent and present need for local congregations to develop structures and intentional plans to help people grow more fully into the image of Christ. This piqued my interest, as it is exactly what we are attempting to do at NFC. If congregations lack an intentional plan for ways to help individuals be formed more fully into the image of Christ, Renovaré does have resources that have been helpful, but these resources often do not get into the hands of most people. Over the past three years Renovaré has developed the Spiritual Formation Institute,¹¹ aimed at training leaders, as well as the Apprentice Series,¹² a curriculum written by James Bryan Smith for small groups in local churches. Both are excellent resources and yet there still appears to be a disconnect between this organization and "the everyday follower of Jesus." Clearly, it is up to the local congregation to provide the structure, opportunities, and awareness of how Renovaré can be a fruitful resource.

¹¹Renovaré, "Spiritual Formation Institute," <http://www.renovare.us/WHATWEDO/Training/SpiritualFormationInstitute/tabid/2348/Default.aspx> (accessed May 24, 2010).

¹²This is a set of three books designed for small groups to consider how one becomes more like Jesus. *The Good and Beautiful God, The Good and Beautiful Life, The Good and Beautiful Community*. James Bryan Smith, "The Apprentice Series Home Page," <http://www.apprenticeofjesus.org/> (accessed May 24, 2010).

Upper Room Resources

Many denominations in the United States have more recently been intentional about producing resources, materials, and opportunities for spiritual formation. Bridging the gap between the historical voices of the church and the present practices for today writers, practitioners, and educators seem to be engaged in this arena. The United Methodists, through Upper Room Resources, seem to be further down the road than most. The move toward this understanding of discipleship and Christian education is happening more thoughtfully and intentionally on many fronts with Upper Room being one clear voice of leadership. Here is the purpose of this arm of the United Methodist Church:

The Upper Room® is a global ministry dedicated to supporting the spiritual formation of Christians seeking to know and experience God more fully. From its beginnings as a daily devotional guide, Upper Room Ministries® has grown to include publications, programs, prayer support, and other resources to help believers of all ages and denominations move to a deeper level of faith and service. Upper Room resources are grouped in five different areas:

- Personal Spirituality (personal spirituality)
- Children, Youth, Young Adults and Families (children and young adults)
- Small Groups (formational groups)
- Spiritual Leadership (spiritual life of a leader)
- Cross-Cultural & International Ministries (worldwide fellowship)¹³

Upper Room Resources has excelled in producing small group materials as well as gathering a group of writers who formulate thoughtful books, articles, and teaching tools. The small group plan called *Companions in Christ*¹⁴ gives opportunities for a group to gather around Jesus, learn to pray, practice spiritual disciplines during the week, and

¹³“Upper Room—About the Ministry and History,” <https://bookstore.upperroom.org/pcd/eServCart?iServ=MjgzMDE2MTU3NCZpVHlwZT1BQk9VVA==> (accessed May 24, 2010).

¹⁴“Companions in Christ Home Page,” Upper Room, <http://www.companionsinchrist.org/> (accessed May 24, 2010). This begins with a twenty-eight week foundational resource and then has many other theme-based series using the same format. There also are youth and children focused materials.

gain exposure to many of the historical foundations and voices of the Christian Church. Although they do have a flavor of the United Methodist stream, the *Companions* materials are written by a variety of authors from Presbyterian, Baptist, Roman Catholic, United Church of Christ, and Methodist backgrounds.

Although Upper Room is not the only publishing company producing Christian spirituality materials (others such as InterVarsity, Zondervan, Nazarene Publishing House), they are providing quality printed material as well as hosting a great deal of hands-on opportunities for spiritual growth on their web site.¹⁵ They have spiritual personality assessments, solid descriptions of practices such as *lectio divina*, and an interactive prayer wall that can be accessed by anyone who is in need. They also have The Academy for Spiritual Formation,¹⁶ a two-year intensive time of training for those interested in going deeper with Christ and learning about spiritual formation. This organization is representative of the type of resources that specific denominations offer the broader Christian community.

Purpose-Driven Approach

One of the influences on the Church in the United States over the past forty years has been the emergence of more mega-churches¹⁷—individual gatherings of believers in one community that grow their attendance in the thousands and then begin to share their discoveries in ministry, worship, and teaching. Influence, power, persuasion, and

¹⁵“Method-X the Way of Christ Home Page,” Upper Room, <http://www.upperroom.org/methodx/thelife/> (accessed May 24, 2010).

¹⁶“The Academy for Spiritual Formation,” Upper Room, <http://www.upperroom.org/academy/> (accessed May 24, 2010).

¹⁷For more information on Mega-churches see the Hartford Institute for Religion Research. “Hartford Institute for Religious Research Home Page,” Hartford Seminary, <http://www.hartfordinstitute.org/> (accessed May 26, 2010).

mobilization of resources allow them to become a model to be emulated. Lakewood Church, with pastor Joel Osteen, or Willow Creek Church, with pastor Bill Hybels, are two recent congregations who fit this category. While it is not the purpose of this paper to give a thorough assessment of the ripples that these large churches are causing in the broader Christian community it is important to acknowledge their existence and influential perspectives on spiritual formation at significant levels.

Another such congregation is Saddleback Valley Community Church centered in Lake Forest, California, led by pastor Rick Warren. This church has more than 20,000 members and has not only influenced the area of Southern California, but has worldwide opportunities to train Christian pastors and leaders. As such, they produce resources such as: *The Purpose-Driven Life*,¹⁸ *The Purpose-Driven Church*,¹⁹ *40 Days of Community*,²⁰ *40 Days of Love*,²¹ and *Celebrate Recovery*²² materials.

These resources teach followers of Jesus the value of finding God's direction in life, the importance of being in smaller groups for support and encouragement, how to deal with addictions, and how God is calling people to love those in need. Recently it has been interesting to note how Rick and Kay Warren have been drawn to express care and love to those who are struggling with AIDS and other poverty issues. They have even

¹⁸Richard Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002).

¹⁹Richard Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message & Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995).

²⁰"Saddleback Resources—Forty Days of Community," <http://www.saddlebackresources.com/en-US/SmallGroups/40DaysofCommunity/BetterTogether.htm> (accessed May 26, 2010).

²¹"Saddleback Resources—Forty Days of Love," <http://www.saddlebackresources.com/en-US/SmallGroups/40DaysofLove/40DaysofLove.htm> (accessed May 26, 2010).

²²"Celebrate Recovery Home Page," <http://www.celebraterecovery.com/> (accessed May 26, 2010).

spearheaded a new organization called *The Peace Plan*²³ designed to help mobilize resources to deal with social justice concerns around the world. By their own example of gracious giving, the Warrens are calling the Christian community to consider who God cares for—those who are suffering, hurting, and marginalized by society.

Countless individuals have no doubt benefited by the broad vision of Rick Warren and his congregation in Southern California. Freedom from addictions, re-focused purpose as individuals and in a congregational setting, new hope for growing in love with God, and restored relationships have been the byproduct of this community's willingness to share resources and be a voice for Jesus in our society over the past thirty years. Who knows what will continue to emerge from this vision for the next thirty or more? I would love to see them grow in the ability to help smaller churches and ministries learn how to discern what God is doing in their specific setting, not just trying to be like Saddleback, but being the most effective gathering of individuals in a specific community who are faithful followers of Jesus. How might the influence of Saddleback challenge other gatherings of believers to listen, discern, and obey the leadings of God in their own area?

New Monasticism Movement

The final group to consider is challenging to define. It isn't a publishing house, a church in one city, or an organization with a clear purpose to create resources in the area of spiritual formation; rather it is a grassroots association of small communities who share common values and callings as they seek to follow Christ. The title given to these folks has been *New Monasticism*. This label or designation harkens back to a form of Christianity in which individuals chose to renounce worldly pursuits in order to serve

²³“The Peace Plan Home Page,” <http://www.thepeaceplan.com/> (accessed May 26, 2010).

Christ and those around them with freedom and reckless abandon. Although monasticism has often been limited to Catholic orders where monks or nuns go away to a cloistered life, this “new” expression includes many Protestants all over the world who instead live in small, intentional, and simple groupings.

Rather than try to describe this movement from an external perspective it is helpful to consider the self-description from one of the most prominent (although an oxymoron) New Monastic small groups called The Simple Way.²⁴ Shane Claiborne—writer, leader, speaker, and founding partner of The Simple Way—rose to popularity with his book *The Irresistible Revolution*.²⁵ This summation of his life journey tells about time spent with Mother Teresa, service on staff at the mega-church Willow Creek, and many experiences in between. Here is what Shane and others see as the twelve marks of New Monasticism:

1. Relocation to the abandoned places of Empire.
2. Sharing economic resources with fellow community members and the needy among us.
3. Hospitality to the stranger.
4. Lament for racial divisions within the church and our communities combined with the active pursuit of a just reconciliation.
5. Humble submission to Christ’s body, the church.
6. Intentional formation in the way of Christ and the rule of the community along the lines of the old novitiate.
7. Nurturing common life among members of intentional community.
8. Support for celibate singles alongside monogamous married couples and their children.
9. Geographical proximity to community members sharing a common rule of life.
10. Care for the plot of God’s earth along with support of our local economies.
11. Peacemaking in the midst of violence and conflict resolution within communities along the lines of Matthew 18.

²⁴“The Simple Way Home Page,” <http://www.thesimpleway.org/> (accessed June 7, 2010).

²⁵Shane Claiborne, *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006).

12. Commitment to a disciplined contemplative life.²⁶

The overall desire of this movement seems to be an attempt to find ways to live like the historical monastic communities and yet to do it in the present. They lean back into the past and take cues from people like St. Benedict and St. Francis while pushing into the future and watching where Jesus seems to be leading into ministry—“Loving God, Loving People, and Following Jesus in our neighborhoods and in our world.”²⁷ While The Simple Way is just one small group, this movement is well represented all over the United States as well as internationally. Although not limited to any age group, the movement draws young people toward simplicity, passionate living, and a radical call to discipleship. Monastic communities have been a consistent voice throughout history calling the Church to remember its purpose and mission, and New Monasticism is an echo of this through example, teaching, and casting vision.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this section we posed three questions: (1) What is Christ speaking to us in regard to following his leadership right here, right now? (2) How do we discern what God is saying to us in the midst of the wide and very diverse views and perspectives on spiritual growth? (3) How can we hear God’s specific call, while at the same time be open to learn, grow, and allow him to teach us through other Christ followers? We then looked at four specific groups or movements that are speaking to this issue. How do we consider what they are offering as we desire to articulate our theology and focus for spiritual formation while at the same time staying faithful to our specific

²⁶“The Simple Way Ministries—Our Commitments,” <http://www.thesimpleway.org/about/12-marks-of-new-monasticism/> (accessed June 7, 2010).

²⁷“The Simple Way Home Page,” (accessed June 7, 2010).

context and Christ's calling at Newberg Friends? Although there are many resources, ideas, and tools that we might use from these four groups it would be unwise and ineffective to attempt molding our approach to spiritual formation into one of these. We must develop a relevant and accessible approach to healthy spirituality in our own unique setting at NFC because of the following five issues:

1. The fact that a specific approach worked in one church context is no guarantee that it will work in a different one. Discernment is key. We must take time to seek God and follow the leadership of the Spirit in our specific setting.
2. There is no short-term fix or golden solution to spiritual growth and transformation. Having an approach that has been developed organically and intentionally in our setting will allow us to use a variety of tools and resources while at the same time having a structure to guide us as a community.
3. Many resources that have been prepackaged may tend to push us toward a programmatic approach to ministry. One major weakness of programs is that they are designed with a generic audience in mind and don't consider the specific nature of the NFC community. Another concern is that they tend to focus on the product that is in hand (a book, video, curriculum) rather than on the relationships to be developed with God and others. We hope to be relationally based and don't want to fall in the trap of marketing by going with the programmatic flow.
4. If we choose a preexisting tool because it looks attractive, there may be a tendency to be drawn from one new and exciting program to another. Our consumer mentality comes into play here and pushes us to think new is always

better than the old. Once again we must have a plumb line to use that can help us stay centered on Christ.

5. Some in our community may have a “grass is greener” mentality when they look at other communities and feel drawn to “be like them” when it comes to spiritual formation. Therefore we must develop an approach that has integrity and intentionality that can be used as a filtering tool when individuals point to other groups as the example of God’s desires for us.

The final major weakness of superimposing another set of resources onto our community is that it will not adequately address the need to articulate our theological basis for spiritual formation. Although each of these four organizations hold key theological tenets, they also are very specific to the setting in which they are being used. We must take the time and effort to clearly name what we believe to be true about God, scripture, formation, and other areas as a way to guide ministry and spirituality in the future specifically in the context of the NFC community.

There is a great deal to be gained from considering the voices of Renovaré, Upper Room Ministries, Purpose-Driven approach, New Monasticism, and the variety of other resources that the historical and present day church offers in the arena of spiritual formation. These things simply must be considered with a spirit of openness to recognize that Christ is not calling us to be just like other communities but rather has specific desires for Newberg Friends to be the people we were created to be. To move forward as a community we must develop lives that are listening to the call of love and turning our hearts, minds, emotions, and energies to the Spirit who is speaking specifically to us.

How do we create a community that is learning to listen to Christ? This is the question to which we now turn.

SECTION THREE: THE THESIS

Listening Life Approach to Spiritual Formation

In section one it was noted that Newberg Friends Church lacks a clearly articulated theological foundation and central guiding focus in the area of spiritual formation with adults. As such, the gathered community has not been as effective in helping one another be formed into healthy disciples of Jesus. Since many other congregations and organizations are attempting to support local churches in spiritual formation, section two focused on a consideration of those resources. The following question was posed, *What must we do to help people be more fully formed spiritually as followers of Jesus?* Although many solutions have been offered, it is essential for our local congregation to name the theological basis for spiritual formation and the focus or approach to use. The heart of spiritual formation at Newberg Friends specifically centers around listening to Christ—helping each other grow and develop listening lives. We chose listening to Christ because it fits us well as Quakers;²⁸ it is biblical; the voices over the history of the church support the concept; and our congregational experience has affirmed this as well.

²⁸Since the beginning of the Quaker movement listening to God, silence, and the desire to follow the leadership of Jesus has been a high value. Although this is in the Quaker DNA I still believe it is essential to continue to find ways to bring this into the present and not rest only on the historical reputation and practice. Quakers have language, practices, and experiences that can be used as a foundation upon which to build. For more specifics on listening and discernment among Quakers see the following sources: (1) *Journal of George Fox*—George Fox, John L. Nickalls, and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, *The Journal of George Fox*, Rev. ed. (Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 1997). (2) *The Journal of John Woolman*—John Woolman and American Imprint Collection (Library of Congress), *The Works of John Woolman in Two Parts* (Philadelphia: Printed by Joseph Crukshank, in Market-street, between Second and Third streets, 1774). (3) *Sacred Compass*—J. Brent Bill, *Sacred Compass: The Way of Spiritual Discernment* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2008). (4) *Listening Spirituality*—Patricia Loring, *Listening Spirituality* (Washington Grove, MD: Openings Press, 1997). (5) *Listening Hearts*—Suzanne G. Farnham, *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community*, Rev. ed. (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Pub., 2001).

Because listening to Christ is the heart of spiritual formation at Newberg Friends we are developing a “Listening Life” approach that emerges from two key scriptures. The Old Testament passage Deuteronomy 6:4 says, “Listen, Israel! The Lord our God is the only true God!” Often translated “Hear, O Israel!” this clear and powerful call asks the people of Israel to listen up and attune their ears and hearts to the word of God. They were to give all of their lives to hearing and obeying what God was speaking in their midst. The Hebrew word used here is *Shama*²⁹ which means *to hear* or *to listen*, and carries with it the concept of *obeying* as well. The second scripture, Mark 9:7, comes in the midst of the account of the Transfiguration. God speaks to those gathered saying: “This is my Son, whom I love, listen to him.” It is interesting to consider all the things God could have said to Peter, James, and John such as, “This is my son, whom I love ... be like him, start a Christian education program, hand out WWJD bracelets, share the gospel, go to church,” but instead he said, “listen to him.” Taking our call from these two passages, and many other sections in the Bible that direct us to listen,³⁰ we propose the Listening Life approach to spiritual formation, as a bridge between the theological foundations and practical ministry opportunities for the community at Newberg Friends.

Humans are spiritual beings who are formed and changed at all times and in all facets of our lives, physical, emotional, and spiritual. Therefore spiritual formation is not

²⁹Three sources shed light on the Hebrew concept *Shama*: (1) Peter Craigie writes, “The verb *hear* (*Shama*) carries with it the sense ‘obey’; hearing that leads to obedience is demanded of the people.” Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), 147. (2) Saint Ambrose (340-397) a Father in the church writes, “the law says, ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God.’ It did not say ‘speak’ but ‘hear’ ... the first words from God says to you, ‘hear.’” Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Second Series*, 14 vols., vol. 10. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 2. (3) Leonard Sweet says, “*Shama* means to listen with response, and not repose, to hear and heed at the same time ... to ‘hear’ God’s Word for the Hebrews was to respond in obedience ...” Leonard I. Sweet, *Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who’s Already There*, 1st ed. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010), 150.

³⁰See Appendix 1 for more examples of scriptures focused on listening.

an option as humans. Our bodies never stop changing and developing; the same is true regarding our spiritual nature. We do have the ability to be involved in the direction our spiritual formation takes, but it is impossible to go through life without being changed and affected by time, people, and the events that occur. As individuals reflect on the places, things, and people who have had an impact on their lives, they will most likely think of a mixture of joy-filled times and some of difficulty. Their experiences have been a part of shaping who they are and what their future will look like.

