

## "Pentecostal Monasticism: Communities of the Spirit both Past and Potential"

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For many, “pentecostal monasticism” might appear like an oxymoron. Our stereotypical images of monasticism (uniform robes, medieval chant, self-renunciation) don’t seem to square with our stereotype of Pentecostalism (raised hands, tongue speaking, wild worship). I would, however, like to suggest that monasticism and Pentecostalism have more in common than we often realize. More importantly I am seeing, of late, a fascinating interpenetration of three forces: Christian monasticism, charismatic renewal, and the Christian community movement. My conviction is that this mutual interpenetration of forces (*intentional form*, and *Spirit, together*) promises to bear good fruit for the glory of Christ in the church and in the world.<sup>2</sup>

My aim in this essay is to record my observations regarding this interpenetration and then—at the end—to reflect a bit on the significance of the interpenetration of these three forces for what I see God doing in the world today. After a few cursory observations regarding connections between monasticism and things “pentecostal” prior to 1960,<sup>3</sup> I will share what I have noticed regarding the interpenetration of these three forces between 1960 and the present.<sup>4</sup> Then, once the development of the

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1 An earlier draft of this essay was submitted to the *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* for the special 2020 edition on “Pentecostal Formation.” Though this essay was not published there, the comments by the two anonymous peer-reviewers were invaluable toward helping me revise this essay into its present form.

2 Reginald Alva treats monasticism and charismatic renewal as independent and parallel movements of renewal in his “*Monasticism and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement*,” in *New Theology Review* 29/2 (March 2017), 1-8. My aim is not merely to see these movements as parallel forces of renewal, but to observe how monastic movements influence expressions of charismatic renewal, how charismatic renewal influences intentional communities, and so on.

3 I offer this cursory sweep presented in “A. Observing the Interpenetration . . .” to share briefly what I have seen in my review of the history of Christian spirituality. I am unable to point to an article or book to document my observations because this book/article does not exist (though see fn 5 below). Clearly a couple of pages is inadequate to defend my sweeping statements. Nevertheless, I think it is important to notice what I see as the broad historical backdrop to later explorations of the integration between community, spirit and form.

4 Once again, though I give greater detail to my presentation in these sections, they are in no way a formal historical or sociological treatment of the development any movement or of the mutual influence of these movements together. A formal historical treatise would require examination of individuals’ correspondence, articles published in charismatic periodicals and newsletters, and the like. A formal sociological study would require employment of a range of literature that, while interesting and relevant, would take us away from the simple observations I wish to make in this study (and

interpenetration of these forces has been presented, I will turn to reflect on the virtues that each of the three forces offers, suggesting that the mutual interpenetration of these movements can prove valuable toward an appropriate traditioning of pentecostal life today.<sup>5</sup>

## A. Past: Observing the Interpenetration of Pentecostal, Monastic, and Community in History

### 300- 1960: Centuries of Exploration

If there is one thing we notice when reading the history of “monasticism,”<sup>6</sup> it is the presence of stories about pentecostal-like phenomena.<sup>7</sup> One heritage we receive from monasticism is that of the

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would require a mastery of material regarding which I am not yet sufficiently familiar to employ).

5 As a collection of “reflections on historical observations,” this essay is not really a paper in the “academic discipline of Christian Spirituality” (see, for example, Sandra Schneiders, “The Study of Christian Spirituality: Contours and Dynamics of a Discipline” in *Christian Spirituality Bulletin* 6/1 (Spring 1998). My aim here is not to make a thick descriptive analysis of the character of human experience of the divine, even if we think of this in a broad, corporate sense of “movements.” Nor am I, in this paper, trying to develop a constructive piece in the sense of some kind of “theology of religious life.” That would require a different bibliography and method (though this is a task which I hope to do in the future). Thus, in this present essay I am (1) just noticing some things I have seen in my reading of history (and particularly the fascinating things I have seen in the development of things from 1960 to the present), and (2) suggesting that we might have something to gain today from a conscious cross-pollination of these three elements. On pentecostal “traditioning” see Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2000). I also regret that I cannot expand the context of this inquiry to include wider global developments. The limits of both space and my own competency make this impossible.

6 I am using the term “monasticism” to refer to everything Roman Catholics might include within their categories of “consecrated” or “religious” life. Regarding these categories see “Navigating the Contemporary Religious Landscape: Discerning Distinctions with a Difference,” chapter 2 of Mary Johnson, Patricia Wittberg, and Mary L. Gautier, *New Generations of Catholic Sisters: The Challenge of Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 25-40. Since Martin Luther, Protestants have usually used the term “monk”/“monastic” to identify all forms of religious life and I will follow that simplification here. See also my “What Do We Call It?: New Monasticism and the Vocabulary of Religious Life” (<https://spiritualityshoppe.org/what-do-we-call-it/>) and “What is Monasticism? A Few Reflections” (<https://spiritualityshoppe.org/what-is-monasticism-a-few-reflections/>).

7 By using the phrase “pentecostal-like” phenomena, I am simply observing the attention that the literature of ancient and medieval monasticism gives to the mystical experiences and miraculous encounters of prominent figures in the history of religious life. Prophetic communication, healing, deliverance, extraordinary encounters with God in prayer, and such are common to many religions and are also regarded as characteristic of Pentecostal/charismatic movements [see for example the treatment of “Pentecostalism” in F. L. Cross, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition edited by E. A. Livingstone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1253-54.] A few examples can be found in Athanasius, “The Life of Antony,” #64 in Athanasius, *The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus*, translated by Robert C. Gregg. Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 78; Gregory the Great, Book Two #26 of *Life and Miracles of St. Benedict* (Kindle), loc 510; John Marsden, *The Illustrated Life of Columba* translated by John Gregory (London: Macmillan, 1995), 55-220; chapter nine of Kathleen Garay and Madeline Jeay, translators, *The Life of Saint Douceline, A Beguine of Provence* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: D.S. Brewer, 2001), 48-67. More generally see Ronald A.N. Kydd, *Charismatic Gifts in the Early Church* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendricksen Publishers, 1984); Louis Bouyer, “Some Charismatic Movements in the History of the Church,” in *Perspectives on Charismatic Renewal*, ed. Edward D. O’Conner (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1975), 113-131; Bruce Yocum, *Prophecy*:

pursuit—often together in community—of the leadership of Holy Spirit through intentionally ordered forms of life.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, within these thousand or so years, the world of monasticism developed an admirable store of wisdom when it came to living life together as local communities. Leadership, accountability, formation of virtue, establishing (and modifying when needed) a rhythm of life, division of labor, property management, expressing appropriate expectations of those who are attached to the community at various levels: these and more were all practical issues that the traditions of religious life addressed in their Rules of Life, their constitutions, their sermons, their letters to one another, and more generally throughout the literary and material culture of religious life. *Spirit* and *community* in the context of intentional *form* – an interpenetration consciously explored in the history of ancient and medieval religious life.

