

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

MOVEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS RENEWAL

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Passiontide through Whitsun 2002



Photo by Robert Massoud

TORONTO CHURCH CONSECRATION AND DEDICATION

For March 23-24, the Toronto congregation has announced festivities celebrating the Consecration and Dedication of their new church. A special program will be forthcoming. For information call the number supplied in the address list, or call Rev. Susan Locey at (416) 636-5407.

THE HEART OF EASTER

The heart's right side opens to receive our dark, spent blood. The heart then directs the blood on its way upward. There the blood meets the lungs, to take up and be renewed by the breath of the world. Then once again the blood returns to the heart, now to the left side, which directs it downward and inward. This time the blood's task is to renew and nourish the interior world of the body. This movement of our blood between left and right, above and below, between outside and interior inscribes a series of crosses. The heart is the center point of these crossings.

Our heart is also the center of our life of feeling. All the enormous range of human emotion and feeling flows through our bodies. Our heart is the place where they gather. When we shine the light of our awareness on our hearts, we can watch the ebb and flow of feeling and emotion as they pass through our hearts.

With some effort we might be able to turn our heart into a kind of worktable - a place where the raw motive force, or the stale tiredness of our feelings are taken up. We may ponder them, shape them, send them out into the world to be refreshed and renewed. We may direct them inward to renew the inner life. Over time we take up our feelings, work on them, set them aside and take them up again - until finally they have been transformed into a work of art.

Creating a work of art involves trimming, shaping, and fitting the raw materials. An artist knows that much material has to be removed, has to be sacrificed, so that something new can emerge. There needs to be a death process, an element of consciously willed sacrifice, so that the "never before", the totally new, can be created. For instance, one's own raw reeling of need or desire for another person can be slowly transformed into devotion to their welfare, and even further into the ability to sacrifice something of oneself for their sake. The rawness of emotions can be tempered over a lifetime into a kind of dynamic balance that is the basis for further inner

progress; perseverance in working on ourselves creates loyalty - to ourselves and to the other. All of this eventually becomes the basis for a greatness of love. The heart is the workplace where our feelings can become works of art, suffused with nobility, a revelation of beauty and goodness and truth.

Christ's worktable was the cross. On that place he consciously willed to offer up his human body, his divine/human life, his pure and noble soul, so that a totally new creation could be revealed. By marrying his life to a sacrificial death on the cross, he created a splendid work of art - a new kind of human being. This new human being sustains infinite loss and yet remains radiantly alive - a divine human being who can absorb all evil and make it serve a higher good - a healer who brings all fragmentation and illness into wholeness.

Christ's creative act is still eternally happening. He is still creating the new human being. In our time one of his worktables is the altar. At the table of the altar, Christ, the Great Heart, the Master Artist, waits for our purest thoughts, our heart's love, our willingness to devote ourselves to his grand work in progress. When we shine the light of our spirit awareness on the altar, we see him there, offering the substance of his own being, joining it to what we bring, in order to create the new humanity. And we stream toward him there, offering the full palette of our heart and soul's life to his great heart. He offers us upward to the life-giving Father with him, toward the creation of a new humanity. He offers us to the world, renewed.

All of creation joins in this, jubilates in joy and delight. For the souls that were dead are living in the streaming of his mighty breath. The spent spirits that were dark are luminous within the light of his great heart. Human beings are streaming toward him at the crossing point at the heart of the altar. They are offering themselves in good faith to the blood that flows to and from the Heart of the World. They offer themselves as materials to the Master Artist, who creates all things anew.

Cynthia Hinds
Los Angeles

SATURDAY MORNING CHURCH

In early 1998 our souls were faced with the question "If my incarnation were to end at the end of this year, what would I wish I had done?" The Act of Consecration of Man was clearly the only answer. We had gone to church sporadically and found it deeply meaningful, but had never attended weekly. Our excuse was logical. We live in Nevada City. It's about 150 miles round trip, but now we had a living question that wanted an answer. We were delighted to learn there was a Saturday service and began the routine of picking up our C.S.A. share on the way to church.

The journey we make from Nevada City has a surprising lightness. We hold long silences, but have some of our most intimate conversations. Great ideas flow. It never seems like a long trip. Over the years we have been doing this, we are amused that no matter when we leave the house we are never late and seldom early. If we leave late the stoplights will all be green. If we leave early the craziest things can hold us up. We've learned to drop the control. This trip is watched over by higher beings.

Saturday morning is a special time to those of us who work a 5 day week. Starting the weekend with The Act of Consecration of Man blesses the leisure that follows. We have come to think of it as first things first and are surprised to find ourselves comfortable with Saturday as our Sabbath.

