

# *THE JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME*

Life and Ministry  
in  
The Church of the Covenant Community

## Preface

This little book provides something of a “handbook” for persons seeking to know what our community is about and how we try to live out our life and ministries. It is also for those who wish to explore the possibility of making a commitment to the Church of the Covenant Community. And, it is to provide a way for those who have been part of the community for a short or long while to stay in touch with the vision of our community.

“Handbook” is misleading, however. It implies that this is a “how-to” manual that lays out a clear system or structure for our own or anyone else’s community. Instead, the aim is to highlight particularly important elements or dimensions of our life together and our missions, to explain a little about how they work together, and to set out their meanings in the context of Christian life and faith. The Church of the Covenant has been learning through the years that structure must follow spirit, God’s spirit as it moves in the lives of people and the world. To build a structure and then cling to it is the exact opposite of following Jesus in the life of God’s spirit that blows where it will (John 3). Yet structure is not unimportant. We all need it in order to live fruitful and productive lives, as individuals and communities. This is the structure, or framework, that has meant something to our community through the years. It is not the only way. It is our way. We share it for what it might be worth to others as they work with their communities of faith, and those who may consider a commitment to their own spiritual life within the Church of the Covenant Community.

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## Beginnings

On the first Sunday of October 1954, a small Christian community officially gathered for worship as the Church of the Covenant in Lynchburg, Virginia. The church was to be affiliated with the Congregational Christian Church, which later became the United Church of Christ.

Co-founded by the Reverends Beverly (Bev) R. Cosby and Irving Stubbs, the church came into being with a particular vision. First, it was to be a spiritual community in support of a mission already underway. A small recreation program for children had begun in 1950 in the basement of the Cosby family home. Where will the children play? That was the inviting question that called forth what developed into the Camp Kum-Ba-Yah summer day camp program and, for a number of years, an inner city program for children. Lynchburg Christian Fellowship was the ecumenical partnership of individuals from several churches in the city, including the Church of the Covenant, that formed to support this ministry for children. In years to come, Lynchburg Christian Fellowship would become Lynchburg Covenant Fellowship, welcoming into its work Agudath Shalom Synagogue. LCF would become a major provider of housing for low-income persons and families. Camp Kum-Ba-Yah, Lynchburg Covenant Fellowship, and the Church of the Covenant arose as a partnership to respond to the needs of the wider community, particularly its poorest and most marginalized citizens. When the Church of the Covenant came into being that World Communion Sunday, a central part of its vision was set: the church of Jesus Christ exists not for itself but for the sake of service in and to the world.

Another dimension of the church's vision had to do with what sort of church it was to be. From the beginning it was decided that the church and the camp would be open to anyone, regardless of race. It is easy to take this for granted these days, but in the early 1950s, in the solidly segregated city of Lynchburg, this was a radical intention of the highest order.

The church also determined to be a community of persons committing themselves to the call of Jesus Christ in their daily lives. Membership was to be framed as a commitment to spiritual disciplines or practices that would guide, deepen, and intensify one's relationship with God and discipleship to the living Christ. A statement of membership entitled "Our Covenant One with Another" was developed and continues to be the framework for those making a commitment to Covenant Membership. In 2005 Community Membership was developed for those who do not feel called to Covenant Membership but desire to make a commitment to similar, though in some ways less specific, spiritual practices. A free, committed response to the call of Jesus to follow him has remained the definition of what it means to be part of Jesus' community as manifested in the Church of the Covenant.

## Where's the Church?

### A Community of Prayer and Service

Covenant Member Vince Sawyer tells the story of his first visit to the grounds that are home to the Church of the Covenant and Camp Kum-Ba-Yah. There are forty acres in all, about four acres owned by the church, the rest by Lynchburg Covenant Fellowship and leased to the camp. Most of the property is a beautiful urban forest with trails, camp sites used by the summer camp program, and a small lake. The remaining acreage opens to the various buildings that house the work and activities of the church and the camp, and Chrysalis Interfaith Retreat Center, a more recently established ministry of the church.

Vince was looking for a congregation of the United Church of Christ, of which he had been a member in New Hampshire. He arrived at the Boonsboro Road property when no one was around, looked about, and walked into the Church House. He was struck by the fact that no doors were locked. Everything was wide open. It was then he thought to himself, "Where's the church?" The "church" worships in the former living room of the house, which had been built in the 1920s and acquired by the church as its modest home. Vince's question serves as an excellent starting point for describing the Church of the Covenant as a small community of persons giving themselves to the call of God in Jesus Christ.

The word "community" has more meaning for us than "church." In a gathering of persons exploring the Church of the Covenant as their spiritual home, one of the participants asked why the word "church" had been chosen in the beginning. For her, "church" had come to have an unfavorable meaning. Religious institution. Doctrinal rigidity. An emphasis on buildings, budgets, offerings, and enrolling as many "members" as possible. She, like so many people in today's society, was seeking a spiritual community that took seriously the life Jesus taught and embodied, a life of compassion, peace, and justice, an authentic spirituality, and community of love. The call to be such a community has been the core of the Church of the Covenant's vision from the beginning.

The Church of the Covenant has been shaped by its sense of the beginnings of the Christian "movement" itself. Jesus called a small community of followers to gather around him, go with him, and find out for themselves the truths of what he was teaching, preaching, and living. It can be truthfully said that Jesus did not set out to found a new religion or to establish what has since developed as an extensive and powerful religious institution. The New Testament word for that "called community" is *ecclesia*—a community called out or called together to live the life Jesus taught and embodied, the life of the kingdom, or realm, of God, life as God made it to be lived in the world that God created.

For the Church of the Covenant, the church exists as small communities or groups of people who are discovering for themselves what the living Christ is calling them to be and do. The community worships together in its "house church." It also consists of smaller communities of people who gather around specific calls to particular ministries or missions. These are called Mission Groups. We strive to be a community in which every person is encouraged to respond to the call to live his or her life as a journey of faith. This journey takes place in two dimensions—the inward journey of prayer, understood in the broadest sense, and the outward journey of service to the community itself or the wider world.

This founding vision of the Church of the Covenant did not arise in a vacuum. By the time the Church of the Covenant was officially established, Gordon and Mary Cosby, Bev Cosby's brother and sister-in-law, had already begun a pioneering "experiment" with this different way of being the church in the Adams Morgan area of Washington, D.C. The Church of the Saviour has always served as a spiritual resource and inspiration for the life and growth of the Church of the Covenant.