After the 15<sup>th</sup> century the magisterial Protestants discouraged charismatic experience and virtually eliminated the institutions of monasticism.<sup>9</sup> Anabaptist groups explored both non-Catholic forms of mysticism and new forms of intentional Christian community, demonstrating the Gospel message through village-sized collections of devout families and singles.<sup>10</sup> Catholic sociologist Patricia

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*Exercising the Prophetic Gifts in the Church Today* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Servant Books, 1976), 19-28; Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Smith (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997), 65-137; George H. Williams and Edith Waldvogel, “A History of Speaking in Tongues and Related Gifts,” in *The Charismatic Movement*, ed. Michael P. Hamilton (Grand Rapids, Michigan: The William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), 69-71. The history of healing is more developed and documented. See, for example, Morton Kelsey, *Healing and Christianity: A Classic Study* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995).

- 8 Antony’s first letter is explicit about this leadership of the Holy Spirit: calling us, making our warfare light, showing us how to repent, delivering works (or a rule) whereby we may constrain our soul and body, opening the eyes of the soul, and so on. See Derwas J. Chitty, translator, *The Letters of Saint Antony the Great* (Oxford: SLG Press, 1975), 2, 12, 18, 21, 28. On forms of life see for example, Gert Melville, *The World of Medieval Monasticism: Its History and Forms of Life*, trans. James D. Mixson (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2016); Giorgio Agamben, *The Highest Poverty: Monastic Rules and Form-of-Life*, trans. Adam Kotsko (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2013).
- 9 Yet it must be acknowledged that in doing so, magisterial Protestants often tried to re-purpose the structures of religious life in the context of an inclusive laity, particularly in the contexts of congregation, family, and school. See Eric Leland Saak, “Martin Luther and the Monastic World of the Later Middle Ages,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion* (religion.oxfordre.com, 2016), 12.
- 10 See Congar, *I Believe*, 138-150; Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Voice of God: How God Speaks Today Through Prophecies, Dreams, and Visions* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996) 64-96; Williams and Waldvogel, “A History of Speaking in Tongues,” 71-91. On Anabaptist spirituality, see Peter Erb, “Anabaptist Spirituality” in *Protestant Spiritual Traditions* ed. Frank C. Senn (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1986), 80-124. For links between Anabaptist movements and monasticism, see for example, Kenneth Roland Davis, *Anabaptism and Asceticism: A Study in Intellectual Origins* (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1974). For connections between “Protestant” Christianity more generally and “monastic” traditions, see Ivan J. Kauffman, *“Follow Me”: A History of Christian*

Wittberg rehearses something of a scholarly consensus when she states that “It has been commonly observed that Catholicism has tended to retain its virtuosi within the Church by channeling them into religious orders, whereas Protestant virtuosi tend to split off from their present denominations to form new sects.”<sup>11</sup> Catholic religious orders in the regions where monasteries were not eliminated experienced other changes after the fifteenth century: as apostolic activity became the dominant expression of Catholic religious life, as lay spiritual movements gained greater measure of recognition and support, and as focus on the discernment of spiritual experience heightened caution regarding things one might label as charismatic.<sup>12</sup> Thus, what I see developing in Western Christianity by the modern era is an orderly, largely non-charismatic hierarchy and parish life, with charismatic exploration rising and falling on the fringes. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the trend among Catholic religious toward active service intensified to the point where the vast majority of religious were nuns involved in teaching ministries. A few Protestants explored charismatic-like experience through the pursuit of holiness, while others explored life together through the foundation of “utopian” communities and “settlement houses.”<sup>13</sup>

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*Intentionality* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2009); Greg Peters, *Reforming the Monastery: Protestant Theologies of the Religious Life* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014); Greg Peters, *The Story of Monasticism: Retrieving an Ancient Tradition for Contemporary Spirituality* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic), 205-242.

11 Patricia Wittberg, *The Rise and Fall of Catholic Religious Orders: A Social Movement Perspective* (Albany, NY: The State University of New York Press, 1994), 45. See also the sources referenced in fn 9 on p. 297.

12 For historical explorations regarding developments in Catholic religious life and Catholic charismatic experience prior to 1960, see Doley C. Moss, *Of Cell and Cloister: Catholic Religious Orders through the Ages* (Milwaukee, WI: The Bruce Publishing Company), 185-204; Jo Ann Kay McNamara, *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns Through Two Millennia* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996), 565-630. Congar, *I Believe*, 151-57; and the examples in Williams and Waldvogel, “A History of Speaking in Tongues,” 71-91. For a sociological consideration of the shifts see Wittberg, *The Rise and Fall*, especially 36-38, 128-29.

13 On holiness movements, see especially David Bebbington, *Holiness in Nineteenth-Century England* (Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Paternoster Press, 2000) and Melvin Dieter, Anthony Hoekema, Stanley Horton, J. Robert McQuilkin, and John Walvoord, *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Academie Books/Zondervan Publishing, 1987). For utopian communities, see for example Chris Jennings, *Paradise Now: The Story of American Utopianism* (New York: Random House, 2016); and Mark S. Ferrara, *American Community: Radical Experiments in Intentional Living* (Rutgers University Press, 2019). For settlement houses see Mina Carson, *Settlement Folk: Social Thought and the American Settlement Movement, 1885-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); and Wes Markofski, *New Monasticism and the Transformation of American Evangelicalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 67-68.

With the start of the twentieth century, Christians throughout the world encountered spiritual experience afresh: the pentecostal movement(s).<sup>14</sup> Different expressions of Pentecostalism drew attention to the release of God’s power for holy living, for church unity, or for mission. The important feature for the present study is that at least in the West, Pentecostal movements did not stimulate the foundation of distinct communities of shared life such as we find in monasticism or in the utopian communities of the nineteenth century, though they fostered a number of close-knit networks.<sup>15</sup> P. D. Hocken, in his article on “Charismatic Communities” in the *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, suggests that “Whereas the eyes of the first Pentecostals had been more focused on the 20th-century “Pentecost” heralding the imminent return of the Lord, the focus of most charismatics was on church renewal, seeing the restored charismata as divine equipment for this purpose.”<sup>16</sup> I suspect other forces also contributed. Nevertheless, while early Pentecostal movements did not trigger the formation of common ways of life, they stimulated a powerful transformation of the church’s understanding of devotion, worship, ministry, missions, theology, and more. The interpenetration of the Pentecostal stream with Christian community life and with monasticism, however, came in the last half of the twentieth century, due to the influences of the Christian community movement and the Charismatic renewal.

