



Wounded Prophet: A Portrait of Henri J.M. Nouwen

By Michael Ford

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Henri Nouwen, a Dutch Roman Catholic priest, was one of the most beloved and important spiritual writers of the twentieth century. Since his death in 1996, his stature has only increased; and his books, including *The Inner Voice of Love*, *The Wounded Healer*, and *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, have become cherished classics. For thousands of readers around the world, Nouwen's influence as a teacher and author is considered equal to, or greater than, that of the century's great spiritual writers, C. S. Lewis and Thomas Merton.

Although Nouwen could be radically revealing about his personal thoughts and struggles, there are nonetheless gaps in our understanding of who he was.

With *Wounded Prophet*, readers are given the first extensive look into this man who touched so many, not only through his own words but, most powerfully, through the eyes of those around the world who knew Nouwen best. While researching this compelling biography, BBC producer Michael Ford conducted wide-ranging interviews with Nouwen's friends, colleagues, and family members. What he discovered was far more compelling than what he had imagined: Though Nouwen was indeed the generous and loving man many thought he was, he was also never able to find consistent peace in his own life. Tormenting him were profound feelings of anxiety, insecurity, and loneliness. This portrait gives an honest and well-balanced account of Nouwen's life that leaves no stone unturned, investigating his childhood, his family, his sexuality, and his life as a priest and member of the L'Arche Daybreak community in Toronto.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Henri Nouwen's devotional writings are effective because their revealing, personal voice invites readers to share an effortless intimacy with him. This literary intimacy, in turn, helps many readers achieve greater closeness with others and with God. Michael Ford's biography of Nouwen, *Wounded Prophet*, draws on interviews with Nouwen's colleagues and close friends who describe Nouwen, predictably, as the generous and loving man readers have met through Nouwen's books. Yet Ford's biography also contains some striking surprises about the extreme loneliness and anxiety that plagued Nouwen throughout his life. *Wounded Prophet* is especially insightful regarding the connections between Nouwen's homosexuality, which he grappled with in earnest during the last years of his life, and his theology, which became increasingly grounded in the life of the senses during that same period. Ford has a clear understanding of and deep compassion for his subject, whose vocation he summarizes beautifully near the end of the book: "Like many mystics, Henri Nouwen was in tune with the energy of divine life, passionate about Jesus, and committed to speaking words of hope from his own mysterious anguish. It was a vocation for connecting the spiritual with the earthbound." --*Michael Joseph Gross*

From Publishers Weekly

In this "portrait" of a formal biography, ABC journalist Michael Ford explores "the person of Henri Nouwen as a wounded prophet for our time." In his title, Ford plays on one of Nouwen's favorite themes, the "wounded healer." Divided into three sections, "Heart," "Mind" and "Body," the book examines the ways Nouwen offered healing and prophetic utterances to his readers and friends as well as the nature of the personal woundedness out of which Nouwen ministered. His strengths included emotional openness, spiritual insight and courage in seeking new avenues to express his faith, from living among the poor in Bolivia and Peru to turning his back on academe to serve the severely handicapped residents of L'Arche. Nouwen's admirers may be less familiar with his weaknesses, such as an emotional insecurity that led him to constantly seek attention and reassurance, bouts of depression and, according to Ford, anguish over his sexual orientation. Ford's theological training (he's working on a doctoral thesis at Heythrop College at the University of London on Henri Nouwen's spiritual writings) allows him to engage Nouwen's ideas and evaluate intelligently his place in the theological landscape, and he discusses Nouwen's character and struggles with compassion and understanding.

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From Library Journal

Next to Thomas Merton, Henri Nouwen is a Dutch Roman Catholic priest who spent most of his life in North America and died in 1996 as chaplain of the L'Arche community in Montreal. He is arguably the most influential spiritual writer of the latter half of the 20th century. One of his books was titled *The Wounded Healer*, and BBC producer Ford's well-written biography reveals just how wounded Nouwen was. While not a tell-all, Ford's book perhaps provides more detail on Nouwen's personal life than many readers will care to know. Still, it does show the human side of a spiritual writer who has touched many people, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish alike. A restless spirit whose personal crises, which were the substance of his writings, were so much like the personal crises of the ordinary believer. De Vinck, a spiritual writer, has gathered reflections by various people who were touched by Nouwen or his work. Some, like John Mogabgab, Nouwen's research assistant at Yale, knew him well. Others knew him only through his writings but were transformed by them. Given the tremendous popularity of Nouwen's works, both of these volumes should find a place in all but the smallest libraries. Augustine J. Curley, O.S.B., Newark Abbey, NJ

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Terri Rouse:

Why don't make it to be your habit? Right now, try to prepare your time to do the important behave, like looking for your favorite guide and reading a reserve. Beside you can solve your short lived problem; you can add your knowledge by the publication entitled Wounded Prophet: A Portrait of Henri J.M. Nouwen. Try to make the book Wounded Prophet: A Portrait of Henri J.M. Nouwen as your buddy. It means that it can to become your friend when you sense alone and beside that of course make you smarter than ever. Yeah, it is very fortunated for you. The book makes you more confidence because you can know anything by the book. So , we need to make new experience as well as knowledge with this book.

Daniel Soderquist:

This Wounded Prophet: A Portrait of Henri J.M. Nouwen book is not really ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you get by reading this book is usually information inside this reserve incredible fresh, you will get data which is getting deeper anyone read a lot of information you will get. This kind of Wounded Prophet: A Portrait of Henri J.M. Nouwen without we recognize teach the one who looking at it become critical in imagining and analyzing. Don't possibly be worry Wounded Prophet: A Portrait of Henri J.M. Nouwen can bring whenever you are and not make your case space or bookshelves' turn out to be full because you can have it in the lovely laptop even phone. This Wounded Prophet: A Portrait of Henri J.M. Nouwen having great arrangement in word in addition to layout, so you will not experience uninterested in reading.

Nora Mickey:

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