## The Journey of a Lifetime

Jesus calls us to follow him, just as he called his first disciples. To every would-be disciple Jesus says, "Follow me." At the end of John's gospel, the risen Christ concludes his final conversation with Peter by saying, "Follow me." Following Jesus is the content and shape of the life of his community and its members. It is an invitation to live the whole of our lives as a journey of faith.

The Church of the Covenant does not center its life so much on "beliefs" as on "practice." What we think about God, Jesus, the Bible, the world, and so forth is important. We are to be thoughtful people of faith who are not reluctant to question and seek to grow in understanding. However, the most important thing is practice, how we live our lives and to what we give them. "What am I to do with this unique, precious, and brief life God has given me?" "How can I live so as to fulfill my deepest, truest nature, and to be in harmony with God's purposes for life?" Such questions are ultimately all that matter. This is where the Church of the Covenant Community seeks to focus its life corporately and individually.

In these days when we are awakening to a new awareness of reality, that life IS change and nothing stays the same, we face the question of whether we will simply drift through our lives, being shaped by the culture in which we live, or make our lives a journey of faith that leads us to our true identities as God's children living in God's good creation. The question is not whether we will experience change or not. The question is how we will choose to live the changes of our lives and the world of which we are part.

Jesus' call to discipleship offers us a journey that continues our whole life long and helps us to touch the deepest meaning of our lives. The vision of the Church of the Covenant Community is to offer people the opportunity to give full attention to their spiritual by making a committed response to God's call to live as we were created to live. The vision includes discovering the uniqueness of our own lives as gifts from God and the particular gifts God gives each of us to use in the service of life. It is the vision of being part of a community that strives to embody in itself the love of God known in Jesus Christ and to share that love in specific ministries for the sake of God's world.

To become part of the Church of the Covenant Community is to embark on one's own spiritual awakening and deepening, a journey that continues our whole life long.

## The Journey Inward

The journey to which Jesus calls us moves in two dimensions or directions: the inward journey of prayer and the outward journey of mission or service in the world.

The inward journey is the way we speak of the life of prayer, prayer in the fullest sense. It is the way we pay attention and awaken to our lives in our relationship with God and our discipleship to the living Christ. By making a commitment to an inward journey, we are determining to live our lives in awareness rather than drifting along, simply going through the motions.

Some aspects of this life of prayer are:

**Silence** – Practicing silence, we develop our capacity to “be still and know that I am God,” as Psalm 46 says. “Be still” literally means stop struggling, stop fighting. Let your incessant thinking settle down. Become aware of what is going on in you emotionally. Be aware of worries, anxieties, and preoccupations. In silence, we simply sit, stop, and calm ourselves, learning to listen inwardly to our own hearts and preparing, or emptying, ourselves to listen to God. Silence is not easy for us, but as we practice stopping, calming, and quieting, we begin to experience a wonderful freshness about our lives. It is coming back into the present moment from our attachments to the past (guilt, shame, lingering hurts, anger, or disappointment) and to the future (anxiety, fear, preoccupation with plans and projects, our desire to control what will happen). As we are more able to dwell in the present moment, we grow in awareness of our life in God and our sense of God’s call in our lives. We enter the present and the presence of God through the doorway of silence.

**Readings** – We devote time each day to the reading of scripture and other writings that nourish the life of faith. As for scripture, one pattern for reading is to follow the New Revised Common Lectionary, an ecumenically created schedule of readings for each Sunday of the year on a three-year cycle. This is not the only way to approach the reading and study of scripture, but it is a helpful approach that, if followed over the course of several years, builds up in a deep and broad knowledge and understanding of scripture. Also, there are particular writers and books that have influenced the life and vision of the Church of the Covenant. These are listed in Appendix 6.

**Meditation** – When we read scripture and other sources of spiritual reflection, we bring from our reading particular words, thoughts or insights that present themselves to us, that connect with our lives in some way. This opens the door to meditation, looking deeply. Meditation is not “thinking hard” about something. It is holding a thought, word, or experience in awareness that leads to insight and understanding.

**Prayer** – As we sit for our inward journey time, we find that there are particular needs, concerns, people, experiences, and situations in our hearts and minds. These lead us naturally into prayer for others, the world, and ourselves. Prayer is simply the lifting up of all these things to God in gratitude or the seeking of God’s guidance or help for others or ourselves. It is important to let our praying for particular needs of the world or ourselves also



be a letting go of our anxiety or worry. It is literally entrusting these needs, situations, and persons to God, while freeing us to respond in ways that open up to us.

**Inner listening** – What is God speaking to me at this time in my life? Where does God seem to be leading me in terms of self-understanding, spiritual growth, and the call to serve others and the world? The daily time of inward journey, through silence and meditation, reading and prayer, creates for us a space in which we can come to greater self-understanding and awareness, and a clearer, deeper sense of our relationship with God. It also attunes us to what we have been gifted and are being called to do as our outward journey.

**Journaling** – It is helpful to keep a journal of our insights, reflections, and experiences. Giving written expression to our inward journey enables us to look more deeply into our lives in relation to God and our discipleship to Jesus. Writing about an experience can help us discern the meaning of that experience for us. Writing about a particular struggle we are having can help us see into the reasons for that struggle and what it is teaching us about ourselves. When we keep a journal we can preserve insights or experiences that in the normal rush of living we often let pass without gleaning the treasure they bring to us. Whether kept in a computer or a notebook, our journal is a significant “spiritual friend” for our inward journey.

It is particularly helpful if we establish a place where we go each day for our inward journey time. This becomes our “refuge” to which we go with the intention of being with ourselves in the presence of God. Throughout the gospels, Jesus withdrew from time to time to a “lonely place,” a place apart from his disciples, other people, and the press of his ministry. Making a commitment to a time and place for our daily inward journey is an essential part of our life of faith. It is not running away from life but withdrawing to touch base with ourselves in our relationship with God. It is not self-indulgence or self-preoccupation, but a devoting of our time to greater awareness of our lives as followers of Jesus.

It is important also to devote longer times to our inward journey. A retreat of one or more days on a regular basis provides us with an even greater opportunity to catch up with ourselves, so to speak, and to deepen our spiritual life. Mission groups are encouraged to take one silent retreat each year for the refocusing of their life and work, and to assess their commitments individually and together to their mission.

