





2018 NATIONAL ALUMNI GATHERING

Spiritual Practices for the Long Haul

LIDLAW
COLLEGE
TE WANANGA AMORANGI

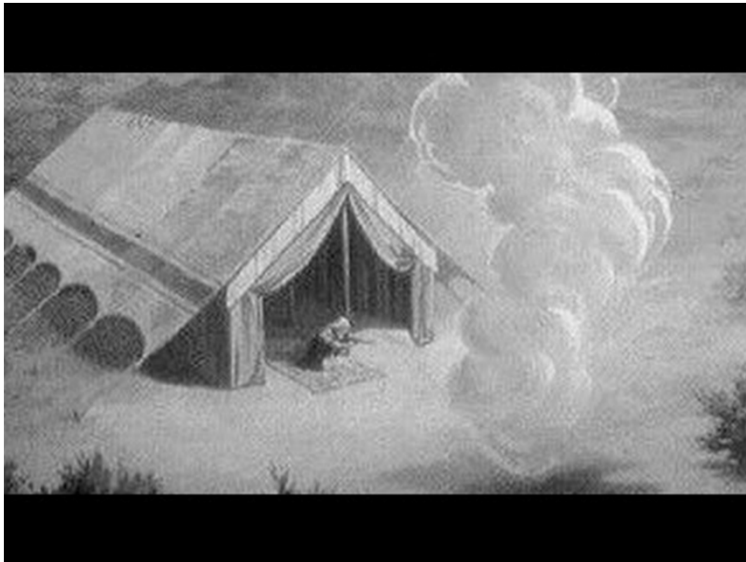
LIDLAW ALUMNI GATHERINGS

Looking forward to hearing from long-time Laidlaw lecturers Tim Meadowcroft and David Crawley at our upcoming Alumni Gatherings in August (4th in Auckland, 11th in Christchurch). They'll be sharing their wisdom with us as we look at how to sustain and nurture our faith over a life-long call to follow Jesus.

If you're an alumni of this College, you are MOST WELCOME!

More details at: <https://www.laidlaw.ac.nz/events/alumni-gathering-aki-2018>

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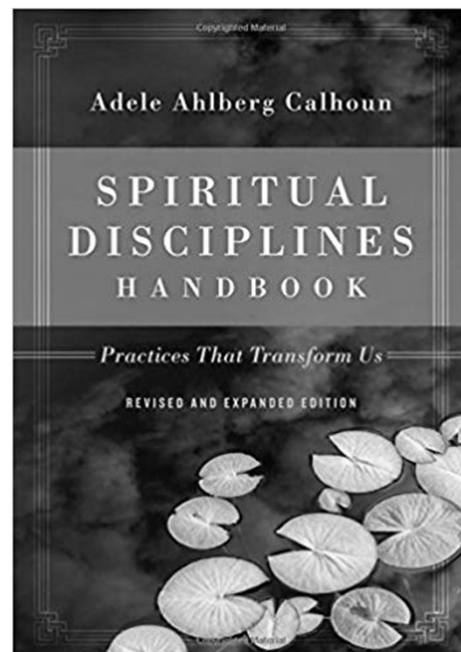
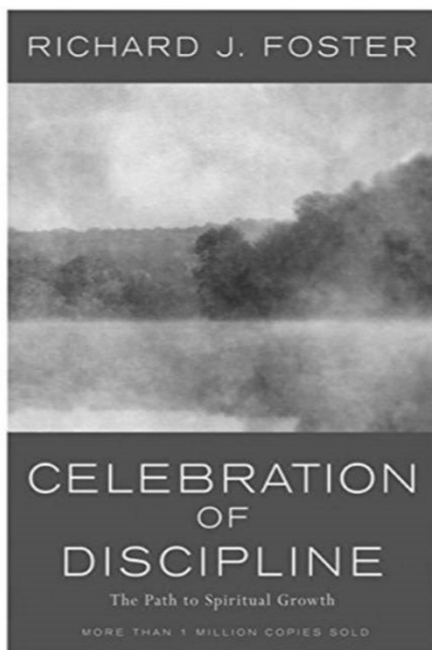
“The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend.”
(Exodus 33:11)



"Spiritual disciplines"

"Quiet time"

"Devotions"



‘Greening’

A metaphor for
spiritual wellbeing

Hildegard of Bingen
(b. 1098)



Viriditas = ‘greening’

The principle of vitality that is at work in all of creation:
Viriditas “causes the grasses to laugh with the joy of life”



Turn to your neighbour and briefly share one thing that you know to be a greening thing for you, and one thing that dries you out.



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The principle of vitality that is at work in all of creation:
Viriditas "causes the grasses to laugh with the joy of life"



A sample of practices from some (36) long-haulers ...