In a similar way life is a spiritual journey. People are shaped as spiritual beings just as much as they are shaped in other areas of life. Robert Mulholland defines spiritual formation as “the process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others.”³¹ Although Christ is central in this definition another word that stands out is the word *process*. Humans aren’t formed into what God desires with the snap of a finger. Although people can have instant meals, super-fast connection through the Internet, and high-speed chats with friends, being changed spiritually doesn’t happen overnight. UPS may be able to get a package from Portland to Hong Kong in a day, but no one can expect to be conformed into the image of Christ this fast.

Discovering what is our part and what is God’s part of spiritual formation is a constant tension in life. We wrestle with the paradox, wondering: is spiritual growth up to God or does it rest in the lap of each individual human being? The truth is that God always does his part of speaking, leading, loving, teaching, and working in the world. There is never a time when God leaves the scene. God pursues each one of us and is faithful to fulfill his side of the equation. So what about us? What is our part? If we

³¹M. Robert Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993).

believe that God is always active in the world, then our part is to pay attention, notice what God is up to in and around us, and offer ourselves to God's love more fully each day. We don't force God to move or speak, but we do need to notice and be willing to follow when he does.³²

Our world is very noisy, which makes it difficult to listen to God—not just in the audible noise around us but also in the areas of activity, busyness, and images thrown our direction. This world values motion, words, and images—the more the better! Is there a chance we might be so active and busy that we miss the subtle nudges of Christ in our lives? Mike Yaconelli summed up the issue well when he wrote:

Could it be that one of the significant problems in the church is noise? Modern faith might be undermined more by activity and noise than by immorality and lack of commitment. Maybe we have become so active and noisy that we have drowned out the thin silence of God. What if we decided to be kids again, to learn again how to listen to the voice of God? Instead of our trying to do *more*, maybe we should try to do *less*, to *pay attention* to the presence of God.³³

If you stop concentrating on reading, what sounds do you hear right now? How many of those sounds have been present the whole time you have been reading? Why didn't you notice them? Maybe part of the reason you didn't is that you weren't being intentional to stop and listen to these sounds. You were focused on reading this section so you filtered out the other noises around you. Could it be that we filter out the nudges and leadings of God in our lives? Maybe we have filled our lives with so much activity and noise that God's voice gets buried under the clutter. At Newberg Friends we hope to

³²Evelyn Underhill offers a helpful description of the spiritual life when she writes, "For a spiritual life is simply a life in which all that we do comes from the center, where we are anchored in God: a life soaked through and through by a sense of His reality and claim, and self-given to the great movement of His will." Evelyn Underhill, *The Spiritual Life* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Pub., 1997), 32. In this book she also suggests that the spiritual life is a combination of *communion* with God and *co-operation* with God. Communion would be God's part and co-operation would be our part of this relationship.

³³Mike Yaconelli, *Dangerous Wonder: The Adventure of Childlike Faith* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1998), 81.

create space for people to retune their ability to listen to Christ and allow this to form them in deep and powerful ways.

Theological Foundation of Spiritual Formation

Before we more fully define listening, and what this might look like at Newberg Friends, it is important to name the theological underpinnings from which this flows. For the past ten years we have been considering, experimenting, dialoging, practicing, and refining the foundation for spiritual formation in our context. Currently, the following five points serve as the central foundational truths in the area of spiritual formation:

1. *God, who loves each person deeply, is intimately present and actively seeking a relationship with us through Jesus Christ, who is alive, speaking, and moving in the world.*
2. *We can experience God in all of life (e.g. soul, body, mind, emotions, relationships, creation) as individuals and in community. We are called to notice God's activity and have an ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ as we listen to him and respond to his presence.*
3. *Scripture and the faith community are foundational aspects in our relationship with God and listening to Christ. We each need the written word and other followers of Christ as voices of truth, challenge, and authority in life.*
4. *We are being spiritually formed at all times. The question is whether we will be intentional about having our formation founded in God or something else as we seek to be conformed into the image of Christ.*
5. *As we respond to God's love and listen to Christ we will be changed and drawn toward serving and loving others.*

While not the church's entire "theology," these five points do form the foundation that supports the way we engage in practical ministry and formation. Although these may seem like simple words on a page they are essential to the way spiritual formation is done at Newberg Friends. What we believe about God, scripture, and spirituality flavors each

small group, worship gathering, time of teaching, and even how we do evangelism.³⁴ The following gives a brief description and articulation of each of the individual theological foundations.

*Theological Foundation One: God, who loves each person deeply, is intimately present and actively seeking a relationship with us through Jesus Christ, who is alive, speaking, and moving in the world.*³⁵

Healthy spiritual formation is founded on the truth that God is pursuing all of humanity with deep love that has no limits, is not dependent on behavior, and will never stop. A line from a 1978 song by the group *The Police* is written to a prostitute who seeks the attention of men who will pay for her love. “Roxanne, you don’t have to put on the red light ...” The singer insists that Roxanne doesn’t need to “sell” herself for love, but instead can simply be loved for who she is. Similarly, people often attempt to buy God’s love, feeling a need to do things just right in order to garner God’s attention. How often do men try to earn God’s favor? How easy is it for women to attempt to placate God with a perfect life?

God loves each human—period. God initiates the relationship through Jesus, who came into the world as a human, and is still present today as the Living Word. We can actually know Jesus if we will open our life to God’s love freely given to all.³⁶ Jesus said,

³⁴See Lenonard Sweet’s book entitled *Nudge* for a challenging perspective on how evangelism might be different if we assume God is already moving and working in each person’s life even before we show up. Sweet, *Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who’s Already There*.

³⁵Scriptural support: Psalm 23, Psalm 117, Psalm 145, John 3:16-21, John 14, Romans 5:6-8, Romans 8:28-39, Ephesians 3:14-21, 1 John 4:7-21.

³⁶God will not force this love on people, but will wait for a response through an open and accepting life. Revelation 3:20 states, “Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.” Each person has the

“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you” (John 14:18). God is not powerless, disconnected from reality, or amorphous but desires and seeks us with the veracity of a caring mother separated from her lost child. God is on the hunt.

*Theological Foundation Two: We can experience God in all of life (e.g. soul, body, mind, emotions, relationships, creation) as individuals and in community. We are called to notice God's activity and have an ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ as we listen to him and respond to his presence.*³⁷

Because God seeks a relationship with us, our call is to watch for God's activity and align our lives with this movement. Whether we notice God as we drive to work, in conversation with a friend, while hiking in the woods, or in a gathered worship service, the hope is to learn to listen to God at all times. This can happen as individuals and in community as we call out and name God's activity in one another. God is not limited to any set of practices or rituals, but can be experienced moment-by-moment in myriad ways. God moves, and we respond and cooperate with the love that flows deeply and freely all around us.

opportunity to open the door and begin an intentional relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Because of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection humans can know the full extent of God's love and can find forgiveness and restoration with God if they accept this love. Jesus is knocking and speaking to all people and it is up to each one to respond by saying yes to his invitation to a new life and relationship with God. This is the first step in a Listening Life.

³⁷Scriptural support: 1 Samuel 3, Mark 12:28-34, Luke 8:1-21, Luke 11:33-36, John 10:1-18, John 15:1-17, John 16:5-16, John 17:20-26, Acts 8:26-40, Acts 16:6-10, Romans 8:9-27, Romans 12:1-2.

*Theological Foundation Three: Scripture and the faith community are foundational aspects in our relationship with God and listening to Christ. We each need the written word and other followers of Christ as voices of truth, challenge, and authority in life.*³⁸

As God reveals truth, speaks love and encouragement, or challenges our values and perspectives, we need to always hold these leadings under the authority of scripture, and the seeking community of faith for affirmation and perspective. As individuals our hearing is limited, and the written word and other perspectives can clarify and even challenge what we hear. Yes, Jesus Christ is speaking to each one of us, but this should always be consistent with the historical document we call the Bible.

On our own, without the balance of the written word and the gathered community, we often cannot rightly discern the voice of Christ. We must be willing to “come under” these foundational sources regularly for testing, insight, and correction.³⁹ As Richard Foster writes, “Oh, I hope you can feel deep down in your bones the great goodness and wonder of the Bible. God, in sovereign grace and outrageous love, has given us the written revelation of his own being and nature and of his purposes for humanity.”⁴⁰ The Bible is more than just another book to pull off the shelf once in a while, it needs to be

³⁸Scriptural support: Psalm 78:1-8, Romans 12:3-21, Romans 15:1-13, Ephesians 2:19-22, 1 Corinthians 12, 2 Timothy 3:14-17, 1 Peter 1:4-12, 2 Peter 1:12-21. See Appendix 4 for a list of One Another Scriptures as well.

³⁹Often individuals and churches have a resistance to an emphasis on spiritual formation. Steve Porter does an excellent job of naming eight potential objections and concludes that it is both biblical and helpful for the church of today. The author notes that many are concerned that spiritual formation is: just another passing fad, Catholic, New Age, contrary to the sufficiency of Scripture, contrary to good old-fashioned obedience, encouraging works righteousness, overly experiential, neglecting missions/evangelism. It is important for those who teach and write in this area to be aware of these objections and be willing to deal with them thoughtfully and carefully, especially in relation to the concerns surrounding the use of scripture. Steve L. Porter, “Sanctification in a New Key: Relieving Evangelical Anxieties over Spiritual Formation,” *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 1, no. 2 (2008): 129-148.

⁴⁰Richard Foster. “Heart to Heart Newsletter–May 2003,” <http://www.renovare.us/ViewNewsLetter/tabid/2404/Default.aspx?ID=71> (accessed May 17, 2010).

part of our daily diet as we chew on the morsels for true life-changing sustenance.

Similarly, we must find ways to be in community with others for challenge, support, and encouragement.

Theological Foundation Four: We are being spiritually formed at all times. The question is whether we will be intentional about having our formation founded in God or something else as we seek to be conformed into the image of Christ.⁴¹

Our physical bodies are fashioned with both amazing sensitivity and function. When we look at our hands, we see an incredible tool that God has given us. Hands allow us to write, feel hot and cold, pick up objects, and even communicate with those around us. Daily tasks such as brushing our teeth use a powerful mix of muscles, tendons, and nerves working together to play a symphony of grace and dexterity. Ask those who struggle with physical limitations how challenging this is, and the truth is clarified immediately.

Our spiritual nature, although not as visible in the same way as an outstretched hand, is no less real, vibrant, and full of life. Often individuals forget that our spiritual life is being stretched, strengthened, pulled, and supported by interactions with God, ourselves, others, and the created world. We are like a rock on the bottom of a river being smoothed out by the water caressing its edges, and our spiritual nature will take the shape of the things pressing and calling each day.

Robert Muholland writes, “Spiritual formation is not an option! The inescapable conclusion is that life itself is a process of spiritual development. The only choice we have is whether that growth moves us toward wholeness in Christ or moves us toward an

⁴¹Scriptural support: Psalm 25, Proverbs 4:20-27, Matthew 7:24-27, Matthew 11:25-30, Romans 6, Romans 12:1-2, Galatians 5:16-26.

increasingly dehumanizing and destructive mode of being.”⁴² At Newberg Friends we hope to encourage people to allow Christ to shape us, form us, and reform us spiritually with love and gentle pressure as we cooperate with God’s working in our lives.⁴³

*Theological Foundation Five: As we respond to God’s love and listen to Christ we will be changed and drawn toward serving and loving others.*⁴⁴

This fifth foundation of spiritual formation is very important but is often overlooked. We believe that if people are truly listening to Christ they will be transformed and drawn to love those around them. There is no possible way to listen and obey what Christ is saying without being changed as an individual and in relationship with others. Christ will affect all areas of life and also give the ability to hear and to see the needs of those who are struggling, marginalized, poor, and oppressed. The focus in spiritual formation should not be self-centered, but should emphasize how Christ transforms us and calls us to love those who are in need. This love, expressed toward others, will indicate what is going on within a person spiritually as that one seeks to listen to Christ. Love is not an optional add-on but is central to a Listening Life.

⁴²Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*, 24.

⁴³It has been helpful for many individuals through the history of Christianity to distinguish between two major modes of experiencing God—the kataphatic and the apophatic. Kataphatic is marked by God being revealed through the visible such as symbol, written words, and images. Apophatic is marked by God being revealed through mystery with a sense that the experience of God is beyond words or even description. Individuals tend to seek to imagine or picture God (kataphatic) and also rest and wait for God (apophatic) to be known beyond words and even images. For more see: Bradley P. Holt, *Thirsty for God: A Brief History of Christian Spirituality*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 74-75. Urban Tigner Holmes, *A History of Christian Spirituality: An Analytical Introduction* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980), 3-5. Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 468-469.

⁴⁴Scriptural support: Isaiah 58, Matthew 5:43-48, Mark 12:28-34, Luke 10:25-37, Galatians 5:13-14, James 1:19-27, 1 Peter 4:8-11, 1 John 3:16-24, 1 John 4:10-11.

What Does Listening Mean?

My wife and I do pre-marriage counseling. We particularly enjoy the session when we talk with the couple about communication. We give the future husband and wife a topic to discuss, then sit back and observe. It is fascinating to see them practice both assertiveness and active listening together. We all have an opportunity to reflect on the loud and even subtle cues we give one another when we talk and listen. Do we see listening as simply taking in noise waves? Do we limit communication to sound bites thrown at the other person to be caught in the eardrum or is there more to listening than meets the eye? Just as one must learn to engage in actively listening to a spouse or a friend the same needs to be done with God. Active listening happens when we attune our whole self to the other. Eye contact, body posture, mind focus, and attention are all given fully to the one speaking or sharing. We recognize that much of communication is below the surface, and when we pay attention to these subtle cues, gestures, and inflections with all of our being, we become healthy listeners.

Active listening can be done with God as well. We have the ability to attune our heart, mind, body, soul, and emotions to listen to God.⁴⁵ The Chinese character for the word *listen* is a helpful image of how one pays attention with more than just ears (see fig. 1).⁴⁶

⁴⁵It is interesting to note the first line of the prologue to *St. Benedict's Rule* when he writes, "Listen carefully my child to your master's precepts, and incline the ear of your heart (Prov. 4:20). Receive willingly and carry out effectively your loving father's advice ..." The master he refers to is God. The rest of the *Rule* is based on the understanding that those who follow it are attempting to listen to God. For an online version of the full text of *St. Benedict's Rule* see: St. Benedict, "St. Benedict's Rule for Monasteries," OSB, <http://www.osb.org/rb/text/toc.html> (accessed January 1, 2011). For another good resource that describes Benedictine spirituality for this day and age see: Dennis L. Okholm, *Monk Habits for Everyday People: Benedictine Spirituality for Protestants* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007).

⁴⁶This is the traditional Chinese symbol for *listen* and was brought to my attention while a part of the Youth Ministries Spirituality Project in 1997 with Mark Yaconelli. He shared this image with the group



Figure 1. Chinese character for listening

Notice how this image is rich in description involving the heart, ears, eyes, and one's undivided attention. While our English word *listen* often seems limited to the ears, this is not true with this Chinese character.⁴⁷ It paints a truer picture of the breadth of listening. Being aware to “hear” with visual clues, emotional senses, and even subtle perceptions expands the field to include a much deeper awareness of the communication going on between us and the other. We respond in dialogue as we receive sounds and expressions coming together that are not limited to just what one can pick up with the ears alone.

If God is speaking, leading, moving, guiding, and expressing love then it is a privilege to open up and hear what is being said. Often the word *prayer* is one way

and I have been using this as a way to describe the breadth of listening that can take place. Newberg Friends was a partner church in this three-year project. For more information on the Youth Ministries Spirituality Project see the two books by Mark Yaconelli that give an overview of this ministry and its findings: Mark Yaconelli, *Contemplative Youth Ministry: Practicing the Presence of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006). Mark Yaconelli, *Growing Souls: Experiments in Contemplative Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007).

⁴⁷To see this Chinese Character one can go to a translator such as Google dictionary– “Google Dictionary,” Google, http://www.google.com/dictionary?q=listen+to&hl=en&sl=en&tl=zh-TW&oi=dict_re (accessed November 29, 2010). It is also being used at the US Department of State web site as a way to discuss active listening. “U.S. Department of State,” <http://www.state.gov/m/a/os/65759.htm> (accessed November 29, 2010).

Christians explain this communication with God.⁴⁸ Prayer is more than just asking God for needs or lifting up the concerns of the day, but also is an opportunity to quiet our heart, mind, and body to be aware of God's response and word to us. Marjorie Thompson writes, "Listening is the first expression of communication in prayer."⁴⁹ How often is this the case in teaching on prayer and experiences of prayer? Are we willing to stop talking long enough to actually wait and hear what Christ is saying to us? Again we read, "Communication is a two-way street. Genuine dialogue asks us to listen as well as to speak, to receive in order to respond. It is the listening side of the communication loop that has been given inadequate attention in most Protestant church teachings on prayer. One of the key things we must consider, then, is how we listen to God."⁵⁰ At Newberg Friends we hope to create space and encourage people to learn active listening not only in marriage and other human relationships but also in the human-divine relationship with God as well.

One of the false impressions is that listening only happens in quiet. Silence, reflection, and stillness definitely have an important function when it comes to learning to listen, but these are not the only modes available. One's whole self can be trained to notice the subtle and sometimes vibrant voice of God at all times. The siren's call from a distant ambulance gets through to a driver even when the radio blares, kids yell in the

⁴⁸Urban T. Holmes writes, "All the spiritual masters say that it (spiritual life) involves a relationship between God and humanity that we call prayer. For us, to pray is to intend to hear God and to respond to God. God is absolutely present to *all* people. Prayer does not "make" him present. Prayer is not a work. It begins with our consent to enter into a relationship to which God invites everyone. Prayer is a consent that is grounded in the expectation that God speaks to us and we can hear." Holmes, *A History of Christian Spirituality: An Analytical Introduction*, 2.

