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The Devout Life
Plunging the Depths of Spiritual Renewal

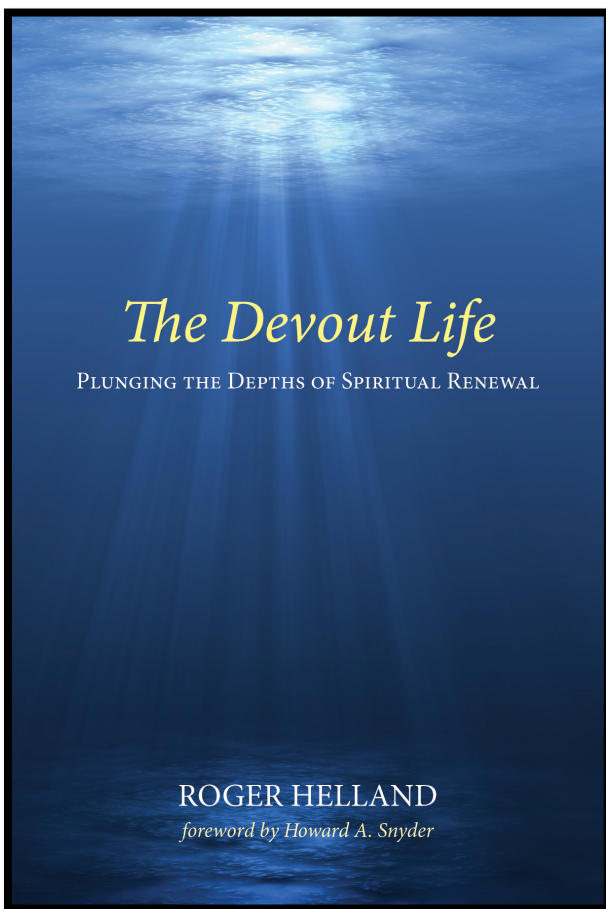
by Roger Helland

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New Title From Roger Helland
The Devout Life
Plunging the Depths of Spiritual Renewal



The church in the Western world is largely faltering in its spiritual and missional vitality. There's a *crisis of piety*—or *the devout life*—heartfelt devotion to Christ and his cause. The Pietist movement of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries grew into a revolutionary torrent of spiritual renewal that influenced the Moravians, the Methodists, the great awakenings, and global evangelicalism as we know it today. *The Devout Life* explores and expands on ten key features of Pietism to plunge the depths of spiritual renewal for today.

Roger Helland is district minister of the Baptist General Conference in Alberta, Canada. His passion is to stimulate spiritual and missional renewal in the church. He is the author of six books including *Magnificent Surrender* (2012) and *Missional Spirituality* (2011) and serves as an adjunct instructor in several Bible colleges and seminaries. Roger and his wife Gail live near Calgary.



Interview with Roger Helland

Why did you write *The Devout Life*?

The church in the Western world is largely faltering in spiritual and missional vitality. There's a crisis of *piety*—the devout life—heartfelt devotion to Christ and his cause. I love pastors, church leaders, and the church, with a life-long passion for the spiritual and missional renewal of the church. I wrote this book to equip, empower, and renew church leaders and churches to thrive and flourish in missional disciple-making.

What is *The Devout Life* about?

This book draws from the Pietist movement of the 17th-18th centuries that grew into a revolutionary torrent of spiritual renewal that influenced the Moravians, the Methodists, the great awakenings, and global evangelicalism, as we know it today. As I demonstrate, the Pietists set forth a life of regeneration, with a heart-felt religion, through a life of Piety that exhibits the fruits of faith. *The Devout Life* offers a rich interaction with past and present Pietists (with references to Puritan and other writers that echo Pietist ideas) for spiritual renewal in today's church.

How is *The Devout Life* unique?

Though the Puritans generally enjoy more attention in church history, there's a current rediscovery of the Pietists. While there are many valuable academic books available on Pietism, my goal is to offer an applied and practical one anchored in solid academics. As I suggest, the devout life is a life of *piety*, nurtured by a certain posture and expressed by certain practices. While there is no uniform consensus on a definitive list of characteristics of Pietism, I will explore and expand on ten observable features for a devout life drawn from a Pietist posture.

How will readers benefit from reading *The Devout Life*?

In one volume, they will have a clear and compelling treatment of Pietist spiritual theology and practices applied for vigorous and lively spiritual and missional renewal. *The Devout Life* offers careful historical, biblical, theological, practical, and personal dimensions of applied Pietism drawn from many primary and secondary sources with documentation for further reading. In addition, the book is designed for personal or group study with questions for reflection and practice and strategic assignments for pastors and church leaders at the end of each chapter.

Who is the target audience of *The Devout Life*?

Pastors, church and denominational leaders, seminary and Bible college professors and students of spiritual theology, discipleship, and mission, missionaries, church boards and key leaders and people interested in exploring the life of piety—the devout life—to plunge the depths of personal and corporate spiritual renewal for today.

How are you qualified to write *The Devout Life*?

