



Reformation
REVIVAL
JOURNAL

SPIRITUAL
FORMATION

A Quarterly for Church Renewal

VOLUME 13 · NUMBER 3 · SUMMER 2004

REFORMATION & REVIVAL JOURNAL

Reformation & Revival Journal (ISSN 1071-7277), (U.S.P.S. 011-791), is published quarterly, for \$28 per year, or \$48 for two years, by Reformation & Revival Ministries, Inc., 630 Paxton Place, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188-9244. Second-class postage has been paid at Carol Stream, Illinois, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Reformation & Revival Journal*, P.O. Box 88216, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188-0216.

Reformation & Revival Journal is indexed in *Christian Periodical Index* and *ATLA Religion Database*, published by the American Theological Library Association, 250 S. Wacker Dr., 16th Flr., Chicago, IL 60606, E-mail: atla@atla.com, <http://www.atla.com/>.

Reformation & Revival Journal is published four times each year by Reformation & Revival Ministries, Inc., a not-for-profit teaching ministry organized in the state of Illinois in 1991. The ministry is committed to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the infallible Word of God and is in essential agreement with the confessional statements of historic Reformation theology. The purpose of this ministry is centered in its name:

1. To encourage *reformation* in local Christian churches worldwide.
2. To promote the cause of *revival* and spiritual awakening through prayer and the provision of resources to aid Christian leaders.

Subscription rates are \$28 for one year, \$48 for two years. Special full-time student rate is \$18 for one year. Please remit in U.S. currency only. For overseas orders add \$4 for each year for postage. Canadian subscribers add \$2 per year for additional postage. Back issues and single issues are \$10 each. To order in other currencies contact the names below:

Australian subscriptions available through:
Reformation & Revival Ministries (Australia)
c/o Malcolm Bouchard
110 Marshall Road
Rocklea, Qld. 4106

United Kingdom subscriptions available through:
Reformation & Revival Ministries (UK)
c/o Tony Ruston
2 Caxton House, Wellesley Road
Ashford, Kent TH24 8ET, England • Phone: 01-233-662262

Canadian subscriptions available through:
Reformation & Revival Ministries (Canada)
c/o Don B. Cook
2113 Victoria Avenue E
Thunder Bay, Ontario P7C 1E4 • Phone: (807) 622-2325

Correspondence concerning articles, editorial policy, books for review, suggested manuscripts, and subscriptions should be addressed to the editor. Comments are welcome.

The conviction of the staff and editors of the *Reformation & Revival Journal* is that awakening, of the kind seen in the First Great Awakening in America, wedded to the doctrinal concerns of the historic Protestant Reformation as expressed in the terms *sola scriptura*, *sola gratia*, and *sola fide*, is needed in our generation.

The views expressed in this publication should be considered as the personal opinions of the authors and are not to be taken as an official editorial perspective.

A Quarterly Journal for Church Renewal

Published by Reformation & Revival Ministries, Inc.
P.O. Box 88216, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188-0216
(630) 221-1817

Editor-in-Chief:

John H. Armstrong

Associate Editors:

Ardel Caneday

T. M. Moore

P. Andrew Sandlin

Thomas N. Smith

Managing Editor:

Anita Armstrong

Design and Production:

Ragont Design

Subscriptions Manager

Stacy Kifer

Contributing Editors:

Joel R. Beeke

Robert Benne

Donald G. Bloesch

David Bryant

Bryan Chapell

Elmer M. Colyer

Susan Cyre

David Dockery

Eifion Evans

Gabriel Fackre

John Franke

Don Garlington

Timothy F. George

John D. Hannah

Michael A. G. Haykin

I. John Hesselink

John Mason Hodges

Alan F. Johnson

Nelson D. Kloosterman

Bonnie Sue Lewis

Erwin W. Lutzer

Ralph MacKenzie

Bassam Madany

Gerald R. McDermott

Andrew T. B. McGowan

Charles H. McGowen

David P. Mills

Peter Moore

Roger Nicole

Thomas C. Oden

Kevin Offner

Hughes Oliphant Old

James I. Packer

Rebecca Pippert

Leland Ryken

Tom Schwanda

H. E. Singley

C. Samuel Storms

Travis Tamerius

Robert E. Webber

Tom Wells

Luder Whitlock

Monte Wilson

Terry Yount

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

REFORMATION & REVIVAL JOURNAL

Introduction

John H. Armstrong 7

Theme Articles

Companion with the Spirit: The Ministry of Spiritual Direction
Tom Schwanda 11

*The Dark Night of the Soul: The Painful Purification of God's
Infused Presence*
Richard Vincent 27