Personal/devotional practices

Prayer/listening to God	17
Bible reading/meditation/memorisation	16
Worship/listening to worship music	9
Journalling	6
Regular retreats/quiet days	5
Spiritual input (books, podcasts, conferences, etc)	7
Time in silence	1
Regular fasting	1

Relational practices

Investing in supportive relationships	25
Having a mentor/spiritual director/supervisor	11

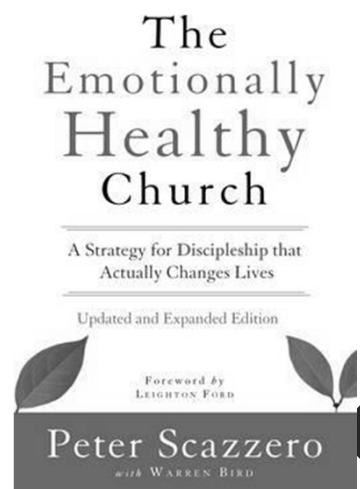
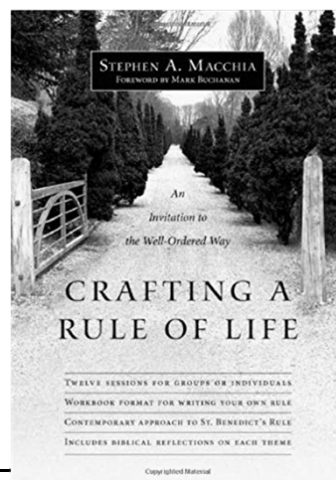
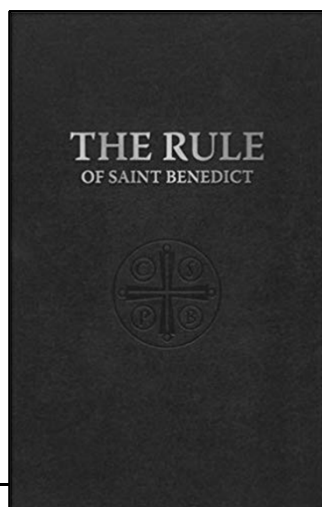
Self-care/Whole person needs

Self-care/making time for personal needs	11
Regular rest/Sabbath	6
Walking in nature/prayer walking	8

World-engaging practices

Gardening/Earth care	4
Hospitality	2
Practising the presence of God in all things	1
Other	1

Developing a personal 'rule of life'



Developing a personal 'rule of life'

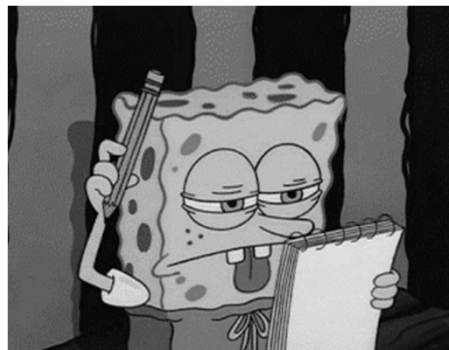
Not as in legalistic rules ...

... but as in commitment to a set of rhythms/practices for your life.

A spacious yet stable structure (like a trellis) that supports growth, greening and fruitfulness.

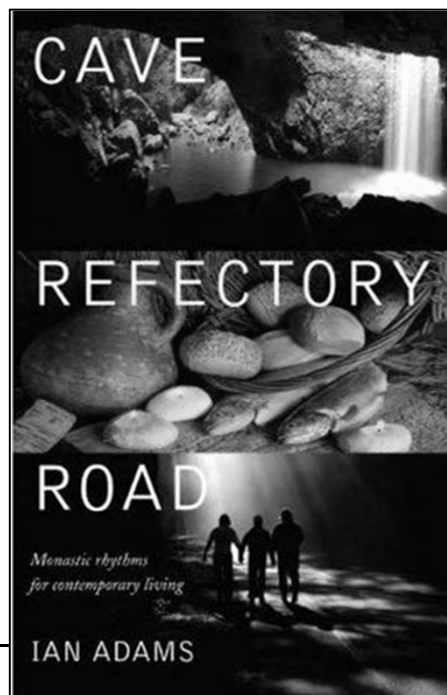


What are (or have been) the regular practices that support your own greening and fruitfulness?



What are (or have been) the regular practices that support your own greening and fruitfulness?

If you were going to select 3 or 4 of these practices, to be the core of your own personal rule of life, what would they be?



