ON THE ROAD

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No. 40 March 2009

Some of the seventy-five folks who attended the conference

COMMUNITIES of the KINGDOM
The New Monasticism and Anabaptism
Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand
January 2009 Conference
Special Conference Edition

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On The Road

The AAANZ quarterly journal publishes news, articles, book reviews, and resource information. It is published online with a paper edition available for those without computer facilities. (Paper edition A$25 per year) To be added to the mailing list write:

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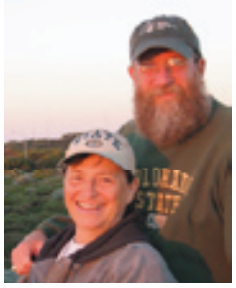
COVER SYMBOL:

The lamb in the midst of briars is a traditional Anabaptist symbol. It illustrates the suffering Lamb of God, who calls the faithful to obedient service and discipleship on the road. This particular rendition is from ***Hymnal A Worship Book***. Copyright 1992. Reprinted with permission of Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, PA, USA.

THE VIEW FROM EPHESIANS FOUR

MARK AND MARY HURST

...to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service



Bessie Pereira, Ross Langmead, and Gordon Preece formed the Melbourne planning committee for this year's AAANZ conference held at Oasis Christian Camp 23-26 January. They provided us with a rich time of fellowship, teaching, and meeting new people. The theme was "Communities of the Kingdom: The New Monasticism and Anabaptism". A number of Christian communities were represented. We hope to give you a taste of the conference in this issue of ***ON THE ROAD***. It was not a conference where formal papers were delivered so most of what is presented here is summaries of what was said. The exception is Gordon Preece's presentation that we present in full.

We enjoyed the presence of several members of the Community of the Transfiguration. They led us in morning prayers Saturday morning and presented in several sessions during the weekend. When asked for summaries of their talks they wrote:

"Thank you for your invitation to share our talk outlines with the readers of ***ON THE ROAD***. The weekend together was a stimulating and relationship building time for us and we are so glad we could share with you all. In general, we have not and do not like our material to be published for wider readers. This means that we miss many opportunities for communication but we prefer that people hear from us personally rather than read about our life. Because our theology and our life practise are so much intertwined, we feel that the only way to communicate these things is through relationship. Consequently, we must decline your request with a little regret but hope that you will understand our reluctance. We look forward to meeting in the future and continuing our journey into community with the non-violent God."

We encourage our readers who want to know more about their community life to visit them. They are in a time of rebuilding but welcome folks to participate in their life together as a monastic community.

Other communities represented were Jesus Generation from Canberra, Peace Tree Community from Perth, and Urban Seed, Urban Neighbours of Hope and Jah Works from Melbourne.

Ross Langmead led the group through a creative worship experience on Sunday morning. The theme was "hospitality" and as a community, we planned and carried out the worship.

Gary Baker videoed most of the presentations. If you are interested in a CD of the conference let us know at AAANZ@iprimus.com.au.

We are always interested in your responses to articles, news items and book reviews that we publish. Write us and share your thoughts.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

DOUG SEWELL

A Step at a Time

The network of people who make up the Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand is an emerging movement. We find inspiration from a belief that faith in Jesus comes alive at the centre through life in community and the work of reconciliation as peacemakers.

In the December issue of **On the Road** I asked you to join us on this great journey…a broad movement of the spirit. I am delighted that so many have chosen to do that. At our recent executive teleconference, we celebrated as 29 new people joined us as members. In addition, since the teleconference in the space of a few days another six have wanted to join us on this journey together.

Our challenge as a diverse and widespread network is how to create opportunities for authentic community to grow amongst us. Not all of us are fortunate to belong to sustaining communities of faith. To connect sporadically is not enough.

The **Prayer Diary** with a member's directory is regularly sent to members. The diary enables each of us daily to support others in prayer. The directory gives opportunities for members to host and visit each other. This is just a beginning.

Our AAANZ Conference in January provided a way to meet and explore Communities of the Kingdom - New Monasticism and Anabaptism. We traced links between the Anabaptists and the new movements of discipleship and faith. We wrestled with the challenges of being in community and how relationships need to be grounded in a spirit of grace. I encourage you to read more about the Conference in this issue of **On The Road**.

Our new AAANZ website has opened another door. Every day, on average between 10 to 20 and as many as 70 people have visited the site. Most are from Australia, USA, and Canada, and there is also broad interest from other countries. If you have not already looked, go to www.anabaptist.asn.au.

A movement is about shared stories that get passed on and on and inspire people to action. I would love to hear more of your stories. A shared journey begins with small steps together. Take a moment to step out and become a part of a great journey of faith, community and reconciliation.

To join AAANZ on line go to: http://www.anabaptist.asn.au/anabaptist/membership.php

WELCOME TO ANABAPTISM

MARK AND MARY HURST

[A number of people attending the 2009 AAANZ conference were new to the Anabaptist fold. The following introduction was presented the first evening.]

Where does the term "Anabaptist" come from? It literally means "re-baptiser." Ana (again) + baptista (to baptize) = Anabaptist. In the sixteenth century, during the time of Martin Luther and the Reformation, someone who had been baptised as an infant and then was baptised again upon confession of faith as an adult was called an Anabaptist. In certain parts of Europe because of the extensive ministry and writings of Menno Simons, Anabaptists became known as Mennists or Mennonites.

What about Anabaptists today? We are people who have a different perspective on the Christian faith. Mennonite educator Paul Lederach refers to Anabaptism as "the third way" while Theologian Walter Klaassen refers to it as "neither Catholic nor Protestant." Palmer Becker says Anabaptists are first of all Christians - a certain kind of Christian. "Anabaptist" should be used as an adjective as in "I am an Anabaptist Christian."

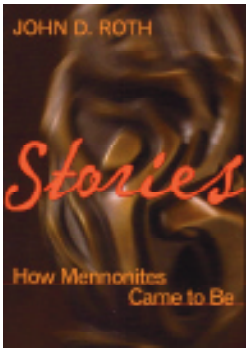
What is central for Anabaptist Christians? Becker has created this statement: "Jesus is the centre of our faith! Community is the centre of our life! Reconciliation is the centre of our work!"

One website where you can learn more about Mennonite history and beliefs is called "Who are the Mennonites?" at http://www.thirdway.com/menno/.

John Paul Lederach is a leading international peacebuilder and a Mennonite. He says this about his tradition:

"I speak from a faith tradition that has for nearly five hundred years embraced the core value of the sanctity of life and sought to redress human suffering and conflict from the pathways of compassionate love, service to others and sacrifice, even on behalf of enemies. I am a Mennonite ...These theological values, I recognize, are not often considered relevant in the mainstream of political ethics, in the "pragmatic" considerations of national security, or in the face of violent oppression and systematic hatred..."

In the court records of 16th century South and Central Germany, Switzerland, and Austria 12,522 Anabaptists are counted. Their numbers were never large, yet they managed to populate 2088 towns and villages of the region. From the beginning Anabaptism was an underground movement that lost virtually all is leaders in the first few years. Gareth Brandt says, "The Anabaptist movement of the 16th century was really a young people's movement, since most of those involved were dead by the age of 30."



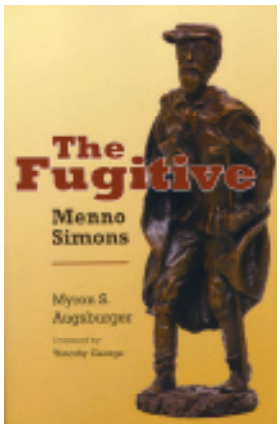
It was partly because of Anabaptism that Protestant churches adopted the confirmation service, and baptismal registers came into being. A 16th century man who did not drink to excess, curse, or abuse his workers or family could be suspected of being an Anabaptist and thus persecuted. Mennonite historian John D. Roth has two recent books that tell more of this Anabaptist story, ***Stories: How Mennonites Came To Be*** and ***Beliefs: Mennonite Faith and Practice.***

Another source of Anabaptist stories is the Martyr's Mirror. Among them is the story of Dirk Willems who saved his enemy from certain death only to be killed himself. The etching that accompanies his story continues to inspire Christians today.

Menno Simons is probably the best-known 16th century Anabaptist due to the denomination named after him. He was born in 1496 in Holland and in 1524 ordained to the Roman Catholic priesthood. At age thirty-two, Menno entered into a study of the Bible to examine Anabaptists' claims about Catholic teachings. After his brother was killed in a local peasant uprising, Menno gave up his life as a priest and then in 1536, at the age of forty, left the Catholic Church. He joined the Obbenites, a group of Anabaptists under the leadership of Obbe Philips and was almost immediately pressed into a leadership role in the group. He reluctantly accepted this responsibility and with it the stressful and dangerous life of an outcast Anabaptist. Married now with children he and his family needed to move constantly from place to place

to avoid arrest, torture and almost certain execution. Within eight years, public authorities referred to the Obbenite group as the "Menists" in recognition of Menno's influence. He remained the principal leader and spokesperson for twenty-five years until he died of natural causes in 1561.

There are forty-two known writings attributed to Menno, more than any other Anabaptist. Twenty-five of his writings are classified in the ***Complete Works*** as books and tracts, seventeen are letters, meditations, prayers and other writings. There are two hymns, one sung to the tune "Where May She Be, This Darling Mine." Four prominent themes emerge from his writings:



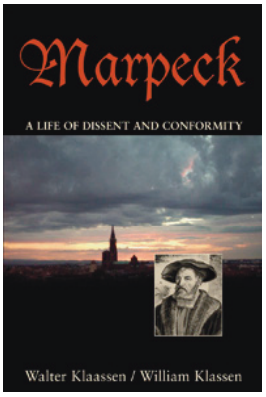
- Give heed to the Word of God:
Scripture was foundational for Menno. His passion for reading the Bible came later in life after he heard about local Anabaptist executions. He wanted to know what motivated these people. His writings are peppered with Scriptural references.

- Godly walk:
Menno emphasized that the Christian faith transforms behaviour.

- An Evangelical:
Menno said, "True evangelical faith cannot lie sleeping. For it clothes the naked. It feeds the hungry. It comforts the sorrowful and it shelters the destitute. It returns good for evil. It serves those who harm it. It binds up the wounded and it seeks that which has been lost. True evangelical faith cannot lie sleeping."

- Christ-centered theology:
Menno quoted both the Old and New Testaments but he saw the life and teachings of Christ as the lens to view the rest of Scripture. His favourite verse, 1 Corinthians 3:11, "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ" prefaced all his writings.

Menno was committed to a life of non-violence. "Since we are to be conformed to the image of Christ, how can we then fight our enemies with the sword? ... Spears and swords of iron we leave to those who, alas, consider human blood and swine's blood of well-nigh equal value ..."



Pilgram Marpeck (died 1556) was another key 16th century Anabaptist leader. He used his engineering and administrative skills to hold down several public service jobs during his lifetime. Marpeck consistently but discreetly stood up to the ruling powers calling for freedom of religion and separation of church and state. Walter Klaassen and William Klassen, editors of ***The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck***, mined Marpeck's writing and dialogue with other Reformation leaders to place his life, work, and theology in their proper context. They show how Marpeck, perhaps more than any other early Anabaptist figure, helped lay the theoretical and practical foundations of the believers' church.

The reformer Wolfgang Capito warned in May 1527 about "the beginning of a new monasticism" and the main culprit he named was **Michael Sattler** (1490-1527). Sattler entered the Benedictine monastery at Freiburg where he eventually became prior. He left the order and was forced to flee Austria in 1525. He travelled to Zurich only to be expelled on November 18, 1525. He went to Strassburg and then to Rottenburg, Germany. On February 24, 1527, he was among a conference of Anabaptists assembled at Schleitheim after which he and his wife were arrested. The Schleitheim Confession became an early expression of Anabaptist church practice. It was called a "Brotherly union of a Number of Children of God Concerning Seven Articles:"

1. Baptism...only believers and no infant baptism;
2. Ban...discipline to follow Matthew 18 model;
3. Breaking Bread...believers all united in baptism and confession/reconciliation;
4. Separation from evil and the devil...allegiance to God in Christ alone;
5. Shepherds...chosen and supported by the congregation according to rule of Paul;
6. Sword...ordering of God outside the perfection of Christ not permitted for Christians;
7. Oath...forbidden by Christ so must do all in the name of God in truthfulness.