The particular time we give to our daily inward journey is not isolated from the rest of our day, the rest of our living. We can speak of the “life of prayer” or the inward journey that is always going on in us even when we are engaged in the activities of living. Yet the set-aside time we commit to the inward journey is important for its own sake as we use that time to deepen our rootedness in God. The fruit of that set-aside time is the way all of our living becomes more awake and aware, more expressive of our lives in their relationship with God and as instruments or channels of God’s love.

## The Journey Outward

Jesus also calls us to follow him in the service of God's world, to live in life-giving ways toward other people and the creation itself. This is the outward journey, and it is rooted in the inward journey where we begin to discern what particular callings and gifts God has given us to share with the world.

The first calling is to share the gift of ourselves, our own life as a unique and precious child of God. When Jesus taught his disciples and the crowd what is known as the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), he said, "You are the light of the world; you are the salt of the earth." He told them to let their light shine in the world so that others would see in them the presence and activity of God. It is not just what we do as Jesus' followers that is significant for the world, but who we are. The inward and outward movements of the journey of faith converge as we become who we truly are, as we grow in awareness and expression of the gift of our lives. Simply being who God made us to be is the greatest gift we can give to the world.

Then there are particular callings of God in our lives. They are always specific, related to some need in the community of faith or the wider community and world. Feed the hungry. Clothe the naked. House the homeless. Visit the sick. Advocate for the forgotten and neglected. Love your enemy. Forgive those who hurt you. Always specific and always a matter of how we relate to others and the world. In Jesus' parable of the final judgment (Matthew 25), the ultimate measure of faith and life is not what religious ideas or beliefs we hold, but whether or not we have responded to the needs of people and the world.

The call of God in Jesus is a coming together of the inward and outward dimensions of our life of faith. Through the inward journey, we become sensitive to the particular lure or nudging of God in our own lives, something we discern as a call, a drawing forth from us something we have and want to give to the world. At the same time, this call comes from the world itself, some need to which we feel ourselves drawn, even compelled to respond, with the gifts God has given us.

Besides the gift of our life itself, the gift of who we are, each of us has at least one gift to share or exercise for the sake of life around us. The gift of expression through writing or music or speaking. The gift of listening so that we truly hear and discern the spirit of another person. The gift of compassion that enables us to perceive the interrelatedness of life. A gift can be a certain sensitivity or characteristic a person has that we realize is essential for the life of the community and its ministry. Gifts can be working with finances, working with our hands, or organizing with an eye to detail. The gifts God gives are diverse and innumerable. They are unique to each person. And each gift is essential for the life and ministry of Jesus' community. Paul wrote about this in 1 Corinthians 12. There are a variety of gifts. Each gift is given by God for the good of all. No gift is unimportant and no gift is cause for self-importance. The community experiences the oneness of God's spirit in the diversity of gifts and callings that emerge in the lives of its members.

This whole area of gifts and callings should not be narrowly defined. It is a dynamic dimension of our lives and the life of our community. We cannot decide beforehand what gifts we need to have. The gifts of the unique persons in our community give shape to our life and ministry. We cannot decide what God is calling us to do solely on the basis of the greatest needs we perceive in the world or in our community. Call must arise not only out of a

particular need but in the life of a particular person in whose spirit that call emerges as a compelling movement of God's spirit. If we discern a need to which we feel we as a community should respond, we pray and wait for that person to emerge who is called to that ministry.

The journey of faith as we understand and seek to live it is a matter of living from the inside out, from the inward journey of our identity in and relationship with God to the outward journey of sharing our lives with the world through the callings and gifts that are given us. This is what the world most needs—persons and communities making themselves channels of what God wants to give to and do for the world through them.

## Mission Groups

One of the first things noticed about our community is that we have no committees and no congregational board as such. In the usual church structure, committees are established to carry out work in designated areas of need or responsibility—education, property, finance, worship, outreach, and so forth. Then people are invited or persuaded to work on those committees. A board or church council is established by some means to give oversight to the general operations of the church. These things are absent from the Church of the Covenant.

One summer a group from a congregation in another state came to help us for a week, working on projects related to our grounds and ministries. During a discussion of our community, one of the leaders of the group looked bewildered by the picture being painted. Finally he asked, “How do things get done? How do decisions get made?” Mission groups were explained, and also the role of Covenant Members who accept responsibility for the church and its life through monthly meetings. In the end, however, there were smiles and shrugs, as it was explained that somehow things get done. The answer did not fully satisfy the questioner, but he seemed to be intrigued by this different, though odd, approach.

Mission groups are the primary way we structure our life and ministry. A person feels a particular call in her life to a vision of offering some ministry, of meeting some need. She shares that call with others—the whole community during worship, a few others over lunch, one person here, another there, who she thinks might share the vision. At some point, the mission is shared with the Covenant Members for input and support. As others respond, a small group begins to meet around that call, forming its life around the inward and outward journeys as a way of focusing on the mission that has emerged.

Simply put, a mission group is two or more people committing themselves to each other and to an outward ministry to which they feel called. The group structures its life so that each meeting affords time for the inward and outward dimensions of its life. The inward journey involves worshipping and praying together, sharing with one another at a deeper level, establishing specific spiritual disciplines or practices the group decides are crucial to the group's life and work, and the regular sharing of "accountability reports" on how members are doing with their commitments and their spiritual lives generally. The group's inward journey will call forth and deepen the members' love for one another, as well as the spiritual growth of each.

The outward journey of the group is the work of the mission itself. Since the group understands from the outset that it bears ultimate responsibility for the mission in all its aspects, the outward journey has to do with everything that needs to be done in order to carry out the mission in accord with its essential vision. Along the way, the gifts of each member need to be discerned and used in the work of the mission, since these are the channels of God's spirit.

A mission group needs to meet frequently enough for the deepening of the life of the group and to carry out the work of the mission. Weekly meetings are ideal; twice-monthly meetings would be minimal. Sufficient time is given to both the inward and outward journeys of the group. Too much time given to the inward can result in never getting around to the mission God has called the group to carry out. Too much time given to the outward can result

in the group's losing its soul, as it were, doing good things but empty of the spirit, energy, and love of God that is to be expressed through the mission. The vision of the mission can get lost in a preoccupation with the outward journey alone. Balance is always important in this and all things related to the journey of faith.