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- 14 For an overview of the issues in defining Pentecostalism, see Cecil M. Robeck, “The Origins of Modern Pentecostalism: Some Historiographical Issues,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism*, ed. Cecil M. Robeck and Amos Yong (Cambridge University Press, 2014), 13-30 and the many relevant articles both in this volume and in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, revised and expanded edition. ed. Stanley M. Burgess (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing, 2003). For reflections on Pentecostalism from the viewpoint of Christian spirituality, see Dan Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality* (Sheffield England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); Simon Chan: *Pentecostal Theology and the Spiritual Tradition*. *Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement* 21 (Sheffield England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001); Daniel E. Albrecht and Evan B. Howard, “Pentecostal Spirituality” in Robeck, *Cambridge Companion*, 235-253.
- 15 I contacted a number of recognized historians of Pentecostalism regarding this question. None gave me the name of any intentional Christian communities founded by Pentecostals during this era.
- 16 P.D. Hocken, “Charismatic Communities,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 473. See also Simon Chan’s comments in *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, 17. I discuss the charismatic movement below.

## 1960s-1970s: Fresh Winds Bring Changes

Something special happened in the 1960s. Indeed three things happened, which together made possible in the West a new integration of spirit and form in the context of local community: (1) the development of communes and intentional Christian communities, (2) the charismatic renewal, and (3) the second Vatican council.

The 60s was the era of the “commune.” As historian Timothy Miller declares, contrasting research on communities founded from 1900 to 1960 with those founded after the ‘60s, “We are no longer dealing with communes numbering in the low hundreds but rather with thousands—probably tens of thousands—of them, and an incredibly diverse lot at that.”<sup>17</sup> Elsewhere Miller argues that the early communes were not the fruit of the 60s hippie culture but rather that the communal expressions founded *before* the 60s—and here he explicitly lists key Christian predecessors—helped to stimulate and channel energies and explorations which ultimately gave rise to the hippie communes.<sup>18</sup>

What is important to note for our purposes is that the rise of communes, in all their variety—and rising on the heels of the Christian predecessors, made *Christian* intentional communities a cultural possibility, particularly in the context of the Jesus movement and other developments in Western Christianity. A number of influential Christian communities were established between 1960 and 1980.<sup>19</sup> These Christian communities were neither hippie communes nor monastic orders. Yet their members

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17 Timothy Miller, *The 60s* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1999), Kindle, loc. 101.

18 Timothy Miller, “The Roots of the 1960s Communal Revival,” in *American Studies* 33/2 (Fall, 1992), pp. 73-93. For an introduction to some of the key predecessors see François Biot, *The Rise of Protestant Monasticism* (Baltimore, Maryland: Helicon Press, 1963); Donald G. Bloesch, *Centers of Christian Renewal* (Philadelphia, PA: United Church Press, 1964); Donald G. Bloesch, *Wellsprings of Renewal: Promise in Christian Communal Life* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974); and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, *New Monasticism: What It Has to Say to Today’s Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2008), 23-39.

19 See Dave and Neta Jackson, *Living Together in a World Falling Apart: The Classic “Handbook on Christian Community,”* With Updated Reflections (Evanston, Illinois: Castle Rock Creative, Inc., 2009 [originally published in 1974]); Ronald M. Enroth, Edward E. Ericson, Jr., C. Breckinridge Peters, *The Jesus People: Old-Time Religion in the Age of Aquarius* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972; Richard A. Bustraan, *The Jesus People Movement: A Story of Spiritual Revolution among the Hippies* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2014). Dave Jackson’s 1978 annotated list of Christian communities in his *Coming Together: All Those Communities and What They’re Up To* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany Fellowship, 1978) runs over thirty pages (pp. 68-99), and documents not only the number and diversity of Christian communities, but also the various networks of communities developing during his time of observation.

shared living space and finances to some extent or another. They made commitments to simplicity, sexual fidelity, and submission to leadership. Within a few decades, some were producing their own “manuals on how to do community life,” though sadly with little reference to the wisdom of the history of religious life.<sup>20</sup>

A second phenomena arising in the 1960s was the charismatic renewal. Whereas, in the West, the pentecostal outpouring of the early twentieth century generally influenced the formation of independent denominations like the Assemblies of God, Churches of God, Foursquare and so on, the *charismatic* outpouring of the 1960s generally influenced people and structures within historic church traditions or other non-pentecostal groups.<sup>21</sup> A number of features characterized the charismatic movement: a love for worship and praise, a belief that God speaks today (the prophetic ministry), and an appreciation of the role of spiritual gifts in the church. Whereas the Pentecostal movement was more missionary oriented, the Charismatic movement was more oriented toward church renewal. Whereas the Pentecostal movement was more oriented to individual experience, the Charismatic movement had a more corporate and even ecumenical emphasis.

But most importantly for our purposes here, while leaders of the Pentecostal revival did not establish residential communities of faith, the charismatic movement most decidedly did. Episcopal priest W. Graham Pulkingham stimulated the foundation of a community at the Church of the Redeemer in Houston in 1965.<sup>22</sup> Many of the communities founded in association with the Jesus People

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20 Dave and Neta Jackson, *Living Together in a World Falling Apart*; Steve Harper, *A New Way of Living: How the Church of the Redeemer, Houston, found a new life-style* (Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos International, 1973). For a more current example, see, Brian Sanders, *Life in Intentional Christian Community* (Underground Media, 2011). David Janzen’s more recent *The Intentional Christian Community Handbook: For Idealists, Hypocrites, and Wannabe Disciples of Jesus* (Brewster, Massachusetts: Paraclete Press, 2013) reveals a greater sensitivity to things monastic.

21 Summaries of the history of the charismatic renewal/movement can be found in P.D. Hocken, “Charismatic Movement,” in *The Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 477-519; McClymond, “Charismatic Renewal,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism*, 31-51; Susan Maurer, *The Spirit of Enthusiasm: A History of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, 1967-2000*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2010.

22 Harper, *A New Way of Living*.

movement were open to things charismatic.<sup>23</sup> A number of Roman Catholic charismatic communities were also established, such as the Word of God Community in Ann Arbor, Michigan.<sup>24</sup>

The charismatic movement not only influenced the foundation of new communities, it also touched a few communities that were founded before the 60s, bringing them new ideas and new life.<sup>25</sup> The movement also impacted monasteries and other vowed religious individuals and groups. Christians of many varieties were drawn together through the experience of charismatic renewal. A Holy Spirit “Grassroots Unity” was beginning to emerge.<sup>26</sup>

Roman Catholic expressions of renewal received significant encouragement as a result of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). In his prayer at the opening of the council, Pope John XXIII “called upon the Spirit to “renew your wonders in our time, as though for [by] a new Pentecost.””<sup>27</sup> The very tone of the Council promoted an openness which gave hope and inspiration to renewal movements of both lay and religious. More particularly, the official statements of the council stimulated both a renewal of lay holiness and an encouragement for religious to be renewed through a return to their sources. Yet, while opening up vast new possibilities, the Council also stimulated something of an identity crisis for those in religious life who were no longer sure what their call or vows were all about.<sup>28</sup>

The combined forces of Vatican II and the Catholic charismatic renewal opened gates and a number of Catholic “new communities” were founded in the 60s and 70s. Pope John Paul II, in his homily for the Mass of Pentecost at the gathering of 50 of these ecclesial movements gathered in Rome

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23 See Richard A. Bustraan, *The Jesus People Movement*.