Weldon Nisly says: "Michael Sattler was shaped in life and faith as a Benedictine steeped in obedience and discipline in the community. As an Anabaptist leader formulating the first "rule" for communal life, Sattler can be seen to draw heavily on his monastic life and the Rule to establish the centrality of obedience and discipline of the community. Nevertheless, we may see a difference in the direction of the obedience for Sattler as a Benedictine and Sattler as an Anabaptist.

In the Benedictine community, the direction of obedience was explicitly to the Abbot, as the representative of Christ, and to the Rule rooted in Scripture. In the Anabaptist community, the direction of obedience is to what is sometimes called the "Rule of Christ" set out in Scripture and lived out in the community. In the Benedictine monastery the Abbot commands ultimate authority while in the Anabaptist community that authority resides in the community where the shepherd has special responsibilities but remains a member of the congregation."

A record was kept of Sattler's trial before he was cruelly executed. One statement that confirms his

commitment to "love of enemy" and how threatening that was to the state is below:

"If the Turks should make an invasion, they should not be resisted; for it is written: Thou shalt not kill. We ought not to defend ourselves against the Turks and our persecutors; but earnestly entreat God in our prayers, that he would repel and withstand them. For my saying, that if I approved war, I would rather march forth against the so named Christians who persecute, imprison, and put to death, the pious Christians, I assign this reason: the Turk is a true Turk, knows nothing of the Christian faith, and is a Turk according to the flesh; but you, wishing to be Christian, and making your boast of Christ, persecute the pious witnesses of Christ, and are Turks according to the Spirit."

Martin Luther accused Anabaptists of having a "monkish" life and doctrine. Zwingli accused them of "restoring a full monkish system." The Reformers were concerned about Anabaptist views on discipleship. They feared a return to salvation by works. The Anabaptist integration between the inner and outer life looked to many Reformers to be influenced by medieval monasticism and asceticism.

This link between Anabaptism and monasticism exists to this day. Gerald Schlabach says, "In explaining who Mennonites are I have sometimes quoted the historians who call them, the Amish, Hutterites, and the Anabaptist forebears who preceded them all, "married monastics...Anabaptist-Mennonites are the old "new monastics." Growing out of late medieval movements for lay renewal, the Anabaptists sought to form communities of intentionality that would make the kind of serious Christian life of discipleship and communion long assumed only to be possible in celibate religious orders and live it out in families. They did so not because they couldn't control their desires and just had to get married, but because Jesus calls us to follow him as disciples in all of life."

Direct descendants of Anabaptists today (2003 figures) number 1,297,966 in close to 70 countries with the largest numbers in North America, Congo, Ethiopia, Indonesia, and Tanzania. Over half live in the developing countries of the Southern hemisphere. There are over 20 distinct groups, among them Mennonites, Amish, Hutterites, Mennonite Brethren, and Brethren in Christ.

We Are People of God's Peace

We are people of God's peace
as a new creation.
Love unites and strengthens us
at this celebration.
Sons and daughters of the Lord,
serving one another,
A new covenant of peace
binds us all together.

We are children of God's peace
in this new creation,
Spreading joy and happiness,
through God's great
salvation.
Hope we bring in spirit meek,
in our daily living.
Peace with everyone we seek,
good for evil giving.

We are servants of God's peace,
of the new creation.
Choosing peace we faithfully
serve with hearts devotion.
Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace,
confidence will give us.
Christ the Lord is our defence
- Christ will never leave us.

Text by Menno Simons, 1552;
tr. Esther C. Bergen, Mennonite World Conference, 1990.

THE ESSENTIALS OF MONASTICISM

PAUL WALLIS

Paul (www.paulwallis.net) is a Canberra-based writer, broadcaster, preacher, and lecturer. He came to the AAANZ conference representing Jesus Generation. His website says:

"Jesus Generation is a network of individuals, group houses, and household-based churches who all share in a pledge to holiness, mutual accountability and the making of disciples. First set up by Bro Paul in 1997 it has had members in the UK, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Dubai, and China, the Jesus Generation network provides friendship, resources and a firm (but non-hierarchical) framework for brothers and sisters seeking to build fresh ways of being church while remaining rooted in historic Christianity. The rule of life we follow draws on the inspiration and approach of movers and shakers through history, including the Celtic Apostles, Benedict, Francis & Clare of Assisi, John Wesley, William Booth and Francis and Edith Schaeffer.

By keeping church small, simple and relational our rule of life seeks to maximize our time and energy for people outside of the churches. Through relational and hospitality-based ministry God is helping us to reach and disciple not gathered congregations, but people among the 95% who will never attend a church venue, meeting or program. That is our aim, beginning with those in our natural networks."

Reviews of Paul's latest books by Bessie Pereira, Director of OIKOS Australia, appear elsewhere in this issue.

What follows is a summary of Paul's conference talk.

I was asked to speak about the "New Monastic" phenomena from a UK perspective. Unlike the United States, the UK has produced no "official summary" of a new monastic movement, and so I allowed myself a bit more latitude in approaching the topic. In my main lecture, I spoke about how discovering the roots of radical, holistic church planting in Amazonia led me to completely alter my view and inform my understanding of the nature and role monastic traditions have within the Church. The radicalism and holism of the Amazonian Base Christian Communities were derived directly from the monastic DNA of the monks and nuns

CATALYSTS' CHURCHES IN AMAZONIA

Peer to peer community
Holistic faith
Different Economic Behaviour
Primary Groups
Accountability not Authority
"Worship Service" – just a Part of the group's life
Bible Central
Autonomous

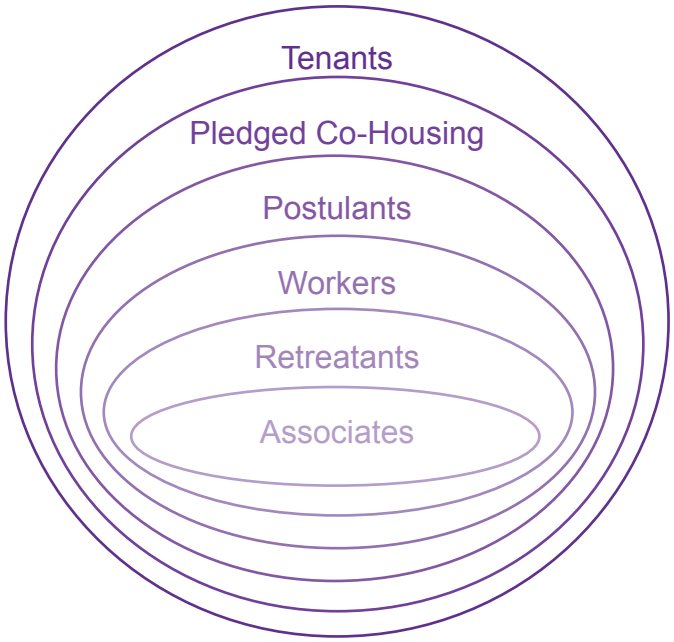
MONASTARIES

Peer to peer community
Holistic faith
Different Economic Behaviour
Founded on Agreements/Pledges
Primary Groups
Accountability not Authority
"Worship Service" – just a Part of a shared rhythm of life
Bible Central
Autonomous

who catalysed and midwifed them into existence. I then unpacked some of the central features of monastic life in the UK/Europe through the centuries:

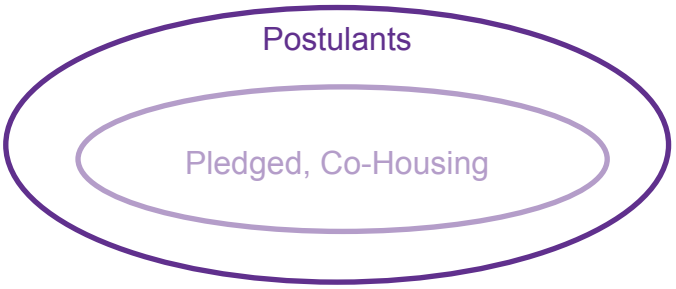
- Peer-to-peer community - a rejection of people's worldly rank - though not without order within the monasteries everyone was first and foremost a "brother" or a "sister"
- Local autonomy and the central value of Scripture resulting in a reforming role in the wider church
- Holistic faith - the "Worship Service" was just a part of a balanced and shared rhythm of life - and a multi-layered relationship to the wider community
- Different Economic Behaviour - common purse, and a balanced approach to work, driven by self-sufficiency rather than acquisition
- Founded on Agreements/Pledges
- The size of Primary Groups
- Careful separation of Accountability not Authority

Pre 1536



Pre -1536 monastic communities in the UK embraced many kinds of people and layers of commitment. That model of monasticism was a model of multi-layered community, with a multi-layered relationship with the wider community and commonly had room for married people, and families as well as celibates. I see six trends within the UK church-scene which have moved diverse groups of people into neo-monastic and quasi-monastic expressions of church.

POST 1536



1) The revival of retreating - which has led to a mushrooming of Associate Members and Retreatants at traditional monastic communities
2) The recovery of Christian heritage - which has led to patterns of church deliberately emulating the models of church community that mothered and fathered the British Church in the beginning
3) Post-modern patterns of reading - through which forms of Associate Membership have developed with a quasi-monastic rhythm of life
4) Renewal in churches altering people's lifestyle choices - leading to co-housing, ministry through hospitality, greater accountability through closer community, and different economic behaviour
5) Pragmatic community as a means to mission - Examples of these from the '60s (e.g. English l'Abri) are beginning to realise parallels between their patterns and disciplines and the classic monastic rhythms of life
6) The special grace of Christian group-housing - noting a wide variety of group-houses that have developed into effective missional and church units. Patterns of life and commitment have grown up as groups have together sensed God's blessing, anointing and call on their residential expression of church-life.

These trends have been contemplative, historical, missiological, pragmatic and have sometimes been arrived at simply through groups of believers following the leading of the Spirit without quite knowing where they were headed.

SIX TRENDS IN UK CHURCH-LIFE TOWARDS A NEW MONASTICISM

- The Revival of Retreat making
- The Reclamation of Christian Heritage
- Post-Modern Reading
- Renewal in Church
- Pursuing a Mission from God
- Following a Call from God

The term "new Monastic" can be a red-herring. Many groups might be described that way who would not think to use such a label. Some of us whose patterns and hopes are rooted in monastic heritage would find the label too grand. It is also a label similar to "Anabaptist" in the sense that gradually one discovers that this is a label that seems to describe one's journey with the Lord! So rather than focus on the term let us look and listen for the forever new thing that God is doing and seek to follow the ways that He blesses. Amen.

EVERYONE A MONK
HISTORICAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN ANABAPTISM & MONASTICISM

GORDON PREECE

Introduction

The trouble with being asked to talk about monasticism is that it could be habit-forming; I've now been asked to turn my Australia Day AAANZ conference talk into an article. The real issue though is whether the combined strengths of monasticism and Anabaptism (AB) can provide holy habits that may sustain us in our journey towards the city of God in the new Dark Ages of global economic and ecological meltdown.

My former teacher and president of Fuller Seminary Richard Mouw opens his account of his engagement with AB by saying that the ultimate insult any Reformed scholar or pastor can throw at another is to call them an Anabaptist! The Reformed 1561 Belgic Confession article 36 says that they 'detest' ABs, along with 'other seditious people' for rejecting magistrates/State, subverting justice, practising community of goods and confounding God's decent order. The 39 Articles of the Church of England that I promised to follow at my ordination speaks of the 'accursed Anabaptists'. As one broadly Reformed in theology and ordained into the Anglican church and a member of AAANZ that puts me in a peculiar position, insulted as indecent, detestable and accursed by my own theological tradition and denomination. It's a position Ross Langmead once said he'd like to hear me publicly rationalise! I could, as someone once advised me, take the Admiral Nelson option and turn a blind eye to the 39 Articles at that point. Or I could dismiss it as an historical peculiarity.

My short answer though is Rich Mouw's and John Yoder's in their Reformed-AB dialogue, that the disputes between Reformed and Anabaptists are not because of radical theological differences but are a family argument. Willem Balke shows this is due partly to Calvinists feeling threatened by being out-Calvinized or Reformed by ABs who 1. more consistently practised church discipline, the avowedly Calvinist note of the church; and 2. ABs even starker view of human depravity or sin, necessitating a separation from the world, especially the sword of the state.[1]

But personal cum traditional reflections and rationalisations aside, my task is to explore not so much the Protestant links with AB but more Catholic and monastic links, paving the way for those who will write on new monasticism. This is something that even great Protestant theologians are now affirming the need for. After his experimentation with a monastic seminary community at Finkelwalde, Bonhoeffer stressed it as one hope for the post-Constantinian Church after World War II in a prophetic letter to his brother Karl-Friedrich on 14th 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, a life lived without compromise according to the Sermon on the Mount in the following of Jesus. I believe the time has come to gather people together for this.[2]

George McLeod developed the Iona Community in Scotland simultaneously. Bonhoeffer's *Life Together* became standard fare there. A generation later 'the evangelical Pope' John Stott called for a 're-monking' of the church.

