

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

MOVEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS RENEWAL

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Advent ~ Christmas ~ Epiphany 1999



Scenes from "A Little Passion" by Albrecht Dürer



What THE ACT OF CONSECRATION OF MAN does at CHRISTMAS

The Eucharist which we celebrate as The Act of Consecration of Man is with us all the year. Although its core is the same, its mood, its flavor changes very much with going from one festival to the other. As the sunlight changes which at one time is more direct and hot, at another soft and mild, at again another maybe almost cold, our communion service goes through a variety of soul moods. These are in-

dicated through the colors which we see at the altar and vestments, through our special and unique Epistles which we hear always at the beginning and the conclusion of the service, as well as through our pericopes, those passages which we hear from the Gospel. Thus The Act of Consecration feels quite different in Advent than during Epiphany, different at Passion Tide or Easter and different again at Pentecost, John's Tide or Michaelmas.

The only time when it is more different than at any other festival of the year is at Christmas. Because then, as a spiritual flower, it opens up to the "midnight sun", the spiritual sun and in doing so re-

veals part of its mystery: its threefold being (three petals, as it were). This threefoldness being anchored in the Triune God which also means being anchored in time, is opened up during the Holy Nights of Christmas.

In our programs we see “Three Christmas Services” announced, one in the first Holy Night, one in the early morning of the first Christmas Day, at dawn when night becomes day, and the third for Christmas Day morning at the usual time of our Sunday services. What we sometimes are not quite aware of is that these “three services” are in fact one, our Act of Consecration showing its true being. At midnight it dives deep into the past which is also expressed through the pericope of the beginning of the first Gospel, Matthew, which has the closest relationship to the Old Testament. At this time we are awake at a time when we usually sleep. The Act of Consecration gives us a chance to grasp the mysteries of sleep (which are also the mysteries of the past) through our wakeful consciousness. This is quite unique and only possible because of the Christmas opening.

In the early morning, at the transition from night to day, the most intimate mood of the whole year prevails. This is the time where “presently” we touch the Mystery of the Child, also expressed through the Christmas Gospel after Luke. Through the openness of The Act of Consecration He touches our souls, He warms our hearts as at no other time.

The Christmas Day Service later in the morning is not like any Sunday Service either, it is all open for the future, both the future of the following Holy Nights and of the whole coming year, as well as for the entire future of humanity. This shows through hearing the very end of the last Gospel, John, where the Risen Christ gives Peter and John their tasks for the future, and through the Epistle which speaks about Christ as the “revealing Creator Spirit” whose intention it is to heal our world. For a moment the creator spirits of the heavenly hierarchies, all nine of them, are lighting up as part of this revelation. This moment then is repeated eleven times i.e. up to the last of the Holy Days of Christmas while slowly through the oneness or maybe ‘sameness’ of this third part of the Christmas Service the spiritual flower closes

again. Yes, it is still the third but through its oneness, slowly becomes the one Act of Consecration again which we then go on celebrating through the whole coming year.

At Christmas our Act of Consecration of Man bows in devotion before the World Child and in doing so opens as a spiritual flower revealing its true being: threefold.

Werner Grimm
Vancouver

LIMA - JULY 23-29, 1999 CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAS OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

*Opening Roads to a New World - The Senses
Unbound at the Frontier*

Next summer in Lima, Peru, the second North-South conference of The Christian Community will take place from July 23rd to 29th. We hope at least 40 North Americans can participate, with all North American communities represented. It is shaping up as a wonderful possibility to meet and help create a spiritual event and deed for the Americas and our common work with the sacraments in North and South America. It is being very eagerly anticipated and prepared by the communities in South America.

The theme is as stated above - our working with the senses on the frontiers of the senses and the supersensible. Dr. Michaela Gloeckler, head of the Medical Section in Dornach, and Lothar Reubke, priest and composer, will be two special guests and full participants from Europe. Workshops are being prepared ranging from ‘Spiritual Geography/Geology of the Americas’ to ‘Creating Social Forms that can carry the Sacramental Stream’, from ‘Eurythmy’ to ‘Colors of the Festivals - Colors of the Soul’. It is intended for workshops and presentations to have a more discursive pole and a more active/artistic pole.