24 See especially P. D. Hocken, “Charismatic Communities”; Susan Maurer, *The Spirit of Enthusiasm*.

25 For the story of Reba Place’s experience, see Dave and Neta Jackson, *Glimpses of Glory: Thirty Years of Community The Story of Reba Place Fellowship* (Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Press, 1987), 161-250.

26 Connie Ho Yan Au, *Grassroots Unity in the Holy Spirit* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2016). For Catholic religious who were early theologians of charismatic renewal see, for example, the work of Jesuit Donald L. Gelpi, *Pentecostalism: A Theological Viewpoint* (New York: Paulist Press, 1971), *Pentecostal Piety* (New York: Paulist Press, 1972); and Dominican Simon Tugwell *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1972).

27 Pope John XXIII. *Prayer to the Holy Spirit* (1961) cited in Maurer, *The Spirit of Enthusiasm*, 37.

28 See Wittberg, *The Rise and Fall*, 214; 231-56.



for their first World Congress, May 31, 2000, summarized their contribution with the following words: "The movements and new communities, providential expressions of the new springtime brought forth by the Spirit with the Second Vatican Council, announce the power of God's love which in overcoming divisions and barriers of every kind, renews the face of the earth to build the civilization of love".<sup>29</sup>

Thus, by the late 1970s diverse forces were beginning to intersect. The Christian *community* movement, *charismatic renewal*, and post-Vatican II *religious life* all started to touch one another. Both monastic and Protestant communities were influenced by the charismatic renewal. Charismatic renewal gave birth to Christian communities: some composed of vowed religious; others of laity, or both. New communities were exploring fresh conceptions of the life of devotion. Yet these were only "touches." I am convinced that it took the challenges of the late 70s up through the start of the new millennium to bring these forces together in a more intentional way.

### **Late 1970s through 2000: Challenges**

The charismatic movement experienced *challenges staying healthy*. My point here is not to rehearse all of the scandals in the charismatic movement in the last few decades but rather to briefly suggest how the challenges of this era brought people to consider a traditioning of pentecostal ecclesial life, particularly in connection with the wisdom of monastic life.<sup>30</sup> As mentioned above, an outpouring of the Spirit led Episcopal rector Graham Pulkinghame and Church of the Redeemer, Houston into a new form of charismatic community. By 1974 writers were praising the model of Redeemer's charismatic community, a model other charismatic communities followed.<sup>31</sup> Challenges also surfaced:

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29 [http://www.vatican.va/jubilee\\_2000/magazine/documents/ju\\_mag\\_01061998\\_p-04\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/jubilee_2000/magazine/documents/ju_mag_01061998_p-04_en.html). Accessed September 7, 2019. For an introduction to some of these communities, see Monique Hébrard, *Les nouveaux disciples: Voyage à travers les communautés charismatiques*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Paris: Le Centurion, 1979). See also Hocken, "Charismatic Communities," 476.

30 For an "insider" critique of the health of the charismatic movement as of 2010, see editor of *Charisma* magazine J. Lee Grady's *The Holy Spirit is Not for Sale: Rekindling the Power of God in an Age of Compromise* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Chosen Books, 2010). Note how he explicitly mentions purity, humility, and justice addressing the problems of money, sex, and power without knowing how they have been addressed in discussion of the monastic vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

31 See Harper, *A New Way of Living*; Dave and Neta Jackson, *Living Together*, loc. 277-324, 3343-3378.

unrealistic expectations of the spiritual experience and personal sacrifice of members, insufficient accountability of the leadership, unfortunate divisions within the congregation.<sup>32</sup> Pulkinghame moved to England to promote the music of the Fisherfolk and his vision of charismatic community while his own church struggled. Finally, back in the USA in the summer of 1992, Graham Pulkinghame confessed to sexual misconduct and was placed on suspension from ministry. He died suddenly of a heart attack the following year. What is interesting to me in this story is that in 1982 Pulkinghame returned to Church of the Redeemer and outlined a vision for integrating monastic and parish life. Documents and sermons from the 80s and early 90s show that Pulkinghame was consciously exploring—perhaps as a way of addressing some of the challenges Church of the Redeemer had encountered—the wisdom of Christian monasticism.<sup>33</sup>

The challenges of staying healthy were also present for those charismatic groups associated with the “shepherding” or “discipleship” movement.<sup>34</sup> Interest in shepherding grew out of a sincere concern with an over-individualization within the charismatic movement. It was too easy to promote spiritual experience without taking further steps toward concrete formation or interpersonal connection. Consequently, some recommended a practice of “pastoral care” or “shepherding,” wherein believers submitted to a shepherd or pastoral leader. Within the shepherding culture, leaders exercised a high degree of authority over individuals’ lives; at times they expected significant control over the major life-choices of individuals. What is striking is how these issues pressed consideration—and should still

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32 My account of the challenges is based largely on Julia Duin’s journalistic recounting of the story of Church of the Redeemer, *Days of Fire and Glory: The Rise and Fall of a Charismatic Community* (Baltimore, MD: Crossland Press, 2009).

33 See for example Duin, *Days of Fire and Glory*, 202-03, 246. My thanks to Julia Duin for providing access to the proposal and the 1981 constitution of the Community of Celebration and to the newsletters of Community of Celebration, to sermon tapes, and other relevant materials that further document this interest between 1980 and 1991.

34 See S. D. Moore, “Shepherding Movement” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 1060-62; S. David Moore, *The Shepherding Movement: History, Controversy, Ecclesiology* (London: T & T Clark International, 2003); Grady, *The Holy Spirit is Not for Sale*, 169-179. A recounting of these challenges as they arose within Catholic charismatic renewal circles surrounding the Word of God community in Ann Arbor, Michigan can be found in the documents and reflections uploaded to scribd by John Flaherty (see <https://www.scribd.com/user/16078640/John-Flaherty>, accessed September 8, 2019 and a public response in the middle of the controversies by Stephen Clark in *The Catholic Register* June 14, 1992, p. 5).

press consideration—of how we “tradition” pentecostal theology in pentecostal life. What do we expect of ordinary believers (and families) and how does that differ from what we might expect from those who wish to make extraordinary commitments to devotion or community life? What is the nature of the Christian’s authority in practice? How should Christians discern the direction of their faith? These are all questions that have been discussed for centuries in the history of religious life.