An Exchange of Joy
Tom Wells 43

*Experiencing the Truth of Scripture: A Perspective from
Methodist History*
Robert E. Coleman 55

*A Tale of Two Pieties: Nurture and Conversion in American
Christianity*
William B. Evans 61

Articles

Christian Existence and the Mission of the Church
John Peter Lewis 79

Paul, the Spirit, and the Sanctification Gap
Alan F. Johnson 89

Scripture, Culture, and the Local Character of Theology
John R. Franke 109

*Classical Worship for Today: Hospitality: The Invitation to
Come, See and Stay*
Wilbur Ellsworth 125

Departments

An RRJ Interview with Dr. Timothy George 133

Annotated Bibliography
Tom Schwanda 167

Ministry Resources

Book Reviews 175

- Duns Scotus
- Against Christianity
- Between Past and Future: Evangelical Mission Entering
the Twenty-First Century
- Just War Against Terror: The Burden of American Power
in a Violent World
- The Changing Shape of Church History
- Deconstructing Evangelicalism: Conservative
Protestantism in the Age of Billy Graham
- The Pigtail and Chopsticks Man: The Story of J. Hudson
Taylor and the China Inland Mission
- The Faith of Israel: A Theological Survey of the Old
Testament
- Can Evangelicals Learn from World Religions?
Jesus, Revelation and Religious Traditions
- Christianity at the Religious Roundtable: Evangelism in
Conversation with Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam

Book Briefs 207

Final Thoughts
John H. Armstrong 219

INTRODUCTION



John H. Armstrong

Spiritual formation is a relatively new idea for multitudes of Evangelicals. We talk a lot about evangelism, even discipleship. But spiritual formation has not been a vital part of our recent history.

In recent years spiritual formation has become a veritable buzz word in our ranks. We have created new courses and Christian education curricula dealing with the subject. Most seminaries have responded by creating classes, if not whole departments, in spiritual formation. More recently we have seen a line, or special imprint, of new book titles with the theme of spiritual formation. And the Catholic West and Orthodox East have had, and will undoubtedly continue to have, a large influence upon this recovery. I, for one, welcome this recovery. I also watch these developments with a cautious eye since some parts of this tradition are clearly questionable for those of us who are deeply rooted in the gospel of grace alone.

The term spiritual is variously used in our time. Because of the confusion that exists about the term itself many have chosen to avoid it. But the term is not New Age or non-Christian. It has been used for centuries by Christians, in the best and broadest sense, to refer to "the living and the experience" of the Christian life. In this sense Evangelicals have always

been deeply interested in spirituality, and thus spiritual formation. We believe Christians must grow in God's grace. We believe that as they grow they become more and more like Christ by and through the work of the Spirit.

Spiritual formation refers to Christian growth through a definite process of living the Christian life by the Holy Spirit. It also refers to the means, or methods, by which this life is to be lived. Embedded in the term is the idea of development, arrangement, organization and synthesis. To engage the subject of spiritual formation, as we do in this issue, is to consider this arrangement, or organization, of Christian growth in the grace and mind of Christ. And we may learn to do this from the entire Christian tradition, not just our own.

Spiritual formation is a historical and practical study which deals with questions like: "How do I *love others* as the Scriptures require?" "How do I *meditate*, in a distinctly Christian way, both day and night?" "How do I *deal with the passions and desires* which so powerfully influence my daily life?" "What are the *various ways Christians have read* Scripture for personal growth? "What help can I find to *pray without ceasing*?" And, "What place do the *sacraments* have in helping me become more and more *like Christ*?"

The most important warning here is rather simple really. All pursuit of likeness to Christ must be *by the Spirit* and is *not* about fulfilling my *egoistic needs*. Spiritual formation recovery must not become the newest rage in evangelicalism. And it is not about mastering techniques, something we usually do rather well. It is about the hard, slow daily work of becoming more and more like Jesus. To begin we must start at the beginning. Our proper starting point is clear: "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).