



**NEW WINE  
AND  
NEW WINESKINS**

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***Newsletter of the North American Network of  
Charismatic Covenant Communities (NAN)***



# NEW WINE AND NEW WINESKINS



## From the Editor

By Mary Ann West, Editor

The Lord has been showing me lately how very important our full response to His call to Covenant Community is to the work of the Kingdom. In fact, I believe He has been saying to me, “You need to know that your position in the Body of Christ is essential.” When hearing this, I saw a visual of the advancing Lord’s Army pouring over a hill (like in *The Lord of the Rings!*), and what it would look like if there was a huge void where covenant communities should be. There is no other part of the army to take our place!



communities. The Unity Forum, sponsored by Alleluia Community, fostered relationships between various Christian Traditions. During one of the breakout sessions, my husband Dirk and I (streaming participants) made a list of various pastors/church leaders we knew in our area and decided to be more intentional in our relationships with them. The Lord himself has opened a couple of doors, not only for us, but for another

community brother in this area. Community of God’s Love shares on a relationship between themselves and Damascus Ministry, which has been helpful in the formation of their youth, and for whom they have provided missionaries. Mother of God reports on their relationship with Encounter Ministries as a satellite campus. Other communities in our NAN family are also in relationship as satellite campuses. City of the Lord shares their growing relationships with young children within their community.

So, what is it that we have to offer our culture that is so essential? David Peterman, Jr. writes on this essential piece in this issue. The charism of Covenant Communities is our life together, our relationships. And models of healthy relationships are what we can offer our world. In the darkness and strife in society at large, in the breakdown of civil discourse, fractured families, confused personhood, we can offer what a relationship is – love, respect, giving and receiving, interest in individuals for their own sake, being vulnerable before another. In our community family relationships, we are images of God, specifically, of the love between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

It is no surprise that covenant communities would be catalysts for relationships beyond our borders as relationships are central to our call.

Bill Kohler, as usual, shares his insightful review of a book worth the read, “The Good, the Bad and the Beautiful: History in Three Dimensions” by Joseph Pearce.

The articles in the issue speak to various kinds of relationships that the Lord has opened for different

Come Holy Spirit, come. May all our relationships give you Glory, Lord!



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## From the Desk of the NAN Moderator

By David Peterman Jr., NAN Moderator



Greetings Sisters and Brothers, what a joy it is to serve the North American Network of Charismatic Covenant Communities. When I sat down to pray for the article for this newsletter, the Holy Spirit brought the word **relationships** to mind.

God created us to be social beings and to desire loving relationships, both with Him, also in loving relationships with one another. This is one of the primary reasons most of us were called into a Charismatic Community.

I believe building relationships is one of the most important reasons why He called our communities into NAN. The world, the flesh, and the devil are attacking us, our families, and our communities on all fronts. It is critical that we do not attempt to fight any of these battles by ourselves. We have strength in numbers when we gather according to His purposes!

Our communities are a place where we can experience BOTH the unconditional love of the Father and the unconditional love of like-minded sisters and brothers in the Lord. We also know that none of us are perfect, hurts occur, we do unloving things... The beauty of our communities is that they provide a safe place to

learn to love. Together, we learn to love God more each day and we learn to love one another more each day.

This leads me to why I think the Holy Spirit brought the word relationships to mind. Just as relationships are the foundation of our communities, relationships are the foundation of our network! We exist for one another. We exist to discern what God is doing in North America and to cooperate with Him. We exist to support one another in building covenant community in our day and time. We do this through His power and grace and through relying on one another across the network that He has called us into.

While it is true that much of NAN relationship development is among the leaders of our communities, so much more is possible if we reach out. This is the exhortation of this article... for every member of every NAN community to try to leverage a NAN resource, to build a relationship across NAN, to take some advantage of the power of our network to aid our individual "Yes" to whatever God is asking of us.

For specifics, consider watching videos from past conferences that are on our website. Consider contacting a leader from another NAN community who serves in a ministry like the one you serve in. Make plans to attend the 2025 Conference in person. NAN is only as

powerful as we respond to what God is about and take advantage of our relationships with one other to say "Yes" to Him!







# NEW WINE AND NEW WINE SKINS



## Hosting Unity and Renewal Forum

By Dan Almeter, Alleluia Community

From June 26 to 29, 2024, Alleluia Community hosted the first “Unity and Renewal Forum”. The steering committee consisted of Dr. David Cole, Dan Almeter, Bob Garrett, Anthony Martini, Prof. Matteo Calisi, Dr. John Gresham, Dr. Don Swenson and Fr. Timothy Cremeens.

