

## CELTIC CHRISTIAN eSTUDIES COURSES

### *Head through the Heart Learning*

#### FROM ANCIENT CELTIC TO NEW MONASTICISM

##### **Aim**

To identify and appraise

- Reasons for the interest in new monasticism
- Neglected expressions of old (especially Celtic) monasticism that resonate today
- Different types of new monasticism
- Issues and questions

##### **Notes and queries**

- Students who enrol commit to the year-long timetable, and are allocated a tutor. They are invited to find a thoughtful, interested friend or group with whom they can discuss issues that the course raises.
- Students may network with other students on this course. For this reason we will circulate a list of fellow students and their emails unless a student requests us not to do this at the time they receive this information.
- Students who for any reason choose not to type may record their contributions and send these as an electronic attachment.
- Each student maintains a reflective log/blog as they go along - to chart thoughts, ideas, revelatory insights, questions etc. for their own benefit although the tutor could comment on it too.
- Each of the eleven units should be completed within one month.
- Following the eleventh session, the student's tutor will provide an assessment of possible next steps, and the admin office may issue a certificate of course completion.
- Required reading during the course:  
*High Street Monasteries* by Ray Simpson with an Appendix by Simon Reed  
(Kevin Mayhew 2009)  
*Ancient Faith, Future Mission: new monasticism as fresh expression of church*  
(Canterbury Press/Morehouse 2010)

- Students who find out about communities and resources not mentioned in the course are invited to copy details to our administration so that we can create an evolving appendix to the course. [brenda.grace@aidanandhilda.org.uk](mailto:brenda.grace@aidanandhilda.org.uk)
- Web details change. If students discover that web details of a resource listed in the course are out of date, please inform admin [brenda.grace@aidanandhilda.org.uk](mailto:brenda.grace@aidanandhilda.org.uk)
- Every book listed under FURTHER READING is available in the Celtic Christian Studies Library at Lindisfarne.

*Enrolment forms and Procedures for students and tutors* are available as Downloads ON THE WEBSITE [www.raysimpson.org](http://www.raysimpson.org)

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

- UNIT 1                    WHAT'S THE POINT OF EXPLORING NEW MONASTICISM?**
- UNIT 2                    A HITCH-HIKER'S GUIDE TO MONASTICISM**
- UNIT 3                    DESERT MONASTICISM**
- UNIT 4                    EARLY CELTIC MONASTIC CHURCHES**
- UNIT 5                    THE RISE OF NEW MONASTICISM**
- UNIT 6                    MARKS OF NEW MONASTICISM**
- UNIT 7                    VOWS AND RULES OF LIFE**
- UNIT 8                    WHAT'S NEW? QUESTIONS AND CHALLENGES**
- UNIT 9                    CAN THERE BE MONASTIC CHURCHES**
- UNIT 10                  MONASTIC CHURCHES AND VILLAGES OF GOD**
- UNIT 11                  DISCERNING A NEW MONASTIC VOCATION**

.

## UNIT 1      WHAT'S THE POINT OF EXPLORING NEW MONASTICISM?

### To read

Chapters 1 and 2 of *Ancient Faith, Future Mission: new monasticism as fresh expression of church* (Canterbury Press/Morehouse 2010)

### After completing this unit you should be able to grasp

- A. Reasons key voices give for exploring monasticism afresh
- B. Why you think this is important.

### Reasons for exploring monasticism afresh

- **1. Civilisation is in crisis: monasteries are laboratories of civilization – Alasdair MacIntyre**

The philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre likens contemporary culture to the period when the Roman Empire began to disintegrate from the third Christian century onwards. He describes contemporary society as 'a collection of strangers.' He believes that it was small communities of virtue – monastic communities – which maintained life and saved the western world from barbarism. He suggests that it is small Christian communities who will have the most powerful effect on our present society, and give it the spiritual and intellectual undergirding that it needs. Others point out that the austerity resulting from prolonged economic recession requires groups who find divine purpose in 'the day of small things'. Some think that the threat of a clash of civilizations requires a third way, a humble monastic model of Christianity replacing the abrasive western versions.

