

ABSTRACT

CELTIC SPIRITUALITY—A MEANS TOWARD
EXPERIENCING GOD’S PRESENCE

by

William Sidney Parks

Celtic Christians of the first millennium are characterized by their view of the pervasive presence of God in the lives of individuals as evidenced by their prayers. This project explores the effect of introducing the Celtic understanding of God’s presence in the world on the religious and prayer practices of college students.

A small group of students met weekly to discuss articles on Celtic spirituality and to review prayers from the Celtic tradition. A pre- and posttest design with no comparison group measured changes in their perception of the presence of God in their lives. They also recorded daily responses to two questions: How have I experienced the presence of God today? and How have I reacted to the presence of God today? These responses were coded using categories suggested by perceived manifestations of God’s presence in a person’s life: connectedness with God, others, and creation; right relationships; a greater sense of the greatness of God; occurrence of private prayer and corporate worship; acceptance of self and one’s gifts; a sense of being led or called; freedom and peace in the midst of crisis or calamity; sacrifice and power in daily life; and, other categories that emerged from the data.

This study suggests that the participants experienced the truth communicated in Scripture that God is present in our world and that God’s presence is something that can be experienced in a variety of ways and places, chiefly through a sense of connectedness

with other persons rather than directly to God or to creation. Furthermore it suggests that being exposed to a different view of God's presence can increase a person's sensitivity to that presence.

Participants expressed an appreciation for the Celtic integration of the Christian faith into all aspects of their lives and came to see the reality that all that we do is prayer. However, this awareness did not substantially affect the time and manner in which the participants prayed to God.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled
CELTIC SPIRITUALITY—A MEANS TOWARD
EXPERIENCING GOD’S PRESENCE

presented by

William Sidney Parks

has been accepted towards fulfillment

of the requirements for the

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY degree at

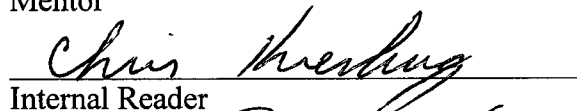
Asbury Theological Seminary



Mentor

June 26, 2001

Date


Internal Reader

June 26, 2001

Date


Director, Doctor of Ministry Program

June 26, 2001

Date


Dean, Doctor of Ministry Program

June 26, 2001

Date

**CELTIC SPIRITUALITY—A MEANS TOWARD
EXPERIENCING GOD’S PRESENCE**

A Dissertation

**Presented to the Faculty of
Asbury Theological Seminary**

**In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry**

William Sidney Parks

June 2001

©2001

William Sidney Parks

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Tables	viii
Acknowledgments	ix
Chapter	
1. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY	1
Background	1
The Problem	2
Biblical View	5
Experiencing the Presence of God	9
Experiencing God—A Short History	12
Experiencing God in the College Environment	15
The Modern Predicament	16
An Answer from the Celtic Tradition	17
Purpose	17
Research Questions	18
Definitions	18
Context	19
Working Design/Methodology	20
Description of the Project	21
Subjects	21
Variables	21
Delimitations and Generalizations	21
Overview	22

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	23
Celtic Culture—A Popular Interest	23
History of Celtic Peoples	24
Celts in Gaul	26
Celts in the British Isles	28
Characteristics of Celtic People	29
Celtic Social Structure	34
Celtic Religion	37
Celtic Culture and Christianity	46
Spread of Christianity among Celtic People	50
Celtic Christianity—Reality or Contrived Invention?	57
Characteristics of Celtic Christianity	60
Celtic Monasticism	66
Celtic Emphasis on God’s Presence in the World	72
Celtic Prayers Today—The Carmina Gadelica	77
Celtic Spirituality	78
Celtic Spirituality in Prayers	81
Research	85
Summary	86
3. DESIGN OF THE STUDY	87
Problem and Purpose	87
Research Questions	87
Field Pilot	89

Working Design/Methodology	89
Description of the Project	89
Subjects	91
Data Collection	91
Instrumentation	92
Data Analysis	93
4. THE STUDY	95
Assumptions of the Presence of God	95
Preparation	95
Introductory Meeting	97
Week 1	98
Week 2	99
Week 3	99
Weeks 4 and 5	100
Week 6	101
Week 7	101
Questionnaire	102
Weekly Report Forms	105
Transcripts of Weekly Meetings	110
Reacting to God's Presence	111
Connectedness	111
Proper Perspective	115
Gifted and Led	122

Sense of Well-being	124
Other Descriptors	125
Conclusion	127
5. CONCLUSIONS	128
From Prayer to Presence	128
An Integration of Life	129
Presence	132
Connectedness	134
Prayer	139
Acknowledging Human Nature and Asking Forgiveness	141
Questions Regarding Praise and Thanksgiving	143
Questions Regarding Worship	144
Sense of Well-being	146
Further Research	147
Limitations	147
Conclusions	148
Final Thoughts	150
APPENDIXES	
A. Religious Experience Questionnaire	152
B. God's Presence Questionnaire	153
C. Flier	154
D. Newspaper Announcement	155
E. Introductory Meeting Agenda	156

F. Weekly Report Form	157
G. Initial Questionnaire Reported by Student Number	158
H. Initial Questionnaire Reported by Question Number	159
I. Final Questionnaire Reported by Student Number	160
J. Final Questionnaire Reported by Question Number	161
K. Written Responses	162
WORKS CITED	176

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1. Questionnaire Results Reported by Student Number	103
2. Questionnaire Results Reported by Question Number	104
3. Connectedness with God	107
8. Acknowledging Rebellion (Human Nature) and Asking Forgiveness	108
14. Responding to Nature's Glory	110

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my wife, Marie, and my sons, William and John for their support during the years of pursuing the degree for which this is the final effort. They have walked over stacks of papers and books, forgiven my missing countless wrestling matches and baseball games, and patiently waited for me to finish writing and editing.

I wish to thank Dave, my spiritual director during most of these years. He has provided a listening ear and needed hours of counsel and guidance.

I wish to thank the students with whom I minister, because they allow me the privilege of ministering alongside them.

Although I cannot thank my mother, who died as I began researching this paper, her years of support have made it possible for me to have completed this effort.

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Background

One spring I participated in a silent retreat for the first time, a wonderful experience of discovery and renewal. One of the more notable discoveries of the week was experiencing the presence of God in the retreat setting. An entry from my journal illustrates this awareness:

Reading about God's presence (Psalm 139) and being here, having a greater awareness of God's presence—yesterday in the stream and (again) today in the bird's song, the fog, and the constant sound of the stream outside my window. This special awareness of God's presence versus the "everyday" knowledge of God's presence as communicated in the Psalm is renewing, reviving, reassuring. Someone said last night, "God uses everything there is to try to get to us." If that is true, it takes a lot of will to ignore/reject all that from God. That is sin.

That discovery led me to wonder why I ordinarily do not sense God's presence during the regular days of my life. Why did I need to retreat into four days of silence in an isolated setting to make that discovery? Is not God just as much a part of my life during the ordinary days of work as I walk across the college campus as when I walked beside the mountain stream? Is not God just as present when I am at home with the dishwasher swishing in the background as when I heard the bird in the forest?

I have been told for much of my life that spending time with God is necessary to start the day. This devotional time, also called quiet time or prayer time, is intended to get us in touch with God through prayer, silence, the study of God's Word, and meditation. After experiencing God's presence in this setting, one is strengthened and prepared to continue through the activities of the day. I leave this devotional time with a greater intellectual appreciation of God's presence in the world and in my life, but many times I

find that whatever experience of God I might have had stays there in what might be called a “spiritual time.” I do not have that awareness for the remainder of the day.

These are opportunities to practice traditional spiritual disciplines, and inherent in them is continuing to discipline oneself, quieting the inner tumult so that God might be heard. According to Richard Foster, disciplines are the means by which we place ourselves before God so God can bless us, and the primary requirement to practice them is a longing after God (2-6). The rationale is that God’s presence comes through extended practice of the disciplines. These are valuable to me, and I will continue to make them a part of my daily life, but are they the only means to an increasing awareness of God?

Does something about my daily life inhibit my experience of God? Does modern life in general keeping me from acknowledging that God is present? Am I doing something that causes me to ignore what God might be doing and in the process to reject God’s presence all about me, or am I just the product of a world that ignores an ever-present God? Do I do anything that limits my experience of God to just the “spiritual time” or do I simply neglect to see God in the activities of the day? Must I retreat into spiritual disciplines or abandon my daily life in a retreat to experience God’s presence?

The Problem

In his novel *In the Beauty of the Lilies*, John Updike tells the story of a clergyman who loses his faith and becomes an encyclopedia salesman. As the novel opens, Clarence Wilmot prepares for a meeting with members of the Church Building Requirements Committee and considers the world in which he lives, in which “the universe was utterly indifferent to his states of mind and as empty of divine content as a corroded kettle” (7). This introduction to Clarence Wilmot could be an introduction to any of a multitude of

persons who inhabit the contemporary world—Christians, non-Christians, and former Christians, including pastors, all of whom are unable to sense God in their lives.

Paul Schilling connects persons with no personal awareness of God with one of seven types he has identified as having no belief in God at all (131). He quotes William Hamilton, a proponent of the death of God, “We do not know, do not adore, do not possess, do not believe in God. . . . We are not talking about the absence of the experience of God, but about the experience of the absence of God” (132). For those like Hamilton, God’s absence is not that something is necessarily missing from life but an actual void that is felt.

Others have observed that Christians are also included in this group. Kenneth Leech acknowledges that his book, *Experiencing God*, was written for the “ordinary Christian” (preface), and in it he confesses that in the spiritual wasteland in which many modern persons live “there is a loss of any sense of a living experience of God” (1). He argues that, while many people have a vague belief in God and remain unconvinced by those beginning with Nietzsche and continuing in the 1960s who announced the death of God, they sense God’s absence and react with a “quest for his presence” (7).

Some would claim that the modern university is a prime example of a world without God, due in part to the fact that life on a secular college campus not only discourages students’ spirituality but actively inhibits its development. Eugene Peterson and Steve Moore sympathize with students who come to college committed to God but find themselves distracted at every turn. They note the widely held opinion that the environment at most universities is unsympathetic to the nurturing of spirituality due to the supposed split between the heart and mind after the Enlightenment, so to think about God

and ask hard questions can be death to one's faith (1-2). The mission of the university in the modern world has been the quest for objective truth. My experience is that out of fear of losing their faith or out of preoccupation with the affairs of intellectual pursuits, many students have simply put their adolescent faith into an obscure pocket of their backpacks and take it out at graduation, only to discover it has become shriveled and lifeless. God may have been present on the campus, but they never bothered to seek out God.

As a minister on a college campus, I spend time with those who desire to deepen the religious dimension of their lives. However, for some, theirs is a compartmentalized religion that finds little room in their daily activities of attending class, researching in the library, eating in the cafeteria, and interacting with friends; it simply is not relevant. In the lives of many of these active Christians, God does not seem present; yet, they desire God to be present with them. This is verbalized consistently in their prayerful appeals for God to "be with me" or "be with us."

Two of the songs frequently sung by students in the organization with which I work echo this desire to experience God. The first is "Open the Eyes of My Heart, Lord," by Paul Baloche.

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord.
Open the eyes of my heart.
I want to see you.
I want to see you.

To see you high and lifted up,
Shining in the light of your glory.
Pour out your power and love
As we sing holy, holy, holy.

The second is "In the Secret," by Andy Park.

In the secret, in the quiet place,
In the stillness, you are there.

In the secret, in the quiet hour,
 I wait only for you,
 'Cause I want to know you more.

I want to know you.
 I want to hear your voice.
 I want to know you more.
 I want to touch you.
 I want to see your face.
 I want to know you more.

Biblical View

We get a different picture when reading the Bible. The God that is revealed in the Bible is a personal God, one who desires to be in relationship with the human beings created in God's image. In the first pages of the Hebrew Scriptures, God is pictured as walking in the garden with Adam and Eve and as repeatedly initiating contact with others such as Cain, Noah, and Abraham. The contact had no more of a life-changing effect in any person's life than in Moses'.

Moses was having a day just like any other as he tended the sheep of his father-in-law. Perhaps his in-laws in the area had told him that the mountain to which he led the sheep was a holy mountain, a mountain of God. When he saw a bush burning but not being consumed, he might have remembered being told that gods sometimes signal their presence with fire. He could have walked on by, but only when he stopped, turned, and saw did God call out to him. This was a very small thing, pausing to turn and see what was there, but as a product of a culture that acknowledged the presence of the divine in the world he was sensitive to its occurring and desired to experience it. When presented with the possibility, he did not dismiss it, nor did he avoid it, but rather sought the experience and the God who stood behind it. Possibly many others had walked by that

same burning bush and ignored it, abandoning their chance to experience the presence of God.

The Bible makes clear that nothing about the person of Moses qualified him to come into the presence of God. Apparently, he was not a particularly religious person, for God had to identify himself in their ensuing conversation. He was not a person of outstanding morals and character; rather, he was a murderer who had left Egypt and his own people to avoid facing up to his crime. He was not one who possessed qualities of leadership, for he later tried to excuse himself from leading the Hebrew slaves by every means he could devise. No indication appears that he did anything to prepare for this encounter.

Yet this was a life-changing encounter with God for Moses. His life was not the same after it. God's presence became a constant characteristic of his life—guiding, confronting, challenging, and motivating him. As a result he guided his people on a journey to the land promised to their ancestors during which God's presence led them with a cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. Moses' discovery of the presence of God was the initial event that led to the disclosure of the name of God and the revelation that God desired to be his God.

Roy Honeycutt states that God's name itself indicates God's presence.

The phrase "I AM WHO I AM" or "I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE" [original emphasis] gives emphasis to the reality of God's being as presence as opposed to the abstract idea of being. God will be with his people. One cannot always specify how this presence will manifest itself, and he certainly cannot control it, for God will be whatever he chooses to be. But one can be sure of God's continuing presence. (209)

Has God changed? Is God further away from persons in the present than for persons in the time of Moses? Of course all persons whose stories are told in the Hebrew Scriptures did not encounter God at every turn. This is evident in the Psalms where God is affirmed as

intimately present but also distressingly absent. In Psalm 23 God is affirmed as the shepherd, his presence known by his providing and protecting those in his care. Psalm 139 is even more forthright, proclaiming that wherever one might go—heaven, Sheol, the uttermost parts of the sea, or the darkness—one can never flee from God's presence, but in the psalms of lament great anguish is expressed over the absence of God. In Psalm 42 the writer cries out for God while tormented by adversaries (v. 10) who taunt him, "Where is your God?" The psalmist cries out in Psalm 88:14, "O Lord, why do you cast me off? Why do you hide your face from me?" Even in God's absence, the writers' presumption is that God is supposed to be present and that one should complain about God's absence. Perhaps one should not complain so readily. Samuel Balentine states that this tension between the hiddenness and presence of God is an integral part of Israel's faith. It is not primarily related to disobedience or a reflection of the human inability to understand or perceive God's presence in the world but is an integral part of the nature of God. "God is hidden just as he is present; he is far away just as he is near" (172-175).

God's presence was a principal element of the faith of the Hebrew people, so important that when they were exiled a major source of their anguish was the belief that God had abandoned the people. The exilic prophets, principally Ezekiel, were the ones who proclaimed to the people that God was still present with them (Bunn 239; Muilenburg 568).

The supreme act of God being present with humankind was in the incarnation, God meeting persons as person. John makes this plain in the beginning of his Gospel, "The Word became flesh and lived among us" (1:14). Paul quoted an early Christian hymn to make a similar point in speaking of Christ,

though he was in the form of God,
 did not regard equality with God
 As something to be exploited,
 but emptied himself,
 taking the form of a slave,
 being born in human likeness
 And being found in human form. (Phil. 2:6-7)

Matthew emphasizes this in the first Gospel as he described how Jesus was conceived, first quoting Isaiah 7:14, “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” and then interpreting it, “which means, ‘God is with us’” (1:23). He takes this even further, showing that Jesus is not just with us while in human form, quoting Jesus at 18:20, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them,” and again at the close of the book in Jesus’ parting words, “And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (28:20b).

As Jesus said farewell to his disciples as recorded in the Gospel of John, he also knew the importance of having a continuing presence in their midst, so he told them of the coming of the Holy Spirit. This exceptional presence of God would be counselor, comforter, and teacher (14:16-26).

Christianity is, in its essence, a relationship initiated by God and made possible through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. This relationship is in evidence by the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Christian’s life. While this personal presence of the Holy Spirit is significant, a larger presence of God is in the world. This aspect has been traditionally described as the immanence of God, God’s presence at every point of the universe, and this is the aspect to be explored here (Humphreys 66). This is the larger presence of God, that to which Leech refers as he confesses that the God of biblical faith is one known only

in the “context of a shared and lived experience,” and without the experience, God is merely an “intellectual abstraction” (25-26).

Experiencing the Presence of God

The Bible could be described as a series of writings tracing the presence of God and its manifestation in the lives of persons. Beginning with the creation of the first man and woman who live in fellowship with God, the biblical account describes groups and individuals who experience God’s presence, ending with the *parousia*, where all creation observes Jesus’ coming in power and glory.

In his letters Paul insists that for Christians, the presence of God is no longer external; with the coming of the Holy Spirit, it is internal. He makes his point by repeating the phrase, “The Spirit of Christ really dwells in you,” several times in Romans 8:9-11. This is a fresh dimension of God’s presence with persons, an intimacy never imagined by the people of God who lived before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Even with the knowledge of the indwelling Spirit, many Christians still desire some more heightened awareness of God’s presence. The biblical account shows that the presence of God in the lives of persons may be manifest in a number of ways.

God’s presence results in a sense of connectedness, first described in the creation account. Man and woman began their experience of life connected with God, with one another, and with the rest of creation. However, their disobedience resulted in alienation from each other and from God and in misunderstanding their role with creation.

As the biblical story of God’s coming to humankind unfolds, God’s people begin to see how being reconciled and reconnected to God was possible. Certain individuals such as Noah, Abraham, and Moses covenanted with God to signify the formalizing of

their relationship. Jesus instituted a new covenant in which persons may enter into God's eternal presence, secured by the atonement of Christ. People may experience the salvation inherent in this covenant and the resulting presence of God in their life in a number of ways, including sudden transformation, forgiveness, and new meaning in life.

The Law had revealed God's desire that right relationships become a part of the covenantal relationship, but only when the Hebrew prophets proclaimed their word from God did God's people begin to see the connection between maintaining God's presence in their lives and the necessity of living in right relationship with others. As the church was established, first century Christians began to understand that the fellowship, or *κοινωνία*, a characteristic of God's new creation, implied not only a relationship with God but also a relationship with others in the community of God's people within which the pilgrimage of faith was to be lived.

Although, many so-called primitive cultures have sensed the necessity of being connected to creation, only in our lifetime did humankind grasp the disastrous consequences of a disconnectedness to the rest of creation. God's people have misunderstood God's command to have dominion over the earth as an implicit endorsement to use and misuse it, with little thought for our future or the future of creation. God's presence moves us to rediscover our connection with creation, to gain a greater appreciation of creation, to see our role as stewards of creation and its resources, for we are linked not only as being part of creation but also are dependant on it. We can also learn what creation teaches us about the Creator as well as join creation in praise of God as evidenced in Psalm 148.

The presence of God in a person's life also helps the individual to maintain a

proper perspective. One may then realize the true greatness of God as creator, sustainer, and redeemer of life alongside the finitude and mortality of humans. This may lead one to recognize both the insignificance of a solitary human in the larger scope of existence and the significance of each individual to God. This new perspective can lead us to respond to God, praising and thanking God for who God is and what God has done. It may also mean that one can acknowledge that the rebellion that is present in every person's life is a distinct reality in one's own life and ask God's forgiveness for these sins. Then a person is free to commit himself or herself to God's purposes and mission. These responses are formalized in corporate worship but can be just as real in private prayer.

This perspective can also lead to the discovery of oneself as a person intentionally created by God, living with a greater awareness of God-given gifts and abilities, using them in service with God as opposed to striving after a false self or trying to live out the expectations of others. A person who knows herself or himself in this way can live with a greater sense of confidence and a sense of meaning and fulfillment in life.

God's presence results in a sense of being led by God. Abraham, the father of many nations, sensed God's presence leading him to leave his home and family and go to a place that God would show him (Gen. 12:1-5). After God's people, led by Moses, left their bondage in Egypt, a cloud and a pillar of fire, which they could see, signified God's presence and led them to the promised land. After God gave them the Ten Commandments, God also gave instructions for building the ark of the covenant, which became the symbol of God's presence moving with them.

For some this may lead further to a specific call from God as shown by the prophets and the apostles. Today this is exhibited by moving toward a certain career or

ministry. All Christians can respond by seeking God's will and following God's leading for life in general, but God's leading in specific situations may also be sensed.

A manifestation of God's presence as described in the Hebrew Scriptures was that of well-being, particularly individuals and the nation being blessed by God. They assumed that this was expressed in the lives of individuals by God's providing riches and children and was expressed for the nation in great productivity, abundance, and victory in war. After the temple was constructed, the Holy of Holies, where God was assumed to reside, held this same significance so that when the temple and the city of Jerusalem were destroyed the nation assumed that God's presence was gone as well. The exiles of the nation of Judah discovered through the proclamation of the prophets among them that even in defeat and utter destruction, God's presence remains.

As Christians learned from the suffering and death of Christ, God's presence does not only not protect from affliction, it may lead to persecution; however, the presence helps one to rest in the knowledge that God is in control of all that exists, allowing one to experience a freedom and a peace and capacity for sacrifice even in the midst of crisis or calamity. This is described in the lives of first century Christians who held to their faith in the midst of persecution of religious and political authorities and in the lives of countless Christians through the centuries. Christians have also demonstrated the power of God working in their lives as they acknowledge God's presence.

Experiencing God—A Short History

During the third century some in the church decided that the answer to experiencing the presence of God was to retreat from the world. These early Christians expressed their spirituality by fleeing from the world in an attempt to attack self-will; some

escaped to the desert to confront Satan and defeat him there (Holt 39-41). These monks, living the spiritual life separated from the world, began to exercise strong influence on average Christians. Glenn Hinson believes this admiration came from their fulfilling scriptural injunctions for self-denial and unswerving devotion to God (31-32). As more and more committed themselves to this kind of life, they began to come together in communities to support one another. In giving the rule for admission of new brothers, St. Benedict saw the test for novices as whether they truly sought God (Meisel and del Mastro 94), and Anthony Meisel and M. L. del Mastro state in their introduction to *The Rule of St. Benedict* that his rule makes success in one's search for God not just possible, but probable (11).

As different monastic orders developed, they evolved differing characteristics and emphases but retained the basics of chastity, poverty, obedience, and the practice of withdrawing from the world to form their own communities even as some spent time in work or ministry. Monasticism's withdrawal from the world provides a common model for Christians seeking to live in God's presence, and serious Christians are encouraged to retreat from the world for some time each day and occasionally longer periods in retreats. For many Christians prayer time has become a retreat as they spend a few minutes in the morning or before bed reading the Bible and/or a book of devotions and praying.

However it is done, the emphasis is on removing oneself from the world and its distractions. The established means is to find a secluded spot, empty the mind to allow God to enter, and spend time in disciplines that foster experiencing God. Susan Muto and Adrian van Kaam see the prayer of presence as an example of this withdrawing for today's Christians. In this type of prayer

the person is receptive to the Holy Spirit as manifesting himself in a scriptural word or other symbol. He is present to the mystery of God's Presence. She allows the Spirit to transform her humanity. He recognizes that the mystery of God's Presence in Jesus is the response he is seeking for his deepest longings. (37)

Certainly nothing is wrong with these times of withdrawal; they have proven helpful to many Christians through the years. However, daily times of morning prayer not only are not mandated in Scripture but actually have little foundation there. Luke records a number of instances of Jesus going to pray: after his baptism (3:21); as his fame grew and many came to him to hear him and to be healed (5:16); before calling the disciples when he continued in prayer all night (6:12); when he was praying alone as the disciples come to him (9:18); just before the transfiguration (9:29); and, when the disciples ask him to teach them to pray (11:1). As he takes the disciples to the Mount of Olives just prior to the betrayal (22:39), the implication is that he came there often to pray. So while he prayed habitually and consistently, the Bible gives no indication he had a prayer time each morning.

Prayer was also an essential part of Paul's life, but rather than praying at an appointed time each day, his pattern seems to be continuing prayer as evidenced in numerous epistles: "giving thanks to God the Father at all times" (Eph. 5:20); "pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication" (Eph. 6:18); "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Phil. 4:6); "devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving" (Col. 4:2); and "pray without ceasing" (1Thess. 5:17).

Modern Christians who live ordinary lives with families and jobs are often unable or unwilling to find their personal desert in which to encounter God. In the Sunday school

class I teach, a discussion on daily prayer moved to members' sharing their need to begin the day with God, then to confessing that they really did not have time for prayer as they began their busy days. A mother asked how she could pray when getting three children ready for school. A banker jokingly asked if he should close his eyes in prayer during his hour-long commute. Many persons, even Christians who should and do desire time with God, are unable or unwilling to carve out the time to seek God's presence. This is reflected in the popularity of Brother Lawrence, who lived out his spirituality in the monastery kitchen, and gave *The Practice of the Presence of God* to Christians, in which he argued against the usual way of prayer.

That the most excellent method he had found of going to God was that of doing our common business . . . purely for the love of God. That it was a great delusion to think that the times of prayer ought to differ from other times; that we are as strictly obliged to adhere to God by action in the time of action as by prayer in the season of prayer. (24)

Experiencing God in the College Environment

If time becomes an enemy to discovering God's presence in working adults then it is even more so for college students. College students function in a world regulated by periods of time. They plan their schedule on blocks of time in which specified classes are held and must regulate their day based on that schedule. Many students, especially those in schools built around commuters' schedules, have work schedules that must be integrated into their days' activities. They rush from one thing to another, occasionally with time on their hands, but in a library, a noisy cafeteria, or commons. A student may find herself or himself on a bench on a sidewalk but not in a prayer closet.

The college culture also operates within a different concept of time where night becomes the prime time for studying, jogging, socializing, or engaging hall mates in

discussions. So after staying up until 1:00 or 2:00 a.m., students fall into bed. There they may stay awake worrying about their current crisis, grades, a relationship, or what to do with their lives. Their goal is to sleep as late as possible, then throw on some clothes, grab a Pop Tart and a Coke, and rush to class. The other day a student remarked that one of his greatest joys was hitting the snooze button on his clock and staying in bed for an extra thirty minutes.

When approximately forty students at a meeting of a college religious organization were asked how many minutes each day and how many days per week were spent in a “quiet time or devotional period,” about 80 percent stated that they did spend some time. The most common response was only ten minutes a day, five to seven days per week. Few find a significant amount of time in their day to come into the presence of God.

The Modern Predicament

We seem to be caught in a culture that does not conceive of God as present, and we have bought its lie. At the very least, we have moved God to the periphery, including the periphery of our schedules. As a result, awareness of God’s presence has been lost. Certainly God is not absent from the world, but few persons are searching for God in the world and, as a result, few interact with God there. Even the current popularization of spirituality is an unfocused and ill-defined search for spiritual meaning, occurring as it does in a world that does not recognize God’s presence (Collins 76-77).

Is discovering God only possible during a time of seclusion and quiet, or might God be discovered in other ways? If God is present in the world, what might be done to discover God there?

An Answer from the Celtic Tradition

An article by Esther de Waal described certain characteristics of Celtic Christians. She related how their being rooted in the simple belief that God is close at hand resulted in a unique approach to prayer (“The Extraordinary” 9). She concluded her article by stating:

What the Celtic understanding brings us is the chance to break down the barrier between the active and the contemplative life and instead to make the busy, boring, relentless daily life tasks the basis for continuous praying and for finding the presence of God. What a waste it is to be surrounded by heaven, by a sky “made white by angels’ wings” and to be unaware of it. Perhaps the first step is that we should want to unearth God in our midst. For letting heaven break through will not happen automatically. It lies to hand, but it needs a determination on our part to find it. Yet, if we can rediscover this vision, then we too may be able to transform what lies to hand, let the mundane become the edge of glory, and find the extraordinary in the ordinary. (15)

This article was exciting in its picture of Christians who lived their daily lives not only surrounded by God but aware of God’s presence. They prayed as they milked their cows, as they started their fires in the morning, and smooored or banked them at night. They presumed that God was alongside them at every point of the day and then responded to God’s presence.

Could becoming familiar with the Celtic conception of God in the world and their resulting ways of prayer help develop a greater awareness of God’s presence during the ordinary events of each day? Given this awareness, could following their example in prayer assist today’s Christians in experiencing God’s presence throughout the day?

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to describe the changes in the daily spiritual practices of college students during an eight-week, small-group experience in discussion of introductory readings on Celtic spirituality and sharing experiences in their use of prayers from the Celtic Christian tradition. Will they find greater understanding of the Celtic

concept of God's presence in the world and increase their experience of God's presence in their daily lives?

Research Questions

The study seeks to answer these questions.

1. What can an introduction to a Celtic understanding of God's presence in the world contribute to college students' understanding of God's presence in their world and in their lives?
2. How does a seven-week depiction of Celtic religious practice affect religious practices of students?
3. What are the effects of using prayers from the Celtic tradition on the prayer and prayer-practices of college students?

Definitions

In this study **Celtic** refers to the peoples who originally settled in Western and Central Europe before 2000 BCE but who as a distinct culture were mostly limited to areas of the British Isles by 100 CE. Their culture resulted in a Christian faith with unique characteristics—specifically, the sense of the “ubiquitous presence of the spiritual in all things and at all times” (Mackey 11).

In this project Celtic Christianity is described as **Celtic spirituality**. Although some authors use the terms Celtic Christianity and Celtic spirituality interchangeably, the term **spirituality** is used to indicate the ways in which Celtic Christians lived out their faith, integrating their beliefs and their faith in their daily lives. Additionally, the spirituality to be examined is characterized by the prayers of lay persons rather than monastic spirituality, with the focus on a prayer life characterized by de Waal as “inseparable from

an ordinary daily working life” (*The Celtic Way* xi-xii).

Context

The young adults with whom I minister are students at The College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. The college was chartered in colonial Virginia with the purpose of “promoting the Studies of true Philosophy, Languages, and other good Arts and Sciences, and for propagating the pure Gospel of Christ, our only Mediator, to the Praise and Honor of Almighty God” (“The Royal Charter of 1693” 3). It became a state-supported school in 1906 and now is a liberal arts college that promotes itself as one of the “Public Ivies.” The current enrollment is approximately 5,500 full-time undergraduates and 2,100 graduate students.

Religious life is an important part of the college community. Organizations include the Agape Christian Fellowship (predominantly Asian), Baptist Student Union, Canterbury (Episcopal), Catholic Student Association, Christian Science Organization, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (interdenominational), Lutheran Student Organization, Wesley Foundation (United Methodist), and Westminster Fellowship (Presbyterian). Other religious organizations include the Islamic Cultural Society, Hillel (Jewish), Latter-Day Saints Student Organization, and the Unitarian Universalist Student Organization. The college administration gives strong support to religious organizations by permitting them to use campus space, participate in campus activities, and hold worship services in the chapel, which is part of the original building of the college.