In this decade Eugene Petersen called on Protestant leaders to radically plan to replace their 'ego lust to be god' with a corporate pattern that makes space for God:

> Historically the most conspicuous corporate construction that does this is the monastery... The genius of the monastery is its comprehensiveness; all the hours of the day are defined by prayer; all the activity of the

> monks is understood as prayer...This external comprehensiveness penetrates community and soul.'

Petersen calls for 'an open monastery', and concludes: 'What is critical is an imagination large enough to contain all of life, all worship and work in prayer set in a structure adequate to the actual conditions in which it is lived out.'[3] What Petersen calls 'an open monastery' I call Monday Monasticism in an attempt to link a disciplined and discerning life of work and worship for lay professionals whose vows are in their vocational calling to follow Christ. The monasteries were the beginnings of modern professions – those who profess or vow, like clergy, lawyers, doctors etc.

Lindisfarne Community New York (www.icmi.org), along with other new monastics, seeks to live out this open or Monday Monasticism. As they say:

> The monastic way was always a demanding and disciplined life. It required leaving home and family to live with others who shared the Rule. The new monasticism will, likewise, be demanding, but in different ways. Most in the new monasticism will not live in enclosed communities or commit themselves to a wandering life of preaching and poverty. The new monastics will come from a variety of walks of life and most will not be committed to celibacy. They will seek to engage in the practices of prayer, meditation, study and service in the midst of busy family and work lives. Theirs will be a radical discipleship in finding Christ in the very heart of twenty-first century life — the breaking down of sacred and secular

Community of the Holy Transfiguration

Most famously, the now Catholic Alasdair MacIntyre stressed the need for a renewal of monasticism as one form of a desperately needed renewal of discipleship[4] and its virtues:

> If my account of our moral condition is correct…. What matters now is the construction of local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the new dark ages that are already upon us. And if the tradition of the virtues were able to survive the horrors of the last dark ages, we are not entirely without grounds for hope. This time however the barbarians are not waiting beyond the frontiers, they have already been among us for some time. And it is our lack of consciousness of this that constitutes part of our predicament. We are waiting not for Godot, but for another - doubtless very different – St. Benedict.[5]

Finally, Anglican Bishop Stephen Pickard responds to MacIntyre's plea by linking *monasterium* with minsters (cf Westminster Abbey) or large parishes, precursors to cathedrals, served by teams of priests before the smaller one man-band model of parish life in the 11th and 12th centuries. 'The strongly monastic character of the pre-parish system generated a team model of ministry that was both collegial and communitarian…. It may well be … that with the decomposition of the Western church the earlier minster model of ecclesial organisation and mission will re-emerge. It is a revolutionary old idea'[6].

What these writers seem to be after is well caught by AB ethicist Gerald Schlabach: 'Catholics could be more AB, ABs more Catholic and mainline Protestants more of both gets it just about right. That may aptly summarise the vocation of the western church in the twenty-first century'.[7]

In this article I will try to provisionally define Anabaptism and Monasticism before discussing the possible biblical roots of the latter, then its pre-Reformation development and refinement of vows, the reforms of medieval Monasticism including its emerging lay forms, links to what Luther really wanted, and the Anabaptist attempt to voluntarily, make 'everyone a monk'.

Let me conclude this introduction with some definitions. First, 'Monasticism, from monarchos meaning "alone", is a specific, institutionalized variation of Christian asceticism' allowing complete withdrawal in the late third and early fourth century of numerous Christians from both temporal [secular] society and the organized [increasingly nominal and secularized Constantinian] church.'[8] It was also a way to avoid the risk of apostasy during persecution or of conscription during war, significant in its relation to AB.

While Monasticism more specifically refers to those in the cloistered life, more generally it can include those dedicated to disciplined ascetic and spiritual practices in that settled communal life, as hermits, and also as mendicants or wandering monks, existing somewhere in the middle. Some also adapt monastic practices to

ordinary life in the world, marriage, paid work etc. This builds a significant bridge to AB also.

Second, a fairly typical definition of AB, by Torsten Bergsten is: 'exclusive biblical authority, church reform which reflects the primitive ideal of the church as a voluntary fellowship of believers who visibly manifest Christlike qualities, a baptismal confession of personal faith, strong congregationally controlled discipline, a "Sermon on the Mount" ideal of Christian conduct, and nonviolent principles, often totally pacifist'.[9]

I. Biblical Monastic Communities – Early Forms of Poverty, Chastity, Obedience

Afternoon Interest group at Oasis Conference

If we are going to reach some convergence and mutual enrichment that New Monasticism and AB at their best are after, then we'd best begin with the Bible. JC O'Neill argues that 'once we concede two points, it is hard to deny the likelihood that there were monastic communities … from the beginning. First, the Dead Sea Scrolls were guarded by a monastic community [Qumran]', not the only one, and not Christian, as archaeology and Philo show. 'Second, the two Egyptian monks Antony (ca 251-356) and Pachomius (ca. 290-346), usually credited with the foundation of Christian monasticism, never suggested that they were doing anything particularly novel, and no one accused them of novelty'. Constantine's church historian Eusebius claims Philo met St Peter in Rome and was acquainted with many ascetic men and women converted by Mark in Egypt 'and so was able to write *On the contemplative life* about Christian monasticism' (*Hist. Ecl. 2.16-17*) and the monastic rules were still observed in Eusebius' day in the fourth century AD. Eusebius's closer knowledge and affirmation of the continuity of monasticism back to the earliest times cannot be dismissed lightly 'as most biblical scholars, of all confessions and none, [do who] simply assume that monasticism is a late development'.[10]

The Qumran community was substantial, with a burial ground containing c. 1100 tombs. Their '*Manual of Discipline* was discipline for a male celibate community that gave up all private property: a community bound by poverty, chastity and obedience' in quest of perfection in contemplation, apart from the active life. Tradition traces monastic communities back to the unmarried prophets Elijah and Elishah (2 Ki 19:20). Elijah set up communities of the sons of prophets in Bethel and Jericho at least (2 Ki 2:3, 5, 7, 15 cf 4:1 and 1 Sam 10:5,10).

O'Neill argues that Jesus' prophetic band fits this monastic mould also. They often received private teaching e.g. on the mystery of the kingdom (Mk 4:11, 33-34, 13:3-4, Lk 12:14, Jn 14-17). From Jesus' first beatitude upon the poor in spirit (Mt 5:3) and his call to the rich young ruler to abandon his wealth (Mt 19:16-22 - the one thing he lacked cf Martha Lk 10: 42; also cf v. 12 on celibacy) and give to 'the community of poor disciples' it appears to O'Neill that he led a mobile monastic, contemplative community for the perfect who lived by monastic like vows, while not denigrating those who kept the commandments in their active life. Acts 2 and 4 reflects this also.

For O'Neill 'Jesus recognised two sorts of the faithful: those who lived an active life in their own families, who married and had possessions, and those who lived the contemplative life in obedience in a community, renouncing marriage and private possessions and putting themselves under a military-like discipline'.[11] O'Neill also sees the all male community of 1 John as a monastic community following the 'counsels of perfection' (1 Jn 2:15-17). This distinction between two equal ways of following Jesus is largely missed in the NT because both were open, not closed, the Messiah had come, and the Kingdom's secrets were revealed.[12]

II. Early Egyptian Monasticism – Solitary and Communal

St Antony (ca 251-356) is known as the key figure of anchoritic or solitary, hermetic and simple monasticism. It sought to keep the pacifist, lay, ascetic and martyr spirit of the often persecuted Early Church alive at a time of emerging nominalism and Constantinian Christendom through a form of military-like bodily discipline in the Egyptian desert.

Philip Jenkins' *The Lost History of Christianity* brings alive the relevance of this rigorous form of eastern ascetic monasticism in a time of renewed persecution. He compares Eastern and Egyptian monasticism with western varieties. Both Christian civilizations were overrun by Muslim forces in the seventh century AD. But the Egyptian Copts survived and continue to thrive spiritually in spite of repressive political and cultural forces. Tragically, the North African churches based in the Carthaginian breadbasket of Rome's Empire simply disappeared, because the Western church greats Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine ministered primarily to Latin-speaking urbanites, 'not sinking roots into the world of the native peoples'.

The Coptic Church thrived because it was anchored in popular indigenous spirituality and language. Its monastic movement was crucial. While Athanasius,

crucial in the development of Nicene Trinitarian Christianity, spoke the philosophical *lingua franca* of Greek, he was also a great advocate of St. Anthony's lay monasticism, writing *The Life of Anthony*. St Anthony embodied the oral Christianity of the earliest Church, speaking the people's Coptic and no Greek, and drew his monks from the commoners. The Coptic Church had sophisticated, orthodox theological and spiritual literature in the indigenous language from early days. They developed a disciplined lay discipleship. By the time Islam arrived in the seventh century, the church was thoroughly indigenized and its leadership decentralised.[13] Can we say the same today?

In urban cultures, a persecuting religious or political foe can make the Christian fish rot from the head, banishing its leaders and restricting believers' meetings. Such total control was difficult in the country where the monks had multiplied.

For a millenium after, Antony was considered the most spiritual man ever, the model monk and man. The monastic movement he inspired, despite or perhaps because of its withdrawal from the heart of Empire, was primarily responsible for evangelizing and Christianizing Europe—an irony for an illiterate Egyptian who fled the world.

Yet sadly the super – spirituality and sanctity of Antony was later and is now elevated at the expense of his lay movement. My good friend Simon Holt who teaches Spirituality at Whitley; reviewed James Cowan's 'coffee table spirituality' book *Journey to the Inner Mountain: In the Desert with St Antony.* He wrote perceptively: 'As an ordinary person with a job, a spouse, small children, a mortgage, and an overflowing diary, how do I give expression to this 'free and open life"' Cowan makes his hero Antony advocate. Holt puts in a plea for many like himself 'left to stand on the spiritual sidelines when it comes to the real business of the spiritual life … At one point Cowan writes that 'a holy man like Antony was a professional in a world of amateurs'. Holt, while deeply appreciative of the contemplative and monastic tradition, asks for a spirituality of the centre, not just the desert or margins.[14]

Contemporary in time and place with Antony in the 4th century in the Egyptian desert is Pachomius (ca. 290-346), the founder of a more communal monasticism. This communal variant become so popular that by the 5th century there were up to 500,000 monks and nuns in the eastern Meditteranean vicinity. While total, solitary contemplation of God was the ideal, Pachomius sought 'to formulate an ascetic way for average souls', a temporary, transitional, communal stage to full solitary asceticism.[15] This more extraverted version would have suited me, as I remember going solo in the bush on an Outward Bound survival course for three days when 21, loaded with theological tomes, unsure if I'd cope on my own. As Bonhoeffer said 'Let him who cannot be alone beware of community. Let him who is not in community, beware of being alone'.[16]

Pachomius also added a stronger stress on working with your hands, leading to the later Benedictine 'to work is to pray'. Work was a means to moral perfection. Yet in this spiritual utilitarianism, in some places work was independently useful, in others such as the basket weavers unweaving their baskets and starting again, it was purely a means to meditation, the more mindless and boring the better.

Early Monasticism was 'a lay protest movement' against nominal, clerical, Constantinian religion excluding the laity from the demands of discipleship or optional counsels (e.g. love of enemies) required only of clerics.[17] Lay monks sometimes took communion themselves and confessed to their lay brothers, as HB Workman argues. This anti-sacerdotalism aroused the church's and clergy's antagonism. 'Increasingly, monks desired to become priests. After the 8th and 9th centuries, all monks were required to do so'.[18]

John Cassian sees the Jerusalem church in Acts 2 as a universal model for all Christians: 'The whole church then was like those few now who can with difficulty be found in the monasteries'. This primitivism or desire to restore the apostolic church in contrast to the 'inclusive, nominal, institutional Constantinian church is similar to AB's everyone a monk.

