

## Message from the Board | William T. Wood, Chairman

Recently my good friend and mentor Richard Simmons, III, published his second book, *Safe Passage, Thinking Clearly About Life and Death*. In his book, Richard strikes a cord with all of human kind as we seek to “find any significant measure of happiness while we live in fear of our mortality” The central focus of his reflections are stated as his conviction and belief that the true challenge to leading a full life is to reach that place in our intellectual and emotional development where our perspective on dying is genuinely transformed — that it becomes “a joyful anticipation.”

Likewise the ministry of Trinity Counseling is transforming lives through a true and sincere process of counseling those in need of help to lead that full life that God intends for all of His children.

Please keep Trinity Counseling in mind as the year ends. Your prayers and contributions continue to enable our counselors to do a work that is desperately needed.

We gratefully thank you for your support and pray you all have a blessed Holy Season. - *Billy*



### Points to Ponder ...

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining;  
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth!  
Long lay the world  
in sin  
and error,  
pining  
till He appeared  
and the soul  
felt its worth.  
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.  
Fall on your knees. O hear the angel voices!  
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!

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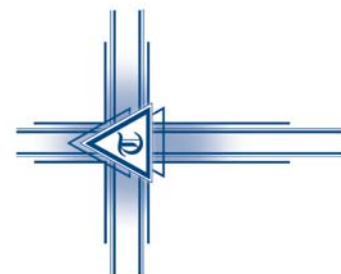
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Trinity Counseling

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# the COMPASS

A NEWSLETTER OF TRINITY COUNSELING, A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

WINTER 2005

## A WORD FROM DON | Don Richards, M. Div., M.S., LPC



### Hurricane Katrina Updates

Trinity Counseling has been, from the onset of the Katrina disaster, actively involved in the recovery efforts. In addition to financial support, Trinity's colleague, Susan Hart, along with Arden Richards (Trinity's Executive Vice President), worked tirelessly at the BJCC. Also, our counselors are working with FEMA and other organizations to provide for those emotionally, relationally and spiritually impacted by this event. These counseling efforts are continuing and will continue until the last need brought to our attention has been met no matter how long that takes. Pray for us as we seek to walk with these precious ones.

And now, Beloved, hear these words from Brennan Manning's book, *Ruthless Trust*, which resonate in our souls like the sound of a fresh mountain stream.

“The grace-laden act of trust is the landmark decision of life outside of which nothing has value and inside of which every relationship and achievement, every success and failure derives its final meaning. Unbounded trust in the merciful love of the redeeming God deals a mortal blow to skepticism, cynicism, self-condemnation and despair. It is our decisive YES to Christ's command, ‘Trust in God and trust in me.’”

Thank you Brennan for reminding us of the things that are “better.”  
Bless you all in this blessed season! †

## Manning Conference Reflections ...

### To the Trinity Counseling staff,

My warmest greeting. I was blessed as I'm sure you were just to close your eyes and hear Brennan Manning speak words that opened us up like spring flowers. My epiphany while attending the retreat was that we are now witnessing an age where the gospel's power is reloaded and recharged as it targets today's ears because the inherent psychological freedom and release offered by Christ registers with this purposeless culture. Thank you for making that clear.

Thank you for praying over the event. It was quite evident that you went to quite a lot of trouble just to bless me. ~MW~

I was able to attend the Brennan Manning Conference and was blessed by it. The Lord reminded me afresh of his love for me as I am and not as I should be, for I will never be as I should be. It's been helpful for me to define myself as Abba's child and not as father, husband, or whatever. I've had a stronger sense of peace and a more fervent desire to know my Father as a result of the conference.

Thank you for the conference and God bless ...  
~BW~





REFLECTIONS continued

I have been a Christian for 35 years. In that time I have read more books than I can count, including those written by Brennan Manning. I have attended numerous conferences, seminars and services. However, I have never experienced the incredible depth and sense of God speaking so intensely to me as I did during the conference as Brennan Manning spoke. I knew without a doubt, that we were hearing directly from the heart of our Abba. His Presence permeated that room and I am forever changed. Thank you Trinity Counseling for bringing Brennan to us. Thank you Brennan for a life poured out. And thank you Abba for your unconditional, unfailing Love!

A Great Big Thank You to you and your staff for all of your dedication in preparing for an exceptional event. ~JW~

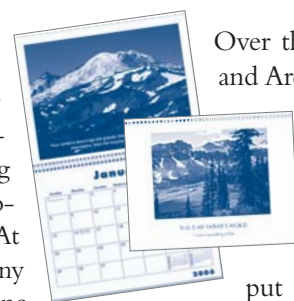
Attending the "Healing Our image of God and Ourselves" workshop that Trinity Counseling sponsored was my first exposure to Brennan Manning. At that time I had not read any of his books and had no idea who he was or what he wrote about. After having the opportunity to experience such a profound message in person, I find it difficult to express how grateful I am for hearing it firsthand. What a precious gift to hear Brennan Manning's testimony and teachings and be reminded that we all fall short of the glory of God. What a comfort to hear that God

still uses the unlikely to relate His message to the hurting and wounded. What a gift to see such an intimate portrayal of this in person and experience it through the vivid guided imagery that Mr. Manning incorporates into his lessons. Having the opportunity to attend was truly an act of kindness that Trinity Counseling gave to me through a scholarship. I thank each of you for this life altering gift that you have bestowed on me. Know that I will take this gift and share it in His name. ~ One of Abba's Own, MW ~

**Christmas Gift Ideas**

*Support the Mission of Trinity Counseling*

We have 3 items with which we are so pleased that we thought we would offer them to you as well.