We plan to go early, around July 16-17, in two

groups if possible, gathering in L.A. and New York. We have special group arrangements with Aeroperu and Delta Airlines and would visit Cuzco and Machupichu before the conference, as well as some other sights. We will not know the exact group rates until January '99 or so, and that will depend somewhat on group size as well. The conference costs will be \$200 and we hope the total costs including transportation and special trips beforehand will be around \$2,000. An initial flyer with as much information as we can give should be out by the end of November and the program by Christmas. Please consider this opportunity, and how you might be able to plan for it. It would be very helpful if we could solidify the group by February. If you have questions, speak to the local priest or contact Erk Ludwig in New York at (212) 877-3577, Hartmut Junge in Detroit at (313) 823-5315 or Richard Dancey in Devon at (610) 647-6869.

Richard Dancey
Devon, PA

Do YOU want to contact Lima Yourself? Write to La Comunidad de Cristianos, El Ovalo de San Isidro 250, Lima - San Isidro 27, Peru or phone Rev. Paul Corman, Phone + Fax: 011-51-1-442-9703 or Rev. Emilia Hosmann, Phone 011-51-1-421-5632.

PERU, THEN AND NOW

Jakob Wassermann, widely known as the author of a standard work on Caspar Hauser, has also written a booklet with the title 'The Gold of Caxamalca', describing how the Spaniards overpowered Atahualpa, the last ruler of the Inca empire in Peru. With deep insight into human nature and on a quest to find out what is at its core, Wassermann depicts with great sensitivity how Francesco Pizarro, one of the most daring Spanish generals, together with his followers, confronts the Inca ruler, last in a long line of noble ancestors representing the Sun as ultimate Ruler and Lord over human and social affairs on earth. Atahualpa was forced to witness the Spanish soldiers

loot, amass and rob the gold on display in his country. These soldiers were unwilling to leave anything untouched, unable to respect anything as sacred. The thirst and greed for gold wiped out any other feelings or stirrings of the human heart. Atahualpa himself gave away the gold insignia he was wearing and also the chain of jewels around his neck, never losing his composure or the solemn mien in his face. He controlled himself with utmost self-discipline.

Jakob Wassermann tried to show in Atahualpa that there are beings of another world appearing here on earth with the mission of guiding and uplifting human beings, how their mission is thwarted and at the same time raised into the dimension of Christ's own mission, and Christ's own destiny. This is the destiny of all true saints who ever appeared among us.

When Paul Corman, priest in Lima, Peru, came to visit the various congregations here in North America, he reported how originally and later on in various different ways the Europeans always came and took of that country. Inviting us for the North-South Christian Community conference in Lima, 1999, he sees how there is, instead of taking, a chance to bring something to the country of Peru.

Hartmut Junge
Detroit

50 YEARS CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN NORTH AMERICA

To celebrate the 50th. Anniversary of the Christian Community in North America Rev. Susan Locey organized a meeting of members and priests in a idyllic camp in Bridgewater near Toronto, Ont. Toronto's reputation as a meeting place was already established before white settlers arrived in North America. If the location had anything to do with the success and joyfulness of this meeting it would indicate that the Indians knew why they selected this area for their gatherings.

On Sept. 4th. Rev. Susan Locey, Rev. Hartmut Junge and Rev. Werner Grimm met with members

from and between Halifax and Vancouver and of course from south of the Border for a three day celebration. The theme was: *Courage for Renewal*. Evidently for the priests the gathering meant not only joy but also serious and hard work. Each priest led a different study group. Their presentations on various themes of the Gospels have been highly appreciated and conversations inspired by the themes resumed whenever there was a break between the celebrations of The Act of Consecration of Man, their lectures and the artistic activities lead by Mrs. Heinz and Peter Doef. All this added to the already strongly felt belonging which included also all of our departed friends and those members who have been aware of our meeting but could not attend. Everybody was keenly aware: This Christian Community really is a Community namely a Community of Christians.

Next to impossible but true: During the Closing Session this spiritual bondage between friends became even stronger. Everybody agreed: Only once could we celebrate the 50th. Anniversary but to come together to such a meeting, that we should do every year. The oldest of our priests, Rev. Werner Grimm, who's domicile is farther away than any of the other participants, spontaneously assured us that if it would in any way be possible he and his wife would come.

I love you all and if it is God's will: See you next year.

Henry Boelsterli
Montreal

(From the editors: A special thank you to all the people who sent us pieces on this Canadian Conference. We are sorry that a lack of space precludes their inclusion.)