There were several goals set by the steering committee. One was to bring hierarchy, theologians and lay people of renewal experience together in North America (a model that has been working in South America with the “We Are One” initiative.) A second goal was to focus on “receptive ecumenism”, a fairly new concept in ecumenical circles. And the third goal was to focus on scripture and early Church Fathers—called “resourcement”.

Along with steering committee members, there were a number of outstanding speakers that included Msgr. Juan Usma Gomez from the Dicastery of Christian Unity in the Vatican, Nathan Smith--a doctoral candidate who is a consultant for the USCCB, and Dr. Mark Kinzer-- a Messianic rabbi who is heavily involved in dialogue with the Catholic Church in Rome. We also were privileged to be some of the first people to watch the new documentary on Christian Unity presented by Adriana Gonzalez from Florida, that traces the New Pentecost starting at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century until now. We participated in an Orthodox paraliturgical service led by Fr. Timothy where we broke bread together.

Approximately 70 people attended the Forum in person and another 30 people participated on live stream. The talks were very beneficial to all attending. We had times of worship, repentance and prophetic words throughout the days we were together. New relationships were forged and a sense that the Holy Spirit was up to something new pervaded our time together.



The steering committee met before the end of the conference and made a commitment to have the second “Unity and Renewal Forum” in Dallas next year. The dates will be June 25-28, 2025. The theme will be to commemorate the 1700 years since the Council of Nicaea in the year 325AD—a glorious watershed moment for all of Christianity and a time of painful separation for Jewish believers in the Messiah. Everyone reading this is invited to the Forum in Dallas next year. Please pray and do spiritual warfare as the committee prepares for next year’s Forum.

Also, the talks from this year’s Forum are available on-line at [unityforum2024.org](http://unityforum2024.org). Click on the live stream button and the password is UnifyUsLord. They are un-edited.



Presenters  
Dr. John Gresham/Rabbi Mark Kinzer



# NEW WINE AND NEW WINESKINS

## On the Road with Damascus

By Paul Wherry, Community of God's Love

Like many communities, the Community of God's Love has aged and struggled with how to best minister to its youth. Originally, we had separate camps for boys and girls. Then sponsored a family camp, and ministries for our seven through twelve-year-olds, and a high school youth group, Hearts of Fire. As the youth population diminished Hearts of Fire added non-community youth. But over the last five years our youth population has shrunk to the point of no longer supporting an active high school ministry program. We knew that we needed a way to still be able to minister to our youth.



each summer, and some have gone to winter camp as well. This year we saw youths spread their stays over multiple weeks. Some of the parents of that original group have attended the men's and women's retreats at Damascus as well.

Here are some quotes about Damascus. "I began using

Lectio Divina to hear to voice of the Lord (while) at Damascus... My powerful experience at Damascus is an important reason why I'm now going to seminary," Max G testifies. "The kids were so pumped up for Jesus and His Church... It was totally amazing!", exclaimed one of the mothers. "Camp really impacts their daily walk with the Lord throughout the year as well. My daughter's friends who go with her continue to have spontaneous faith sharing groups over the course of the year," said one of the fathers.

We chose Damascus. (According to damascus.net, Damascus is a missionary movement that partners with the work of the Holy Spirit to bring revival to the Catholic Church in America. [Their] mission is to awaken, empower, and equip a generation to live the adventure of the Catholic faith through world-class programs and an environment of encounter.) Damascus has been such a blessing to our children and many of their friends. The first year the community sent an organized group to Damascus was in 2019. Not quite knowing what to expect, we sent a fourteen-passenger van full of excited high school community youths and their friends. They arrived to a spiritual and fun filled week of prayer, mass, small groups, high ropes, paint ball wars, and other exciting outdoor activities. Of that original group, two of them have

This year, the youth returned from Damascus on fire with the Holy Spirit and they asked to lead a community praise and worship. They have successfully led three meetings and did all the ministries associated by leading worship, music and prayer ministry. Some of their younger siblings even helped with prayer ministry.