Over the last several years Don and Arden have been blessed to see much of God's beautiful creation. A wonderful collection of photographs taken over the years has been put together in calendar and note card form.

- **"This is My Father's World" 2006 Calendar** - Suggested donation: \$20

- **"This is My Father's World" Note Cards (set of 12)** - Suggested donation: \$12



**Do you feel led to share your anonymous experience with others? If so please e-mail Arden at: [ardentc@bellsouth.net](mailto:ardentc@bellsouth.net).**

**"Healing Our Image of God and Ourselves"** by Brennan Manning is a set of recordings featuring all of Mr. Manning's messages at our recent conference at Oak Mt. Presbyterian Church.

- **Boxed Set of 4 CD's** - Suggested donation: \$30



If you would like to order any of these three items, please contact Arden at the Trinity Counseling offices by phone (205-822-2730), mail (1025 Montgomery Hwy; #214; Birmingham, AL 35216) or e-mail ([ardentc@bellsouth.net](mailto:ardentc@bellsouth.net)).

**He Touched Me** | Susan L. Hart, MA, LPC, NCC

I tried not to get my hopes up too much. For so long I had dreamed about meeting my hero, Brennan Manning. In October my big opportunity had finally arrived. At the conference I would have the chance to see him in person, shake his hand, and maybe share a conversation with this man who has so powerfully reshaped my spiritual journey over the past twenty years. Moments after Don escorted Brennan through the front door, as the excited crowd pressed in, I boldly reached out to touch my hero. During the excitement-filled days before the conference, I'd dreamed about this magnificent moment. I had imagined that the handshake would have the power to capture my hero's attention and set me apart from everyone else.



Through this brief yet cataclysmic contact he would see me as a unique individual, not just another beaming face in another admiring crowd. Brennan would see me as special, and this fateful encounter would transform my life. Instead, the experience passed without any noticeable fireworks. Time did not stand still. Even so, I felt unspeakable joy. As I introduced our conference speaker, I spoke of the power a hero has to influence others: "They help us vividly imagine what we value most, hope that these noble traits are achievable, and believe that the miracle of transformation is possible." The roomful of participants listened and learned, and we were touched by the humility of this ordinary man who expresses extraordinary heart-wrenching truths about compassion and forgiveness, and about hope in the face of apparent hopelessness. By the way, Brennan later told me that he did indeed notice me. *Dreams really CAN come true.*

*God can do anything, you know - far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us." Ephesians 3:20 (The Message)*

**MEMORIALS & HONORARIUMS**

Contributions have been made to Trinity Counseling in memory and honor of the following family members, friends and loved ones in recent months:

**MR. CHARLES BABER**  
By Mrs. Dolores Baber

**MR. FRANK MORDECAI**  
**MR. GEORGE RUSH**  
**MR. EDWIN C. WALLACE, JR.**  
By Mr. & Mrs. Louis Renshaw Fortier

**Inklings** | Hank Paine, Ph.D.



As you might expect, a significant portion of our work is focused on communication. Therapists, counselors and the like spend a great deal of time training and thinking about the importance of clear communication; how we talk to our clients, how our clients talk to us, what we tell ourselves in our head, what our clients tell themselves. At any of these points the words that we use and the meanings they confer obviously have a great impact on what we believe about ourselves, the world and others.

Now here's my point; the truth about the importance of words and the messages they communicate, obvious though it may be, runs counter to what many believe to be true. We even have a nursery rhyme that perpetuates the myth, "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never harm me." What a lie. People have been emotionally devastated by careless accusations, deliberate put-downs, haughty judgments, heated arguments, unfair characterizations. The list goes on and on. We even do untold harm to ourselves with the untruths that we use to judge ourselves in our own minds.

*"Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never harm me." What a lie.*

How about those invasive, dark, not-quite-clear images we have of ourselves and others, although vague and ill-defined, that consistently hints at how corrupt we may be and certainly how corrupt others are? How did we ever get to the place where we've come to believe that we have the right to play God in our right to judge anybody? God save us from our presumptuous sins and our own hidden faults (Psalm 19:12, 13).

Consider this; when was the last time you stole the time for yourself to listen, really listen, to the quiet, comfortable, gracious compassion that God was speaking to you and to you alone? When we are really honest (and really still) are we then able to acknowledge that there is some intimate, internal dialogue that speaks stronger than words, that because of its very nature insists upon being attended to. Is it our shameful commitment to our own pride that deafens our ears or is it some gut-wrenching fear that we really are that bad?

Do you talk or do you listen? Are you willing to be quiet enough to hear? Think on this appeal by C. S. Lewis, "To be God-to be like God and to share His goodness in creaturely response-to be miserable-these are the only three alternatives. If we will not learn to eat the only food that universe grows-the only food that any possible universe can ever grow-then we must starve eternally." God give us ears to hear.