At first we were shocked to find that there were only three of us who came regularly. Richard Lewis was quick to remind us that there are many more of us than are visible. Yet one does feel something important has happened when church is over. Recently our group has grown a lot. For a long time I (RM) had a hard time talking after church. I was reluctant to break the deep connection that had been so carefully prepared. Paul and Jim had no such problem. Thus began the custom of trading jokes. Jim Cookson is a most wonderful story teller and Paul has kept me laughing for 28 years. We sometimes get pretty loud. Still I wanted to find a place to relax and be quiet

before beginning the trip home. Border's Cafe. You can sit quietly, drink green tea and read good books. It's a fine way to transition back into the world.

We now think that committing to attending church every week is the most important thing we have done together. Staying connected with the Christ in this and all future incarnations surely has to be the most important thing that a human being could do. Our lives have been reshaped, expanded and blessed far beyond our understanding.

Ruth Mary Harrop and Paul J. King
Sacramento Congregation

Article submitted with permission from the author by Franziska Hesse.

NOTE: Paul King was diagnosed with cancer last June, two years after they had made this wonderful decision. He continued to make the long trip every Saturday with his wife until he could no longer get into the car. He has received the Last Anointing and is preparing for his death as the illness ravages his body. His wife Ruth continues to come to the Act of Consecration of Man every Saturday at his request, bringing back with her renewed strength for both of them.

CHICAGO SEMINARY UPDATE

Has everyone heard that the Christian Community is in the process of establishing a seminary in Chicago? It is, and the doors are due to open in the fall of 2003. This will be the first place outside of Europe where those wishing to prepare for the priesthood can go, and it will welcome people from all parts of the world. Beyond that, it is hoped that it will also be a center to meet other needs: to provide vocational direction for young people, to offer retreats, and the like. As you can see, a mighty and daunting undertaking and a golden opportunity for the Christian Community on this continent to unite in support of this initiative.

As a support during this time of preparation, an

East coast group has been meeting in New York City. The following people are part of the group: Erika v. Asten, Anne-Elizabeth Barnes, Tony Bingham, Robb Creese, Rev. Richard Dancey, Rudolf Heirman, Rev. Erk Ludwig, Christa Macbeth, Richard Meyers, Douglas Sloan and Rev. Gisela Wielki.

Gisela Wielki, who has been released from congregational duties in order to devote herself entirely to the task of leading the seminary, will be assisted by Richard Dancey, who will also carry the congregational work in Chicago, and by Erk Ludwig, who will remain in New York City. We have looked at the history of this project and discussed what it will take to bring it about. We share the hope for what it may come to offer those who walk through its door. And, of necessity, we are now focusing on how to raise the funds for it. We are much encouraged by having already received unsolicited gifts from Germany, Holland and the United States.

Anyone who feels they would like to join in this work should know that there are myriad ways of helping: by taking a caring interest: by spreading the word and sparking interest in others: by giving time, or goods, or skills, or money. Your local priest or any of the above will be able to give more information, answer questions, pass on ideas, etc. We are interested to help individuals in other parts of North America to form support groups.

Christa Macbeth
Spring Valley/New York

MY SHADOW, MY SELF

Young Adult Conference, January 2-4, 2002

*Three seeds in the wind
alighting, one, two, now three
you, I, the shadow*

The sun sets earlier this time of the year, casting long shadows across frozen lakes and frosted meadows. Light dimming and sound muted, the forest and its creatures live in hibernation while people bundle

in scarves and jackets. Arriving at the Fairview Lake YMCA campground in New Jersey soon after the New Year, thirty-five young people from the east coast area were soon gathered to discuss and experience the particulars of shadow: physical, metaphorical, spiritual. Joining us were Christian Community priests Richard Dancey of Devon, Pennsylvania and Gisela Wielki of New York City.

The impulse for this conference has a history starting many years ago with the conception of Christian Community summer camps and youth conferences, and recently the international anthroposophical Youth Conferences of 1997 and 1999 held in Ann Arbor, MI and Santa Cruz, CA respectively. Out of these and other events, there has been a growing movement of spiritually-minded young people interested in the ideas and intentions of The Christian Community and Rudolf Steiner. Early in the first evening, we came together in small groups to each create a short shadow-drama to be performed using sheets and candlelight. The experience of observing, creating, and laughing at physical shadows helped bring all of us into the theme, and started opening our perception to the world of shadow.

What is a shadow? An absence of light photons in the object-space opposite a light source? The unconscious voice inside who decides between hot coco and hot coffee? Perhaps the collective gloom of a country facing grief and loss?

