

Advisory Board

We are very pleased to announce the addition of Mal McSwain to our Advisory Board. Mal lives in Atlanta, GA and has served on the Young Life staff for 40 years. He and his wife Wanda are currently Ministers at Large with Young Life. For the past 25 years he has been a close personal friend of Fil's and a source of wise counsel. We welcome Mal and thank him for his help & support.

Generous Response to Request for Financial Support

A great big "Thank You" to all who have made pledges and sent gifts for the support of Journey Resources! It is very important to us that you understand we are not asking you to simply become a donor to "our" ministry. Rather, it is our hope you will see yourself as a Journey Resources "partner".

Let us remind you that cash and stock gifts may be made to Journey Resources and are tax deductible.

Book Mark

We hope you find the enclosed book mark a continual reminder of our deep appreciation for your friendship and support. Perhaps it will also serve as a reminder to pray for the work of Journey Resources.

The prayer was written by Thomas Merton. Born in France, Thomas

Merton had a challenging and painful childhood--his mother died when he was six and his father died when he

was fifteen. In his teens and early twenties Merton led a prodigal, sensual life in his search for fulfillment. In his mid-twenties Merton experienced a profound conversion while attending Columbia University. At the age of twenty-six he entered Gethsemane Abbey in Kentucky where he would live the rest of his life as a Trappist monk.

Reflections on Solitude

Finding time for "solitude" may be one of the most difficult disciplines for those of us who are such busy people. Before a demanding workday, we are often so preoccupied with getting out of the house, or perhaps we're taking care of children before they head off to school. After a long day's work, we feel the need to unwind, have dinner, and, more often than not, shift our focus to other interests that occupy our evening schedules.

Henri Nouwen, the Roman Catholic priest & professor, was a prolific writer about solitude. But even Henri found it difficult to practice what he preached. Those who knew him well prior to his death September 21, 1996 attest, "He believed in it, but was often fidgety in prayer or so overbooked that he allowed his distractions and appointments to take precedence over time for solitude." Perhaps because he knew it was both difficult but necessary he wrote with great insight and conviction about solitude.

"As soon as we are alone, without people to talk with, books to read, TV to watch, or phone calls to make, an

inner chaos opens up to us," he wrote in *Making All Things New*. "The chaos can be so confusing that we can hardly wait to get busy again."

Solitude is the very foundation of the spiritual life. Solitude is different from prayer, different from silence, different from just being alone in a private place, although it likely will involve all of those things. "Solitude means rest, rest of the body and mind, in which we become available for God," Nouwen wrote in "Training for the Campus Ministry."

I appreciate Henri Nouwen for the way he was always offering practical help for busy people like you and me to get started or grow in our discipline of solitude. The following are just a few suggestions:

- Maybe allow for five or ten minutes a day of solitude. That is a good start. The important thing is to carefully plan whatever time you can. Feel the freedom to dismiss conventional thoughts about when is the best time. You decide. Schedule it.
- Find a place for solitude: your home, nature, a church or chapel. Once you find it, cherish it!
- Expect distractions, but don't allow them to stop you from finding time and places for solitude. Have as gentle a response to them as you possibly can and often they will lose their power and go away.
- It will take time - weeks, even months - for your solitude to seem to be bearing fruit. But it will bear fruit.
- Listen in solitude for the voice of the One who calls you "*the beloved*." It is in solitude where you clearly hear God calling you.

In solitude we discover the truth that being "*the beloved*" is our intended identity, the core of our existence. It is not merely a lofty thought, an inspiring idea, or one name among many. It is the name by which God knows us and the way God intends to relate to us.

Solitude is a place of conversion. There we are converted from people who want to show each other what we have and what we can do into people who raise our open and empty hands to God in the recognition that all we are is a free gift from God.

Henri Nouwen in *Clowning in Rome* (1979).

For further reading about solitude by Henri Nouwen:

Out of Solitude (1974, Ave Maria Press)

Making All Things New (1981, Harper & Row)

The Way of the Heart (1981, Seabury; 1983, Harper, Collins)

With Open Hands (Revised edition, 1995, Ave Maria Press)

The Only Necessary Thing: Living a Prayerful Life (edited by Wendy Greer, 1999, Crossroad)

A Note From Fil

I hope you have enjoyed receiving Journey Resources first newsletter. Our plan is to communicate with you once each quarter. We hope you will look forward to hearing from us and will find the information helpful to you as you continue on your own journey with God. We would also love to hear from you, so please keep in touch.

On a more personal note, may I ask you to please pray for me, my family, and this ministry? In addition, would you help us by making Journey Resources known to your church and others who might benefit from our ministry? Thanks and God bless!

Fil's Fall Ministry Schedule:

September

22-23 Speaking at Christ Community Church Men's Retreat, Greensboro, NC

27 Keynote speaker at Raleigh Young Life Fund Raising Dinner

October

5-6 Speaking at Youth Specialties National Youth Workers Convention,

Anaheim, CA

8 Preaching at Poplar Springs Friends Meeting, Trinity, NC

11 Speaking at First Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, NC

14-15 Speaking at The Church at Charlotte Retreat, Charlotte, NC

17-18 Directing Grace Community Church Silent Retreat for Pastors

20-22 Speaking at Charlotte, NC Young Life Windy Gap Outreach Camp

24 Speaking at First Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, NC

29 Preaching at Grace Community Church, Greensboro, NC

November

9-10 Youth Specialties National Youth Workers Convention, St. Louis, MO

14-16 Directing Young Life Regional Silent Retreat

17-18 Youth Specialties National Youth Worker's Convention, Atlanta, GA

28 Speaking at Elon College Inter-Varsity