# FOREWORD

This book represents a lifetime of reflection translated into haiku poetry. It forms a personal case history of growth in grace and maturity through the fiery furnace of life's trials. Richard's book is an action/reflection study with deep personal dynamics. It demonstrates a process that is more than theoretical and intellectual, but one in which the very praxis of a renewal paradigm for life is portrayed through the poetry of haiku.

The hundreds of haiku draw out, in a compelling way, principles of life around spiritual themes of grace. As the themes unfold, quiet reflection instills a sense of confidence that fortifies our strength of character. The haiku insights, applied in the daily experience of life, provide practical depths of knowledge and a wealth of relevant truths.

This first hand account of life's realities experienced by Richard in warfare and years of reflection as an airline pilot, is powerful in its portrayal of gratifying, sobering and, at times, shocking truths we all need to face in life. The lessons available to learn are timely in their relevance.

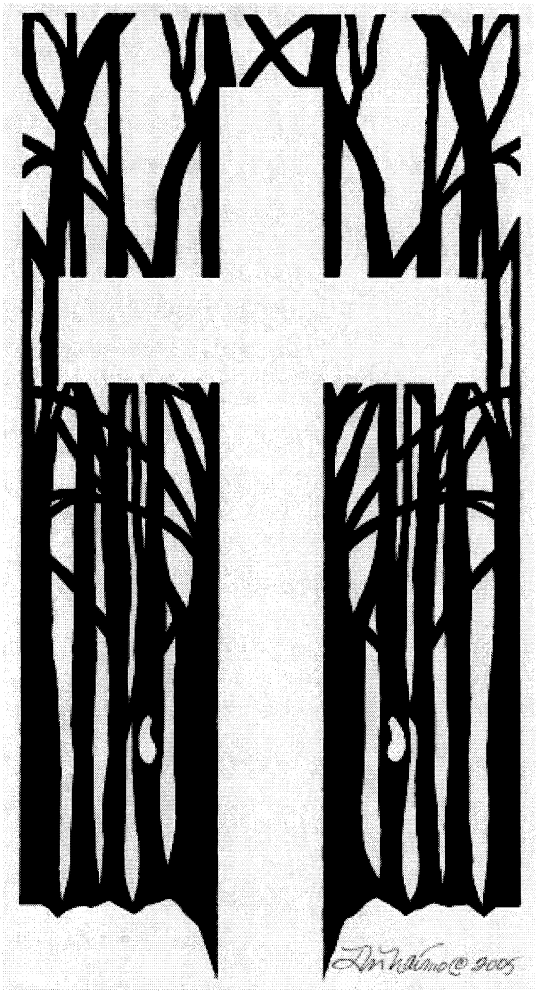
At the same time, the truths of the haiku testify to the spiritual power released. The themes carry a strong resurrection motif. By coming to terms with the barrenness of life's mistakes, loneliness and grief, a new life emerges through the grace of God's power as the truths contained in the haiku translate into applied reality. The haiku draw conclusions in practical suggestions for the wide variety of life's challenges presented by a person who has passed through the fire, glimpsed death in the face, and survived to tell his story with recommendations in haiku poetry that we cannot afford to ignore.

This book of haiku poetry represents a significant point of personal transition in Richard's life and service to the community, both professionally and in the church. It portrays a profound understanding of the paradigm of transformation available for renewal in the midst of loneliness and grief. In our contemporary preoccupation with success based on effective methods, this book is a powerful testimony to the effectual grace of restoration in the spirit of Jesus Christ. If we have "hit the wall" of unsupported grief in our life, we can, like Saint Paul, thank God "who, in Christ, always leads us in triumph" (2 Corinthians 2:14) by taking His truths conveyed so magnificently in this book and making them live.

It gives me great pleasure to endorse this book. It will edify as well as instruct, and contribute to the renewal of all who discipline themselves to daily reflect on the truths in the haiku and then apply them in daily interactions with people at all levels of society.

**Rev. Dr. John R Howell**
Executive Chairman
Transforming Leadership, Inc.

# *Family Trees*



*Narrowed focus and*
*Shifts in attention create*
*Double-mindedness.*

*The Truth is I Am*
*One with the Father of All*
*Now and Forever..*

# INTRODUCTION
## *General Discussion*

What you have in your hands is an extreme distillate of the truth as the author has come to see, know and love it after 40 years of seeking the truth as a common thread in the world's predominant religions, philosophies, psychologies and metaphysical systems. As a poetic compellation it has been further distilled through a multi-phase selection process that has gone on for nearly two years and involved nearly 70,000 pieces. Although offered in a poetic style the author believes serves to enhance potential understanding, each haiku conveys a rather simple insight that might just as easily be read as a wisdom saying.

As to why a collection of haiku was chosen as the first offering in the series, the author would suggest that haiku has an unparallel potential to overcome the loss of fidelity that normally occurs when relative words and thoughts are used to convey non-relative insights. As such, haiku has a remarkable capacity to evoke direct experiential understanding without the mental noise linguistic communication normally entails. Seen in this light, haiku might be rightly characterized as a kind of "intellectual judo," in which a simple arrangement of words is used to throw the thinker beyond thought and occasion direct insight.

The author further suggests that each of the haiku offered contains a nugget of the truth–some pure gold, some nearly pure and some in need of additional refinement. Some will occasion immediate recognition, some will need pondering, and others will require cross referencing before they reveal their message. The best, at least traditionally, will be those that evoke a surprise, a smile, a laugh. Still others may re-

quire extensive contextual correlation with the background information provided in the appendices before they surrender their insight. Of course, an individual reader's response to any particular haiku will depend on his personal experience and perspective. Even so, each should contribute to a degree of conceptual triangulation that may serve to expand the reader's mental box, upgrade conceptual software and facilitate direct seeing.