⁴⁹Marjorie J. Thompson, *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 34-35.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 35.

back seat, and the air-conditioner blows. Why is this true? We have trained our hearing to pick up this cue—to change course, pull over, and let the emergency vehicle fly by—even in the midst of chaos. Committing to a listening life does not mean we stop living life, get away from others, and hole up in a cabin in the woods. While this might sound appealing at times and can be a call for some who live a cloistered life, most often we merely need to learn to pay attention to God in the midst of it all.

Brother Lawrence and Frank Laubach have made the phrase “practicing the presence” more common as a way to describe the awareness and ability to tune into God’s voice.⁵¹ Both of these men demonstrated the ability to live life while they responded to the presence of God in the daily flow of cooking, teaching, scrubbing the floors, or meeting new people. These two men and countless others stayed engaged in life and experienced what Thomas Kelly describes when he writes, “On one level we may be thinking, discussing, seeing, calculating, meeting all the demands of external affairs. But deep within, behind the scenes, at a profounder level, we may also be in prayer and adoration, song and worship, and a gentle receptiveness to divine breathings.”⁵² A listening life is exactly that—listening to Christ while we shop, go to school, or have coffee with a friend. There is no experience that is off limits, no time, no place where listening cannot occur.

⁵¹Gene Edwards, Frank Charles Laubach, and Lawrence, *Practicing His Presence* (Goleta, Calif.: Christian Books, 1973). Brother Lawrence was a French monk from the late seventeenth century who wrote letters that give clues to how one might learn to pay attention to God in all of life. Frank Laubach was a missionary in the Philippines, born in 1884, who lived to be 85. He wrote extensively and most cherished are some of his letters penned to his father in which he describes the experience of learning to become aware of God’s presence and leading in his life at all times.

⁵²Thomas R. Kelly and Douglas V. Steere, *A Testament of Devotion* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941), 35.

We will need practice and intentional effort to learn to listen to Christ because our God-hearing skills have atrophied. Our society values noise and speaking over paying attention and listening. Walter Wink writes, “Faith is a healing of blindness, humanity’s trained inability to perceive God’s presence and deeds when they are happening before our very eyes.”⁵³ This “training” is often subtle and yet holds a powerful grip on us. Do we even assume that God is speaking and if so are we willing to listen? It seems right in this context to alter this quote to read, “*Faith is a healing of deafness, humanity’s trained inability to perceive God’s presence and deeds when they are happening before our very ears.*” Listening to Christ does take more than just our ears. It can be learned, and it happens in the everyday flow of life.

Listening Life Approach

At Newberg Friends we hope to become a community more attuned to the presence and voice of Jesus Christ speaking in our midst. This starts with those in leadership as we recognize that “one of the primary skills we as leaders need to have is the ability to listen.”⁵⁴ Leaders model and set a tone in the community and it is essential that paying attention to Christ is a high priority and not relegated to the periphery of ministry. The Listening Life⁵⁵ approach to spiritual formation is based on six key components that we believe guide us to be balanced and effective in supporting one another as we develop spiritually. These six components, summed up using the word

⁵³Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 135.

⁵⁴Jules Glanzer, February 23, 2010, lecture during a George Fox University DMin class.

⁵⁵See Appendix 2 for a comparison of the Listening Life approach with two other approaches from Dallas Willard and James Bryan Smith.

LISTEN, form the foundation for this focus or approach to spiritual formation (see fig. 2). We have developed an image and practical tools that help us respond to the biblical call to churches: “Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches” (Revelation 2–3). We believe that individuals and a community centered on Christ can truly grow in this ability to hear what God is saying so we choose to live this out in our community.

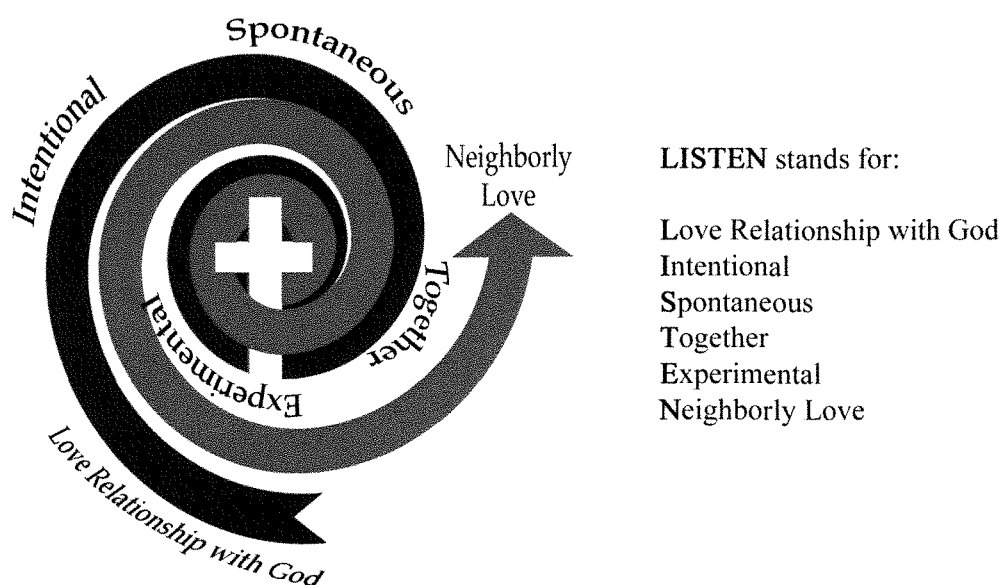


Figure 2. Listening Life spiral

The following sections expand the L-I-S-T-E-N concept. Each part includes: (1) a description of the specific area of listening, (2) a quote from a follower of Jesus, (3) a few simple reflection questions, (4) a ministry question, and (5) a written prayer. These quotes, questions, and prayers represent the type of resources Newberg Friends uses as a way to invite reflection, personal evaluation, and challenge to individuals and to the corporate community. The ministry questions are a guide for those in leadership to consider the ways in which we might more effectively create space in areas that might be

lacking in emphasis. They are written as a tool to evaluate the potential holes in ministry and areas that need development.

L-ove Relationship with God

Description:

Often people feel as though it is impossible to measure up to what God desires in life. No matter how hard we work at it, we never seem to “get it right.” Many have this attitude when it comes to listening to Christ. When I was in high school I would go to summer camp and come home jazzed about my relationship with God. I would have the desire to grow and foster this relationship. Every day for the next four to five days I would “do” devotions. That’s right—it usually lasted about five days until I missed a day. My view of both God and myself was skewed. I believed I needed to “do” devotions and if I failed I would somehow lose the affection of God. I was tempted to give up.

We don’t have to “get it right,” “perform,” or “do things perfectly.” Instead, what we need to do is find ways to rest in the lap of a papa who wants to hold us and will heal our brokenness. God is “head over heels” in love with each person. Listening is not about “doing” things but about a relationship with a God who loves deeply and will not stop loving when we make a mistake or forget about him for a day. Zephaniah 3:17 says, “The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.” I received an email from a man in our congregation who wrote, “I’m an addict. I don’t know how to say this ... and I’m scared to death ... but I have addictive behaviors around food, love, sex, control ... And while I see that these behaviors are not healthy, and even though on some level I

want to push them aside, I can't or am unwilling or something." This man needed me to remind him that he is deeply loved even in the midst of his brokenness. How might we be people who keep pointing to the deep love of God for all?

Our call for people to listen to Christ needs to be founded upon the truth of scripture: "God demonstrates his love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). God loves each person deeply and is pursuing each one with a persistent love. God initiates the relationship, calls, and changes us. We don't need to get all cleaned up before we come to God, but we come just as we are into the loving arms of the Savior who searches for us with reckless abandon. The man who sent an email in his hopeless condition didn't need me to heap shame and condemnation on his head, but he needed me to come gently alongside him, lift his chin, look into his eyes, and tell him he is loved and cherished by God who wants to bring deep healing into his life.

Quote:

"God is the creator and lover of the world ... God's love for the world calling out an answering love from us, enabling us to discover that God not only happens to love us but that he is love itself."⁵⁶

Reflection Questions:

1. How am I growing in my awareness that God loves me deeply and that there is nothing I can do to make God love me any more or any less?
2. How can I continue to open my life to the gift of Christ given for me and remember that spiritual formation is centered on a loving relationship with God?

⁵⁶N. T. Wright, *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 138-139.

Ministry Question:

How do we help people experience the deep love of God and know that there is nothing they can do to cause God to love them any more or any less?

Prayer:

“Lord you love me; I give you my life.”⁵⁷

*I-ntentional**Description:*

While it is true that God pursues each person with a never-ending love, the choice to respond to this love is an individual decision. Saying yes to God’s gift of love through Jesus is the first step to a renewed and full life in God but this is not the end of the story. God has given humans opportunity to continue to move more deeply into the flow of love as we engage in spiritual practices, disciplines, prayer, scripture study, and offering ourselves as living sacrifices to God (Romans 12:1).

People caught in the trap of sin, addiction, or pain need to first hear that God loves them deeply, but this is not where the conversation ends. As Gerald May writes, “To be alive is to be addicted, and to be alive and addicted is to stand in need of grace.”⁵⁸ All humans struggle with misplaced desires that cloud the vision and experience of God’s love and are deeply in need of transformation. Reminding one another that change

⁵⁷Stephen Fawver, “Simple Breath Prayer,” in *Personal Writings* (Newberg, OR: Newberg Friends Church, 2003).

⁵⁸Gerald G. May, *Addiction and Grace*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 11.

happens as we cooperate with God, through deliberately creating space in our lives for listening, is the second key to healthy spiritual formation.

What a profound and yet simple image Richard Foster uses of the farmer and the seed. He suggests that the spiritual disciplines are like a farmer planting and tending a new crop. Although the farmer cannot make a plant grow, he can put the seed in the ground, water, fertilize, and weed.⁵⁹ It is important to remember that we are not the ones who do the changing of ourselves, rather, God changes us. However, we can put ourselves in places where we allow God to work and flow more freely in and through us. We can be “intentional” in creating space to notice and pay attention to God’s activity. John Dalrymple wrote, “The truth is that we only learn to pray all the time everywhere after we have resolutely set about praying some of the time somewhere!”⁶⁰ This is a very important component of a listening life—placing our lives intentionally into the loving hands of God.

Quote:

“Spiritual *formation* involves the believer’s intentional attempt at setting aside sacred spaces for God to bring about life change.”⁶¹

Reflection Questions:

1. How am I creating space to intentionally listen to Christ, allow his love to change me, and heal in the areas of brokenness in my life?

⁵⁹Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, 6.

⁶⁰John Dalrymple, *Simple Prayer* (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1984), 47.

⁶¹Paul Pettit, *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2008), 22.

2. If someone were to look at my schedule would they see that listening to Christ is a priority or that I am pursuing secondary values?

Ministry Question:

How do we help people create space to listen to Christ?

Prayer:

“Lord, I offer you myself ... from my toes to my head, from my left to my right, from my back to my front, from inside out ...”⁶²

Spontaneous

Description:

Although we need to be intentional in listening, the goal is to be in a place where we are responding to the moment-by-moment “nudges” of God in our lives. We call this spontaneous listening. Jesus really is present in the world today speaking, leading, and giving insight to those willing to pay attention. Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, Christ actually comes to individuals and communities with an active presence. At the core, spiritual formation is not simply doing set-aside practices or engaging in prayer but it is an ongoing dialogue with the very creator of the world.

Early Quakers lived into this reality with reckless abandon. They were people who responded to the “openings” of Jesus Christ in their everyday lives. John Woolman, a very early abolitionist who spoke out against slavery in the mid-seventeen-hundreds, learned to follow the still, small voice of God as he walked through life. He demonstrated

⁶²Stephen Fawver, “Sermon—God Has Come to Help His People,” (Newberg, OR: Newberg Friends Church, 2008).

a willingness to give weight to the interior voice of the Spirit and showed that clearly when a man asked him to write up a bill of sale for a slave. He wrote, “I felt uneasy ... I should have been clearer if I had desired to be excused from it as a thing against my conscience.”⁶³ This “uneasiness” was undoubtedly the voice of Christ speaking into his life. He began to practice responding to the pressure of the Spirit and became a loud and clear voice of love on behalf of those caught in the trap of slavery. He filled his journal with experiences of spontaneous response to the presence of Christ leading, calling, nudging, and drawing him into a life that was countercultural in his society and yet consistent with the heart of love expressed in the person of Christ.

People tend to look at those such as John Woolman and feel immobilized when they measure their life’s results against the deep change his life brought to society. But his impact flowed from a regular pattern of learning to listen to the voice of Christ in the moment-by-moment decisions of life.⁶⁴ As Mary Darling writes, “We need to learn how to be led by the Spirit of God in all of life.”⁶⁵ John Woolman probably did not set out to totally abolish slavery among Quakers initially, but he learned to listen each day to the loving voice of God in his own life. The ripples flowed out into his community as well.

⁶³John Woolman and Phillips P. Moulton, *The Journal and Major Essays of John Woolman* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 2000), 32-33.

⁶⁴For centuries people have practiced the Jesus Prayer (*Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me*) as a tool to pray continually and pay attention to Christ in the everyday moments of life. This is especially true in the Eastern Orthodox stream of the Church. Although John Woolman may not have used this specific prayer, his life is an example of the same type of spiritual awareness that this prayer is intended to encourage. As Eastern Orthodox Bishop Kallistos Ware writes, “The Jesus Prayer is not just a hypnotic incantation but a meaningful phrase, an invocation addressed to another Person. Its object is not relaxation but alertness, not waking slumber but living prayer.” Kallistos, *The Orthodox Way*, Rev. ed. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1995), 122. For more history on the Jesus Prayer see *The Study of Spirituality*: Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Edward Yarnold, *The Study of Spirituality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 176-184.

⁶⁵Anthony Campolo and Mary Albert Darling, *The God of Intimacy and Action: Reconnecting Ancient Spiritual Practices, Evangelism, and Justice*, 1st ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 149.

The same is true for believers today as they follow God's lead to be more patient with children, send an email to a friend, or speak a word of encouragement to someone in need. These spontaneous and regular points of faithfulness to Christ may seem insignificant in the moment yet in the hands of a loving Father they have potential for deep impact. This happens as one prays, "Lord, help me pay attention to you every moment today."

Quote:

"And our task is not to work for Him, but to learn for Him to *work through us and to join our sensitivity to His working*, already going on inside the lives of others. For wherever we go, there God has preceded us. To whomever we speak, God has first been speaking to him. And our task is to urge men and women to listen to their *inner Teacher*."⁶⁶

Reflection Questions:

Do I really trust that Christ is speaking to me each day and that I can be aware of these nudges?

What am I doing to develop a sense of awareness as to how Christ is speaking?

Ministry Question:

How do we help people learn to pay attention to God in all of life and listen to Christ who is speaking to each one of us?

⁶⁶Thomas R. Kelly, *The Eternal Promise: A Sequel to a Testament of Devotion*, 2nd Friends United Press ed. (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1988), 148.

Prayer:

“Oh Lord, draw me where you want me to go. Lead me by the power of your magnetic love. Guide me by the hand of your Spirit as you touch my mind and heart. I choose to follow your nudges. I choose to be guided by your Spirit as you press in upon my life. May you come and be the one who leads me every day!”⁶⁷

T-together

Description:

Society has become very individualistic as people are being programmed to look out for themselves and live independent of others. Slogans dripping with me-focused attitudes are being thrust up from consumer-driven society such as, “have it your way,” “you’re worth it,” “watch out for number one,” “be all that you can be.” Many have pulled this self-centered attitude into spirituality and even the phrase *individual spiritual life* is used with little consideration. Does Christ want us to be self-reliant? Should we give in to the American ideal that says, “If I just try harder, pray more, or have the correct theology things will get better”?

A personal relationship with Christ is foundational in faith with God but this should not be taken to the extremes of isolation and do-it-yourself religion. Western Christianity has bought into “consuming religion.”⁶⁸ Richard Rohr even goes so far as to say, “The primary philosophical and spiritual problem in the West is the lie of

⁶⁷Stephen Fawver, “Compass Prayer–Listening Life Resources,” (Newberg, OR: Newberg Friends Church, 2008).

⁶⁸Vincent Jude Miller, *Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture* (New York: Continuum, 2004). In his excellent critique of the amalgamation of consumerism and Christianity the author pushes the reader to consider the commodification of culture and its power to shape religion.

individualism. Individualism makes church almost impossible. It makes community almost impossible.”⁶⁹

We hope that the Listening Life approach will help our community begin to break through this type of self-reliant spirituality and see the value of deep spiritual community as not simply an add-on option, but as essential to healthy life. When I was in high school I had the chance to go on a backpack trip in the California Sierras with some family friends. I loved the chance I had to hike with Doug, a friend who was my age. We would set out at almost a running pace even though we had full packs, blaze a trail for an hour or so and then find a nice spot to stop and wait for the rest of the group to catch up. As I reflect on this experience I am aware that neither of us could have done this on our own; we each needed the other to “spur us on” and to be a challenge in pushing ourselves. Boy, did we push!