Each mission group shapes its life according to the needs of the inward and outward dimensions of the group and its mission. However, certain elements are essential:

- balanced attention to both the group inward journey and the outward journey
- the discerning of gifts that members of the group bring to the life and work of the group
- accountability with regard to the inward and outward dimensions of the group through regular reports
- a clear sense not only of the vision of the mission but also of having ultimate responsibility for every aspect of the group and its mission

## Spiritual Disciplines or Practices

Though these have been touched on, a word needs to be said about the importance of spiritual disciplines or practices in the journey of faith for both individuals and groups. Not only in Christianity but in all religious traditions, spiritual disciplines are recognized as crucial to spiritual growth and to the living out of faith. Regular prayer, study, worship, work, and giving of oneself and one's resources are typically found throughout spiritual communities.

Monastic communities have always developed a "rule" that members of the community commit to and practice. These are specific practices that enable the community and its members to stay on the spiritual path and hold together as a community. The word "rule" as used in religious communities comes from the Latin and French from which we get *trellis*. A trellis is a framework upon which a rose or other vine grows. The form of the trellis supports and guides the growth of the vine. The Church of the Covenant recognized at its beginning the need for a trellis, a spiritual rule that would enable growth in the journey of faith in its inward and outward dimensions.

To some this may feel like legalism, and certainly the temptation is always there to regard spiritual disciplines legalistically. However, that would be focusing on the trellis, the form, instead of the vine, the growth of the life of discipleship. Curtis Harper, Community Member, tells a wonderful story about this potential pitfall. He once constructed a rather large and elaborate trellis for his garden. The trellis, in fact, took so much work that Curtis did not pay enough attention to the rose vines themselves, which withered away. If we concentrate only on the disciplines or practices without remaining aware that they are for the purpose of awakening, deepening, and guiding our living as people of faith, then we have only empty practice. We end up with an obeying-the-rules mentality that takes us nowhere.

Zen Buddhism has a helpful saying: The raft is not the shore. The spiritual disciplines we commit to are important for guiding our spiritual journey. Yet we must remember that it is the journey that is most important, not the disciplines. At the same time, letting ourselves off the hook, as it were, by only half-hearted effort means we are trying to reach the shore without a raft. We end up flailing around in the water, going nowhere. Whatever spiritual practices we accept as the trellis for our spiritual life, we make every effort to work with them so that we deepen our spiritual lives inwardly and give focus to our outward lives of service to the world.

## Accountability

Jesus told a parable about a landowner who was leaving on a trip (Matthew 25:14-30). He entrusted varying amounts of money to his servants, though he did not tell them what to do with it. While their master was away, the servants each took responsibility for what was given to their care. Some of the servants invested the money, and when the master returned, they brought him the money with interest. One servant, afraid of losing what was given him, buried the sum and then dug it up to return to the master when he got home. The parable has a rather harsh ending. The investment-minded servants are praised for their creativity and ingenuity. The cautious servant is scolded for his lack of enterprise. In both cases, however, the servants were held accountable for what was entrusted to them.

Accountability has to do with our taking responsibility for these lives we have been given and making the most of them. Jesus' invitation to discipleship is a call to live according to our true identities as God's children, to live as those who belong to God and God's reign over life, the kingdom of God. Jesus related to people in a way that showed he considered them fully capable of taking responsibility and being held accountable for the gift of their lives. In our community we try to hold up this view of the life of faith, that each of us is trusted by God and entrusted with the gift of our lives and the particular gifts we have to share. This is the first thing to say about accountability.

Accountability also means being in a community that supports and challenges us to live with increasing fullness the life of faith. In this way, we need to be willing to be held accountable for the commitments we make and to hold others accountable. This does not mean policing one another. Accountability means sharing with others how we are doing with our spiritual practices and our spiritual life in general. And we make ourselves available to others to listen to their sharing of their lives and struggles. It is mutual help and encouragement.

Practicing accountability can happen in a couple of ways, and it is very important for each member of the community to establish this practice.

- In mission groups, each member who commits to the group and its work needs the opportunity to report on a regular basis on how he is doing with the group's spiritual disciplines, where he is struggling or experiencing growth, seeking help and advice when needed, and generally sharing what is going on in his spiritual life as a whole. Each group might discuss what kinds of questions are most helpful as focusing points for reports.
- If a person is not in a mission group, then it is important that she ask someone who is trusted to be honest, fair, and a good listener to meet on a regular basis for spiritual reporting or sharing. This needs to be taken seriously and the meetings frequent enough to provide regular and sustained support.

Without accountability, the honest sharing of our spiritual lives with others, we can easily delude ourselves or miss significant spiritual growth. Accountability provides the "traction" for our journey of faith.

It is important to understand accountability as a part of the love that we are to have for one another. Jesus' central commandment to his community in John's gospel (13:34-35)

was “to love one another as I have loved you; this is the way others will know you are my disciples.” A discipline common to both Covenant and Community Membership is to “endeavor in every relationship to be a channel of God’s love and forgiveness.” We strive to love one another with the same compassionate love with which God in Christ has loved us. This means that we accept one another as we are, with the mix of unhealthiness and healthiness, woundedness and wholeness that is part of every life. It also means, however, that there will be times when we need to be reminded or made aware of this obligation of love. When I am acting in a way that is causing hurt or distress, then I need to be made aware of this so that I can see my actions and do the work of making amends. This is an opportunity for me to look deeply into where my harmful behavior is coming from, understand it, and find a healthier path. Unconditional love does not mean ignoring or putting up with harmful behavior, but dealing with it honestly and compassionately so that change can take place. This, too, is part of accountability.



## Ultimate Responsibility

Jesus called those who wished to follow him to “pick up their cross daily and follow him.” It is not Jesus’ cross we carry but our own. “Cross” here can mean our own lives in relationship to God. It means being willing to take responsibility for our own lives of faith, our own spiritual lives. Like accountability, **ultimate responsibility** points to our need to live the gift of our lives to the fullest extent.

Ultimate responsibility is inherent in the way the Church of the Covenant Community frames “church membership.” It is not the placing of one’s name on a membership roll, or “joining the church” in order to receive certain “spiritual services.” Membership in the community is a matter of committing oneself to following the living Christ in the inward and outward dimensions, and doing so within a community of others working with the same life of faith. There is an old spiritual song that goes: “You’ve got to walk that lonesome valley / You’ve got to walk it by yourself / Nobody else can walk it for you / You’ve got to walk it by yourself.” No one can live our lives for us and we cannot live the life of faith vicariously through other people or a religious organization. The challenges and joys, the struggles and the spiritual growth of the life of faith can be ours as we each work with what we call ultimate responsibility.