As one of twenty Baptist campus ministers employed by the Virginia Baptist Mission Board, I work with the Baptist Student Union, advising its leaders, giving

direction to its programs and ministry, and leading some programs and studies. Although we do not know exactly when it began, alumni records indicate that the BSU has been organized for more than sixty years. It currently has a membership of about one hundred students with an active membership of seventy, about 80 percent of whom are actually Baptist. It sponsors a variety of activities designed to nurture spiritual growth including small group Bible studies, worship, fellowships and socials, community ministry, and creative ministry groups involved in music, drama, and creative movement.

As a campus minister at the college, I have a wider ministry, however. The campus ministers serve as unofficial chaplains at the college, planning and leading yearly Baccalaureate services, participating in college programs as representatives of the religious community, and planning and leading memorial services when requested. Campus ministers are invited to participate in meetings of the Division of Student Affairs and work with several departments in that division. We meet twice a year with the college president to share concerns with him and hear his concerns for the campus community.

Working Design/Methodology

This project is a study in the exploratory and descriptive modes which will utilize data collected by using a pre- and posttest design with no comparison group, by responses to reflective questions, and through observational notes obtained by conducting observations as a participant.

Description of the Project

During the 2000 fall semester, I recruited students to join a group studying Celtic spirituality and prayer. Each week I supplied them with an article describing an aspect of Celtic spirituality and prayers from the Celtic tradition. The students were encouraged to

use the prayers during a prayer or devotional time and to use them during the day when appropriate.

During the weekly meetings, the articles were reviewed, and each person was given the opportunity to reflect on the past week, sharing how they had responded to the articles and prayers. At the introductory session and in the final session, the participants were given an instrument to measure their perception of the closeness of God in their life.

Subjects

The subjects of this study were college students enlisted for an eight-week study of Celtic spirituality. The students were recruited from a variety of Christian traditions as well as from the college population at large by flier and advertisement in the campus newspaper to ensure a variety of religious backgrounds and levels of spiritual maturity.

Variables

The independent variable of this study is the participants' exposure to Celtic spirituality in the form of articles that give a basic understanding of the tradition and collected prayers that illustrate the Celtic practice. The dependent variable was the participants' awareness of God's presence in their lives.

Delimitations and Generalizations

This study emphasizes an experiential process of exposing students to the prayers and practices of Celtic people who are recognized as examples of Christians with a heightened awareness of the presence of God. The students also participated in sharing experiences using those prayers to see if those practicing the Celtic way of praying would come to a greater awareness of God. No attempt was made to use other formats such as lectures or Bible studies to achieve the same purpose.

The participants were students who responded to an invitation to participate in a study of spirituality. Their willingness to participate should indicate a willingness to engage in a serious experience and debriefing with others involved in the process. I presumed that many persons, students and non-students alike, could gain greater understanding and appreciation of God's presence from a similar experience. No evidence exists that persons not involved in the Christian faith or those who would not be willing to practice the disciplines of prayer and reflection could gain from it.

Overview

Chapter 2 of this study establishes a historical, theological, and theoretical context for this study. It gives an overview of Celtic culture and the unique characteristics of the Celts' practice of the Christian faith. The research design is presented in Chapter 3. It is a detailed explanation of the research project. The research findings are reported in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 summarizes and interprets of the study and its findings.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Celtic Culture—A Popular Interest

Currently a renewed interest in Celtic culture and traditions is emerging throughout Europe and the United States. Celtic lands and traditions are admired and receiving a great deal of attention. Celtic music is of great interest on any show featuring folk music and is sold in unlikely places, including the shop near my home which sells bird food and other supplies. In the New Age movement where earth-friendly customs are respected, Celtic traditions stand at the top. Some may be attempting to return to earth-friendly roots, a movement parallel to the renewed interest in Native Americans and their cultures. Others find in the Celtic culture a link to meaningful spirituality although the attraction may be dissimilar for different persons. In a weekly Internet column, Terry Mattingly quotes Thomas Cahill, author of *How the Irish Saved Civilization*, “‘Some people become interested in Celtic spirituality because they want to reject what they perceive as traditional Christianity,’ said Cahill. ‘Others become fascinated with the Celtic past because they are seeking traditional Christianity’” (1).

This revival of interest is no more in evidence than on the Internet; 5,614 sites were listed in a recent search of the World Wide Web. One site, “Every Celtic Thing on the Web,” links about 140 others, from “Welcome to the Foolish Cross (Spreading the knowledge of the Gospel and the love of Jesus Christ)” to “Celtic Deities and Myth,” to “Árn Draíocht Féin (A Druid Fellowship).” I even discovered that a “Gathering of the Tribes (An enjoyable weekend of Pagan Networking, Knowledge, Exchange, Healing and Fun)” was being held less than twenty minutes from my home (“Every Celtic” 1-3).

History of Celtic Peoples

The term “Celts” is actually a modern term used to describe an ancient people.

While persons in the twentieth century may think of Celts as describing the Irish, Scotch, and Welsh peoples from what is now known of their beginnings, the Celtic people have a long history and have covered a great deal of territory. Although the Greeks and Romans used terms such as *Keltoi*, *Galli*, and *Celtae* to name different Celtic peoples with whom they came into contact, the term “Celts” was coined by linguists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to describe a group of similar tribes who shared distinct families of languages. Much of what is known about them comes from outside sources since they did not record their history in writing (Time-Life Books 27). Later with additional archeological research, other cultural characteristics were recognized as common to these groups as well (Davies and Bowie 2).

The first people identified as Celtic were those of the Hallstatt culture which developed in what is now Austria in 700-500 BCE (Davies and Bowie 4). They slowly spread throughout Europe establishing themselves from Portugal, Spain, and France to Hungary. Celtic tribes were established in the Po Valley of northern Italy by the fifth century BCE. They are reported to have invaded Rome in 369 BCE and pushed into Asia Minor by 278 (Leatham, *Celtic Sunrise* 12; McNeill 1; Joyce 5; Ellis 23).

Christianity may have reached at least two Celtic groups quite early in its history, though they may not be readily recognized as such. A Celtic people populated the Balkan peninsula in southeastern Europe in what is now the area of Macedonia and Bosnia, leading some to suppose that Paul may have preached to Celtic peoples in Illyricum (Rom. 15:19), which in the first century was a Roman province (Finegan 681). Although Paul’s

traveling there is not mentioned in the description of his journeys in Acts, Dodd supposes that he would have had time to travel there after departing Ephesus and arriving in Greece (228).

Another area populated by Celtic tribes is one more familiar to readers of the New Testament, for Celts entered a section of Asia Minor from the Greek peninsula during the third century BCE, and according to Jerome, a Celtic language was spoken there until the end of the fifth century CE (Mellink 338). Two areas are named Galatia after the Greek name for these people, *Galatae*, a country, and a Roman province. Although differing opinions have been expressed over which of these was the area to which Paul wrote his epistle, some scholars believe that these Celtic peoples are those who heard the gospel and became Christian and to whom the letter to the Galatians was written (McNeill 10; Knudsen 57).

Persons wanting greater understanding of the Celtic peoples might begin with a study of the Galatian epistle. Lightfoot states that although other peoples such as Jews, Greeks, Romans, and native Phrygians lived in Galatia, to interpret Paul's words in the letter it is important to examine the characteristics of the Celts living there, for they were quite different from the cultured Greeks and Christianized Colossians to whom Paul also wrote. Although much of their Celtic culture, especially their religion, had been lost, many of their characteristics as a people remained. So while the Judaizers may have precipitated the crisis that Paul addresses in the epistle, the "tough vitality of the Celtic character" that manifests itself in the positive characteristics Lightfoot describes as "quickness of apprehension, promptitude in action, great impressibility, an eager craving after knowledge" (14) were evident in the church. Negative ones also emerged, such as being

“inconstant and quarrelsome, treacherous in their dealings, incapable of sustained effort, easily disheartened by failure” having a “restless, fickle temperament” and “in a ferment of busy turmoil and ceaseless migration” (14). Considering these characteristics may help readers of the epistle better understand the church and Paul’s words (8-15).

Celts in Gaul

The stronghold of Celtic culture was in continental Europe and was known by the Roman designation, Gaul. Nora Chadwick notes that even by the time of the Roman conquest in the first century BCE, Gaul was not entirely settled by Celtic peoples though that they were the dominant culture in the region (*The Celts* 54). During the time of their independence prior to Roman conquest, they were developed enough to have sixteen different types of political groups. The larger groupings of tribes had their own name and frequently had a fortified central area (57). Roman conquests and migration of Germanic tribes into central and southern Europe brought an end to their expansion and to their development as a culture (McNeill 4).

Chadwick states that the Roman conquest of Gaul was the end of a great nation but that the conquest resulted in significant material, economic, and intellectual benefits from the Romans, along with the peace of Rome instead of the war and struggle for existence they had known.

These cultural gifts of Rome to Gaul must have been largely responsible for the development of the intellectual and spiritual pre-eminence of Gaul for the first five centuries of the Christian era. . . . It is impossible to over-rate the value of the gifts and education and literacy which Rome gave to Gaul in exchange for her liberty and which made her a partaker in the highest culture of the age. (*The Celts* 63)

The Roman contribution may have been noteworthy, but their conquest of these Celtic tribes also resulted in the loss of a large number of citizens and their Celtic culture.

Of an estimated population of six or seven million in Gaul, Barry Cunliffe states that about one million had been killed and another million sold into slavery so that many of the unique characteristics of their Celtic culture were lost, leaving only the Celtic people along the Atlantic coasts with their culture intact (247). John McNeill agrees that as the Celtic culture in Gaul gave way to the Latin culture through the blending of the two peoples, the features that might have nurtured a distinctively Celtic church there also disappeared as the Celtic Christians in Gaul instead became some of the first Christians in the imperial and papal church of the West (14).

However, the church in Gaul held strong connections to traditions of the Eastern Church, including common liturgical elements, a married priesthood, an Eastern style of tonsure, and calculation of the date of Easter. The church of Lyons maintained especially close contact with the churches of Asia, likely due to Irenaeus, bishop there in the third century. Through Irenaeus, Christians there would have had links to Polycarp and the church at Ephesus (Chadwick, *The Celts* 53). While Chadwick describes Irenaeus as a Greek and Joyce states that he described himself as being an exile among the Celts, Johannes Knudsen identifies him as a Celt. He was from Asia Minor, and although he was given a classical education and a Greek name, he personified the Celtic way of viewing life in his writings, especially in refuting Gnostic ideas, countering the Gnostic claim that human life and all creation was evil, and promoting a theology of wholeness and respect for creation (Chadwick, *The Celts* 186; Knudsen 57; Joyce 24).

Especially after his election as bishop in 371, Martin of Tours influenced Christianity in Gaul. The form of Christianity favored by Martin originated in Egypt and the East, more monastic and eremetical but alien to the type becoming established in Gaul

and more bound up in the function of the bishops. The monastic movement originating at the monastery he founded in Marmoutier and that founded by John Cassian at Marseilles had a great effect on Christianity in Gaul and later in Britain (Chadwick, *The Celts* 187-188).

Celts in the British Isles

Peter Ellis notes that Celtic tribes may have been in Britain as early as 1200-1000 BCE (140). Indications are that Celtic bands were in northeast Scotland as early as 600 BCE, and an early Celtic language was already established in Ireland and Britain by the sixth century BCE. Evidence of settlements occurring by 450 BCE exists in southern and western parts of the British Isles and of a second wave of immigrants in the fourth century who moved onto the southern coast of what is now England. Although the manner in which Ireland was settled is uncertain—Celtic peoples coming directly from the continent, from Britain, or from both sources—a group of Celts from northeast Gaul (differentiated from those in Ireland and England by a different language tradition) settled in southeast England before 100 BCE (Cunliffe 146; Ross 25-27).

Caesar began his military campaign into Britain in 55 BCE, and though the Romans were finally able to control much of England, their hold on the northern and western areas of Scotland was tenuous. Although they desired to move into Ireland, nothing indicates a Roman military presence there while evidence remains of great Roman influence in the occupied area of Britain. In southeast Britain, towns began to develop in formerly rural areas and on the sites of settlements. In this development Cunliffe points to three zones of Roman influence: an area of extreme romanization where few elements of Celtic culture remained; a peripheral zone, including the southwest peninsula, Wales, and

northern Britain, which was unromanized to a great extent; and, a zone including the north of Britain and all of Ireland where Celtic culture continued for the most part. However, in the southwestern and the northern areas of Britain and in Wales, Cunliffe notes that the life of much of the population changed very little, and the Celtic language with its oral tradition remained strong (255-260).

Thus even with their occupation of most of Europe and Asia Minor, much of the Celtic civilization disappeared, and Cunliffe states that in the British Isles the survival of Celtic culture was related to the degree of romanization (260). That seems to be the case in most of the places where they were conquered; much of their distinctiveness was simply absorbed into the culture of the conquering people. The few traces that remain are in names of geographical features, such as rivers and mountains, and place names. Except for the areas currently identified as Celtic, much of their unique culture is gone.

Characteristics of Celtic People

Describing the characteristics of any people over an extended period of time is quite difficult. Thus the general characteristics of the Celtic peoples are inferred from what is known of certain tribes in certain periods, although they were a people that consisted of a number of tribes moving and shifting over most of Europe and part of Asia over a period of 1,500 years.

Especially in the early years of their settling in Europe, theirs was a warrior culture in which war was seen as the norm and desirable. Their ability to make superior armaments of iron, and somewhat later, their exceptional use of chariots and calvary made them a superior fighting force (Cunliffe 111). The passion and fierceness of great warriors and heros were admired and celebrated, and they put great value on an individual's

strength and valor and one's achievements in war.

In the centuries of the prominent Greek and Roman civilizations, Celts were known as great soldiers with a reputation for bravery and were hired as mercenaries by many nations. Unfortunately, their bravery was not matched by their planning and tactical skills. Many times their downfall was due to initially rushing wildly into battle with no thought of the consequences or of appearing fierce and hysterical in the beginning of a battle but fleeing in panic later. As Cunliffe states, "But the fury, by its very nature, lacked control: it was impetuous but without any forethought or planning. Thus when the onslaught was held and turned, there was no strategy in reserve to cope, and desperation set in" (103).

The beginning of a battle involving a Celtic army must have been a sight to behold. Cunliffe notes that a recurring theme was the noise made to begin the battle. Some used a war dance; others used trumpets to strike fear into their enemy. In *The Histories*, Polybius describes that with the

innumerable horn-blowers and trumpeters, and, as the whole army were shouting their war-cries at the same time, there was such a tumult of sound that it seemed that not only the trumpeters and soldiers but all the country round had got a voice and caught up the cry. (315)

Their fascination with the human head may have further spread their reputation as brutal and barbarous fighters. The Celts took the heads of defeated enemies as trophies, hung them from their horses' necks, and displayed them in their sanctuaries (Chadwick, *The Celts* 49-50; Ross 154-155).

The brutality of this warrior culture and their preoccupation with war were balanced by their appreciation of learning, imagination, and artistic ability. While their weapons were generally similar to those of other armies, their shields were distinctive in

that they were decorated in individual ways, highly ornamented, and some were covered in bronze. Helmets also showed an artistic flair—some having horns and one found with an attached bird, complete with flapping wings. Their exquisitely designed golden collars, torques, were also worn into battle as a symbol of the warrior's life and being. The torque may have had a deep religious significance since gods are shown wearing them, and wearing one may have given the warrior a sense of protection by the gods (Cunliffe 96-99).

The Celts thought music, both instrumental and vocal, very important. They saw it as an significant part of the otherworld and considered that those who dwelt there must eclipse their own mortal efforts (Ross 102-103). A warrior must not just be a fighter; he or she must also be a poet, musician, or artist. Timothy Joyce quotes an ancient saying attributed to the Irish, "Never give a sword to a person who can't dance" (7).

They left signs of ingenious designs in practical items such as plows, horseshoes, files, chisels, and spoked wheels and great artistic style in brooches, rings, torques, and necklaces, showing an appreciation of function and beauty. They were able to combine the two in the ornate decoration of everyday items, or, as Cunliffe notes, "The two (technology of construction and love of pure decoration) are strictly separate but they may come together to enhance each other and create a greater whole." (111)

For Anne Ross the genius of Celtic art is seen to a small extent in stone, to a larger extent in leather, wood, and bone. In metalwork however, the "full flowering of the style can be witnessed" (175). Celtic artisans were skillful, but, as Cunliffe states, "[They] carried with them not only skill but a deep knowledge of society's beliefs and values in symbols. That knowledge was potent and it must surely have been revered and feared"

(132). Ross notes that the craftsmen, especially the blacksmith, had a high position in society, that “his craft was believed to have been of a semi-supernatural character and the smith-god held an equally elevated position in the divine society of Celtic deities” (36).

Their love of beauty was not limited to objects to be fashioned; they displayed the same characteristics in words. They always had a natural quest for learning and intellectual exercise, exhibiting a crude contrast between their use of language and barbaric methods in war. Ross quotes Diodorus Sacculus in speaking about the Gauls.

In conversation they use very few words and speak in riddles, for the most part hinting and things and leaving a great deal to the understood. They frequently exaggerate, with the aim of extolling themselves and diminishing the status of others. They are boasters and threateners, and given to bombastic self-dramatization, and yet they are quick of mind and with good natural ability for learning. (125)

Joyce notes that Celtic peoples delighted in the power and value of the word, although for them it was the oral word rather than the written word since significant use of written language is not evident until after the establishment of Christianity in the fifth century (4). The druids may have expressed the sentiment of the whole people. Ellis quotes Caesar, describing their aversion to the written word:

The druids think it unlawful to commit this knowledge of theirs to writing (in secular and in public and private business they use Greek characters). This is a practice which they have, I think, adopted for two reasons. They do not wish that their system should become commonly known or that their pupils, trusting in written documents, should less carefully cultivate their memory. (10)

This means that most of what is known about them from historical records was written down by persons in other cultures (Chadwick, *The Celts* 142; Dunham 114). This can make the job of finding a non-pejorative source difficult and describing their culture quite troublesome.

Celtic peoples held great respect for storytelling, poetry, and verbal battling. As he was traveling in Gaul in the second century CE, the Greek writer Lucian observed a picture of an old man in a lion's skin leading a group of followers. The man's ears were attached to his own tongue by delicate gold chains. A Greek-speaking Gaul nearby explained that the old man represented eloquence but was in the lion skin as Hercules, for the Celts believed that eloquence had more power than physical strength (Chadwick, *The Celts* 145).

The bard was important to the Celtic social structure in Ireland, memorizing thousands of lines of poetry and keeping traditions alive along with composing new poems to memorialize current happenings. Warriors going into battle would be accompanied by bards proclaiming their genealogies and calling out insults to the enemy (Joyce 7).

Celtic intellectual development is further shown by their being exemplary timekeepers, essential in a culture that needed to know when to plant crops and move animals to upland pastures. A Celtic calendar from the first century BCE was quite sophisticated and more elaborate than the Julian calendar of the same period, telling time by nights as well as marking unlucky and lucky days. Indicating sixty-two consecutive lunar months, it is divided into columns which are subdivided into four months except for the fifth and ninth columns, which contain two months and an additional month to adjust to real time. The months are divided alternatively into twenty-nine and thirty days, equaling a year of 354 days (Ellis 18; Ross 127-128; Cunliffe 188-189).

The Celtic peoples possessed a wanderlust, an ardent desire to move on, with the result that they spread over most of Europe. Pierre Riché points that they had many stories and legends of heros and souls of the dead traveling far from their native country to

mysterious islands (164). This may have compelled them to move on and explore.

Cunliffe sees an explanation for Celtic wandering in the practice of “the raid,” which gave a warrior the opportunity to demonstrate leadership ability, to furnish a context for acts of valor, and to acquire booty, all to enhance a warrior’s status. Thus raids would grow ever larger to fulfill increased expectations, and populations would be forced to move when the raiders needed more territory (88-89).

Celtic Social Structure

The social unit of the Celts was the clan or tribe, a localized group where the individual found identity and to which loyalty was primary. These tribes formed loose connections with other similar groups. While this connecting led to group development and an emphasis on local authority, it also resulted in fighting and disunity between the clans (Joyce 9). In fact, Caesar commented that the Celts were “too much given to faction” to erect any stable political structure (McNeill 5). Ross notes that the Celtic “ideal” and the Celtic way of life have “always been at odds,” that their lack of putting theories into practice prevented development of political organization and resulted both in intertribal conflict and disintegration from outside; this was most evident in interaction with other peoples (110).

Kings ruled within each clan along with provincial kings and a high king. The king was thought to be a sacred, semi-divine being whose ancestor was the god of the tribe or people. His well-being reflected that of the tribe especially in the case of fertility and infertility. He had to embody what was finest in the clan (Ross 119-120).

The Irish high king (*Ard Ri*) had a dwelling on a hilltop, but it was only several hundred feet high so he was not seen as much above the people as among them. His was

not a hierarchical position since he might share his quarters and sleep with a group of the clan (Joyce 9; O'Laoghaire, "Daily" 46). He was responsible for the material welfare of the people and for balancing cosmic forces. He was thought to be invested with magical power contingent on moral and physical integrity (Riché 163).

Although Sean Dunham cautions readers that his Roman perspective may have colored his perceptions, Caesar described the Gallic social structure that he knew as having a ruling aristocratic class. Below them were the chief nobles who were quite powerful, and next the freemen, those who owned property along with the craftsmen and artisans. Next were those who held no property, conquered peoples and slaves. He also mentions *druides*, those concerned with divine matters and settling disputes (Dunham 112-114; Ross 35-36).

Bards were an important part of Celtic society. This highly trained group was the repository of history, legends, folklore, and poetry. Being a part of an oral culture, they had to commit great amounts of knowledge and lore and recite them perfectly (Ellis 18). In Welsh society the *penkerdd*, the "chief of song," sat next to the king's heir in the hall and had the right to sit next to the king. The household bard, the *bardd teulu*, had a free house and land from the king along with a harp and gold ring from the queen (Chadwick, *The Celts* 121).

The most notable role in Celtic society was that of the druid who embodied the functions of sage, priest, counselor, judge, bard, and medicine man and who interceded between the gods and the tribe. Many modern perceptions of the druids are based on Pliny the Elder's description of a ritual in which he tells of a druid cutting mistletoe off an oak tree. This was used by other writers of the past to embellish the little that was known

about the druids and to create the figure of their being mysterious and powerful wizards. Although Ross states that historians actually know little about druids, and whether they were common to the entire Celtic world is not known, they were a part of a number of different traditions within Celtic cultures. Caesar thought that the practice originated in Britain and then came to Gaul where he encountered it. His description is assumed by most historians to give an accurate description of their role.

The Druids are concerned with the worship of the gods, look after public and private sacrifice, and expound religious matters; a large number of young men flock to them for training, and hold them in high honor. . . . For they have the right to decide nearly all public and private disputes, and they also pass judgement and decide rewards and penalties in criminal and murder cases, and in disputes regarding legacies and boundaries. (141-145)

Eluère quotes T. G. E. Powell, “Druid, as a word, is considered to derive from roots meaning ‘knowledge of the oak,’ or possibly ‘great or deep knowledge’” (155). These persons, who included women, were recruited from the aristocratic class and went through intense training for about twenty years. They served as guardians of their tribe’s knowledge of the gods and the otherworld, the law, and working of the calendar, all of which was preserved in the oral tradition and some passed on in their role as teachers of science, theology, and philosophy.

Druids served as judges and as advisor to the king. Having rapport with the gods, they spoke in their name and explained dreams and visions and supervised religious ceremonies. Druids had the power to deny a member of the tribe the privilege to participate in ritual activities, a powerful incentive to conform (McNeill 8; Schmiel 169-170; Riché 164; Eluère 119, 158; Chadwick, *The Celts* 113).

Joyce reports that they fulfilled other functions: as astrologers they read the stars to determine the right time to make war or plant crops; they met with the druids of other

clans to deliberate and make decisions; they supervised the annual feasts and religious celebrations and presided at marriages and funerals. Warriors going into battle might be accompanied by their tribe's druid who would engage in frenzied verbal combat with the druid of another clan as a part of the battle. They alone were able to read and write by the time of Caesar and handed down the history and values to the upcoming generations. Joyce describes them as being at the center of the clan's life, embodying the spiritual, mythical, and cultural values of the people in their office. Perhaps for this reason when Christianity came to the Celtic people, Saint Columba proudly confessed that Christ was his druid (Joyce 12; Leatham, *Celtic Sunrise* 90-94).

Celtic women had a higher status and more rights than in most other cultures of the period, although their status was still quite inferior to that of men. Under Irish law a woman was considered legally incompetent with a standing barely above that of a slave or child, although marriage could give her a measure of independence (Time-Life Books 74). Women had the right to hold property, and if a woman survived her husband she could retain her dowry as well as her husband's property (Cunliffe 109). They might initiate divorce as well. Reports exist of women fighting in battle, and a woman on the Isle of Skye was the teacher of fighting skills for Cuchulainn. Another woman, Buodicca, led the Celtic insurrection against the Roman invasion of Britain in the first century. The picture of her leading the Celtic warriors with her long red hair flying, a bright cloak, and golden torque has been a lasting image of the status of Celtic women (Riché 93; Chadwick, *The Celts* 116; Joyce 9; Ellis 16; Cunliffe 110).

Celtic Religion

The Romans observed that the Celts were a religious people. Religion was a

fundamental part of every facet of their lives. However, Cunliffe comments on the “enormously rich array of partial and confusing evidence available to us from a wide variety of sources” (183) on their religious belief and practices. He continues,

It may be said that there is more, varied, evidence for Celtic religion than for any other aspect of Celtic life. The only problem is to be able to assemble it in a systematic form which does not too greatly oversimplify the intricate texture of its detail. (183)

Ross sees them as “completely engrossed with, and preoccupied by, their religion and its expression that it was constantly and positively to the forefront of their lives” (133). It determined their time and seasons. Gods were not just academic ideas to remember at convenient times; they were ever-present. The everyday life of the Celts included the supernatural equally with the natural, the divine with the mundane. The otherworld was as real and as present as the tangible one (133). The Celts seem to have believed that they lived in a world permeated by spirits, both beneficent and hostile. Their religion offered them the means to ameliorate these spirits (Davies and Bowie 6-7).

Although Chadwick states that they had no concept of sin or punishment (*The Celts* 150), they had a strong belief in the immortality of the soul and that it might be reincarnated in other humans or animals. This belief resulted in their having little fear of death. Ross states that the otherworld was not seen as a prize for ethical behavior but as a natural place that one would go, and that a mortal might even force his or her way there by treachery and skill (172). Chadwick depicts the supernatural world as described in an old Irish tradition as a land of perpetual youth with no sickness or death, where flowers always bloom and lambs play, and where peace and goodwill reign forever. She sees it as beauty, perpetual youth, and goodwill, which symbolize an “ideal spiritual existence” (*The Celts* 177). Their strong belief in the afterlife and the belief that the other world was as

real and definite as the present one resulted in a belief that it was quite close, particularly in the “thin spaces,” sites such as groves and wells, where spirits of ancestors and gods such as fairies were able to come and go with minimal difficulty and where they could more easily be found and in “thin times,” certain times of the year such as the new year, 1 November, when spirits could also come and go with ease (*The Celts* 177-182).

After death souls could travel far from their native land to other lands described in legends and stories (Riché 164). From the seventh to the first centuries BCE, the most popular burial tradition was inhumation where the dead were provided with necessities appropriate for his or her status (Cunliffe 208-209). The excavation of a prince’s tomb in the village of Hochdorf near Stuttgart is a prime example of their preparations for this journey and the importance that it had for them. The prince, buried between 540 and 520 BCE, was lying on a couch standing on little wheels. Around his neck was a bag containing essential toiletries—nail clippers, razor, and comb—along with three fishhooks. Nearby were nine drinking horns one nearly four feet long, holding five quarts, along with a 125 gallon bronze cauldron with a golden cup for dipping balanced on the rim. On a wagon was laid a banquet service, with bowls and plates, an ax, knives, and a spearhead with pieces of a horse harness (Eluère 36-38).

As a rule the Celts’ worship was not in human-made temples but in sacred woods or groves having sacred associations to gods. In his poem, “Pharsalia,” Lucan describes such a place in southern Gaul. “A grove there was untouched by men’s hands from ancient times, whose interlacing boughs enclosed a space of darkness and cold shade, and banished the sunlight from above. . . . [G]ods were worshiped there with savage rites ” (qtd. in Cunliffe 198). Bodies of water or sacred wells also appear to have been sites

where worshipers seem to have deposited sacrificial offerings such as woodcarvings, bronze sculptures, weapons, and cauldrons (Chadwick, *The Celts* 148). Cunliffe notes that at some sites the offerings seem to symbolize body parts, indicating a belief in the curative power of the waters (199).

Archeologists have discovered some buildings, usually of wood, and earthworks where worship rituals took place. One such building in northern Gaul appears to have been used continuously for five hundred years. Some contain ditches, pits, or shafts into which offerings and sacrifices were placed or thrown or ritual poles or pillars which might have been a focal point for sacrifice (Cunliffe 202-204; Ross 140).

Religion seemed to have had a distinctly local aspect, with particular deities linked to specific locations such as rivers, lakes, or forest groves rather than being mobile as were the gods of the Romans and Greeks. A poem from the end of the third century BCE mentions the “jealous Rhine” to which one could appeal for a verdict on the legitimacy of offspring, and a Gallic chief boasted of being the son of the Rhine River (Ross 146-148).

Brennus, a Celtic military leader, is said to have burst out laughing when told about the temple at Delphi and the Greek gods’ human forms depicted in stone there, for the Celts were reluctant to make images of their gods. After the Roman conquest however, images became more common (Eluère 113). The few Celtic idols that have been discovered were made of wood, and since they venerated the oak above all trees this would probably have been their first choice. They may have seen the god as a part of the wood. Images from stone were less popular, but after contact with the Romans, they became more so (Ross 146).

Ross characterizes Celtic religion as being

controlled by magic and affected by the correct or incorrect performance of ritual. The Celtic gods were as crafty and as unpredictable as their own neighbors; if they were properly approached and propitiated according to their individual requirements, with sacrifice and the recitation of charms and incantations, they could be mild and beneficent. If neglected or offended, they could be cruel and relentless. They frequently entered the world of men and played tricks upon those they chanced upon. They were not invincible, nor were they immortal. (173)

John McNeill reports that more than four hundred deity names have been identified, although, many may be multiple names for the same god (7). Ross is of the opinion that no rigid segmentation of the gods and goddesses into specific functions or categories occurred (159). Dagda was the father of all, a divine ancestor god. As father-god, he presided over justice and law in times of peace. Some, such as Lug, the luminous god, were common to the entire Celtic society. Each tribe would also have had its own divine father who assumed the role of leader in battle and became the ideal for human endurance (164). Others were gods just for a specific tribe, with some mated to an earth-goddess having different names in respective tribes. Gods of fertility, of protection, and others representing animal species and “mother earth” have all been identified. Lug, armed with javelin and sling, possessed “all the arts” and so was accepted as the leader (Ross 159-160; Riché 163; McNeill 7; Chadwick, *The Celts* 170).

Ross states that gods were seen to have vital intellectual powers and were deeply versed in native learning. They were poets, prophets, storytellers, craftsmen, magicians, healers, and warriors. They were endowed with every quality admired and desired by the Celtic people themselves, a divine reflection of all that was envied but unattainable by humans. The empty-headed handsome hero or the lovely but stupid goddess would not have been tolerated in Celtic society (133).