This is the value of being together, not that we just run down the trail of life at breakneck speeds, but knowing that someone will offer support when the trail gets challenging or the pack gets heavy. On this journey of listening to God we each need others to be a part of our lives of faith; it cannot be done fully alone. As Reuben Welch noted in the title of his book on community, “We really do need each other.”⁷⁰ It is important to listen in community so that others can:

- Help fill in or shine the light on parts of the picture of God that may be missed due to limited perspectives.⁷¹

⁶⁹Richard Rohr, *Everything Belongs: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer* (New York: Crossroad Pub., 1999), 79.

⁷⁰Reuben Welch, *We Really Do Need Each Other* (Nashville, TN: Impact Books, 1982).

⁷¹From the book *Listening Hearts*: “Although God calls each of us personally, as individuals we see only partially. Individual perception, reasoning, and understanding are always limited. Even a person

- Speak the words of Christ that are desperately needed, such as “You are forgiven,” “I am here,” “God loves you,” or “You are not alone.”
- Offer accountability to engage in spiritual practices and move into areas of healing toward which God is calling us. Accountability can be a challenging concept for many and yet is necessary for healthy growth in the Christian life. Just like an athlete needs a coach or a musician needs an instructor there is need to have specific challenge and support that comes from a loving person who has permission to speak truth into our life.
- Help discern the voice of God from among other voices that call out to us. It may be helpful to have another individual or even a group who can listen to our spiritual experiences and reflect back what they are hearing us say with wisdom, insight, and new perspectives.⁷²

Listening on our own is a lonely and limited adventure, while listening together with others has the possibility of being life-giving and encouraging as a disciple of Christ heads down the trail of life. We need one other.⁷³

who feels absolutely certain that a specific revelation comes from God may be mistaken as to how it is to be applied. Because God often reveals part of the picture to one person and another part to another person, it is prudent to consult one another to discern God’s counsel, guidance, and direction, even if there is no apparent reason to do so.” Farnham, *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community*, 55.

⁷²For centuries Christians have found the practice of spiritual direction to be a helpful tool of spiritual formation. *Spiritual friendship, discernment, guidance, group direction*, and even *mentoring* are some terms that have been used to describe this practice. Although the Catholic stream of Christianity has practiced this more regularly throughout the years Protestants are beginning to rediscover this tool as one that can be very helpful and even central in spiritual formation.

⁷³See Appendix 4 for a list of the One Another Scriptures.

Quote:

“From the beginning it was clear that Christianity is something people do together.”⁷⁴

Reflection Questions:

How am I engaged in finding ways to listen with others and to be gathered together around Christ?

Who are the people in my life that are voices of encouragement, perspective, accountability, and love?

Ministry Question:

How do we help people find ways to listen with others and to be gathered together around Christ?

Prayer:

“Lord, may I be real and honest with those around me as I break through the false message that I can go it alone.”

*E-xperimental**Description:*

Often the power of spiritual anxiety⁷⁵ seems to grip individuals and communities of faith. Many conversations with people indicate that they think they don’t know how to

⁷⁴Wright, *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense*, 157.

⁷⁵Although the term *spiritual anxiety* is one that we are beginning to use, the overall concept comes from a variety of sources. There are many resources on helping individuals and congregations be places of grace and acceptance and challenge the views that portray God as unloving and graceless. See: (1)

pray and that they don't want to do it wrong. God is seen as an exacting tyrant rather than a gracious and caring papa. Christianity has become a matter of crossing the t's and dotting the i's just right. Writes Lewis Smedes, "Graceless religion tells us that, to be acceptable, we must live up to the customs and shun the taboos of its tradition ... it creates the illusion that if we only follow the letter of the rules, we will be acceptable, and that if we fail we will be rejected and despised."⁷⁶ This anxiety binds and holds people captive in their life with God. Rather than helping one another find freedom to hold things loosely and with a sense of rest in the love of God, we subtly or even overtly perpetuate this anxiety.

At Newberg Friends we believe that each individual is created with a unique spiritual personality and needs to be encouraged to discover how he or she is designed and what is life-giving in a relationship with God. Like a cook in the kitchen who is free to add a bit of cinnamon or a pinch of salt to a recipe, we ask how might we be a body that encourages individuals to practice and feel a sense of freedom as they discover how they are wired spiritually? Morton Kelsey says it well with the following images, "We forget that no two humans are identical, any more than two leaves are identical. When even our fingers and toes and voices leave a distinguishing imprint, it is no wonder that our personalities also differ in many unique ways."⁷⁷ Some individuals experience God

Lewis B. Smedes, *Shame and Grace: Healing the Shame We Don't Deserve*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993). (2) Philip Yancey, *What's So Amazing About Grace?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997). (3) Brennan Manning, *The Wisdom of Tenderness: What Happens When God's Fierce Mercy Transforms Our Lives*, 1st ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2002). (4) James Bryan Smith, *The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love with the God Jesus Knows* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009). (5) Steve Sherwood, *Embraced: Prodigals at the Cross* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010).

⁷⁶Smedes, *Shame and Grace: Healing the Shame We Don't Deserve*, 39.

⁷⁷Morton T. Kelsey, *The Other Side of Silence: A Guide to Christian Meditation* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), 21.

more naturally in the quiet of a peace-filled chapel while others find life as they sit by a babbling brook, toes dangling in the water.⁷⁸ Many people feel stifled by the box of liturgy while countless others find life in the clearly defined shape of the timeless truth that has been recorded and practiced over centuries.⁷⁹

One reason people find it difficult to experiment spiritually is that pastors and other spiritual leaders often invite those around them to use methods and tools that work for the leader rather than creating space for people to discover their own unique personality. If a leader journals it is easy to expect others in the congregation to follow that pattern. I often wonder how I contribute to this as a spiritual leader. Do I subtly communicate that to be a follower of Jesus others need to interact with Jesus just like I do? Could it be that I project an expectation that my way of spirituality is *the way* rather than speaking freedom to people to hold things loosely and be who God created them to be? I believe that many are longing for life with God that emphasizes the reality that they are “fearfully and wonderfully made,”⁸⁰ with freedom to explore this relationship rather

⁷⁸For three sources in connection with experiencing God in creation see: (1) *Rediscovering the Outdoors*, by Gary Fawver. This contains resources, scriptures, and ideas for prayer and practical suggestions for ways to enjoy and worship in God’s creation. Gary K. Fawver, “Rediscovering the Outdoors” (Thesis [D Min], Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1995). (2) *The Wonder of Creation* web site that is full of resources, photos, articles, and helpful links. Dean Ohlman, “The Wonder of Creation,” <http://wonderofcreation.org/> (accessed December 31, 2010). (3) *God in the Yard*, by L.L. Barkat. This gives spiritual practices to be used in the backyard. L. L. Barkat, *God in the Yard: Spiritual Practice for the Rest of Us*, 1st ed. (Ossining, NY: T. S. Poetry Press, 2010).

⁷⁹For two sources in connection with experiencing God in liturgical modes see: (1) *The Way of a Pilgrim*. This is an account of the life of an unknown pilgrim who journeys through Russia and practices the Jesus Prayer as a tool for awareness in his relationship with God. It is a central text of the Orthodox Church and provides a refreshing look at how regular routine can aid the followers of Jesus in faith. R. M. French, *The Way of a Pilgrim and the Pilgrim Continues His Way* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974). (2) *A Book of Hours*, by Thomas Merton. This is a compilation of some writings of Thomas Merton that are linked to four of the daily hours—dawn, day, dusk, and dark. They can be used as a tool for regular prayer and reflection. Thomas Merton and Kathleen Deignan, *A Book of Hours* (Notre Dame, IN: Sorin Books, 2007).

⁸⁰Psalms 139:14.

than feeling limited to the patterns set by those around them. Newberg Friends will continue to use many resources on spiritual personalities to help individuals consider the preconceived limits that they or others may have set in place.⁸¹

Quote:

“Since each person is unique, each one will have an individual way of relating the totality of his or her being to God. Other people’s ideas may be helpful, but only one’s own way, which is uniquely individual and personal, will offer a relationship with the Other that is real and meaningful.”⁸²

Reflection Questions:

How have I been experimenting with prayer, listening, and learning to hold things loosely as I listen to Christ?

What new discoveries have I been making about my unique spiritual personality?

Ministry Question:

How can we encourage people to experiment with prayer and listening, and to learn to hold things loosely as they discover God’s presence deep within them?

Prayer:

“Lord, help me to be open and free to be loved by you just as I am.”

⁸¹See Appendix 3 for resources on spiritual personality.

⁸²Kelsey, *The Other Side of Silence: A Guide to Christian Meditation*, 21.

N-ighborly Love

Description:

In a powerful scene in the story *Les Miserables*, the bishop looks into the eyes of Jean Valjean and says, “I have ransomed you from fear and hatred ... now I give you back to God.”⁸³ The conversation depicts a moving image of grace and love extended to someone who deserves punishment. As followers of Christ interact with their own Jean Valjean characters will they be able to look that person in the eyes and speak love and grace? A listening life begins with love and ends with love—living into the deep love and grace that Christ demonstrated for all⁸⁴ and sharing this love freely with those who are overwhelmed with pain and brokenness.

When God’s people listen to Christ they will be called to love those who are lost, hurting, poor, and oppressed. God’s love will bring change and flow out into mission, callings, and ministry. The Old Testament prophets spoke deep truth when they pleaded with the children of Israel to “act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”⁸⁵ The best indication of whether listening to Christ is actually happening is the

⁸³*Les Miserables* is a 1998 movie based on the 1862 Victor Hugo novel by the same title. Victor Hugo, *Les Miserables* (New York, NY: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2005). Jean Valjean is a criminal who has just been released from prison, stolen from the bishop, been caught, and brought back to face conviction but finds grace and forgiveness instead. He deserves punishment and rejection but receives love and acceptance that totally transforms his life.

⁸⁴Hannah Whitall Smith writes, “... how many of us really believe that God’s comforting is actually as tender and true as a mother’s ... We have, rather, been inclined to look upon Him as a stern, unbending Judge, holding us at a distance, and demanding our respectful homage, and critical of our slightest fault ... The God who does exist is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God who so loved the world that He sent His Son, not to judge the world but to save it. He is the God who ‘anointed’ the Lord Jesus Christ to bind up the brokenhearted ... Not a few select ones only, but all...” Hannah Whitall Smith, *The God of All Comfort* (Westwood, N.J.: Christian Library, 1984), 7-8.

⁸⁵Micah 6:8.

fruit of the Spirit⁸⁶ exhibited in relationships with others. A life with God will be one that demonstrates patience, care, gratefulness, and mercy bubbling up from within. Tony Campolo speaks truth as he says, “I become convinced that my relationship with Christ calls me to ‘love tenderly’ in relationships with friends, family, community, and even casual acquaintances.”⁸⁷ Listening to Christ is not simply about gaining entrance into heaven or having a blessed life on earth. It offers a way for us to open ourselves to God’s transforming power, which will flow freely out into the places of darkness and pain all around. We listen for the heartbeat of a loving God who cares for every person in the world and follow where he leads as we join in sharing this love with others.⁸⁸

Quote:

“For all of us who do not seem to be able to provide miracles for an unbelieving world, there is the good news of an even better way to bring people into God’s kingdom, and that is to love them there.”⁸⁹

Reflection Questions:

How is Christ calling me to live out love and care for those who are in need?

⁸⁶Galatians 5:22-23: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

⁸⁷Campolo and Darling, *The God of Intimacy and Action: Reconnecting Ancient Spiritual Practices, Evangelism, and Justice*, 17.

⁸⁸St. Teresa of Avila writes, “But here the Lord only requires two things of us, namely, that we should love God and love our neighbor. These are the objects that we must labor to fulfill ... the surest sign by which we discover whether we are observing these two duties is the love of neighbor. For since we cannot know whether we love God even though we may have strong proofs of it, these signs can be more easily discovered respecting the love of our neighbor.” Teresa and J. M. Houston, *A Life of Prayer* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1983), 173-174.

⁸⁹Anthony Campolo, *Which Jesus?* (Nashville, TN: W Pub. Group, 2002), 57.

How is my listening to Christ affecting not only my spiritual health but also the relationships I have with others?

Ministry Question:

How can we encourage people to pay attention to how Christ is calling them to live out love and care for those who are in need?

Prayer:

“Lord, won’t you make me a blessing and a witness today as I follow you.”⁹⁰

Conclusion

A listening life is a holistic life, one that is open to being loved by a perfect God, creating intentional space and time with God, and responding to this love in the spontaneity of life. This listening needs to be done in community with an open-handed approach that allows freedom to love others with the heart of God. God is calling us at Newberg Friends to continue to build upon the five theological foundations through the Listening Life approach to ministry. To do this we have begun to gather tools, prayers, stories, music, and images that can be used in our setting.

A listening life starts with Christ, is centered on Christ, and needs to always be connected to the vine⁹¹ of Christ. We long to be a community that creates space for individuals and groups to grow in this relationship with Christ. The next few sections give an overview of some of the tools that are being offered as a support to those seeking to live this way.

⁹⁰Dave Woolsey, “Daily Offering Prayer,” (Newberg, OR: Newberg Friends Church, 2010).

⁹¹John 15:5.

SECTION FOUR: ARTIFACT DESCRIPTION

Introduction

Since listening to Christ is the central guiding foundation for spiritual formation at Newberg Friends Church, we will articulate the Listening Life approach to spiritual formation. We will develop a web site (www.listeninglife.org) that will be accessible to those in the Newberg Friends Church community and a broader audience as well. The following section includes some examples of the types of resources, tools, and information that will be available on the Listening Life web site. Leaders, group participants, and individuals in the Newberg Friends community will use the site as we continue to encourage one another to grow in our ability to listen to Christ. The value of a web-based approach is that it is flexible, fluid, and allows for multiple forms of media to be used. The Listening Life web site will be the central avenue for dissemination of resources as well as a creative spark as we invite the whole community to share images, prayers, songs, and stories of transformation as they pay attention to Christ.

The information below is not an exhaustive compilation, but rather a sampling to give a flavor of this artifact. It is organized by broad categories that will be present on the web site, which will also include some cross-referencing and compiling for the user. Some of the sections, such as *Key Truths*, may be done in video form as well, providing a live person to describe each area. Since there is such a variety of spiritual personalities and learning styles, the resources will be designed with this in mind.

While this site will house many tools there also are many other sources with excellent resources and materials. Because this is true we chose to link to some of these instead of re-creating the good work that others have already done. If a written resource is

suggested, such as *The Good and Beautiful God*,⁹² providing a link to a Google Books page description seems logical. If a song is named, linking to a site to listen to this in digital form may be done. If a scripture is noted, connecting it to another page where the user could go immediately and read this passage can be helpful. The key components found in the Listening Life spiral will function as the overall framework from which the rest of the information will emerge. This structure will be based on the word *LISTEN*:

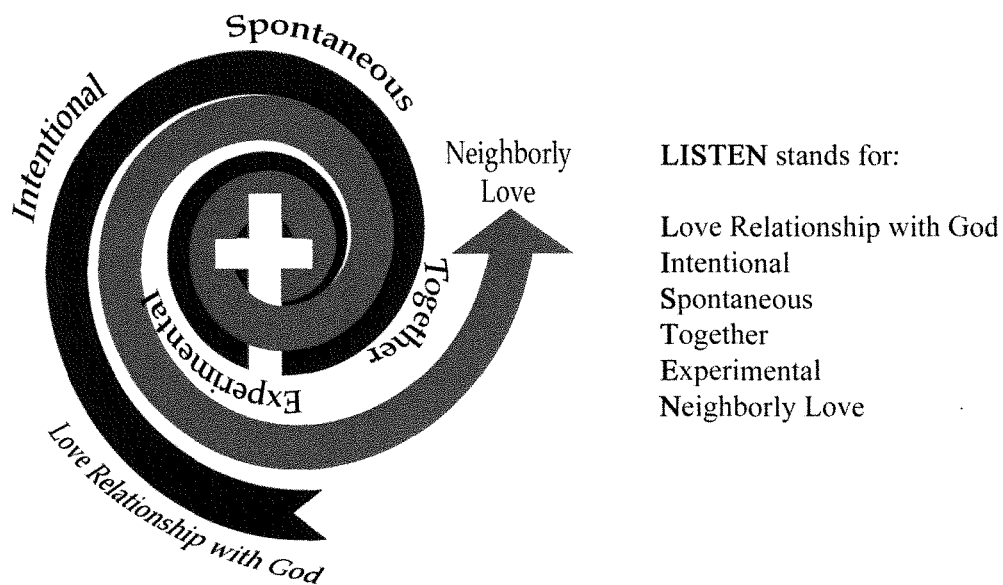


Figure 2. Listening Life spiral

L-ove Relationship with God

Key Truths:

- God loves every person deeply and is pursuing us with a persistent love.
- God is the one who initiates, changes, and calls us.
- Spiritual formation is not a set of steps, works, or plan but a relationship with Christ, who came to show us the saving love of God.

Key Quotes:

“And the Church’s talk is first of all to call people to a listening life, a life of internal listening to the inner promptings that are already going on. We don’t

⁹²Smith, *The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love with the God Jesus Knows*.

begin religion; *God begins it, knocking within*, in faint promptings, in inward appeals in the silence of our hearts.”⁹³

“Making disciples is not something we do, but Jesus does. We need to get people to bond with Jesus directly, to get out of the way and not put anything, especially ourselves, between the person and Jesus.”⁹⁴

Key Scriptures:

Luke 15, John 3:16-21, John 14, Romans 5:6-8, Ephesians 3:14-21, 1 John 4:7-21, Psalm 23, 117, 118, 145

Key Resources:

*The Good and Beautiful God, Wisdom of Tenderness, The Inner Voice of Love, Embraced: Prodigals at the Cross, Eternal Promise, Summoned to Lead*⁹⁵

Reflection Questions:

How am I growing in my awareness that God loves me deeply and that there is nothing I can do to make God love me any more or any less?