Psalms 34 says: “O taste and see that the Lord is good.” A more literal translation would be: “Find out for yourself that God is good.” Ultimate responsibility is finding out for ourselves what the life of faith is about, discovering in the uniqueness of our own lives who God is, who we are in God, and what we are called to be and do with these lives of ours. If we come into the community of faith expecting others to give us the answers or to tell us what to do, we are doomed to frustration, disappointment, and confusion. We are expecting others to give us what we need to discover for ourselves. The great adventure and challenge of the life of faith is the journey we take of discovering in our own lives what it means to follow Jesus.

Ultimate responsibility also has to do with **call**. When we discern what God is calling us to do, we take responsibility for every aspect of that call. We give our lives wholly to it, not expecting someone else to take this “great idea” we have and make it a reality. When we are discussing needs in our own community or the wider world, we recognize that we are not thinking up things that need to be done and then recruiting someone to do them. We may identify something to which we feel God is calling us as a community to respond. We then lift up that need so that someone might then feel called to respond. This is working on the basis of call, aware that a “called person” is essential for any mission to get off the ground and then to persevere. For then it is God’s moving a person into mission, God’s love becoming incarnated, embodied in a person and then a group of persons. All of this is part of our awareness that ultimate responsibility is crucial in both the individual spiritual life and the life of a mission.

A mission group acknowledges from the start that it bears ultimate responsibility for every aspect of the mission—organization, the work itself, articulating and remaining faithful to the vision, and the financial and other needs. When we are willing to accept ultimate responsibility, then we are placing ourselves completely in God’s hands. We will do everything that is needed and at the same time live at the point of complete trust or faith in God. This is full partnership with God in the process of ministry to the world. When the

Israelites were at the shore of the Red Sea with the Egyptian army bearing down on them, goes an old story, God did not part the waters until the first Israelite jumped in. That is ultimate responsibility!

That we are each ultimately responsible for our own lives of faith, that each mission group is ultimately responsible for its own life and work, does not mean that we go it alone. I do have to “walk that lonesome valley” by and for myself. However, being part of a community of faith means that we also travel the journey together. We are in a community of those who are working with the same things, struggling with the same challenges, suffering the same difficulties, and yet experiencing the same grace, spirit, and transformation. In a community of commitment to the spiritual journey we find the support and encouragement we need to bear the ultimate responsibility for our own lives of faith and what God calls us to be and do.

## Moving Toward Membership

The Church of the Covenant Community offers two kinds of membership, Covenant and Community (Appendix 1). It is up to each person to decide to which she feels called and when she feels ready to make a commitment. Readiness includes a good understanding of what the disciplines mean, some work already with the disciplines in an exploratory way, and a substantial period of time spent with the community so that there is an understanding of its history, vision, life, and ministry.

A person moving toward Covenant Membership attends at least one Covenant Members meeting and shares with that group something about his life and spiritual journey. It is expected that one will meet for a period of time with a current Covenant Member to talk about the spiritual disciplines and to gain an understanding of them and the nature of the Church of the Covenant's history and life. This is also an opportunity to fully explore one's sense of call to this form of spiritual life. At the point of making a commitment, the person then meets with the Covenant Members and shares her readiness to commit. There is no voting on membership, but an affirmation by the group of this person and a celebration of her commitment. At a Sunday morning worship, a time is set aside for a celebration of commitment. The new Covenant Member is invited to share something of her spiritual autobiography, the meaning of this commitment to her life, and what she may be feeling called to in terms of outward ministry.

With Community Membership the process is similar. It is not required that one moving toward Community Membership meet with a "sponsor," though conversations with the pastor and/or current members of the community are strongly encouraged and expected. The specific spiritual disciplines of Community Membership are a bit different from those of Covenant Members, generally being less particular in some areas. Financial giving, for instance, is not specified a tithe as with Covenant Membership. Time given to prayer and study of scripture is to be "regular," whereas for Covenant Membership it is to be daily. Also, the commitment to Community Membership does not include the sharing of ultimate responsibility for the community's life and ministry as with Covenant Membership. When a person feels ready to commit as a Community Member, he indicates this to the Minister and/or Covenant Members. A time is set for a service of commitment as part of the community's corporate worship. Community Members are also invited to share a statement with the community as part of their commitment celebration.

An annual re-commitment retreat is held for Covenant and Community Members and any who are moving toward a commitment to membership. This is a day-long silent retreat that gives participants a time to reflect clearly and deeply on their readiness to commit to membership for another year. Covenant and Community Members are completely free to not re-commit. There should be no sense of guilt or failure attached to this decision. It is better not to re-commit than to do so out of obligation or without a sense of continuing to feel called to the inward and outward journeys of discipleship as expressed in the forms of membership.

Though the "official" membership of the community consists of Covenant and Community Members, those who do not choose to make those commitments, yet who worship and work with the community in many ways, are considered very much part of the Church of the Covenant Community. It is of utmost importance that the commitment to

membership be a completely free and wholehearted response to the call of Jesus. This is something no one can or should decide for us. There is no timetable. Such a decision should not feel rushed but emerge over a period of months or even years. Our commitment needs to come at the time when it seems right for the person and the community. A part of that "rightness" is making one's commitment with integrity, that is, with deep desire and a willingness to persevere. Our response always needs to be in the spirit of Isaiah's free and willing response to God's calling him to the ministry of a prophet: "Here I am; send me!" It also needs to be with awareness that Jesus' call is to leave everything to follow him, to place our whole lives under this call.

## Emerging Dimensions

Our community continues the struggle to remain faithful to its vision of being a Christian community that is shaped by new movements of God's spirit and the changing needs of the world. The mission group continues to be a vital structure in this regard. Yet we remain open to new forms, new kinds of groups that may emerge. The essential principle is that form follows spirit, requiring an openness to new forms that are shaped by God who is always desiring to "do a new thing" in and through us for the world.

There is an emerging change these days in our understanding of spirituality. For the Christian community there needs to be greater clarity of purpose with regard to overcoming barriers of race, gender, social and economic status, and sexual orientation. In 2003 the Church of the Covenant, by consensus of the Covenant Members, became an Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ. This means we are welcoming and affirming of all persons regardless of sexual orientation.

