

# THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

MOVEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS RENEWAL

North American Newsletter • Volume 6, Number 1

## Easter 1998



Woodcut by Doldinger

# EASTER, THE FESTIVAL OF CONFIRMATION

Confirmation - what does that mean?

In The Christian Community the Sacrament of Confirmation is always celebrated during the five weeks of the Easter Festival. At their threshold from childhood to youth, an important spirit step is being prepared and tried for those children whose parents are able and willing to accompany them; children who themselves are willing to trust this lead, and who want to begin to take their destinies into their own hands.

Easter it is then - and we stand before the world-moving deed of the God who became Man ... and overcame. He overcame what had pulled humanity down for ages, the free fall which we would not have been able to stop on our own. But as human beings, created in God's image (i.e. also implanted with divine creative power) and as Christians, we are now able - ready in a way - to take up that power of overcoming. That belongs to our very existence as humans.

When those young people are led to what they don't quite know yet, to what they can't know beforehand, they still might be called upon to listen to what is resounding in the background of their and any human existence, for what they can become conscious: "We shall overcome" - and not only that, also: "We are able to overcome", we are able to overcome that which pulls Man down and would let us eventually disappear within the context of nature. That is the true Easter message to which we, as human beings, images of the Godhead, have that inbuilt affinity which needs to be and can be activated at the right time.

But what does "confirmation" mean? In daily life we often have to confirm things, appointments, decisions, our ways of action; once in our life - as a sacramental act - we may confirm and get confirmed in our human dignity as such. Then we are led to realize that we are not just that nature being which has so much in common with the kingdom of the animals but that out of our own strength we can rise

(overcome) to another level of existence, our very human level. This is what also had been implanted into us as "images of the Godhead": the hidden will to morality, i.e. to take up and do the good consciously. The confirmation of our dignity as human being is to take place... and the young people may at least feel this and agree deep in their souls to this very human, morally human step. The God who as Man overcame death, is shown to them as their guide and helper in the joys and sorrows of life - and as the other side of the confirmation (the confirmation that this is so) they are privileged to receive Holy Communion the first time: the power of Christ's overcoming, His Body and Blood in and with the earthly substances of Bread and Wine. This is a very holy and touching moment but a happening which can be fulfilled only, through making this First Communion a real first by entering the new life rhythm of receiving these holy gifts regularly.

A first cannot be and is not a 'first' if there are no 'seconds', 'thirds' etc... "Once does not count" and there are no magic powers either which would bring about this or that, as we sometimes think. "Once" doesn't work in earthly life, it is "too divine" and we cannot handle that as human beings. Even what we - at any stage of our life - can confirm as our human dignity, and get confirmed from what the Deed of Christ stands for in this world of struggle.

*Werner Grimm  
Vancouver*

*[Belated congratulations to the author, who turned seventy years old on February 8th., editors]*

## AN AMERICAN'S FIRST NINE MONTHS IN GERMANY

On the morning of January 10, 1997, my plane landed at the Frankfurt airport. The person who walked out of that airplane had my generous waistline, double chin and curly, dark hair. At the customs gate, the official who compared my face with

the picture in my passport was satisfied. Somehow I experienced surprise. This was not the same person who boarded that airplane the previous evening in Boston, Massachusetts. To be sure, the body of Eric Klein, born on September 8, 1951 in New York City, arrived that Winter morning in Germany. I would like to give you the date of arrival of the remainder of me, but truthfully I have no idea. As I sit at my desk writing this account of my recent experiences, there are a great many facets of this person I call "I" that I don't recognize.

The previous years at home in Wilton, New Hampshire, a small village in the northeast corner of the USA, I had learned a bit of the German language from a book and a CD-ROM. However, when I was delivered to the *Heil- und Erziehungs Institut Lauterbach*, an anthroposophical home for handicapped children in Kassel, on Sunday, January 12, I could neither understand nor speak German. The only way I can think of to describe my condition is to tell you that the handicapped children immediately accepted me as one of their own. For the next 3 months I lived and worked with this life-giving, life-renewing group of children.

At the beginning, someone had to "show" me what and how a task was to be accomplished. I had to "feel" my way into and through each moment, learning at first how to react to each detail and nuance, like a blind person changing direction upon bumping into something. The next step came with a growing understanding of the needs of the children and of my colleagues. At this stage came the possibility of preparatory work, thinking through the tasks ahead and how better to work and adjust. Accompanying this stage was the recognition from my colleagues that an intelligent life-form loomed behind the blindness, deafness and dumbness.