I bring over 35 years of experience as a pastor, professor, denominational leader, consultant, mentor, and author. My education includes a Master of Theology in Old Testament and Doctor of Ministry in Leadership and Spiritual Formation. I've taught graduate courses and seminars in Spiritual and Missional Renewal, The History and Theology of Christian Spirituality, Missional Spirituality, Pastoral Theology and Practice, and others. My pastoral and denominational ministries have always had spiritual renewal at the core, grounded in the Spirit and the Scriptures. My teaching and writing concentrates on spiritual formation and church renewal informed by vigorous Pietist research, and contextualized in the rich traditions where I have served with the Vineyard, Mennonite Brethren, Christian and Missionary Alliance, and Baptist. I love pastors and church leaders. And, I'm a Pietist!

An Excerpt from *The Devout Life*

The command center of the devout life is *piety*. This is an older word that refers to Christian maturity marked by holiness, reverence, and godliness. Picture a gentle, wise, and winsome Pope Francis or Elisabeth Elliot type Christian who radiates Jesus Christ. A pious person is not simply a moral or religious person, but a godly or devout person.

An artesian well I will draw from for the devout life is Pietism—a spiritual renewal movement that arose within European Lutheran and Reformed State Churches in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Pietism was “a Bible centered movement, concerned for holy living that flows from a regenerate heart.” It played a significant role in the beginning of evangelical movements in Britain, and the main themes of Pietism influenced the main themes of evangelicalism. Continental Pietist spirituality made its mark on almost every phase of the British and American awakenings.

The Pietist movement, launched in the late seventeenth century, was a welcome reaction to lifeless Lutheran orthodoxy and spiritual atrophy. Imagine what it would be like if the sum of your Christian life was a series of rituals: the pastor baptized you as an infant; you sat through rote catechism classes; you attended church every week by law and listened to academic sermons and received communion; you went to confessional to seek forgiveness of your sins; and then you glugged your intake of beer and played cards or dice while your pastor haggled with other pastors, and everyone held to exact doctrine, even though rancid corruption seethed within.

Douglas Shantz writes, “The genius of Pietism lay in the adjectives it employed: true Christianity; heartfelt, living faith; a living knowledge of God; the inward Christ; and the inner Word; . . . the new man; born again Christianity.” Pietism stressed that true Christianity was a practical love for God and neighbor that integrated the head and the heart—doctrine and devotion—evidenced by the “fruits of faith” through ongoing repentance and conversion. Pietism focused on inner piety, religious experience, and renovation—the regenerate life. It placed the authority of Scripture above church creeds and dogmas as the source for the Christian life. Pietism embraced a love theology that promoted a missional emphasis on charity and good deeds fused with an activation of the spiritual priesthood of true believers primarily practiced in small groups called “conventicles,” viewed as “colleges of piety” and as “little churches within the church.”

Pietism is a religion of the heart—the affective command center or nucleus of your life. Though the Puritans generally enjoy more attention in church history, there is a current rediscovery of the Pietists. I see classical Pietism as a mighty river of spiritual renewal with many tributaries and parallel streams that flowed into it and out from it. Though it is no longer a movement but a milieu or an ethos, its effects and expressions permeate much of evangelical spiritual life, with some mutations and distortions.

Pietism was an eclectic mix of biblical theology merged with the ideas of numerous devotional writers. It developed into two primary camps—church and radical—with a variety of expressions such as Halle, Moravian, Württemberg, and Reformed. Throughout this book, I will cite various Pietist scholars and develop the ideas primarily of key church Pietist leaders, both early and modern, and others who influenced the Pietists or reflect Pietist ideas. Let me introduce a few Pietists to you.

Praise for *The Devout Life*

“Many great spiritual writers in Christian history were busy pastors and administrators. This ultimately depends upon the disposition of the heart—the orientation of the affective and controlling center of the self. Roger Helland passionately believes this still. Drawing upon the legacy of classic Pietism, he calls for a renewal of heartfelt, ‘all-in’ devotion to Christ and his mission in the world.”

—**Glen G. Scorgie, Professor of Theology, Bethel Seminary San Diego**

“Few books can both prick the Christian’s conscience and compel the reader towards a deeper and more authentic relationship with God. Roger’s appeal to historical Pietism and systematic application to modern discipleship stirs the heart and challenges the mind to move beyond intellectual and religious activity, to true intimacy with a living and loving God.”

—**Tom Blackaby, Pastor and former International Director of Blackaby Ministries International**

“Spiritual growth requires transformation of our heart as well as our head. In *The Devout Life*, Roger Helland encourages both, drawing on the history of the Pietist movement to affect both mind and will. This rich stream of historical insight brings fresh perspective to our contemporary interest in the spiritual disciplines.”

—**Kenton C. Anderson, President, Northwest Baptist Seminary**

“Sometimes there’s a gap between a book’s content and its author. Not here. Helland’s prescription for the devout Christian life mines Scripture, Pietist and Puritan doctors alike, but also aligns with what I know to be Roger’s deepest aspirations. May this prescription from a devoted disciple, a capable leader, and a competent scholar settle deeply into your heart as you read and the Spirit enables.”

—**David Guretzki, Executive Vice President, Evangelical Fellowship of Canada**

“Roger Helland has written an engaging and stirring call to actually live the sanctified life as described in Scripture and experienced and taught by holy men and women down throughout the ages, particularly those in the Pietist tradition. I heartily recommend it. If read and applied, it would lead to the cure for so much staleness and bondage in the lives of believers and to the experience of a deeper experience of the presence of Christ. He has made a rich offering, especially to the evangelical Christian.”

—**Peter H. Davids, Visiting Professor, Houston Graduate School of Theology**