Our nation and world is experiencing increased religious intolerance and extremism. As Christians we need to learn how to be faithful Christians in a religiously pluralistic human family. In 2005 a mission emerged to develop a retreat center on the grounds shared by the church, Camp Kum-Ba-Yah and Lynchburg Covenant Fellowship. For some years, the seeds of such a vision had been around. A mission group was now being called into being to develop the Chrysalis Interfaith Retreat Center. Phil Boyce, then Program Director for Camp Kum-Ba-Yah and practitioner of Zen Buddhism, was employed on a part-time basis as the first Director. Chrysalis is envisioned as a "refuge" for persons of any spiritual tradition who seek a place for rest, renewal, prayer, and meditation. The Chrysalis Mission Group seeks to foster a spirit of interfaith respect and learning. Understanding of and respect for spiritual traditions and practices other than our own contribute richly to the deepening of our own faith and practice. Though there are important differences among various religious traditions, there are also essential commonalities in terms of what it means to live as human beings.

The Church of the Covenant, Lynchburg Covenant Fellowship, and Camp Kum-Ba-Yah were born out of a call to serve children. Today we are gaining a deeper, wiser understanding of children as spiritual beings who already have their own relationship with God. Jesus lifted up children as those to whom the kingdom of God already belongs, who can show us the way (Matthew 18:1-5; Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9:46-48). He said that if we do not become as children—open, trusting, spontaneous, eager to love, and with a capacity for wonder—we cannot enter God's kingdom. So we need to stay close to children not only for their own sakes but ours. A Children Worship & Wonder program was established to be held during Sunday worship. Kaye Edwards, Community Member, works with this program for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Influenced by the educational approach of Maria Montessori and the work of Sofia Cavaletti, who developed "The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd," this time of worship for children assumes that children already have a very close relationship with God. What they need from adults is a place and the tools to deepen, express, and explore that relationship. The Church of the Covenant continues to explore ministries to, of, and with children. We need children in our lives because they know the way to the kingdom of God.

A renewed appreciation of the creation and our belonging to it has been emerging in recent decades in the Christian community. The environmental crisis has brought this to the fore in a way that leads us to re-learn and pay greater attention to how integrally our lives as human beings are interwoven with the world of nature. Spirituality today is expanding beyond the personal and interpersonal to embrace our relationship with all of God's creation and creatures. The "dominion" God has entrusted to human beings (e.g. Genesis 1, Psalm 8) means our care and responsible stewardship of life around us. We are learning to value our spiritual bond with the creation, the delight, joy, and awareness of God that we experience as we "look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established (Psalm 8)," and contemplate our place within the whole fabric of God's world.

Jesus pointed us to the spiritual wisdom we learn from the creation around us as we contemplate the birds of the air and the flowers of the field (Matthew 6), learning from them how to trust God and let go of our anxious living that results in destructive patterns of living. A more Franciscan spirituality is maturing in us as we look at the creation as our home and non-human creatures as our brothers and sisters in a tapestry and web of life that God has wondrously woven for us.

The Church of the Covenant, Camp Kum-Ba-Yah, and Lynchburg Covenant Fellowship have been entrusted with a precious gift—forty acres of beautiful urban forest and open spaces where we can maintain and deepen our connection with the creation. In recent years, Camp Kum-Ba-Yah, which has always afforded children the direct experience of nature they need, developed year-around environmental education opportunities for children, youth, and adults. Unfortunately, because of economic limitations, the year-around program has been discontinued for the time being, but the vision remains. Chrysalis Interfaith Retreat Center not only seeks to be a refuge for persons of varying spiritual practice and traditions, but a place where people can touch their interconnection with the creation. For our faith community, it is hoped that the gift of being in this place will continually expand and deepen our awareness of God and our life as part of God's good creation.

## The Power of the Small

Anyone who hangs around the Church of the Covenant community for a while will detect our seeming obsession with “the small”! The community itself began as a tiny, by current church standards, gathering of Christians, and pretty much remains so. The originating vision was a small group of people committing themselves to God, to discipleship to Jesus, and to one another in love. Did Jesus not call to himself a small inner circle of disciples to travel with him, to learn, and to work for God’s reign, God’s kingdom? When describing the kingdom of God, Jesus likened it to the tiny mustard seed (Matthew 13:31-33; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:19-19). Small beginnings are the way the realm of God takes root and grows. Jesus said that when only two or three were gathered together in his name—his spirit and teachings and life—he is in their midst (Matt. 18:20). He spoke not of a great religious movement sweeping through the world but of persons being faithful to love of God and neighbor, just as they love themselves. He was wary of religion that lured people into preoccupation with forms and control and power but had lost its essence, which is love. This was clear in one of his most dramatic parables (Luke 10). One question raised by the story of the Good Samaritan is: What good is religion if it does not enable us to care for one human being in need or to respond to one particular need in the world?

The missions and ministries of the Church of the Covenant begin as seeds:

- To provide firewood for one household in the inner city was the seed of the Wood Ministry in the 1970s and 80s.
- To offer a place for hospitality, conversation, music and poetry for people, especially young people, was the seed of the Lodge of the Fisherman coffee house in the 1960s through the 1980s.
- To help people who found themselves “hard to employ” prepare for, find, and sustain a job was the seed of New Land Jobs.
- To establish a safe place to live for men and women recovering from addiction and homelessness was the seed of The Gateway and Miriam’s House. The Haven Mission Group currently seeks to provide continuing and supportive housing for those who have completed recovery programs.
- To call together a small community of persons with disabilities, “core members”, living with “assistants” was the seed vision that was nurtured for many years before becoming L’Arche Blue Ridge Mountains.
- To care for our modest, beautiful, but aging buildings was the seed-vision that brought together the Mary and Martha Church Support Group.
- To create a place where people could grow together in community across racial and socio-economic boundaries was the seed of The Festival Center, 2003-2010.
- The meeting of a Zen Buddhist and a Christian pastor provided the seed for the Chrysalis Interfaith Retreat Center where persons of all spiritual traditions could come for rest and renewal in an atmosphere of respect and mutual learning.

This is how things begin, as seeds. Maybe they grow larger. Maybe they stay small. What matters is that God seems to work best when a few people come together around a specific vision for ministry and give themselves to God, each other, and the call of that vision.