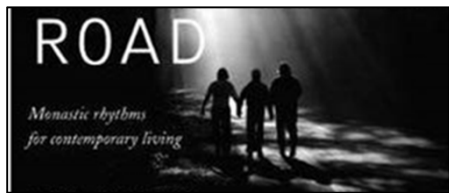


The idea of the cave in the monastic tradition teaches us that there will be seasons of life, moments in our routine, times of the day, when we need to strip from ourselves all that clutters, comforts and soothes us. (Adams, p19)

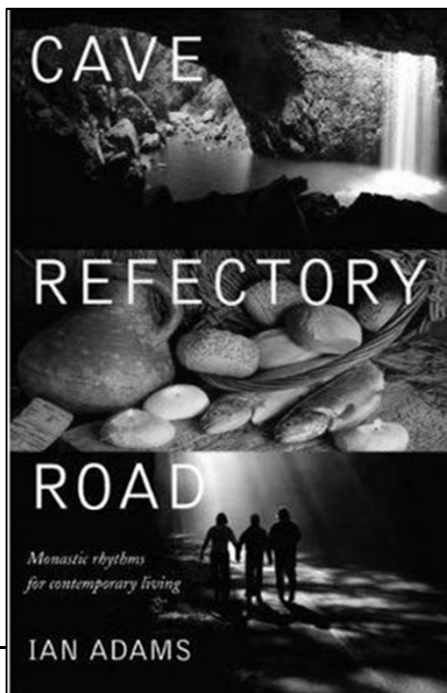
Why is it so important that you are with God and God alone ...? It's important because it's the place in which you can listen to the voice of the One who calls you the beloved. (Nouwen, 81)



And so there is progression and flow in the monastic way; from the cave – place of grounding, self-recovery, God discovery; to the refectory – place of hospitality, reconciliation and energy for our wider communities. (Adams, 30)



I recommend walking. If you can, wherever you live and work, start to walk. And be open to the possibility of encounter. This will sometimes feel like a gift, at other times it will be demanding. On the road we meet whoever comes our way.
(Adams, 38)



Solitude [S]



Community [C]



Ministry/
mission [M]

(Henri Nouwen)

With this in mind, look again at your own list of practices.

For each put S (solitude), C (community) or M (ministry/mission) alongside.

(Some may fit more than one category).

How is the balance looking?

Unforced rhythms of grace



	Daily	Weekly	Monthly/ Quarterly	Annually
Solitude Personal spiritual life & self-care	Meditation on Scripture and prayer. Go the gym, 3-4 times a week.	30 minutes being in silence. Bush or beach walk by myself.	Meet with spiritual director each month. Quiet day every two months (fast sometimes).	Retreat for at least 3 days, or a conference. Follow church calendar, e.g. Lent.
Community Investing in important relationships	Grace at meals, prayers with children at bed time.	Attend church together. Pray with spouse. Prayer partner. Life group.	Meet friend for coffee. Hospitality – new church people.	Summer camping with family and friends.
Ministry Engaging with wider community & world	Catch up on the news each morning - turn it into prayer.	Prison visiting with church group.	Give morning's voluntary work for Christian Aid.	Help run Easter youth camp. 40 hour famine.

The topography of the long haul



The topography of the long haul



In all our journeying with Christ the initiative belongs to God. The Spirit will lead us where we need to go.

It is hard to appreciate or accept this when after romping in green pastures we find ourselves in the dark valley of the desert. With no pasture land in sight, and no evidence of water, quiet or otherwise, we can stagger along ...

Outwardly everything may be fine. You can still preach, and counsel, and pray with people, and God seems to bless your endeavours. But within, there is a dry restlessness, a weary boredom and not uncommonly, a depressive fear that you may have failed God.

(John Franklin, "The Grace of the Desert")

- **Acceptance**

The desert is a place of grace and transformation that has a blessedness and beauty of its own. While we may be stripped of pleasant feelings, and all feelings of satisfaction, God has not deserted us. We learn to trust him rather than our feelings about him.

(John Franklin, "The Grace of the Desert")

- **Continue to choose God in all things** and abandon yourself utterly to his grace. "Blessed are the poor in spirit."
- **Be faithful in prayer**, for that is always a choice for God, a strengthening of the will toward him.
- **Read the Scriptures**, even if outwardly they do not seem to touch you. The work of grace is often deeper than thought or feeling.
- **Love.** Above all, this discipline must not be neglected. Love is a choice, a choice of God's way, a choice to love God for God's sake.
- **Remain connected to God's people**, even if worship brings no consoling feelings.

The desert then is a fruitful place. If God has a mind to send us there, then there are no detours or short cuts. We will be there for as long as his good providence deems necessary. If we do not run away or abandon him we will taste the fruit of insights that no amount of study can produce.

(John Franklin, "The Grace of the Desert")