For some like John Chrysostom the restoration went even further back. The golden-mouthed and often acid-tongued preacher (he called his enemy the Empress, Jezebel!) put the more negative renunciations of monasticism in a more positive creation context when he said 'the faithful monk has returned to the Garden of Eden'.[19] The famous monk and preacher provides in his sermons promoting Christ-like virtues and identification with the poor an 'overall program of democratizing monastic virtues onto the urban laity of Antioch and Constantinople around the turn of the fifth century. … In these homilies … we have the first full-scale exposition of Jesus's Sermon on the Mount as providing the principal foundation of the Christian *politeia*' or city of God'.[20] Chrysostom seeks to restore the original, universal discipleship for all citizens of that city.

III. Benedictine Balanced Spirituality and the Vow of Stability

From the 6th century of Benedict of Nursia[21] to the 12th century were the Benedictine centuries. The Benedictine Rule was a summarising and climax of the main trends of communal monasticism under the three main vows and three occupational patterns: chanting and prayer (*opus dei* – work of God), devotional study

(*lectio divina* – divine reading), and integration of manual work with prayer (*opera manuum* – manual work). The Benedictine Rule provides 'a wise and enduring balance … between solitary and communal ways of searching for God, asceticism and realism, insularity and hospitality (including how to take people in without getting taken in!) rigor and flexibility'.[22] The Benedictine model of moderation sponsored by Gregory Great dominated the Middle Ages for a millenium. Its goal was still charity (or perfection) but through a moderate, well-organized, common life of detatchment, spiritual exercises, and work, though older forms of monasticism, especially Celtic and anchorite or solitary monasticism, continued.

Significantly, the Benedictines added a fourth vow, of stability – being permanently bound to one community – which was a unique feature against brown robed monks on the move, spiritual individualists with wanderlust, wanting a better, more radical community, leader,[23] better food! etc. Today many pastors, mega or emerging church leaders and members, have no stability, when difficulty tries or an upward career move tempts them, they easily succumb, sometimes every three years or so. They reflect the turbulent *Liquid Modernity* and *Liquid Love*[24] of our postmodern world. Eugene Peterson describes this as 'the Jonah Syndrome',[25] after the prophet with itchy feet. Peterson himself is a great example of stability. He stayed at Christ the King Church in Maryland for 30 years despite twice toying with leaving and eventually moving to Regent College. Wendell Berry similarly argues against our endless adolescent anxiety and rootless rebellion instead of a fidelity-like stability.[26] His commitment to his farm, community and church in Kentucky is an inspiring model of this stability. As Schlabach counsels:

> It is no use rediscovering any of our church's roots, nor discerning innovative ways to be faithful to our church's calling, if we will not slow down, stay *longer* even if we can't stay *put* indefinitely, and take something *like* a vow of stability. Slow down – because postmodernism may really be hypermodernism. Stay longer – because there is no way to discern God's will together without commitment to sit long together in the first place. A vow of stability – because it is no use discerning appropriate ways to be … disciples in our age if we do not embody them through time, testing, and the patience with one another that our good ideas and great ideals need to prove their worth as communal practices. "It's getting so the Abrahamic thing to do is to stay put".' [27]

Time for discussions at the conference

The Benedictine Rule, to modern itchy ears, sounds overly hierarchical as Schlabach notes. But today the real difficulty is one of finding abbots, and too many abdicating the responsibility, and it being too hard to find visionaries today in an age when 'stable relationships are for horses' as the bumper sticker says. More egalitarian Christian communities, if they're seeking consensus will need more time, more meetings, and therefore need more stability, he wisely notes. 'Concensus takes long to reach. Good intentions and the initial romance of community life wane. Patience frays and righteous conviction turns to anger'.[28]

Unfortunately, the life of contemporary Christian communities in Melbourne, Australia and the West is littered with such examples. Many Christian advocacy groups easily turn adversarial and angry. I was commending a friend recently for having ministered in a very difficult inner-city Melbourne parish for over fifteen years. She blamed me, (nicely!) for having plugged the Benedictine vow of stability with them years before. Sadly, I couldn't bear to tell her that I was just about to reluctantly leave a job and community after only 18 months, my shortest ever spell somewhere by far. And that was for an advocacy community for whom some form of stability was one of our 'vows'. I honour the ideals but lament our difficulty in living up to them.

For Anabaptists, as Stanley Hauerwas notes, the danger is voluntarism (vital to believers' baptism) without Benedictine stability. And dare I say voluntarism without a Reformed sense of vocational stability, rather than rushing from monastery to monastery, community to community, charismatic leader to charismatic leader, job to job, like a 'labyrinth' of ceaseless change we're lost in.[29] Vocation is the perfect analogue, a series of stable supportive relationships to our primary quest to follow Christ. We can compare Paul and Luther's 'stay in the calling in which you were called' (Rom 7:20).

Stability is an answer to 'a consumeristic religious economy that allows me to keep my Mennonite pacifism here, shop for a little catholic spirituality there, and pick up a little Benedictine glue at an abbey to hold it all together'. Schlabach encourages us to rediscover an ancient catholicity not through ecumenical shopping but by putting roots down far enough into the soil of our own traditions to discover those deep and fecund places where our roots intertwine.'[30] Compare Simone Weil's *The Need for Roots* emerging out of her disillusionment with secular France's inability to resist Nazism.[31] Or Joseph Ratzinger, now aptly self-named Benedict XVI

on 'The Spiritual Roots of Europe', where he describes monasticism as 'the indispensable bearer not only of cultural continuity but above all of fundamental religious and moral values, the ultimate guidance of humankind. As a pre-political and supra-political force, monasticism was also the harbinger of ever welcome and necessary re-births of culture and civilization'.[32] Perhaps not one strong root but intertwined roots reflecting the catholicity of our rich tradition, monastic, Reformed and Anabaptist is what we need for stability.

Two speakers for the conference

Similarly, MacIntyre's stress on new and different Benedictine and local forms of community shaping the virtues is vital, in our current descent into the Dark Ages. He argues for Aristotelian apprenticeship not Kantian or modern autonomy, shaping moral life.[33] In 'The Benedict Option', people of goodwill withdraw from the political commonwealth and build new communities where the virtues can flourish. By contrast, in the Roman 'Cincinnatus' Option', men and women of goodwill, devote themselves to the repair of the commonwealth, selflessly working to reform and re-order it from within towards the Good.[34] The choice is not black or white but one of discernment of the times and of the extent of the Empire's dominance and space for distinctive Christian discipleship.

IV. Late Medieval Reform Movements toward Lay Monasticism

Unlike many Protestants and many modern Enlightenment rationalist figures may believe with their polemical divisions of history, the spelling of the synonym for Middle Ages is 'medieval', not 'Medi-*evil*'. Compare the pejorative terminology of 'the Dark Ages'; so when did the lights come on? - in the 16th century Reformation, according to the garbage trucks of Geneva slogans 'then there was light'. Or in the 18th century Enlightenment, but certainly not in the monasteries.

The contrast between medieval tradition, mistakenly identified with traditionalism, and modern scientific reason, mistakenly identified with scientism is arrogantly assumed. Rodney Stark's *The Victory of Reason* shows that after Rome's Fall there were many advances in technology and civilization due to the monasteries. e.g. clocks, water and wind mills, art, and the founding of professions[35].

However, as Macintyre shows, traditions are ongoing, rational arguments over time,[36] and such was the case with the monastic tradition. Deformities arose and reforms also.

Catholic philosopher Charles Taylor argues that a wider reformation movement dated back at least to the Lateran Council in 1215 (where laity were exhorted to take communion at least yearly and universal auricular confession was made mandatory) to help the laity be more serious disciples.[37]

During this period an increasingly educated laity were no longer content to just 'pray, pay and obey' or submit to Constantinian Christendom's 'Taming of the Pew'. Thus: 'Between the late 11th and 14th centuries at least four new forms of monasticism appeared to illustrate the continuing or renewed capacity of Christian asceticism to be innovative, flexible, and adaptable':

1. *The military orders* – e.g. the Knights Templars and Knights Hospitallers of Da Vinci Code (or is it Ode?) fame. This reminds me of the sick old joke - why were the Dark Ages called the Dark Ages? – because there were so many knights. These Knights were not likely to be attractive to ABs, unless we count the earlier more militant theocratic ones at Muntzer and Melchior Hoffmann and co. as AB.

2. *The Mendicant (i.e. begging) not mendacious (lying) orders* - though some did both - of Francis and Dominic were 'so completely different, according to HB Workman, that they were forbidden to enter within the walls of any monastery'.[38] They were seen by some like tele-evangelists are seen today. They were also different to each other – Franciscan friars stressed (missionary) mobility, like Jesus and the 12 disciples, contrasted to Benedictine stability. This led GK Chesterton to say that what Benedictines in their white robes stored (in their stable communities), Franciscan friars in their brown robes scattered, and the Dominican city street preachers (in black robes) saved (from heresy).

Do you want to know why Mendicants were called friars? So did one woman on retreat at a modern monastery, having Friday lunch at the refectory, where she was naturally served fish and chips. They were the best fish and chips the woman had ever tasted so to thank them she asked in the kitchen who'd cooked them? One monk replied 'I'm the fish friar' and the other say 'and I'm the chip-monk'.[39]

These begging orders had a greater stress on absolute poverty and on personal perfection through charity and service to God *in society*, through altruistic deeds, preaching, mission, teaching/education e.g. the Dominican Thomas Aquinas. These new orders were not subject to one monastery under an abbott's authority but an international order under a chapter general.

'Mendicants practice the ascetic life individually (hermetically), but in proximity to, and in community with other mendicants (cenobitically). Moreover, as a non-localized and non-cloistered community, they do so while remaining within society as beggars, preachers, and servants'.[40] St. Francis' Franciscans are the most common mendicants.

3. *Franciscan tertiaries (3rd order)*. This includes Philip Freire, Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne. 'This order functioned fully "in the world, retaining the estate of marriage and most of the normal involvements of the life of the laity". 'The ascetic goal of purity, holiness, virtue, Christ-likeness does not change but the method'. There is no withdrawal from marriage or the world, which approximates a return to early Christian asceticism.[41] They successfully extended their approach to the whole church, but some slackness and literal indulgence lead to the Reformation reaction from Luther to indulgences[42] and also from other stricter communal orders.

During worship on hospitality, "Elisha" led us to a drama from 2 Kings 4

4. *The Brethren of the Common Life* promoted the kind of lay monasticism begun by St. Francis. Many were Franciscan tertiaries immersed in ordinary life. This was a landmark movement in a context of anticlericalism due to monastic corruption when many people were losing faith in monks but were not wanting to lose the monastic ideal.[43] Their founder Gerhard Groote (d. 1384) doesn't deny the value of monasticism for some, but he does deny the restriction of the term *religious* to clergy and monastics.[44]'Truly religious men are not confined by place, time or manner of men'. Rather, 'all those who live aloof from the world to serve God, who despise temporal honors; lead chaste lives, obedient and poor: they are religious people".'[45] These lay monks practised holiness and *The Imitation of Christ* in the world, which Thomas a Kempis popularised in late 15th century.

H Daniel Rops sums up the Devotio Moderna (modern devotion) and Brethren essence as 'a warm, pulsating and profoundly human way of seeking perfection; a spiritual technique based on the inner-make-up of the individual; a modest kind of mysticism …which subjected the whole soul to the imitation of Christ, the One Model'. At the end of the 15th century the Brethren scholar Gabriel Biel (d. 1490) described its ideal as 'a life in freedom of the Christian law, under the one abbot Jesus Christ, without obligation to observances [or counsels such as monastic vows of celibacy] above and beyond the precepts … everyone should remain in the state in which he is called'.[46] Note the use of the same biblical text, 1 Cor 7:20, so crucial to Luther's affirmation of the universal vocation or calling of all Christian people in all their roles, a title previously confined to a monastic elite.

Celibacy, though generally required was not required of everyone. Nor were renunciation of communal or corporate possessions. 'The dominant negative means for expressing self-denial were flexible and variable in externals'. Positive means included individual prayer, Scripture reading, meditation and communal worship, sacraments, and the discipline of the Rule. A revived, primitive, biblical asceticism of the Devotio Moderna, 'upheld a moderation, laicization, personalization, and internalization of ascetic ideals and practices'.[47]

Peifer summarizes well: 'if monasticism has been such a long-lived phenomenon, is it not precisely because it was always ready to change structures and institutions which, because of changed conditions, were no longer the best means of expressing its inner nature?' Davis agrees: 'Through the history of monastic asceticism the principle of separation from the world 'changed its external expression successively from a separated church in the world to a church under persecution, living by its own 'laws', and suffering martyrdom, to the limited withdrawal from both society and church by the third century 'virgins', to the total physical withdrawal to solitude by the Hermit, to cenobitic 'communal' withdrawal', and then back to a lesser degree of withdrawal by the Mendicants, third Orders, and Brethren of the Common Life'.