Ross gives this picture:

We can, then, envisage Celtic divine society as being composed of a basic all-purpose tribal god, the divine counterpart of the king or chieftain, with the earth-mother as his consort, she being concerned with the fertility of the land, the crops, and the stock, and taking an active part in battle against the tribal enemies, using incantations and magical spells rather than weapons to bring about victory. Over and above this fundamental divine couple there is evidence for gods having rather more closely defined spheres of influence, such as one finds in human society. A smith-god, a divine healer, a god specially concerned with the literary arts, a patron deity of some powerful well or river [sic]. But the all-purpose god could also turn his hand to any of these skills if necessary, and there must have been a good deal of overlapping of sphere. (160)

Goddesses included Rosmerta, Nantosuelta, Flidais, and others who were partners of the male gods (Eluère 115-118; Ross 166). Authors contradict one another over whether these goddesses were distinct from mother goddesses, normally pictured as a triad, carrying infants, cornucopias, or baskets of fruit. The goddesses were normally concerned with maternal and sexual affairs although exceptions existed. The triple raven-war-goddess, Mórrígná, had a clear relation to sexuality but was more concerned with battle. Flidais seems to have been more concerned with mastery of woodland animals (Chadwick, *The Celts* 154; Ross 166).

Ross notes that the lower members of the tribe may have invoked local spirits and forces which they believed controlled their own destinies over and above the great deities which interceded on behalf of the upper classes and the tribe in general. They may have observed special rituals known only to themselves and those of their ilk and participated with the whole tribe in their ritual gatherings (132).

The number three had special significance within Celtic religion, resulting in the belief that it had magical powers and was an expression of extreme potency. Some gods were thought to be born with two others of the same name. Certain mythological characters were pictured with three faces or sculpted with three heads. Female deities

were especially prone to triplism, such as Mórríghna who resolved into three forms—Mórrígan, Badb, and Nemain (Ross 157-158; Cunliffe 187). The goddess Bridget appeared in three forms: goddess of fire, of poetry, and of fertility (Joyce 19).

The most documented facet of Celtic religion was seeing the divine in all of nature. As with all primitive agricultural peoples, they saw the earth as the source of fertility and life, but Oliver Davies and Fiona Bowie state, “We see among the Celts an interpenetration of religion and landscape in a way that surpasses anything that we might find in the late classical world” (8).

This manifested itself in veneration of animals, with horned deities quite common. A particular god appears consistently with stag antlers and is frequently portrayed as lord of the animals, a deity who may have been particularly venerated by the druids. In later Christian manuscripts, he becomes symbolic of the devil and anti-Christian forces. Birds were also quite important. Water birds were associated with the sun, and some idols are portrayed in chariots pulled by birds. The crane was considered sinister and is still disliked in modern traditions (Ross 162-167).

First and foremost Celtic religion was a nature religion, for they saw their gods as a part of nature. Mary Schmiel states, “[They] had no concept of a god who was ‘wholly other’” (170). Pliny the Elder wrote, “The druids . . . consider nothing more sacred than the mistletoe and the tree that it grows on, so long as it is an oak” (qtd. in Eluère 119). In popular lore, druids are often shown harvesting mistletoe which was supposed to be related to the tree as the body is to the soul, proceeding from the god of the tree and nourished by it. J. A. MacCulloch notes that the custom was to take oaths by the elements—heaven, earth, sun, fire, moon, sea, land, day night—for they were thought to be

divine (172-173).

Dr. Madeleine Gray states that for many ancient peoples, water welling up had a magical, symbolic sense, but that it had an even greater importance for the pagan Celts. To them water was in some sense, the God rather than belonging to the God. For those who worshipped at the shrine at Fontes Sequanae, she stated, “The Seine was the god” (“Walking to the Well”).

R. J. Stewart sees Celtic religion as primarily associated with the sanctity of the land and certain locations in the land which had great power. He refuses to see them as “mere nature worshippers” who bowed down to trees and stones. “They had a whole vision of the sanctity of the land, unified and harmonized together” (15). According to Stewart this meant no separation between religion and living.

All life, all acts, all relationships were essentially religious; not in any formal sense, but as a matter of simple fact. There were formal religious sites, . . . but these were the nodes . . . of energies within a living land, a land sacred as a goddess, and peopled by a host of visible and invisible supernatural deities. (23)

The Celts do not easily fit into designations of other nature worshippers as pantheistic or panentheistic. While seeing some objects in nature as divine, Stewart states that they saw the gods and goddesses “as inherently firstly within the land and secondly within themselves” (33). They did not see them as distant or impersonal but inherent within the presence of a great oak, the shape of a range of hills, or the flow of a river, “literally looking at the Celtic gods and goddesses inherent within the living land” (33).

In this system of belief, divine power was diffused all through nature (Mackey 170). Mackey states this even more strongly.

The nearness, the ubiquitous presence of the spiritual in all things and at all times . . . is indeed a powerful, permanent and characteristic conviction. . . .

It may prove to be the most important contribution which the Celtic mind can offer to the modern world. (11)

This high view of nature resulted in a characteristic admired by those who think highly of the Celts: a great respect, love, and admiration of nature. The earth was accepted as good, was seen as a source of beauty, and was celebrated in all seasons (Joyce 11). This has resulted in their popularity in recent times as persons have searched for a spiritual foundation for earth-friendly attitudes and practices.

They also recognized that a dark side to nature existed, and they sought means of protection from it (Joyce 11). This might have been the motivation for their sacrifices to the gods, a fact frequently ignored by those who seek to emulate them today. As part of their rituals, animals—including oxen, bulls, and horses—were sacrificed; human sacrifice was also common. In the third century BCE a sanctuary more than 2,500 feet long was built at Ribemont-sur-Ancre. Bones from about one thousand persons were stacked and crisscrossed into a cubic monument (Eluère 106-108). The discovery of a man's body in a bog in Lindow in Cheshire from the first or second century CE gives evidence of his having been strangled, hit on the head, and having his throat cut, all in rapid succession, indicating a rapid ritual death. Other historical accounts describe human sacrifice by other means indicating that different gods were thought to require different means of death. Cunliffe describes the impaling of female victims as a plea to the goddess Andrasta during a British revolt in 60-61 CE (255).

Tribes came together for four seasonal feasts. Each part of the year was preceded by festivals of feasting, fairs, games, sport, and solemn religious observances including human sacrifice. The Irish designations began with Samain (1 November) which was the time to celebrate the new year, and one of the "thin times" when the spaces between the

old time and new time or between time and eternity were thin enough to allow spirits to move freely in and out of this world, a time of spiritual vulnerability. During Samain important communal acts, meetings, and sacrifices took place (Ross 153; Cunliffe 189).

Oimelec or Imbolg (1 February) was a feast to the goddess Brigit and was connected with breeding, moving sheep to upland pastures, and ewes coming into milk. At Beltine (1 May) the god Belenos, along with fire and sun symbolized by disks with spirals, was honored. Belenos was apparently associated with the promotion of fertility and observed rites to encourage the growth of cattle and crops. Lugnasad, held fifteen days before and fifteen days after 1 August, was the feast of harvesting, possibly associated with the god Lug, and offerings might have been made for a good harvest (Ross 151-154; Riché 163-164; Cunliffe 189).

Celtic Culture and Christianity

At some point the relatively few Celtic tribes whose culture had not been obliterated and whose religion had not been absorbed by other peoples, discovered or were discovered by Christianity, and assimilated Christian traditions into their religious life. The means of initial contact is unknown and probably will never be discovered; although, legends suggest an explanation. Diana Leatham reports a legend of Joseph of Arimathea going to Glastonbury. She quotes Eusebius, the fourth-century historian, who offers another one. "The Apostles passed beyond the ocean to the isles called the Brittanian Isles" (*Celtic Sunrise* 47-54). Actually the time when and the means by which Christianity was first introduced there remains a mystery.

Some writers assume that Christians would have been among those soldiers and civilian traders and colonists who were entering Britain and soon formed an element in

Roman centers. Glastonbury, where tradition places the oldest church, was well situated to be an appropriate entrance point (McNeill 16-18; Edwards 20). With evidence of a Christian cryptogram scratched on red wall plaster in a house at Cirencester, Chadwick concludes that Christians may have been present there in the second century (*The Celts* 190-191). By 208, Christianity in Britain was becoming widespread and widely known, for Tertullian reported then that “parts of Britain inaccessible to the Romans were indeed conquered by Christ” (qtd. in Edwards 20). About 240, Origen mentions Christianity as a unifying force among Britons. “When before the coming of Christ did the land of Britain agree on the worship of one God?” (qtd. in McNeill 19).

However Christianity was introduced in Britain, Leatham sees Christians in the British Isles as linked to the Christians of Gaul through persecution, trade or immigration. After the persecution of Christians by Marcus Aurelius in 177, many Gaulish Christians may have fled to Britain taking their Christianity with them (*Celtic Sunrise* 47; Moorman 3-4). The proximity of Gaul together with the interaction between the Celtic people in Gaul and in the British Isles resulted in a continuing influence and may have helped Christianity’s acceptance.

An Internet article, giving what is perhaps an oversimplification of their Christianization, states that the Celtic peoples literally threw away their pagan rituals and beliefs, voluntarily converting to Christianity and tearing down their pagan holy places to build Christian holy places on top of them (Pavlac 1). While the Celtic religion certainly did not disappear, apparently the transition to Christianity was relatively free of the strife and contention that appear in Acts and other missionary endeavors. Archaeological finds from this period suggest a relatively peaceful coexistence of the new religion with some of

the symbols and practices of the older pagan way of life (Davies and Bowie 9). Ross states that this was because of the Celts'

great background of oral knowledge, of intricately-worked-out legal codes, of calendrical skill and of tale and poetry, which made the imposition of Christianity on a society already so highly organized in this respect, so comparatively easy and painless. (130)

Joyce states that the transition from pagan religions to Christianity came about peacefully and was almost a "natural development" in Ireland. He sees as reasons the significant beliefs of the pagan Celts that naturally led to Christianity, such as their fascination with the number three and the belief that many of their gods were believed to exist in three forms, so moving to belief in a God with three persons was easy. Also important was their openness to the otherworld and seeing the sacredness in the ordinariness of creation (20). Diarmuid O'Laoghaire echos John Macquarrie by maintaining that their model for understanding God was the Irish High King, who was "always among his people as well as above them" ("Daily" 47).

Little is known about the expansion of Christianity in Britain in the third century. Beda describes the martyrdom of St. Alban as a part of the persecution by the emperor Diocletian during the last years of the third century (29). In Britain, as elsewhere in the empire, Christianity was gradually embraced by increasing numbers despite opposition and danger from environing paganism until about 300 CE when an organized church took shape in most parts of the province (McNeill 22).

By 314, when the Council of Arles was held, Christianity was established in Britain and was organized to the extent that three bishops from Britain attended (Chadwick, *The Celts* 191; Leatham, *Celtic Sunrise* 56; Moorman 3). In 359, other British bishops attended the Council of Rimini, but they were so poor that the emperor had to contribute

funds for their expenses. Moorman suggests that this indicates that many were not the prosperous members of the community; however, Henry Mayr-Harting states that the strength of Christianity lay in the towns and prosperous villas (32).

The establishment of Christianity was not to be permanent. A revival of Celtic paganism occurred in the fourth century. Also, the Saxons, brought in by the Romans as early as the fourth century to assist in defending against attacks by the Picts in the north and by tribes from the mainland, began to settle as farmers. After the Roman withdrawal in 410, the Saxons rose up to assert themselves, and with their continued settlement, the cultural and political life of Roman Britain was eliminated along with the religious life. Around 500, the British in the western area of the island regained at least some of their political control over the areas settled by the Saxons, but in the latter years of the century they were pushed again to the west. This did not mean an extermination of Christianity, but probably very few Christians remained, confined in large part to the more romanized upper class, and little ecclesiastical organization existed to support them (Mayr-Harting 13-15, 32-33; Chadwick, *The Celts* 191-192).

Christians whose origins, like those in the eastern area, are also unknown lived in the southwest area of the island though, some historians assume they were among traders coming across the channel from Gaul. Edwards states that those who remained free in the western part of the island became Welsh maintaining their Christian faith, but he also claims that they never forgave those Saxons who had invaded their land, so no record exists of any Welsh becoming a missionary among the invaders (15-20). Chadwick reports that the Welsh Christians continued their isolationist tendencies until well into the seventh century and were among the last remnants of the Celtic Church to come under the

influence of Rome (*The Celts* 198).

Spread of Christianity among Celtic People

Edwards quotes W. H. C. Frend, saying that it was “in this period of freedom between the Roman and Saxon Occupations that the ideals and literature took shape which still characterize the Celtic peoples wherever the Celtic languages are spoken” (26). In the absence of the Romans, the Celtic people retained their Latin language and their religion, Christianity. For Edwards this was a new form of Christianity, however, more monastic and tribal, similar to that in Gaul. The faith was spread by monks who also preserved its literature, especially the Bible, and lived out its commands in a literal fashion with lives of corporate and private prayer. From their monasteries the monks moved out to minister to Celtic tribes still in existence in the countryside, each in their own area, but sharing a common culture (27-28).

Few Christian theologians from this era are remembered. The one exception, Pelagius, is believed by some historians to have been a Welsh monk (Nicholson 386-387), although John Moorman believes him to have been a well-educated, highly civilized, romanized Briton who left in 380 to travel about the Mediterranean region. Although much of what he taught is gleaned from his opponents rather than from his own works, he became known as one who promoted the possibility of reaching perfection without supernatural grace, a view which ran counter to Augustine’s teaching and led to his condemnation as a heretic (6).

Most writers believe that Pelagius never returned to his homeland, but his teachings did in the person of Agricola, a Pelagian and son of a Pelagian bishop, who was reported to be spreading the doctrine in Britain. At the suggestion of a deacon named

Palladius, Pope Celestine dispatched Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, to counteract these teachings and bring the people back to the true faith. This Palladius could well be the same person who was ordained by Celestine and sent as the first bishop in 431 to the Irish who believed in Christ. By this point apparently enough Christians lived in Ireland that a bishop was needed (Edwards 31; Chadwick, *The Age* 16; De Paor 18-20).

Other missionary activity occurred at this time. St. Ninian, trained in St. Martin's monastery at Marmoutier, arrived about 397 and built a monastery at Whithorn in Galloway, whitewashing it so that it might be conspicuous. It became a base for evangelistic journeys to the savage Pict tribes in northern Britain, up the east coast of Scotland, and even to Ireland (Moorman 6-7).

While Ninian was doing his work, a small boy was growing up in western England. The boy, a nominal Christian whose father was a deacon, was kidnapped by pirates and taken to Ireland where he was enslaved. He tells his story in his confessions.

But after I had come to Ireland,
 it was then that I was made to shepherd the flocks day after day,
 and, as I did so, I would pray all the time, right through the day.
 More and more the love of God and fear of him grew strong within me,
 and as my faith grew, so the Spirit became more and more active,
 so that in a single day I would say as many as a hundred prayers,
 and at night only slightly less.
 Although I might be staying in a forest or out on a mountainside,
 it would be the same; even before dawn broke, I would be aroused to pray.
 In snow, in frost, in rain,
 I would hardly notice any discomfort,
 and I was never slack but always full of energy.
 It is clear to me now, that this was due to the fervor of the Spirit within
 me.

And on a certain night, I had a dream
 in which I heard a voice saying to me,
 "You are right to fast, soon you will be returning to your own country."
 And, once again, after only a short while,
 I had the response to this mysterious dream for I was told,

“Come and see, where your ship is waiting for you.” (Skinner 38-39)

This was Patrick, who became the patron saint of Ireland. He did escape, walked what he estimated to be two hundred miles, found the ship that had also been in his dream, and sailed away, apparently to Gaul, where he was drawn into the monastic movement of St. Martin. After years of study and training there, he returned to Britain where in another dream he heard Irish people calling him to return to Ireland. He did return in 431, and for thirty years he traveled throughout Ireland baptizing thousands and establishing monasteries (Skinner 38-39).

Tradition says that he directly challenged the power and authority of the druids. Many tribes traditionally gathered on 25 March for the lighting of the sacred spring fires, and until that fire was lit all hearths had to remain cold for the day (Leatham, *They Built* 69). Patrick and his company lit a great Paschal fire in honor of the risen Christ.

It was also seen from Tara, and everyone wondered at the sight. King Loiguire called together the elders, councilors and druids and said to them: “What is this? Who is it who has dared to commit this sacrilege in my kingdom? Let him be put to death.” They all replied that they did not know who had done it, but the druids answered: “O king, may you live forever! This fire, which we see and which was lit this night before one was lit in your palace of Tara, will never be put out unless it is put out this very night; what is more, it will surpass all the fires of our customs, and he who kindled it and the kingdom brought upon us by him who has kindled it on this night will overpower us all and you. It will seduce all the people of your kingdom, and all kingdoms will yield to it. It will spread over the whole country and will reign for ever and ever.” (Sellner 183-184)

Mary Cagney says that Patrick did not require the native Irish to give up their belief in supernatural beings but transformed their fear of them into seeing them as hated demons. She notes that he concentrated most of his evangelistic efforts on tribal kings, presuming that if they became Christian so would their subjects (12-13). The High King was never converted; although, his brother and daughters were along with many other

chiefs. Since the chiefs owned the land, Patrick was able to convince them to give land to him to build churches. Some chiefs gave all they owned, including their tribe itself, to Christ. Leatham states that Christianity did not overturn pagan religion as much as transform and complete it, largely through the work of women (*Celtic Sunrise* 102-104).

While the spread of Christianity in an Ireland in which the druids still ruled the people was remarkable, the rapid spread of monasticism is even more so, especially that it developed new characteristics. Chadwick suggests some type of ecclesiastical organization was in place, one introduced by Patrick and those who preceded him. This was the diocesan model patterned after that of western Europe, but it proved unworkable in Irish society. Having never been conquered by Rome, no cities existed, and the Irish economy was pastoral and quite different from the Roman urban system present in Gaul and in Britain. Rather than being the place for persons to withdraw from the world, the monastery served as the gathering place for the rural population. The diocese gave way to federations of monastic communities with a founder-saint as its abbot (or abbess) and leader, and churches developed within the communities so that monasteries achieved great power and stature (*The Age* 33-35; *The Celts* 202-203). Mayr-Harting notes that Kathleen Hughes sees the chief abbot in the monastic confederations as analogous to the Irish tribal overking, so that as the traveling monks with missionary zeal founded monasteries in distant places, they in turn became part of the confederation, providing a flexible institution to accommodate the Irish love of wandering (86).

Christians were in Scotland as early as the fifth century since Patrick wrote *A Letter to the Soldiers of Corotius* after his band of marauding soldiers attacked Christians in Ireland—murdering, raping, and taking many into slavery. In a style reminiscent of the

Celtic bards who had cursed their enemies generations before, Patrick castigates these who call themselves Christians but act in a way foreign to such a title (Skinner 1-16), but Columba bears responsibility for the greatest gains there.

Columba, born in 521 to an influential noble family, was forced to leave the country although reports offer conflicting reasons for his expulsion. The most common explanation is that he was forced to leave after his involvement in a violent quarrel over a manuscript left three thousand dead. He sailed with twelve companions to an island called Ioua, now Iona, which had been a holy site for the druids. They built a monastery in the Irish custom and by 574 a monastic community was established which became a center of missionary activity. The Northern Picts in Scotland saw much of his work, and with the cry "Christ is my Druid," he brought the pagans to Christ and to the Church. Through the efforts of his brothers, a number of other monasteries were established in the Hebrides and on the Scottish mainland so that Iona became the hub of a network of routes linking it to the political and ecclesiastical centers of the area (*Celtic Sunrise* 90-94; Time-Life Books 44-45). Leatham states that when he died in 597 the western part of Scotland was a Christian area. The raids of Norse Vikings in the eighth century spelled the end of Celtic Christianity there (Leatham, *Celtic Sunrise* 92-96).

Gregory the Great became deeply concerned about the spiritual condition of England after seeing Anglican slaves being sold in Rome. After becoming pope in 590, he dedicated monies of the papacy to buy the slaves and educate them in the Christian faith. That took longer than he thought best so he decided that missionaries must be sent there. In 596, he selected a monk with no particular expertise qualifying him to be a missionary and told him to lead a group to England. After once turning back and having to be

persuaded to go on, the evangelists landed in Kent in 597 and discovered a friendly king, Ethelbert, who had a Christian wife, Bertha. Ethelbert received them warmly, if cautiously, and listened to what Augustine had to say. Within a few weeks, the king and most of his court were baptized, and the monks began using an abandoned church built when the Romans were in the city. On Christmas day of 597, reports claim that over ten thousand persons were baptized. Augustine's work among the English lasted about ten years but after he died sometime between 604 and 609, a living and active church functioned there (Moorman 12-16; Bede 69-107).

Edwards cautions that the people's conversion might not be as thorough as it might appear, that the faith seems to have gotten its start with the kings and only trickled down to the common people. He states that in the ninety years it took to convert the entire countryside, "hardly a court was converted which did not suffer at least one subsequent relapse into paganism before being reconverted" (44-45). This is more evident in the case of another Italian monk, Palenness, who spent twenty-four years in southern England and then went north to York where he preached, beginning with the king and his nobles, meeting with rapid success. Moorman describes the effort as superficial, since in 634 he fled to the south, and the church almost disappeared (16).

Also in 634, Oswald, a young man raised and educated by monks after the death of his father, defeated heathens who occupied his father's land and became king of Northumbria. He sent to Iona for a bishop to evangelize his people. The first one sent was unsuccessful and returned. Bede states that he reported that the people were intractable, obstinate, and uncivilized, and in the discussion which followed his report, Aidan responded,

It seems to me, brother, that you have been unreasonably harsh upon your ignorant hearers; you did not first offer them the milk of simpler teaching, as the apostle recommends, until little by little, as they grew strong on the food of God's word, they were capable of receiving more elaborate instruction and of carrying out the more transcendent commandments of God. (qtd. in Bede 229)

Aidan, consecrated and sent to Northumbria, was responsible for restoring Christianity to the north. His monastery at Lindisfarne sent out missionaries all over England. However, this was a different tradition than the one emerging in the South. These missionaries were trained in the traditions of the Celtic church, and the differences with those sent by the Roman Church were for the most part minor: How should the date for Easter be calculated? Which is the proper method of tonsure? and, How should the Eucharist be consecrated? The basic question underlying the division was the question of authority: Who was in charge, Iona or Rome (*Celtic Sunrise* 154)?

The question came to a head in 633 when Oswald's brother, Oswy, discovered that following the Celtic tradition he would be celebrating Easter when his wife, following the Roman tradition, would still be in her Lenten fast. An assembly was called to meet at the monastery at Whitby, under the supervision of the abbess Hilda, with the king presiding. Each contingent stated their position. The final statement of Colman, Bishop of Lindisfarne, indicates no inclination to compromise on the date of Easter.

We dare not change it, for our fathers' sake, nor do we wish to do so. Our fathers and their predecessors, plainly inspired by the Holy Spirit, as was Columba, followed the friend of our Lord, John. . . . And we, his disciple Polycarp, and others, celebrate it thus on his authority. (Chadwick, *Celtic Sunrise* 154-155)

The king decided in favor of Rome, since he wanted to be on the side with Peter, the keeper of the keys of heaven. Bede quotes him as saying,

Then, I tell you, since he is the doorkeeper I will not contradict him; but I

intend to obey his commands in everything to the best of my knowledge and ability, otherwise when I come to the gates of the kingdom of heaven, there may be no one to open them because the one who on your own showing holds the keys has turned his back on me. (297-307)

The Celtic leaders withdrew and continued to follow their own traditions to a large degree. Colman yielded not to papal authority but to a royal decision, so the Celts had little motivation to change. With this decision, however, the laborious process by which the Celtic Church became part of the Roman Church began, symbolized by the replacing of the small wooden structures of the Celtic monastery at Lindisfarne with a church built of stone in the Roman manner. The monks at Iona preferred the traditions of their elders. Late in the seventh century, Adamnan, abbot of Iona, was converted to the Roman date. However, only in 716 were the brothers convinced by Egbert to do so (Mayr-Harting 111-113).

The final sign of this extended conversion was the building of the Benedictine monastery on Iona in the thirteenth century, for “at this point the Celtic mission can said to have ceased in any structured religious form” (Newell 40). Phillip Newell sees this period of resistance on the Isle of Iona as a time of creativity reflecting the spiritual vitality of the Celtic Church. During this time the beautiful illuminated manuscripts such as the *Book of Kells* were written, in which the Celts’ love of creation and love of Scripture is expressed with the visible and invisible both depicted there (40).

Celtic Christianity—Reality or Contrived Invention?

Thus with unknown beginnings and a drawn-out ending, a Celtic Church thrived at times and merely survived at times. Did an actual Celtic church function? Was its brand of Christianity so distinct that it can be differentiated from that of the Roman tradition?

James Mackey begins the book he edited with this question: “Is there a Celtic

Christianity?" (1-21). Of course he answers in the affirmative since the title for the collection of articles forming the book is *An Introduction to Celtic Christianity*. Although he makes the point that one might also argue for the existence of several Celtic Christianities based on traditions and cultures in different Celtic groups, he is not alone in raising the question of the existence of a distinct Celtic Christianity.

Donald Meek, professor and chair of Celtic studies at the University of Aberdeen, states that the Celtic Christianity presented today is largely the product of a revival of interest in Celtic religion and that it has been manufactured, reflecting the "needs and feelings of modernity," that it can be partly seen as a remedy for modern concerns in ecology, women's rights, and general disillusionment with contemporary Christianity ("Modern Celtic Christianity" 6-9). In another article he argues against a Celtic Church and a Celtic systematic theology; in his view it was simply a pre-Reformation form of the Catholic faith. What is called Celtic Christianity is a mixture of past and present to meet the needs of the postmodern spiritual consumer ("Modern Myths" 42-44). Chadwick echoes that the Celtic Church was never outside the framework of the Roman Church. It was completely orthodox, she maintains, holding to the same faith, founded on the same traditions, with the same hope of the resurrection, but because of irregular contact and remote geographical position, it held to certain practices that were part of the early continental church but which had been superseded through time (*The Age* 62-66).

In a book published for the Church Historical Society twenty years before Meek's articles, Leslie Hardinge notes an increased interest in things Celtic even at that time. He argues for the existence of the Celtic church. He describes it as the group of Christians who lived in the British Isles before Augustine's mission in 597 and continued for about a

century. Although, he adds that the term “church” is a “handy title for this body of believers” and should not be construed to mean that they had an organization now equated with the term (xii). He states that whenever contacts took place between Celtic Christians and a representative of Rome, conflict occurred, and that those in the Celtic Church were seen as heretics by Rome. He quotes Theodore of Tarsus, the seventh archbishop of Canterbury, who decreed as late as 668 that one who was “ordained by heretics” be re-ordained, that those so baptized should be re-baptized, and that one giving communion to or receiving communion from ‘a heretic . . . shall do penance for an entire year’ (20).

Joseph Cahill sees a distinct style of faith most evident in Ireland, and that after 431, when Palladius was sent to Ireland, a “very unusual brand of Christianity” was there, in some ways resembling forms of Christianity before church order formed it into the institution described by history (9). He uses the term “a form of Christianity” repeatedly to describe the Christianity in Ireland strongly affected by ancient Celtic religion (9-11).

Davies and Bowie, noting that we live in a world governed by denominations, comment that our tendency is to project that into the past. The Western Church was one until the Reformation so that conflict between the Celtic Church and the Roman Catholic Church actually was “competition between different trends and traditions within a single and still unified Church” (3). Their conclusion offers some resolution to this tension.

[W]e feel justified in using the term “Celtic Christianity” for two reasons. First because there undoubtedly are some distinctive and important Christian emphases which thread their way through the religious imagination of Celtic-speaking people, and second though just as important, many Christians living in Celtic countries today choose to regard themselves as Celts. Such an identity is to some extent, like all ethnicities, based on a mythologized reading of the past, but it has its own reality and exigencies, and should not be dismissed too lightly. (4)

Perhaps a Celtic Church did not exist outside the structure of the Roman Church

of that day, but a distinctive Christianity did, made so by the remnants of Celtic culture and religion which remained in many Celtic cultures either slightly affected by their Roman conquerors or untouched at all. Some Christians might be mortified to think of a pagan culture infecting the gospel of Christ, but it happens every time Christianity is introduced into such a culture. Thus within the twentieth century Church, the Roman Catholic Church reflects the political structure of ancient Rome, elements of African music are a part of African American worship, and moving into the twenty-first century, new Baptist and Pentecostal churches attempt to attract these segments of the population by incorporating components of their particular slice of culture.

Thus attempting to describe a Celtic church with an existence parallel to that of the Roman Catholic Church is impossible, for their existence was quite dissimilar. The case can be made for a form or style of Christianity unique to the Celtic peoples whose culture was not significantly affected by the Romans and whose Christianity was profoundly affected by their pagan faith. The distinctive Celtic Christianity that resulted was alive from the fifth century until the Council of Whitby when it began to fade, until the twelfth century when it ceased to exist in any organized fashion.

Characteristics of Celtic Christianity

Cahill describes three major forms of Christianity: the Latin with its hierarchy and dogmas; the Greek with collegial structure, patriarchates, and liturgical history; and, the Celtic “with its independent, non-hierarchical, mystical thrust in which what we call the supernatural is somehow present in the natural and in which perhaps the highest good is individual moral freedom” (18). Some might think it presumptuous to put Celtic Christianity in the same league as the Roman and Greek churches, but the fact that it did

not last does not mean that it did not make a significant contribution to Christian history.

What is this Celtic Christianity? What characterized Celtic Christianity? Can we know conclusive beliefs about peoples who only late in their history began to write?

For Knudsen it was a “folksy, culture-conscious type of Christianity which was different from the intellectually-influenced, institutionally-directed, and individualistically-dominated Christianity of the Hellenistic world” (59). Cahill sees it as a Christianity that “resembled certain forms of early Christianity before Church order assumed the shapes to which we have all become accustomed” and a faith “tolerant of dissident opinion, unafraid really of so-called heathen practices and, in fact, in many instances rather attached to them” (11-16). Newell, former Warden of Iona Abbey, sees the Celtic way as a distinct orientation inspired by John, the beloved disciple, who portrayed an image of “listening for the heartbeat of God,” manifest in “listening for God at the heart of life ” (1). The Roman way was based on the authority of Peter as rock, manifest as “faithful action and outward unity,” favoring the “listening for God in the ordained teaching and life of the Church” (1-2). Thus outward unity won over listening for God, and the Roman tradition is now seen as the real church.

Celtic Christians held a high view of Scripture. Leslie Hardinge sees their attitude toward Scripture as being God’s Word which could and should be understood by all and should be carefully obeyed. Scripture molded their theology and guided their worship, as shown by writers such as Patrick who appealed solely to the Bible in the few writings attributed to him with no references to church fathers or councils. Not having the advantage of the church fathers, they went about the task of discovering for themselves what the Scriptures meant, relying solely on their interpretation to the exclusion of church

councils and official church teaching. Continuing the Celtic emphasis on learning as from the druids, Ireland became a center for the study of the Scriptures, employing exegesis by examining the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew and emphasizing a literal interpretation rather than an allegorical one, producing a number of commentaries (Hardinge 29-35; Wallace 14).