How can I continue to open my life to the gift of Christ given for me and remember that spiritual formation is centered on a loving relationship with God?

Prayers:

*“Lord you love me, I give you my life.”*⁹⁶

*“I pray that you _____ being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”*⁹⁷

*“Reverse Psalm 121”*⁹⁸

⁹³Kelly, *The Eternal Promise: A Sequel to a Testament of Devotion*, 149.

⁹⁴Leonard I. Sweet, *So Beautiful: Divine Design for Life and the Church : Missional, Relational, Incarnational*, 1st ed. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2009), 215.

⁹⁵Smith, *The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love with the God Jesus Knows*. Manning, *The Wisdom of Tenderness: What Happens When God’s Fierce Mercy Transforms Our Lives*. Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Inner Voice of Love: A Journey through Anguish to Freedom*, 1st ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1996). Sherwood, *Embraced: Prodigals at the Cross*. Kelly, *The Eternal Promise: A Sequel to a Testament of Devotion*. Leonard I. Sweet, *Summoned to Lead* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004).

⁹⁶Fawver, “Simple Breath Prayer.”

⁹⁷Taken from Ephesians 3:17-19.

⁹⁸This is a spiritual practice that is designed to help individuals to consider the deep love God has for them. See Appendix 5 for this practice.

Stories of Transformation:

These stories will be gathered in text, audio, or video format.

Media–Music, Videos, Images, and Art:

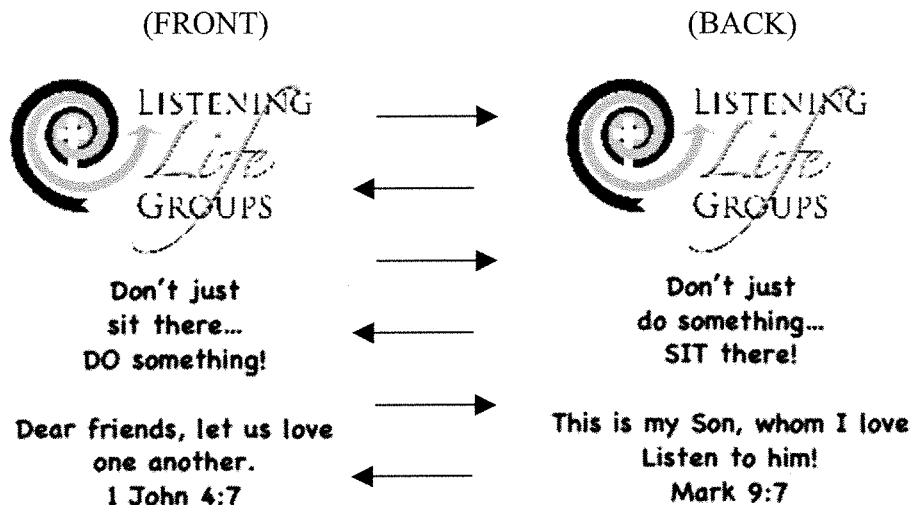


Figure 3. Listening Life bookmark

Leaders Materials:

Listening Life–Good and Beautiful God Resources

Come Listen To Christ Retreats–Saturday retreats from 9:00-3:00 which focus on creating space for individuals to listen to Christ and experiment with disciplines, spiritual practices, and other tools of the spiritual life. They have many different themes such as:

- Creation and Prayer*
- Silence*

Ministry Question:

How do we help people experience the deep love of God and know that there is nothing they can do to cause God to love them any more or any less?

I-ntentional

Key Truths:

- We join God's transforming love as we engage in spiritual practices, disciplines, prayer, scripture, and offer ourselves as living sacrifices.
- Our part of the relationship is to respond to and accept God's love.
- The Spirit changes us as we deal with sin and addictions by creating space for healing.

Key Quotes:

“The very first thing we need to do is set apart a time and a place to be with God and him alone. The concrete shape of this discipline of solitude will be different for each person depending on individual character, ministerial task, and milieu. But a real discipline never remains vague or general. It is as concrete and specific as daily life itself.”⁹⁹

“A farmer is helpless to grow grain; all he can do is provide the right conditions for the growing of grain. He cultivates the ground, he plants the seed, he waters the plants, and then the natural forces of the earth take over and up comes the grain. This is the way it is with the Spiritual Disciplines—they are a way of sowing to the Spirit. The Disciplines are God’s way of getting us into the ground; they put us where he can work within us and transform us. By themselves the Spiritual Disciplines can do nothing; they can only get us to the place where something can be done.”¹⁰⁰

Key Scriptures:

Matthew 5-7, Mark 12:28-34, Luke 8:1-21, Luke 11:1-13, Luke 14:15-34, John 4-5, Colossians 3:1-12, Psalm 1, 119, 130, 136

Key Resources:

*Celebration of Discipline, Listening Hearts, Out of Solitude, Prayer, Shaped by the Word, Soul Feast, The Spirit of the Disciplines, Renovation of the Heart, The Good and Beautiful Life, Emotionally Healthy Spirituality.*¹⁰¹

Reflection Questions:

How am I creating space to intentionally listen to Christ, allow his love to change me, and heal in the areas of brokenness in my life?

If someone were to look at my schedule would they see that listening to Christ is a priority or that I am pursuing secondary values?

⁹⁹Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart: Desert Spirituality and Contemporary Ministry*, 1st HarperCollins pbk. ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 31.

¹⁰⁰Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, 7.

¹⁰¹Ibid. Farnham, *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community*. Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Out of Solitude: Three Meditations on the Christian Life* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1974). Richard J. Foster, *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992). M. Robert Mulholland, *Shaped by the Word: The Power of Scripture in Spiritual Formation*, Rev. ed. (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 2000). Thompson, *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*. Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988). Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002). James Bryan Smith, *The Good and Beautiful Life: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009). Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: Unleash a Revolution in Your Life in Christ* (Nashville, TN: Integrity, 2006).

Prayers:

“Lord, I offer you myself... from my toes to my head, from my left to my right, from my back to my front, from inside out...”¹⁰²

“The Gift of Breath”¹⁰³

Stories of Transformation:

These stories will be gathered in text, audio, or video format.

Media–Music, Videos, Images, Art:

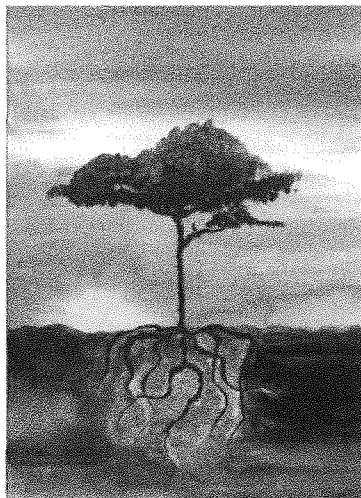


Figure 4. *Deep Roots* by Amanda Watson

Leaders Materials:

Listening Life–Introduction Materials

Come Listen To Christ Retreats:

–Fasting

–Journaling

–Scripture and Prayer

Ministry Question:

How do we help people create space to listen to Christ?

¹⁰²Fawver, “Sermon–God Has Come to Help His People.”

¹⁰³See Appendix 6 for a simple prayer practice focused on God’s presence and life given to us through the gift of breath.

S-pontaneous

Key Truths:

- We cooperate with God as we follow the nudges and learn to listen to Christ in all of life through times of celebration, normalcy, suffering, and grief.
- Spiritual formation happens as we practice the presence¹⁰⁴ and follow the Wild Goose.¹⁰⁵
- We join Christ’s work as we offer ourselves to the Spirit¹⁰⁶ of God every moment of the day and night.

Key Quotes:

“And our task is not to work for Him, but to learn for Him to *work through us and to join our sensitivity to His working*, already going on inside the lives of others. For wherever we go, there God has preceded us. To whomever we speak, God has first been speaking to him. And our task is to urge men to listen to their *inner Teacher*.”¹⁰⁷

“The Christian life is more than finding Jesus—it is *following* Jesus. Following, it turns out, is not a one-time, spectacular act of faith, but a one-day-at-a-time, ordinary, unspectacular following; a daily act of fearlessness that takes us through the most frightening and rugged terrain to a place of peace, joy, and abandon.”¹⁰⁸

Key Scriptures:

Romans 12:1-2, Luke 7:11-17, John 15-17, Psalm 25

Key Resources:

*Journal of John Woolman, The Way of a Pilgrim, Wild Goose Chase, Testament of Devotion, Laubach and Lawrence—Practicing His Presence, Letters by a Modern Mystic, Dangerous Wonder*¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴See Note 51 for a brief description of “practicing the presence.”

¹⁰⁵“Wild Goose” is often used as a phrase for the Holy Spirit coming from Celtic traditions.

¹⁰⁶See Appendix 7 for a beautiful description of the Spirit of God. Kathy Watson, “Spirit,” (Newberg, OR: Newberg Friends Church, 2004).

¹⁰⁷Kelly, *The Eternal Promise: A Sequel to a Testament of Devotion*, 148.

¹⁰⁸Yaconelli, *Dangerous Wonder: The Adventure of Childlike Faith*, 57.

¹⁰⁹Woolman and Moulton, *The Journal and Major Essays of John Woolman*. French, *The Way of a Pilgrim and the Pilgrim Continues His Way*. Mark Batterson, *Wild Goose Chase: Reclaim the Adventure of Pursuing God* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2008). Kelly and Steere, *A Testament of Devotion*. Edwards, Laubach, and Lawrence, *Practicing His Presence*. Frank Charles Laubach, *Letters by a Modern Mystic* (Westwood, NJ: Revell, 1958). Yaconelli, *Dangerous Wonder: The Adventure of Childlike Faith*.

Reflection Questions:

Do I really trust that Christ is speaking to me each day and that I can be aware of these nudges?

What am I doing to develop a sense of awareness to how Christ is speaking?

Prayers:

"Lord, help me pay attention to you each moment today."

"Oh Lord, draw me where you want me to go. Lead me by the power of your magnetic love. Guide me by the hand of your Spirit as you touch my mind and heart. I choose to follow your nudges. I choose to be guided by your Spirit as you press in upon my life. May you come and be the one who leads me every day!"¹¹⁰

Stories of Transformation:

These stories will be gathered in text, audio, or video format.

Media–Music, Videos, Images, Art:

Delight Thyself

by Mike Comfort

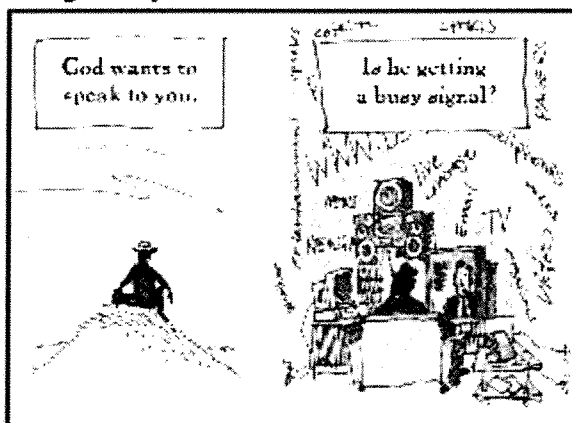


Figure 5. Delight Thyself cartoon by Mike Comfort, November 2000

Leaders Materials:

Come Listen To Christ Retreats:

- Gratitude and Prayer
- Prayer of Examen
- The Power of Reflection

Ministry Question:

How do we help people learn to pay attention to God in all of life and listen to Christ who is speaking to each one of us?

¹¹⁰Fawver, "Compass Prayer–Listening Life Resources."

T-together

Key Truths:

- We need to be listening to Christ in community as we find support and encouragement.
- The key is to have accountability, practice the One Another scriptures, engage in confession, and seek discernment with others.
- The great cloud of witnesses, who have gone before us, need to be part of our community as well as those at home and next door.

Key Quotes:

“Let him who cannot be alone beware of community. Let him who is not in community beware of being alone.”¹¹¹

“The primary philosophical and spiritual problem in the West is the lie of individualism. Individualism makes church almost impossible. It makes community almost impossible.”¹¹²

Key Scriptures:

Mark 2:1-12, One Another passages, Acts 1:12-14, Acts 2:42-47, Galatians 6:1-2, Ephesians 6:18, Philippians 2:1-11, Colossians 3:13-17, James 5:13-20, Psalm 133, 145

Key Resources:

Life Together, *Devotional Classics*, *Listening Life—Great Cloud of Witnesses*, *Practicing Discernment Together*, *Listening Hearts*, *The Good and Beautiful Community*¹¹³

Reflection Questions:

How am I engaged in finding ways to listen with others and to be gathered together around Christ?

Who are the people in my life that are voices of encouragement, perspective, accountability, and love?

Prayers:

“Lord, may I be real and honest with those around me.”

¹¹¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1954), 78.

¹¹² Rohr, *Everything Belongs: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer*, 79.

¹¹³ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*. Lon Fendall, Jan Wood, and Bruce Bishop, *Practicing Discernment Together: Finding God's Way Forward in Decision Making* (Newberg, OR: Barclay Press, 2007); Richard J. Foster and James Bryan Smith, *Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups*, Rev. and expanded ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005). Farnham, *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community*. James Bryan Smith, *The Good and Beautiful Community: Following the Spirit, Extending Grace, Demonstrating Love* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2010).

“And this is my prayer for you _____: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ.”¹¹⁴

Stories of Transformation:

These stories will be gathered in text, audio, or video format.

Media–Music, Videos, Images, Art:



Figure 6. *Christ Is the Light* by Kathy Watson, 2008

Leaders Materials:

*Listening Life–Cloud of Witnesses Series*¹¹⁵

Come Listen To Christ Retreats:

- Christian Classics and Prayer*
- Scripture and Prayer*

Ministry Question:

How do we help people find ways to listen with others and to be gathered together around Christ?

E-xperimental

Key Truths:

- Each individual is unique and different from any other person and can discover their spiritual personality while journeying with Christ.

¹¹⁴Taken from Philippians 1:9-10.

¹¹⁵See Appendix 8 for *Session One–Francis De Sales*. This is session one of a thirteen-week series written by Newberg Friends writers in which participants are exposed to some voices of the saints from the past as well as some individual and group spiritual practices.

- We need to hold things loosely, give things a try, be patient with the process, and practice prayer.
- God will meet us in specific ways and call out specific gifts in us.

Key Quotes:

“I mean a slow, subtle, nearly unconscious process of formation, something like the way a moving stream shapes the rocks over a long passage of time.”¹¹⁶

“Spiritual formation is not an option! The inescapable conclusion is that life itself is a process of spiritual development. The only choice we have is whether that growth moves us toward wholeness in Christ or toward an increasingly dehumanized and destructive mode of being.”¹¹⁷

Key Scriptures:

Matthew 11:25-30, Luke 11:1-13 and 33-36, Luke 12:22-34, Ephesians 6:10-18, Psalm 139, Isaiah 55

Key Resources:

*Sacred Pathways, Streams of Living Water, Invitation to a Journey, Sacred Compass, Sacred Echo, Creating a Life with God, Devotional Classics*¹¹⁸

Reflection Questions:

How have I been experimenting with prayer, listening, and learning to hold things loosely as I listen to Christ?

What new discoveries have I been making about my unique spiritual personality?

Prayers:

“Lord, help me to be open and free to be loved by you just as I am.”

*“Prayer Walk”*¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶Parker J. Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey*, 1st HarperCollins pbk ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 20.

¹¹⁷Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*, 24.

¹¹⁸Gary Thomas, *Sacred Pathways* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1996). Foster, *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith*. Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*. Bill, *Sacred Compass: The Way of Spiritual Discernment*. Margaret Feinberg, *The Sacred Echo: Hearing God's Voice in Every Area of Your Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008). Daniel Wolpert, *Creating a Life with God: The Call of Ancient Prayer Practices* (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 2003). Foster and Smith, *Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups*.

¹¹⁹See Appendix 9.

Stories of Transformation:

These stories will be gathered in text, audio, or video format.

Media—Music, Videos, Images, Art:



Figure 7. *The Wild Goose* by Robert Henry, September 2010

Leaders Materials:

Series on Spiritual Personality

Ministry Question:

How can we encourage people to experiment with prayer, listening, and learn to hold things loosely as they discover God's presence deep within them?

N-ighborly Love

Key Truths:

- When we listen to Christ we are called to live out love and minister to those who are lost, hurting, poor, and oppressed.
- God's love will flow through us in mission, specific callings, and ministries, as we are all a part of the priesthood of all believers.
- The best indication of God's work within us is the fruit of the Spirit exhibited in our relationships with others.

Key Quotes:

“God loves us first, and we see that clearly in God's Son offering his life in order to reconcile us to God. And that love propels me to love God and others in return. God first loved us and will never stop loving us. The primary thing God wants from us is not improved moral behavior (which will come), but to love God because he first loves us.”¹²⁰

¹²⁰Smith, *The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love with the God Jesus Knows*, 88.

“If you want a good litmus test of your spiritual growth, simply examine the nature and quality of your relationships with others. Are you more loving, more compassionate, more patient, more understanding, more caring, more giving, more forgiving than you were a year ago?”¹²¹

Key Scriptures:

Love God and Love your Neighbor—Mark 12:28-34, Luke 10:25-37, Galatians 5:13-26, Galatians 6:1-10, James 1:19-27, 1 John 4:10-11, Isaiah 58 and 61

Key Resources:

*Irresistible Revolution, The God of Intimacy and Action, The Treasure Principle, Freedom of Simplicity, Journal of John Woolman, Wisdom of the Desert, Walking Gently on the Earth*¹²²

Reflection Questions:

How is Christ calling me to live out love and care for those who are in need?