Each week I attended lectures and events at the anthroposophical society and The Christian Community. Even though my understanding was minimal, I felt that the effort to understand was critically important. Somehow, I began to understand more and more of what I heard and saw, even though the words remained, for the most part, hidden behind a veil.

Although the work in Kassel was wonderful and

important, at the beginning of April it was clear that I was not learning a great deal of German. In a meeting with the seminar leaders, a decision was made that I come to Stuttgart, live at the priest seminar, and study German in a program designed for foreigners. It was clear to me that this was the best course. On Sunday evening, April 13, I arrived, laden with luggage, at the priest seminar. The following morning I began my German language studies at a private institute in Stuttgart.

The start of the new semester at the seminar on April 14 coincided with my new beginning. I was living in a residence predominately occupied by a group of young people starting the first semester. This vital, talented, intelligent, questioning and searching group of young people from around the world made room for me in their hearts and schedules, sharing their vitality and thirst for life.

My day started each morning with The Act of Consecration of Man, followed by breakfast with the seminarists. From 9:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., I studied German in a school in downtown Stuttgart. Two to three hours each afternoon or evening was devoted to homework. Another two to three hours was usually devoted to reading anthroposophical literature, reading and memorizing poetry and other projects to further my knowledge and use of German. Since the classes at school were conducted entirely in German, the greatest challenge at the outset was often the understanding of instructions. This program ran for 18 weeks, through August 15. Although I unquestionably learned a great deal, it was a constant source of amazement how inept and ignorant I felt.

Music and the seminar cabaret gave me much needed respite from the lonely, long and often torturous days of language study. I am a musician and violinist by profession. On a number of occasions I played for The Act of Consecration of Man, as well as joining the seminarists for informal musical gatherings. When the opportunity arose to participate in the cabaret, I was elated. Those hours of rehearsal, whether playing the violin or singing, provided me with some moments in which I felt a competent, capable human being once again. The subsequent trips to Hamburg for The Christian Community Whitsun

Conference, and to the Goetheanum at Dornach in June, to perform the cabaret, gave me the opportunity to experience and be a part of the unique seminar "family."

In late September, I had the opportunity to be a part of a seminar trip that visited eight congregations in eight cities in eight days throughout central, northern and eastern Germany. Each day we met with a new congregation; performing a sketch, singing, talking about the seminar, our personal biographies, and answering questions. My level of competence with the German language was not at a stage where I felt at all prepared to speak before an audience. However, employing a strange and unique form of language, only in part German, and with considerable stress and anxiety, I managed to communicate something. The audiences open-heartedly entered into a process with me, allowing something wonderful to unfold.

At this point in time I have no idea how well prepared I am for the start of my seminar studies. However, the last nine months, although often very stressful and painful, have been extraordinarily rich.

*Eric Klein*  
Priest Seminary, Stuttgart

## **SEMINARY RETREAT MAY 10-29, CHICAGO**

A three week program with morning courses by Werner Grimm (Christology and The Act of Consecration of Man), Susan Lowndes (Messengers of the Second Coming: Kierkegaard, Emerson, Nietzsche), and Erk Ludwig (Encountering and Transforming Evil); Eurythmy and Speech. Costs: \$650.00. A program will be available in the congregation. For more information, to enroll, contact Rev. Robert Patterson, 5236 N. Virginia Ave., Chicago, IL 60615, Phone (773) 334-7677.

Robert Patterson characterized last year's Seminary Retreat in Chicago as "A three week program oriented toward a deepening into the religious life of

The Christian Community. While this conference has been designed to help further the development of our Movement for Religious Renewal in a broad sense, a more specific design comes from the hope that by way of this event individuals might be encouraged to consider preparing themselves to take on the life task of serving as priests.

We hope that those who present themselves as willing to undergo the process of becoming priests will have the resources, financially as well as constitutionally, to make it through the stages of preparation for ordination. And we hope that we will be able to support them along the way as may be needed. If you would like to make a donation to The Christian Community Central Fund for student support to help us be prepared to offer financial help, you may send your contribution to the Central Fund, c/o Robert Patterson, at the address given above."

## **A STUDY COURSE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE from North America, Ages 18-28, at the Priest Seminary of The Christian Community, Stuttgart, Germany**

### **THE TIME:**

**Three weeks in June 1998 (June 14-July 4)**

### **A STUDY COURSE**

A Study Course for young people, age 18-28 at the priest Seminary in Stuttgart, Germany, will be held from June 14 through July 4, 1998.

