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Dr. Rorem

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### **Paper Proposal**

Dionysius' use of the apophatic is one of the most intriguing aspects of the corpus for this author. Apophatic language and the negative theology that it elicits has seen a resurgence in some of the deconstructionist work of the postmodern philosophers, particularly the work of Jacques Derrida. It is the author's assumption that Dionysius has something to say to Christians in today's postmodern era, and Derrida is the possible vehicle to bring Dionysius' thoughts into this discussion.

Issues relating to language are among the core aspects of postmodern philosophy and theology. This paper will deal with an investigation of Dionysius' treatment of apophatic language and theology in the corpus and their relationship to the contemporary work of Derrida. The question that will be addressed in this paper is *what can the apophatic theology and language of Dionysius do for theology and the church in today's postmodern context?* Special attention will be given to a book written by a former student of Dr. Wayne J. Hankey; Derrida and Negative Theology, written by Howard Coward and Hankey's former student, Toby Foshay (a Benedictine monk).

The hope of the author, in writing this paper, is to allow Dionysius and Derrida to discuss the issue of the apophatic, specifically its use with language, in relation to today's postmodern context. Finally, the author will briefly analyze the particular helpfulness of the apophatic model in today's emerging church.

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