While trying to discuss the shadow, it felt as if the conference itself took on the experience of shadow, as all of us struggled to identify what we were talking about. One had the feeling that the shadow wished to prevent us from discovering its secrets. However, through our observation of the physical shadow we were able to touch upon several interesting points. A physical shadow is created through the combination of a light source and an object. In the human being, could we say that the essential or higher self represents the light? Perhaps our desires, needs, loves, and anxieties are the 'objects' from which our awareness is shadowed by the so-called all-perceiving eye of the Essential Self.

If we relate the shadow self to the psychological concept of the unconscious, how do our shadows in-

teract with those of other people? Might our cravings and antipathies be influencing our behavior with other people's shadows? As we become more aware of how our shadow selves influence those around us, it is imperative to become conscious of the energy we generate towards others. Likewise it is important to become conscious of the energy we receive from others, and in so doing, illuminate their shadows.

Our three-day conference was packed with discussions in large groups, small groups, at meals, and around campfires. We also engaged each other in artistic workshops, singing, meals, and playfulness in games and music. New acquaintances were made and past connections strengthened as we experienced the artistic and intellectual in our fellows. Each morning Richard and Gisela celebrated the Act of Consecration of Man, and in the evening a short Close of Day service. One of the most memorable events occurred following the second day evening service when, seated in a quiet silence, we spontaneously started to sing the African hymn, 'Tu ma mina'. Soon we were singing old camp songs and Steiner school songs, and more.

Shadows serve to bring dimension to our reality, yet we have grown so accustomed to their behavior that we hardly take notice of them. They represent the unknown, the unspoken, unseen aspects of our lives. In literature and psychology, the shadow is often a metaphor for dark and evil. While this is certainly a poignant image, at the conference we tried to think of shadows as having both negative and positive values. Depending on the light source, a shadow shifts and has the potential to transform.

As one participant described, the shadow of depression consumed thought, mind, and interaction until circumstances allowed a recognition and transformation of the 'shadow'. Upon recognition of the invisible force gripping her emotions, she was able to make the step from being a victim to being a survivor. Once 'seen', perhaps the shadows within us transform into illumination.

Our final afternoon was a joyous occasion of great discussion, a general sharing of poetry, sculpture, and artwork, as well as a singing performance for our YMCA cooks and hosts. We gathered our

belongings, bid farewell and good wishes to Richard and Gisela as they prepare to move to Chicago to begin the first North American CC priest seminary, and made our departure amidst the pale white-orange glow of a winter sunset. While our impressions on the conference will vary, I feel confident that each of us carry a renewed curiosity of the shadows around us, and the shadows within us. As the sun made her final descent, a new perception was alive among the shadows of the frozen lake and across the frosting meadow.

Special thanks to the planning committee for bringing us together for such a harmonious three days, and to Richard and Gisela for their commitment to young people in our communities.

John Ananda Graham, age 22
Kimberton, PA

NOTE: Early this spring, Gisela Wielki will have left the New York congregation for Chicago, to prepare full-time for the Seminary to open its doors in the fall of 2003. Richard Dancey, leaving his Devon, Pennsylvania congregation, will move later in the year to begin his work in the Chicago congregation, as well as to work together with Gisela Wielki for the Seminary.

Toronto Church Main Entrance



Photo by Robert Massoud

PASSING THE TORCH

On Saturday afternoon, January 26, the large Music Room of the Green Meadow Waldorf School in Spring Valley, NY, was packed with members, children and friends of the Christian Community. Nearly two hundred people gathered to express love and gratitude to Gisela Wielki, our priest of nearly thirty years, as she leaves our community to take up the task of founding a Christian Community seminary in Chicago. It was a deeply moving celebration, beginning with musical offerings by the Christian Community Youth Orchestra led by Christiane Landowne, and eurythmy by Dorothea Mier. Young people stepped forward to offer piano, cello and violin solo pieces. After refreshments (including an absolutely enormous decorated cake), everyone enjoyed musical contributions by the "Christian Community Ladies Choir", and skits by community members.

Martha Bosch, our local historian, chronicled the many ways in which Gisela has served our development as individuals and as a community over the past three decades. For many, the jewel in her crown has been her work with the children and young people. Gisela founded and carried the East coast Christian Community Camp for twenty-eight years and has taken young people from here to Conferences in South Africa, Peru and to the seminary in Stuttgart, Germany. Her enthusiastic efforts have earned her the love, gratitude and admiration of hundreds of young people for whom these experiences have played a formative role in their lives. One of Gisela's talents is seeing potential in others that they themselves may not yet recognize, and helping to stimulate and activate that potential. One of her final gifts to our congregation has been her support of Carol Kelly in becoming a Christian Community priest. Ordained last spring, Carol arrived in late summer to continue the work that Gisela began in creating a congregation and building the church here in Spring Valley.