How is my listening to Christ affecting not only my spiritual health but also the relationships I have with others?

Prayers:

“Lord, won’t you make me a blessing and a witness today as I follow you.”¹²³

“This morning, as I kindle the fire upon my hearth, I pray that the flame of God’s love may burn in my heart, and the hearts of all I meet today.

I pray that no envy and malice, no hatred or fear, may smother the flame.

I pray that indifference and apathy, contempt and pride, may not pour like cold water on the fire.

Instead, may the spark of God’s love light the love in my heart, that it may burn brightly through the day.

And may I warm those who are lonely, whose hearts are cold and lifeless, so that all may know the comfort of God’s love.”¹²⁴

¹²¹Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*, 42.

¹²²Claiborne, *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical*. Campolo and Darling, *The God of Intimacy and Action: Reconnecting Ancient Spiritual Practices, Evangelism, and Justice*. Randy C. Alcorn, *The Treasure Principle* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2001). Richard J. Foster, *Freedom of Simplicity: Finding Harmony in a Complex World*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005). Woolman and American Imprint Collection (Library of Congress), *The Works of John Woolman in Two Parts*. Thomas Merton, *The Wisdom of the Desert: Sayings from the Desert Fathers of the Fourth Century* (New York: New Directions, 1961). Lisa Graham McMinn and Megan Anna Neff, *Walking Gently on the Earth: Making Faithful Choices About Food, Energy, Shelter and More* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2010).

¹²³Woolsey, “Daily Offering Prayer.”

¹²⁴Robert Van de Weyer, *Celtic Prayers* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997).

Stories of Transformation:

These stories will be gathered in text, audio, or video format.

Media—Music, Videos, Images, Art:

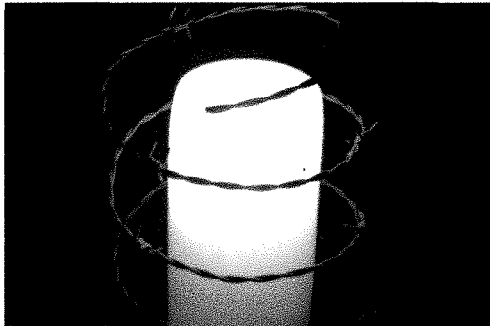


Figure 8. *Christ Candle* by Kathy Watson, 2008

Leaders Materials:

Come Listen To Christ Retreats:

–*Gratitude and Prayer*

–*Intercession*

Ministry Question:

How can we encourage people to pay attention to how Christ is calling them to live out love and care for those who are in need?

SECTION FIVE: ARTIFACT SPECIFICATIONS

1–Track 02 Artifact Description:

Since listening to Christ is the central guiding foundation for spiritual formation at Newberg Friends Church, we will articulate the Listening Life approach to spiritual formation. We will develop a web site (www.listeninglife.org) that will be accessible to those in the Newberg Friends Church community and a broader audience as well.

2–Audience:

1. Written Statement: I am writing to groups and individuals leading Newberg Friends Church, other Northwest Yearly Meeting (our denomination) pastors, and my dissertation readers. This will include those on the leadership level at NFC such as the elders and pastoral team, and those leading in areas of spiritual formation as well. I plan to share this information with these groups as a way to help them gain a comprehensive view of the foundation in the area of spiritual formation at NFC. I also hope that this will generate excitement and vision as we continue to develop this approach to spiritual formation that is effective in our setting.

2. Practical Audience engaging in the Track 02 Artifact: My audience for application is the broader Newberg Friends community. Not only will the leaders, elders, pastoral team, and those with a heart for spiritual formation in our community be using this guide/resource, but also it will be accessible to the whole congregation.

3–Goals and Strategies:

The main goal for this dissertation is to put into writing our key theological foundations and the Listening Life approach to spiritual formation that we have been

experimenting with at Newberg Friends Church. We have tested this approach and have found that it serves as a helpful tool for people in our community. We hope to continue to expand and refine this work and allow it to be used by a broader group of people in our congregation. We will further develop a web-based approach to our resources and develop some specific tools in written form for groups and individuals to use in our community setting. This process will gather, organize, and clarify the Listening Life approach.

4—Track 02 Artifact Scope and Content:

The technical and content parameters for this Artifact will be a Listening Life web site that will house the information and relevant resources for the Listening Life approach to spiritual formation. Jason Schwanz is working on the web site (www.listeninglife.org) and Sherry Macy will help organize, proofread, and assist in this process as well. Many materials have been written and need to be organized, structured, and pulled into the web site.

5—Dissertation Skill-set Assessment:

Skills needed to develop this Track 02 Artifact:

- Writing
- Organizing
- Gathering resources
- Web design
- Writing spiritual practices and gathering these
- Personal practice and experience in listening to Christ

–Big picture vision and organization

I believe that I have the skill set needed for this dissertation and will work with experts on web design, proofreading, and visual development of resources. We will be using Word Press software to develop and implement this site.

6–Standards of Publication:

I plan to have a high standard of publication that gives attention to detail and proofreading issues, accessibility of the web based materials, and thoughtful leaders guides and individual resources. I seek to have standards of excellence, accessibility, and resources that are formational in nature. I plan to have these materials and resources done in ways that create space for people to enter into a deepening relationship with Christ.

7–Budget:

We will determine the funding needed to host this site. This will include a yearly amount in our NFC budget for hosting of the Listening Life site.

SECTION SIX: POSTSCRIPT

Going through the discipline of articulating the Listening Life approach to spiritual formation and developing the web site has been a good process. Like preparing for a sporting event, some of the practice has been enjoyable and exhilarating while some has been arduous and tedious—producing sweat, sore muscles, and exhaustion. Countless hours writing, gathering resources, and processing with individuals is paying off as we have addressed the ministry problem that Newberg Friends has *lacked a clearly articulated theological foundation and central guiding focus in the area of spiritual formation with adults*. Because the Elders have given me the time and space to write, the opportunity to work with people on developing the web site, and a chance to connect with other leaders in the area of spiritual formation at Newberg Friends I now believe that we have a strong foundation upon which to build for many years to come.

At the beginning of this paper I noted that at Newberg Friends *it is as if there is the heart focused on Christ and the skin of programs and ministries, but the skeletal and muscular structure of a clarified theology and approach to spiritual formation is lacking*. I now believe that the skeleton and muscles are forming through the exercise and growth we have gone through over the past few years. While this development will always continue as we exercise our spiritual muscles I see some maturing already. We now have the five theological foundational statements upon which to build, and the Listening Life approach in place giving a framework for this growth.

The Listening Life filter has been very helpful when it comes to working with leaders in ministry at Newberg Friends. Recently I was in a conversation with two teachers of a new Bible study being planning for Sunday morning. One of them asked

about the structure and focus of this time together. I found it very valuable to be able to answer these questions thoughtfully as I reflected on the L-I-S-T-E-N areas rather than just saying “I don’t know ... do whatever!” I was able to speak about the need for people to be intentional in the disciplines of study and scripture memorization, the different spiritual personalities that might be drawn to this group, and the value of being together each week centered on paying attention to Christ our present teacher.¹²⁵ It was very encouraging to have some filters and priorities in place that guided us in our specific setting as to how we were going to help people be formed through this Bible study. Rather than just relying on the experts from another congregation, a denominational publishing house, or the latest spiritual technique as our guide we were able to build upon the foundation of the Listening Life approach specifically in the context of our community at Newberg Friends.

While most of my experience with this approach has been very positive the following are some reflections I have had over the past few months on areas needing further attention. First, we need to continue to have a broader base of people involved in writing, developing prayers and spiritual practices, and speaking into this arena at Newberg Friends. I think it will be important that we use the structure as a means to hear from more individuals. Now that we have the web site up and running a continuing task is to fill it out with the voices of those in our community. I am convinced that many are just waiting to be asked to write, create, and offer tools to others.

Another thing I have noticed is that we tend to be fairly reflective, introspective, and focused toward meditative types of practices in this approach. This is partly due to

¹²⁵George Fox often spoke about Christ being here with us now. We don’t have to think in terms of Jesus only being a historical figure, but that his presence and life is real and active in the present. Fox, Nickalls, and Friends, *The Journal of George Fox*, 109.

the personalities of the leaders who have been involved so far. I think we are off to a good start in our understanding of “Listening” but need to expand the “Life” component as well. While we don’t teach that listening is just a reflective or quiet concept I wonder if many of our practices convey that it is. While I am excited about what has been developed I also believe we must find ways to expand this to include the wider range of spiritual personalities that are active, oriented toward energetic praise and worship, and drawn to use all of the senses when listening to Christ. To do this we must continue to find individuals who will help give leadership, offer practical suggestions, and be willing to be voices that call out the need for balance in this area.

Next, we need to continue to compile more “stories of transformation” of what God is doing in the lives of people at Newberg Friends and create more opportunities for these to be shared. While we can try to convince people to listen to God because it is essential for a healthy spiritual life, having people share their own experiences will carry much more weight and value in this regard. Recently I had a conversation with a woman who is a part of a group that meets to encourage one another, pray together, and practice spiritual disciplines. She shared about doing one of the spiritual practices she was encouraged to try. I was energized as she explained having a conversation with God where she said, “Help me,” and sensed God saying to her, “I am here.” These were not simply words for her, but a deep spiritual experience that was sacred and powerful in her life. I was blessed and challenged by her sharing. While we do have some of these stories, we need to strengthen the process of compiling more real life examples of what God is doing that can be shared with others. This is not a means to place people on a

spiritual pedestal, but rather a way to give testimony to God's work and celebrate what the Spirit is doing in our midst.

Finally, I want to make sure that we don't allow Listening Life to be just another program, but rather an overall approach to spiritual formation at Newberg Friends. While it is helpful to be intentional in spiritual discipleship, first and foremost it is about nurturing a relationship with a living God. In Isaiah 55:2-3 we have an invitation from God to, "... listen, listen to me and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear to me, that your soul may live." The simple invitation to a full life is easily buried under a hill of complexity. People tend to codify the truth and allow words, plans, programs, and methods to squeeze the breath out of the things that are designed to nurture growth. The call in Isaiah needs to be central in our lives with God. We are invited to come to Christ for nourishment and sustenance and the invitation is open to all. My prayer is that we at Newberg Friends will do this each moment of every day. A listening life starts with God who loves us very much. The invitation is not to develop structures, practice disciplines, or even do the work of God, but is for each individual to be filled with the love of God that does bring full life. We must continue to keep every part of our life attuned to Christ and let him lead, guide, and love us deeply as we seek to pay attention to his gentle presence as individuals and in community with one another.

Appendix 1

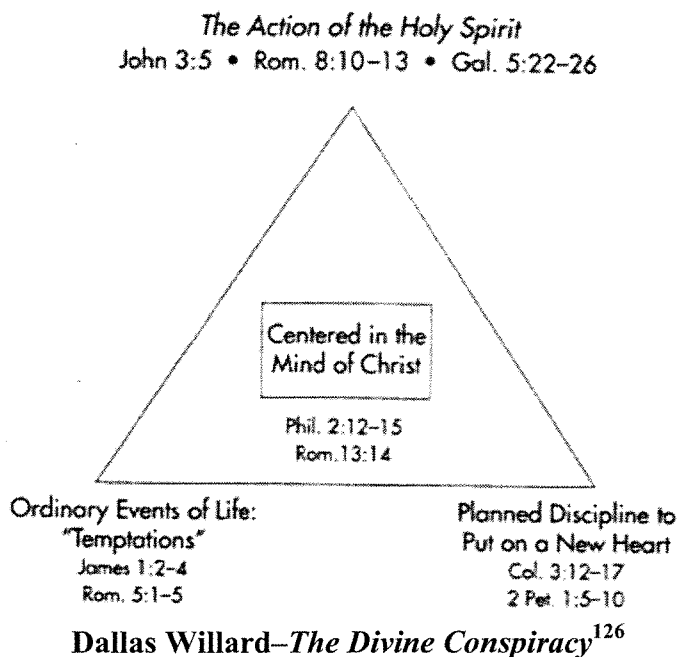
Listening Scriptures

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Genesis 1 | John 14:23-27 |
| Genesis 3:8-10 | John 16:12-16 |
| Deuteronomy 6:1-9 | Acts 3:22-26 |
| 1 Kings 19:11-13 | Acts 7:51-53 |
| 1 Samuel 3 | Acts 8:26-40 |
| Nehemiah 9:16-31 | Acts 9:1-19 |
| Psalms 78:1-8 | Acts 16:6-10 |
| Proverbs 4:20-27 | Romans 8:9-27 |
| Proverbs 8:32-36 | Colossians 3:15-17 |
| Isaiah 46:3-13 | James 1:19-27 |
| Isaiah 48 | 1 Peter 4:11 |
| Jeremiah 6:16-20 | 2 Peter 1:16-21 |
| Jeremiah 7:21-26 | Revelation 2 & 3 |
| Zachariah 7:8-14 | |
| Matthew 7:24-27 | |
| Mark 9:2-8 | |
| Luke 8:4-21 | |
| Luke 16:19-31 | |
| John 1:1-18 | |
| John 5:36-40 | |
| John 10:1-18, 27 | |

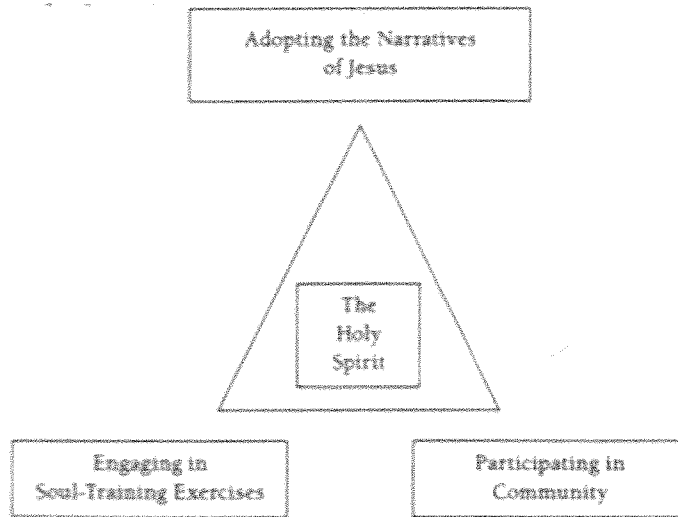
Appendix 2

Spiritual Formation Approaches

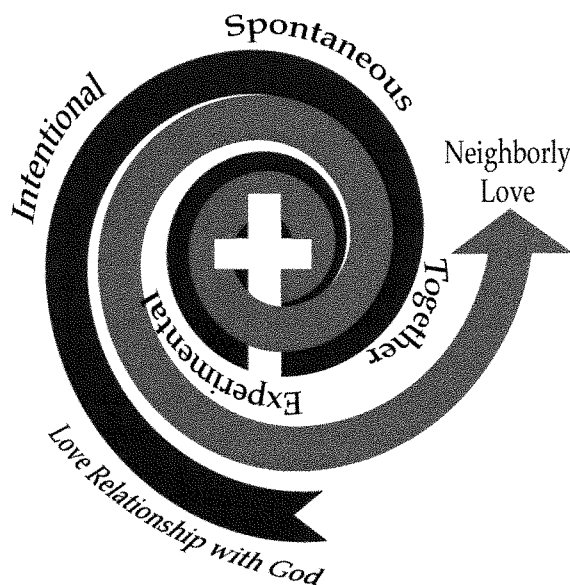
It is informative to compare the three approaches to spiritual formation shown below. As one compares the images taken from Dallas Willard with that of James Bryan Smith a few gaps are apparent. Dallas Willard seems to leave off the area of community in his chart. James Bryan Smith has added this, called *participating in community*, while not addressing the area of *ordinary events of life*, which is noted in Dallas Willard's chart. While I am not saying that either of these individuals would argue that *community* or *ordinary life* are not important components of our spiritual formation it is interesting to notice their absence in the visual representation Willard and Smith used in their writings. In the Listening Life approach we have tried to address the main areas of spiritual formation and include *community* (Together) and the *ordinary events of life* (Spontaneous) as a part of our overall focus and in the image of the spiral as well.



¹²⁶Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 347.



**James Bryan Smith—
*The Good and Beautiful God*¹²⁷**



LISTEN stands for:

Love Relationship with God
 Intentional
 Spontaneous
 Together
 Experimental
 Neighborly Love

Listening Life—Newberg Friends

¹²⁷Smith, *The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love with the God Jesus Knows*, 24.

Appendix 3

Introduction: This resource was developed at NFC to use when we do teaching in the area of spiritual personalities. We have used this with individuals and groups as a way to begin the discussion and give a start on how to consider the variety of ways we connect with God. It helps give some focus to the “*E-xperimental*” area. It is often used with an assessment found at: <http://common.northpoint.org/sacredpathway.html>.

Spiritual Personality Resources¹²⁸

1) The Naturalist: Loving God Out-of-Doors (Nature, beauty, garden, mountain)

These Christians would prefer to leave any building—however beautiful or austere—to pray to God beside a river. Leave the books behind, forget the demonstrations, just let them take a walk through the woods, mountains, or in the open meadows.

2) The Sensate: Loving God with the Senses (Sensuous, colorful, aromatic, majesty)

Sensate Christians want to be lost in the awe, beauty, and splendor of God. They are drawn particularly to the liturgical, the majestic, and the grand. When these Christians worship, they want to be filled with sights, sounds, and smells that overwhelm them. Incense, intricate architecture, classical music, and formal language send their hearts soaring.

