



## 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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## Wounded Prophet: A Portrait of Henri J.M. Nouwen By Michael Ford Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #221442 in Books
- Published on: 2002-02-19
- Released on: 2002-02-19
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.56" h x .50" w x 5.56" l, .78 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 264 pages

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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

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### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Avis Zeiger:**

The guide untitled Wounded Prophet: A Portrait of Henri J.M. Nouwen is the book that recommended to you to read. You can see the quality of the guide content that will be shown to anyone. The language that publisher use to explained their way of doing something is easily to understand. The article author was did a lot of exploration when write the book, and so the information that they share to your account is absolutely accurate. You also could possibly get the e-book of Wounded Prophet: A Portrait of Henri J.M. Nouwen from the publisher to make you much more enjoy free time.

#### **Milan Allen:**

Reading can called brain hangout, why? Because if you are reading a book especially book entitled Wounded Prophet: A Portrait of Henri J.M. Nouwen your thoughts will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in each and every aspect that maybe unfamiliar for but surely can become your mind friends. Imaging every single word written in a publication then become one form conclusion and explanation that maybe you never get before. The Wounded Prophet: A Portrait of Henri J.M. Nouwen giving you one more experience more than blown away your brain but also giving you useful facts for your better life in this era. So now let us present to you the relaxing pattern here is your body and mind are going to be pleased when you are finished studying it, like winning a. Do you want to try this extraordinary shelling out spare time activity?

#### **John Davis:**

Your reading sixth sense will not betray anyone, why because this Wounded Prophet: A Portrait of Henri J.M. Nouwen e-book written by well-known writer who knows well how to make book that may be understand by anyone who all read the book. Written with good manner for you, still dripping wet every ideas and producing skill only for eliminate your personal hunger then you still doubt Wounded Prophet: A Portrait of Henri J.M. Nouwen as good book but not only by the cover but also with the content. This is one publication that can break don't determine book by its cover, so do you still needing one more sixth sense to pick that!? Oh come on your reading sixth sense already told you so why you have to listening to yet another sixth sense.

#### **Joshua Miner:**

This Wounded Prophet: A Portrait of Henri J.M. Nouwen is great book for you because the content which can be full of information for you who all always deal with world and possess to make decision every minute. This specific book reveal it information accurately using great manage word or we can declare no rambling sentences in it. So if you are read the idea hurriedly you can have whole details in it. Doesn't mean it only will give you straight forward sentences but difficult core information with lovely delivering sentences. Having Wounded Prophet: A Portrait of Henri J.M. Nouwen in your hand like keeping the world

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