The eirenic Christian humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam was influenced by the Devotio Moderna and his biblical primitivism driving him back to the original sources, modest plain worship and an heroic biblical ethic. His satire against the monasteries is designed to preserve the ideal.

Erasmus has a clear role as a mediator of late Medieval reform to AB. Despite differences, especially after the Peasants Revolt of 1525 'almost the whole essential and distinctive core of the Anabaptist synthesis is contained in Erasmus' pre-1525 religious writings and to a much greater degree than in Luther, Zwingli, Carlstadt or Thomas Muntzer. Furthermore, Erasmus had copious direct and indirect contact with many of the founding leaders … all of which strongly supports the thesis that the Anabaptists … [are] a radicalization and Protestantization not of the Magisterial Reformation but of the lay-oriented, ascetic reformation of which Erasmus is the principle mediator.'[48]

According to the subtitle of Walter Klaassen's book *Anabaptism*, it was 'Neither Catholic nor Protestant'. The ABs were a third, radical way, going back to the roots of primitive Christianity, 'a return to the prophetic understanding of the sacred'. 'A measure of it existed in Protestantism as well as in Roman Christianity… But

the Anabaptists …sought to find and express God's will in radically personal and communal terms'.[49]

V. Luther's Hints of a More Disciplined form of Discipleship

Many Christian humanists like Erasmus were initially attracted to Luther's reforms though Erasmus soon found them too divisive doctrinally, too Augustinian and predestinarian as Luther's *Bondage of the Will* written against Erasmus. His interests were more in practical, peaceful reform.

Luther himself, even after 1526 when he published his vernacular mass for the unlearned, admitted his reforms failed to bring about a substantial increase in general piety. Despite his hopes and enormous efforts there was a lack of biblical literacy and piety. Luther said what was needed was a 'truly evangelical order' or service, but also we might add, an almost monastic order. This was not to be held in public for a mixed group but in private homes 'for those who want to be Christians in earnest and who profess the gospel with hand and mouth' i.e. the whole person. How would he do this?

Time to worship God with music and singing

> [They] should sign their names and meet alone in a house somewhere to pray, to read, to baptize, to receive the sacrament, and do other Christian works. According to this order, those who do not lead Christian lives could be known, reproved, corrected, cast out, or excommunicated, according to the rule of Christ, [Matthew 18:15-17, the AB Rule of Christ]. Here one could solicit benevolent gifts to be distributed to the poor, according to St. Paul's example, II Corinthians 9. Here would be no need of much and elaborate singing. Here one could set out a brief and neat order for baptism and the sacrament and center everything on the Word, prayer, and love.[50]

Sadly Luther was never able to really put this order for a disciplined group of disciples into practice, due to 'sheer lack of personnel'. He later decided it was an impractical dream due to the crowds of nominal Christians. So around the time of the Peasants Revolt in 1525 which was so significant for the Abs, he turned to the State as an emergency measure or emergency Bishop to help secure an orderly Reformation, hence the title Magisterial Reformation, or by the Magistrates. Like the state with its terrorism emergency, or NT emergency, the long emergency excuse of State control over the Reformation church is still going nearly 500 years later. Luther was caught between his desires for a territorial church of the masses and a confessing church of believers. Forced to choose he went with the masses.[51]

But as Donald Durnbaugh notes: 'Luther's sketch of those for whom the third order was intended is an excellent resume of the character and concerns of members of the Believers' or AB Churches. 1. Earnestness of profession led logically to believers baptism 2. witness ['mouth'], 3. covenant [signing their names], 4.discipline [corrected or excommunicated], 5. mutual aid [benevolent gifts given to the poor] ['hand'], 6. simple … worship' [including believers baptism].[52]

ABs largely accepted Luther's doctrinal and institutional reforms but wanted greater behavioural fruits of individual piety and church integrity separate from the State. An ascetic doctrine of 'relative perfectionism' and 'a life of practical victory over the flesh and of progressive deepening of holiness of life', is implied in and reconciles AB writings, according to Davis. This ascetic holiness is not individualistic but reflects the communal monastic tradition modified in a lay direction.

The ABs, building on moderate medieval lay monasticism, perhaps provide a radical middle that Charles Taylor seems to be seeking between corrupted forms of monasticism and Protestantism's Reform as an unintended step toward secularism and consumerist licence. He speaks of its 'proto-totalitarian temptation. Luther and Calvin were surely right to condemn the ideology of spiritual superiority which infected late-medieval monasticism, but they ended up discrediting celibate vocations as such, greatly reducing the range of Christian lives. And their reformation has helped to produce, via another [Enlightenment] stage of "reform", today's secular world, where renunciation is … off the radar altogether, just a form of madness or self-mutilation. We end up from all of this with a narrower, more homogeneous world of conformity to a hedonic principle'.[53] AB communal asceticism is an alternative to this.

The ABs also followed through Luther's notion of the priesthood of all believers into the 'prophethood of all believers', as Stuart Murray Williams' book on *Scriptural Interpretation in the Anabaptist Tradition* shows. It is particularly displayed with great relevance for contemporary discerning discipleship in their Rule of Paul, based on the weighing of the prophecies in 1 Cor 14.[54] Magisterial reformers and their patrons however were scared that the prophethood of all believers

would overflow a religiously restricted notion of Sunday worship and soul-itary confinement and become embodied communally in forms that challenged their worldly polity in the name of the polity of the prophetic Word.

VI Anabaptist Asceticism and Lay Monastic Links

When Conrad Grebel's group of original Swiss ABs emerged out of Ulrich Zwingli's Reformed circle in Zurich in 1525 the issue was not primarily about believers versus infant baptism (which came later as symbolic action), nor free church versus state – church that was the distinctive issue – (at first they wanted a 'Christian senate'). It was the ideal of individual and communal ascetic reform like the late 15th century Roman Catholic and monastic reformers. Unlike Zwingli they sought ethical and ascetic reform of the visible church using the disciplinary rule of Mt 18. The difference with the magisterial Reformers was over the right disciplinary means towards the new Christian society – voluntary Christian asceticism or State control.

Marcus sharing about Urban Seed

A pattern of sympathy followed by disillusionment was typical of a number of monks who initially supported the Reformation. But some others instead of turning back on the Reformation found a more compatible alternative and became leaders as the ABs spread out from Zurich. Some four or more of the original group were former monks, especially Franciscan observants. These included George Blaurock and soon Michael Sattler. They were not medieval heretics nor fanatics. 'The common monastic training, and continued sympathy with ascetic values by so many leaders, were major factors in sustaining and expanding the ascetic element in Swiss AB development'.[55]

According to Davis, 'For all three issues (faith, repentance and church discipline) the ABs define the failure of the Magisterial Reformation in terms that reflect their own ascetic presuppositions'; i.e. lack of works flowing from faith, repentance flowing from forgiveness and discipline leading to discipleship.[56] ABs 'relate to the larger "rightist" reaction to Luther … among many evangelical reformers from 1520-25'. 'This alternative Reformed synthesis can perhaps be characterized best as a Protestantized continuation of an ascetic, biblical theology of holiness'.

AB's opponents charged them with being monastic, e.g. Zwingli charged them with making 'a new monkery', and of making baptism 'a monkish vow'. Hubmaier admits to being charged by many with making 'monks and nuns of them'. Luther charges them with being 'brethren' to Roman Catholics insisting on works and worthiness in baptism and Calvin accuses them of being 'companions' with Jesuits.[57]

Michael Sattler married a Beghuine wife very close to the Franciscan tertiaries, a lay ascetic movement. She helped the poor, suffering from heavy taxes and church tithes and may well have won her husband to be over to the cause.[58] Sattler's Schleitheim Confession (1527), is the closest ABs have to a creed, or perhaps a statement of orthoproxis or ortho-asceticism to balance the lack of such in the ecumenical creeds. It passes on the stress on 'moral earnestness and ascetic idealism' to form an ecclesial society of saints based on Sermon on the Mount. They commend a strong ascetic dualism.[59] 'The whole document is nothing less than a manifesto for moral separation on lay, ascetic terms'. 'No longer is there an easier way, either by the sacraments [Roman Catholic] or by 'faith-alone" [Protestant], for the masses; nor a higher, specialized, monastic way for a few select souls. Also, there is still no salvation outside the church, but for the ABs the only true church is the separated, holy brotherhood.[60]

As we've shown, there was already an officially approved trend toward the moderation and adaptation of the three-fold monastic vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience by the lay ascetic tradition that the ABs adapted. They 'adopted a laicized concept of chastity similar to … the tertiaries. While the[y] … allowed for marriage and family in the brotherhood … primary loyalty must always be to Christ;… one must always be willing to forsake family, leave all and follow Christ, if necessary'. Yet they held to total faithfulness within marriage and no divorce, barring adultery.

Concerning poverty, ABs built on the tertiaries laicized inner renunciation of desire for worldly goods. They were suspicious of personal acquisition and required its abandonment in some observable way – either in the stronger Hutterite form of giving one's possessions to the community or retaining personal use and direction but with a stronger sense of stewardship.

ABs see believers baptism as an 'initiatory vow … of the new life of purity and devotion to Christ; their expression of chastity'. It was also a pledge of submission to brotherhood discipline; their vow of obedience, not to an abbott, but to the AB sense of the faithful or brotherly discernment and discipline. Personally speaking, while doing my PhD at Fuller Seminary in LA this was what made an AB out of me as I read Hubmaier's baptismal rite, as well as AB protests against the first Iraq War and US idolatry. It gave me hope after my adolescent disillusionment with Baptist Sunday night gospel services I observed where Christian friends

bet on who'd be baptised that night in response to an individualistic, emotional appeal. It seemed to have no more sticking and transformative power for discipleship than Anglican confirmation – commonly regarded as a leaving certificate. I'd experienced a sense of Acts 2 and 4 community in a house-church connected to my Presbyterian church and longed for something more like what I'd read about in Acts. The service also 'included a renunciation of private possessions in favor of either the Christian stewardship of or the community of goods; their vow of poverty'.

Amy and Josh sharing about Peacetree Community

As well as the threefold vows the principle of ascetic separation from the world was expressed by medieval society granting monastics exemptions from political and military service and oath-taking. In various ways these exemptions were extended to the laicized monastics, especially the tertiaries. ABs espousing these exemptions is consistent with their laicized monasticism and separation of the church and world.[61]

Being AB 'involved a practical outward renunciation of worldliness … and the disciplining of all material and physical aspects of human life. Though not requiring perfect holiness it required a determined voluntary desire and disciplined process of development. Monasticism required withdrawal from society, Puritanism 'the severe control of social life … to make the environment suitable for the ascetic to live in the world' as in Max Weber's 'inner-worldly asceticism' in a secularised monastic stewardship or discipline over money and time through thrift and 'redeeming the time'.[62]

AB baptism was an initiation into an ascetic lifestyle based on something like the early church's and monastic probationary period of instruction and observation of life, acceptance of the rule of Christ in relation to ongoing discipline, repentance and discipleship, and willingness to place one's goods at the service of the community when need arose. AB baptism is like a monastic vow. Monastics saw entry to the monastery as like a second baptism. Even Zwingli compared baptism to the cowl that a monastic novitiate wears. Partaking of the Lord's Supper is also a willingness to adopt a suffering, dying and rising stance towards life. There must be evidence of improvement of life if one is to partake. 'The Lord's Supper is for a brotherhood of the ascetically separated'.[63]

Ecclesiologically, holiness is fundamental to ABs, as they rejected any purely internalised view of holiness or any invisible church of the elect only known to God. They had a strong sense of mission, seeing the AB church as a 'sealed band of athletes of the Spirit'. 'In their worship three characteristics stand out: simplicity, fellowship, and total, even prophetic participation'. Even AB eschatology has been described by Michael Novak as an '"eschatology of the cloister"', an ascetic, martyrological, not militant eschatology.[64] Their hermeneutics is also ascetic: 1. in its limited anti-intellectualism; 2. in a view of dualistic mortification not a law-Gospel contrast like Luther; 3. the medieval imitation of Christ is a crucial key; 4. most distinctive is 'the notion of a "non-flat" Bible' prioritising the New Testament'.