MacIntyre, Alasdair, *After Virtue* 1981. A summary of this is available on [www.enotes.com](http://www.enotes.com) > [Literature](#) > [After Virtue Study Guide](#)

- **2. Monastic practice is a means to mature character formation – Graham Cray**

'Many young adults avoid binding choices because something or someone better may come along. But it is the nature of choices to limit options. And character grows through making and sustaining wise choices. The evasion of commitment is a recipe for permanent immaturity.' Bishop Graham Cray, Chapter 1, *Ancient Faith, Future Mission: new monasticism as fresh expression of church*

- **3. Monastic communities are an authentic alternative to anachronistic and driven churches – Matt Rees**

Matt Rees wrote a paper for his M. Litt entitled *Changing Our Habits: A New Model of Monasticism for the Contemporary Church*. He observes that forces such as the Reformation, the Enlightenment, the industrial revolution, and secularism have weakened the foundations of churches as communities; and that globalization means that people are no longer content to remain with a church that is stuck in a framework that does not feel right. He believes that one solution to this problem is to return to some of our earliest roots – to the ancient practice of monasticism. People with this view don't want to copy the exact practices, they want to copy the values and goals and allow culturally authentic practices to flow out of these.

## UNIT FIVE            THE RISE OF NEW MONASTICISM

### To read

Chapter 1 of *High Street Monasteries*

### After completing this unit you should be able to grasp:

- A) Five waves of new monasticism
- B) Types of new monasticism

## FIVE WAVES OF NEW MONASTICISM

### 1)        Out of World War Two

The German Lutheran martyr **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** wrote in a letter to his brother Karl in January 1935: 'The restoration of the Church must surely come from a new kind of monasticism, which will have only one thing in common with the old kind, a life lived without compromise according to the Sermon on the Mount in the following of Jesus... I think it is time to gather the people for this.' *Bonhoeffer, Dietrich*, Gesammelte Schriften, herausgegeben von Eberhard Bethge (4 volumes 1st edition volume 3 page 25). Translated by Daniel Hug.

## UNIT SIX                MARKS OF NEW MONASTICISM

### To read

Chapter 4 of *High Street Monasteries*

Chapter 3 (by Shane Claiborne) of *Ancient Faith, Future Mission: new monasticism as fresh expression of church*

### After completing this unit you should be able to grasp:

- A)        Some marks of new monasticism as external actions
- B)        Some marks of new monasticism as inward qualities
- C)        Some marks of new monasticism as intellectual ideas

### Twelve Marks (USA)

In 2004 a number of groups and academics convened a meeting in a church in Durham, North Carolina and issued a statement. They spoke of 'a grassroots ecumenism and a prophetic witness within the North American church which is diverse in form, but characterized by twelve marks...'

The marks are:

## UNIT TEN                VILLAGES OF GOD

### To read

Chapter 7 of *Ancient Faith, Future Mission* (by Tom Sine).

Also re-read and meditate on pages 103-116 of *High Street Monasteries*

### After completing this unit you should be able to grasp

- A) Trends that point to 'joined up' developments
- B) Theology that calls for holistic expressions of church
- C) Various paradigms of a village of God.

## **UNIT 11                    DISCERNING NEW MONASTIC VOCATIONS**

### **To read**

Chapters 10 (by Philip Roderick) and 13 of *Ancient Faith, Future Mission* (by Abbot Stuart Burns).

### **After completing this unit you should be able to grasp**

- A) The main expressions of new monasticism
- B) Some ways of discerning your own calling

Help us, Lord,  
to trade with the gifts you have given us  
and to bend our minds to holy learning,  
that we may escape the fretting moth  
of littleness of mind that would wear out our souls.  
Brace our wills to actions  
that they may not be the spoils of weak desires.  
Train our hearts and lips  
to song which gives courage to the soul.  
Being buffeted by trials, may we learn to laugh.  
Being reproved, may we give thanks.  
Having failed, may we determine to succeed.

*Echoes the anonymous 'Homily of St Hilda'*