The seed germinates in persons who are living into a commitment to follow the living Christ, honoring and growing in their true selfhood as God's children, and discerning God's call in their lives and the gifts God gives them to use. The spiritual work of our lives is to notice the seeds, to pay attention to the seeds, and to let God give the growth in the ways God desires for the sake of the world.

The Tao te Ching (6-5<sup>th</sup> Cent. BCE) has a famous teaching: "The journey of a thousand miles begins beneath your feet." When he was asked when the kingdom of God was coming, Jesus said: "It is not coming with predictable signs; you can't say 'There it is!' In fact, the kingdom of God is within you"(Luke 17:20-21). That is where we start on the journey of faith, this journey of a lifetime. The small. The near. In our own hearts, our own lives. As we take the first step, who knows where the journey will take us.



## Appendix 1: Covenant and Community Member Commitments

### Covenant Member Commitment: Our Covenant One with Another”

I understand that the purpose of our church is to bind together followers of Jesus Christ for the purpose of sharing the worship of God and in making God’s will dominant in the lives of people, individually and collectively, as that will is set forth in the life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and in Holy Scripture.

In reviewing prayerfully my relationship to God in Christ, and my relationship to the community of God’s people to which I have been led, I now renew my commitment to Christ and wish to express this commitment for another year through the Church of the Covenant by entering fully into “Our Covenant One with Another”

Feeling that we receive strength and encouragement from a joint commitment to Jesus Christ, we members of the Church of the Covenant, do covenant with one another that each of us will:

Engage in the regular and systematic reading and study of the Bible each day as a source of guidance, inspiration and insight.

Develop my prayer life through setting aside daily the time needed for this purpose.

Give through this expression of the Church at least a tithe of the income which is entrusted to my stewardship as a token expression of God’s total claim on my total life.

Participate regularly each week in corporate worship, usually the worship of this church.

Fulfill the privilege of Christian service by assuming the responsibility in the life and mission of the community to which I am best suited or for which I am most needed.

Endeavor in every relationship to be a channel of God’s love and forgiveness.

Indicate to the Community or some member of it any difficulty I may be having with any area of our Covenant, and will seek the counsel, prayers, and support of the church.

### Community Member Commitment

Desiring to follow Jesus, the Christ, and with the help of God and this community of faith, I commit myself to:

- Take seriously my involvement in the life and ministry of the Church of the Covenant as an expression of my Christian discipleship
- Participate regularly in worship
- Give time regularly to prayer and the study of scripture
- Support the community’s life and ministry through the use of my God-given gifts
- Give of my financial resources in support of this community’s life and ministries
- Endeavor in every relationship to be a channel of God’s love and forgiveness
- Renew my commitment annually, as I feel so called

## Appendix 2: Essential Elements of a Mission Group

A mission group forms around a specific vision for mission to serve the needs of the community of faith or the wider community. The group is composed of persons who feel called to that particular mission and commit themselves to a structure of discipline and a covenant of accountability for the implementing of the mission. The group takes ultimate responsibility for all aspects of its life and work.

A commitment is made by members to both the inward and outward journey through the following minimal disciplines:

- Daily prayer and meditation on behalf of the vision and mission
- Working with scripture daily as a source of guidance, inspiration and insight
- Regular and prompt participation in scheduled meetings. It is preferable that groups meet weekly, but at a minimum twice a month
- Participation in corporate worship each week
- Giving of material resources and time to advance the mission
- Offering of one's personal gifts and abilities, as needed, on behalf of the mission
- Periodic and regular accountability report to the group on one's spiritual journey and work with the group disciplines
- Participation in a silent retreat as a group at least once a year for at least one full day
- An annual recommitment to the mission group
- Maintaining confidentiality with regard to what members share within the group.

--Approved by Covenant Members, February 13, 2011

## Appendix 3: Example of a Mission Group Meeting Structure

### The Group Inward Journey (about one hour)

- Opening time of worship (15-20 minutes). Should include some time for silence, at least five minutes, preferably more. Other elements: Scripture and other readings, a song or hymn, a time for open prayers, a lifting up in prayer and other ways the life and work of the mission group and its members
- Accountability report. Each member who has committed to the group should be given a regular and reasonably frequent (monthly or bi-monthly, if possible) opportunity to share a report. Some focusing questions to use in preparation might be:

*How am I doing with the group's spiritual disciplines? Where am I struggling and where am I experiencing growth?*

*How do I see my life and gifts at this point in relation to our mission and our group's life together?*

*What do I sense God is doing in and with my life at this point?*

- A time for responses from the group. These should be for the purpose of understanding and not criticism, and for encouragement. Focus needs to remain on the person reporting, not getting off into things unrelated to what the person has shared. This is also a time for the person reporting to clarify or share further.
- As time permits, an open time of sharing if any other member needs to share something with the group about her or his life.

### The Group Outward Journey (about one hour)

This portion of the meeting is given to whatever work of the mission needs to be done. It is good to find ways during this portion of the meeting to keep before the group the vision and mission of the group. Is what we are doing related to and expressive of our mission?

### Closing Time of Silence and Prayer

It is helpful to come back to a brief (3-5 minute) time of silence and prayer. In this way the group is returned to its spiritual center and its time and work together is offered to God.

## Appendix 4: Excerpts from Accountability Reports

*It is harder to make sense of what I am [now] doing being related to the call of God—the exhaustion of travel (worse as I grow older), the constant stream of new people and places, and the intensity of the work. I get discouraged when I experience what seems to me to be a lot of activity unrelated to following the way that Jesus' life, death and resurrection show us. I think I am still blaming [others]. What I am trying to say is how important are the weekly times with this group and knowing you are close by during all the times between our meetings and knowing by name the children in my life [at the Festival Center]. Here there is connectedness with people and call. Life makes more sense when I am home.*

*I feel like I am making some progress in my inward journey – I finally decided that for it to be meaningful to me I have to take my 'quiet time' in the morning, so in the time since I last reported to the group I have been working on making that happen...Beginning my day with silence, scripture, and prayer helps me to be centered in God and more present to and mindful of God, myself, others, and the world around me.*

*The past few weeks have been particularly trying for me. I have found myself to be filled with frustration, anxiety and fear at times...These struggles have taught me a lot about my inner life, most of which goes on beneath the surface of consciousness. The disciplines I keep are crucial to examining myself, and maintaining inner peace, joy, thankfulness. Without them, I am a mess and separated from God. One can measure the strength of a relationship by the time put into it.*