### **THE PURPOSE:**

An intensive study to allow young people to broaden the perspective on their current endeavors and life circumstances from a unique point of view.

### **THE STUDY:**

Courses will be given in English. There will be three one-week long Main Courses taught by Semi-

nary faculty. Topics are still under consideration, but each week will address one of the following three subjects: Art, Science and Religion. For some activities the participants will join the international student body at the seminary and for others they will be among themselves. There will also be Eurythmy, Speech Formation, Gospel Study, Sculpture (and German for those who want it).

#### REQUIREMENTS:

An open mind and enthusiasm for new ideas and experiences.

#### ENCOUNTER:

A group of South Africans will join the Young Americans for the Course.

#### COSTS:

The Seminary will carry the course expenses and will provide room and board. Participants will have to provide for: evening meals, (light supper), pocket money for excursions, cultural activities, and airfare. Total cost estimated to be around \$800. Eighteen young people have already signed up. Anyone interested please contact Gisela Wielki immediately, as space is limited. Rev. Sanford Miller and Rev. Gisela Wielki will accompany the group. Anyone who is interested or wants more information can contact

*Gisela Wielki*  
309 W. 74th St.  
New York, NY 10023  
Tel. (212) 362-7204 or FAX (212) 874-5395

## **ABOUT THE TWELVE HOLY DAYS OF CHRISTMAS IN VANCOUVER**

The Twelve Days of Christmas are a very special time, not only in Vancouver. One can have the impression that the understanding and participation

of our congregation grows every year. This shows in the number of people taking part in the Services.

In terms of participation the first three Christmas Services which belong together (at midnight, early in the morning of Christmas Day and later when the day is fully there,) seem to equalize each other more every year. The Midnight Service is not packed anymore; but the Early Morning Service, which began when it was still dark for a little crowd of over twenty souls, made its very special and intimate mood felt to all present: the birth of the child out of the night into the day. One really would wish more people could experience this.

As in other years, we also had a community breakfast together, this time between the second and third services - always a very festive and congenial occasion, one where we, meeting in the spirit of Christmas, could feel some of the blessings of being a congregation.

As in the early morning, so also at the third service the sun - a rare commodity in the winter in Vancouver - had come through the clouds emphasizing the new day.

During the other holy days (except the last on January 5) we never had less than ten participants before the Christmas altar; even on Epiphany Day this held true.

There were two quite special services held during the course of this time. On both Saturdays we came together to celebrate The Act of Consecration for someone who had passed away in the course of the year. So we could send not only our good thoughts and feelings into the world where they now live but also a bit of the Christmas light .

We are happy that our priest, although not the youngest anymore, could find the strength to hold all those fifteen services in a row. Even rumors of his impending retirement came up, but fortunately could be proved just what they were 'mere rumors'.

*Bettina Hillaby*  
North Vancouver

## 1998 CONFIRMATIONS

April 19	New York
April 26	Los Angeles, Toronto
May 2	San Francisco
May 3	Denver, Detroit, Sacramento
May 9	Great Barrington
May 10	Boston, Chicago
May 17	Devon

## CAMPS AND HIKES

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY SUMMER CAMP FOR CHILDREN, Camp Tamarack in the High Sierra of California, July 1-18. Contact Dale Robinson, 1962 Asilomar Drive, Oakland, CA 94611, Phone (510) 339-2769.

ANOTHER HEIMDAHL WILDERNESS CANOE TRIP is being planned for the last two weeks of July. Please contact Rev. Peter Skaller, Phone (905) 508-1431.

A BACKPACKING TRIP IN THE HIGH SIERRA OF CALIFORNIA is planned for late July. Contact Rev. Everett Moraine, Phone (916) 366-9545.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY (EAST COAST) CHILDREN'S CAMP, August 6-22. Please contact Rev. Gisela Wielki, Phone (212) 362-7204.

AUGUST 17-21, California FAMILY CAMP at Camp Tamarack, in the Sierra, south of Yosemite. Join with other families of the Christian Community for a family camp - four days full of healthy outdoor life emphasizing family and spiritual enrichment. We will have a resident priest with story telling, adult studies, campfire songs, swimming, and excursions into the spectacular surroundings. Call or write for a brochure: Contact Melissa Kay, 906 Divisadero St, San Francisco, CA 94115, Phone (415) 928-1715, Fax (415) 334-0115. Costs: \$100.00/person, includes food and lodging. Sponsored by the Christian Communities of Western U.S. and Canada.