Hardinge states that for the Celtic Christian the Scriptures were the supreme authority, literally interpreted by each individual and rigidly obeyed, developing an emphasis on obedience which grew to have increasing importance, with additional rules added to assist in obedience. Since not only could sin lead one to disobedience, a person's free will could also lead one to obey laws, so that while grace was important to salvation, each individual also had his or her part to play in obedience to the commandments, making Christ's atonement effective in personal experience (Hardinge 29-51).

For James Bulloch, who lectured in Iona in 1963, Celtic Christianity is an "evangelical faith," exemplified by Patrick who did not set forth a creed in his Confession but declared God's mercy as revealed in Christ and experienced by in his own life. He hypothesizes that Celtic Christians were engrossed in the task of holding and defending the faith against heathens, so they did not become concerned with speculation in matters of theology (89-93).

Hardinge agrees that Celtic Christians held to a biblical theology with little discussion or speculation leading to a systematized theology. They believed that the godhead was made up of three personages. They also believed in Satan, warring against God through persons along with other spiritual beings who threatened humans in their daily lives. Sin is not a strong theme but is not ignored. The fallenness of the world is

pictured on many Irish high crosses by Adam and Eve sharing an apple in the garden of Eden. Also on these crosses a triumphant Christ is centered, holding out victorious hands after battling and defeating the forces of evil (de Waal, *The Celtic Way* 120).

A prayer of forgiveness, attributed to St. Ciaran, states not only the need for forgiveness, but also points to attributes of the Forgiving One.

“According to the multitude of your mercies, cleanse my iniquity.”

O star-like sun,
O guiding light,
O home of the planets,
O firey-maned and marvelous One,
O fertile, undulating, firey sea,
Forgive.

O firey glow,
O firey flame of Judgment,
Forgive.

O holy story-teller, holy scholar,
O full of holy grace, of holy strength,
O overflowing, loving, silent One,
O generous and thunderous giver of gifts,
Forgive.

O rock-like warrior of a hundred hosts,
O fair crowned One, victorious, skilled in battle.
Forgive. (Davies and Bowie 45)

The Celts manifest a great emphasis on the sovereignty of the human will. They stressed Christ as the substitutionary sacrifice for the individual, needed because of the exercise of one's choice to sin and not due to original sin coming down from Adam; therefore, each individual must guard against sin by disciplining everything he or she did or thought. To help humans, Christ provided the Holy Spirit and angels who had resisted the seduction of Satan, enabling them to help those who called upon them (Hardinge 66-71).

Little doctrine of the church developed. The lack of organization among Celtic

tribes as noted by Caesar continued as they began to become the people of God. No central authority existed for Celtic Christians so that there was little development of church structure or an established systematic theology (McNeill 111). Hardinge notes that each bishop was the pastor of the congregation and there was little organization or hierarchy beyond them (124-125). No unity emerged among the monasteries, not even unity of liturgy. This may be due to the significant role of the local monastic communities who seemed to find their purpose in the missionary act of forming other monastic communities like their own. Chadwick sees this as contributing to their ultimate downfall. “The absence of central authority and organization based on it was undoubtedly the cause of the ultimate extinction of the Celtic Church” (*The Age* 76-77).

With only minor interest in systematic theology, theologians are few in the Celtic church, Pelagius being the one exception. Leatham notes that some believe he was taught by the Syrian Rufinus, but others maintain that he sought to revive views on nature and freewill taught by the druids, a view strengthened if the tradition is true that he was an abbot of Bangor in North Wales where ancient druid strongholds had been (*They Built* 58). Chadwick references Plinval, who stated that he “was a Celt from our islands by birth” (qtd. in *The Age* 16).

Forthomme Nicholson thinks he must be seen as coming from a “Christian Romanized Celtic background with its emphasis on faith and good works, on the holiness of all life and the oneness-of-all,” but his theology is from the druids’ ancient wisdom of the Celts as refined to their Christian faith (387). He notes that for the druids, everything in nature was good, but it depended on the will of humanity to keep it good. The divine soul, actually part of the deity, must try to return to its original state of divine perfection.

This surfaces in Pelagius' conviction that persons are born with no sin and created in God's image, to whom they returned if they followed Christ's command, "be perfect" (387-402).

Knudsen states that as a Celt Pelagius was not just in opposition to Augustine's view of humans as sinful in basic nature. He should be understood as symbolizing the attitude of the Celtic church to the life of humankind (58).

His Celtic roots also reveal themselves in his discussing the doctrines of Scripture with everyone, with young women at their spindles and their wickerwork wool baskets as with educated men. This practice seems to have resulted in condemnation from Jerome who reports this and sarcastically comments on Pelagius' view that women should be taught to read and interpret Scripture (Nicholson 387-389).

While not a major focus of this work, his teachings are important in reflecting a Celtic belief in the basic goodness of persons. He taught that a baby is born innocent with no original sin. He saw a division in the *posse*, *velle*, and *esse*, gifts from God of human life. Nicholson states,

Thus, the ability (*posse*) to live a life of sinlessness (*inpeccantia*) comes only from God, it is God's free gift to man; the will (*velle*) to do this, and the being, the becoming or the action (*esse*) toward this aim, depend on the free decision of man. Since both the will and the action take their origin in man's decisions they are both to be referred to man and he is responsible for both will and action. Ability, will, and action are all three necessary to living a life of *inpeccantia*. (396)

God assists this with his grace. For Pelagius grace takes the form of the rule, that for Nicholson, is great esteem, even love, which was a free gift from God present in humanity's nature after conception, a part of the law of Moses and the poetry of Charles Wesley: "Still let me guard the holy fire/And still stir up the gift in me./Still let me prove

thy perfect will/My acts of faith and love repeat” (398).

Newell believes that much of his teaching stems from the wisdom tradition of the Old Testament and that he saw Christ as a fulfillment of that tradition. His emphasis was not so much on religious belief and Church doctrine as it was on living a life of wisdom (8-11). Rather than being the enemy of grace, as he was condemned, he seems to be a great respecter of grace, rejecting the teaching that God created both saved and damned masses of persons. Grace must be equal for all. Bulloch sees that for him grace was the free will originally endowed by God, the God-given capacity to do his will (107).

Pelagius’ encounters with the heavyweights of the Roman Church foretell things to come for the Celtic church as a whole. They were out of step with the seat of power and authority in the church, promoting and practicing a Christianity that held an idealistic view of human nature. If this view were widely held there it would undermine the position of the church for persons would not need the Church with its imparting of grace to persons caught in the web of original sin.

Celtic Monasticism

Bulloch sees monasticism as the force that shaped and directed the Celtic Church (162). Hardinge gives a thorough picture of the monasteries as central facets of Celtic Christianity. They were the nucleus of the teaching and study of the Scriptures. The establishment of the first monasteries was in the middle of the sixth century, perhaps beginning as missionary compounds and walled off from nearby hostile pagans. These walled communities were called “cities,” with boundaries marked by a pillar or later a cross upon which might be carved biblical scenes. They also seemed to have been modeled on the Old Testament cities of refuge, functioning as sanctuaries and offering protection

for offenders (169-170).

Eastern monasticism, particularly that as practiced by Martin of Tours in Gaul, was their model, but it was modified further by the tribal form of life of the Irish Celts. Some monasteries were placed on desolate islands in the spirit of the desert fathers. In these many monks lived like hermits, a solitary lifestyle in their small beehive-shaped cells (Chadwick, *The Age* 97-99).

Celtic monasteries had no dormitories. Each monk had an individual cell, a simple hut where one lived, worked, wrote and studied, although a monk might also bring his family and live with them in the monastery. In the larger monasteries was a refectory where communal meals were eaten. Churches, sometimes more than one, were built, depending on the size of the settlement. A school house for teaching might also be built (Hardinge 166-169).

The head of the community was the abbot, ruling over three thousand persons in the case of Finnian of Clonard. The abbot exercised control over all in the monastery, including admitting or excluding strangers (Bulloch 175-176). The abbot would also rule over the daughter monasteries planted under its control. Wallace adds that the bishop or bishops in residence were necessary for perpetuation of the ministry and the sacraments, but they were subordinate to the abbot in matters of administration (79). In a number of “double Monasteries,” both men and women lived in the same building or in adjacent ones. Hilda ruled over a famous double monastery at Whitby (Hardinge 155-185; Newell 1).

The monasteries encouraged spirituality with devotion to study and prayer with emphasis on praying and meditating on the psalms. They also included rigorous asceticism, plunging into ice-cold water, praying for long periods with arms extended or crossed, and

eating a strict diet. They also adopted private penance in the tradition of John Cassian.

O'Laoghaire quotes from the *Penitential* of Finnian, "[L]et us make haste to cure contraries and to cleanse away these faults from our hearts and introduce heavenly virtues in their place" ("Celtic Spirituality" 221-222). He sees this practice as promoted by private confession to the abbot who would impose an appropriate penance for the sins confessed. This practice of *anamchairdeas*, spiritual direction, was exercised by the *anamchara* or soul-friend and became an essential element of Celtic spirituality in the Irish tradition (222). Riché quotes an Irish saying, "A person without a soul-friend is like a body without a head" (Riché 166-169).

As has been mentioned, the Celts also retained their love of learning which manifested itself most fully in the Irish monasteries. With the introduction of Christianity the Celts moved from communicating orally to becoming a people who wrote. The monasteries also became the place where people were educated. They attracted the young and enthusiastic and gave them discipline and training (Bulloch 170).

The monasteries became the center of Celtic spiritual life. Although the Irish monasteries resembled the Benedictine monasteries in requiring obedience, fostering learning and the arts, and being dominated by worship, they differed in their attitude to the world. While the Benedictine abbey was indifferent to the world, the Celtic abbey was committed to it. Bulloch states that they were "not merely related to the work of the church in the world; they were so integrated with it that they dominated it" (179). There were no parish churches until the second millennium; religious life centered around the abbey. In addition, the monks moved out to new regions, taking the Christian faith with them. "Thus the fundamental concept of turning one's back upon the world to seek the

service of God in a separate community was completely repudiated” (180).

This way of relating to the world was not manifest solely in a new form of monasticism. The monasteries also perpetuated the Celtic drive to move on and explore the unknown. Perhaps it was a result of the migratory nature of their Celtic ancestors or their being inspired by the stories in the Bible of their spiritual ancestors, such as Abraham, Jacob, and Paul, for whom journey was a significant part of spiritual life. Edward Sellner sees this desire to be a pilgrim for Christ as a key element of their spirituality, noting that one word, *hiraeth*, described the yearning for home which was felt by these pilgrims (23).

Hardinge describes their journeys as taking them throughout Scotland and northern Britain, along the western islands as far as Iceland, and then to the continent (7-15). A selection quoted by A. M. Allchin and Esther de Waal in *Daily Readings from Prayers and Praises in the Celtic Tradition* describes it as a type of martyrdom.

Now there are three kinds of martyrdom which are counted as a cross to man, that is to say, white martyrdom, and green martyrdom, and red martyrdom. This is the white martyrdom to man, when he separates for the sake of God from everything he loves, although he suffer fasting or labour thereat. This is the green martyrdom to him, when by means of them (fasting and penance) he separates from his desires, or suffers toil in penance and repentance. This is the red martyrdom to him, endurance of a cross or destruction for Christ's sake, as has happened to the apostles in the persecution of the wicked and in teaching the law of God. These three kinds of martyrdom are comprised in the carnal ones who resort to good repentance, who separate from their desires, who pour forth their blood in fasting and in labour for Christ's sake. (62)

Tomás Fiaich sees this as one of the most important religious and cultural phenomena on the European mainland in this period. Starting at the end of the sixth century, the movement called *peregrinatio* by contemporary writers was not as much missionary as ascetical, as the Christian abandoned his or her home with little hope of returning. Results were preaching the gospel in France, Germany, and Belgium and

recruiting local monks and forming monasteries in the custom they knew in Ireland (101-108). By the seventh century, great missionary activity had emerged for Irish Christians going as “pilgrims for God” to the North of Britain and the European continent.

Chadwick refers to a sermon during a festival for St. Columba four hundred years later that defines such pilgrimages in three levels.

The first is when a man leaves his country in body only, but with spirit still uncleansed. The second is when a man leaves his fatherland in zeal of heart, though not in body, being detained under authority in his own land, though dedicated in spirit to God. The third is when a man leaves his country altogether in body and soul, as the apostles and people of perfect pilgrimage left it. These are they of the perfect pilgrimage. (*The Age* 83)

Women were given higher status in the Celtic church than in the churches of the Roman tradition. Sellner notes that rather than isolating women from positions of authority and relationships with monks and others in positions of spiritual leadership, they held powerful positions in religious communities. Liam De Paor wonders if the Irish monastic movement was pioneered by communities of women from as early as the fifth century (49).

John Meissner describes the account of a bishop in a double monastery as subject to the rule of the abbess. In this particular monastery a guest was tormented by an unclean spirit during the night. After being told by a servant, the abbess went with a nun to a priest’s room, who accompanied them to the guest’s room to rid him of the unclean spirit, illustrating the atypical living circumstances there, men and women together under the authority of an abbess, no separation of the sexes, and women going freely into the men’s quarters (185).

Brigid, the abbess of the double monastery at Kildare is the most notable example of women’s place in Celtic Christianity. She was the daughter of a king’s poet-laureate

and spent her early years in the household of a druid. She founded the nunnery at Kildare where a pagan sanctuary at an oak tree had existed and convinced the head of a group of anchorites she should receive consecration as a bishop and to move to an adjacent site to form the only authenticated double monastery in Ireland. While her local bishop was reading the words of consecration over her, he was supposedly overcome by the presence of God and instead read from the service for ordination of a bishop, giving her apostolic authority (Sellner 69-75). Having the name of an ancient pagan goddess whose sacred and perpetual fire burned at Kildare, McNeill states that the Irish almost made her a goddess and celebrated her as “Mother of the High King of Heaven.” She was reported to be generous to a fault, even giving away things that were not hers. She was noted for taking care of the unfortunate but also took part in policy-forming conferences with abbots and bishops and was head of a number of connected nunneries (McNeill 79-80; Mulhern 30-31).

Celtic art illustrates the transformation from pagan to Christian in both its medium and its purpose. Christianity was responsible for the rebirth of artistic styles expressed in large carved Celtic crosses which still serve as the symbol for Celtic Christianity and beautifully illuminated manuscripts done in microscopic detail. Newell sees that in these illustrations, “Celtic art’s ‘everlasting pattern,’ as it has come to be known, was used to suggest the eternal interviewing of heaven and earth, time and eternity—the immediacy of God in all created life” (33).

The crosses were constructed with mathematical precision and designed not just to tell a story but to do it in highly symbolic ways (Eluère 122; Richardson 376-381). Bulloch describes two major types of crosses. One type, found mostly in the southwest

and northeast of Scotland, has its origin in the chi-rho symbol. Its arms are contained within a circle, and it is either unmounted or stands on a short, supporting pedestal. The other type, associated with Ireland and the west coast of Scotland, is the Irish high cross. It is free-standing with the stem an integral part and not just support and in which a circle does not terminate or enclose the arms of the cross, a more direct representation of the cross upon which Christ was crucified (117-118). Both contain the distinctive central circle, probably representing the sun and the light of the world but also expressing a desire to hold together the revelation of God in creation, represented on one side, and in Scripture, represented on the other (Newell 33-34).

Hilary Richardson states that Celtic art took time to come to its full potential within a Christian vision. Just as those in the monastery dedicated their lives to devotion, the skilled craftsmen dedicated their service to God. Celtic art revolved around the church and its experience of God. It was an adaptation of age-old methods to a grander operation in both material and spiritual levels (373).

Celtic Emphasis on God's Presence in the World

While these aspects of pagan Celtic religion and culture found a place in a distinct form of Christianity of the Celtic church, no aspect has been recounted more than the emphasis on God's presence in the world. Macquarrie states that the "profound sense of the immanence of God in the world" was the most important concept Celtic Christianity received from its pagan religions, that they possessed an awareness of an all-pervading divine presence in all of nature (83-84).

Gilbert Márkus maintains, "There is nothing distinctively *Celtic* [original emphasis] about the sense of God's presence in the natural world" (19). He refers to Augustine of

Hippo, seeking God in and through nature's beauties: "With a great voice they cried out, 'He made us.' My question was the attention I gave to them; their response was their beauty" (20). Most other authors would oppose his view. They stress this emphasis as a central part of Celtic faith, deriving from the pantheism of their pagan Celtic ancestors. Perhaps other Christians had this sense of God's presence, but for the Celtic Christians it was central.

Davies and Bowie are in this camp. They state,

It means that, for the Celt, God or the transcendent did not speak to the human community outside and beyond its natural environment. Rather God spoke to humanity precisely within the natural world. In other words, nature, the cosmos, was taken up into and formed part of the dialogue between humans and God. This is in stark contrast to the tendency we find in the late classical world to abstract human community from the environment and to confine religious dialogue to that realm of the spirit. (8)

They see the Celtic refusal to set up an opposition between the worlds of grace and humanity and the natural realm is important to those who desire to restore a more positive relation between persons and environment, but it is also a way of seeing that can return Christians to a more biblical view (Davies and Bowie 19). Cahill states that the Celtic belief in the "coherence of creation" is compatible to what is known about the interpretation of Genesis 1-3 until the time of Augustine (17). In an address to the 1999 Congress on evangelism, George Hunter echos this, stating that Roman Christianity had lost the biblical revelation that saw God as revealed through the world, but the Celts brought it back to the fore through their reverence for life, their worship in the open air, and their proclamation that God can meet humans in nature just as in the biblical revelation.

Sellner thinks that for the Celts the supernatural pervaded every aspect of life, so

they experienced God in their natural surroundings as a matter of course. He characterizes this as a “love of and respect for the physical environment” since they lived in such close proximity to nature and is reflected in what the Welsh called “a sense of wonder and awe at the divine residing in everything” (21-22).

For Mackey it is the most significant Celtic tradition imparted to the modern world, “the ubiquitous *presence* [original emphasis] of the spiritual in all things and at all times . . . may prove to be the most important contribution which the Celtic mind can still offer to the modern world” (11). This is not just a way of looking at nature but a way of looking at all of reality. He states, “In Celtic Christianity God’s gracious power, God’s spirit, one might say God’s grace, is everywhere in the natural world and in all our dealings with it, as much as it is in all those spiritual persons who are on God’s side” (11). He sees the key is that they saw no difference between spirits and material things, no real distinction between the modes of God’s presence in one or the other. This is in direct opposition to the overshadowing of the concepts of “uncreated grace (God’s own personal presence or spirit), by concepts of created grace (effects or states produced within God’s creatures)” in Western theology (12). For him, if grace is “a way of talking about God’s creative, life-giving, beneficent presence to and within all, both personal and impersonal entities, spiritual and material,” this is Celtic Christianity at its most characteristic (13).

In an article in which he takes modern interpretations of Celtic thought to task, Loren Wilkinson argues against the pagan concept of “nature” and advocates the biblical concept of “creation,” noting that Scripture is clear that creation itself is not divine and is not to be worshiped. While God’s closeness to creation must not be rejected, any attempt

to identify God with creation must be. He notes that theologians such as Matthew Fox and Thomas Berry call themselves panentheists, but their God is a wholly immanent God, “emerging from the process into human consciousness.” For him the challenge for Christians is to see the presence of God in nature, through the person of Christ, in whom “all things were created” (Col. 1:17).

Macquarrie sees John Scotus Eriugena (810-877), condemned as a heretic after his death, as a true Celtic theologian although he lived in the years when the Celtic Church was alive in only a few isolated sites. His is a genuine pantheistic theology, stating that “God is in all things and is said to be the true essence of all things. They are not external to him, because for God, ‘making’ is the same as ‘being’” (83-84). Newell calls him the greatest teacher produced by the Celtic church, significantly shaped by the Gospel of John, seeing God in all things, the essence of life, not having created everything out of nothing, but out of his own essence, which is the light in all things (35). Perhaps his was an attempt to characterize something experienced in Celtic Christianity, the nearness of God. Although Macquarrie states that Eriugena’s main work was condemned by the Pope because of alleged pantheism four hundred years after he wrote it, he does give a scriptural foundation for this particular way of intimacy with God (84).

O’Laoghaire believes that the Celts came to experience an intimacy with God, as well as the saints and Mary, within the monastery, but he believes that “familiarity” might be a better word (“Insular Traditions” 49). O’Laoghaire notes that in his book John Macquarrie refers to John Baillie, who argued

that God is known as presence rather than by inference, and when he tells us that this presence is a “mediated immediacy,” mediated, that is to say, by persons, things and events within the world, then he is stating in theological

language the basic convictions underlying Celtic spirituality. ("Daily Intimacy" 52)

O'Laoghaire ends his article with a prayer attributed to St. Fursa, which illustrates this all-embracing presence of God.

May the yoke of the Law of God be on this shoulder,
 the coming of the Holy Spirit on this head,
 the sign of Christ on this forehead,
 the hearing of Christ in these ears,
 the smelling of the Holy Spirit in this nose,
 the vision that the people of heaven have 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 the neighbour in these feet.
 May God dwell in this heart
 and this person belong entirely to God the father! ("Daily Intimacy" 55)

A remarkable characteristic of this prayer is the inclusion of the senses. Most persons would claim to have a sense of God but only within themselves. I maintain that while pagan Celts and other religions may have been pantheistic, the Celts made a successful transition to a Christian panentheism in which they discovered that not only is God revealed in and through creation, God is very present in creation and can be experienced there.

Although few Celts other than Scotus actually tried to explain the relationship of God to creation, the ordinary person did not trouble himself or herself with such deliberation but assumed that God was present in creation and simply delighted in God's presence. This realization, along with other distinct traditions, was lost to the more rational and philosophical theology of the Roman Church. Modern Christians are called to that same awareness and to discover God in the present world, drawing from God not only the protection that the Celtic Christians sought but also wisdom, fortitude, and comfort.

Even Wilkinson states that today's neo-pagans are closer to the truth of sensing the message of God through creation than many modern Christians (25). This conviction and the possibility of experiencing God in one's daily life is a gift that modern Christians can receive from the tradition of Celtic Christians and desperately need to find it.

Celtic Prayers Today--The Carmina Gadelica

One individual, Alexander Carmichael (1832-1912), was responsible for opening the window to Celtic spirituality for twentieth century Christians. He was a civil servant who traveled in the Hebrides and the west coast of Scotland, listening to those who worked during the day and met in the evenings in one another's houses, "telling tales and histories, invocations and prayers, singing hymns and songs, runes and lays, sweet, beautiful, and soft" (qtd. in de Waal, *The Celtic Vision* 4). He visited and listened to people in their homes as they shared, recording the prayers and poems that had been passed down in an oral tradition for centuries and before the Education Act of 1872 began to take its toll on the Gaelic oral tradition. De Waal quotes MacLeod, writing in "Our Interpreter," "We thought of him rather as one who saw with our eyes, who felt with our heart, and who reproduced our past because he loved it himself and was proud of it" (*The Celtic Vision* 4).

De Waal tells a story of how this trust was exemplified.

[O]ne reciter, who gave Carmichael a singularly beautiful going-to-sleep rune, returned the next morning, having traveled 26 miles, to exact a pledge that his "little prayer" should never be allowed to appear in print. "Thank ye," said the old man, "if I slept a wink last night for thinking of what I had given away. Proud, indeed, shall I be, if it give pleasure to yourself, but I should not like cold eyes to read it in a book." (*God under* 3)

Although Carmichael did not use this particular prayer, he was able to include many others

in his collection. The result was the *Carmina Gadelica* (*God under 3*).

Although the collection included much that was not Christian or that was pre-Christian, many persons have found a link to the Celtic Christians of many years ago. Esther de Waal in particular has brought these prayers and poems to the modern reader through a number of publications. She is adamant that they are a treasure. “They found God lovingly concerned with all aspects of their lives and felt themselves walking not only in his presence but close to the angels and saints too” (*God under 3*). It communicates a view

far removed from easy-going romantic pantheism. At its heart lies a recognition that everything good comes from God and is to be given the freedom to be itself, to enjoy and be enjoyed, and that we are enslaved if we care for anything in ways that exclude the giver. (*God under 4*)

Celtic Spirituality

Celtic Christianity existed in the first millennium; it has been captured in many prayers handed down for generations. Is there a Celtic spirituality for today? Wilkinson sees a form of it emerging in elements of the current revival of paganism and warns Christians to reject its perversion of traditional Christian beliefs (15). Donald Meek is also critical of modern New Age movements which attempt to incorporate some bits and pieces of Celtic practice of Christianity and of modern Celtic spiritualities that ignore some of the less palatable components of historical Celtic Christianity. This modern effort “expresses itself most effectively on paper,” resulting in the publication of poems, prayers, and other writings in the Celtic tradition which are not true to historical Celtic Christianity (“Modern Celtic” 6-29).

Perhaps a better term for the spirituality in this paper would be “spirituality in the style of early Celtic Christians,” but this is not accurate. The spirituality in the Celtic

monastic communities was particularly harsh and ascetic, at times including praying for hours in ice-cold pools, a strict diet of one meal a day, total isolation from others, life-long separation from one's family, and beatings with a stick for minor transgressions (Riché 166-169; Leclercq, Vandenbroucke, and Bouyer 35-43). That is not the spirituality represented here.

Macquarrie writes that even though Celtic spirituality comes from a way of life that is now extinct, it can still teach something to Christians of this day and "generate a new spirituality appropriate to new social conditions" (84). For this paper, the term Celtic spirituality will be used with the assumption that it is modeled after some characteristics of Celtic Christianity during the middle of the first century, characteristics that are needed and desired today.

Celtic spirituality should be a Christian spirituality, acknowledging Christ at the center of creation and redemption. This spirituality rejects neo-paganism and other new age spiritualities that claim Celtic elements, those that call on "the spiritual" and "the divine" without a clear identification of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, the creator, not contained by or part of creation, but revealed through creation. It is a biblically-based spirituality, acknowledging that the Bible is the primary source of God's revelation and models of honest, forthright prayer (Meek, "Modern Celtic" 30; Wilkinson 23-25; Joyce 157).

It is a spirituality that confesses God's transcendence. God is Mystery who is greater than all creation but is also personal, desiring relationship with persons; therefore, it emphasizes God's immanence and active involvement in the lives of all persons and anticipates an intimacy available with God. This is a God who can be found in the ordinary

events of life and desires our communication not merely in the formal prayers of congregational and private worship but also in the mundane activities of everyday existence (Macquarrie 84; Joyce 154-158; O'Laoghaire, "Daily Intimacy" 46-47).

Historically, Celtic Christians were avowedly trinitarian, due in part to the importance of the association of the number three with their gods and goddesses. Any Celtic spirituality must express the same emphasis, strongly affirming all persons of the Trinity and their place in each individual Christian's life (Wilkinson 28-29).

This spirituality is unapologetically friendly to nature. Creation reveals the glory of God, and certain places in God's creation are especially valuable in sensing God's presence. God's created world is valued and celebrated and to be experienced to the fullest (Schmiel 167; Wilkinson 21-26).

It is a spirituality that encourages community, one in which relationships are respected and encouraged. Marriage is honored and not seen as a hindrance in one's spiritual life. Women are seen as fully able to contribute in all ways and are able to serve in positions of leadership. A strict ecclesiastical hierarchy dividing clergy and laypersons is not present. Although times of solitude are encouraged and can be worthwhile, seeking a special relationship with an *anamchara* or soul friend to facilitate spiritual growth is encouraged (Faulkenbury; Joyce 150-165).

It is a mind-friendly and knowledge-friendly spirituality. Knowledge is seen as a part of faith, not a hindrance; learning is essential and to be pursued. Persons should be supported in efforts to understand Scripture and to grasp its meaning for their lives. Creative imagination is appreciated and its expression in art, music, and story is encouraged (Davies and Bowie 19; Joyce 157).

Celtic Spirituality in Prayers

Several prayers from this tradition illustrate aspects of God's presence valuable to the modern Christian. One example is

God to enfold me,
 God to surround me,
 God in my speaking,
 God in my thinking

God in my sleeping,
 God in my waking,
 God in my watching,
 God in my hoping.

God in my life,
 God in my lips,
 God in my soul,
 God in my heart,

God in my sufficing,
 God in my slumber,
 God in mine ever-living soul,
 God in mine eternity. (Davies and Bowie 130)

This prayer reinforces Psalm 139 in a powerful way. As one prays this prayer, he or she is reminded that God is an omnipresent force in his or her life, not in a rational or theological way but in an intensely practical way, in the activities of the day, within and without, in one's finite life, and in one's eternal soul.

The Celtic belief that God was not just close at hand but interested in one's most mundane tasks is shown by the number of prayers created around daily activities. They found all activities an opportunity for prayer.

I will kindle my fire this morning
 In the presence of the holy angels of heaven,
 In the presence of Ariel of the loveliest form,
 In the presence of Uriel of the myriad charms,
 Without malice, without jealousy, without envy,
 Without fear, without terror of anyone under the sun,

But the Holy Son of God to shield me.
 Without malice, without jealousy, without envy,
 Without fear, without terror of anyone under the sun,
 But the Holy Son of God to shield me.

God, kindle Thou in my heart within
 A flame of love to my neighbor,
 To my foe, to my friend, to my kindred all,
 To the brave, to the knave, to the thrall,
 O Son of the loveliest Mary,
 From the lowliest thing that liveth,
 To the Name that is highest of all. (Allchin and de Waal 38)

De Waal says that this type of prayer was a natural part of every day. She quotes Eleanor Hull in *Poem Book*:

[T]hey had little time for long, formal prayers. Instead throughout the day they make each activity in turn an occasion for prayer, doing what has to be done carefully for its own sake, but simultaneously making it into the occasion for prayer. Each thing in turn, however humble, however mundane, can be handed over to God, or performed in partnership with the Trinity, saints, and angels. (*The Celtic Way* 75)

Along with an awareness of God's presence the Celts believed that other spiritual beings were present continued even as Christians, so they depended in great measure on God's protection from any being who would cause them harm, whether spiritual or physical.

My walk this day with God
 My walk this day with Christ
 My walk this day with Spirit
 The Threefold all-kindly
 Ho! Ho! Ho! the Threefold all-kindly.

My shielding this day from ill,
 My shielding this night from harm,
 Ho! Ho! Both my soul and my body,
 Be by Father, by Son, by Holy Spirit,
 By Father, by Son, by Holy Spirit.

Be the Father shielding me,
 Be the Son shielding me,

Be the Spirit shielding me,
 As Three and as One:
 Ho! Ho! Ho! As Three and as One. (de Waal, "The Extraordinary" 10-11)

The one walking and praying assumed was that God walked beside him or her as he or she set out for work. Sellner states that an "appreciation of ordinary life" was characteristic of Celtic spirituality, that they valued the daily, the routine, and the ordinary, believing that God is not to be found "at the end of time, when the reign of God *finally* [original emphasis] comes," as much as now when God's reign can already be living in God's people (25). For the one praying this prayer, de Waal feels that the sense of God's presence is so vivid and so immediate and carries such a feeling of security and happiness that this person is actually laughing to himself or herself while going along ("The Extraordinary" 11).

