Special Issue Reprint

Exploring the Future of Christian Monasticisms

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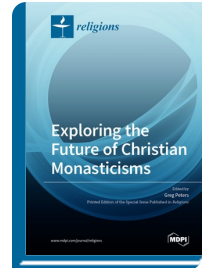
The institution of monasticism in the Christian Church is in general decline, at least in so-called "first world" nations. Though there are many reasons for this, monastic leaders are confronted by the reality of fewer communities, monks, and nuns nonetheless. At the same time, many younger Christians are rediscovering the rich heritage of the monastic tradition. Though they themselves might not be called to join a traditional monastery, they are eager to appropriate monastic practices in their own lives. This had led to a movement known as the "new monasticism" or "secular monasticism." Despite lacking a unified vision and any central organization, these new/secular monastics are attempting, in their own ways, to carry on the tradition and practices of Christian monasticism. As well, there is a movement within historical Christian monasteries to pour new wine into old wineskins. Traditional forms of monasticism are also generally flourishing in developing nations, breathing new life into monasticism. This volume looks at the current monastic landscape to assess where monasticism stands and to imagine ways in which it will grow in the future, leading not only to a renewed Christian monasticism but to new monasticisms.

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