3) The Traditionalist: Loving God through Ritual and Symbol (Tradition, liturgy, worship, history, symbol)

These Christians are fed by what are often termed the historic dimensions of faith: ritual, symbols, sacraments, and sacrifice. Traditionalists tend to have a disciplined life of faith. May be seen by others as legalists, defining their faith largely by matters of conduct. They frequently enjoy regular attendance at church services, tithing, keeping the Sabbath, and so on.

4) The Ascetic: Loving God in Solitude and Simplicity (Silence, solitude, discipline, retreat, alone)

Ascetics want nothing more than to be left alone in prayer. Take away the liturgy, the trappings of religion, the noise of the outside world. Let there be nothing to distract them—no pictures, no loud music—and leave them alone to pray in silence and simplicity.

5) The Activist: Loving God through Confrontation (Social action, make a difference, justice, apathy, social evil)

Activists serve a God of justice, and their favorite scripture is often the account of Jesus cleansing the temple. They define worship as standing against the evil and calling sinners to repentance. These Christians often view the church as a place to recharge their batteries so they can go back into the world to wage war against injustice.

¹²⁸Taken from Thomas, *Sacred Pathways*.

6) The Caregiver: Loving God by Loving Others (Service, help, love in action)

These Christians serve God by serving others. They often claim to see Christ in the poor and needy. Their faith is built up by interacting with other people. Whereas caring for others might wear many people down, this recharges a caregiver's battery. They see introspection as selfish.

7) The Enthusiast: Loving God with Mystery and Celebration (Joy, worship music, celebrate God, excitement, hope, passion, dreaming)

"Enthusiasm" in worship primarily feeds these Christians. Where sensates want to be surrounded by beauty and intellects want to be grappling with concepts, enthusiasts are inspired by joyful celebration. These Christians are cheerleaders for God and the Christian life. Let them clap their hands, shout "Amen!" and dance in their excitement. This person doesn't want to know concepts, but experience them, to feel them, and to be moved by them.

8) The Contemplative: Loving God through Contemplation (Lover, intimacy, heart, adoration, feeling God, touch of God)

These Christians refer to God as their lover, and images of a loving Father and Bridegroom predominate their view of God. Their favorite Bible passages might be taken from the Song of Songs as they enter the "divine romance." The focus is not necessarily on serving God, doing his will, accomplishing great things in his name, or even obeying God. Rather, these Christians seek to love God with a pure and intimate heart.

9) The Intellectual: Loving God with the Mind (Learning, concepts, truth, study)

Intellectuals might be skeptics or committed believers, but in either case they are likely to be studying (and in some instances, arguing either for or against) Christian beliefs and doctrines. These people live in the world of concepts and may gain more from reading theological textbooks and commentaries than they will from listening and prayer. "Faith" is something to be understood as much as experienced. They may feel closest to God when they first understand something new about him.

Other Resources:

Prayer and Temperament by Chester P. Michael and Marie C. Norrissey.¹²⁹

Knowing Me, Knowing God by Malcolm Goldsmith.¹³⁰

Discover Your Spiritual Type by Corinne Ware.¹³¹

¹²⁹Chester P. Michael and Marie C. Norrissey, *Prayer and Temperament: Different Prayer Forms for Different Personality Types*, New rev. ed. (Charlottesville, VA: Open Door, 1991).

¹³⁰Malcolm Goldsmith, *Knowing Me, Knowing God: Exploring Your Spirituality with Myers-Briggs* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997).

¹³¹Corinne Ware, *Discover Your Spiritual Type: A Guide to Individual and Congregational Growth* (Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1995).

Appendix 4

Introduction: This resource is used to help individuals and groups consider the area of “*T-together*” and how we are called to be in community with each other. It is a good resource for teaching, small groups, and one-on-one conversations when considering the relationships we have with those in the body of Christ.

One Another Scriptures

- 1) “Be at peace with each other” (Mark 9:50).
- 2) “Wash one another’s feet”(John 13:14).
- 3) “Love one another...” (John 13:34).
- 4) “Love one another” (John 13:34).
- 5) “Love one another” (John 13:35).
- 6) “Love each other...” (John 15:12).
- 7) “Love each other” (John 15:17).
- 8) “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love...” (Romans 12:10).
- 9) “Honor one another above yourselves” (Romans 12:10).
- 10) “Live in harmony with one another...” (Romans 12:16).
- 11) “Love one another...” (Romans 13:8).
- 12) “Stop passing judgment on one another” (Romans 14:13).
- 13) “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you...” (Romans 15:17).
- 14) “Instruct one another” (Romans 15:14).
- 15) “Greet one another with a holy kiss...” (Romans 16:16).
- 16) “...When you come together to eat, wait for each other...” (1 Corinthians 11:33).
- 17) “...Have equal concern for each other” (1 Corinthians 12:25).
- 18) “...Greet one another with a holy kiss” (1 Corinthians 16:20).
- 19) “Greet one another with a holy kiss” (2 Corinthians 13:12).
- 20) “...Serve one another in love” (Galatians 5:13).
- 21) “If you keep on biting and devouring each other...you will be destroyed by each other” (Galatians 5:15).
- 22) “Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other” (Galatians 5:26).
- 23) “Carry each other’s burdens...” (Galatians 6:2).
- 24) “Be...patient, bearing with one another in love” (Ephesians 4:2).
- 25) “Be kind and compassionate to one another...” (Ephesians 4:32).
- 26) “...Forgiving each other...” (Ephesians 4:32).
- 27) “Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” (Ephesians 5:19).
- 28) “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:21).
- 29) “...In humility consider others better than yourselves” (Philippians 2:3).
- 30) “Do not lie to each other...” (Colossians 3:9).
- 31) “Bear with each other...” (Colossians 3:13).
- 32) “...Forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another” (Colossians 3:16).
- 33) “Teach one another” (Colossians 3:16).
- 34) “...Admonish one another” (Colossians 3:16).

- 35) "...Make your love increase and overflow for each other" (1 Thessalonians 3:12).
- 36) "...Love each other" (1 Thessalonians 4:9).
- 37) "...Encourage one another..." (1 Thessalonians 4:18).
- 38) "...Encourage one another..." (1 Thessalonians 5:11).
- 39) "...Build each other up..." (1 Thessalonians 5:11).
- 40) "Encourage one another daily..." (Hebrews 3:13).
- 41) "...Spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (Hebrews 10:24).
- 42) "...Encourage one another" (Hebrews 10:25).
- 43) "...Do not slander one another" (James 4:11).
- 44) "Don't grumble against each other..." (James 5:9).
- 45) "Confess your sins to each other..." (James 5:16).
- 46) "...Pray for each other" (James 5:16).
- 47) "...Love one another deeply, from the heart" (1 Peter 1:22).
- 48) "...Live in harmony with one another..." (1 Peter 3:8).
- 49) "...Love each other deeply..." (1 Peter 4:8).
- 50) "Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling" (1 Peter 4:9).
- 51) "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others..." (1 Peter 4:10).
- 52) "...Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another..." (1 Peter 5:5).
- 53) "Greet one another with a kiss of love" (1 Peter 5:14).
- 54) "...Love one another" (1 John 3:11).
- 55) "...Love one another" (1 John 3:23).
- 56) "...Love one another" (1 John 4:11).
- 57) "...Love one another..." (1 John 4:12).
- 58) "...Love one another" (2 John 5).

Appendix 5

Introduction: This prayer practice is used for individuals to consider the love that God has for them. It is printed for groups or accessed on the web site.

“Reverse Psalm 121”

Use Psalm 121 as a tool to help you recognize God’s activity and presence in your life. Read the Psalm through a couple of times and then take time to write a reverse paraphrase of the lines in the Psalm. Take each line and write the opposite of the truth. One example would be for the line, “My help comes from the Lord,” you might write something like, “I don’t have anyone to help at all...” Feel free to be as creative as you want with this process. After you are finished you may want to read the whole Psalm once more and thank God for the reality of this amazing truth.

Psalm 121

1 I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from?

2 My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

3 He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber;

4 indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The LORD watches over you—the LORD is your shade at your right hand;

6 the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.

7 The LORD will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life;

8 the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forever more.

Appendix 6

Introduction: This prayer practice is used for individuals to consider the way that God is the source of life and how his love flows like the breath we breathe. It is printed for groups or accessed on the web site.

The Gift of Breath—A Prayer

“Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.”

Take a moment to thank God that he is closer to you than the breath you breathe.

Read Genesis 2:7: “Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”

Now simply take a moment to pay attention to your breathing... wait in the silence as you notice the air coming in and flowing out... breathe slowly... in and out... do this for 3-4 minutes... in and out... in and out...

Now stop and hold your breath...

Imagine what it would be like to not have this gift of breath.

Pay attention for a few more moments to your breathing... in and out... in and out...

Now list all the things that are dependent on the very breath of life. List these in your mind or write them here on this paper.

Now take a moment to use the following breath prayer:

As you breathe in pray, “God you are good...”

As you breathe out pray, “Each breath is from you...”

“God you are good... Each breath is from you...”

Now, using this breath prayer, take 5-10 minutes to thank God and rest in his love for you.

To finish take a moment to write some thanks to God for the gift of breath.

Appendix 7

Introduction: This reflection is used as a tool to help individuals and groups consider the reality of the Spirit as one attempts to listen in the “*S-pontaneous*” times of life.

Spirit—By Kathy Watson¹³²

There is a sense of something ancient and wise "out there" transcending time and space, language and human thought.

It crouches naked and nearly visible in new life--in babies, in leaf buds, and at the dawn of the day.

It is a sense of something not quite remembered as I drift into sleep.

I feel it most keenly in quiet and it is almost tangible in the pounding of the surf, the nighttime murmuring among the trees, in the ticking of a clock.

It flows deep, wordlessly drawing me in, tenderly and gently embracing me.

It knows pure love, simple joy, and infinite sadness.

It is a whisper just above the noise, heard by sailors and dreamers and me.

It breathes my name and tells me that everything I see is not everything.

It is simple and beautiful and it is gathering all beauty to itself.

It is perfect, mysterious, dangerous, huge, relentless. It will consume me if I yield to it.

Its one desire is to capture my heart.

It is the Spirit of God.

¹³²Watson, "Spirit."

Appendix 8

Introduction: The following pages are a sample of a resource written by NFC authors focused on the saints of the past. These are designed for small group use.



Session One

Cloud of Witnesses • Francis de Sales (1567-1622) • by Gary Fawver

A number of years ago, at one point in my academic and spiritual journey, I spent six weeks at Bethel Seminary under the direction of very wise men. He coached me in the writings of the great spiritual leaders of history. In this *Listening Life* series we are including them under the heading "cloud of witnesses" taken from Hebrews 12:1. They are people like Brother Lawrence, Francis of Sales, George MacDonald, Bernard of Clairvaux, Julian of Norwich, Teresa of Avila, Thomas Kelly, John Woolman, A. W. Tozer.

Questions faced me as I began my time at Bethel: Can the church fathers and medieval writers, most of them Roman Catholics and many living the monastic life, have relevance to me, an average Protestant evangelical? Is it possible to discover the communion of saints as a living reality during all periods of church history? The Lord's method of answering our questions is at times quite awesome. That very first morning, May 21, 1988, the first writer God directed me to (of the hundreds I could have chosen) was Francis de Sales, a French monk of the 17th century. His opening paragraph says: "Others who have written about devotion, directed their thoughts toward those who have withdrawn from ordinary life. It is my intention to teach those who live in ordinary families and communities. Because many such people think it cannot be done, they never attempt living devoutly. No doubt, it is difficult, but I want to help anyone who will try it." [*Introduction to The Devout Life* from Bangley p. 108] I entered in my journal: "This too is my intent.... As I read on, tears of rejoicing surfaced, and my first morning of study was a wonderful experience." Here was an immediate and partial answer to my question. As I read I found de Sales' counsel to be "bedrock," practical to my Christian experience. My sincere desire is for you to find the Christian classics a rich source of spiritual nourishment as well, an affirmation of and supplement to your study of the word of God.

Francis was born of nobility in the castle of Sales in France. After switching from the study of rhetoric to theology at a Jesuit college in Paris, he said: "I studied many subjects to please my father; but I studied theology to please myself." Having passed his doctorate in canon law at age 24, Francis could have become prominent in the government, but he became a priest in 1593. He then volunteered to be assigned as a missionary in Geneva, where he "fought" Calvin and other first-generation Calvinists with the weapon of Christian love. His motto was: "He who wins the heart wins all." The Calvinists not only debated him, but thought nothing of ambushing mission priests, and therefore he had a number of encounters and miraculous escapes. For several years he took another assignment away from Geneva for the church, but in 1602 he was made Bishop of Geneva, staying there until his death in 1622.

An able bishop and popular preacher, Francis wished most to be seen as a "director of souls." And in fact his correspondence of spiritual counsel was enormous, from 15 to 20 carefully written letters a day for years. A small portion of these letters fills 11 published volumes. His *Introduction To the Devout Life*, one of his two most famous works, began as a series of letters of guidance to the wife of an ambassador. Instead of calling her by her real name, Mme. de Charmois, when the book was published, he called her "Philothea" (Lover of God). It was immediately recognized as one of the truly

great masterpieces of devotional literature. This book has always been significant because Francis's stated purpose was to influence ordinary people, not church leaders. It asserts that holiness is possible to those whose lives are entirely in the world, in towns, households, at court, and in ordinary circumstances. In many ways this work is the best primer for those who would attempt a mastery of the devotional life. The heartbeat of the whole work is the firm conviction that every person can live a life of devotion, if he or she wills to do so with zeal.

Characteristics of Sales's Spirituality

- It starts from the heart and grows outward. Like the New Testament, it must grow into observable behavior.
- It is a relational spirituality—Christians are called to live in the world, therefore all relationships are part of their journey to God. He writes of friendship, marriage, leisure, social gatherings and work.
- In the midst of movement Salesian spirituality finds peace. There is a smooth alternation of the roles of Martha and Mary.

Characteristics of *Introduction to the Devout Life*.

- God is portrayed more as the Father than the majestic awesome Lord. Human's response is quiet, fervent love, not fearful cowering.
- The devout life is open to all types of men and women, not just the religious.
- The devout life can be lived day in and day out, not just in a crisis experience.
- One should live a life of meditation of God and always realize his very real presence.
- His anecdotes and analogies from nature are used often and effectively.

Key quotes that give a flavor and sense of Francis de Sales's heart and message.

Definition and description of devotion: "Genuine devotion is simply honest love of God. When this love becomes so much a part of us that we automatically do deliberate good, then it can be labeled *devotion*. Ostriches are not flying birds, chickens fly short distances with much effort, but eagles, doves, and swallows fly high and far. Sinners are like the ostrich and are earthbound. Good people who have not quite reached devotion are like the chicken. They fly in God's direction, but inefficiently and awkwardly. The devout soar to God with regularity. Devotion, then, is a natural agility of the spirit." (Bangley p. 109)

Take a daily spiritual retreat (time of devotion): "Birds have nests in trees and can retire to them when need arises, and stags have bushes and thickets where they take cover, hide, and enjoy the cool shade during the summer. So also, Philothea, our hearts should each day pick and choose some place...as a retreat where they can retire at various times to refresh and restore themselves during their exterior occupations. There, as in a stronghold, they can defend themselves against temptations. Always remember, then, Philothea, to retire at various times into the solitude of your own heart even while outwardly engaged in discussions or transactions with others. This mental solitude cannot be violated by the many people who surround you since they are not standing around your heart but only around your body. Your heart remains alone in the presence of God." (Francis de Sales, *Introduction to The Devout Life*, p. 96)

Take your time with Christ with you throughout the day: "Conclude your meditation with humble thanks and an offering of yourself to God. Offer prayers and then gather a devotional nosegay (bouquet). Let me explain what I mean by that. When people have been strolling through a beautiful garden they usually pick four or five flowers to take with them through the day. They smell them from time to time to cleanse their nostrils of foul odors. When our souls have roamed in meditation through a spiritual garden, we can choose two or three ideas that seemed most helpful and think about them occasionally all day long." (Bangley, p. 120)

Pray any time throughout the day: "We will not often be too busy to turn aside to God for an instant. In fact, we can present our souls to him a thousand times a day. Sprinkle a seasoning of short prayers in you daily living. If you see something beautiful, thank God for it. If you are aware of someone's need, ask God to help...." (Bangley, p. 122)

Church attendance: "By all means, go to church. There is always more value for you in public worship than in any private act of devotion. Give reverent attention to sermons. Apply the words you hear. Don't let them fall on the floor; take them into your heart." (Bangley, p. 122)

Piety should affect one's everyday life: "Sick people will love your devotion if they are comforted in a charitable manner; your family if it recognizes that you are more careful of its concerns, gentler in the emergencies of everyday life, more sympathetic in your method of correcting, and so on; your husband if he sees that with the growth of your piety you are more affectionate towards him and sweeter in the love you show him; your relations and friends if they see in you more sincerity, more agreement with such of their wishes as are not contrary to those of God. Briefly, we should as far as possible make our piety attractive." (Francis, Jeanne-Françoise de Chantal, p. 104)

In Francis's "old lesson" he encourages us to be the people God made us to be. His spirituality was designed largely to be lived in the midst of a changing world. To come to accept who you are, where you are, what you are, as a reality intended or at least permitted by a loving God who is present to you right where you are now—that is Francis's old lesson. "Don't sow your desires in someone else's garden; just cultivate your own as best you can; don't long to be other than what you are, but desire to be thoroughly what you are. Direct your thoughts to being very good at that and to bearing the crosses, little or great, that you will find there. Believe me, this is the most important and least understood point in the spiritual life. We all love what is according to our taste; few people like what is according to their duty or to God's liking. What is the use of building castles in Spain when we have to live in France? This is my old lesson...." (Francis, Jeanne-Françoise de Chantal, p. 112)

Fill your life with the best stuff. Don't let the good stuff crowd out the best: "Spiders are not deadly to bees, but they entangle their honeycombs with webs and make their work difficult. Excusable sins will not kill your soul, but if they wrap a tangle of bad habits around you, devotion will suffer....While it is not illegal to have a little harmless fun, it can become dangerous. The evil is not in the pastimes; it is in our affection for them. Don't sow weeds in the soil of your heart. Your garden space is limited." (Bangley p.118)

Legacy Francis de Sales leaves for us:

- The devout life open to all types of men and women, not just the priests;
- The devout life can be lived day in, day out all through life, not just in a crisis experience;
- One should live a life of meditating on God and always realize his very real presence;
- Writings more appealing and understandable by his anecdotes and analogies from nature;
- One's piety must have a positive effect on others.