Reba Place Fellowship (RPF) recognized this as they worked to resolve their own challenges. In the late 1970s, conscious of the concerns that members of their own and other communities were voicing, the leaders of RPF publically “repented on their knees for their use of excessive authority.”<sup>35</sup> Yet they also realized that this was not merely an issue of leadership character, but also a challenge for their church/community structure. They could not continue making the same expectations of everyone. But what were they to do, having members and friends with a variety of different levels of commitment? Dave Jackson recounts their deliberation:

Several options were considered: Reba could quit calling itself a “church” and become a religious order . . . . Forgetting the communal aspect of Reba’s life was another option . . . Finally, the consultation recommended a form that saw community at the center of a local church.<sup>36</sup>

Ultimately RPF chose a dual-level framework. They felt they needed to honor the commitments some had made to the sharing of life together. But at the same time they had to make room for people to associate with Reba Place who did not want to make lifetime decisions to share a common purse or the like. The point I want to make in this example, as with the Church of the Redeemer above, is that the process of addressing their own challenges pressed them to think about how they might compare with (or even learn from) “religious orders.”

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35 Jackson, *Glimpses of Glory*, 252.

36 Jackson, *Glimpses of Glory*, 268.

Other examples of the consideration of things monastic in the process of charismatic communities struggling to keep healthy can be given, particularly as the Roman Catholic church addressed challenges associated with new charismatic communities within their own circle. The point is that these challenges stimulated some within the charismatic renewal to look to monastic wisdom for ways toward health.

The Christian community movement experienced *challenges staying together*. By 1978 Dave Jackson reported that “while we have heard of many communities established” in his survey of Christian communities, “many others have failed—possibly as many as one-third of the attempts.”<sup>37</sup> He identifies three issues as being critical: willingness of the community to accept oversight, the quality of leadership, and the depth of the members’ commitment to the Lord. The rest of his book is organized to address these three issues. In 1996 David Janzen addressed the same issue in his chapter “What Happened to All Those Communities of the 1970s?” of his *Fire, Salt, and Peace: Intentional Christian Communities Alive in North America*.<sup>38</sup> Janzen identifies a variety of forces that “came together in the 1980s to disperse a movement that many expected to be a prime mover of church renewal”: exhaustion of community members, changes in life-stage (for example, singles marrying and having families), broad cultural changes, personal boundaries violated by leadership, lack of external review and accountability, shift in emphasis from the community within to the neighborhood without, and gradiose expectations that did not, in the end, fulfill the promises some had hoped for. Richard Bustraan, in his review of the Jesus People movement, titles the period from 1976-1979 as “Devolution,” listing communities and organizations that closed in this period.<sup>39</sup> It is significant that at the close of Janzen’s

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37 Jackson, *Coming Together*, 8.

38 David Janzen, *Fire, Salt, and Peace: Intentional Christian Communities Alive in North America* (Evanston, Illinois: Shalom Mission Communities, 1996), 172-77.

39 Bustraan, *The Jesus People Movement*, 47-48. See also Marc Allen, *What Happened to You? Hippies, Gospel Outreach and the Jesus People Revival* (Enumclaw, Washington: Redemption Press, 2016), 282-86.

explanation for the failure of many Christian communities, he proclaims, “Nevertheless, many communities did come through the 1980s, sustained by daily love, hidden service, and humble forgiveness—a million stories that will never get into books.”<sup>40</sup> It is important to remember: it was a challenge for Christian communities to stay together; yet some, through daily love, hidden service, humble forgiveness, are staying together today.

Catholic religious life has experienced *challenges staying alive*. Whereas in 1965 there were 214,932 religious priests, sisters, and brothers, by 2014 that number had dwindled to 66,211. The average age of a vowed religious woman has increased significantly. Some speak of the “extinction” of Roman Catholic religious life.<sup>41</sup> Many reasons have been offered to explain this crisis of religious life: shifts in identity due to changes introduced through Vatican II, economic factors (particularly for women), withdrawal of support from Rome. Nonetheless, the fact is convents are being sold and communities are being dissolved or merged with others. Many religious long to see “life” in the form of new recruits or fresh vision.

Yet new life can be observed. Patricia Wittberg, writing in 1994, speaks of the significant growth shown by the new religious “orders” founded since 1970. She specifically mentions charismatic covenant communities.<sup>42</sup> Of the two major groupings of women religious, there are indications of growth, particularly in the grouping which tends to be represented by newer, more “traditional” institutes.<sup>43</sup> My suspicion, as I review the contemporary situation in Roman Catholicism, is that hope is

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40 Janzen, *Fire, Salt, and Peace*, 176.

41 These trends are discussed, for example, in Wittberg, *The Rise and Fall* and Johnson, Wittberg, and Gautier, *New Generations*. On the extinction of religious life, see Diarmuid O’ Murchu, *The Seed must Die: Religious Life—survival or extinction* (Dublin: Veritas Publications, 1980) and his recent *Religious Life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Prospect of Refounding* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2016). Current statistics on religious life can be found at the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (<https://cara.georgetown.edu/> accessed September 12, 2019).

42 Wittberg, *The Rise and Fall*, 269-70.

43 See for example Johnson, Wittberg, and Gautier, *New Generations*, 22 and scattered throughout this book. Yet see also the—what I consider to be hopeful—dialogue between representatives of both groups of women religious in Dawn Araujo-Hawkins, “Today’s generation of women religious forge cross-conference relationships” by Dawn (June 23, 2019) in *Crux: Taking the Catholic Pulse*, available at <https://cruxnow.com/church-in-the-usa/2019/06/23/todays-generation-of-women-religious-forge-cross-conference-relationships/>, accessed September 14, 2019.

strongest where forms of religious life are being established with intentional sensitivity to the charismatic Spirit of God.

The challenges of the last half of the twentieth century—to stay healthy, to stay together, to stay alive—have pressed our three key movements (Christian community, charismatic renewal, monasticism) toward each other. In the twenty-first century these forces have grown even closer through a flowering of new monasticisms.