Although whether the ancient prayer known as "St Patrick's Breastplate" actually originated with St. Patrick is not known, it is one of the best known expressions of Celtic Christian faith and one of the best examples of a Lorica or Protection Prayer. It is both assuring and challenging to present expressions of faith. Two sections are especially illustrative.

IV

For my shield this day I call:
 Heaven's might,
 Sun's brightness,
 Moon's whiteness,
 Fire's glory,
 Lightning's swiftness,
 Wind's wildness,
 Ocean's depth,
 Earth's solidity,
 Rock's immobility.

V

This day I call to me:

God's strength to direct me,
 God's power to sustain me,
 God's wisdom to guide me,
 God's vision to light me,
 God's ear to my hearing,
 God's word to my speaking,
 God's hand to uphold me,
 God's pathway before me,
 God's shield to protect me,
 God's legions to save me:
 from snares of the demons,
 from evil enticements,
 from the failings of nature
 from one man or many
 that seek to destroy me,
 anear or afar. (O'Donoghue 47)

Some find Stanza IV problematic. Is calling on creation for protection a pantheistic prayer more appropriate for pagans or is O'Donoghue's view right? He sees the elements of God's creation as powerful agents of God, carrying God's protective power within them (56)? The Old Testament in particular sees creation as God's agent, destroying Pharaoh and his army, but protecting Moses and the Hebrews who followed him. Situated as it is, preceding Stanza V, which is a direct call to God for providence in such manifold ways, it illustrates an even stronger confession of faith in God and God's working through creation.

Stanza VII is one of the most beautiful and meaningful confessions of faith in Christ ever written and is frequently used as a prayer by itself.

VII

Be Christ this day my strong protector;
 against poison and burning,
 against drowning and wounding,
 through reward wide and plenty . . .
 Christ beside me, Christ before me;

Christ behind me, Christ within me;
 Christ beneath me, Christ above me;
 Christ to right of me, Christ to left of me;
 Christ in my lying, my sitting, my rising;
 Christ in heart of all who know me,
 Christ on tongue of all who meet me,
 Christ in eye of all who see me,
 Christ in ear of all who hear me. (O'Donoghue 48)

Christ not only surrounds the person praying but is a part of him or her. Christ is not only in the person's life but also a part of those with whom she or he comes in contact. O'Donoghue sees its realism and optimism as a clear alternative to the Augustinian pessimism that is such an integral part of Christianity.

The man or woman who has entered fully into the spirituality of the *Lorica* walks freely through a world where innocence and goodness are at home and where evil is an alien power from which there is nothing to fear. (63)

This is the promise before us.

Research

Determining changes in the spiritual life of persons is difficult and may be done in a setting where the researcher and the participants are in a group setting together over a period of time. David and Chava Nachmias state that while the researcher may be a part of the group as a complete participant, concealing all research objectives while interacting as naturally as possible, but this role has been criticized since the true role of the researcher is unknown to other members of the group. They note that the role of researcher-as-observer is more often used. In this role the researcher attempts to establish close relationships with members of the group, but must be careful to maintain objectivity within the relationships. Over-identifying with the observed and losing perspective can be an consequence. (172-176).

Schwandt states that participant observation is a more often used procedure for coming to an understanding of the life of others and may include activities such as direct observation, interviewing, document analysis, reflection, analysis and interpretation. The researcher must work on gaining trust, developing empathy and understanding the participants' ways of talking about and acting in their world (110-111).

Wiersma notes that notes taken while observing may be quite unorganized and rough and that in recent years taping has a advantage. While he evaluates videotaping and sees it as taking pressure off note-taking since notes may be made as the tapes are repeatedly reviewed, the same is true for audio tapes (261-262).

Summary

Celtic tribes which spread through much of Europe in the first millennium BCE lost many of the characteristic traits of their culture as they were conquered and absorbed by other peoples. As those Celtic peoples in what is now known as the British Isles came to Christianity, the pantheism which was a part of their pagan religion emerged as a strong emphasis on the presence of God in creation and in their daily lives.

This distinctive spirituality, not seen in other Christian traditions of the period, was depicted in prayers which have been passed down through generations. They can show Christians of today that common activities are occasions for prayer and that God can be discovered in the everydayness of life.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Problem and Purpose

The presence of God is foundational for the Christian. Christianity at its most basic is a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, and Celtic Christianity is no different. As a partner in the relationship, each Christian should have some awareness of God, not only in the times when she or he is in a spiritual activity, such as worship or prayer, but in times of work and play as well. Whether due to the influence of society or a lessening of emphasis by the Church, the lack of awareness of God's presence in the daily lives of Christians should be affected by exposure to the beliefs and practices of those with a greater awareness.

The purpose of this study is to describe the changes in the daily spiritual practices of college students during an eight-week, small-group experience in which discussion follows participants reading articles on Celtic spirituality and using prayers from the Celtic Christian tradition. My expectation is that participants will not only have a greater understanding of the Celtic concept of God's presence in the world but also will increase their experience of God's presence in their daily lives.

Research Questions

The research questions of this study grow out of a desire to introduce students to an era of Christianity that is new and unexplored for most. The radical beliefs and practices of Celtic Christians can provide an alternative view of God's presence in the world. The research questions are an attempt to explore students' reactions to this exposure.

Question 1 assumes that an exposure to Celtic spirituality will have effects in the perceptions of those students involved.

- What can an introduction to a Celtic understanding of God's presence in the world contribute to college students' understanding of God's presence in their world and in their lives?

Celtic spirituality has been largely ignored by church historians and theologians so that Celtic beliefs are quite novel to most Christians. If God is present in the world in the manner understood in Celtic belief and modern persons are simply not aware of this reality, exposure to a contrasting reality should open them to a new understanding and appreciation of God's presence.

Spirituality is not merely cognitive awareness. Question 2 presumes that being exposed to a Celtic way of life will have an effect on the actions of students.

- How does a seven-week depiction of Celtic religious practice affect religious practices of students?

Anticipated changes might include a greater sense of connectedness with God, others, and creation; a proper perspective of God and appreciation of one's gifts and abilities; a sense of being led by God; and, a sense of freedom and peace.

The prayer styles of most Christians have been learned from others who have influenced their religious experience. Question 3 seeks to determine how an exposure to prayers that assume God's presence and are prayed in a variety of situations might affect students' prayer life.

- What are the effects of using prayers from the Celtic tradition on the prayer and prayer-practices of college students?

If these prayers result in a greater awareness of God in their daily lives, these students' prayers should become more frequent and less confined to a designated time of prayer.

Field Pilot

A field pilot for this project was conducted during Lent of 1999. A study similar to the one described here was held for a period of seven weeks with two students participating. The sole purpose of the field pilot was to confirm the relevance of the Celtic materials in the lives of students. Each week the participants were given a series of prayers and a short article on a facet of Celtic Christianity. They returned the following week to discuss what they had read and experienced. No data was collected. From their regular attendance, their reading the materials prior to sessions, and their enthusiasm and responses during the sessions they appeared to see the materials relevant to their lives as college students and helpful in their praying. They appreciated the opportunity to learn about the Celtic view of God in the world and the lives of Christians.

Working Design/Methodology

This project is a study in the exploratory and descriptive modes, utilizing data collected through the use of pre- and posttest design with no comparison group, in response to reflective questions and through observational notes obtained as a participant.

Description of the Project

During the 2000 fall semester as a part of my ongoing ministry on the campus at the College of William and Mary, I recruited students to join a group studying Celtic spirituality and prayer. The agreement with them included meeting weekly for eight weeks for approximately one hour. After an introductory session, for seven weeks I supplied them with a series of articles describing aspects of Celtic spirituality such as creation, daily

tasks, spiritual journeying, and presence of God. These were read on their own so they might become better informed about the Celtic Christian tradition. Portraying any people and their religion in a thorough manner is difficult. This was an attempt to represent the exceptional nature of Celtic Christianity.

I shared prayers from the Celtic tradition with them, one for each day of the week, collected from *The Celtic Vision*, edited by Esther de Waal; *Daily Readings from Prayers and Praises in the Celtic Tradition*, edited by A. M. Allchin and Esther de Waal; *Celtic Christianity* by Timothy Joyce; and *Celtic Christian Spirituality*, edited by Oliver Davies and Fiona Bowie. Most of these prayers were originally collected in written form in the late nineteenth century by Alexander Carmichael in the *Carmina Gadelica*.

The students were encouraged to use these prayers during a prayer or devotional time, taking a few minutes each day to read the designated prayer for that day. I also suggested that they choose a phrase from the prayer that was meaningful to them and to reflect on it during the day or take a copy of the prayer with them, continuing to use it to pray at times during the day when appropriate. They also were encouraged to write their own prayers that reflected the sense of those sampled but more appropriate to the setting and activities in their lives.

During the weekly meetings, the articles were reviewed to let students respond to aspects of Celtic Christianity that impressed them. An opportunity was given for each person to reflect on the past week, to share meaningful experiences, and to relate their own stories of how they encountered God during each day. They were also asked to share prayers that they composed that could be appropriate for other students.

Subjects

The subjects for this study were student volunteers at the College of William and Mary. They were recruited for this project in three ways:

1. Fliers were provided to Christian religious organizations for posting. The fliers gave a phone number and an e-mail address to which students could respond if they were interested in obtaining additional information or registering for the study.

2. Announcements were supplied to the campus newspaper with similar information.

3. I announced that a Celtic Spirituality group would be offered as one of a number of small group offerings of the Baptist Student Union, and students were invited to join it as they would any of the others.

Those who indicated an interest in participating in the study were told that it was being conducted for research purposes, that it would operate from a Christian perspective, and that they would be expected to attend a series of eight weekly meetings and spend some time each day using selected Celtic prayers as the basis for some portion of a daily time of prayer. Those who were willing to do so were invited to the initial meeting.

Participation was limited to twelve persons. If more than twelve students indicated an interest in participating, two meeting times were planned, and the group would have been divided.

Data Collection

Data for this study was collected in three ways. Each participant was given a pre- and posttest instrument to measure their perception of the nearness of God. Additionally I suggested that participants keep a daily journal to record her or his experiences, and a

one-page response form was used to facilitate each one's journaling. The form focused on two questions: How have I experienced God's presence today? How have I responded to God's presence today? Participants were asked to answer each question for not less than five days of each week of the study. Additional space was provided on the forms for participants to compose prayers to illustrate how they were experiencing God's presence. The forms were collected at each weekly meeting although the journals were not. Students were invited to respond in the meetings to answer the same questions in an in-depth discussion period. Each session was recorded on audio tape so that relevant comments could be transcribed. Students who wished to explore their experiences further were invited to a personal interview. The conversations from these interviews were not a part of the data for this study.

Instrumentation

The researcher-designed questionnaire used in the pre- and posttest to evaluate participants' nearness to God was partially based on the Religious Experience Questionnaire to differentiate between an individual's perception of God as loving and accepting versus punishing and distant (see Appendix A). Elizabeth Hall states that its purpose is

to measure personal religious experience, which refers to the experienced reality of an affective relationship with a personal, caring God. The author differentiates between this affective, experiential dimension, and the cognitive dimension of belief in a religious system or in doctrinal statements. (218)

The original version consisted of eight items, but it was later revised and expanded to twelve items in order to include four reverse-scored items, and the scoring scale was expanded from a 4-point Likert scale to a 7-point scale ranging from "never" to "always."

The total score is derived by adding the responses on each item, giving a range of twelve to eighty-four (Brokaw and Edwards 357-358; Hall 218) The mean may also be calculated.

Hall reports that the face validity is good with all items relating to the construct which it attempts to measure. “Construct validity of an affective experience of God as close and loving is supported by significant positive correlations between the REQ scores and loving benevolent images . . . and intrinsic-committed religious orientation, and peer ratings of the individual’s relationship with God,” as well as a number of other studies (218). She states that no specific reliability data are available (219).

I used questions from this instrument that I perceived to be directed to measuring one’s experience of the presence of God and added questions derived from the section in Chapter 1, *Experiencing the Presence of God*. This was an attempt to include items which explore different ways that experiencing the presence of God might be manifest in a person’s life, including feeling connected to God, creation and others; a greater sense of God’s greatness leading to worship and prayer; discovery of one’s gifts leading to service; a sense of being led or called; and, a sense of freedom and peace (see Appendix B). Together, these questions measured the change in an individual’s awareness of God’s presence and how this awareness affected him or her.

Data Analysis

The data from this instrument were used to calculate the mean and standard deviation to measure and describe any change in the awareness of God’s presence (Wiersma 338-342). Data from the weekly response forms were initially coded using categories suggested by specific manifestations of God’s presence in a person’s life:

connectedness with God, others, and creation; right relationships; proper perspective of the greatness of God; significance of humans in God's sight; occurrence of private prayer and corporate worship; acceptance of self; being led; freedom and peace in the midst of crisis or calamity; and sacrifice in daily life. Other categories emerged from the data. The coding suggested the interpretations of the project along with the transcribed comments from the audio recordings (216-218).

CHAPTER 4

THE STUDY

Assumptions of the Presence of God

The everyday experience of the presence of God in a Christian's life can be affected by a number of factors, and during each individual's lifetime his or her experience of God's presence may grow stronger or weaker. This study is based on the assumptions that (1) each Christian lives with basic convictions or expectations that determine and, to an extent, limit how that person experiences God and (2) an exposure to a tradition that places great value on God's presence will affect how one encounters God in daily life.

One characteristic of the Celtic experience during the middle of the first millennium of Christianity was the assumption that God was intimately present with each person. The purpose of this study is to describe the changes in the daily spiritual practices of college students during a small-group experience in which participants discussed introductory readings on Celtic spirituality and shared experiences in their use of prayers from the Celtic Christian tradition, which I theorized would promote the experiencing of God in their lives. Three questions have formed the basis for this study: What can an introduction to a Celtic understanding of God's presence in the world contribute to college students' understandings of God's presence in their world and in their lives? How does a seven-week depiction of Celtic religious practice affect religious practices of students? and, What are the effects of using prayers from the Celtic tradition on the prayer and prayer-practices of college students?

Preparation

In order to attract a sufficient number of participants and students from a variety of

traditions to this study, I attempted to publicize it in a number of ways. During the summer I was invited, along with another campus minister, to lead a seminar on spiritual diversity during the college's Resident Assistant training period. Although the content of this particular seminar had little to do with the study, it did give me the opportunity to announce the study to a group of students with whom I would otherwise have had no contact.

I also shared the content of the study with the other campus ministers of the college at two of our bi-weekly meetings at the beginning of the semester and provided fliers that they could distribute in their respective groups (see Appendix C). The campus newspaper, *The Flat Hat*, provides free advertising on a page of announcements. I sent them an announcement to be published in the paper which came out a week prior to the initial meeting (see Appendix D).

The group with which I minister, the Baptist Student Union (BSU), devotes the second of its weekly programs in the fall semester to a promotion of Family Groups, its small group ministry. In that meeting each of the pairs of leaders of the Family Groups describe their goals for the year and what they hope their Family Group experience will be. At the conclusion of the meeting all interested students sign up for the Family Group that they would like to join. Groups are limited in size so that students may not be able to be a member of the group that they desire to join. At this meeting I made a short presentation about the group on Celtic spirituality that I would be leading and invited interested students to come to me for more information and to sign up for the group.

From these attempts to publicize the study, fifteen students expressed interest. One Resident Assistant had indicated her interest at the conclusion of the August seminar, and

I had e-mailed her information. Eleven members of the BSU had indicated their interest on the sign-up sheet during the introduction of Family Groups of the BSU, though several of them were also interested in the option of a particular Family Group if it were available. Three students from Catholic Campus Ministry had e-mailed me to express their interest, and an additional student had talked to me about coming when he had seen me on campus. I e-mailed all of them the second week of September to invite them to the meeting which was to be held the following Monday, 20 September, at 7:00 p.m., and to let them know its purpose.

A number of students responded to the e-mail to indicate that they would not be attending. Some said that they had signed up for the Celtic group as well as a Family Group and planned to participate in the particular Family Group they wished to join since it appeared that there would be adequate space. A member of the Catholic Campus ministry e-mailed saying that he could participate only if the group met at another time. Given this level of response, I had decided to have only the one session as indicated in the publicity.

Introductory Meeting

At the introductory meeting, five people were present. A sophomore (Jane) a third-year law student (Bob) and a first-year seminary student who was active in the BSU until her graduation two years ago, and whom I am supervising in an internship (Linda) were Baptists. A sophomore from the Disciples of Christ tradition who attended the BSU with her roommate (Dorothy) and a physical therapist who is Roman Catholic, approximately twenty-five years of age (Lucia). All names are pseudonyms.

The agenda in Appendix E was followed. I gave each person a copy of the God's

Presence Questionnaire (see Appendix B) to complete. All who were present at this session completed the questionnaire. (Two students who joined the group at the second meeting also completed it upon their first session with the group.) At this initial session I gave each person a form that asks two questions: How have I experienced God's presence today? and, How have I responded to God's presence today? (see Appendix F). I asked them to complete it at least five days during the following week. I also asked for and received each person's permission to record and transcribe the dialogue for each session.

During the week I contacted by e-mail those who had not attended. Several of those who had signed up had decided to join another group. Two others had schedule conflicts. Three others indicated that they were still interested. I invited them to come to the meeting the following Monday.

Week 1

The same five persons were at the next meeting. We discussed moving the time back fifteen minutes to give one person who was present the time to get to another meeting. All agreed that this would not be a problem.

I distributed copies of "Be Thou My Vision," a familiar hymn that has been translated from Old Irish (Byrne 212). We read through the stanzas of the hymn, and I pointed out words and phrases that take on more meaning when the Celtic context from which they come is noted. I noted that they would find these and similar references in the prayers that they would be reading, and that although they might seem somewhat foreign to us, they are rich with meaning within their context.

I asked those present for feedback regarding the experience of filling out the report forms. Four students returned their report forms and reported experiencing God's

presence during the week in a variety of ways: seeing beautiful sky and trees, realizing a God-given gift, in just being alive, and silence. They responded with thanks, joy, peace and wonder, a desire to read more, and satisfaction. As the meeting ended, I distributed the first article, “The Extraordinary in the Ordinary” by Esther de Waal, to be read before the next meeting, an additional form to record their experiences with God’s presence, and prayers for the next seven days.

These prayers and those for the rest of the study came from the following sources: *Daily Readings from Prayers and Praises in the Celtic Tradition*, edited by A. M. Allchin and Esther de Waal; *Celtic Christian Spirituality: An Anthology of Medieval and Modern Sources*, edited by Oliver Davies and Fiona Bowie; and “The Extraordinary in the Ordinary,” *The Celtic Way of Prayer*, and, *The Celtic Vision* all by Esther de Waal.

Week 2

We began the discussion of the article with one member missing, the Roman Catholic woman. We continued by sharing how we had found God’s presence that week. As we ended I distributed forms and prayer for the next week and two short articles for the coming week, “Introduction” to *The Celtic Way of Prayer* by Esther de Waal, and “Contemplative Prayer” from *Exploring Celtic Spirituality* by Ray Simpson. I discovered after the meeting that the tape recorder had malfunctioned, and the conversations of the evening had not recorded.

Week 3

As I arrived I noted a person at the table reading. She was one of the persons who had contacted me about being interested but had not attended the previous meetings. She was the Resident Assistant who had attended the seminar I led in August who had

indicated her interest. She shared that she was active in the Lutheran student ministry and said that she had a conflict the previous weeks but that she still desired to join the group. I will refer to her as Trisha.

As we were discussing readings from the previous week, another student entered, a graduate student in education, Wanda, a Baptist. She had also indicated interest in the group from the beginning but had said a class which met until 7:00 might prevent her from coming. She remained interested in the group and indicated her willingness to attend even though we had moved the meeting back to 6:45 to accommodate the one who needed to leave by 7:45. At the conclusion of the meeting, I distributed prayers and forms for two weeks and a longer article, Chapter 2, "Presence and Protection," from *The Celtic Way*, since we would miss the next week due to Fall Break.

With two new members, I had to go over all the specifics of the group with them. I chose to do it after the others had left. I also gave them materials then that had been distributed to the others in the prior meetings, and they completed the Presence of God questionnaire.

Weeks 4 and 5

This meeting was held the Monday after Fall Break, so we had actually skipped the Monday of the third week. I had called Lucia and discovered that she had been absent because her husband had had surgery, and she had been sick herself. She stated that she hoped to come to the next week's meeting, and I mailed the materials to her in the hope that she could make it. However, she, along with the Disciples of Christ student and the law student, was not present. We had much to talk about since we had to cover two weeks of material, a longer article than usual, and two weeks of prayers. I distributed an

article from *An Introduction to Celtic Christianity*, “St Patrick’s Breastplate,” by N. D. O’Donoghue and the form for the week.

Week 6

Again the Roman Catholic woman was not present. Apparently she would not be coming back. The rest of the group were present. The two who had missed the previous week both apologized for missing.

We discussed “St. Patrick’s Breastplate,” a long prayer with several stanzas, and the accompanying article that explained and interpreted it. Two of the members had been at a conference that I also attended the previous weekend during which a liturgical dance was performed to a section of this prayer which had been put to music. Both of them had commented on it at the time. A part of the meeting was spent listening to this same recording and singing another version of the prayer put to music in the style of a hymn.

I was encouraging the students to write their own prayers in the spirit of the Celtic prayers we had been reading, but none had done so. As we left I distributed the form for the coming week, the prayers, and two short articles, Chapter 3, “People on the Move for God” and Chapter 5, “Rhythm in Work and Worship” in *Exploring Christian Spirituality* by Ray Simpson.

Week 7

This was the final meeting. Two members were absent. The meeting returned to the original format, discussing the article read during the week and the individual prayers, and final impressions from the study. Those present took the “God’s Presence Questionnaire” again. I contacted those who were absent so that they might complete the questionnaire as well.

Questionnaire

Before beginning the study, the God's Presence Questionnaire was given to those attending the introductory session and to two others whose first meeting was the second weekly meeting. The results from that questionnaire give some indication of how often each student experienced the presence of God and the manifestations of God's presence. No established norms exist for this instrument, so the reliability of the results are uncertain.

The same instrument was administered at the conclusion of the final meeting to give some indication of change in the participants' experience of God and resulting manifestations after taking part in the study. The individual who did not return after the first weekly meeting took it at the initial meeting but did not complete it the second time, so her results are not included in the final calculations. Two individuals were absent at the final meeting. I sent them a copy which each completed and returned to me.

Table 1 illustrates the results of the questionnaire for each of the individuals who completed it. The results correspond to the frequency of each person's experiencing God and/or the manifestations of experiencing God's presence on a scale from 1-7. For the initial questionnaire the mean of the values of each person's answers fell above the midpoint, that of "occasionally" experiencing God's presence, which would have been 3.5. Of the seven individuals, the mean of two of them fell very close to or on the value for "often" experiencing God's presence, four fell between the area of experiencing God's presence "often" and "almost all the time," and one fell in the area of experiencing God's presence "almost all the time." The standard deviation varied between 0.70 and 1.54, with four individuals having fairly small distribution and two individuals having a greater

distribution.

The results of the means of the individuals' scores for the final questionnaire were again all above the midpoint, and all the means except one rose in value from the initial questionnaire to the final one, with all except one falling between the area of experiencing God's presence "often" and "almost all the time," and one falling in the area of experiencing God's presence "almost all the time."

Table 1
Questionnaire Results Reported by Student Number

Student Number	Initial Mean	Initial Stand Dev.	Final Mean	Change in Mean	Final Stand Dev.
2167	5.47	0.70	5.76	0.29	0.88
6303	5.06	1.30	5.82	0.76	0.78
4037	5.47	0.85	5.29	-0.18	0.96
3623	5.47	0.85	5.71	0.24	0.82
6067	6.24	0.88	-	-	-
0557	5.00	1.19	5.35	0.35	1.08
0878	5.59	1.54	6.35	0.76	0.68

*Students are identified by the last four digits of their Social Security Number.

The student identified by 6067 has no final mean, change in mean, or final standard deviation since she did not take the final questionnaire.

When the results are examined question by question (See Table 2), the values of the means illustrate which questions represent areas in which individuals experience God's presence or certain manifestations of God's presence most often. The question with the highest mean in the initial questionnaire was number sixteen, "When I feel God's presence

Table 2**Questionnaire Results Reported by Question Number**

Question Number	Initial Mean	Initial Stand Dev.	Final Mean	Change in Mean	Final Stand Dev.
1.	5.33	0.75	5.67	0.34	0.47
2.	4.83	1.07	5.66	0.83	0.74
3.	6.00	1.00	6.00	0	0.58
4.	6.00	0.82	6.83	0.83	0.37
5.	4.33	1.49	5.00	0.67	0.82
6.	5.67	0.94	6.17	0.50	0.69
7.	5.17	0.69	5.17	0	1.07
8.	5.17	1.21	5.50	0.33	0.76
9.	4.67	0.94	5.33	0.66	1.37
10.	4.57	0.50	5.00	0.50	0.58
11.	5.83	0.69	5.83	0	1.07
12.	6.00	1.00	6.33	0.67	0.75
13.	5.17	1.34	6.00	0.83	0.58
14.	4.67	1.25	5.33	0.66	0.47
15.	5.17	0.69	5.50	0.33	0.96
16.	6.67	0.47	6.00	-0.67	1.00
17.	5.67	0.47	5.86	0.19	0.69

The student identified by 6067 is not included in the means or standard deviations of the initial or final results since she did not take the final questionnaire.

I have a greater sense of peace,” and that with the lowest mean was number five, “When I have decisions to make in my everyday life, I try to find out what God wants me to do.”

Several questions had identical means. In these instances the standard deviation ranged from 0.47 to 1.49

All of the means of the questions of the final survey except three rose in value. Number three, "I pray privately in places other than church," and number eleven, "When I feel God's presence I participate in worship to a greater degree," stayed the same, and number sixteen, "When I feel God's presence I have a greater sense of peace," decreased.

Weekly Report Forms

A second source of data was the weekly report forms that were completed by each student participating in the group (see Appendix F). Each participant was asked to answer the two questions on the form for not less than five days each week, beginning the week after the initial meeting and ending the week prior to the seventh weekly meeting. I suggested that they might want to complete the forms in conjunction with keeping a personal journal, but journaling was not considered a part of this project.

For several students just filling out the forms indicating how they had experienced God's presence made a difference in their awareness of God. Lucia shared,

[I]t made me a lot more aware of everything I was seeing . . . saying, "Do I see God in this? Have I seen God in this before or is it just that I just got knocked in the forehead? . . . "Hey, take a look at this. . . ." It made me a lot more conscious of my thoughts and also my actions with people and just alone in the prayer life that I'm trying to develop now.

Dorothy found something valuable, too.

It was sorta nice to write down . . . saying to myself, "Yeah this is true." . . . It made me be aware. There are some things that often are more consistent for me, but little things that I hadn't really recognized God in before. I was like, "Oh wait. That was neat."

Bob reported that simply recalling something was helpful. "It made me aware of the things too that take place on a daily basis that I'd usually say, 'Well, I think God's

acting here,' but I remember it more long-term."

I also asked them to recall during the first weekly meeting, whether they had written them down or not, specific ways they had experienced God's presence. Linda began:

I've been more aware of God's presence in just everyday things, and I'm not sure when that started and why that started. It's just a sudden thing like at work on Saturday. I had to stay. I work with people at the Science museum, and I work with people, and it's really hard for me. I usually see the bad side of people and I don't like working with people but for some reason Saturday it was the first time in a long time that enjoyed my job. I could see God in the kids and even in the parents fussing at the kids. . . . And I just sat there and thought, "When did this happen and why did this happen?" I've worked here a year and it just hadn't been this way.

For Bob, God's presence was evident, but also a perceived action on God's part.

Yesterday afternoon . . . the more I think about it the more I think that it may be God trying to talk to me. I'd planned for a long time before going to the ocean this weekend to put a message in a bottle and get some things off my chest. I wrote my letter and put it in the bottle yesterday as I was leaving town and I threw it in the ocean. The tide was coming in . . . and well, 5 minutes later the bottle came back to me. It was like God wants me say some things or to do some things more actively than just putting them into a bottle.

Jane experienced God in a field trip.

Today I had a biology field trip and I was not excited about it because we would be walking in mud to our waist. I didn't have a very good attitude about it. . . . I just wanted to get it over with. When we got there he told us we had to find 24 species of animals. I was like "O my gosh. How in the heck am I going to do that?" But my partner knew how to use the seine net so she taught me. We caught the most amazing things. We caught a sea horse, 3 different kinds of fish, sea fleas—sea shrimp things. . . . God made all these things and I can find them. We found 24 things and then some. It was a lot of fun.

Linda's interest in Celtic prayer was already aroused, and she anticipated our use of them in her daily routine.

I'm in an Intro to Christian Spirituality class, and we're required to do an

hour of holy leisure each week. I used a Celtic prayer this week and repeated it each day this week. [Reads the prayer] Three lines of the prayer really encouraged me this week. [Repeats the lines] It reminded me that God is gonna take care of everything I need. He's going to direct me, protect me, and strengthen me. It made me more aware that I'm not alone and that there's something more than just me in the world. It really helped me this week.

The report forms were coded with respect to the ways that the presence of God might be experienced or manifest in an individual's life as delineated in Chapter 1. Some responses did not explicitly denote God's presence, but since participants were asked to fill them out with respect to the two questions, "How have I experienced God's presence today?" and, "How have I responded to God's presence today?" which were printed at the top of the form, I coded most responses as such even if the presence of God was not explicitly stated. Some statements may be coded in more than one area.

The following tables are examples of the written responses for each of those manifestations. (Location is expressed as the last four digits of the individual's Social Security Number, the week the form was completed, the day of the comment. An "R" indicates that it was written as a response to God's presence.) The tables of all responses are in Appendix K.

Table 3

Connectedness with God

location	expressed as
0557-1-6	experienced presence in church [Sunday school]
6303-2-4	"God to enfold me, God to surround me." It reminded me of a song saying, "When you're alone, you're not really alone." I had an extra coat on today (God).

Table 3

2167-2-5	realization that God was in the space as the words from “Light My Fire” came into my head
6303-3-7	While taking my shower this morning, God spoke to me. The water was cold and I was shaking and complaining. He said, “Don’t panic.” The words stuck with me and my day proceeded with so much less stress.
2167-4-2	think that the lyrics that came into my head are put there through the power of God—today “Gloria Patri”
6303-4-5	God’s voice was very direct this morning. I was walking away from a situation that made me uncomfortable. Suddenly he said, “Go back.”
3623-2-5R	spent time relaxing in God’s presence
6303-2-3R	draw us closer to God [conversation]
2167-4-6R	trying to be open to God’s presence—powerful
3623-6-5R	returned to the Father just as the Prodigal Son, weak and helpless, on my own

In coding these responses for “Acknowledging rebellion and asking forgiveness,” I expanded the descriptors since responses did not fit the descriptor “rebellion” but were more expressions of human nature.