Since Carol's arrival, she has already begun to share her gifts with us - in music and choral singing, in her work with the children where her background

as an experienced Waldorf teacher is evident, and in her outreach to young people. This came to expression shortly after her arrival, when she opened her home to the teenagers in the Green Meadow community to share their concerns and thoughts immediately following the events of September 11th. Our hearts are full of gratitude as we bid farewell to Gisela Wielki and welcome Carol Kelly into our growing congregation. We have confidence that Carol will ably take up the task of developing the Spring Valley congregation and chapel, building an altar that will allow the bringing together of Heaven and Earth into the future.

Susan Howard
Spring Valley

REPORT FROM SPRING VALLEY

Since Michaelmas, the day of the laying of the Foundation Stone of our new church building, we have been able to watch, as the leaves fell down, the church building arise. By the time of beginning winter, the walls and the roof were already up. What had seemed such a small place, when still an open foundation, looked very spacious once the walls and the ceiling were up, the surprise of many of us. As Christmastide approached, we thought of what would be an appropriate gift to be put in the partially completed space.

Eleven young girls, ages 5-10 came together to present a short singing pageant on December 23rd, portraying the Luke Gospel birth story. On a cold wintry afternoon, with open spaces in the walls, three angels, Mary and Joseph, three shepherds and three sheep (kept warm by many clothes layers under their costumes) processed through the chapel space, lit by candles and lanterns, their child soprano voices filling the vaulted chapel space, and unfolding their pageant where soon the altar shall stand.

At the end of the Holy Nights, on January 6th, six confirmands performed the other Christmas imagination, the presenting of the gifts by the three

Magi. This was a spoken pageant with the deeper adolescent voices resounding from the walls. The three Kings were supported by three young pages who carried their gifts for them on their journey to the Christ child, following the angel's star. Again this pageant took place where the future altar will stand.

At Michaelmas, many physical gifts were laid in the copper pentagon dodecahedron, which was lowered into the physical foundation of the church building, below the place of the future altar, never to see the light of day again. At Christmas the children presented an artistic offering, a soul gift, at the place where the altar will soon stand. Will Easter allow the Act of Consecration of Man to arise at this place, where the altar will stand? We are filled with hope and gratitude.

Barbara Renold
Spring Valley

ORDINATIONS 2002

Ordinations are to be held in Stuttgart, Germany, on Friday, Saturday and Sunday February 22, 23 and 24.

A Youth Conference for 16 year olds and over will be held in conjunction with and centering on the ordinations of the 16 of the 17 candidates, coming from Argentina, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, Norway, Peru, Rumania and the United States.

It has been announced that the ordination of Cheryl Nekvapil from Australia will take place in Canberra, the Australian capital on Saturday, April 13, the first service by the newly ordained priest to be held Sunday, April 14.

CONFIRMATION DATES 2002

April 7	Sacramento, Toronto
April 14	Washington DC, Chicago
April 21	Devon, Vancouver
April 28	Detroit, Taconic-Berkshires
May 4	Spring Valley
May 5	Boston, New York

COMING EVENTS

EAST COAST CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY SUMMER CAMP for boys and girls ages 8-13, August 1-17. Costs \$475.- At Camp Glen Sprey in Glen Sprey, NY. For information and registration forms call Rev. Carol Kelly at (845) 371-3058.

HEIMDAHL BY CANOE For inquiries about this year's canoe trip please call Rev. Peter Skaller at (413) 274-6032.

WEST COAST CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY SUMMER CAMP for children ages 8-13, at Camp Tamarack in the High Sierra of California, June 28 - July 15. Contact Rev. Sanford Miller at (916) 362-4330.

EAST COAST CONFERENCE for Teenagers, August 19-24. For information contact Erk Ludwig, 309 West 74th Street, New York, NY 10023. Phone (212) 877-3577.

Please send letters and literary contributions to Arie Boogert, 20 Lake Street, Arlington, MA 02474-8526, Phone/Fax (781) 646-4644 (E-mail: arieboogert@hotmail.com) . Due date for the next issue is August 15, 2002.

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AS OF FEBRUARY, 2002**

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Camphill Nottawasaga, Ontario CANADA
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Contact Mindy Kash (919) 967-5672 or

Margaret Heath (919) 933-6496 (Or contact Philadelphia)

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