### **2000-The Present: New Monasticism(s) and New Connections**

Although it is common to speak of “new monasticism” in the singular, using this phrase to refer to those communities associated with popular writers/speakers Shane Claiborne and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove or with the well-known book *School(s) for Conversion: 12 Marks of a New Monasticism*, I think it is more accurate to think of the birth and development of a variety of somewhat independent expressions in the past twenty or so years.<sup>44</sup> While Catholic and charismatic communities were facing challenges between 1975 and 2000, another segment of Christianity was beginning to give voice to a new vision of connection. People who self-identified as “evangelical” Christians, inspired by their interest in the spiritual formation movement, by a recovery of key structures in mission history, or by an incarnational strategy for social action, began to wonder if there might be something to be gained by a fresh exploration of historic religious life.<sup>45</sup>

By the start of the new millennium, Westmont professor Jonathan Wilson had issued a passionate call for a “new monasticism,” arguing that “we desperately need the church to recover a

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44 For a summary see Evan B. Howard, “Introducing New Monasticism” (<https://spiritualityshoppe.org/introducing-new-monasticism/>) accessed September 12, 2019.

45 See for example, Ralph Winter, “Protestant Mission Societies: The American Experience,” *Missiology: An International Review* 7/2 (April, 1979), 139-178; Rodney Clapp, “Remonking the Church: Would a Protestant form of monasticism help liberate Evangelicalism from its cultural captivity?” *Christianity Today* 32/11 (August 12, 1988), 20-21. *Sojourners* magazine 10/12 (December, 1981) is devoted to reflections on Francis of Assisi.

sense of its mission through faithful living.”<sup>46</sup> A number of communities were formed with a vision to explore just such connections.<sup>47</sup> Inspired by the postliberal vision of thinkers like Stanley Hauerwas (who wrote a glowing endorsement of *School(s) for Conversion*), mainline Christians also joined in a fresh exploration of things monastic.<sup>48</sup>

The communities founded in this season varied. Some were *residential communities*, where a group of people lived in a single dwelling or a set of nearby dwellings. Other communities were *gathered communities*, where people might use other forms of transportation than walking to attend regular gatherings. Still others were *dispersed communities* where values, personal accountability, similar ministries (and even finances at times) were shared, yet where the members residences might be quite distant from each other.<sup>49</sup> Though some measure of common life was (and is) characteristic of all these communities, expressions of new monasticism(s) exhibit a wide range of common finances, common ministries, common worship, and more.<sup>50</sup>

What is most significant with regards to the present essay are the new—and intentional—connections being made between Christian community, charismatic renewal, and historic Christian monasticism. Charismatic missions groups like Youth With A Mission have ordered their ministry centers with a measure of rhythm and simplicity since their inception, though not necessarily with a conscious recovery of monastic wisdom. Increasingly now, however, we are witnessing a *conscious*

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46 Jonathan Wilson, *Living Faithfully in a Fragmented World: From ‘After Virtue’ to a New Monasticism*, second edition (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2010), 59.

47 Networks of these communities include, for example, communities of “new friars” [see Scott Bessenecker, *The New Friars: The Emerging Movement Serving the World’s Poor* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2006), those associated with Rutba House and *School(s) for Conversion: 12 Marks of a New Monasticism* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2005), groups in the UK connected in some way to the “Fresh Expressions” movement [see Graham Cray, Ian Mobsby, and Aaron Kennedy, eds., *New Monasticism as Fresh Expression of Church* (London: Canterbury Press, 2010)].

48 See for example, Elaine Heath and Larry Duggins, *Missional. Monastic. Mainline: A Guide to Starting Missional Micro-Communities in Historically Mainline Traditions* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014). For a Roman Catholic reflection on the phenomena of new monasticism(s) see Bernadette Flanagan, *Embracing Solitude: Women and New Monasticism* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014).

49 Dispersed religious life has been common since the mendicants and especially since the development of the Jesuit order. It has been especially common in the past century among contemporary active religious in teaching or service congregations.

50 A review of some of these practical details can be found by browsing the testimonies of the communities mentioned in footnotes 56 and 57 and in Janzen, *The Intentional Christian Community Handbook*.

appropriation (a traditioning) of pentecostal life with a view to intentional community and monastic wisdom.

The “Boiler Room” communities (now 24-7 Communities and the Order of the Mustard Seed [OMS]) grew out of the culture of the charismatic influences in the UK which flowered in Holy Trinity Brompton church, in the Alpha course, and in the Soul Survivor festivals. Rooms where people devoted hours to prayer (creating 24-7 prayer watches) morphed into communities shaped by commitments to prayer, mission, justice, creativity and more. Their self-description, particularly in the influential book *Punk Monk: New Monasticism and the Ancient Art of Breathing*, clearly demonstrates the interpenetration of the charismatic, the monastic, and the communitarian streams.<sup>51</sup> A second example of this interpenetration is the Alleluia Community, in Georgia. This community started in 1973 as an ecumenical (but dominantly Roman Catholic) charismatic residential community and has now survived forty years of life together.<sup>52</sup> Over time they articulated a common Rule of Life and are currently involved in visits to Rome and elsewhere, participating in the newly established Catholic Charismatic International Renewal Service, the North American Family of Communities, and other groups. My third example is the Order of Sustainable Faith: A Missional Monastic Expression for the Vineyard Movement. The Order of Sustainable Faith (OSF) is a fledgling movement, with only a few vowed novices and a number of aspirants involved at this point.<sup>53</sup> OSF promotes both residential and non-

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51 Andy Freeman and Pete Greig, *Punk Monk: New Monasticism and the Ancient Art of Breathing* (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 2007). For a sociological analysis of a boiler room community as a case study of the relationship of new monasticism and evangelicalism, see Wes Markofski, *New Monasticism and the Transformation of American Evangelicalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). 24-7 Communities can be explored further at <https://www.24-7prayer.com/247communities>, accessed September 16, 2019. For the Order of the Mustard Seed see [www.orderofthemustardseed.com](http://www.orderofthemustardseed.com). For use of a similar charismatic prayer community in a sociological study see Mark Killian’s analysis of the “Philadelphia” community in his *Religious Vitality in Christian Intentional Communities: A Comparative Ethnographic Study* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2017).

52 For information on the Alleluia community see Don Swenson, *Alleluia! The Return of the Prototype: An Ecumenical, Covenanted and Charismatic Community* (New Life Publishing, 2018); and Dan K. Almeter, *Unity: On Earth as in Heaven* (Augusta GA: Alleluia Christian Service Center, 2017). I am also drawing from an interview and materials from Bob Garrett of the community.

53 My information on OSF is gathered from Jared Patrick Boyd, *Invitations & Commitments: A Rule of Life* for The Order of Sustainable Faith (self-published by Jared Boyd, 2014), and from interviews with Boyd. For an analysis of another Vineyard-based community see Mark Killian’s treatment of the “Berean” community in his *Religious vitality in Christian Intentional Communities*.



residential expressions, expecting members to make appropriate commitments to a number of different values including receiving spiritual direction, simplicity, singleness or faithfulness in marriage, shared work, peacemaking and more. Jared Boyd, founder of this order, states that he is writing the OSF Rule in a “spirit of *taking the best* of the historic church and from within the stream of a *renewal movement*.”<sup>54</sup> These different expressions (OMS, Alleluia, OSF) are samples of what I am calling “pentecostal monasticism,” intentional attempts at the interpenetration of the monastic, the community, and the charismatic. My conviction is that these kinds of expressions were made possible by the historical developments outlined above. I am also convinced that the mutual interpenetration of these three forces offers a surer path to healthy, devoted Christian life. I will use the remainder of this essay to explain why.