Davis sums up well: 'Asceticism clearly dominates the theology, soteriology, and sacramental teachings, ecclesiology, eschatology, and even the unique principles of biblical interpretation of evangelical Anabaptism'. 'The spirituality of the monastery is generally maintained; that is, while the threefold ideals of chastity, poverty, and obedience are biblically adjusted and laicized, they are not abandoned'.[65]

VII Reformation and Anabaptist/Monastic Views of Vocation and Transformation

In this final section, rounded out on the biblical number seven symbolic of eternity, which may seem literal to some readers I beg your indulgence and patience to explore two different models of vocation and social transformation that this study raises for me and that I believe are of great significance at the time of the Global Financial and Ecological crises – the magisterial Reformation model and the lay monastic/AB model.

Davis states rightly that the AB 'concept of sanctification through the separated brotherhood rather than, as in Luther, through secular vocation, is also essentially a laicization of the ascetic idea'. As Williams writes:

'What Luther elaborated as the doctrine of vocation in the world, as a consequence of the justification by faith alone over against the purely religious vocation of the medieval ascetics and clerics, the radicals also construed as "laic" but not in the world: rather for the world to come'. He argues that they had 'an eschatological vocation of programmatic self-deprivation

or communal self-discipline'. 'Whereas Luther endowed legal labor 'by all ranks and classes' with a religious and moral significance previously reserved for monks and clerics, 'the AB understanding of salvation as holiness led to an ascetic withdrawal from the world and to the concept of the attainment of sanctification not in secular vocations but in brotherhoods of mutual aid, love, and discipline'.[66] Luther, by contrast, had a more protological or creation-based approach to vocation in reaction to what he saw as monastic and AB dualism, asceticism and eschatological elitism, seeing themselves as the advance-guard of heaven. We could almost say Luther had an earthy aesthetic as opposed to an AB/Monastic and ascetic view of work. One remembers Luther's homely yet profound response when asked what would he do if he heard Christ was coming back that day: he said 'I'd go home and plant an apple tree'.

As Davis notes, AB lay monastic asceticism affected their view of work: 'the Anabaptists rejected begging; work was required. Shirking or laziness made one eligible for discipline and the ban'. In general ABs worked in normal secular vocations. 'Even those in Hutterite communal brotherhoods could work outside the community. However, all legitimate work was considered to have penitential morally corrective and spiritual disciplinary value – an ascetic attitude toward work. Precedent, both for the rejection of begging and for the use of secular employment for ascetic spiritual ends, can be found in the ascetic tradition, in the Brethren for Common Life, in the Franciscan tertiaries, and in some of the communities of the "Desert Fathers.'


Mark and Nathan converse during a break

'The early Anabaptists do not seem to directly specify which kinds of work the members … could most fittingly engage in. Some limitations are implicit, however, in their rejection of certain amusements such as the drinking house, of usury, bearing of arms and warfare, and the holding of civic offices.' These are similar to the tertiaries' restrictions[67] and those of the Early Church which banned involvement in the Roman games and theatre due to violence and sexual depravity and the military due to violence and idolatry.

Again, Anabaptists, as good anticlerical Protestants, 'though repudiating both the cloister and the hermitage … accepted the underlying principles of separation and dualism'. But institutionally they laicized those ideals like lay tertiary and brotherhood movements', through voluntary associations providing a disciplining brotherhood through which God's kingdom is expressed on earth. But there wasn't only one way in which the Kingdom could be expressed. The Hutterian communities were close to the cenobitic monastic communities of the 4th century and more cloistered lay brotherhoods of the 14-15th centuries who pooled their property. These all sought to live out Acts 4. But other ABs placed themselves under the strict stewardly discipline of some sort of separated brotherhood-community equivalent to the monastic vow of obedience while maintaining their property. For these ABs separation did not extend to a total, cenobitic, physical withdrawal from society, but was applied to several areas: especially to worship, including 'complete withdrawal from the churches of the Roman Catholic and Magisterial Reformation; to conduct, involving the rejection of the frivolity, festivities, amusements, and much of the "worldy" dress of society; to social fellowship, including the maintenance of varying degrees of social distance from those outside the brotherhood; and to certain civic and social obligations such as the rejection by many of oath-taking, of holding civic office, and of the bearing of weapons' (Schleitheim Confession).

This sense of shared accountability is what I call 'Monday monasticism' which groups like Zadok and Macquarie Christian Studies Institute have tried to put into practice, as contexts for discernment, in various Christian professional groups: economists, lawyers, public servants, teachers, IT professionals and business people. Yet this lack of Anabaptist disciplinary teeth and visible, communal alternatives gnaws at me. Perhaps we fitted too easily into a Christ Transforming Culture model?

In a profound and provocative article Derek Woodard-Layman challenges the traditional mainline Protestant adherence to H. Richard Niebuhr's 'Christ Transforming Culture' model of the church's relationship to society through a reading of Niebuhr's whole corpus with its 'abiding tension between critical and constructive relations with culture permeating Niebuhr's thought' expressed in the interrelated tensions of 'movement and institution, withdrawal and identification, accomodation and transformation'[68] and forgotten in the light of the near canonical status of his hyper-popular and optimistic post World War II Marshall Plan and baby-boom hit *Christ and Culture.*

Yet there are surprising notes of appreciation of monastic alternatives in the more despairing Christ Against Culture[69] and 'Back to Benedict?' written in the midst and just before a Global Financial Crisis respectively. Woodard-Layman comes to advocate a mendicant model himself as an alternative to the emergency situation of global inequality and ecological

catastrophe we are complicit in. He quotes Niebuhr: 'In a time when a man cannot own a square foot of property or accept a salary without coming dangerously close to compromise with the whole evil and selfish system which issues in class and race exploitation and murder, the monastic ideal of poverty is not an unreasonable answer to the moral problem of poverty'.[70]

In these more pessimistic pieces Niebuhr says that 'Christian radicalism suffers a double failure; it is both unable to reorder social arrangements [despite the high hopes of the Social Gospel movement then and now run to seed], and more importantly, it incurs a disordering of ecclesial arrangements' [exemplified in his *The Social Sources of Denominatonalism* about churches mimicking the divisions of society]. Like Macintyre and Benedict XVI he judges his then historical moment to be like [the monastic] Benedict's, 'noting both share a "pessimism, the conscience-stricken consciousness of compromise … now Protestantism has grown sick of its bargain with nationalism [George W Bush hasn't] while the divorce between Christian ethics and the ethics of business and industry is so complete that the application of Christian principles in commercial life is one of those rarities … The proximity and permeability required by the Christian movement's attempt to reorder the world has produced compromise and complicity rather than conversion'.[71]

Enjoying good food

HR Niebuhr challenges the 'potential ascetic' or monastic to maintain their conversational or dialogical humanity open to the world and not negate it by making the emergency moment of monasticism or Christ against Culture into a permanent one. Their often heroic monastic and other movements accomplish unintended social reforms, but only mediated through socially transformationalist believers.[72] Thus Christ Against Culture monastic cum ascetic positions are necessary, especially in a cultural emergency like the Dark Ages, but not sufficient. Niebuhr however, misses 'the performative and communicative significance of actions such as conscientious objection or voluntarily religious poverty … undertaken as witness', inviting response. Niebuhr also 'collapses the distinction between the monastic and the hermetic, while ignoring the mendicant altogether'. [73]

Further, *Christ and Culture* must be read … within the broader project of which it is a part, not the whole, 'thus maintaining the … tension between withdrawal and identification that distinguishes the transformative type from the affirmative type (i.e. "Christ of Culture")'. The transformative type requires the sectarian to not collapse into culture, particularly capitalist, technologist, surveillance, militarist culture highlighted by Ellul, Foucault, Hauerwas etc. 'A mendicant cultural ethic combines within itself both withdrawal and identification…: the hermetic-ascetic aspect considered as withdrawal, and the non-cloistered cenobitic [communal] aspect considered as identification. This more accurately reflects his [Niebuhr's] insistent accent on Christianity as a movement, rather than institution. Further, it more fittingly captures the dynamism and temporality characteristic of Niebuhr's project'.

Secondly, a mendicant cultural ethic has advantages in late modernity over against the dominating powers tendency 'to sublimate any and all critical and revolutionary energy' in order to maintain the status quo. 'In such circumstances identification is almost inevitably sublimated into legitimization, with respect to economy, politics, and violence'.[74] The idolatrous identification of faith and nation was the great mistake of the 20th century. Fundamentalists of all sorts post-9/11 seem to be repeating it, though some like Islam take a more global than national form. 'In such circumstances', Woodard-Lehman argues, 'our heavy foot must be on the ascetic side of things; transformation must be construed *within* withdrawal'. He supports Kelly Johnson's advocacy of post-Constantinian 'poverty', 'dispossession and weakness' not Constantinian 'stewardship' ethics of possession or managerial and scientific mastery'.[75]

A 'mendicant cultural ethic' enables cultural distance while still witnessing. 'As such its engagement and identification can never be permanent, final or unambiguous; they are always provisional, situational, and equivocal. Stated within the typology of *Christ and Culture*, a mendicant cultural ethic would be a Christ *transfigures* culture type…. Transfiguration, as opposed to transformation, is momentary and episodic; although it has lasting consequences, it is not, itself, necessarily enduring. The presence of Christ in the Eucharist, from a Reformed Protestant perspective, provisional and partial, a product of the Spirit's spontaneous, sacramental action, but the Spirit blows where God wills; the elements return to their everyday use, 'they are not transubstantiated permanently'.[76] They are a numinous 'now' aspect of the Kingdom, awaiting the sacramentalising of the whole new creation at the wedding of heaven and earth (Rev 21:1-2) which is not yet. All earthly engagement must remember our eschatologically 'engaged' state. Instead, we are always trying to be totally transformative like Peter, in our spiritual inarticulacy and fear, building three tents to permanently tabernacle Christ's transfiguration, along with Moses and Elijah (law and prophets). We want

to stay on top of the mountain, not descend into the valley of dumb, demon-oppressed boys (who remind us of our inability to name or tame the transfigured one), and faithless, prayer-less disciples and half-doubting fathers (Mk 9:1-29). Monastic, especially mendicant 'communities' of prayer exist in this in-between space and time.

Woodard-Lehman, following Barth's 'theology on the way', suggests that 'the "new monasticism" for which the earlier Niebuhr called is really a new mendicancy; an exilic, diasporic, or nomadic cultural ethic …. The people and practices of the Catholic Worker, L'Arche, the SNCC Freedom Houses, the Christian Community Development Association, and the New Sanctuary Movement display such an ethic concretely. They are deeply present in, and given for the world. Yet, their mode of participation and belonging is shaped by an askesis [ascetic, monastic practice] determinatively arrayed against the powers and practices of dominative violence'. Their exemplification of the mendicant cultural ethic … makes sense of Niebuhr's own insistence that …. '*There is nothing unsocial about this attitude.* It is not for the love of self that the monk retires from the world, but for the love of his brethren *who may be saved by no other means.*' Thomas Merton exemplified this through his prayerful activism during the Vietnam War. Henri Nouwen sums up the connection between contemplation and social concern after a stay at the Trappist Monastery of the Genessee:

Discussions between sessions

> Prayer is the only real way to clean my heart and create new space… When it is there it seems I can receive many concerns of others … and feel a very intimate relationship with them. There even seems to be room for the thousands of suffering people in prisons and in the deserts of North Africa. Sometimes I feel as if my heart expands from my parents traveling in Indonesia to my friends in Los Angeles and from the Chilean prisons to the parishes in Brooklyn.
>
> Now I know that it is not I who pray but the spirit of God who prays in me … and touches the whole world with his love right here and now. At those moments all questions about 'the social relevance of prayer, etc.' seem dull and very unintelligent ….[77]

There is not much to be said after that. Above, as Woodard-Lehman notes, Neibuhr denies his later *Christ and Culture* denial of transformative intent by sectarians or monastics. As long as the stance of being against culture or its dominant aspects like violence, comes framed within a stance of being fundamentally for the world. 'Perhaps Niebuhr might join MacIntyre in once again calling for a new Benedict; or perhaps more fittingly, a new Francis'.[78]

Post Script

I am conscious of a tension between my advocacy with Schlabach and co. of a Benedictine vow of stability and my use of Woodard-Lehman and his advocacy of a more Franciscan nomadic mendicancy. My own view is that discerning the appropriate moment for these different monastic stances requires communal discernment concerning their timeliness, and personal and communal calling, so that 'it seems good to the Holy Spirit and to us'. Elements of both may be expressed in the lives of different communities, or as one dwells in more than one community. It is a matter of dynamic juggling of a calling to stay and a calling away (cf 1 Cor 7:17, 20, 24, and 29-31), not static balancing.