References:

Bangley, Bernard. *Spiritual Treasure: Paraphrases of the Spiritual Classics*. New York: Paulist Press, 1985.

Francis, Jeanne-Françoise de Chantal, Wendy M. Wright, and Joseph F. Power. *Francis de Sales, Jane de Chantal: Letters of Spiritual Direction Classics of Western Spirituality*. New York: Paulist Press, 1988.

Francis de Sales, John K. Ryan. *Introduction to the Devout Life*. New York: Image Book, 1989.



Individual Weekly Exercises

Cloud of Witnesses • Francis de Sales (1567-1622) • by Gary Fawver

Life of Listening Reflection

Take a few moments to consider the following:

- How has God shown up in your life this week?
- What did you sense God calling you to? How have you responded?

Exercise 1 — One of my favorite quotes is about the spiritual bouquet. Read that one again and then consider the following:

Can you find a beautiful and pleasant-smelling flower? It need not be picked to enjoy, but if many of them are around, pick it and keep it with you for a time. Read again the statement of de Sales about the spiritual bouquet.

Can you think of a verse or two that you can take with you today to remind you of God's love and faithfulness? Perhaps you can find one that is familiar to you. Or maybe you would like to pick one of these Scripture flowers to carry with you today:

"The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear?" (Psalm 27:1)

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." (Psalm 119:105)

"Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom." (Psalm 145:3)

Exercise 2 — Refer again to the quote that talks about birds and deer retiring to a safe place. What is your place of daily retreat where you can go for refreshing and restoration? Do you have a favorite place in the house to meet with the Lord? Can you talk with him while out for a walk? Can your car be that stronghold where you can cry out to him even while driving through town? Can you, as you sit at your desk, take a minute or two to retreat with the Lord for a mini time of respite from the cares of business?

Find a place of quiet retreat where you can meditate on one of the following verses. Simply sit quietly and repeat these words in a simple prayer:

Psalm 62:1-2: "My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him; He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken."

Psalm 131:2: "But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me."

Some people have designated small rooms in their homes as "Quiet Places," which are used when the need or desire is present to spend time with the Lord. What is your place of quiet retreat?

Exercise 3 — Have you watched hawks or eagles, wings outstretched, floating on the thermals? Perhaps you have watched swallows do their aerial acrobatics. Are you in a location where you can do that now? If not, close your eyes and imagine the soaring birds and then, using your sanctified imagination, picture yourself soaring to God with regularity, not pulled down with the cares of the world. "Oh, had I the wings of a dove! Then I would fly away and be at rest." (Psalm 55:6) "But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles..." (Isaiah 40:31)

Now take a few moments to simply sketch any image that comes to mind or write out the words that come to the surface as you imagine soaring with God.

Appendix 9

Introduction: This prayer practice is used for individuals who might find active prayer as a helpful tool depending on their spiritual personality. It is printed for groups or accessed on the web site as a tool to consider the “*E-xperimental*” side of spiritual formation.

Prayer Walk

Take a moment before you walk to dedicate this time to God and read the following scriptures:

Psalm 136:1-9

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of gods. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the Lord of lords: His love endures forever. To him who alone does great wonders, His love endures forever. Who by his understanding made the heavens, His love endures forever. Who spread out the earth upon the waters, His love endures forever. Who made the great lights— His love endures forever. The sun to govern the day, His love endures forever. The moon and stars to govern the night; His love endures forever.

Psalm 19 (For the director of music. A psalm of David.)

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is hidden from its heat.

Now take time to walk in silence and notice God’s beauty around you. You may want to stop and find a place to sit down or simply walk at a leisurely pace.

After you have walked for a while you may want to consider the following questions. Feel free to write your responses if that would be helpful:

- What did you notice in creation?
- What caught your attention?
- What thoughts did you have?
- What feelings came to the surface for you?
- How did you experience God during this time?

Thank God for this time of prayer.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alcorn, Randy C. *The Treasure Principle*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2001.
- Andrews, Alan. *The Kingdom Life: A Practical Theology of Discipleship and Spiritual Formation*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2010.
- Barkat, L. L. *God in the Yard: Spiritual Practice for the Rest of Us*. 1st ed. Ossining, NY: T. S. Poetry Press, 2010.
- Batterson, Mark. *Wild Goose Chase: Reclaim the Adventure of Pursuing God*. Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2008.
- Benedict, St. "St. Benedict's Rule for Monasteries." OSB, <http://www.osb.org/rb/text/toc.html> (accessed January 1, 2011).
- Bill, J. Brent. *Sacred Compass: The Way of Spiritual Discernment*. Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2008.
- Boa, Kenneth. *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1954.
- Campolo, Anthony. *Which Jesus?* Nashville, TN: W Pub. Group, 2002.
- Campolo, Anthony, and Mary Albert Darling. *The God of Intimacy and Action: Reconnecting Ancient Spiritual Practices, Evangelism, and Justice*. 1st ed. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2007.
- "Celebrate Recovery Home Page." <http://www.celebraterecovery.com/> (accessed May 26, 2010).
- Chittister, Joan. *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily: Living the Rule of St. Benedict Today*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990.
- Claiborne, Shane. *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006.
- Cloud, Henry, and John Sims Townsend. *Making Small Groups Work: What Every Small Group Leader Needs to Know*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003.
- "Companions in Christ Home Page." Upper Room, <http://www.companionsinchrist.org/> (accessed May 24, 2010).

- Craigie, Peter C. *The Book of Deuteronomy*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976.
- Dalrymple, John. *Simple Prayer*. Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1984.
- Edwards, Gene, Frank Charles Laubach, and Lawrence. *Practicing His Presence*. Goleta, Calif.: Christian Books, 1973.
- Farnham, Suzanne G. *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community*. Rev. ed. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Pub., 2001.
- Fawver, Gary K. "Rediscovering the Outdoors." Thesis [D Min], Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1995.
- Fawver, Stephen. "Simple Breath Prayer." In *Personal Writings*. Newberg, OR: Newberg Friends Church, 2003.
- _____. "Compass Prayer—Listening Life Resources." Newberg, OR: Newberg Friends Church, 2008.
- _____. "Sermon—God Has Come to Help His People." Newberg, OR: Newberg Friends Church, 2008.
- Feinberg, Margaret. *The Sacred Echo: Hearing God's Voice in Every Area of Your Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008.
- Fendall, Lon, Jan Wood, and Bruce Bishop. *Practicing Discernment Together: Finding God's Way Forward in Decision Making*. Newberg, OR: Barclay Press, 2007.
- Foster, Richard. "Heart to Heart Newsletter—May 2003,"
<http://www.renovare.us/ViewNewsLetter/tabid/2404/Default.aspx?ID=71>
 (accessed May 17, 2010).
- Foster, Richard J. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. 1st ed. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978.
- _____. *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*. 1st ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992.
- _____. *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith*. 1st ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998.
- _____. *Freedom of Simplicity: Finding Harmony in a Complex World*. 1st ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005.

- Foster, Richard J., and James Bryan Smith. *Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups*. Rev. and expanded ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005.
- Fox, George, John L. Nickalls, and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. *The Journal of George Fox*. Rev. ed. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 1997.
- French, R. M. *The Way of a Pilgrim and the Pilgrim Continues His Way*. New York: Seabury Press, 1974.
- Gangel, Kenneth O., and Jim Wilhoit. *The Christian Educator's Handbook on Spiritual Formation*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1994.
- Goldsmith, Malcolm. *Knowing Me, Knowing God: Exploring Your Spirituality with Myers-Briggs*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997.
- "Google Dictionary." Google,
http://www.google.com/dictionary?q=listen+to&hl=en&sl=en&tl=zh-TW&oi=dict_re (accessed November 29, 2010).
- "Hartford Institute for Religious Research Home Page." Hartford Seminary,
<http://www.hartfordinstitute.org/> (accessed May 26, 2010).
- Holmes, Urban Tigner. *A History of Christian Spirituality: An Analytical Introduction*. New York: Seabury Press, 1980.
- Holt, Bradley P. *Thirsty for God: A Brief History of Christian Spirituality*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005.
- Hugo, Victor. *Les Miserables*. New York, NY: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2005.
- Jones, Cheslyn, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Edward Yarnold. *The Study of Spirituality*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Kallistos. *The Orthodox Way*. Rev. ed. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995.
- Kelly, Thomas R. *The Eternal Promise: A Sequel to a Testament of Devotion*. 2nd Friends United Press ed. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1988.
- Kelly, Thomas R., and Douglas V. Steere. *A Testament of Devotion*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941.
- Kelsey, Morton T. *The Other Side of Silence: A Guide to Christian Meditation*. New York: Paulist Press, 1976.

- Laubach, Frank Charles. *Letters by a Modern Mystic*. Westwood, NJ: Revell, 1958.
- Loring, Patricia. *Listening Spirituality*. Washington Grove, MD: Openings Press, 1997.
- Manning, Brennan. *The Wisdom of Tenderness: What Happens When God's Fierce Mercy Transforms Our Lives*. 1st ed. New York: HarperCollins, 2002.
- May, Gerald G. *Addiction and Grace*. 1st ed. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988.
- McMinn, Lisa Graham, and Megan Anna Neff. *Walking Gently on the Earth: Making Faithful Choices About Food, Energy, Shelter and More*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2010.
- Merton, Thomas. *The Wisdom of the Desert: Sayings from the Desert Fathers of the Fourth Century*. New York: New Directions, 1961.
- Merton, Thomas, and Kathleen Deignan. *A Book of Hours*. Notre Dame, IN: Sorin Books, 2007.
- "Method-X the Way of Christ Home Page." Upper Room, <http://www.upperroom.org/methodx/thelife/> (accessed May 24, 2010).
- Michael, Chester P., and Marie C. Norrissey. *Prayer and Temperament: Different Prayer Forms for Different Personality Types*. New rev. ed. Charlottesville, VA: Open Door, 1991.
- Miller, Vincent Jude. *Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture*. New York: Continuum, 2004.
- Mulholland, M. Robert. *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993.
- _____. *Shaped by the Word: The Power of Scripture in Spiritual Formation*. Rev. ed. Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 2000.
- Myers, Joseph R. *The Search to Belong: Rethinking Intimacy, Community, and Small Groups*. Grand Rapids, MI: Youth Specialties, 2003.
- _____. *Organic Community: Creating a Place Where People Naturally Connect*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007.
- "Newberg Friends Church Beliefs." <http://www.newbergfriends.org/general/beliefs.html> (accessed May 13, 2010).

Nouwen, Henri J. M. *Out of Solitude: Three Meditations on the Christian Life*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1974.

_____. *The Way of the Heart: Desert Spirituality and Contemporary Ministry*. 1st HarperCollins pbk. ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991.

_____. *The Inner Voice of Love: A Journey through Anguish to Freedom*. 1st ed. New York: Doubleday, 1996.

Ohlman, Dean. "The Wonder of Creation." <http://wonderofcreation.org/> (accessed December 31, 2010).

Okholm, Dennis L. *Monk Habits for Everyday People: Benedictine Spirituality for Protestants*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007.

Palmer, Parker J. *To Know as We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey*. 1st HarperCollins pbk ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993.

Pettit, Paul. *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2008.

Porter, Steve L. "Sanctification in a New Key: Relieving Evangelical Anxieties over Spiritual Formation." *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 1, no. 2 (2008): 129-148.

Renovaré. "Application for Nonprofit Status." <http://www.renovare.us/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=k%2f7ZuzIEoko%3d&tabid=2359> (accessed May 17, 2010).

_____. "Covenant." <http://www.renovare.us/SPIRITUALRENEWAL/TheRenovar%C3%A9Covenant/tabid/2370/Default.aspx> (accessed May 17, 2010).

_____. "Home Page." <http://www.renovare.us/> (accessed May 17, 2010).

_____. "Ministry Team." www.renovare.us/WHOWEARE/MinistryTeamandStaff/Renovar%8EMinistryTeam/tabid/2367/Default.aspx (accessed May 17, 2010).

_____. "Spiritual Formation Institute." <http://www.renovare.us/WHATWEDO/Training/SpiritualFormationInstitute/tabid/2348/Default.aspx> (accessed May 24, 2010).

_____. "What Is Renovaré." <http://www.renovare.us/WHOWEARE/WhatisRenovar%C3%A9/tabid/2475/Default.aspx> (accessed May 12, 2010).

Rohr, Richard. *Everything Belongs: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer*. New York: Crossroad Pub., 1999.

“Saddleback Resources–Forty Days of Community.”

<http://www.saddlebackresources.com/en-US/SmallGroups/40DaysofCommunity/BetterTogether.htm> (accessed May 26, 2010).

“Saddleback Resources–Forty Days of Love.” <http://www.saddlebackresources.com/en-US/SmallGroups/40DaysofLove/40DaysofLove.htm> (accessed May 26, 2010).

Scazzero, Peter. *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: Unleash a Revolution in Your Life in Christ*. Nashville, TN: Integrity, 2006.

Scazzero, Peter, and Warren Bird. *The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship That Actually Changes Lives*. Expanded ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.

Schaff, Philip, and Henry Wace. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Second Series*. 14 vols., vol. 10. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

Sherwood, Steve. *Embraced: Prodigals at the Cross*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010.

Smedes, Lewis B. *Shame and Grace: Healing the Shame We Don't Deserve*. 1st ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993.

Smith, Hannah Whitall. *The God of All Comfort*. Westwood, N.J.: Christian Library, 1984.

Smith, James Bryan. “The Apprentice Series Home Page.”

<http://www.apprenticeofjesus.org/> (accessed May 24, 2010).

_____. *The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love with the God Jesus Knows*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009.

_____. *The Good and Beautiful Life: Putting on the Character of Christ*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009.

_____. *The Good and Beautiful Community: Following the Spirit, Extending Grace, Demonstrating Love*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2010.

Sweet, Leonard I. *Summoned to Lead*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.

_____. *So Beautiful: Divine Design for Life and the Church : Missional, Relational, Incarnational*. 1st ed. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2009.

- _____. *Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There*. 1st ed. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010.
- Teresa, and J. M. Houston. *A Life of Prayer*. Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1983.
- "The Academy for Spiritual Formation." Upper Room, <http://www.upperroom.org/academy/> (accessed May 24, 2010).
- "The Peace Plan Home Page." <http://www.thepeaceplan.com/> (accessed May 26, 2010).
- "The Simple Way Home Page." <http://www.thesimpleway.org/> (accessed June 7, 2010).
- "The Simple Way Ministries—Our Commitments." <http://www.thesimpleway.org/about/12-marks-of-new-monasticism/> (accessed June 7, 2010).
- Thomas, Gary. *Sacred Pathways*. Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1996.
- Thompson, Marjorie J. *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005.
- "U.S. Department of State." <http://www.state.gov/m/a/os/65759.htm> (accessed November 29, 2010).
- Underhill, Evelyn. *The Spiritual Life*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Pub., 1997.
- "Upper Room—About the Ministry and History." <https://bookstore.upperroom.org/pcd/eServCart?iServ=MjgzMDE2MTU3NCZpVHlwZT1BQk9VVA==> (accessed May 24, 2010).
- Ware, Corinne. *Discover Your Spiritual Type: A Guide to Individual and Congregational Growth*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1995.
- Warren, Richard. *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message & Mission*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.
- _____. *The Purpose-Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002.
- Watson, Kathy. "Spirit." Newberg, OR: Newberg Friends Church, 2004.
- Welch, Reuben. *We Really Do Need Each Other*. Nashville, TN: Impact Books, 1982.
- Weyer, Robert Van de. *Celtic Prayers*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997.

- Wilhoit, Jim. *Spiritual Formation as If the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Willard, Dallas. *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*. 1st ed. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988.
- _____. *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*. 1st ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998.
- _____. *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002.
- Wink, Walter. *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.
- Wolpert, Daniel. *Creating a Life with God: The Call of Ancient Prayer Practices*. Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 2003.
- Woolman, John, and American Imprint Collection (Library of Congress). *The Works of John Woolman in Two Parts*. Philadelphia: Printed by Joseph Crukshank, in Market-street, between Second and Third streets, 1774.
- Woolman, John, and Phillips P. Moulton. *The Journal and Major Essays of John Woolman*. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 2000.
- Woolsey, Dave. "Daily Offering Prayer." Newberg, OR: Newberg Friends Church, 2010.
- Wright, N. T. *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense*. 1st ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006.
- Yaconelli, Mark. *Contemplative Youth Ministry: Practicing the Presence of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006.
- _____. *Growing Souls: Experiments in Contemplative Youth Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007.
- Yaconelli, Mike. *Dangerous Wonder: The Adventure of Childlike Faith*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1998.
- Yancey, Philip. *What's So Amazing About Grace?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997.