50 YEARS CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN FRANCE, TOO

In December the French Communauté des chrétiens celebrates its 50th anniversary, to be commemorated by a conference in its church in Chatou near Paris, December 18 through 20. In October, two one-day conferences were held in Strasbourg and Colmar, both in Alsace where the movement began in 1948 in Strasbourg. Here, in the house of the

Klockenbring family, the founding Services were held on December 19 and 20. On the first day, Robert Goebel celebrated The Act of Consecration of Man in German, on the second day followed by Gérard Klockenbring, celebrating in French. In this way, the foundation of The Christian Community in France became connected to our worldwide foundation, as Robert Goebel, himself born in Paris, had been ordained in 1923 among those sharing in the ongoing foundation events. Gérard Klockenbring was in 1951 joined by (Swiss born) Jérémie Nidecker and Pierre Lienhard. Thus in a later development, services and Sacramento have for years now been celebrated in French not only in metropolitan France but also in Geneva and Lausanne in the French speaking part of Switzerland. With French, it had become possible to celebrate services and sacraments in seven languages. The initial German language had been followed by Czech, Dutch, Norwegian and English in the twenties, by Swedish in the thirties. Thus the year 1948 has set the tone for an expansion into other languages and into other continents, which has come to characterize the growth of The Christian Community in the fifty years that have passed since .

Arie Boogert
Boston, MA

YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE PRIEST SEMINARY

At the beginning of last Summer twenty-six young people answered an invitation to an English-speaking, three week Study Course at our Priest Seminary in Stuttgart, Germany. They were accompanied by Rev. Gisela Wielki and Rev. Sanford Miller. Participants have written:

...”The experience I had, getting a glimpse of seminary life and at the same time being with a group of people my age and at a similar stage of life, was a worthwhile one. Speaking to seminary students concerning what it is to become a priest was really interesting and broadened my perspective considerably. Through these three weeks I gained some valuable

insights into Anthroposophy and The Christian Community. What surprised me was the open-mindedness of our lecturers and seminar leaders - something I haven't often experienced in similar circles. Generally I went away from class with more questions than I went in with. Topics were handled in a thought-provoking way, and I got the impression that nothing is necessarily written on stone.'...

Justine Olofsson, age 23, South Africa

...'Our group of twenty-six young people arrived at the seminary bursting with vitality. So of course my first impression when I met the students was that they seemed very quiet, perhaps even 'tired'. This initial perception was soon swept aside when I began to observe the students in different situations and in conversations with them. They seemed to be awake and alive in a way that I myself have seldom experienced and witnessed in others in my everyday life. No wonder they are 'tired', I thought. Staying awake *like that* is hard work.'...

Kevin Hindes, age 23, USA

...'One impression that perplexed me greatly, and with much joy, was the element of humor. I look back now and realize how much we laughed together during our stay. This element of humor is clearly a balancing necessity for the truly profound work done at the seminary. This first impression left me saying to myself; This is a place for me.'...

Ben Black, age 21, Canada

These excerpts have been taken from *Recollections*, a collection of letters written by those young people from North America and South Africa. It is hoped to repeat these study courses for the next few years for other young people. The costs for the individual participants, despite the free room and board carried by the Seminary, is still high. To help make it possible for as many young people as possible to attend, donations to support the 1999 study course are warmly welcomed. Please send your donation earmarked "Stuttgart Fund" to: The Christian Community, 309 West 74th Street, New York, NY 10023 (which has published these 'Recollections').

FINDING MY WAY

Back in the early '70's, I was a Waldorf School class teacher. One Easter Sunday I went, on impulse, to The Christian Community for the first time. Having heard of The Christian Community from friends, I expected the Service to "speak" to me, but I was frankly baffled by the language and formality of the ritual. I might have given up interest at that point, but something was surely there that I simply could not yet understand. If there were only some way I could help, and thereby engage my will, I might be able to come at this mysterious something "side-ways." I felt I could trust the communication channel that would open through my willingness to help. The camp came to my rescue! Here was a milieu I could understand: dealing with children.

It was a good thing to make possible a joyful, healing experience for the children and staff. It was all so simple, yet essential, as if the most important needs of life - body, soul and spirit - were being recognized. I was exhausted yet exhilarated at the end of camp. I felt like I was discovering a home for my soul that carried me through everyday stresses and challenges the rest of the year.

After my second summer of being a counselor, a couple of us were invited to give a little presentation to the congregation in New York City to impart a flavor of the camp experience. On that particular Sunday, one of the leaders of The Christian Community Seminary in Stuttgart was also visiting, and before our presentations he gave a short talk. Not only was that talk immanently interesting, it touched gently on a deeply buried questions in my heart. In the fifteen minutes between that short talk and my own modest contribution, my whole grasp of the importance of the camp and of anyone connected with it underwent a dramatic re-evaluation. In a roundabout way, The Christian Community Summer Camp led me to the Priest Seminary in Stuttgart, Germany.