We appreciate their service to the whole community and anticipate their leading another prayer meeting. We look forward to our youth going to Damascus in the future and all the blessings the youth and our community will glean from Damascus.

served as missionaries at Damascus. All that original group have continued to go







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## Teaming with Encounter

By Rick McKinney, Mother of God Community

In 2021 the Mother of God Community (MOGC) was approved to operate as the DC area satellite campus for the Encounter School of Ministry by its



Archbishop., Wilton Cardinal Gregory of Washington. The school is a two-year tuition program designed to train and disciple Catholics to demonstrate the love of God through the power of the Holy Spirit in their sphere of influence. The School's DC Campus Director is long-time MOGC member, Mark Gargulinski, who is now also the MOGC Coordinator, and who in 2020, with the blessing of the MOGC Council and Encounter Ministries, gathered a team of mostly volunteer teachers and support staff to receive on-line instruction.

The School's eight-quarter curricula includes: identity in Christ, Hearing God's Voice & The Prophetic Gifts of the Holy Spirit, Power & Healing, Inner Healing & Freedom, Intimacy with God, Advanced Ministry Training, Power Evangelization, and Leadership & Deployment. On a Tuesday evening each session begins with a half-hour of praise and worship followed by a teaching, then an intermission with snacks, and usually a final teaching with activation practices.

Some 100 people in the DC area have now graduated from the School including a majority of MOGC members. All can testify to its transforming aspects in varying degrees. Many attest to a renewed awareness of one's identity as a beloved child of the Father, healed memories, a new openness to the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit and being used by God to operate in them, especially the gift of prophecy.

The program is presented as part of the deposit of faith that belongs to all baptized believers and not just a special ministry for "saints". For instance, second-year students organize themselves into ministry teams to minister in the Holy Spirit in various ways, such as healing prayer teams, street evangelism, life-in-the-Spirit retreats in their local parish, an evening of praying for physical healing and other modes of action. Students are encouraged to invite folks to a Summer Intensive course of the first year's curriculum for four straight evenings and this often inspires attendees to register for the first year's course. There were some 330 attendees during this past Summer Intensive session.

Graduates are encouraged to continue to attend the Tuesday praise and worship meeting followed by continuing education classes and discussion of MOGC teachings. There is also a monthly Encounter praise and worship meeting on Sunday night that students and graduates are invited to attend. This has resulted in quite a few students being interested in becoming members or continuing their relationship with Mother of God Community.

Encouraged By Well Known Teachers



Dr. Mary Healy



Peter Herbeck





# NEW WINE AND NEW WINESKINS



## “Let the Little Children...”

By Sarah Castellanos, City of the Lord

In the many years of community life in Tempe, there have been families upon families and more children who have come and gone through our doors than we can count. However, for a long time, this was not the case. Not none, for there is always a presence of children, but there is a definite change from the robust numbers of the past. I have had the blessing and privilege of working with our children, my four included, to provide more content and care for them, and to give them a sense of belonging in community alongside their parents and grandparents. It is no easy labor, but it is full of joy and blessing. And with that work has come growth. “If you build it, they will come” springs to mind. In the last couple of years, the Lord has given City of The Lord a surge of growth. My husband Nathan and I made our full covenant along with several other couples. And many families with children are now in discernment to the call.

The children are loud, messy, and chaotic as all happy and safe children should be. In this ministry we all keep an eye out for them.

We abide by diocesan safety procedures as best as we can, and we all learn each child’s name and who the parents are. This



creates a vibrant scene full of love and joy—not without a little disarray!

We have had the joy of bursting at the seams in our children's ministry, with more little ones than we even have space for at times. What a wonderful problem! At recent Lord’s Day and worship gatherings we have had as many as 80 children, most of whom are under the age of ten. And although 80 is not the new normal (we usually have around 50), it is an exciting time to be serving our youth. I am not a youth minister; I am a mother. And I believe prioritizing children in our community through relationship building, some child friendly programming and content, and support of the parents is a way to ensure the longevity of a community.

The Lord said, “Let the little children come unto me” as many adults were grumping at Him over distractions and their own ideas of piety! But Jesus was also a child once. We were all children once. Let us not forget how it felt to be welcomed or how it felt to be rejected when we were small. Our children can be present to the Lord in a way we should strive to be -- without self-consciousness or false pride but with a free expression of love that is filled with the Spirit.

It is easy to see growth and youth as an inconvenience. We are tempted at times to be overwhelmed by the logistics of it all. It can be frustrating at times with our prayer being “disrupted” by a young one wandering through the worship team or making a noise into an unwatched microphone. However, we can learn from this and in humility enter a deeper trust of the Lord, knowing He will let *us* come to Him as we are. We are all little in His sight. I rejoice that we have such an abundance of life, and I hope to see it in many communities and in the generations to come!





