

'Renovaré' is Latin for 'to renew' or to 'restore'. It claims to be a Christian organisation set up to help individuals and organisations to be more Christlike through 'spiritual formation'. This is growth and development of the 'whole person' by concentrating on one's inner life and spirituality, societal interaction and spiritual practices. These are supposed to deepen faith and encourage spiritual growth... but any mature believer will immediately be made suspicious by the term 'spiritual practices'. For more information on Renovare, see the 'About' page on www.renovarelife.org

, where James Catford, Chair of Renovaré Britain and Ireland, says
"the Bible frustrated me to tears. I found it to be dry, drab and deeply disappointing"
, before presenting Renovaré as the key to understanding!

'Spiritual formation' sound alright? Not when you go on to discover that "It is a process that happens to everyone... Terrorists as well as saints are the outcome of spiritual formation. Their spirits or hearts have been formed", as well as adherents to a wide variety of false religions. (Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*. [Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2002] p. 19).

Just like those who practice Lectio Divina (see [Article A/427](#)), the focus is on Jesus... not that this means anything in today's eclectic religious scene. Also like those who use Lectio Divinas techniques, followers of Renovare resort to 'Spiritual formation', which is very similar in concept. They list prayer, fasting, solitude, confession and worship as key elements. Once again, we see in this the touch of Arminianism (works) and Rome, with an emphasis on being 'holistic'. One teacher of this kind of approach lists 12 ways to study Christian spirituality:

1. Relational Spirituality: Loving God Completely, Ourselves Correctly, and Others Compassionately
 2. Paradigm Spirituality: Cultivating an Eternal versus a Temporal Perspective
 3. Disciplined Spirituality: Engaging in the Historical Disciplines
 4. Exchanged Life Spirituality: Grasping Our True Identity in Christ
 5. Motivated Spirituality: A Set of Biblical Incentives
 6. Devotional Spirituality: Falling in Love with God
 7. Holistic Spirituality: Every Component of Life under the Lordship of Christ
 8. Process Spirituality: Process versus Product, Being versus Doing
 9. Spirit-Filled Spirituality: Walking in the Power of the Spirit
 10. Warfare Spirituality: The World, the Flesh, and the Devil
 11. Nurturing Spirituality: A Lifestyles of Evangelism and Discipleship
 12. Corporate Spirituality: Encouragement, Accountability, and Worship.
- (Ken Boa. *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation*.)

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[Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001], p. 21-23).

Always be wary when Christian life is reduced to a set of stages or steps to follow, because, very soon, a whole new lifestyle emerges, one that supersedes God's word, even if not intentionally (ed. see how James Catford makes the *'The Balanced Vision and Practical Strategy of Renovaré'* superior to God's

word, on the 'About' page of

www.renovarelife.org

)! And, like Ignatius Loyola and his Jesuits, people who use this approach believe that their spiritual exercises lead to spiritual growth and entrance to God's presence.

Quakerism and Ecumenism

Not surprisingly one leader in this movement is Richard Foster, a Quaker (see my various articles on Quakerism). Indeed, he was the founder of Renovaré, and this ought to make you see red flags!

Every aspect of Renovaré needs deep examination, for many godless groups use the same words, but with vastly different meanings. Renovaré's ministry team draws from Anglicans, Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, Roman Catholics and Quakers, amongst others. Headquartered in Colorado, Renovaré is present throughout the world ([Renovaré US](#)).

Renovaré describes itself as the "*hub for spiritual formation in Britain, Ireland and Europe*" (<http://www.renovarelife.org/>

), set up by Foster to bring about a renewal of the Church. So, it is a ministry of works.

It is also charismatic in worldview, one of the 'six streams' of Renovare's approach to spirituality, concentrates on charismatic 'gifts'. Though saying that the Holy Spirit helps them, the path given to follow is of works and occultism.