Table 8

Acknowledging Rebellion and Asking Forgiveness

location	expressed as
0557-1-2	So busy today that I barely thought about God—not a good way to live. I was worried about finishing up work for a job—helping a professor get ready for a workshop
0557-1-7	realized have unresolved issues of maladaptive ways of behaving
0557-1-7	don’t confide in others about things that bother me
3623-1-1	really didn’t let God be present in my life today—I’ve rushed around, frustration and stress mounting and fell into bed, exhausted and cranky

Table 8

6303-1-5	I did not feel like myself today and I couldn't find God. I know he was there but I guess I didn't feel like looking for Him or listening to Him
3623-3-4	have felt a little distant from God—things just seem a little too easy right now (what a problem to have . . .)
2167-3-6	I don't have anything written—because in all honesty I haven't been focusing on looking for or being open to God's presence. I am disappointed in myself
6303-4-4	I was convicted today. In my selfishness I was envious of my friends because I didn't feel important to them. I mentally accused them of being a "bad friend." I soon realized that I was a bad friend
3623-4-7	Ugh—I feel like I have nothing to give—God has hardly been on my agenda today
0878-4-1	Perhaps I haven't been focusing enough on how I respond or experience God's presence each day
0878-4-2	Too much work to think about anything else much
6303-5-4	Talking to an acquaintance that I . . . thought had no serious thoughts in their head. . . . God proved me wrong.
2167-6-3	treated friend badly—blocked God's presence so concerned with my own needs and wants and put them before God and my friend
6303-3-2R	I'm afraid of what things would happen if I gave myself to prayer. I'm afraid that something would change and I wouldn't be able to handle it
3623-3-3R	not very well—I've been catty with one roommate

No responses fit the descriptor "insignificance of persons." In the process of coding, several responses did not fit into any of the descriptors that were listed, so several additional ones were indicated. The following table is an example; the others are Tables 14-20 in Appendix K.

Table 14

Respond to Nature's Glory	
location	expressed as
0557-1-1	reminded of God's presence by enjoying nature—sky and trees beautiful
0557-1-4	it's lovely outside—beautiful weather and changing trees—an inspiration
0557-1-5	beautiful views
3623-1-2	beautiful weather
2167-1-1	joy at night sky
6303-1-4	magnificent [at beach]
2167-1-2	realized how vivid the colors are
2167-1-5	absolute majesty of nature
4037-2-4	watched beautiful sunset
4037-2-5	felt small as I sat beneath stars
3623-2-6	sun peaking through the clouds—symbolic of God's presence
6303-3-1	I smelled God in autumn tonight
2167-3-3	beautiful sky—beauty of God's creation
2167-3-7	God created the seasons
2167-4-4	take in the beauty of the mountains that surround me
2167-6-5,6	on retreat—leaves, mountains, wind
2167-7-1	see sky full of stars can't see on campus
2167-7-7	saw moon in afternoon
2167-4-4R	In awe of different aspects of God's creation
2167-7-7R	think of wonder at God's creation

Transcripts of Weekly Meetings

A third source of data came from transcripts of weekly meetings. After permission

was given by participants at the introductory meeting, each session was recorded and transcribed. The tape recorder malfunctioned at the second weekly meeting so no transcript is available.

Reacting to God's Presence

I have surmised that when a person experiences the presence of God, he or she may react to God's presence in a number of ways as described in the Bible, which I have generalized into broad areas. (See Chapter 1, *Experiencing the Presence of God*.) These are signs or manifestations of God's presence in one's life and may serve as indications of instances and times when an individual has experienced God and of how that experience has affected her or him. An examination of the results of the God's Presence Questionnaire taken by those involved in this study gives some indication of how they may have changed after being exposed to new images of God's presence in the lives of Celtic Christians. Their reports of how they have both experienced God's presence and reacted to that presence should elucidate specific instances in their individual experiences. Comments made during weekly meetings give clarification and illustration.

Connectedness

The first series of descriptions listed resulting from God's presence is a sense of connectedness with God, other persons, and creation. The connectedness with God was represented by the questionnaire in question one, "I experience an awareness of God's love," question seven, "I feel very close to God in prayer, during public worship, or at important moments in my life," and question fourteen, "My relationship with God is characterized by close fellowship." While the mean of questions one and fourteen both increased modestly in the final questionnaire, the mean of question seven remained the

same, a result that I think reflects on a poorly constructed question that attempts to connect instances as diverse as prayer and important moments in one's life. The responses in the weekly reporting were relatively few, and the eight that were coded with the descriptor "Connectedness with God" were quite varied in how the person experienced God: in church, in silence, in music, and through God's voice.

Only three were a direct experience of God. A prayer of protection included one week did result in a student feeling a direct connectedness to God.

God shield the house, the fire, the kine,
Every one who dwells herein tonight.
Shield myself and my beloved group,
Preserve us from violence and from harm;
Preserve us from foes this night,
For the sake of the Son of the Mary Mother,
In this place and in every place wherein they dwell tonight,
On this night and on every night,
This night and every night. (Davies and Bowie 100)

This student told the group, "It made me feel like I was a partner with God. By saying this prayer it's helping me to make sure the people around me are remembered and protected."

Rather than being experienced directly, connectedness to God is more readily experienced symbolically. Ironically lighthouses were mentioned in two different weekly meetings by two students as just such a symbol. One stated it this way:

I've been listening a lot lately to the Garth Brooks song, *Till You Come Back to Me Again* and it talks about a ship being tossed upon the ocean, wrecked and broken, but you know that God is there all along because in the distance there is a lighthouse.

In contrast those who reported experiencing God's presence in others were numerous, almost five times as many as opposed to those reporting a connectedness with God. Thirty-five instances reported experiencing God's presence as a connectedness with others, and the number indicating their response to God's presence by connecting with

others numbered fifteen. This was expressed in weekly reports of “saw God in children and parents at work” and, simply, “thoughts of home.” The increase in the mean from the initial to the final questionnaire for question two, “An awareness of God’s presence results in my feeling closer to others,” was 0.83, equal with two others for the largest increase in mean for any question.

As might be expected this was common with those persons who were close to the participants, but it occurred with strangers as well. One student shared an extreme example.

I found God in lots of connections with people. There was a picture of a child in my biology book in a chapter about diseases, and I just looked at her face. I felt a connection with this person, but I don’t know her at all, and yet we have a connection.

Another spoke of being amazed at how she had started seeing others.

I’ve seen a connection with people a lot more than I ever have some with people I know, but it’s strange because as an introvert I’m not usually out there a lot with a bunch of people, but it’s really amazed me the last week the number of people that God has put into my life, that I probably wouldn’t have chosen myself, but somehow, randomly they’ve ended up in my life. I’m starting to see reasons and purposes and seeing new qualities in people that I haven’t always seen.

Question number four in the questionnaire related to connectedness to creation, stating, “God’s presence in my life results in my having a greater appreciation of creation.” The mean increased 0.83, equal to the question related to connectedness with others and one other question for the largest increase. However, very few of the responses on the weekly report indicated any sense of connectedness with creation. One individual did describe nature as a means to experience God, after hearing the wind and feeling “as if God was physically surrounding me in a way I could tangibly sense.” Another stated, “I realized that God is in everything—even manic squirrels,” and another declared, “I smelled

God in autumn tonight.”

In a weekly session one student did express a feeling of connectedness with nature through one of the prayers we used.

Bless of God my little cow,
 Bless O God, my desire,
 Bless Thou my partnership
 And the milking of my hands, O God.

Bless O God each teat,
 Bless O God, each finger,
 Bless Thou each drop
 That goes into my pitcher, O God. (de Waal, *The Celtic Vision* 79)

She said, “It said to me that God made this cow and somehow God made me, and somehow we’re working together, and there’s this cooperation. Creation is bigger than I am, but it’s also all these little things that all work.”

Rather than any sense of connectedness, most comments indicated more of an appreciation due to the beauty or wonder of creation. It became a means to appreciate who God is. One person said, “I felt small as I sat beneath the stars,” and another commented, “I think of the wonder of God’s creation.” Therefore in coding the responses, I created a new descriptor, “Responding to nature’s glory,” to code responses such as these.

From these reports these individuals find it difficult to feel a connectedness directly with God and with God’s creation but much easier to sense a connectedness with other persons. Creation is rather a means to sense God’s work or to become connected with God. That may comment more on God’s greatness. Individuals find it relatively easy to sense a connectedness with persons, either those with whom we have a close relationship or those that may be complete strangers, perhaps by virtue of the fact the we have much

more in common than things that make us different.

Proper Perspective

In the biblical revelation, being in the presence of God frequently results in a renewed or altered perspective, the person's realizing the greatness of God and the limitedness of persons. Either or both of these realizations may move a person to corporate worship and/or private prayer in which he or she might offer praise and thanksgiving to God and confess himself or herself as a sinful or inadequate person. Of course, along with being responses to God, prayer and worship can also be vehicles to experience God.

I surmised that experiencing God would result in a greater appreciation of God's greatness. The mean for question six in the questionnaire that relates to this, "Sensing God's presence results in my having a greater awareness of God's greatness," increased moderately. Eight persons reported having an awareness of God's greatness in the weekly report in diverse ways as God's presence in history, reaction to nature, and God's protection.

This awareness usually came out in weekly discussions in response to several prayers of protection given out each week and discussed in the following session. One particular prayer was a favorite.

God with me lying down,
 God with me rising up,
 God with me in each ray of life,
 Nor I a ray of joy without Him,
 Nor one ray without Him.

Christ with me sleeping,
 Christ with me waking,
 Christ with me watching,
 Every day and night,

Each day and night.

God with me protecting,
 The Lord with me directing,
 The Spirit with me strengthening,
 For ever and evermore,
 Ever and evermore, Amen.
 Chief of chiefs, Amen. (Davies and Bowie 91)

Linda felt this prayer helped her experience God in several ways. “I like the last stanza. It catches on everything. ‘God with me protecting, the Lord with me directing, the Spirit with me strengthening.’ Those are the things I need right now.”

Jane continued, “I like the end of the first stanza, “Not a ray of joy without Him. Joy always comes from him. You don’t find any true joy without him there.” She also found the idea of God as our protector in another prayer, but in a unique way.

The compassing of God and His right hand
 Be upon my form and upon my frame;
 The compassing of the High King and the grace of the Trinity
 Be upon me abiding ever eternally,
 Be upon me abiding ever eternally.

May the compassing of the Three shield me in my means,
 The compassing of the Three shield me this day,
 The compassing of the Three shield me this night
 From hate, from harm, from act, from ill,
 From hate, from harm, from act, from ill. (de Waal, *The Celtic Vision* 162)

She was impressed by the words “from act.” She confessed, “It struck me because it didn’t go along with everything else. Everything else was like outside forces will be acting on you and you need to protect me from that, but [this is] protecting me from myself, from acting wrong.”

No individuals reported reacting to God’s presence by recording his or her insignificance in comparison to God. One individual did describe that feeling in the

discussion during a weekly meeting, responding to a question about occasions for prayer in day to day life.

At night—clear nights like last night. I like to lie down in a field and just look at the sky. It makes me feel really insignificant. I like to just sit there and talk to God until someone walks past me. I would say times like that—looking at the sky, feeling insignificant, times of helplessness.

Numerous expressions of sinfulness surfaced in the weekly reporting although most were acknowledgments of human nature and being incapable of what was expected or desired rather than purposeful rebellion, and as I have already noted, I changed the descriptor to account for this. Many of these were expressed in the context of not experiencing God's presence or being unwilling to take the steps necessary to do so. A typical response was, "I didn't feel like myself today and I couldn't find God. I know he was there but I guess I didn't feel like looking for Him or listening to Him." Another confessed fear of the results of encountering God in prayer. "I'm afraid of what would happen if I gave myself to prayer. I'm afraid something would change and I wouldn't be able to handle it." None of the responses reported asking forgiveness.

The most commonly reported response to God's presence was praise and thanksgiving with twenty-two responses. Not surprisingly, prayer was also mentioned frequently as both a way of experiencing God's presence and as a response to it, sometimes briefly mentioned as one word: prayer. In other instances a specific example was given: "In prayer I replaced 'give me' with 'bless me,' and felt more sacred. He was giving me more than a gift. I received a blessing. It almost felt like I needed to take care of it a little more."

Two questions in the questionnaire related to prayer. The mean for answers to question three, "I pray privately in places other than church," did not change at all, which

was a surprise considering that praying in places other than church is one of the distinguishing characteristics of prayer in the Celtic tradition. However, the mean of question twelve, “When I pray to God I feel like I’m having a conversation with a close friend,” increased moderately.

Some mentioned specific examples of when they usually prayed. Wanda shared a typical example: “Whenever I’m worried that I’m not going to turn in something or I’m going to turn it in late or whatever, I’m like ‘Please let this turn out all right.’ That’s when I pray a lot.”

Linda responded that she always wanted to wait for big things and have serious prayers, but “today I had this really good prayer time. It was really good. God and I needed that—just killing time.” She realized however that “my whole day can be in a spirit of prayer.”

As specific Celtic prayers were discussed during the weekly meetings, Wanda shared that certain of the prayers “felt right at different times of the day.” Dorothy noted that repeating the prayers during the day meant a lot to her.

As we learned more about Celtic prayer, the discussion turned to times in our days when prayer was needed or appropriate that we might never have considered. Some suggestions were tongue-in-cheek, such as Jane’s, “The shower—I don’t have anything else to think about,” or Linda’s, “Hitting the snooze button prayer.” Linda also found a common task an appropriate time.

The kitchen—that’s going to be my next prayer, because my responsibility is to clean the kitchen. We have a white kitchen so you can really tell when it’s dirty, and I’m thinking, “If God can bless my kitchen that’s a good thing, that God can bless it while I’m cleaning the kitchen.”

Jane’s was also tongue-in-cheek but had a serious thought behind it.

I was making a sandwich, and my roommate asked “Do you think they had one for making a sandwich?” Maybe they were thanking God for their good crop for whatever they were putting on their sandwich; they were able to get the bread. . . . It made me think. . . . Maybe they did have a lot of prayers that were task oriented, not necessarily for the task, specifically like . . . in everything they do it would be beneficial for some reason, “Make me prosperous.”

Other suggested times for prayer were more serious. “When I’m driving.” “When I’m cooking.” Others felt prompted at certain times.

A lot of random moments during the day when I think of someone to pray for, like driving the car and hearing a certain song that reminds me of somebody or I see something that will remind me of somebody, especially if I haven’t seen them for a while. It sticks in my mind that I should be praying for them.

Jane found that being grateful to another helped her realize that she could also give thanks to God.

Now when I think about saying thanks to anyone else, I say thanks to God at the same time. If a friend’s been there for me or just listened or something, I say thanks to them and say thanks to God for bringing them here.

Tricia found prayer especially important in her practicum at school.

I find I need to say a prayer when I’m working with a child. Right now I’m working with a boy who’s developmentally delayed, and there’s some days when we get through the hour and it’s not too difficult, but other times it’s really hard to keep him on task, and to try to find out ways to constructively help him. I’m in a school setting, and I can’t break out into a prayer out loud, but I say a little prayer to myself—to God—because sometimes, with these kids, you need all the help you can get.

Several students came to some significant conclusions about prayer and when it is appropriate. Jane noted in an early session that we tend to separate living and praying.

We have certain times that are prayer times; that gets into your mind that it’s different. It’s something that needs to be set aside; it’s more sacred than the rest of your life so that gets into our head that it’s supposed to be different than everyday things that we do.

Bob added:

Certain etiquette tends to be attached to prayer as well, tends to make it something solemn, quiet, you have to go into a closet to do it, whereas these people were doing it in hectic times in everyday life. What we consider leisure time they didn't even have. . . It's totally the opposite of what we would consider solemn and quiet.

Jane continued a minute later after an interruption.

We were talking about how the Celtics didn't separate their lives, but they have that mind-set not to separate anything. . . It was their mind-set from the beginning, and they just pushed that into their prayer life. We have the individualistic idea that we are—that one of us is separate—we're not as interconnected as they were, and so it's hard to get the connection of prayer into our lives.

In the last session she summed up her understanding this way.

I found the freedom from learning about them. It's ok to thank God for the simple things; it's ok to find him in the simple things. Whereas before this I always thought prayer was—or proper prayer—was very sacred and like you needed to kneel down. This was like prayer was said while you were standing up, prayer that was said while you may have been doing something else. You didn't have to stop.

She added after another spoke.

I have found that there are certain times in our day when prayer is expected. I find that a prayer that is more spontaneous than that is much more meaningful. It's much more meaningful that—not when I'm forced to pray—but when I'm expected to pray.

In spite of these comments the fact remains that according to the results of the questionnaire indicating no change in the mean of the question relating to prayer other than church, old habits die hard. No examples of prayers were submitted when I offered the opportunity; no serious proposals were proposed of regular times for prayer in our daily lives.

In addition to discovering new opportunities for prayer, other comments in the weekly sessions indicated that the participants found other ways of praying as well.

Dorothy was reminded that “everything we do is a prayer, and I know we’ve talked about that a lot, but all that kept coming up for me.”

Jane discovered something in a article on Celtic prayer.

In the first paragraph it said, “The Celtic way of prayer is prayer with the whole of myself” (de Waal, *The Celtic Way* ix). I always thought it was . . . and prayer with your heart, but it’s, then, it’s also like with everything else, too. I’d never thought about it in that way.

Wanda discovered something in a Celtic prayer.

Bless to me, O God,
 My soul and my body;
 Bless to me, O God,
 My belief and my condition;

Bless to me O God,
 My heart and my speech;
 And bless to me, O God,
 The handling of my hand.

Strength and busyness of morning,
 Habit and temper of modesty,
 Force and wisdom of thought,
 And thine own path, O God of virtues
 Till I go to sleep this night.

Thine own path, O God of virtues,
 Till I go to sleep this night. (de Waal, *The Celtic Way* 79-80)

She said:

A lot of time we talk about feeling better about yourself, working on your self-esteem. The way . . . it reminds me of that. You’re like “Bless these things to me because I forget to bless. . . .” My body is something I should care about and my soul and my condition.

Jane reacted to another group member’s comment regarding a “foxhole” prayer.

How often do our prayers need to be asking, how often do we really need to say “I need,” “I need,” “I need.” “Bless this to me.” “Bless this to me.” “Bless this to me.” Prayer is like communing with God so you don’t. . . . There are times for that and there are times when you aren’t praying—you don’t need to be asking for anything. You can say “Hey God, what’s been

happening today?” or “Here’s what I’ve been feeling.” or “What do you think?” That’s the kind of thing that I’m finding time for in the shower—I don’t have anything else to think about.

The popularity of prayer as a response to God’s presence was in strong contrast to worship as a response. The questionnaire results for question eleven, “When I feel God’s presence I participate in worship to a greater degree,” stayed the same, and only two instances related to worship in the weekly reporting, one of one experiencing God in people worshipping together and one response to God by “opening myself to worship.” The only description of worship in the weekly meetings was in the first weekly meeting by Lucia, the Roman Catholic woman who did not attend any more meetings. She described being in a candlelight mass the previous week where she experienced God’s presence both in intimacy with the congregation and in the sermon.

The candlelight service is always a lot more intimate, and it appeals to my spiritual and mystic enjoyment, and there were no squalling babies and people slapping their kids, things you see that you’re like, “Oh I love human nature.” But it was . . . like there was only fifteen of us, and it was an incredibly intimate moment that I haven’t had in church in so long, and I was like “This is church. I know God is here.” But . . . we all held hands and we all hugged and it was like it didn’t matter that I didn’t know you from Adam. And it was dark and we really couldn’t see each other. . . . The homily was so—it was like Father was in my head, and it was very frightening when you know God is talking to you, and you go like “Ok—now there’s no way that I can turn away.” I have gone down that road, and there’s a big hand and it’s pushing me, and it was something I had been so aware of. And it was like sometimes you can drift during reading. . . . Every single word at mass on Sunday. And it’s like when I read the Bible. And I was like “Oh my God, I’m paying attention.” It’s like I was getting it, and it’s not so hard. Part of it too is the language and getting involved in some of the Celtic stuff.

Gifted and Led

Many persons who were encountered by God as described in the biblical record came away from the encounter the same person but seeing themselves differently, gifted

by God for a purpose. They found a new purpose and were led by God in a new way.

Only two persons had any awareness of new abilities as recorded in their weekly comments. One “felt God in the day that I was molding,” and the other realized a gift given by God. The questionnaire brings this out in question nine, “Feeling God’s presence results in my having a greater awareness of myself as a unique creation,” whose mean increased moderately,

Being led by God is reflected in questions thirteen, “Having a greater commitment to God’s purposes comes from my sensing God’s presence,” and fifteen, “God’s presence in my life results in my having a greater sense of being led by God.” The mean of question fifteen increased somewhat, but question thirteen increased the greatest together with two other questions. Nine instances of being led by God were reported. They were expressed in a variety of ways, mostly subtle, such as God “telling me something” through getting something back, giving encouragement, opening a door, and guiding the individual, even though “I feel like I have little direction.” One person did refer to an experience when strong direction came: “God’s voice was very direct this morning. I was walking away from a situation that made me uncomfortable. Suddenly he said, ‘Go back.’ I did and took a big step toward making the situation not so uncomfortable for me.”

Although question thirteen, “Having a greater commitment to God’s purposes comes from my sensing God’s presence,” showed a significant increase the question is general in nature with no specifics. Few references to specific purposes of God were reported. The increase seems to reflect Christians’ common desire to be committed, but not resulting in specific practices.

No instances were shared in the weekly meetings of direct guidance; rather,

several shared their confidence that God was giving them direction or was “just there” as they made life decisions. Several noted that they felt that they were a in partnership with God.

Sense of Well-being

The last result I identified was a sense of well-being—freedom, peace, and a capacity for sacrifice. The related question in the questionnaire, “When I feel God’s presence I have a greater sense of peace,” was the one question whose mean actually decreased from the initial time of answering it to the final time. Although twenty-two reports of well-being and peace were made, none included a report that could be coded as a capacity for sacrifice. Because of the number of instances in which joy or happiness was mentioned and because these emotions seem to go beyond a sense of well-being and peace, I added a coding descriptor of “Joy and happiness” which had six entries.

The prayers that we read seemed to encourage a sense of security, which was expressed when we met. Linda shared that a prayer (already quoted on page 136) “catches on everything. ‘God with me protecting; the Lord with me directing; the Spirit with me strengthening.’ Those are the things I need right now.” Wanda noted that she and her roommate had heard a missionary from Tanzania, and

we are both looking at options for next year, and like could we go over and get involved. What does that take? We have to get over the fear and the worries of what we would do about our families, and we wouldn’t know anybody. But in a way knowing that there is a greater being out there who will always be with you makes you more courageous.

Dorothy and Tricia liked another prayer.

Bless to me, O God,
The earth beneath my foot,
Bless to me, O God,
The path whereon I go;

Bless to me O God,
 The thing of my desire;
 Thou Evermore of evermore,
 Bless Thou to me my rest.

Bless to me the thing
 Whereon is set my mind,
 Bless to me the thing
 Whereon is set my love;
 Bless to me the thing
 Whereon is set my hope;
 O Thou King of kings,
 Bless Thou to me mine eye! (de Waal, *The Celtic Vision* 144)

Dorothy said, “The second half . . . I thought of as relating to goals and how I do that whole thing . . . and having to realize that it’s not just me doing that.” For Tricia, the phrases “‘Whereon I set my mind . . . my love . . . my hope,’ makes me think about the things I have in my mind and what I hope and what I love.”

Other Descriptors

In coding the weekly reports some entries did not fit or complement any of the categories, so I created four additional descriptors. The first was the presence of God bringing something to mind, a coding I named “Brought to mind,” usually described as mental activities akin to realizing or thinking, such as “seemed that God is in everything—even what we complain about,” “realized that I haven’t been taking care of myself,” or “figured out why my prayer life is so superficial.” Similar reactions were shared in the weekly meetings; many times insights discovered, such as “I was thinking about how I should think about the Holy Spirit.” By some comments God was helping persons to see others in a new light as “He’s not the kind of person I would get anything out of, but he just amazed me this week in seeing him reaching out to other people. It’s neat to see that people are more than I think they are.”

Dorothy reported that the study had made a big difference in how she sees.

I think now I mentally notice things that I always saw before but sort of unconscious, like a lot of nature stuff, but now as the time's gone by, I'm trying to see more in people too. But things . . . are really beautiful—that's amazing—but now my little head is like "Dorothy-God." That's been really neat for me—even as I've been walking along I pay attention to more detail. Always intellectually I've understood the idea of God everywhere, but not really ever really ever really understood it I guess. To process that has been really good for me.

Other discoveries were, "We need those [prayers asking for help] time too, but you need times when you're just being quiet like in the Spirit. You just need to find that quiet."

The second descriptor was persons reacting to God's presence by the need to do more, such as read more, focus energy to get a job done, work on attitudes, "take care of my body," and trust God more, which I have called "Motivation to action." Another descriptor that was needed was "Silence," since several reported responding to God's presence by "listening instead of filling the silence," "spent time listening," or even "kept my mouth shut."

Some listed manifestations did not fit into any of the above categories, so I listed them in a descriptor, "Other." It included things as diverse as finding God in preparations for a party, in music, or at the Holocaust Museum, and responding to God's presence by questioning and "lost cynicism."

Two person expressed the extremes of this group in our last meeting together. Tricia expressed the typical situation for many of today's Christians and how the study had affected her.

I think one of the things that I realize is how much I really go to classes and go to work and hang out with friends, and a lot of time . . . the whole day may pass and I may not think about God very much. That's honestly

what happens in my life. And how much more they were able to integrate their Christian belief in their life and how much I need to improve on that because I just have this life.

Jane noted that “Sometimes I go through the day now without saying ‘Amen.’ You just add on and say ‘Amen’ when you go to bed.” Bob added, “ When you spend the whole day with someone you don’t tell them goodbye.”

Conclusion

This study suggests that the participants have learned the truth communicated in Scripture that God is present in our world and that God’s presence is something that can be experienced. Furthermore it suggests that being exposed to a different view of God’s presence can increase a person’s sensitivity to that presence. This has affirmed for me the truth undergirding the Celtic prayers, that God’s presence is all around us. This can be invaluable to the Christian, for it affirms that God has not abandoned this world but is fully present, that any Christian can discover God’s presence in a myriad of ways, and that one can indeed find the “extraordinary in the ordinary,” as expressed by Esther de Waal (“The Extraordinary in the Ordinary” 15).

According to one participant you have understanding and then you have understanding. She said, “Always intellectually I’ve understood the idea of God everywhere but not really ever really understood it I guess. To process that has been really good for me.” To process this was good for all of us, for in the processing we discovered that experience goes beyond mere intellectual comprehension and can lead to great discoveries.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

From Prayer to Presence

God to enfold me,
 God to surround me,
God in my speaking,
 God in my thinking,

God in my sleeping,
 God in my waking,
God in my watching,
 God in my hoping.

God in my life,
 God in my lips,
God in my soul,
 God in my heart,

God in my sufficing,
 God in my slumber,
God in mine ever-living soul,
 God in mine eternity. (Davies and Bowie 130)

This prayer, introduced in the first week of this study, communicates an awareness of the presence of God beautifully, from the simple acts of sleeping and thinking to the existing of the soul throughout eternity. It points to the substance of the study, God's constant presence in the lives of Christians, as well as the possibility of discovering God's presence in the unexpected and in the ordinary. If that happens how do individuals respond, and how are their lives affected?

The study was designed to affect participants on three levels. The articles that we discussed and the prayers that we shared informed participants about the Celtic Christians' understanding of Christianity and how they lived it in their daily lives. In addition to this cognitive understanding, they created an awareness that God's presence is around and

about us. Our world is not as different from the Celtic world as we might suppose; God is present for us as God was for them. The prayers also presented the participants with a fresh mind-set regarding how individuals might meet God in prayer. A student noted this the first week. She discovered that the prayer she had repeated during the week had given new meaning and structure to the presence that she already knew was there.

An Integration of Life

While their denoting “thin times” and “thin spaces” as opportunities for the other world to break into this one cannot be ignored, the Celts had no hard and fast division between holy time and secular time. God was a part of all. What made every moment sacred was that every moment was God-infused, so that the simple act of sniffing a flower’s fragrance or making the bed could be an opportunity to be reminded of God’s presence.

Those who participated in this study quickly noticed something else: the Celtic Christians had something more than a pervasive presence. They lived with an integration of their Christian faith into all of their lives. The students observed it first in the Celts’ prayer life. They didn’t separate their “praying and their living” as one student expressed, and they quickly discovered that this was a trait of their lives as a whole. Because God surrounded them, each taste, each smell, each act could be blessed and become holy.

The following prayer, introduced during the second week of the study, captures much of what this lifestyle was about. It emphasizes the presence of God in one’s life, not just a presence that we passively encounter from time to time, but an active presence that is blessing and seeking.

Bless to me O God,
Each thing mine eye sees;

Bless to me O God,
 Each sound mine ear hears;
 Bless to me O God,
 Each odor that goes to my nostrils;
 Bless to me, O God,
 Each taste that goes to my lips;
 Each note that goes to my song,
 Each ray that guides my way,
 Each thing that I pursue,
 Each lure that tempts my will,
 The zeal that seeks my living soul,
 The Three that seek my heart,
 The zeal that seeks my living soul,
 The Three that seek my heart. (de Waal, *The Celtic* 76-77)

This is in stark contrast to modern persons' tendencies of separating activities into categories, the so-called secular: work, play, sleep, etc.; and the so-called spiritual: worship, prayer, Bible study, etc. This separation leads to assigning hierarchies of importance and necessity, Christians seeing certain activities and roles as more spiritual than others and therefore more desirable, but with each person defining his or her own hierarchy so that different activities and roles are determined to be more or less sacred or secular than another. The Celts called on God to bless all activities, even the temptation that threatens the will. The Celtic view was of the Trinity of Creator, Redeemer, and Spirit all present and filling each moment with opportunity and depth.

I was reminded of this recently, when the group with whom I minister ended a retreat with worship. As I watched the students wash one another's feet, I realized that Jesus took what was as secular an act imaginable to those in his culture and turned it into a spiritual one by virtue of his example and his comments which accompanied it. During our worship this same act became a spiritual experience for members of the group, a time of confession, outreach, and affirmation.

The Celtic Christians accomplished the same thing with a prayer thought to be

uttered after arising when washing one's face.

The palmful of the God of Life
 The palmful of the Christ of Love
 The palmful of the Spirit of Peace
 Triune
 Of grace. (de Waal, "The Extraordinary in the Ordinary" 6)

This ordinary act became a time to encounter palmfuls of God and start the day, cleansed with God's life, love, peace, and grace.

Jane also noticed integration when one article described how Celts used the ordinary vessels from home in worship rather than having special chalices and plates. She noted, "They didn't have to make it so special even though it was, because everything was special." She seemed to be saying that using the household items integrated daily life into worship and integrated worship into daily life and made the worship more relevant to what took place in the kitchen. The Celts not only took their kitchen to worship, they invited God to be present in their kitchen, and asked his blessing on it as well.

Oh, my prince
 Who canst do all these things,
 Bless O God—a cry unforbidden—
 My kitchen with Thy right hand!

My kitchen,
 The kitchen of the white God,
 A kitchen which my King hath blessed,
 A kitchen that hath butter.

Mary's Son, my Friend cometh
 To bless my kitchen. (de Waal, *The Celtic Way* 82)

Not just rooms were blessed by God, but activities as well. Can daily chores possible be done in God's name? The Celts thought so.

I make this bed
 In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
 In the name of the night we were conceived,

In the name of the night we were born,
 In the name of the day we were baptized,
 In the name of each night, each day,
 Each angel that is in the heavens. (de Waal, *The Celtic Way* 78)

Could the ordinary jobs of our lives acquire a greater significance if done in God's name?