Rev. Susan Karnes Locey
Toronto
Counselor 1974/1975

"Finding my Way" has been taken from Reflections on Twenty-Five Years Christian Community East Coast Summer Camp, 1973-1998, published by The Christian Community Camp, 309 West 74th Street, New York, NY 10023.

REFLECTIONS ON A SEMESTER AT THE SEMINAR OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN STUTTART, GERMANY IN THE LIGHT OF THE 12TH SENTENCE OF THE CREED

They may hope for the overcoming of the sickness of sin; for the continuance of man's being; and for the preservation of their life destined for eternity.

I felt greatly hopeful at the start of the semester in October, 1997: there were over thirty students in our second semester group; five of us were Americans! Our first assignment was to choose one of the twelve sentences of the Creed in the Christian Community on which to give a short two to five minute talk. These short talks would supplement the content of the two week main lesson on the Creed. Those who had chosen one of the first six sentences had to speak to the group of roughly 50 students (in the second and fourth semesters) during the first week of the term. Still self-conscious of my "pigeon" German at that early stage I was glad to have chosen the 12th sentence; I gave my talk on the last day of the Semester at the end of February.

From beginning to end of this long, full semester I pondered the last sentence of the Creed. My biggest question was, "What can I say about the sickness of sin, the continuance of man's being and the preservation of life - in two to five minutes?" Finding no real answer, I chose to focus on two words: "hope" and "eternity". I felt frustrated in my efforts to understand my sentence; it seemed very powerful- that one could *hope* for such awe-inspiring things as are mentioned in the 12th sentence; and yet that small word, *hope*, left me feeling its powerlessness. Why not "expect" in its place?

Two thoughts that were considered in the last week of the semester served as catalysts to the order-

ing of my own thoughts. The first, of hell, according to Catholic belief, as the eternal separation from God; the second, of hell as our life on earth. It was words of the 12th century Alanus ab Insulus, whom we'd learned of in our studies of the Middle Ages, that helped me to understand why hope is called for in the Creed's last sentence. In his Michaelmas Sermon he states that human *hoping* is a longing for God, for the elevation of godliness. At the end of his sermon he states: "Work then, oh man, so that you... will be connected with the master." - It is so simple! Our hoping is a longing to be connected with God which we can attain through our work! A priest once said that in "hoping" for something we leave room for the freedom of others. I suppose that's what it's really all about. At the seminar, as in life, each of us will find it necessary to take the sometimes unique actions that represent who we are. The true gift of being at the seminar is in the time and space that is offered, through the coursework and in social interactions, to come closer to understanding who we are.

At the end of the semester on the very last day I concluded my brief talk by reading two verses which seemed to bring my new understanding of hope in the light of eternity into brilliant pictures. The first one is by Rudolf Steiner (as translated by Arvia MacKaye Ege), the second American Indian:

Light and Star

They light up like stars
On the heaven of eternal being -
The god-inspired spirits.
Oh, may all human souls achieve,
In realms of earth-becoming,
The power to see their flaming light.

We Are The Stars

*We are the stars that sing,
We sing with our light
We are the birds of fire,
We fly across the heavens:
Our light is a star.*

American Indian

Upon returning to my hometown in Florida I found reason to continue to feel hopeful in a conversation I had with my 19 year-old nephew. In it I was sharing with him my semester-long struggle to understand the word “hope”. Within minutes, before I’d gotten to the end of a description of my struggle, he had it all figured out: “I can’t imagine anyone hoping for something bad. So if you hope for something good, you have to *do* something to make it happen.” Slightly stunned, I said, “That’s exactly what I came to, but it took me all semester; you figured it out in a few minutes!” “You should have called me, Aunt Mert.”

Marietta Schneider
Ft. Myers, Florida

THE SHIPWRECK OF THE TITANIC OR: HOW INITIATION CAN BE MARKETED

Following the common trend a few friends of mine and I have also contributed to the film “Titanic” becoming the biggest box office success in movie history. Interestingly enough I had trouble sleeping after viewing this spectacle. My friends also spent sleepless nights. After asking around our circle of acquaintances we learned that there are many people who felt themselves in the grip of the pictures and impressions of this film. I asked myself: what could be the reason for this? Actually it couldn’t be the content because that is quite plain, almost simple, I would say, and there was hardly a scene in the course of those 3 1/2 hours which was not predictable; no unexpected actions. The characters are clearly divided into good only or bad only. Or were the excellent computer simulations so impressive? Even that I have to answer in the negative. All simulations were recognizable as such. There certainly is a flair of fascination emanating from the perfection of these simulations, but they are not so impressive that one had to say: I *must* see this movie again under all circumstances. The cause for the strong affect of this film,