Another of the six streams is the "Social Justice" stream, which strives for equality and compassion for all people... which is what we can expect from Quakers. The last 'stream' is "The Incarnational stream" which claims to make visible the invisible spiritual realm... another red flag. A description of meetings is very close to the principles found in Quakerism. There is an 'Order of Meeting' which begins thus:

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"After a few moments of silence, the leader for the week reads the Opening Words aloud:

Welcome to the Renovaré Spiritual Formation Group. May God's Holy Spirit bless us, and may we find fellowship and encouragement during this time together.

We gather together with one aim – to become better disciples of Jesus Christ. We do this by encouraging one another to keep Jesus' word, which, as he said, is what we naturally do when we love him (John 14:23-24). Through the grace of mutual accountability, we strive to inspire one another to love and good works."

Everything said here is in confidence and stays within these walls. Only then can we feel free to share honestly. This is how we help each other."

The meeting in full is rather like that found in many Romanist organisations, Quakerism, or monastic communities, with an emphasis on group repetition and saying the correct words/practicing the correct exercises. These are nothing more than traditional approaches that stifle, not bring, true spiritual activity. Like the Lectio Divinas movement, Renovaré is a mystical movement.

"Being a mystical movement, Renovare's constituency consists of the Charismatic, the Catholic and the Quaker. All are anti-dispensational, pseudo-doctrinal, and comfortably at home in subjective mysticism. Renovaré... (tries) to "renew" the Church alright - from objective biblical truth to subjective mystical error."

(<http://withchrist.org/mjs/renovare.htm>)

Renovaré's Board of Reference include such men as Tony Campolo, Faith and Roger Forster, J I Packer, C Peter Wagner and the late John Wimber – hardly people to recommend or to follow! Is this just a Roman spin-off or a deliberate Romish activity used to ruin Protestant truth? After all, it claims that we can know God better through spiritual disciplines... which goes way back to Loyola and the Jesuits. It is also charismatic and Quaker, both of which are heinous to true faith.

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One of Renovaré's associates' teachers teaches Reiki, an occult practice, as part of her course entitled 'Incarnate Presence for God: Body Prayer'. She is also a Quaker. One of her colleagues teaches 'Presence Through Sacred Image: Icon Prayer Group'. She teaches that by gazing at Eastern Orthodox icon pictures we can come to enter the spiritual realm. All of these can be found regularly in a wide variety of New Age, Gaia-worship pagan groups.

Foster speaks of 'center down', which sounds more like Transcendental Meditation to me. It 'focuses on the silence of the universe' and other ludicrous but occult, New Age practices.

Earth worship features in Renovaré's occultism, along with pantheism, as adherents are encouraged to focus on some part of creation – a tree, a bird, leaf, cloud, etc. The act of meditation is also given a New Age twist, as people are told to use 'imaginational prayer'. An example is given of how Foster used this kind of false prayer to supposedly heal a little girl. It sounded exactly like 'imaging' and dream interpretation found amongst charismatics, an occult technique. Astral projection (flying in the spirit) is also taught.

Foster teaches that God "*constantly changes His mind in accord with His unchanging love*"! He places emphasis on humanism. There is even a Renovaré Bible. It includes the Apocrypha, which, it says, is almost equal to scripture; it says Moses did not write Genesis, which is regarded as 'mythical' anyway; it denies that the Book of Daniel is prophetic or that Daniel wrote it, basing much on the falsity of Higher Critical Analysis.

Renovaré is one of many false movements entering the churches today, and shares parity with such 'acclaimed' things as the Alpha Course. Because so many Christians are superficial, with little biblical or theological knowledge, they are easily duped by Renovaré. There are also many unsaved people in our churches, and they will readily follow a system rather than scripture itself, because most people love to be told what to do! They also love the idea that they can 'reach' God through spiritual exercises, thus bypassing salvation.

Whatever the system, whether the Alpha Course or Renovaré, you should shun it. Systems are put in place of truth and the Holy Spirit guidance of each individual soul. As such they are dangerous and spiritually damaging, if not occult. Renovare is filled with New Age and Roman Catholic mysticism and I see no worth in it.

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