



Summer School 2010

April 22, 2010

SP104: ANCIENT (CELTIC) GIFTS FOR MODERN TIMES

John Bell of the Iona Community

July 5-9, 2010. 1:30 – 4:30 pm

Course Purpose

The Course is designed to enable students to have a historical perspective on the various strands of tradition which contribute to what is currently called ‘Celtic Spirituality,’ and to recognise in these theological, aesthetic and devotional insights and practices which may be advantageous to ministry and belief in the churches today.

Competence objectives, expectations and evaluations

All class participants are expected to meet the following criteria:

- 1) Have a familiarity with Carmina Gadelica or another compendium of English translations of Gaelic poems and songs of Christian devotion and with How the Irish Saved Civilisation or another book which offers a historical overview.
- 2) Attend all five sessions of the course.
- 3) Participate in classwork and discussions.

Class Outline

Monday: Voices from the Periphery

An overview of the historical context in which the Celtic Tradition finds its roots, and how that challenges contemporary church life.

Tuesday The Celtic Use and Understanding of Holy Scripture

How did the Celts who were illiterate understand the Bible and enable it to address their private and corporate lives?

Wednesday Ecology as Doxology

The Celtic relationship to nature is not ‘New Age,’ though sometimes taken as such. It represents a much deeper biblical pedigree.

Thursday The Practical Concomitants of the Incarnation

John’s Gospel, the favourite of the Celts celebrates the incarnate Christ. But they saw this not simply as a theological insight, but as a dynamic for living.

Friday Celtic Prayer

This tradition may have one of the antidotes for people who find cerebral and liturgical prayer less than satisfying.

REMINDER: Students please make your own arrangements for acquisition of the summer school required texts through your **local bookstores**. Online bookstores such as Indigo.ca or Amazon.ca might have competitive prices with fast shipping to your neighbourhood. VST will NOT pre-order titles.

Required Reading: *'Required books and readings, as available, will be on reserve in the Library'*

Please be familiar with the content of one book from each section before the course begins. Should they be unavailable in Canada, it may be possible to find another with similar content.

a) Historical Perspective (* These should be the most easily available in Canada)

*HOW THE IRISH SAVED CIVILISATION by Thomas Cahill (Anchor Books) ISBN 0-385-41849-3

EARLY CELTIC CHRISTIANITY by Brendan Lehane (Constable & Company, London) ISBN 0 09 474490 4

SUN AND CROSS by Jacob Streit (Floris books) ISBN 0 -86315-010-1

b) Celtic Poetry from the Oral Tradition

*CARMINA GADELICA by Alexander Carmichael (Floris Books) ISBN 0-86315-520-0

THE CELTIC VISION by Esther de Waal (Darton, Longman & Todd) ISBN 0-232-51811-4

CELTIC CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY by Oliver Davies & Fiona Bowie (SPCK) ISBN 0-281-04765-0

c) Celtic Life and Faith

COLONIES OF HEAVEN by Ian Bradley (Darton, Longman & Todd) ISBN 0-232-52337-1

INVISIBLE WE SEE YOU by Nancy Cocks (Wild Goose Publications) ISBN 9781905010295,
(Novalis) ISBN 2895076057

CELTIC THREADS by Padraigh Clancy (Veritas) ISBN 1-85390-499-6

John L. Bell is a hymn writer, author, and member and employee of the Iona Community.