## WHAT'S THE PAYOFF?

Despite the author's obvious enthusiasm for haiku, the reader may still be wondering, "Why should I be interested in a book of poetry, let alone Japanese poetry"; or even more pragmatically, in the words of a young friend: "What's in this for me?" Well, the answer is simple: "YOU ARE!" For what this rather extensive compilation offers, and the author does not believe he is overstating the case, is a very real potential for a quantum leap in self-knowledge, and with that the accompanying joy and inner peace that any such growth promises.

For those of more pragmatic bent, this collection of haiku offers an extreme condensation of 40 years worth of study and research that has already been accomplished for the reader, if and when he is inclined to apply himself to the more fundamental questions of life we all came to answer (i.e., "Who Am I, What is the meaning of life, Why does man suffer, Does God exist?" etc.). Seen in this light, the humble nuggets of truth this work offers might rightly be characterized as "Cliff Notes" of the Spirit.

## WHY HAIKU?

Although alluded to in less detail above, the following response to a friend's query as to "Why haiku?" is offered for the additional insight it might provide:

(1) First, because I had stopped writing anything but prose and open letters by 1997, and felt called to explore new ways of expressing the Truth I had been graced to receive during 30 plus years of searching. In this regard, and having once read a small book of Japanese haiku belonging to my mother, it occurred to me that haiku might just be the alternative mode of expression I was seeking. I was not wrong.

(2) Secondly, because I discovered that writing haiku was a wonderful way of distilling ideas to their essence, clarifying related insights and fine-tuning conceptual understanding. I also found haiku's potential to evoke an immediate experience in another quite extraordinary. As such, its potential fidelity as a means of interpersonal communication is unparalleled in my experience.

(3) Thirdly, because haiku does an outstanding job of achieving the objective the following metaphor attempts to describe:

> Coin Balancing: Although we can not fully define an absolute state in relative terms, we can use analogies, metaphors and similes in an attempt to evoke or recall a direct sense or perception of that state. Thus, if I have an experience I wish to share, I can use a metaphor to indicate what it felt like with the hope of evoking a similar feeling in another. This is the verbal equivalent of having someone balance a coin to convey what balance feels like. This is because balance, as an absolute or non-relative state, cannot be captured in words, yet can be known as a direct experience. Thus, by moving a coin back and forth through its balance point, while progressively reducing said movements, one may get a feel for almost balanced. Then, suddenly, as the coin comes to rest, perhaps a direct sense of balance, as a non-relative state, may be experienced.

## TITLE NOTE

Also worth noting for the context provided is that the working title of the original work was, "What is Truth—The One that Sets You Free?" With a decision to switch from a full blown anthology as a first offering, however, a significant number of other titles were considered before "Out of My Mind and Back to My Senses" was selected. The following two "near misses" are mentioned for the synoptic insight they clearly offer: (1) "Super-strength Truth in Easy to Swallow Capsule Form"; and (2) "Thinking Myself to Death."

## POTENTIAL READING STRATEGIES

For those readers who may still feel poetically challenged, as the author himself is with respect to many poetic forms, or, perhaps, those who feel daunted by the philosophical, theological or intellectual implications of the material, the following strategies are offered as frames of reference the reader might find useful in recognizing the "common thread" the haiku individually and collectively reflect:

1) Use the other haiku on the same page for potential contextual help.

2) Seek the common tread that each haiku expresses as a particular or unique reflection of the one changeless Truth in which "we all live move and have our being."

3) Seek to see how things are the same, rather than different, and so use the mind's discriminative faculties to build-up rather than break-down. In other words, try to see how things fit together rather than come apart.

4) If you still don't like the idea of reading poetry, let alone poetry with the mysterious quality haiku sometimes has, try reading each as if it were prose–as a saying or notable quote.

5) Correlating individual haiku with the Foundational Scriptures referenced in Appendix F might be an excellent approach for many Christian readers, and the reason they were included.

(Note: For those interested in specific examples as to how these strategies might be applied, please see Appendix G.)

## DISCLAIMER

The author would now like to suggest that neither he nor anyone else can tell the reader any truth he does not already know at some level of his being, conscious or unconscious. For if not, he would have no way of recognizing truth when he saw it reflected in outer words, thoughts, and ideas. This is why truth speaks directly to those whose "spiritual eye" is no longer subject to and blinded by an endless stream of relative words and thoughts (read mental noise). Truth, as such, is inwardly discerned, self-evident and in no need of outer defense. In fact, the only thing that ever truly needs defending are partial conceptual positions held relative to the truth, and those who unwittingly identify with them.

## CLOSING NOTE

In closing, the author would like to say that after penning a massive number of haiku in the last 8 years, some much more finished than others, and many variations on the same theme or insight, that the haiku contained in this collection are all honest attempts, not only to convey, but more importantly, to evoke direct insights into the Ultimate Truth of Being which they, with varying degrees of fidelity, reflect. Having said that, he now leaves the reader with counsel Thomas Merton once gave in a book entitled *New Seeds of Contemplation:* "As soon as any thought stimulates your mind or your heart you can put the book down because your meditation has begun."

*The Center of One's*
*Conscious Attention is both*
*An Altar and Throne.*