Presence

Experiencing God is quite subjective; some might claim that it is a totally subjective experience and actually a work of the imagination. The Christian faith states, however, that God wants to be known, and as people who have cast their lot with this God, we believe that God is not beyond knowing and is not impersonal. Can we actually sense God's presence?

I had expected that the participants would desire God's presence in a way that could be experienced and that exposing them to Celtic spirituality would make a difference in how they experienced God's presence. They began to discover God's presence from the first week, but initially it was not engendered from the Celtic prayers, which had not been introduced, but from the assignment to write down how they had experienced God's presence. They reported that they began to perceive God in a variety of ways and places, and in our meeting they shared that simply looking and watching made a difference. Once they began to look, the students began to see God all around them. In fact one student went through an amazing transition during the first week:

I found that towards the end of the week I began to not be able to pinpoint one specific moment. . . . It was just all meshing together that I saw God in so many ways. Where at the beginning of the week, it was one moment and then it was it that I really noticed that he was there. But towards the end of the week it was like it was meshed together in different sort of ways, and it was difficult to point at one thing.

She was already infected by the Celtic view, and she had not begun to explore it yet.

As the study moved forward, a couple of us went through a similar change in how we saw God's presence. As it began we saw God primarily in points—a bird, a tree, a person, an event. As we continued we began to see God's presence not as a static presence but in a more dynamic way of moving in and shaping the world. For me I had an initial awareness of God's presence in the beauty of the autumnal colors of a tree, but as I pondered it, I realized that God's presence was there through all the seasons and the years, that God is moving the seasons forward in the largest possible scale, just as God changes the season in one leaf. This was an important discovery for me, for then I fathomed God's presence more fully, not just in every place but in every time.

The Celtic exposure complemented this discovery with many prayers in which God was experienced as dynamic rather than static or passive. The group found that not only could we find confidence in God's presence, but in faith could live with the confidence that God would be active in our lives. After pondering one particular prayer, Linda said, "He's going to direct me, protect me, and strengthen me. It made me more aware that I'm not alone and that there's something more than just me in the world. It really helped me this week."

God was also seen as a partner with people. The Celts were quick to see God's presence as one with whom they could partner. This is a common theme in Celtic thought. One student was especially struck by the idea that the Celtic people saw Jesus as working beside them as illustrated in the prayer already quoted for making the bed. Similar prayers exist for sowing, sailing, and journeying. While not a major theme of this study, the concept of a partnership with God can be quite significant for students who are trying to determine their life's work. This is an important concept in James Fowler's work,

Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian, in which he encourages followers to view their vocation as a calling and as an opportunity for working in partnership with God as creator, governor, and redeemer. While making a bed in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is certainly a pleasing notion, partnering with God in a life's work is a greater notion which can make that work more meaningful and relevant and can provide a way for an individual to live out his or her faith with a world-changing attitude and affect.

I realized that as important as researching the Celtic peoples and their culture was, research on the biblical and theological background of God's presence would have provided a more complete foundation for this study. Knowing how God's presence was experienced by the Jewish people and by Christians would have provided a better perspective to evaluate our experiences.

Connectedness

I proposed that persons would experience God's presence through a sense of connectedness directly with God, with persons, and with creation, and that persons would respond to God's presence by connecting with these as well. Connectedness with people proved to be listed far more than any other as the means by which persons experienced God. Why did these students experience God in others so extensively but did not do so directly or through creation?

Experiencing God directly did not seem to be a problem for the Celts, as this prayer illustrates.

I am lying down to-night as beseems
 In the fellowship of Christ, Son of the Virgin golden,
 In the fellowship of the gracious Father of glory,
 In the fellowship of the Spirit of powerful aid.

I am lying down tonight with God,
 And God to-night will lie down with me,
 I will not lie down to-night with sin, nor shall
 Sin or sin's shadow lie down with me.

I am lying down to-night with the Holy Spirit,
 And the Holy Spirit this night will lie down with me,
 I will lie down this night with the Three of my love,
 And the Three of my love will lie down with me. (de Waal, *The Celtic Way*
 93)

Not only could the Celt take the initiative to lie down with God, God also takes the initiative to lie down with him or her. If we view God's nature as predominately holy and inapproachable, being in bed with God is difficult to imagine although this was literally true in the case of Jesus as he lay down with the disciples.

The closeness of God is a foreign concept to today's Christians. The same dynamics may be at work as in the Old Testament so that conceiving of a direct experience with God is difficult. Therefore we rely on other more symbolic ways to connect with God, and in the case of the participants in this study, the connection seemed to happen primarily through other persons and indirectly through creation.

I have heard that asking "Did you experience the presence of God today?" is meaningless. To see God we simply need to look in the mirror. This is not an attempt to see ourselves as God, although doing so is a characteristic of our sinful nature and needs to be taken seriously. Seeing God in ourselves is a consequence of our being created in his image.

Persons are unique in that we have been created by God not merely as social beings but as having the capacity for deep and lasting relationships. This is at least part of how we are created in God's image, so that when we behold another person we behold the image of God. Experiencing God's presence in that same person is a small step. The

number of reports of persons experiencing God in others speaks of the natural bond that exists between persons. The fact that it does not occur more often is a reflection of the tragedy of sin that corrupts our relationships with each other.

Seeking to be connected with persons is a natural response to God's presence, as shown by the reports of bonding with others and seeking to work on relationships when the individuals sensed God's presence. The horizontal dimension of the Christian life is lived out not in a solitary existence but in interaction, connectedness with others. That is the essence of the greatest commandment as given by Jesus: love God with heart, soul, and mind and the second greatest, loving your neighbor as yourself. The number of responses indicates the primacy of this commandment, which indicates how the natural tendency of relating to others should move toward more complete, loving relationships.

In contrast to the connectedness with persons, little awareness of a connectedness with creation was reported. This is in stark opposition to the Celtic peoples and their fundamental characteristic of being connected with creation, as illustrated in this prayer.

The Three Who are over me,
 The Three Who are below me,
 The Three Who are above me here,
 The Three Who are above me yonder,
 The Three Who are in the earth,
 The Three Who are in the air,
 The Three Who are in heaven
 The Three Who are in the great pouring sea. (de Waal, *The Celtic Way*
 44)

This is a characteristic of a number of Celtic prayers, so the students were exposed to this connectedness with creation on a number of occasions. The fact that this aspect of Celtic spirituality did not transfer to members of the group is significant. Just being exposed to different aspects of Celtic spirituality does not necessarily mean that modern persons will

automatically emulate any characteristic that might be new or unique. The characteristics that were appropriated were done so willingly.

Why did these students not move toward a connectedness with creation? Implicit in the Celtic peoples' connectedness to creation was their living intimately with it and their dependence on it for everything they had. Modern persons do not see themselves as dependent on creation. As we have moved toward living in cities and towns, we have constructed an environment by our own hands. We have lost touch with creation and seemingly become less dependent on it.

Many environmentalists complain that Western Christianity has actually contributed to the environmental crisis by taking literally God's words in Genesis 1:28 to the first man and woman, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." Walter Brueggemann states that the original words do not have that sense of "exploitation and abuse," rather, imply "securing the well-being of every other creature" (32). We have concluded nevertheless, that God planned for humans to have a controlling relationship in which humankind functions to tame and control creation as God did at the onset of creation, subduing the chaos.

This view ignores God's purpose for humankind as expressed in Genesis 2:15, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it," in which the man is placed in a garden which needs his care and attention. Rather than seeing ourselves as stewards and managers of this garden-like creation, we have seen creation as something to be consumed, exploited, and used for our own benefit. Becoming connected

to something that one consumes is dangerous; therefore we need to keep our distance from it.

However, the beauty of a single flower and of an entire mountain range still speak to persons of God. Persons seem to be pulled toward nature, toward a connectedness which they sense but cannot quite fathom. I see this in the yearning of those who are imprisoned in cities to retreat to the seclusion of nature to get away from the hectic pace and the crowded streets, but also to get back to God. The connectedness to creation and thus to God is realized again, and for a short time it brings rebirth to the individual. This is exemplified in an unconscious way for people who desire to vacation in nature, particularly the beach and the mountains. They sense something in the power of the waves, the rising and ebbing of the tide, and the wide expanse of the ocean; likewise, people sense greatness in the towering majesty of the mountains. I believe they experience the pull toward an encounter with something greater and more powerful than themselves, a desire to be connected to creation and to sense the presence of God. The psalmist looked to the hills for his help, too (Ps. 121:1), but confessed that he found his source of help in the Lord, creator of the heaven and earth and of those very hills.

The lack of this sense of connectedness with creation may indicate that we do not know exactly how to think of God in terms of creation. The Celtic peoples were so connected to creation that they identified attributes of God with attributes of creation. The Hebrews, careful to maintain the distinction between Creator and creation, did refer to God as their Rock. Certainly we must steer clear of any designation of God as an element of creation, but the Celts seems to have a greater appreciation of God because they had a greater appreciation of creation's representation of God.

The recent celebration of the decoding of the human genome may give the impression that humans have been able to take apart and analyze most of creation, but while science has made great advances in its understanding of the created order, creation remains something that still is a mystery and not controlled or controllable. The Christians' awareness that creation is something larger than ourselves commands respect and awe, just as God does.

Prayer

A major emphasis of this project was prayer. Prayers were a significant means by which the Celtic idea of God's presence was introduced. The students were asked to make the prayers a part of their day, and they described the practice as valuable. I had proposed that seeing the Celtic proclivity toward praying as daily activities were done would be a freeing experience for the participants in this study, and that this would move them from praying during designated prayer times in their day to a sense of freedom and less of a structured prayer regimen.

Jane saw that our mind-set of separating the sacred and the secular leads directly to our prayer practices. She confessed, "We're not as interconnected as they were, and so it's hard to get the connectedness of prayer into our lives." The group used this route to arrive at the concept that prayer is not a separate activity that one does only after stopping another activity, and they delineated this in two ways. One student stated that prayer is not just with one's heart, but "is with everything else too." Jesus stated that the greatest commandment is to love God "with all of your heart, soul and mind." Prayer should be just as pervasive, occupying all of one's being, including the sighs that are too deep for words. It is a total communion with God.

For another student the idea that “everything that we do is a prayer” kept coming up for her. Perhaps this student had made the connection with Paul’s statement, “Pray without ceasing.” That has always been a hard point to comprehend, especially if one sees prayer as an attempt to communicate just with words. Prayer becomes an attempt to correctly express thoughts and deep concerns in actual words to God. I believe that the student had discovered that with God ever present everything she did was a part of her communicating with God. Perhaps she also understood the truth that actions speak louder than words because they are a part of our life of prayer, or why sin is so abhorrent to God. It is living out an attitude of contempt and disrespect to God.

Recently I attended the Wednesday evening prayer service at my church, and, as is the usual practice, a list of new and ongoing prayer concerns was distributed. Individuals shared additional concerns, and we divided into small groups to pray. As my group began to go down the list, we talked and shared about the individuals who had ongoing needs for prayer, so that by the time we finished we had no time left to “pray.” Several in the group felt guilty, but I was able to share my conviction that in sharing their particular needs we were lifting their needs to God and lifting the individuals in prayer just as much as if we had closed our eyes and interceded with God to meet these same needs.

Perhaps research into prayer practices would have given this study a better foundation into the ways that persons pray. Just recognizing God’s presence and learning about prayer for eight weeks was evidently not enough to change thoroughly ingrained practices of praying for those in this study. Comments about what the students had learned about when to pray and how to pray were voiced in weekly meetings, but by their own reporting, they did not change their practice of prayer.

Perhaps this failure to change points to the value of the monastic life, where those who live under that rule find their schedule converted from human time into God's time. In the new awareness of what is important a group accountability in coming together to pray surfaces. The monastic rules regarding talking to in keep noise and interruptions to a minimum promote prayerful listening. This structure forces the members of the community to make prayer a priority and a primary activity. Living in a world regulated by human institutions, we find ourselves governed by the world. Only a major crisis to move us out of the familiar pattern of prayer and into another paradigm of prayer.

The Celts did not write down the prayers of their Christian faith. Their children learned them as they heard and repeated them, but they also learned the context for prayer in the ordinary activities of the day. In the same way, the prayers repeated at the table or at the bedside are the ones that today's children remember. They have not only learned the prayers themselves but also perceived that those are the natural and appropriate times to pray. That remains ingrained as the pattern of their prayer life.

Acknowledging Human Nature and Asking Forgiveness

Many people seem to go to extremes to avoid being confronted by their own sinfulness. The fact that a number of responses acknowledged sinfulness and failure on the forms was significant, although they fall into two categories. Several actually were confessions of sin resulting from an experience of God's presence, but over half were explanations for why the individual did not have anything to report. I wondered how many of them were actually excuses for why the person responding had not written down anything or why he or she had not experienced God's presence that particular day. A striking element in several of these responses is the presence of feelings. "I was

worried. . .” “Frustration and stress mounting. . .” “I didn’t feel like myself today.”

“Have felt a little distant from God.” Do feelings affect our ability to experience God?

I have quoted Psalm 139 countless times when, as a chaplain in a psychiatric hospital, I spent time with those in deep depression or psychosis who described their state as seeming to be separated by a great distance from God’s presence. I found myself repeating this psalm again and again, sharing how we can take comfort in the firm knowledge that one cannot simply lose God’s presence and that God is present even when feelings may communicate otherwise. My message remained the same: a person cannot let the emotional state determine his or her confidence of God’s presence. Whether chronically depressed or simply feeling a little down, relying on the truth of God’s promise to be with us is essential.

The number of times that I have heard this cry from depressed persons leads me to wonder how God’s presence is linked to emotional state. Even those who are only slightly depressed frequently describe themselves as feeling far from God. I have talked to many people with emotional illness, but I cannot remember talking to one person whose illness made him or her sense being closer to God’s presence.

So what is the link between experiencing God’s presence and emotional state?

While no strong link appears between those who experienced God and a heightened emotional state, the number of references to feelings in this category makes me think that a relationship exists here. It is not a simple relationship however, for people in the midst of intense grief can find God, but when conditions such as depression are present, the person may not have the emotional energy to seek God or to experience God.

The attitudes represented by the term “feeling” in the responses are not really

emotion, but are a condition in which persons allow themselves to be, one in which they do not put forth effort. This condition has a lack of motivation, an act (or lack of an act) of the will, and while the result may appear to be the same, I think there a difference exists. Both experience God's presence with difficulty; the unmotivated person will not put forth the effort; the depressed person cannot.

Two Christians may be in the same place at the same time: one may experience God's presence and the other may not. Many Christians fall into the latter group. They are simply too busy or preoccupied to make the effort to experience God's presence. The solution is the same as for the depressed person, relying on the firm foundation of God's word. The intellect must take over. A minister can remind the individual of the promise, not felt but able to be known nevertheless, that God is present.

Questions Regarding Praise and Thanksgiving

The primary response to God's presence was coded "Praise and Thanksgiving," but that is actually too broad a category. The vast majority of the responses were specifically reported as thanksgiving; very few actually offered praise. I have read a number of authors who insist no distinction be made between the two. Differences do exist in attitudes if not in terms. I see praise as what one offers to God simply because he is what he is; thanks is offered to God for what he has done. Therefore one may praise God even in dire circumstances because he still is God whether one is thankful and able to offer thanks or not.

With this distinction I see very little praise being offered to God. Even in the current church culture of praise songs and praise services, I see little of what I would consider praise. What God gets is mostly thanks, conditional on the good fortune that we

see as having originated with God. We are authentically and truly grateful and rightfully offer our thanks, but where is our praise? I think a student was sensing that recently when she commented on the song “Create in Me a Clean Heart” based on the confession of sin in Psalm 51. “It’s really not praise is it?” she asked rhetorically, and then she added, “but it is a praise song.” Does a true biblical distinction exist between praise and thanksgiving? Have we really lost the capability to offer praise? If so, can one teach the people of God to offer authentic praise?

Perhaps the problem lies in our seeing ourselves as too important. As Adam and Eve reached up to pick the forbidden fruit they were reaching up toward godliness, to become as God. In our sin we are reaching just as high in the same attempt to become as God. With that attitude, one finds it difficult to admit the greatness of God but relatively easy to be grateful for the gifts that we see coming from God. Could authentic praise become a reality check for us?

How do we rediscover praise? Perhaps the first step is education on the value and place of praise and then discovering authentic ways for this generation to do it, such as in music, dance, and song. The how is not as important as the fact that we recognize God’s greatness and cultivate an attitude of response to God.

Questions Regarding Worship

What a surprise I had in discovering that only one instance was reported in which a member of the group experienced God in worship. The members of the group participate in a number of different churches so this is not an isolated phenomenon. While we do not find God all around us in the same way as the Celts, from the beginning of the worship of YHWH, worship has been seen as the means to meet God, to invoke God’s presence. Why

was God's presence not found in worship by the students?

Different people will experience God in worship in their own ways. Some will experience God primarily through their senses, whether seeing a flickering candle, tasting the communion bread and wine, smelling the incense, or hearing beautiful music. Others find God in the symbol of the church's architecture, the depictions in the stained glass windows or in the broken bread. Some find God in the certain truth of the Bible or the proclaimed word. Others feel God in the closeness of the family of God. All of these are elements of worship that appeal to different people.

As we have adapted worship to meet changing needs of the culture and to attract members of that culture, have we lost God in the process? Did the grand hymns summon images that lead us to God's presence more than praise choruses? Do praise bands leave out something that is in the grandeur of an organ? Do imposing sanctuaries lead us to God more than modern churches meeting in multipurpose rooms? As the free church has moved further from the high church style of worship with its call to worship, confession, and assurance of pardon, have we also lowered ourselves out of the presence of God? Are some elements of worship more conducive to acknowledging and finding God's presence in worship than others, or as the elements change with interests and characteristics of the worshipers are they changed with the continuing purpose of enabling worshipers to experience God's presence? I believe with all the demands that are on them church leaders may have forgotten the importance of God's presence in worship.

Do church members insist on God's presence in worship? In the search for the pastor whose sermons are the best in style and content, the congregation that is the friendliest, the youth program that is the most exciting, or the Bible teaching that is the

most meaningful, is experiencing God high on the list of priorities? Is it even on the list of priorities at all?

Christians may not follow the example of the Celts in their belief that God is present in our daily lives, but we must not ignore God's presence in worship. Each Sunday as we begin to worship, I hear my one of the ministers at my church invoke God's presence. Formal or not, worship must begin with a call to worship or invocation in which we acknowledge God's presence and call on the church to respond to it. Persons gathered for worship need to be aware of God's presence. This finding has reinforced my resolve to voice the fact that God is present whenever I lead in worship. Whether the reminder makes a difference or teaching people over a period of time helps them to remember, responding to God's presence with praise, thanksgiving, confession, and giving are the reasons that we are present in worship. If we ignore God's presence then we have no need to be there.

Sense of Well-being

The only question in the questionnaire whose mean actually decreased was related to feeling a sense of peace when experiencing God's presence, and only one person reported peace as a result of being in God's presence. This is quite disheartening, although I believe that this decrease may be related to several factors.

College students are in constant crisis. These crises are related to issues of acceptance, relationship, vocational questions, finances, morality, parents and problems at home, and spiritual doubts and questions. This tumultuous time of life is one in which one crisis is superseded by the next one, and stress is a more common characteristic than peace.

The final questionnaire was taken about four weeks before the end of the semester when the awareness of impending and unfinished assignments is beginning to come home. All of this may have resulted in a greater sense of anxiety for students, regardless of God's presence.

A greater indication may lie in the thirteen reports of persons responding to God's presence with a motivation to action. We may not be convinced that God is a God of grace rather than a God of works who demands more and more from us. Particularly at a college where students characteristically push themselves, God may be perceived more as a parent or other authority figure who demands more than as a calming and peaceful presence. That may be an additional reason that we avoid God's presence.

Further Research

Further research indicated by this study includes what sensitizes persons to God's presence. Initially the persons in this study were sensitized to God's presence simply by recording it. Does paying attention to God's presence mean that persons actually notice the presence more? Do they sense it to avoid a sense of guilt? Are they trying to placate the researcher? A separate study with a control group would answer some of these questions.

Some other traditions pay attention to prayer in the mundane times of life, such as *Practicing the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence. Further research is indicated to see how if a study of one of these traditions would affect persons' perceptions of God's presence and their prayer life in similar ways as a study of Celtic tradition.

Limitations

A number of factors limit generalizations made by this study. The participants were

not chosen randomly. Their self-selection resulted in a group which had a distinct interest in the subject to be studied. The small size of the group may also have affected the results. The fact that one initial participant did not return and that two participants entered the group after the group had been meeting for two weeks certainly affected the group dynamics.

In this study considerable weight is placed on subjective data. The reports of the participants could have been colored by a number of concerns. My selection of particular quotes from the transcripts of the meetings was also quite subjective and determined by my research objectives.

All students are under considerable pressure and demands on their time. These and other factors of their particular place in life strongly affected their presence at meetings, their willingness to record daily, and their ability to participate fully. Control groups for these limitations would have added strength to the finds of this research.

Conclusions

The Celtic peoples' pagan religions allowed them to see a side of the Christian God that many other Christians have missed. For them, living in total dependence on creation meant that they were able to find and relate to the God that they saw as revealed in creation and present in their world. With that foundation, they were able to transform their small corner of the world and extend their influence through northern Europe.

The students in this study learned that "a" Christian way of living one's faith in the world is not dominant but a number of Christian ways are attainable. They saw that their manner of understanding and living the Christian faith is not ideal, and that other ways of envisioning God and living with the God who embodies both transcendence and

immanence are possible. If the God we worship does indeed desire to live in relationship with what he has created he will relate to humans who are the crowning touch of that creation.

Many persons live as if we have no connectedness with creation at all, and we are learning the results of our abuse of creation. We have confessed a connectedness with God, but most Christians are content to worship an idea of God rather than seeking God's presence in the world, and this study has shown that the results can affect our relationships with others, our prayer life, and our worship.

Young people are fascinated with the presence of information that they can search out through their computers. The students in this study learned that they can be a search engine for God's presence and that such a search can be a rewarding experience. The discovery of God's presence can add another dimension to a world that is bored with simple materialistic pleasures or a religion that promotes a seemingly irrelevant and distant God. Living with the expectation of God's presence enables one to see his activity in creation, in others, and in ourselves, respond to his presence with a life of prayer and worship, and work with him for the redemption of all creation.

This pattern is not a sudden, life-changing transformation where one is transported into a Celtic mind-set to dwell forever. It does open a door to a new way of seeing this world, but allowing the door to shut is easy. I have been immersed in this study for two years, and I still neglect to look for God's presence and fail to see it when it is right in front of me. Eight weeks of discussion and seven weeks of reading about the Celtic ways does not change the ways and means that we have learned so completely. Individuals must have a daily commitment to look for God's presence and to respond to it.

This study has revealed that many Christians, myself included, do not experience God as we might because of three major reasons. Some are not expectant, believing God is concerned for our world but relates in a detached and distant way. Learning about the Celtic people may help them in discovering the remarkable view of God's presence in our world.

Many of us do not take the time or the effort to see God. Even if we believe that God is present, we do not slow down and look for God. Sometimes we are slowed by illness or other crises. Then we may discover what living in the presence can mean, but we have missed the wondrous life in God's presence.

Others avoid God for fear that they will have to change a sinful or harmful lifestyle. God respects us even when we are hurting ourselves, so God waits patiently, letting us slowly unravel until we are ready, waiting for an invitation.

A basic message of the incarnation is that God desires to dwell with us, noted in the introduction to Matthew's Gospel, "they shall name him Emmanuel," which means "God is with us" (1:23b), a quote from Isaiah. Isaiah and Matthew both recognized this as good news for those in their day. The Celtic Christians thought it essential in living out their faith. The news is just as good and as relevant to the Christians of today.

Final Thoughts

Perhaps one of the reasons I have undertaken this study has been an experience I had as I graduated from college. After an arduous process of deciding what my major would be, I chose zoology, intending to go on to medical school and feeling a certain sense of calling toward that profession. The application procedure was long and involved, and I got several letters indicating that I would be notified soon, which I interpreted as a

test of my faith. Only a week before graduation did I ultimately get the letter stating that I had not been accepted.

Feeling like a failure, I graduated and returned home. I was in a vocational crisis, not knowing what I would do. I was in an emotional crisis, feeling depressed but mostly I was in a spiritual crisis, feeling that God had slammed the door in my face and responding with a great deal of anger to God. That summer my home pastor preached a sermon based on Exodus 33:15, with Moses telling God, "If your presence will not go [with us] do not carry us up from here." That verse became my motto, for even in the midst of my questioning, my depression, and my anger, I still recognized God as God and acknowledged him as the one whom I needed. God has been true to that verse, going with me even while taking me up from that place. I have not noticed God's presence nor responded to it as I should have, but it has been there.

The Celts have given me a significant gift—images and concepts to picture God's presence in my life and my world. Their gift has enabled me to respond to the presence in more appropriate ways; however, this gift must be opened to be appreciated, and it must be opened every day.

APPENDIX A

Religious Experience Questionnaire

Below are listed a number of descriptive statements concerning religious experience. We would like you to use these statements to describe *YOUR* religious experience as accurately as possible. That is, we would like you to indicate, on a scale from 1 to 7, how true of **YOUR** religious experience these various statements are. Please respond to each item using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Almost never	Sometimes but infrequently	Occasionally	Often	Almost all the time	Always

- _____ 1. I experience an awareness of God's love.
- _____ 2. I pray privately in places other than church.
- _____ 3. I experience feelings of anger or resentment towards God.
- _____ 4. I ask God to forgive my sins.
- _____ 5. I am afraid that God is going to punish me in some way.
- _____ 6. When I have decisions to make in my everyday life, I try to find out what God wants me to do.
- _____ 7. I experience the feeling that God is so big and important He doesn't have time for my personal problems.
- _____ 8. I feel very close to God in prayer, during public worship, or at important moments in my life.
- _____ 9. I experience awareness of God's influence in my daily life.
- _____ 10. When I pray to God, I feel like I'm having a conversation with a close friend.
- _____ 11. My relationship to God is characterized by close fellowship.
- _____ 12. I find myself doubting that God really exists.

APPENDIX B

God's Presence Questionnaire

A number of descriptive statements concerning ways one might experience God's presence are listed below. Use these statements to describe **YOUR** religious experience as accurately as possible. That is, indicate on a scale from 1 to 7 how true of **YOUR** experience these various statements are. Please respond to each item using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Almost never	Sometimes but infrequently	Occasionally	Often	Almost all the time	Always

- _____ 1. I experience an awareness of God's love.
- _____ 2. An awareness of God's presence results in my feeling closer to others.
- _____ 3. I pray privately in places other than in church.
- _____ 4. God's presence in my life results in my having a greater appreciation of creation.
- _____ 5. When I have decisions to make in my everyday life, I try to find out what God wants me to do.
- _____ 6. Sensing God's presence results in my having a greater awareness of God's greatness.
- _____ 7. I feel very close to God in prayer, during public worship, or at important moments in my life.
- _____ 8. God's presence results in my having a greater sense of my dependance on God.
- _____ 9. Feeling God's presence results in my having a greater awareness of myself as a unique creation.
- _____ 10. I experience awareness of God's influence in my daily life.
- _____ 11. When I feel God's presence, I participate in worship to a greater degree.
- _____ 12. When I pray to God, I feel like I'm having a conversation with a close friend.
- _____ 13. Having a greater commitment to God's purposes comes from my sensing God's presence.
- _____ 14. My relationship to God is characterized by close fellowship.
- _____ 15. God's presence in my life results in my having a greater sense of being led by God.
- _____ 16. When I feel God's presence I have a greater sense of peace.
- _____ 17. A sense of God's presence results in my feeling blessed by God.

APPENDIX C

Flier

Celtic Spirituality and Prayer

Mondays from 7:00-8:00 PM*

* Other times may be offered if there is sufficient interest

Spend Time with Some Celtic Christians...

“What the Celtic understanding brings us is the chance to break down the barriers between the active and the contemplative life and instead to make the busy, boring, relentless daily life tasks the basis for continuous praying and for finding the presence of God.”

- Esther de Waal, (British teacher and editor of Celtic prayers and other materials)
“The Extraordinary in the Ordinary”

My walk this day with God

My walk this day with Christ

My walk this day with Spirit

The Threefold all-kindly.

My shielding this day from ill,

My shielding this night from harm,

Ho! Ho! Both my soul and my body,

Be by my Father, by Son, by Holy Spirit.

Be the Father shielding me,

Be the Son shielding me,

Be the Spirit shielding me,

As Three and as One:

Ho! Ho! Ho! As Three and as One

de Waal, “The Extraordinary in the Ordinary.” Weavings 2.3 1987: (10-11)

For more information call Pete Parks at 229-3471 or e-mail 4parks@whro.net.

APPENDIX D

Newspaper Announcement

Celtic Spirituality

The Celtic Christians of the first millennium had a radical spirituality that was almost lost to history. Join us Mondays at 7:00 p.m. as we investigate their spirituality and discover its implications for those of us in this millennium. For more information contact Pete Parks at 4parks@whro.net or 229-3471

APPENDIX E

Introductory Meeting Agenda

1. Greetings and introduction

2. Description of the project

- A. Discovery of article in *Weavings* on Celtic prayer
- B. Research on Celtic Christianity
- C. This group is part of a research project, conducted for purposes of research
- D. Although there is a lot of material on Celtic culture being presented these days, this group will operate from a Christian perspective. The Christian faith of the Celtic peoples was influenced by their culture and may not be exactly as the Christian faith that each one present knows, but it was Christian
- E. Each week when we meeting I will give you an article describing as aspect of Celtic spirituality which you should read to become more familiar with Celtic Christians and how they lived out their faith. I will also give you several prayers, one for each day of the week. Each day I hope you will read the prayer ad spend a few minutes thinking about what it says about God, living as a Christian, or how God is revealed to us. If the prayer is long pick out a key phrase that is significant for you and bring it to mind during the day. If the prayer is short you may want to take the printed prayer with you and re-read it to yourself as you have the opportunity, meditating on its meaning for you.

3. Expectations

- A. Weekly meetings: Each one needs to be present unless extenuating circumstances prevent it. It will be an important time of sharing your experiences with others and learning from them.
- B. Spend time at some point during each day using that day's prayer as a basis of time of prayer, returning to it as you have the opportunity.
- C. I encourage you to keep a journal focusing on the way that you have experienced God's presence that day.
- D. At least five days each week, note on a form that I will give you: How have I experienced God's presence today? And how have I responded to God's presence today?

APPENDIX F

Weekly Report Form

last 4 digits of SS #

How have I experienced God's presence today?
How have I responded to God's presence today?