## **B. Potential: Reflections on Spirit, Community, and Form Today**

My observations in the previous section are not offered to demonstrate some persistent connection between Pentecostal distinctives and monastic (or intentional community) structures. Rather I am merely observing that these connections have been made throughout history, and that they have been made consciously by a few folks recently, which I take to be of significance. In a recent contribution to the special issue of *Religions* exploring the future of Christian monasticism, I suggested that at this stage in our postmodern era it might be helpful to image monasticism in terms of a “Begaine Option”: the development of expressions of common life which are intentional, yet not institutional.<sup>55</sup> My dual concerns in that article were (1) that it would be all too easy to attempt to fix the crisis of religious life by rearranging the structural furniture of monastic institutions or by simply trying to “recover” old institutional forms, when what we might need most is permission to abandon institutional

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54 Boyd, *Invitations & Commitments*, v.

55 See Evan B. Howard, “The Begaine Option: A Persistent Past and a Promising Future of Christian Monasticism,” *Religions* 10/9, available at <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/10/9/491>, accessed September 18, 2019.

forms in order to discover “monasticism” afresh through a sincere pursuit of the s/Spirit of religious life in the context of our new era, and (2) that, on the other hand, this pursuit could easily derail if our abandonment of institutional forms was accompanied by a neglect of historic wisdom. My hope is that our advances toward lived devotion are intentional enough to identify concrete visions and means to serve as guides, yet not so intentional that we lose the authentic leadership of the Spirit of Christ when we most need it.

In light of the historical observations I have outlined above, I would like, in these reflections, to take my suggestions a few steps further. First, with reference to those wishing to address the current challenges facing monasticism, I recommend an intentional infusion of charismatic renewal. Second, with reference to Pentecostals, I suggest that valuable resources toward healthy formation in the Spirit are available in the collected wisdom of Christian religious life. Third, with reference to people exploring Christian community, I wish to affirm the need for local communities, particularly in a postmodern age. And in order to communicate these three points I must, in between my first and second points, include a few comments about *appropriate* formation.

*Why We Need Charismatic Renewal* - The fact of the matter is—in Scripture, theology and history—the Holy Spirit is the One who brings life to creation and to the people of God.<sup>56</sup> We are “born again” in (or by) the Holy Spirit. The church is given life by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. And the church continues to be formed into life (as do the members of the church) through the work of God’s Spirit. This is the plan of God. The signs of the Spirit’s working are recognized through changes both within (enlightening our mind, convicting our heart) and without (gifts and fruit exercised through the

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56 See for example, George T. Montague, *The Holy Spirit: The Growth of a Biblical Tradition* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2006); Gordon Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: BakerAcademic, 1994); Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1992); Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Spirit and Salvation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 43-106. With regard to history we tend to refer to the Spirit’s work of bringing life as *revival*. I have presented a brief selection of revivals through Christian history in Evan B. Howard, *The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2008), 408-414; see also the bibliography listed there.

harmony of believers, miraculous events). While we can be confident *that* the Holy Spirit is actively present in our communities, we can never be fully certain *how* the Spirit may be present. Consequently, it is vital to attend, as individuals and as communities, to the Spirit of God: eagerly making room for the Spirit's presence in creation, prophecy, healing, tongues, sacrament, teaching, and more.

*A Note on Appropriate Formation* – The founders of the shepherding movement were right: the Spirit of God is not poured out merely for the sake of providing spectacular experiences. We need “more effectively to teach Charismatics [indeed, all Christians] how to mature in their relationship with Christ.”<sup>57</sup> But how do we identify which kinds of relationships (friendships, spiritual direction, shepherding . . .), at what degree of commitment and sacrifice, are best at facilitating maturity (of individual, of community) for whom? And for how long? Some charismatic communities struggled with an expectation that all believers (or at least all those who were valued) would experience the Holy Spirit in supernatural ways, would make heroic sacrifices, and would be in complete submission to a pastoral care provider. In the end, many found this just too much to give for the long haul. Some, however, seemed to find these demanding commitments and sacrifices to be a perfect vehicle for growth and service to the Lord.

I would suggest this is ultimately an issue of identifying the *appropriate* means of formation for individuals and communities.<sup>58</sup> Given context, relationships, stage of maturity, and so on, what is the appropriate path to maturity? One danger of Christian community is to think that one's own way of sacrificial living together is “Christianity (or church) done *right*.” Practices of sharing finances, celibacy, housing, time together, prayer ministry, relationship with a shepherd or spiritual director, or involvement in a needy neighborhood or political cause, get identified as the normative expectation of all participants. Roman Catholics addressed this issue forthrightly in Vatican II by simultaneously

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<sup>57</sup> Moore, *The Shepherding Movement*, 44.

<sup>58</sup> The notion of “appropriate” steps of formation are central to my book, *A Guide to Christian Spiritual Formation: How Scripture, Spirit, Community, and Mission Shape Our Souls* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: BakerAcademic, 2018).

proclaiming our universal call to holiness as Christians and the value of religious life as one legitimate *means* of following that universal call. I concur. We need to discern (and to provide as leaders) appropriate means of formation into holiness for every individual and community within our sphere of influence. Thus, we need to permit and to provide support for those who experience supernatural experience or who desire to make sacrificial commitments, yet to do so without expecting the same from all.<sup>59</sup> To give an example: covenant communities are not the first to discover the value of submission. Treatments of religious life frequently discuss the nature and value of the vow of obedience.<sup>60</sup> Is there not a place for this in communities today? But where? With whom? To what degree? For how long? These are questions of appropriate formation.

*Why We Need Monasticism* – As communicated above, I do not believe that serious “covenant commitments” of the type modeled in the shepherding relationships of some 1970s charismatic communities are for everybody, though we all embrace covenant relationships with God and others in some form or other (baptism, marriage, etc.). Sometimes one’s discipline of the Spirit is simply to attend to the love of God frequently enough to avoid suicide. Most believers (and congregations) find their Spirit-led path of holiness within a life of reasonable virtue, habitual participation in common worship, moderate experience, and small offerings of service. I say this not to describe some form of “second-rate” Christianity. By no means! The point is rather that the authentic life of loving God and neighbor is lived as we follow vocations unique to each individual and each community. Each vocation is a gift both to the one who follows as well as the community who benefits from that vocation.