## NEW WINE AND NEW WINESKINS



### Great Reads in the Communities

By Bill Kohler,  
City of the Lord

#### A review of *The Good the Bad and the Beautiful, History in Three Dimensions* by Joseph Pearce

In this book, Joseph Pearce has written a very readable, informative, balanced, and Catholic view of Church history and culture (aka Christendom.) The book contains 20 chapters—one for each century. Each century is further divided into sections—one for the good, one for the bad and one for the beautiful.

Let's look at the 13<sup>th</sup> century as an example. The *good* included the Fourth Lateran Council—the most important council of the Middle Ages. St. Francis and St. Dominic founded their religious orders; the Franciscans represented the mystical marriage of love and beauty while the Dominicans, in and through the persons of St. Albert the Great and St. Thomas Aquinas (primarily through their re-discovery of Aristotle), brought forth the union of faith and reason. In the same year as the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), the Magna Carta was signed in England, putting into effect individual rights which included due process jurisprudence.

Mentioned in the *bad*, Pearce writes of the continuation of the Crusades, which resulted in the sacking of Constantinople. This century also saw the beginning of the Inquisition.

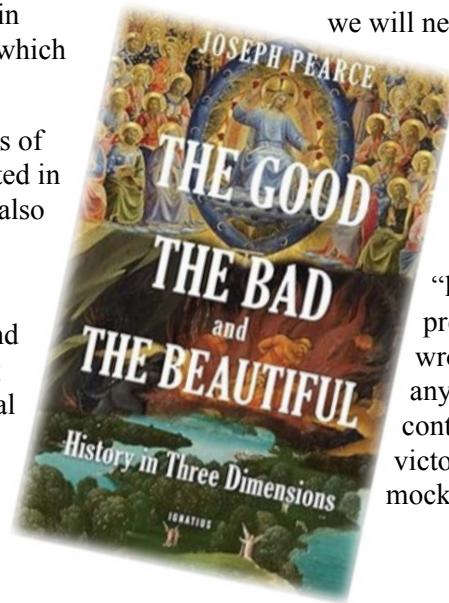
The beautiful speaks of the Gothic style of architecture with its pointed arches and buttressing. The western tradition of painting had its beginnings in the creation of devotional art all over Italy. The thirteenth century also saw the poetry of both St. Francis and St. Thomas Aquinas.

This is our story, and we need to know it. We need to know it, Pearce writes, so that we know the right side of history. We became part of the story when we were baptized. Knowing our story allows us to choose the good and the beautiful and lay down our lives for them—to lay down our lives for Christ.

When we choose Christ, we discover Christ is culture. Thus, when faith comes, it is inevitable that culture follows. It is no accident that art appeared in the caves and catacombs of the early believers. Pope John Paul states, “Thanks to inculturation, the Church recognizes and expresses in a better way the mystery of Christ.”

Just as culture is necessary, so, too, are warriors. To establish the good and the beautiful on earth, we will need to fight, fight, fight, both in the heavens and on the earth. (Just ask pro-lifers.) We have spent much of our history fighting each other. We have been and are now in a long truce, but *no one has sued for peace.*

This long truce may be part of a “long defeat” we may be enduring presently. Catholic writer J.R.R. Tolkien wrote that “...I do not expect ‘history’ to be anything but a ‘long defeat’--though it contains...some glimpses and samples of final victory.” Indeed, Jesus and the Last Supper are mocked in Catholic France. And the Church,







# NEW WINE AND NEW WINESKINS



## *Great Reads in the Communities (Cont'd)*

### *The Good the Bad and the Beautiful, History in Three Dimentions* by Joseph Pearce

By Bill Kohler,  
City of the Lord

close to schism, is weakened by clerical corruption, and Covid closures. She seems to be enduring a “long defeat.”

There is a path forward. That path is one of holiness and art. Joseph Ratzinger wrote, “The only really effective apologia for Christianity comes down to two arguments, namely, the saints the Church has produced, and the art which has grown in her womb.” Holiness and culture represent the path forward, not mainly apologetics.

The long defeat is not *final*. History is not just our story. It is His story as well. That story is beyond the “long defeat”. That story is wrapped in the victory of the Cross and the glory of the Resurrection. That story is the true “end of history” for it is the story of He who is, and will always be, *the alpha and the omega*. Our part is to overcome the bad, so we need to know clearly the choice for good and beautiful. Joseph Pearce has done an excellent job of equipping us to do just that.