Day 1

Day 2

Day 3

Day 4

Day 5

Day 6

Day 7

APPENDIX G**Initial Questionnaire****Reported by Student Number***

Question	2167	6303	4037	3623	6067	0557	0878
1.	6	6	5	6	6	4	5
2.	5	4	4	5	7	4	7
3.	5	7	7	7	5	5	5
4.	5	6	5	7	7	7	6
5.	4	3	6	5	5	6	2
6.	6	4	5	6	7	6	7
7.	5	6	5	5	7	4	6
8.	5	3	6	5	7	5	7
9.	5	5	4	6	6	3	5
10.	5	4	5	4	5	5	4
11.	6	6	6	5	7	5	7
12.	6	7	6	4	6	6	7
13.	6	3	5	6	5	4	7
14.	6	5	6	5	5	3	3
15.	5	5	6	6	7	5	4
16.	7	6	7	6	7	7	7
17.	6	6	5	5	7	6	6
Mean	5.47	5.06	5.47	5.47	6.24	5.00	5.59
Stand dev	0.70	1.30	0.85	0.85	0.88	1.19	1.54

*Students are identified by the last four digits of their Social Security Number

APPENDIX H**Initial Questionnaire****Reported by Question Number**

Question	2167	6303	4037	3623	6067*	0557	0878	Mean	Stan dev
1.	6	6	5	6	6	4	5	5.33	0.75
2.	5	4	4	5	7	4	7	4.83	1.07
3.	5	7	7	7	5	5	5	6.00	1.00
4.	5	5	5	7	7	7	6	6.00	0.82
5.	4	6	6	5	5	6	2	4.33	1.49
6.	6	5	5	6	7	6	7	5.67	0.94
7.	5	5	5	5	7	4	6	5.17	0.69
8.	5	6	6	5	7	5	7	5.17	1.21
9.	5	4	4	6	6	3	5	4.67	0.94
10.	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	4.57	0.50
11.	6	6	6	5	7	5	7	5.83	0.69
12.	6	6	6	4	6	6	7	6.00	1.00
13.	6	5	5	6	5	4	7	5.17	1.34
14.	6	6	6	5	5	3	3	4.67	1.25
15.	5	6	6	6	7	5	4	5.17	0.69
16.	7	7	7	6	7	7	7	6.67	0.47
17.	6	5	5	5	7	6	6	5.67	0.47

*This individual is not included in the mean or standard deviation since she did not take the final questionnaire.

APPENDIX I**Final Questionnaire****Reported by Student Number**

Question	2167	6303	4037	3623	6067	0557	0878
1.	5	6	6	5		6	6
2.	6	6	5	6		4	7
3.	5	6	7	6		6	6
4.	7	7	7	6		7	7
5.	4	5	6	4		6	5
6.	7	6	6	6		5	7
7.	5	6	4	5		4	7
8.	5	5	5	6		5	7
9.	6	6	4	7		3	6
10.	5	5	5	5		4	6
11.	6	5	4	7		6	7
12.	7	7	6	5		7	6
13.	6	6	5	6		6	7
14.	6	6	5	5		5	5
15.	5	4	6	6		5	7
16.	6	7	4	7		6	6
17.	7	6	5	5		6	6
Mean	5.76	5.82	5.29	5.71	-	5.35	6.35
Change	0.29	0.76	-0.18	0.24	-	0.35	0.76
Stand dev	0.88	0.78	0.96	0.82	-	1.08	0.68

APPENDIX J**Final Questionnaire****Reported by Question Number**

Question	2167	6303	4037	3623	6067	0557	0878	Mean	Change	Stan dev.
1.	5	6	6	5		6	6	5.67	0.34	0.47
2.	6	6	5	6		4	7	5.367	0.83	0.74
3.	5	6	7	6		6	6	6.00	0	0.58
4.	7	7	7	6		7	7	6.83	0.83	0.37
5.	4	5	6	4		6	5	5.00	0.67	0.82
6.	7	6	6	6		5	7	6.17	0.50	0.69
7.	5	6	4	5		4	7	5.17	0	1.07
8.	5	5	5	6		5	7	5.50	0.33	0.76
9.	6	6	4	7		3	6	5.33	0.66	1.37
10.	5	5	5	5		4	6	5.00	0.50	0.58
11.	6	5	4	7		6	7	5.83	0	1.07
12.	7	7	6	4		7	6	6.33	0.67	0.75
13.	6	6	5	6		6	7	6.00	0.83	0.58
14.	6	6	5	4		5	5	5.33	0.60	0.47
15.	5	4	6	6		5	7	5.50	0.33	0.96
16.	6	7	4	7		6	6	6.00	-0.67	1.00
17.	7	6	5	5		6	6	5.86	0.19	0.69

APPENDIX K

Written Responses

Table 3

Connectedness with God	
location	expressed as
0557-1-6	experienced presence in church [Sunday school]
6303-2-4	"God to enfold me, God to surround me." It reminded me of a song saying, "When you're alone, you're not really alone." I had an extra coat on today (God).
2167-2-5	realization that God was in the space as the words from "Light My Fire" came into my head
6303-3-7	While taking my shower this morning, God spoke to me. The water was cold and I was shaking and complaining. He said, "Don't panic." The words stuck with me and my day proceeded with so much less stress.
2167-4-2	think that the lyrics that came into my head are put there through the power of God—today "Gloria Patri"
6303-4-5	God's voice was very direct this morning. I was walking away from a situation that made me uncomfortable. Suddenly he said, "Go back."
3623-2-5R	spent time relaxing in God's presence
6303-2-3R	draw us closer to God [conversation]
2167-4-6R	trying to be open to God's presence—powerful
3623-6-5R	returned to the Father just as the Prodigal Son, weak and helpless, on my own

Table 4

Connectedness with Others	
location	expressed as
0557-1-7	help me confide in others when I experience struggles

Table 4

4037-1-1	kind words and advice of nurse who gave a prayer to take with me; comforted me
3623-1-5	saw God in children and parents at work
3623-1-5	saw God's love in a friend and felt it in our talk and time together
2167-1-1	got an e-mail from a friend that I haven't seen since the end of July . . . filled a need and seemed like a work of God
2167-1-2	looked at people—realized how special they are in individual ways
2167-1-5	saw God in people who mean so much to me and inspire me
6303-1-1	God overwhelmed me—feel compassion and sympathy for [lab partner]
4037-1-1	Someone reminded me of the many blessings in my life for which I should be happy.
4037-2-3	a person I ran into
3623-2-1	discussion with classmates
3623-2-1	learned that my roommates are full of surprises and its [sic] good to have them around—God's blessing my prayers that we will get along
6303-2-2	saw him in a person today—a stranger who walked down the street
3623-3-5	presence of friends
3623-3-5	listened to others
3623-3-7	great group meeting
0787-3-4	thought of having God help me to look out for my friends and loved ones who live with me
3623-4-3	tenderness in a friend who wordlessly went along to the hospital to comfort a friend in pain
3623-4-4	protection of a friend helping me to find my way
3623-4-4	God sent a new friend into my life with words of encouragement
3623-4-5	remembered the joy of romantic love
3623-4-6	bonding with youth
2167-4-5	love of family is one of the most amazing gifts from God
3623-5-1	missed a friend—found he was thinking of me too

Table 4

3623-5-4	presence of friends
3623-5-6	thoughts of home
2167-5-2	good conversation with mom and she reassured me about doubts
6303-5-4	Got an E-mail from a [distant] friend asking for prayer. In a prayer we again connected. We have a common, unbreakable bond—the body of Christ.
6303-5-6	I went back to a church I used to play piano for. With every hug I received strength to carry on.
2167-6-1	generosity of others
2167-6-4	God working though roommate
2167-6-5,6	friends, old and new
3623-6-3	friendships and laughter
3623-6-4	felt needs of those around me and prayed for them
6303-6-5	(I) saw a picture of a malnourished child in my biology book. I thought, “Jesus loves her too.” I wanted to tell her that and rock her back and forth in my arms and show her love.
4037-1-1R	thank God for chances to comfort and help others
3623-1-5R	reaching beyond myself to interact with them
3623-1-5R	making peace with my friend
2167-1-2R	tried to make eye contact with everyone I met
2167-1-4R	making new connections with people
6303-2-2R	smiled in the eyes of God’s creation, though I did not know him
6303-2-3R	drew us closer together (conversation)
3623-2-1R	discussed spirituality with a friend
3623-2-3R	spent time with friends instead of doing homework
3623-2-6R	sent E mails and prayed for friends as I did
0787-3-7R	I was gardening with my dad and wanted to show him this prayer.
3623-3-1R	put people above studying - shared insights

Table 4

3623-3-3R	ministered through listening
2167-4-1R	interacting with others - receiving and giving kindness
3623-5-5R	bonded with roommates
2167-5-2R	being as open with her as she was with me
3623-6-3R	made people a priority

Table 5

Connectedness with Creation	
location	expressed as
2167-2-1	audible noise of wind—as if God was physically surrounding me in a way I could tangibly sense
2167-2-2	noticed colors—finding through my senses that God really is in everything
2167-2-3	realized that God is in everything—even manic squirrels
6303-4-6	I woke up early to meet the sun and the Son. There was compassionate silence that I really needed.
3623-1-2R	with love for creation
2167-2-1R	realizing this [God surrounding in the wind]

Table 6

Realize Greatness of God	
location	expressed as
0557-1-5	reminded of God's presence in history—amazed that of all the people that have lived God knows all of them
3623-2-5	different religious perspectives of my friends—God seems so much bigger to me to encompass that
4037-2-5	felt very small as I sat beneath the stars

Table 6

6303-2-3	conversation with my roommate—wonder at His power and creativity in making us. I was studying genetics and could not help exclaiming, “How did he do that?”
6303-3-3	I experienced God’s protection today.
0878-4-5	Each particle, each piece of life, fits like a puzzle together, and God is the one who puts the pieces together.
2167-6-2	prayers really are answered
6303-3-1R	think about change and how God is unwavering and a constant source of help and comfort. Yet he changes—he reveals more of himself to me—a new mystery solved.

Table 7

Praise and Thanksgiving	
location	expressed as
0557-1-3	feeling thankful workshop was over
6303-5-1	thanked God for each part of my sandwich and for good crops that made it possible
0557-1-2R	praised God we got everything done
0557-1-3R	thanked God the project was completed
0557-1-4R	thanked him for the beautiful day and being alive
4037-1-1R	thank God for chances to comfort and help others
4037-1-1R	thanked for many blessings for which I should be happy
3623-1-2R	praise for the beautiful weather
2167-1-2R	grateful [for special people]
2167-1-2R	thanked God
2167-1-5R	grateful
2167-1-6R	thanked God for friends and family
2167-2-5R	grateful to realize God in space

Table 7

6303-2-4R	sang a song as thanks [remembering “When You’re Alone, You’re not Really Alone”]
3623-3-2R	attitude of wonder, prayer, and praise
3623-3-7R	expressed thanks and praise
6303-3-6R	I don’t know how he did it, but neither does it matter—just thanks.
2167-4-2R	rejoiced in remembering “Gloria Patri”
2167-5-7R	thankful for God’s blessings
6303-5-1R	Thanked God for each part of my sandwich and for good crops that made it possible.
2167-6-4R	thank God for working though roommate
3623-6-6R	attitude of wonder, praise and prayer

Table 8

Acknowledging Rebellion and Asking Forgiveness	
location	expressed as
0557-1-2	So busy today that I barely thought about God—not a good way to live. I was worried about finishing up work for a job—helping a professor get ready for a workshop.
0557-1-7	realized have unresolved issues of maladaptive ways of behaving
0557-1-7	don’t confide in others about things that bother me
3623-1-1	really didn’t let God be present in my life today—I’ve rushed around, frustration and stress mounting and fell into bed, exhausted and cranky.
6303-1-5	I did not feel like myself today and I couldn’t find God. I know he was there but I guess I didn’t feel like looking for Him or listening to Him.
3623-3-4	have felt a little distant from God—things just seem a little too easy right now (what a problem to have . . .)
2167-3-6	I don’t have anything written—because in all honesty I haven’t been focusing on looking for or being open to God’s presence. I am disappointed in myself.

Table 8

6303-4-4	I was convicted today. In my selfishness I was envious of my friends because I didn't feel important to them. I mentally accused them of being a "bad friend." I soon realized that I was a bad friend.
3623-4-7	Ugh—I feel like I have nothing to give—God has hardly been on my agenda today.
0878-4-1	Perhaps I haven't been focusing enough on how I respond or experience God's presence each day.
0878-4-2	Too much work to think about anything else much
6303-5-4	Talking to an acquaintance that I . . . thought had no serious thoughts in their head. . . . God proved me wrong.
2167-6-3	treated friend badly—blocked God's presence so concerned with my own needs and wants and put them before God and my friend
6303-3-2R	I'm afraid of what things would happen if I gave myself to prayer. I'm afraid that something would change and I wouldn't be able to handle it.
3623-3-3R	not very well—I've been catty with one roommate

Table 9

Worship	
location	expressed as
2167-6-5,6	God's people worshipping together
3623-2-4R	opened myself to worship

Table 10

Prayer	
location	expressed as
4037-1-6	asked God to help me in my time of need
6303-2-6	In prayer I replaced "give me" with "bless me" and felt more sacred. He was giving me more than a gift. I received a blessing. It almost felt like I needed to take care of it a little more.

Table 10

6303-3-5	prayed for others
6303-3-6	prayer for healing in relationships
6303-4-3	prayer
6303-4-6	prayer
3603-5-2	prayer
3623-6-6	attitude of wonder, praise, and prayer
6303-1-1R	asked for opportunities to show him compassion
0557-1-7R	In prayer I asked God to help me to be able to confide in someone when I'm experiencing a significant struggle.
6303-2-1R	prayer to show me how to glorify you, how to make you happy by my life
6303-3-2R	attitude of wonder, prayer, and praise
0878-5-3R	I like the idea of writing a prayer about raking leaves or turning on a light or catching a leaf as it falls.
3623-6-4R	felt needs of those around me and prayed for them

Table 11

Awareness of God-given Abilities	
location	expressed as
3623-1-3	felt God in the day I was molding
3623-1-6	realized one of the gifts God has given me

Table 12

Being Led by God/Specific call	
location	expressed as
4037-1-5	reflect on what God is trying to show me

Table 12

4037-1-7	God telling me something? [bottle returning]
3623-2-4	God great insight for youth lesson
6303-4-3	God sent me encouragement in a way that I never would have expected.
6303-4-5	God's voice was very direct this morning. I was walking away from a situation that made me uncomfortable. Suddenly he said, "Go back."
6303-4-7	God opened a door today. I was able to tell a friend that I would see [dead] loved ones again.
3623-4-6	hike-like spiritual journey
3623-6-1	I feel like I have little direction and yet I know God is guiding me step by step.
6303-4-5R	I did and took a big step toward making the situation not so uncomfortable for me.

Table 13

Sense of Well-being–Freedom, Peace, Capacity for Sacrifice	
location	expressed as
0557-1-4	Glad that it's Friday
2167-1-2	in being alive and have the ability to walk and enjoy campus
2167-1-3	calmed by listening, smelling rain
6303-1-2	He was in laughter–God was there to share with me.
6303-1-3	God was in silence–comfort in knowing he was there–comfort and love
6303-1-6	with me all day–singing kids' songs
3623-3-1	woke up rested and had relatively free morning–a gift from God
3623-3-3	lots of laughter
6303-3-2	I'm so excited that I know, turning that over to God makes my load lighter.
3623-4-1	I am at peace.

Table 13

2167-4-1	felt loved by God in a more noticeable way than usual
2167-4-6	felt real spiritual calm focusing on Celtic prayer
3623-5-2	moments of random and unexpected joy
3623-5-5	feel blessed in my place in life and the person I'm becoming
2167-6-5,6	retreat restfulness
3623-6-4	felt God in the least likely place—a crowded, loud, smokey dance floor and knew that I was protected
0557-1-1R	remembered Jesus's words about worrying—God is trying to remind me not to worry so about the future that I don't act in the present.
0557-1-5R	joy, peace, and wonder at the beauty of nature and God's presence throughout history
2167-1-2R	satisfied
6303-1-4R	Gave everything to him and felt true freedom
2167-2-4R	allowed self to completely relax and felt something very special when I read the words, "I have called you by name"
3623-5-4R	took time to rest and just be

Table 14

Respond to Nature's Glory	
location	expressed as
0557-1-1	reminded of God's presence by enjoying nature—sky and trees beautiful
0557-1-4	it's lovely outside—beautiful weather and changing trees—an inspiration
0557-1-5	beautiful views
3623-1-2	beautiful weather
2167-1-1	joy at night sky
6303-1-4	magnificent [at beach]
2167-1-2	realized how vivid the colors are
2167-1-5	absolute majesty of nature

Table 14

4037-2-4	watched beautiful sunset
4037-2-5	felt small as I sat beneath stars
3623-2-6	sun peaking through the clouds—symbolic of God’s presence
6303-3-1	I smelled God in autumn tonight.
2167-3-3	beautiful sky—beauty of God’s creation
2167-3-7	God created the seasons.
2167-4-4	take in the beauty of the mountains that surround me
2167-6-5,6	on retreat—leaves, mountains, wind
2167-7-1	see sky full of stars can’t see on campus
2167-7-7	saw moon in afternoon
2167-4-4R	In awe of different aspects of God’s creation
2167-7-7R	think of wonder at God’s creation

Table 15

God’s Acting	
location	expressed as
2167-1-1	Got an email [sic] from a friend that I haven’t seen since the end of July—filled a need and seemed like a work of God
3623-2-2	I was almost involved in an accident and God protected me.
3623-4-2	felt unsure about class decision and then a new and better opportunity opened up

Table 16

Motivation to Action	
location	expressed as
3623-1-4	read more
3623-1-6R	devote more time to using and refining my gift
2167-1-5R	able to focus energy to get a job done
0557-1-6R	I need to improve my spiritual [life?].
4037-1-7R	need to trust God with what I bring to him in prayer
3623-2-2R	trying not to limit God by my attitudes
0878-3-3R	volunteered to do study [on Celtic Christianity]
3623-4-1R	working on my attitudes
6303-4-2R	It's been my mission to spread encouragement around.
6303-4-4R	I'm hoping to work on being a biblical friend-loving at all times.
3623-5-4R	tried to have meaningful devotion
0878-5-6R	thinking about goals for religion-how can I be more religious?
3623-6-2R	remembered my body is a temple and I need to take care of it
3623-6-3R	made people a priority

Table 17

Brought to Mind	
location	expressed as
0557-1-6	realize God should be integrated into all aspects of life
4037-1-1	reflect on my health
4037-1-1	reminded of blessings for which I should be happy
3623-1-4	thinking about what word meant to first century Christians
2167-1-3	seemed that God is in everything-even what we complain about
2167-1-4	noticed trees-seemed majestic

Table 17

2167-1-5	majesty of nature
4037-2-6	pastor reaffirmed something I already knew: If we do the small things we can entrust God with the great things
2167-2-4	struck by idea of prayer as an attitude
3623-2-1	saw connections between events in my life and God's plan for me
3623-3-6	lots of revelations [during] healing service
0878-3-2	God always seemed to be floating in space to me. Now I see God or Jesus could be with me at the computer even
6303-3-2	figured out why my prayer life is so superficial. True prayer required the whole self
6303-3-5	God was acting in my life today, but I only saw him in retrospect. . . . I don't know how he did it, but neither does it matter.
6303-3-7	I wonder how exasperated he must be with me when I act stupidly and don't listen to what he's promised me.
2167-4-1	realized again that God does answer prayer
3623-5-3	theological revelations
3623-6-2	realized I haven't been taking care of myself and went to work out; It was the greatest spiritual experience I've had all week.
0557-1-6R	reflected on lessons/topics of church
3623-5-3R	thoughts on God

Table 18

Feeling Joy, Happiness	
location	expressed as
6303-1-2	He was in laughter—God was there to share with me.
3623-3-3	lots of laughter
3623-5-2	moments of random and unexpected joy
2167-1-6R	happy

Table 18

0557-1-5R	joy and happiness and wonder at the beauty of nature and God's presence throughout history
-----------	--

Table 19

Silence	
6303-1-3	God was in silence—comfort of knowing he was there when I needed him
3623-2-7R	listened instead of filling silence
3623-4-4R	kept my mouth shut
3623-5-6R	spent time listening

Table 20

Other	
location	expressed as
3623-1-3	felt God in the day I was molding as the unknown objective took shape
3623-1-3	sharing my thoughts aloud
3623-2-4	Went to Christian concert and felt like I was the only one there
3623-3-2	granted free time, asked to read paper in class and received unexpected check
3623-3-5	preparations for party
2167-5-7	theater experience turned from bad to positive
2167-6-5,6	music
3623-6-5	read <i>Return of the Prodigal Son</i> by Henri Nouwen which touched me deeply and showed me where I am in my own journey
3623-6-7	Holocaust Museum
3623-4-5R	lost cynicism
3623-5-1R	didn't obsess about dirty dishes roommate left

Table 20

3623-6-1R	reflection and exercise
-----------	-------------------------

WORKS CITED

- Allchin, A. M., and Esther de Waal. *Daily Readings from Prayers and Praises in the Celtic Tradition*. Springfield, IL: Templegate, 1986.
- Allen, Clifton J., ed. *The Broadman Bible Commentary*. Nashville: Broadman P, 1969.
- Balentine, Samuel E. *The Hidden God: The Hiding of the Face of God in the Old Testament*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983.
- Baloche, Paul. "Open the Eyes of My Heart, Lord." Integrity's Hosannah! Music. Mobine, AL: Integrity Music, 1997.
- Beda, Venerabilis. *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. Eds. Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors. London: Oxford UP, 1969.
- Brokaw, Beth Fletcher, and Keith J. Edwards. "The Relationship of God Image to Level of Object Relations Development." *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 22:4 (1994): 352-367.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *Genesis*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1982.
- Bulloch, James. *The Life of the Celtic Church*. Edinburgh: St. Andrew P, 1963.
- Bunn, John T. "Ezekiel." Allen 223-371.
- Buttrick, George Authur, ed. *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1962.
- Byrne, Mary, trans. "Be Thou My Vision." *Baptist Hymnal*. Ed. William J. Reynolds. Nashville: Convention P, 1975.
- Cagney, Mary. "Patrick the Saint." *Christian History* 17.4 (1998): 10-15.
- Cahill, P. Joseph. "Celtic Christianity: A Different Drum." *Religious Studies and Theology* 12 Jan (1992): 9-23.
- Chadwick, Nora. *The Age of the Saints in the Early Celtic Church*. London: Oxford UP, 1961.
- . *The Celts*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1970.
- Collins, Kenneth J. "What is Spirituality? Historical and Methodological Considerations." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 31:1 (1996): 76-94.
- Cunliffe, Barry. *The Ancient Celts*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997.

Davies, Oliver, and Fiona Bowie, ed. *Celtic Christian Spirituality: An Anthology of Medieval and Modern Sources*. New York: Continuum Publishing, 1995.

De Paor, Liam. *Saint Patrick's World: The Christian Culture of Ireland's Apostolic Age*. Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame P, 1993.

de Waal, Esther, ed. *The Celtic Vision*. Petersham, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 1988.

---. *The Celtic Way of Prayer*. New York: Doubleday, 1997.

---. "The Extraordinary in the Ordinary." *Weavings* 2.3 (1987): 6-15.

---. *God under My Roof*. Fairacres, Oxford: SLG P, 1984.

Dodd, C. H. *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1932.

Dunham, Sean B. "Caesar's Perception of Gallic Social Structures." *Celtic Chieftdom, Celtic State: The Evolution of Complex Social Systems in Prehistoric Europe*. Eds. Bettina Arnold and D. Blair Gibdon. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995. 110-115.

Edwards, David L. *Christian England*. New York: Oxford UP, 1980.

Ellis, Peter Berresford. *The Celtic Empire: First Millennium of Celtic History, 1000 B.C. to 51 A.D.* London: Constable and Company, 1990.

Eluère, Christiane. *The Celts: Conquerors of Ancient Rome*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993.

"Every Celtic Thing on the Web." n.d. 23 April 1999 <www.celt.net/og/ethmyst.html>.

Faulkenbury, Tom. "Celtic Christian Spirituality." Adapted from an article in *The Celtic Fire* 1.3. 23 Apr. 1999 <<http://baste.magibox.net/~greymonk/celtic.htm>>.

Fiaich, Tomás Ó. "Irish Monks on the Continent." Mackey 101-139.

Finegan, J. "Illyricum." Buttrick 681.

Foster, Richard J. *Celebration of Discipline*. New York: Harper, 1978.

Fowler, James W. *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984.

- Gray, Madeleine. "Walking to the Well: the Gallo-Roman Healing Shrine at Fontes Sequanae (Burgundy) and the Role of the Well as a Pilgrimage Focus in Celtic Spirituality." Univ. of Wales, Lampeter; Lampeter Celtic Christian Summer School, Carmarthen, Wales. 22 June 1999.
- Hall, M. Elizabeth Lewis. "Religious Experience Questionnaire." *Measures of Religiosity*. Eds. Peter C. Hill and Ralph W. Hood, Jr. Birmingham: Religious Education P, 1999. 218-220.
- Hardinge, Leslie. *The Celtic Church in Britain*. London: S. P. C. K., 1972.
- Hinson, E. Glenn. *Seekers after Mature Faith*. Nashville: Broadman, 1968.
- Holt, Bradley P. *Thirsty for God*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993.
- Honeycutt, Roy L. "Exodus" Allen 289-456.
- Humphreys, Fisher. *The Nature of God*. Nashville: Broadman, 1984.
- Hunter, George G., III. *How Ancient Celtic Christians Reclaimed the West*. Audiocassette. 1999 Congress on Evangelism. Bethany, OK: Audio Enterprises.
- Joyce, Timothy. *Celtic Christianity: A Sacred Tradition, A Vision of Hope*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998.
- Knudsen, Johannes. "Celtic Christianity" *Dialogue* 22 (Winter 1983): 56-59.
- Lawrence, Brother. *The Practice of the Presence of God*. Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1958.
- Leatham, Diana. *Celtic Sunrise: An Outline of Celtic Christianity*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1951.
- . *They Built on Rock*. Glasgow: Celtic Art Society, 1948.
- Leclercq, Dom Jean, Dom François Vandenbroucke, and Louis Bouyer. *A History of Christian Spirituality*. Vol 2. London: Burns & Oates, 1986.
- Leech, Kenneth. *Experiencing God*. San Francisco: Harper, 1985.
- Lightfoot, J. B. *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1981.
- MacCulloch, J. A. *The Religion of the Ancient Celts*. London: Constable and Co., 1991.
- Mackey, James P., ed. *An Introduction to Celtic Christianity*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995.

- Macquarrie, John. "Celtic Christianity." *Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*. Ed. Gordon S. Wakefield. Philadelphia: Westminster P, 1983. 83-84.
- Márkus, Gilbert. "Rooted in the Tradition." *Christian History* 17.4 (1998):19-21.
- Mattingly, Terry. "Searching for Celtic Spirituality," n.d. 23 Apr. 1999
<www.textnews.com/1998/religion/matt0314.html>.
- Mayr-Harting, Henry. *The Coming of Christianity to England*. New York: Schocken Books, 1972.
- McNeill, John T. *The Celtic Churches: A History A.D. 200 to 1200*. Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1974.
- Meek, Donald E. "Modern Celtic Christianity: The Contemporary 'Revival' and Its Roots." *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 10.1 (1992): 6-31.
- . "Modern Myths of the Medieval Past." *Christian History* 17.4 (1998): 42-44.
- Meisel, Anthony C., and M. L. del Mastro. *The Rule of St. Benedict*. New York: Image Books, 1975.
- Meissner, John L. Gough. *The Celtic Church in England after the Synod of Whitby*. London: Martin Hopkinson, 1929.
- Mellink, M. J. "Galatians." Buttrick 338-343.
- Metzger, Bruce, and Roland E. Murphy. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible—New Revised Standard Version*. New York: Oxford UP, 1991.
- Moorman, John R. H. *A History of the Church in England*. New York: Morehouse-Barlow, 1967.
- Muilenburg, J. "Ezekiel." *Peck's Commentary on the Bible*. Ed. Matthew Black and H. H. Rowley. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1962. 569-590.
- Mulhern, Kathy. "The Festive Abbess." *Christian History* 17.4 (1998): 30-31.
- Muto, Susan, and Adrian van Kaam. *Practicing the Prayer of Presence*. Mineola, NY: Resurrection P, 1993.
- Nachmias, David, and Chava Nachmias. *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. New York: St. Martin's P, 1981.
- Newell, J. Phillip. *Listening for the Heartbeat of God: A Celtic Spirituality*. New York: Paulist P, 1997.

- Nicholson, M. Forthomme. "Celtic Theology: Pelagius." Mackey 386-413.
- O'Donoghue, N. D. "St Patrick's Breastplate." Mackey 45-63.
- O'Laoghaire, Diarmuid. "Daily Intimacy with God—an Ever New Aspect of Celtic Worship." *Studia Liturgica* 13.1 (1979): 46-56.
- . "Insular Traditions: Celtic Spirituality." *The Study of Spirituality*. Ed. Cheslyn Jones and Geoffrey Wainwright. New York: Oxford UP, 1986, 216-225.
- Park, Alan. "In the Secret." Mercy Vineyard Publishing. Anaheim: Vineyard Music Group, 1995.
- Pavlac, Ross. "Celtic Christianity." *Avenging Aardvark's Aeire*. 16 Sept 1996. 21 Mar 1999 <<http://www.swinggirl.com/~mpavlac/celtic.htm>>.
- Peterson, Eugene, and Steve Moore. "Spiritual Formation on the Campus." *The Ivy Jungle Report* Summer (1994): 1-2.
- Polybius. *The Histories*, Vol 1. Trans. W. R. Paton. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1922.
- Richardson, Hilary. "Celtic Art." Mackey 359-385.
- Riché, Pierre. "Spirituality in Celtic and Germanic Society." *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century*. Eds. Benard McGinn, John Meyendorff, and Jean Leclercq. New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1986. 163-176.
- Ross, Anne. *Everyday Life of the Pagan Celts*. London: B. T. Batsford, 1970.
- "The Royal Charter of 1693 of the College of William and Mary in Virginia." *The Laws of the British Plantations in America, Relating to the Church and the Clergy, Religion and Learning*. London: Nicholas Trot, 1721. Rpt in *The Royal Charter of 1693*. Williamsburg, VA: The College of William and Mary, 1993.
- Schilling, S. Paul. *God in an Age of Atheism*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1969.
- Schmiel, Mary Aileen. "The Finest Music in the World: Exploring Celtic Spiritual Legacies." *Western Spirituality: Historical Roots, Ecumenical Routes*. Ed. Matthew Fox. Notre Dame: Fides Chlorothen, 1979. 164-192.
- Schwandt, Thomas A. *Qualitative Inquiry: A Dictionary of Terms*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1997.
- Sellner, Edward C. *Wisdom of the Celtic Saints*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria P, 1993.

- Simpson, Ray. *Exploring Celtic Spirituality*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995.
- Skinner, John, trans. *The Confession of Saint Patrick and Letter to Coroticus*. New York: Doubleday, 1998.
- Stewart, R. J. *Celtic Gods, Celtic Goddesses*. London: Blandford, 1990.
- Time-Life Books. *What Life Was Like among Druids and High Kings: Celtic Ireland A.D. 400-1200*. Alexandria, VA: 1998.
- Urdike, John. *In the Beauty of the Lilies*. New York: Knopf, 1996.
- Wallace, T. G. *Our Debt to the Celtic Church*. London, Ontario: n.p., 1954.
- Wiersma, William. *Research Methods in Education: An Introduction*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995.
- Wilkinson, Loren. "Circles and the Cross: Reflections on Neo-paganism, Postmodernity, and Celtic Christianity." *CRUX* 32.4 (1996): 15-23.

