



Spirituality Has a Long History

Many Christian people today are longing and searching for greater spiritual depth through a closer relationship with God. Some are active church members who keep looking to the church to provide this depth. Increasing numbers of them have chosen to remain outside the church and have looked elsewhere for spiritual nourishment. Still others have given up searching altogether, but continue to hope.

As members of the church we have a rich spiritual heritage, a long tradition of wisdom and depth. This tradition is vital to the lives of its people, but unfortunately it has not been mainstreamed by many segments of the church. Because it has not been widely promoted, it has not been pursued and practiced by most members of main-line churches, although many church members long for its empowerment, but do not know where to look.

It is valuable for our own spiritual development to recognize that we are in this long tradition of spiritual practice. While it is true that spirituality has become quite popular among some Christian people in recent times, the phenomenon is ancient with its roots dating back to the early church and to Pentecost itself. It is certainly not a modern day outbreak.

The great Spiritual Classics, many coming out of the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries, testify to its historicity. We would do well to acquaint ourselves with these historic writings. They provide uniquely formative reading that can move us to deeper reflection. There is great value in branching out in our reading and being open to spiritual surprises.

Highly recommended: *Spiritual Classics* edited by Richard Foster and Emilie Griffin and *Devotional Classics* co-edited by Richard Foster and James Bryan Smith, both Renovare publications. These are excerpts from more extensive writings that can be pursued as you find ones that are particularly helpful. This is a discipline that deserves your time and attention.

