

Renewing the Church as the Community of the Kingdom — Bishop Wayne Boosahda



THE ANCIENT PATHS

*Thus says the LORD,
"Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths,
where the good way is, and walk in it;
and you will find rest for your souls."*

Jeremiah 6:16

Below are personal, introductory reflections from Bishop Wayne Boosahda on some of the elements the Spirit of Christ is using in our time for renewing the Church as the Community of the Kingdom of God on earth, involved with Him in His redeeming Mission...these reflections are meant to encourage all those who are stirred by them to further explore the resources they are meant to make available and which will be offered and communicated on a regular basis to those in relational connections with Bishop Wayne and the CEEC missional Society of St. Patrick & St. Aidan, as well as any and all who are on similar journeys for the love of Christ.

The particular vision advocated below is one of the renewed and fresh 'ancient-future'/convergence perspectives on being the Church in our postmodern western societies, whether rural or metropolitan. It is one that fits in somewhat with Ray Simpson's vision of 'high street monasteries' and 'villages of God', or what we might refer to as the 'Abbey' model of being communities of the Kingdom that call people to a Way of Living in following Jesus in the declining western experiences of being the Church. I offer this article, together with others I am going to begin to send out regularly to those joining us through the Society of St. Patrick & St. Aidan (*an ecumenical, relational mission society based in the Communion of Evangelical Episcopal Churches*). My desire and longing would be to foster, nurture and resource fresh prayer and study initiatives for church planting movements. Let us pray and listen to the Lord to see if these inter-connected relational movements might be able to cross-pollinate with one another so that we can learn from one another in the unity of Christ's love as we embark on fresh 21st century pilgrimages of discovery with Christ our Shepherd, Lord and Redeemer.

My prayer and vision would be that together we seek to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the Kingdom of Heaven's divinely inspired and creative strategies and solutions for transforming the Church (particularly in the Western postmodern, post-Christendom context) through modeling, living and offering freely to hungry seekers of all kinds fresh, Spirit-empowered expressions of "communities – and networks of communities - of Heaven on earth". These initiatives would need to be birthed through much prayer and pioneering ventures of faith, obedience & sacrifice by the power of the Spirit (see Zechariah 4:1-10 -Living Bible & other translations). I propose that these types of Spirit-birthed and empowered initiatives can lead to a greater harvest moving of the Holy Spirit to bring new generations of disciples and leaders into the role of "active contemplatives" or "apostolic and prophetic prayer mystics" operating missionally out a hub or abbey center for different geographical and networked regions.

There are many budding movements already appearing in Western nations, such as our own Wild Goose Initiative (see: www.dioceseofstpatrick.org for a visual presentation) and many others that seem to be evidence of the Holy Spirit's action to conceive, birth and weave together varied strands of the Kingdom of God's fresh emergence and demonstration. One of the central elements of many of these emerging church planting and equipping/discipling movements (especially among those in their 20's and 30's) is what would be described as "ancient-future faith", "three streams convergence" and "new monastic" experiences of renewal in the Way and Works of Jesus and His Kingdom. Other related terms being used would be: "The Great Tradition" or "Treasures Old and New".

These common seeds of vision, practices and mission in following our Lord Jesus have the potential to germinate in hungry hearts across all the older "denominational" experiences of being the Church and draw together into relational, Kingdom initiatives those who are looking for deeply grounded, historically rooted - but culturally, 21st century contextualized ways of living the Way of Jesus and His kingdom on earth at this time in history. I believe that these

movements also have the Holy Spirit's power, Life and blessing on them to draw spiritual seekers who do not yet know Christ personally but have passed by and beyond most of the Western Church as we have known it.

Neighborhood and community/regional “houses of prayer” have often begun to form throughout the West (such as many of the Chinese underground “house church” networks and movements began, as well as the 24/7 prayer movement out of England). And, as they have done so, they have often been gradually shaped by the Spirit into spiritual “greenhouses” that have led to divinely directed explorations and experimentations with the above described elements for being able to live the mission of God's heart in Christ that enables us to *be* the Good News for the “multitudes in the valley of decision” throughout the Western world.

These are some “dreams” and ponderings of an older man who has known, loved and served our Lord Jesus for 54 years and been involved in many different streams of the Holy Spirit's renewal during my journey. It has been my great and humble honor and joyful privilege to serve as a spiritual father to many church plants, church planters and communions of churches that have sought to be faithful to “the heavenly vision” in their own lives, ministries and worship communities. The apostle Peter proclaimed boldly on the day of Pentecost that in the last days the Holy Spirit would be poured out on all humanity and that there would be visions, dreams and prophesying through young and old and through men and women of every people group, social status and nation which would release many signs and wonders resulting in hungry and receptive hearts receiving God's healing, saving, transforming work in Jesus His Son.

As this moving of the Holy Spirit is released, there will be need for these fresh, ancient-future, convergence, Great Tradition, new monastic communities and movements to gather in the harvest and reverently tap the spiritual treasures that will enable Christ to be fully formed in each new believer born anew into the Household of God. Let us pray together, let us worship the Three of Great Love and Mercy together, let us dream and listen for His Voice together so that, as with Mary the mother of our Savior, something wondrous might be conceived within us as the Holy Spirit comes upon us and the power of the Most High overshadows us to incarnate anew the ministry of Jesus in making disciples of all nations.

Yours in the Way of Jesus,

Bishop Wayne Boosahda