

New Monasticism: re-imagining radical discipleship

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Introduction

Sense we turn monks and saints into statues or pictures. Stories of the Celtic saints and of monastic saints say otherwise. Celtic monks (haircuts, tattoos, radical lifestyle - Hilda, Aidan, Columba)

Benedict



“The dominant institution of Celtic Christianity was neither the parish church nor the cathedral, but the monastery a combination of commune, retreat house, mission station, hotel, hospital, school, university, arts centre and power house for the local community – a source not only of spiritual energy but also of hospitality, learning and cultural enlightenment.”(Ian Bradley, *The Celtic Way*)

New Monasticism in 2013

MISSION SHAPED CHURCH makes reference to ‘new monasticism’ and its breadth as a gift to the church. The Simple Way in the US, 24-7 Prayer in the UK, Europe and North America Moot in London. The Church Army and the Church Mission Society monastic-style mission orders.

At the end of 2011, the Church of England began to consider widening categories of religious orders which they referred to “include Re-imagined expressions of the Religious Life and New Monastic Communities.”

Resonances with others who re-imagined monasticism

“The restoration of the Church will surely come from the sort of monasticism which has in common with the old only the uncompromising attitude of a life lived according to the Sermon on the Mount in the following of Christ. I believe it is now time to call people together to do this.” (*Bonhoeffer 1935*)

WHY NOW?

- * Cultural moment
- * Contextualisation
- * Gibbs/Coffey - every 500 years

“God has consistently helped the church remember who it is through monastic movements”
Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove

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DYNAMIC:

Christ Centred focus said Bonhoeffer is the distinctive of Christian Community

24-7 rule/distinctives



PRINCIPLES FOR EMBRACING MONASTICISM

1. A Lifestyle built around Jesus (*John 4:23, Romans 12:1*)

Monasteries would be built around a rhythm of prayer and worship. Devotion was the key duty. Whether going for constant prayer or regular times of prayer each day, the key idea was that at certain points everything stopped for time with the Father. Each day life was prayed for, thanked for, prepared for, reflected on – all at Jesus feet. Spiritual disciplines or exercises rose out of a desire to keep coming back to Him – to soak in his presence.

2. Patterns and Seasons (*Ecclesiastes 3*)

Work and study, of rest and of prayer. Each term we would focus on times of mission, seasons of prayer or times of rest. God created a world of seasons – of activity and passivity – of life and death. Ecclesiastes 3 gives a theology for this. Importance of place and locality.

3. Relationality

Hospitality and the importance of relationships.

“These churches placed a high value on community, with church practices based around meals.”

Community is a beginning place for experimentation and pioneering

4. Availability (*Romans 12:1*)

“The glory of God always shows itself in an empty space”

An early church bishop called Irenaeus believed that a true search for God could only come with the concept of ‘apavia’, a Latin word which means ‘roadlessness’. Irenaeus called for ‘a state of complete trust in the direction of God rather than human decision.’

5. Living the prayer

‘He has shown you O man what is good and what is pleasing. To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.’ (*Micah 6:8*)

‘You can no more show me your works apart from your faith as I can show you my faith apart from my works. Faith and works, works and faith, fit together hand in glove.’ (*James 2:18*)