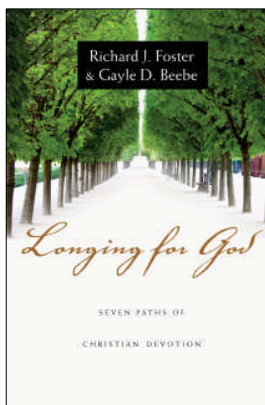


Q&A

AUTHOR INTERVIEW



“This marvelous source book by Foster and Beebe invites us to a pilgrimage toward God. It takes us deeply and slowly into the old trusts of our fathers and mothers in faith.

The book will be a valuable detailed reminder that the journey is not an easy one, and that we are not the first ones who have walked that way.”

—Walter Brueggemann,
The Prophetic Imagination

How did you two come to write *Longing for God* together?

Gayle Beebe: I was a freshman at George Fox College in Newberg, Oregon. Richard was teaching at the college, pastoring the local Friends church and writing *Celebration of Discipline*. It was during a class led by Richard that I first read *Celebration* in mimeographed form. I had been in Christian circles all my life and yet I had never read nor experienced such a thorough ordering of how we could understand and make progress in our life with God. As you can imagine, it was a thrilling time. The discoveries I made during this critical period have guided me ever since and continue to this day.

In 1992, Richard and I were reunited and began teaching a class together at a university in Southern California. During this time we developed a course titled “The History and Practice of Christian Spirituality.” It is the interaction around the ideas and sessions from this course that forms the foundation of this book.

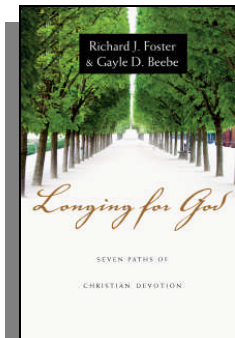
Shortly after Christmas 2005, I was driving with my family when Richard called on my cell phone. He was watching (of all things) a football game while recovering from surgery. Eventually our conversation drifted to the topic of this book and we agreed to think further about it and pray. The next morning Richard called back to say he thought we should do it, and we immediately went to work.

You write, “When people experience a desire for God, the cultural environment does not encourage any consideration of God, let alone give that desire room to develop.” How does our cultural environment often hinder our longings for God?

Beebe: Our culture tends to be surface-oriented. People are looking for a much deeper experience of life than the “surface show” that we so often encounter. Also, like Augustine noted, people often mistake their longing for God for something else that leads them to pursue all sorts of earthly activities that lead them away from God.

Q&A

AUTHOR INTERVIEW



*Longing for God:
Seven Paths of
Christian Devotion*

April 2009
350 pages, cloth, \$25,
978-0-8308-3514-0

Each chapter in *Longing for God* features one spiritual writer who embodies one of the seven paths to God. For instance, describe the path of “intimacy with Jesus Christ” and why you chose Francis of Assisi for that particular path.

Beebe: The chapters actually feature three or four authors who embody each path. We chose Francis as one of the four that embody the spiritual life as intimacy with Jesus Christ because he so deliberately and radically chose the teachings of Jesus Christ, interpreted them literally and then did everything with the rest of his life to embody them fully.

***Longing for God* explains the seven primary paths to God that have developed throughout Christian history. You also write that “no single path is the Christian path to the exclusion of the others.” What do you mean by that?**

Foster and Beebe: We wanted to emphasize that there is no single path to God, but as the statement you quote goes on to mention, all Christian paths inevitably lead through Jesus Christ.

What is your hope for *Longing for God*?

Beebe: Our hope for *Longing for God* is that it will draw thousands of others back to a vital relationship with God that satisfies the deep hunger lingering within their life. Those that long for meaning in life must be given guideposts to help them discern the proper way to satisfy their longings and desires.