

The Quarterly Journal



THE NEWSLETTER PUBLICATION OF PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH

VOL. 31, NO. 2

APRIL-JUNE 2011

EDITOR: KEITH A. MORSE

Evangelicalism's Favorite Priest Is Henri Nouwen a Friend or Foe?

by G. Richard Fisher

Roman Catholic priest Henri Nouwen once wrote, "We prayed for many people, living and dead."¹ With allegiance to this and similar doctrines, there should be no question how Evangelicals should regard Nouwen. And yet this oft-quoted — and seldom examined — writer has a large cheering section in the "evangelical" world.

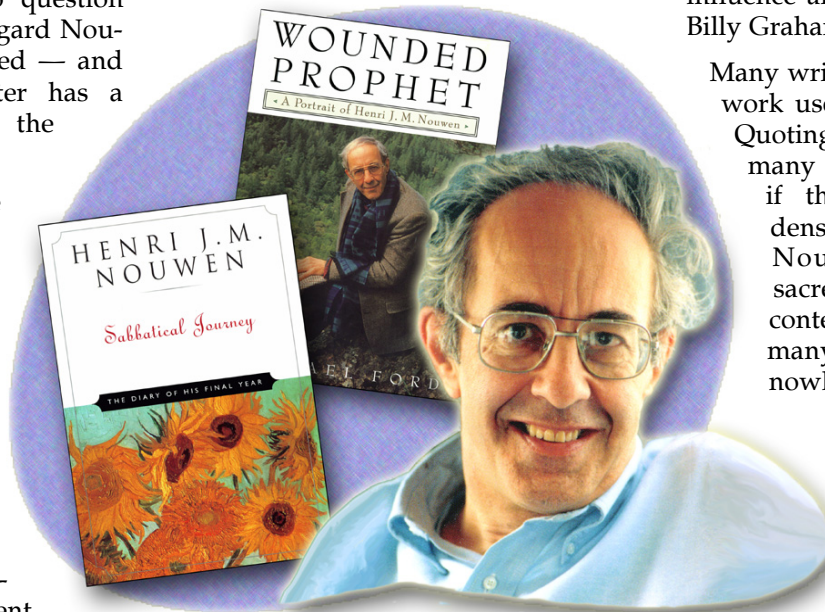
Nouwen is quoted by the likes of Richard Foster, Tony Campolo, Rick Warren, Charles Swindoll, Brian McLaren, and even Ravi Zacharias. *Crosstalk* host Ingrid Schlueter featured on one of her broadcasts an audio clip of Zacharias referring to Nouwen "as being a great saint of recent memory."² Zacharias' organization defends Nouwen's endorsement of contemplative practices simply because these have been part of the Roman Catholic and Byzantine tradition for centuries. However, Evangelicals should use Scripture — not necessarily Church history — as the benchmark.

Nouwen was introduced to the Protestant world in the early 1990s by Robert Schuller when he preached for

three consecutive Sundays at the Crystal Cathedral. He gained mainstream exposure and credibility, and by 1994 he was said to have more influence among Protestants than did Billy Graham.³

Many writers have found Nouwen's work useful for religious citations. Quoting him became popular and many authors did so, especially if they were groping for a dense and esoteric statement. Nouwen's works became sacred without background, context, or examination. For many, he was the man from nowhere — sort of a modern Melchizedek — who says lofty things.

Nouwen's quotes have appeared in the *Our Daily Bread* devotionals published by
(continues on page 15)



Inside this Issue:

- RICK WARREN AND THE SADDLEBAGGAGE OF SADDLEBACK PAGE 2
- GRASSLEY EXONERATES TELEVANGELISTS PAGE 3
- I'VE GOT THE POWER! — THE RETURN OF RHONDA BYRNE PAGE 4