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59 For a review of early Church councils and their treatment of such questions, see Evan B. Howard, “Spiritual Formation and Elitism: Reflections on Early Councils and Contemporary Practice,” available at <https://spiritualityshoppe.org/spiritual-formation-elitism-reflections-early-councils-contemporary-practice/>, accessed 2/4/20. In a future article I hope to reflect on the history of the distinction between “commandments” and “counsels”: a distinction which played a significant role in the development of formal religious life and against which late medieval semi-monastics and Protestants reacted.

60 See for example, Sandra M. Schneiders, *Buying the Field: Catholic Religious Life in Mission to the World*, volume 3 of *Religious Life in a New Millennium* (New York: Paulist Press, 2013), 352-593.

And it is precisely for that reason that we need monasticism today. All are not called to 24-7 prayer, but we need communities of people who keep this kind of prayer watch on behalf of God's vision. Medieval society felt that the prayers of the saints in monasteries were protecting their world; do we not need this today? Though the work of God's Spirit was not limited to religious, nuns and monks who devoted themselves to the pursuit of God were often used as vehicles of healing and power encounter for the sake of their local regions. We still need this ministry. Monastic communities have frequently served a prophetic role, calling the people of God through their lives to a fresh reexamination of their relationship with God and the world. Religious life offers freedom from obligations and thereby permits opportunity to experiment with new and perhaps newly appropriate forms of worship and ministry. Monastic communities also serve as repositories of discerning wisdom. Ideas regarding how to affirm and confess, how to live together rooted in values rather than mere friendships, how to navigate use of time and property: all this and more are the treasure of communities which have made covenant commitments and have sustained for many years. For these reasons, we all need monasticism.

Yet some need monasticism more specifically. Some people long for—indeed *need*—some kind of committed community in order to follow God's Spirit. There will always be those in the church who have a “monastic impulse.”<sup>61</sup> For these people, some kind of monastic expression functions as what I have elsewhere called a “formational greenhouse.”<sup>62</sup> Without the responsibilities of career or family believers can explore Christian practice or ministry in ways that would be impossible for most. And in doing so, they are able to share ideas and practices (like spiritual direction, rhythms of prayer,

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61 See for example, Walter Capps, *The Monastic Impulse* (New York: Crossroad, 1983). In sociology this phenomena is discussed in terms of “religious virtuosi.” For an analysis of religious life from this perspective, see Wittberg, *The Rise and Fall of Religious Life*. I have not addressed intentional solitude here, but the religious impulse is not always directed toward intentional *community*, but also at times a commitment to live an ordered life alone. On intentional solitude, see, for example, Paul A. Fredette and Karen Karper Fredette, *Consider the Ravens: On Contemporary Hermit Life* (iUniverse, 2011).

62 Howard, *Guide to Christian Spiritual Formation*, 169.

procedures for visitation, forms of self-examination and so on) that are used to some degree by Christians who might not make the same commitments. Some are called by the Holy Spirit to be pioneers of the faith for the next generation. This does not make them any more holy: just a different way of becoming holy.

*Why We Need Intentional Christian Communities* – We have needed them all through history. Ancient Christian families who broadened their household to include others who wanted to share life. Dormitories full of Benedictines praying and farming. Bands of Franciscan friars traveling from village to village offering labor and service in the name of Jesus. Celtic, Anabaptist or Moravian settlements which themselves became small villages of God’s empowered people. Jesuit houses, convents near schools, utopian communities, settlement houses, Christian communes. There is something about humankind that needs to see visions of life embodied in concrete forms of life. It is not enough just to have groups of people who share common values and stay in touch for mutual accountability. We need to see the Spirit at work within real forms of life among people living together. Furthermore, I think that we especially need local Christian communities in our postmodern context. Two parent nuclear families are no longer the dominant housing arrangement. Many people are entering adulthood out of broken homes, not knowing how to “do community.” People see church as but one node within their network of Christian resources. Many Christians are both afraid of commitment and yet long for a shared life and ministry in Christ that is more than attending a weekly Bible study or service project. We need new Christian “homes,” centers where people can be invited into a rhythm of chores, prayers and ministries. This is not recovering “the way church ought to be done,” but rather exploring appropriate forms (plural) of living the Gospel today. My guess is that, by incorporating lessons from the history of monasticism, charismatic renewal, and Christian community, we can find ways of incorporating Christians of various levels of commitment into centers of vibrant Christian life together.

## Conclusions -

I began this essay by suggesting that an interpenetration of the charismatic and monastic within the context of Christian community may prove valuable for an appropriate “traditioning” of Pentecostalism. My use of the word “traditioning” is taken from Simon Chan’s *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, where he argues explicitly for the need of Pentecostals to undertake a “traditioning process”: locating theological reflection within the conceptual framework of historic Christianity—and more particularly within the frameworks of Christian spiritual theology.<sup>63</sup> Chan recommends that Pentecostals consider a legitimate place for Christian theological systematization: thinking with exactness and thoroughness, maintaining dialogue with historic church tradition as a legitimate expression of the ongoing work of God’s Spirit, and reconsidering current practices of worship. The aim of *Pentecostal Theology* is just that: to foster an appropriate traditioning of pentecostal theological reflection. All well and good.

But I would like to argue—and I am sure that Chan would agree—that a *theological* traditioning must not (and truly cannot) be separated from an *ecclesiological* traditioning. We may, in our desire for both charismatic experience and Spirit-led maturity, institute “covenant communities” or “shepherding.” But in doing so, we must realize that we are venturing into models and questions—and we are wiser when we are in conscious dialogue with these models and questions—which have been discussed for centuries. Our theologies are embodied in our concrete forms of life as communities of faith. When for example we establish new charismatic communities, we are traditioning the leading of God’s Spirit. Consequently we must, as Chan recommends, examine our practices of Christian formation and congregational life (just as we examine our theology) with exactness and thoroughness, in dialogue with a church tradition that we understand to be—in spite of serious failures throughout history—as an expression of the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit, understanding our worship of God to

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<sup>63</sup> See Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, 17-39.

encompass all of life.<sup>64</sup> Various streams of the Christian faith are nourishing one another.<sup>65</sup> I see great hope in this. As we permit the Holy Spirit (charismatic) to be embodied in intentional forms (monastic) in local expressions (community), I see a path toward a vibrancy of Christian life that might become a vehicle for revival in the generations to come.

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64 Chan urges Pentecostals to go beyond thinking of worship as the recitation of “praise ditties” to a deeper practice of theology in our corporate (and eucharistic) worship services. I concur, and would argue further that what we confess in our gathered worship services is the truth that is also lived out in our scattered worship lives. See for example, David Peterson, *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2002); James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2016).

65 See Richard Foster, *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998).