I think, needs to be looked for on an entirely different level. Techniques are used which work directly onto the soul without confronting consciousness. Mystery contents are consciously depicted which work deeply into the soul. I would like to choose three scenes in order to explain this: Scene I: In slow motion the young couple flees past the burning furnaces in the engine room. The heroine wears a long flowing light dress; the viewer subconsciously fears it could catch fire on the flames leaping out of the furnace. Scene II: The main characters fight against tremendous masses of water in order to survive. The dramatic action is quite questionable, because in the freezing water of the North Atlantic one isn’t able to stay conscious for more than a few minutes. Also everyone who has ever been swimming in flowing water knows, that one needs super human powers to move against the enormous water pressure; in the film this looks almost playful. Scene III: In the last phase of her sinking the Titanic took on an almost vertical position. The stern is about 100 m above the sea. The two main characters cling to the stern railing and with the sinking ship are pulled down into the depth almost in free fall. This was staged in a very impressive way. The spectator inwardly is pulled into this haltless fall towards perishing; one can almost feel the air stream.

These three scenes which occur in this sequence in the movie can easily be recognized as the three trials on the path of initiation, as they are described by Rudolf Steiner in “*How to Attain Knowledge of Higher Worlds*”: the trial with fire, the trial with water and the trial with air. What the film does is to show as outer pictures contents which the spiritual student should experience as inner soul pictures on the path of initiation. These images, representing highest truths, work especially deeply into the soul. In the true sense of the word, they are ‘impressive’. Although highest truths exist behind these images, one needs to understand that this form of presentation is harmful for a healthy soul development, because these contents are not grasped consciously by the spectator i.e. his ego is not involved. The actual content cannot be permeated.

Still these images settle down deep into the soul

and this blocks the access to the true archetypal images. What the soul actually does experience spiritually while undergoing the Fire Trial (Water Trial, Air Trial) cannot really be expressed in words of the sense world; what is described as fire or burning is just a picture for an experience in the spiritual world. It is this archetypal experience which the spiritual researcher calls Imagination. If one shows this archetype as a sense picture through photography or film, one takes away that freedom which one needs when approaching the real Imagination of the Fire Trial. Through the portrayal in the sense world the Imagination becomes dulled, if not eliminated completely.

The film ends with an extremely interesting scene. Through the frame action the 100 year old heroine relates the sinking of the Titanic from her own point of view. In the last scene one sees this old lady with closed eyes lying peacefully in the berth of the salvage vessel which swims on top of the sunken Titanic. The movie camera leads along a row of pictures on the night table, which show the life of the heroine after her rescue. Then the camera leads vertically down through the different decks of the salvage vessel and further through the dark water right to the wreck of the Titanic. At the arrival the wreck inwardly begins to shine brightly. The camera leads us right to the ball room which at this instant changes back to its original condition. Here we now meet all performers who lost their lives through the catastrophe. Only then the camera turns and lets the spectator know that inwardly he had followed the heroine who in youthful age throws herself into the arms of her beloved partner.

It is not difficult to recognize that here down to the smallest detail we deal with a near-death-experience as Raymond Moody describes them in his book "Life after Life", brought into images. A few of the steps of near-death-experiences may be looked at here aphoristically although in the sequence the film brings them: The dead one sees his body - peaceful atmosphere tableau of past life - movement through mere thought power, permeating walls - the long dark tunnel - the light experience the meeting with other previously passed souls.

If one can believe other scientists who have dealt with near death-experiences, many people in our time have had experiences like that. Without exception they are declared to be the most important experiences in life. It is hardly astonishing that as an image this short scene also makes a deep impression on the soul.

So far I have seen the movie just once, contrary to many others who made the pilgrimage up to 40 times. As is the case with other cult movies, highest Christian esoteric truths are presented which the disciple wants to take in rhythmically time and again. Whether this is healthy for the soul is after all very questionable.

Hans-Bernd Neumann, Ph.D.

(Published in "Die Christengemeinschaft", the German Journal of The Christian Community, June 1998 - translated by Bettina Hillaby, Vancouver)

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

'CHRIST AND THE FUTURE' New York, Friday, December 11 - Sunday, December 13, 1998 East Coast Conference, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the work of The Christian Community in North America

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