*Not that I am going in wrong directions, but it is just that I know the things I need to do and just need to start doing them. I know how I worry about where money is going to come from for our mission as we go along. But I know that I and we can't waste time worrying about that. I and we need to become and stay clear about what we are called to do here, each one of us and together. It's as we do that that what we need to keep going will come. Or it won't. At least I/we will not have wasted time worrying about it and spent the time and effort doing what God calls us to do here.*

*I have never been a person with much patience so I spend much of my time feeling frustrated. I've always had lots of energy and enthusiasm for everything so the waiting is exceedingly difficult. I've become depressed and have spent much of my energy recently dealing with depression while doing my activities of daily life and working. All this time, I've wondered where God is. Intellectually I know God is here but my heart is impatient, frustrated, and hurt...Never before have I been invited to share my inward/outward journey with folks in my 'church community.' To me, this is what true community is about.*

*Although I am struggling in some ways, I also feel that I am growing too. Even on days when I'm super-distracted and having trouble with the disciplines, I still feel like it's fruitful for me. Even on days when it feels like a chore (that feeling usually changes once I get into it), I still*

*feel like it's fruitful for me. I feel that through these spiritual disciplines I am really discovering who I am for the first time, discovering the person that God created me to be.*

*The support of a group committed to following a Call is inspirational, and I feel that we help share each other's burdens, even if in some small sense. Holding each other accountable, listening patiently, encouraging each other without pretense—this is what true community is about, and it is how we can build the Kingdom of God on earth.*

## Appendix 5: An Example Order for Personal Inward Journey Time

**Begin in silence** in a comfortable place set aside for meditation and prayer. Lighting a candle can remind you of God's light and presence. You may want to create an altar with items that have special meaning for your spiritual life – a cross, a picture, a flower, for instance. To help you become inwardly quiet and more present, simply be aware of your in and out breathing, letting it lead you into peacefulness. Take as long as you need for this. The quieter we are inwardly the readier we are to listen for God's living word in us.

**Read a Psalm** If you are using the Revised Common Lectionary, this would be the psalm for the coming Sunday. Otherwise read the psalms in whatever order makes sense to you. Try to read the psalm as your prayer.

**Scripture Reading** If you are using the lectionary, begin on Monday with the First Lesson, then the Second Lesson on Tuesday, and the Gospel on Wednesday, repeating the cycle. Or you may find it more helpful to read all three lessons in the beginning and as the week goes on focus on the one or more that seem to speak most clearly to you. If not the lectionary, you may choose a book of the Bible to be reading through from day to day. During this time you may have other readings that are helpful to you.

**Reflection/Journaling** Take this time to reflect on what you have read and other thoughts, concerns, or experiences in your life that come to mind. This is a good time to do some writing in your journal on your reflections on the readings and life experiences, insights, or struggles you may be having.

**Prayer** Lift up in prayer other people, the world, the church, whatever is on your personal prayer list, as well as for your own life and needs.

**Closing Prayer** Pray the Lord's Prayer or your own benediction for this day's time of prayer.

**End your time** by following your breathing again, being fully present to yourself, to God, and to the day.

As you move from one portion to another, do not rush. Take time for silence and breathing. This is only a suggested order. It is best when you begin to establish your own pattern and rhythm of daily inward journey time. The time of day or evening is up to your personal schedule and needs. Take all the time you need, but try to devote at least 30 minutes.

## Appendix 6: Writing Your Spiritual Autobiography

A spiritual autobiography is the story of your own spiritual awareness, experiences, thought, and growth. Reflecting on and writing your spiritual autobiography is a great help in giving attention to your life and to centering your life on your relationship with God and your sense of God's call in your life. It is important at some point for a person moving toward a membership commitment share his or her autobiography with the community—with the Covenant Members, with the whole community at the celebration of commitment. It is also important that new members of a mission group be invited to share their autobiographies.

What are some elements of a spiritual autobiography?

- Experiences that you would describe as spiritual in nature, that were significant in shaping your spiritual outlook
- People, places, events that made you aware of the spiritual dimension of your life
- Negative experiences that communicated to you what you don't believe or feel is spiritually authentic or real
- Who are the persons who have helped you with spiritual awareness and understanding?
- What places were, or are, significant to you in terms of sensing the reality, presence and nature of God, or the sacred?
- What experiences opened up for you the spiritual dimension of life?
- What experiences were challenging or even painful in terms of your religious faith or spiritual understanding?
- What particular books or readings have been formative in your spiritual awareness, growth, and understanding?

Besides looking back over your life, where are you at this point in terms of your spiritual understanding and your sense of God? Where do you feel you are growing or stuck? What do you feel God is doing with your life at this point? What are the areas of spiritual growth and understanding that seem to be calling for your attention?

A spiritual autobiography is an on-going process of understanding our lives more deeply and clearly in relation to the spiritual dimension of life. Writing your spiritual autobiography for the first time provides a kind of "baseline" for continued self-understanding and spiritual growth. Revisiting your spiritual autobiography from time to time is a helpful way of gaining a deeper self-understanding and sense of the unique ways that your life is related to God and the world in which we live.

## Appendix 7: Books Influencing the Church of the Covenant

Elizabeth O'Connor	JOURNEY INWARD/JOURNEY OUTWARD CALL TO COMMITMENT EIGHTH DAY OF CREATION CRY PAIN, CRY HOPE
N. Gordon Cosby	HANDBOOK FOR CHURCHES AND MISSION GROUPS BY GRACE TRANSFORMED BECOMING THE AUTHENTIC CHURCH
Thomas Kelly	A TESTAMENT OF DEVOTION
Parker J. Palmer	LET YOUR LIFE SPEAK
Marcus J. Borg	THE HEART OF CHRISTIANITY: REDISCOVERING A LIFE OF FAITH
Matthew Fox	ORIGINAL BLESSING
Jean Vanier	COMMUNITY AND GROWTH
Thich Nhat Hanh	PEACE IS EVERY STEP LIVING BUDDHA, LIVING CHRIST
Richard Louv	LAST CHILD IN THE WOODS
Richard J. Foster	CELEBRATION OF DISCIPLINE
Dietrich Bonhoeffer	COST OF DISCIPLESHIP LIFE TOGETHER
Writings of Howard Thurman	
Writings of Thomas Merton	
Writings of Thomas Keating	
Writings of Henry Nouwen	
Writings of Elton Trueblood	