As Scott Bessenecker, author of *The New Friars* writes:

> The cloistered (or inward) and the missional (or outward) forces in these various [old] monastic communities were often held in tension. Likewise today we find both cloistered and missional communities. New Monasticism often consists of households of Christian men and women planted in dying inner-city communities within their home country, attempting to live the Christian ideal among their neighbours, drawing the lost, poor and broken to themselves. They resemble more the cloistered order.
>
> The new friars, on the other hand, have something of the spirit of mission-driven monks and nuns in them, leaving their mother country and moving to those parts of the world where little is known about Jesus.[79]

Both models have biblical precedent. Let a thousand flowers bloom. And may new monastic and AB communities and individuals, learning from the old, allow everyone to be a monk.

(Footnotes)

[1] Richard J. Mouw, 'Reflections on My Encounter with the Anabaptist-Mennonite Tradition', in John D. Roth, ed. *Engaging Anabaptism: Conversations with a Radical Tradition* (Scottdale Pa: Herald Press, 2001), 121-2.

[2] Cited in John W de Gruchy ed. *Bonhoeffer for a New Day* (Capetown: 1996), 48.
[3] *www.aidanandhilda.org.uk/public_html/downloads/Church%20of%20the%20Isles%202003.*
[4] Cf megachurch Willow Creek's recent admission after a major survey of its congregations that its discipling strategy was clearly inadequate. See 'A Shocking "Confession" from Willow Creek Community Church' Discipleship programs rarely teach people to think, act and be like Jesus Christ'. www.crosswalk.com/pastors/11558438/
[5] After Virtue: A study in Moral Theory (London: Cuckworth, 1987), 263.
[6] 'Community *After Virtue: New Monasticism, Theology and the Future Church*' in G. Garrett ed. '*Into the World You Love'* (Adeleide: ATF Press, 2007), 180-1.
[7] 'Anabaptism and the Obstacles that Make for Vocation' in John D. Roth, ed. *Engaging Anabaptism: Conversations with a Radical Tradition*, 2001, 143.
[8] JC O'Neill, 'New Testament Monasteries', in *Common Life in the Early Church: Essays Honoring Graydon F Snyder* ed. Julian V. Hills *et al*. Harrisburg PA: Trinity Press International, 1998, 119-20.
[9] *Balthasar Hubmaier* (Kassel: 1961), 26, 16. The more recent study by Hans-Jurgen Goertz, *The Anabaptists* (London: Routledge, 1996), 6 argues that 'there was not *one* Anabaptist movement but several. He sees them as an anticlerical reform movement against 'ecclesiastical excesses' without an initially 'clear course or precise objective'. 'They represented a common church-political front, but the arguments underpinning their protests and their visions of a better church and society were very disparate. The loose unity of the reform camp consequently soon shattered and dissolved into several reform movements, often competing against each other'. My account, drawing especially on Davis, *Anabaptism and Asceticism* will focus more on the Swiss Evangelical Anabaptism which solidified around the Schleitheim Confession which through Harold Bender and John Howard Yoder, has acquired classic status.
[10] Ibid. See n. 3 for those more cautious or skeptical regarding such continuities and Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History* vol 1 and 2, (London: Heinemann, 1959 and 1964) for more detail.
[11] Ibid, 125.
[12] Ibid, 132. O'Neill's hypothesis is that John's gospel and epistles are from monastic communities featuring all their peculiar features: the preservation of secret heavenly teaching; commandments for all versus counsels for the perfect monks and nuns; heretical and breakaway movements; and mixed houses under the headship of women.
[13] David Neff, 'Two Tidbits from *The Lost History of Christianity'* December 28, 2008.
[14] Hodder & Stoughton, 2002 reviewed in *Zadok Perspectives*, Winter, 2003, 22-23.
[15] Kenneth R Davis, *Anabaptism and Asceticism* (Scottdale Pa: Herald Press, 1974), 43 citing Patrice Cousin, *Precis de Histoire Monastique* (Belgium: Bloud et Gay, 1956), 42.
[16] *Life Together* (London: SCM, 1954), 58.
[17] Geoffrey Barnes, *The Forgotten Factor: The Story of Lay People in the Church* (Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 1991) 14-5.
[18] 'Monasticism' in *The Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology* ed. D. Atkinson and D. Field, (Leicester UK: 1995).
[19] Davis, 47.


walks and conversations between buildings

[20] Cited by Margaret M Mitchell, 'John Chrysostom', 42, in *The Sermon on the Mount through the Centuries* (J P Greenman, T. Larsen, and SR Spencer eds. (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2007).
[21] Cf New Norcia Benedictine monastery just outside Perth which I recently visited.
[22] Gerald W. Schlabach, 'The Vow of Stability' in Anabaptists and Postmodernity eds S & G Biesecker-Mast, (Telford Pa: Pandora, 2000), 317. Cf the Didache 1:6 'Let your charitable gift sweat into your hands until you know to whom you are giving it' and its warning against those who have no stability but are false prophets fleecing the flock; to not give them money nor, paradoxically allow them to stay more than three days (*Didache: A Commentary,* Kurt Niederwimmer, [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998], 11:5.
[23] Richard W. Brown, *Restoring the Vow of Stability* (Camp Hill Pa: Christian Publications, 1993), 1-3.
[24] Both books by Zygmunt Bauman and published by Polity: Cambridge, the first in 2000, the second 2003.
[25] *Under the Unpredictable Plant: An Exploration in Vocational Holiness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).
[26] Schlabach, 'The Vow of Stability', 305 citing 'The Body and the Earth', in *The Unsettling of American Culture and Agriculture* (NY: Avon, 1977), 120-3. Cf Jonathon R Wilson, *Living Faithfully in a Fragmented World: Lessons from Macintyre's After Virtue*, (Harrisburg PA, Trinity Press International, 1997) and Marcus Curnow, 'Missionary Grow Home!' *Zadok Papers* S166, Autumn 2009.
[27] Schlabach, 303. Cf GR Preece, 'The Threefolkd Call', in Robert J Banks ed, *Faith Goes to Work: Reflections from the Marketplace* (Alban Institute: 1993), 167-9.
[28] Ibid, 315.

[29] As Calvin put it; W J Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth Century Portrait* (New York: Oxford Uni. Press, 1988), 181, cf 45-8, 81.
[30] Schlabach, 315.
[31] (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952). Cf my 'Vocation in a Vocationless World' in S. Holt and G R Preece, eds. *The Bible and the Business of Life* (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2004) drawing in part on her work.
[32] In his and Marcello Pera, *Without Roots: The West, Relativism, Christianity, Islam* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 55-56 citing Friedrich Prinz, *Askese und Kultur* [Asceticism and Culture – two normally opposed phenomena] (Munich: Beck 1980) and in contrast to the new, angry atheists' assumption that civilization begins when religion ends (ABCTV *Compass* 29/3/09, 'The Atheists').
[33] Schlabach, 308.
[34] As Rod Dreher, author of *Crunchy Cons*, calls it.
[35] (New York: Random House, 2006) ch. 2 'Medieval Progress: technical, Coutural and Religious'.
[36] Jean Porter, 'Tradition in the recent work of Alisdair MacIntyre' in *Alasdair MacIntyre* ed Mark C. Murphy (Cambridge University Press, 2003), Ch.2
[37] *A Secular Age* (Harvard: Belknap, 2007), 64, 68, 243, 265.
[38] Davis, 49, citing HB Workman, *The Evolution of the Monastic Ideal* (London: Epworth, 1927), 271.
[39] Monastic humour belies their perhaps dour image in the outside world. The email address for New Norcia Benedictine monastery's business side is Monk-e-business@ ….
[40] Derek Alan Woodard-Lehman, 'On the Christological Transfiguration of Culture: Toward a Mendicant Ethic', *Studies in Christian Ethics* 21.3 (2008), 413.
[41] Cf 1 Cor 7:29-31 and Vincent L Wimbush, *Paul the Worldly Ascetic*(Macon GA: Mercer University Press, 1987).
[42] Tetzel the wandering monk invading Luther's Augustinian monastic territory of Wittenberg is reputed to have coined the ditty 'As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs'. It was the final straw that precipitated his 95 theses or proposals for church reformation.
[43] Davis, 51.
[44] Cf William Cavanaugh's careful tracing of the development of the creation of the notion of 'religion' and religious. The term *religio* (binding – of the whole) is used very rarely in medieval times. When used it refers most often to the monastic life of an order, distinct from lay or secular life (or secular i.e. regular parish clergy). For Aquinas *religio* is a rational habit of the soul embodied in disciplined bodily and communal habits directing us to the good. The rise of the modern concept of religion as a bare private belief of the interior, individual soul, a form of soul-itary confinement to the private and individual domain, is linked to the decline of the church around the late 15th century and the decline of monastic traditions of public, bodily, disciplined habits, of which 'the habit' itself is merely one visible expression. After the peace of Augsburg's solution to the religious wars in terms of the subject following the sovereign's religion. Religion is now domesticated and manipulated for the benefit of the sovereign. 'Religio is no longer a matter of certain bodily practices within the Body of Chirst, but is limited to the realm of the "soul", and the body is handed over to the State ("'A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House": The Wars of Religion and the Rise of the State', *Modern Theology* 11.4 [Oct., 1995]: 402-5). Those who sought to bring corporate religious practices into everyday life were being true to the original meaning of religious as binding all things together.

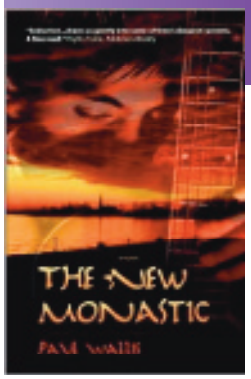
new faces and great contacts

[45] Davis, 51.
[46] Ibid, 56-7.
[47] Davis, 62-4.
[48] Davis, 291-2. Cf Abraham Friesen, *Erasmus, the Anabaptists and the Great Commission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).
[49] 3rd ed. (Kitchener: Pandora, 2001), 19.
[50] *Luthers Works* vol. 53, ed J J Pelikan and WE Hansen, (St. Louis: Concordia, 1956), 53ff.
[51] Roland H Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther*, (New York: New American Library, 1950), 311.
[52] The Believers Church: The History and Character of Radical Protestantism, (New York: MacMillan, 1968), 4, 32.
[53] Taylor, *A Secular Age,* 772.
[54] (Kitchener, Pandora, 2000) which I spoke about at the Whitley AAANZ conference c. 10 years ago.
[55] Davis, 112.
[56] E.g. Schnabel argued with the eirenic Strasbourg Reformer Martin Bucer over Christians' lack of Christ-likeness and concern for poor, and their allowing usury. Davis,124-5.
[57] Davis, 126-7.
[58] Davis, 114.
[59] Davis, 115.
[60] Davis,196.
[61] Yet the ambiguity about the extension of the exemption in lay monasticism is reflected in differences amongst ABs like the stricter Sattler and more moderate Hubmaier e.g. on political and military service and other occasional oaths. Davis, 200.
[62] Davis, 201-2. See Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* trans. Talcott Parsons (London: 1930).
[63] Davis, 208-9.
[64] Davis, 212-3.
[65] Davis, 217.
[66] Davis, 192 -3 citing George Williams, 'Sanctification in the testimony of several so-called the Schwarmer', *Mennonite Quarterly Review* XLII, (1968), 24.
[67] Davis, 197.
[68] Woodard-Lehman, 405-6.
[69] (Chicago: Willet, Clark & Co, 1935).

[70] HR Neibuhr, 'Back to Benedict?', *The Christian Century* 42 (1925), 861.
[71] Woodard-Lehman, 407 citing HR Niebuhr, Back to Benedict?' 861-2.
[72] *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper& Row, 1951) 66-7.
[73] Woodard-Lehman, 412-3 esp. n. 27.
[74] Ibid, 416-8.
[75] Woodard-Lehman, 419, n. 47.
[76] Ibid, 420 citing Kelly Johnson, *Fear of Beggars: Stewardship and Poverty in Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).
[77] Henri J Nouwen, *The Genesee Diary: Report from a Trappist Monastery,* (Garden City NY: Doubleday, 1981), 74-5.
[78] Ibid, 424 and n. 77, citing Niebuhr, 'Back to Benedict?', 861.
[79] (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2006), 21-2.