## YOUTH CONFERENCES

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, July 26-31. Please contact Rev. Sanford Miller, Phone (916) 362-4330.

EAST COAST, August 23-29. Please contact Rev. Erk Ludwig, Phone (212) 877-3577.

## CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

RESURRECTION NOW : **Easter Conference of The Christian Community** - Fifty years of the Movement for Religious Renewal in North America This, the first of three Coast to Coast festival conferences to be held this year, will take place April 17-19, 1998, in Sacramento (A program will be available in the congregations)

### MIDWEST CONFERENCE

The Midwest gathers in Ontario, August 27-31, at Heimdahl Camp near Minden, Ontario for a conference, provisionally called: "The Challenge of Religious Renewal", with Rev.s Werner Grimm, Hartmut Junge, Susan Locey, and Peter Skaller.

TWO CONFERENCES WILL BE HELD IN NEW YORK CITY to celebrate the 50th Annivesary of The Christian Community in North America.

THE FIRST, to be held from October 23 through the 25th, 1998, is presently entitled: "The Cities We Build - Monuments of Self-Glorification, or Building Stones for the New Jerusalem?"

THE SECOND, to be held from December 11th through the 13th, 1998 is presently entitled: "Christ and the Future."

(At present these themes and their titles are "works-in-progress.")

Please send letters and literary contributions to Dale B. Brunsvold, 2740 S. Ogden, Englewood, CO 80110-1744, or by e-mail: dbrunsvold@aol.com  
Due date for the next issue is August 15, 1998

## DEMANDING PERSPECTIVES

Many people know the fairy tale about the Fisherman's Wife. Each time her patient husband fulfills her wishes she is ready with a grander, more urgent request. Will she ever be satisfied? We, at "Perspectives" enjoy this tale as we turn to you, patient readers, to ask for your participation once again. New subscriptions are coming in steadily, renewals are up, new members are receiving one year gratis (ask your priest), sales in congregations are growing. We are really pleased!!! So, what more could we want?

Well,...but if only those wonderful subscribers would....if only they would...write some articles. Wouldn't that be grand! The deadline for articles for the summer issue is April 6th and we would love to submit contributions from North America. It is a painful process to solidify thoughts into a handful of words, but it is a precious gift. In the end, "Perspectives" will survive without our active reader-input...but like the Fisherman's Wife we have a vision, a dissatisfaction with stagnation and ...yes, indeed...good, patient friends!

*Suzanne Steinrueck*  
for "Perspectives"  
2135 W. Wilson Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60625

## LIMA WITH AND WITHOUT PRIESTS

On the first of February, The Christian Community in Lima came together to celebrate the Sunday without priests. Both were attending the South American Synod in Buenos Aires, Argentina. It was the first time in seven years, since the church was consecrated, that such a situation occurred.

Our meeting was not lengthy, but quite natural and even logical for members and friends, who come together each Sunday. It was a shared celebration in

which there were no "acts" or "presentations" especially prepared and rehearsed for the moment. Nonetheless the space was "filled", dense with the will of those present. The devotion, solemnity and sacredness of the regular Sunday Acts of Consecration could be felt; only the form was different - that and the fact that no priest was present physically.

Perhaps it is daring of me to say this, but I think all of us members felt ourselves in some way priests - supporting this meeting, doing what was possible, putting our will at the disposition of the event; and it occurred and became reality.

This time only members took active responsibility. Each one was there with all his being. There was no room for anything else except the act itself and from this fact streamed strength and gave fullness to the space.

I believe this was a step forward for the Lima community, a community that is growing slowly, but one that is strengthening itself each day. And this is the community that is preparing itself to be the meeting point for the second conference of The Christian Communities of the Americas. In July, 1999, we will join together sharing a similar path, experiences and creative ideas which will prepare us to receive with strength and optimism that which the new millennium will bring. See you in Lima in '99.

*Ana Ornano*  
Lima

## THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN NORTH AMERICA, AS OF FEBRUARY, 1998

Rev. Arie Boogert has been assigned to work in our Boston congregation from May onwards, in a retiring position. During the time when Denver is without a resident priest, priests from elsewhere will be visiting regularly.