THE NEW MONASTIC

BY PAUL WALLIS, OAK TARA, 2009



Paul heads up Jesus Generation (JGen), a network of individuals, group houses, and household-based churches in Canberra. JGen is a partner of OIKOS Australia and Paul and his wife Ruth serve as the Team Leaders for OIKOS A.C.T. Paul lectures courses centred on Church History and Hermeneutics at Unity College, Australia. He has authored three previously books.

While written as a novel, one soon realises that the author has lived many of the realities he portrays through his character, 'Ben Anthony'. At the end of the book Paul Wallis hopes that the story of Ben Anthony will "entertain and encourage you, praying especially that it will inspire fresh courage in anyone who feels they have paid a price for being as slow as Ben Anthony was in catching on to the exciting, earth-shattering, and church-changing call of today's new monastic".

Ben Anthony's experiences as leader of a successful independent Pentecostal work sandwiched between significant stints in the Anglican Church as priest, were the backdrop to a roller coaster ride of triumph and trauma in which God fashioned him for his future. Many readers would identify with these scenarios and their effects described in Ben Anthony's story. How these were worked through is told with such clarity and realism that readers could be mightily encouraged to press on in similar difficulties.

Entertaining it certainly is. The book is written in an engaging style that pulls you into the story. The only difficulty I had was working out the order of events when particular challenges for Ben Anthony harked back and forth to various stages of his life. However, that did not detract from being able to absorb the unfolding transitions through which Ben Anthony battled and triumphed.

Although grim experiences are explained, even to the point where Ben Anthony was 'without reputation and without a job', there is also a sense of 'well that is how it was and God used it', plus smatterings of clever humour throughout. Ultimately there is the triumph of Ben Anthony's call to begin a work which is radical and rooted in today's world, and yet ancient in essence - that of a monasticism that vibrates in the 21st century.

Ben Anthony was profoundly impacted by Hebrews 11:28 and 12:1. The reality of the 'cloud of witnesses' that we are surrounded by and the call to 'press on' resonated with him. His 'pressing on' led him to 'chain-reading' the lives of many in this 'cloud of witnesses' in the Bible as well as those of many of the saints down through church history. He was profoundly influenced by monastics like Aidan and Hilda in Britain, John of the Cross and Teresa in Spain, Sophrony in Greece, John Climacus in Syria, and Benedict and Scholastica, Francis and Clare in Italy.

His search, however, did not only lead him back into history, but also forward into radical movements in Britain and South America where he experienced present day examples of pledged church movements either on the edge or outside hierarchical structures. His experience in the Base Ecclesial Communities in Brazil had a deep affect on him.

At the end of the book are meditations based on each chapter. These may be wonderfully used in both groups and individual reflection. They comprise some Bible references, a paragraph or two guiding reflection on the chapter and suggestions for a response in prayer. I found these very enjoyable (Yes - enjoyable! They were challenging also!)

Those who are interested in the reasons why New Monastic movements are emerging in the Western world would enjoy this book. Those who think that these monastics are withdrawing from the world, will be surprised at their ground-breaking engagement with the world. Described in this book are the counter-cultural, Kingdom focused realities that these groups are living out as singles, marrieds, families and across age differences regardless of church background.

I would encourage home churches to read this book. It will broaden one's understanding of the wide scope of the ways of God in forming His church, an appreciation of the 'cloud of witnesses' through the ages. This is an engaging and challenging book. This book comes with endorsements from Phyllis Tickle, well known amongst New Monastics, and also Tony and Felicity Dale of House2House, well known to our OIKOS readers.

- REVIEWED BY BESSIE PEREIRA

(PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED IN OIKOS AUSTRALIA NEWSLETTER – www.oikos.org.au)

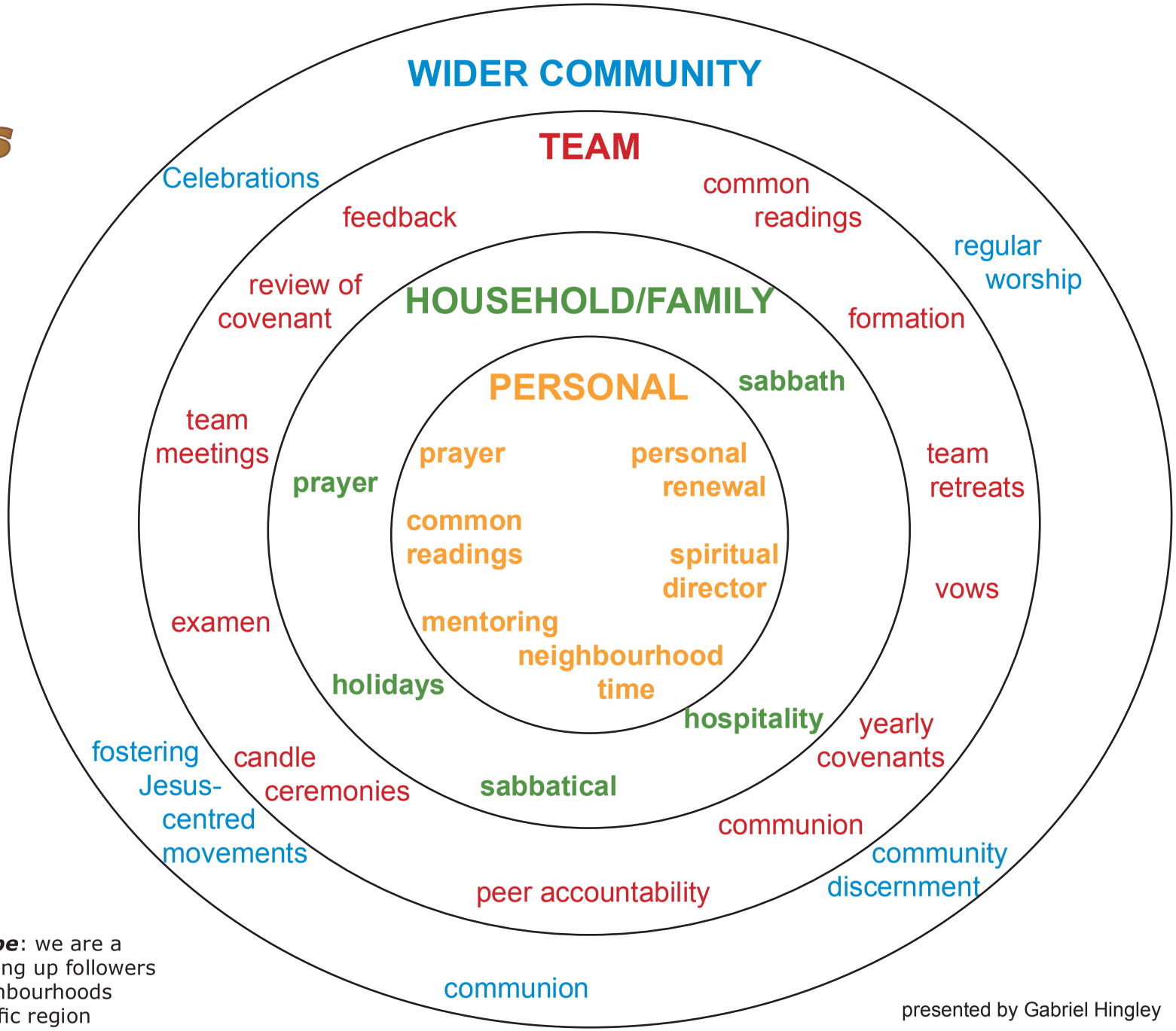
The Spiritual Disciplines of a UNOH* Worker

VOWS

1. Loving obedience:
to discern the will and heartbeat of our Lord together and respond faithfully

2. Voluntary poverty:
to share our lives and resources in solidarity with those facing poverty

3. Apostolic Service:
to advance the reign of God, Sharing Jesus in word, deed and sign



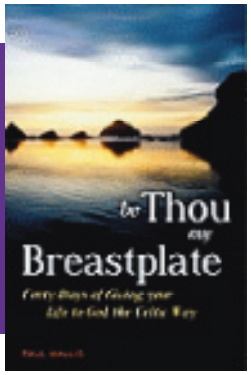
***Urban Neighbours of Hope**: we are a community commited to raising up followers of Jesus to help release neighbourhoods from poverty in the Asia Pacific region

presented by Gabriel Hingley

A Lorica or Breastplate Prayer

A Lorica or Breastplate Prayer is an ancient prayer of protection. The one to the right is an adaption of Saint Patrick's prayer first composed in 433, when he faced the danger of returning to Ireland to minister to his former captors.

BE THOU MY BREASTPLATE
FORTY DAYS OF GIVING YOUR LIFE TO GOD THE CELTIC WAY
By Paul Wallis, Mowbray, 2008



Paul introduces his book thus - "The ancient Celtic Christians had a uniquely powerful way of giving their lives to God. It was called the Breastplate Prayer (or Lorica). As the name implies, it was a prayer invoking God's blessing and protection on the life of the one who prayed it. Symbolically the ancient Celts would use such a prayer to rededicate to God every part of their physical body and every aspect of their daily life. A few of these prayers, so loved by our spiritual ancestors, have survived to this day. One of the most powerful was the Breastplate of Fursa. Its author, Fursa, was an evangelist, church planter and founder of monastic communities in Ireland, England and France. History records that he penned these 11 brief lines of prayer some time in the early seventh century. Today his prayer is still powerful." (Part of the Introduction)

The book has forty daily readings gradually taking us through the prayer. There are guides at the back of the book for group sharing and for a weekend retreat.

- reviewed by Bessie Pereira

The Lorica

I bind unto myself today
The gift to call on the Trinity
The saving faith where I can say
Come three in one, oh one in three
Be above me, as high as the noonday sun
Be below me, the rock I set my feet upon
Be beside me, the wind on my left and right
Be behind me, oh circle me with Your truth and light
I bind unto myself today
The love of Angels and Seraphim
The prayers and prophesies of Saints
The words and deeds of righteous men
God's ear to hear me
God's hand to guide me
God's might to uphold me
God's shield to hide me
Against all powers deceiving
Against my own unbelieving
Whether near or far
I bind unto myself today
The hope to rise from the dust of earth
The songs of nature giving praise
To Father, Spirit, Living Word
(Adapted by Gayle Salmond, Copyright K-Dawn Music, 2008)

The Breastplate of Fursa

May the yoke of the Law of God be upon this shoulder,
The coming of the Holy Spirit on this head,
The sign of Christ on this forehead,
The hearing of the Holy Spirit in these ears,
The smelling of the Holy Spirit in this nose,
The vision that the people of heaven have be in these eyes,
The speech of the people of heaven in this mouth,
The work of the church of God in these hands
The good of God and of neighbour in these feet.
May God dwell in this heart,
And this person belong entirely to God the Father.

Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand Inc.

The purposes of the Association are:

- To nurture and support the Christian faith of individuals and groups in Australia and New Zealand who identify with the Anabaptist tradition.
- To network and link individuals, churches and groups of Christians who share a common Anabaptist understanding of the Christian faith.
- To provide religious services including teaching, training, pastoral care, mediation, and counsel to its members and others interested in the Anabaptist tradition.
- To provide resources and materials relating to the tradition, perspectives, and teaching of Anabaptists to both the Christian and general public.
- To convene conferences and gatherings which provide opportunity for worship, teaching, training, consultation, celebration, and prayer in the Anabaptist tradition.
- To extend the awareness of Anabaptism in Australia and New Zealand assisting individuals, churches and groups discover and express their links with the Anabaptist tradition.
- To provide an opportunity for affiliation for churches and groups who wish to be known in Australia and New Zealand as Anabaptists.

What is Anabaptism?

Anabaptism is a radical Christian renewal movement that emerged in Europe during the sixteenth-century Reformation. Whilst Anabaptism was a grassroots movement with diverse expressions in its early development, its enduring legacy usually has included the following:

- Baptism upon profession of faith
- A view of the church in which membership is voluntary and members are accountable to the Bible and to each other
- A commitment to the way of peace and other teachings of Jesus as a rule for life
- Separation of church and state
- Worshipping congregations which create authentic community and reach out through vision and service

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