## CONGREGATIONS AND THEIR ADDRESSES

**Boston USA** (617) 926-2615  
366 Washington Street, Brookline, MA 02146

Rev. Susan Lowndes

**Chicago USA (773) 989-8558**

2135 West Wilson, Chicago IL 60625

Rev. Robert Patterson, Rev. Oliver Steinrueck

**Denver USA (303) 758-7553**

2180 South Madison Street, Denver, CO 80210

Rev. Arie Boogert

**Detroit USA (810) 546-3611**

1320 Camden at Wanda, Ferndale, MI 48220

Rev. Hartmut Junge (313) 823-5315

**Los Angeles USA (818) 762-2251**

11030 LaMaida Street, North Hollywood, CA 91601

Rev. Cynthia Hindes, Rev. Jim Hindes

**New York USA (212) 877-3577 or 362-7204**

309 West 74th Street, New York, NY 10023

Rev. Erk Ludwig, Rev. Gisela Wielki

**Philadelphia USA (610) 647-6869**

212 Old Lancaster Road, Devon, PA 19333

Rev. Richard Dancey, Rev. Franziska Steinrueck

**Sacramento USA (916) 362-4330 or 366-9545**

3506 Eisenhower Drive, Sacramento, CA 95826

Rev. Sanford Miller, Rev. Everett Moraine

**San Francisco USA (415) 928-1715**

906 Divisadero Street, San Francisco, CA 94115

Contact Melissa Kay (415) 469-0705, or contact the

Sacramento priests

**Toronto CANADA (416) 224-2011 or (905) 508-1431**

1766 Avenue Road, Toronto, Ontario M5M 3Y9

Rev. Susan Locey, Rev. Peter Skaller

**Vancouver CANADA (604) 988-4038**

5050 East Hastings Street, Burnaby, B.C. V5B 1P6

Rev. Werner Grimm

**Western Massachusetts USA (413) 274-6032**

The Granary, 37 Rosseter St., Great Barrington, MA

[Send mail to P.O. Box 658, Housatonic, MA 01236]

Contact Jonitha Hasse (518) 329-7992, or contact the  
New York priests

**GROUPS AFFILIATED WITH  
CONGREGATIONS**

(\*Not regularly visited by a priest)

**\*Albuquerque, New Mexico USA** Contact  
(505) 293-2608 Dennis Kane (Or contact Denver)

**\*Austin, Texas USA** Contact (512) 472-4366

Sandra Richter (Or contact Denver)

**\*Boulder, Colorado USA** Contact (303) 661-0927,

Claudia Lainson (Or contact Denver)

**Burlington, Vermont USA** Contact Bill Warnock

(802) 862-7001 (Or contact Toronto)

**Camphill Minnesota USA** Contact Chicago

**Camphill Ontario CANADA** Contact Edi Holzer

(705) 424-2409 (Or contact Toronto)

**Copake Camphill Village, New York USA**

Contact Western Massachusetts

**\*Dallas, Texas USA** Contact (972) 238-0610

Linda Kemp (Or contact Denver)

**Durham Area, Ontario CANADA** Contact Fritz

Stutzki, (519) 369-6011 (Or contact Toronto)

**East Troy, Wisconsin USA** Contact Chicago

**Edmonton, Alberta CANADA** Contact Vancouver

**\*Honolulu, Hawai USA** Contact (808) 395-8049

Genie Sakaguchi (Or contact Los Angeles)

**\*Houston, Texas USA** Contact (409) 321-4479

Cherry Brown Damianoff (Or contact Denver)

**Kimberton Hills, Pennsylvania USA**

Contact Philadelphia

**London, Ontario CANADA** Contact (519) 433-0090

Carol Lewis (Or contact Detroit)

**Meadow Vista California USA** Contact Sacramento

**Minneapolis, Minnesota USA** Contact Chicago

**Montreal, Quebec CANADA** Contact Erika Keipert

(514) 691-2093 (Or contact Toronto)

**New Hampshire (Southern) USA**

Contact Boston

**\*Northampton, Massachusetts USA**

Contact (413) 665-0985 Sandra Littell

(Or contact Western Massachusetts)

**Ottawa, Ontario CANADA** Contact Pieter Doef

(613) 269-4967 (Or contact Toronto)

**Santa Cruz, California USA**

Contact (408) 423-4025, Bruce Bischof

(Or contact San Francisco)

**Santa Rosa, California USA**

Contact (707) 542-2304, Elizabeth Hecht

(Or contact Sacramento)

**Spring Valley, New York USA** Contact New York

**Washington DC, District of Columbia USA**

Contact Philadelphia