

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

MOVEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS RENEWAL

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Passiontide through Whitsun 2003

Cosmic Lights

By Susan Lowndes

The universe offers us two kinds of cosmic light—the sun by day, and the stars by night. The one is all round and full, shining everywhere equally, with its great embracing light joining everything visible in its benevolent glow. The other is all distant sparkling points, individual, distinct, and separated in the cold darkness from one another.

When the Community of Christians was founded on the earth, these two kinds of light were brought into a new world-historical connection. For each of us is distinct, in our own space, with our own perspective, experiencing aloneness and the dark as we strive and suffer, regret and rejoice, learn and love. This is how we evolve, becoming ourselves and more enlightened on our path.

But human history moves forward as well, through the destiny of communities to which everyone belongs by birth, by upbringing, by choice. And through communities, something greater than the individual can work, for better or for worse.

Eighty years ago, a free religious community, without rules or dogma, came into being, to be worthy of modern individuals and of the Spirit at work in our time in community-building ritual.

The Act of Consecration of Man, said Rudolf Steiner, is more real than anything in Nature. It will outlast everything material. As an eternal sun, it generates spiritual community, blessing and nurturing our common human essence, consecrating human beings on either side of the threshold in divine deed.

Our life weaves between these two forms of light—the sparkle of individual destiny and the destiny of the Christ-centered community, shining through, in, and around us. So may we together play a crucial benevolent role in the history of community life and world evolution.

Susan Lowndes:

Oct. 22, 1942 – Dec. 11, 2002

By Oliver Steinrueck

On December 11, early in the morning Susan Jane Lowndes, the priest in the Boston congregation, died in the care and in the arms of her two children, William and Alexandra. The last weeks were a steady and conscious journey for the three of them toward this crossing. For many in the community it came as a sudden shock, since most were unaware of her illness until a letter arrived in November explaining the imminence of her death. The cancer that had been treated some years earlier had returned and was inoperable. The event had the drama befitting Susan's temperament.

Susan was ordained in February, 1992, the oldest in the group of eighteen, but in many ways one of the youngest in her attitude and demeanor. Nothing was ever stale or boring when Susan was there. She brought with her the ability to always be fully present in the moment, making each conversation or activity a new and often dramatic event. This freshness, coupled with her disregard for hollow conventions, would bring out the humor and the unexpected in daily events.

Susan's youthfulness was accompanied by a wholly different quality in her soul, that added to the mystery of who she was. She had a love for philosophy, for learning, for ideas, and lived in the modern cultural sphere with a certain poise. Some of this erudition she brought with her from her former occupation as a philosophy teacher, but she was continually exploring the new ways people were thinking and writing about inner development and growth.

Susan served all of her ten years as a priest in the Boston community. In 1996 her colleague, Sanford Miller left Boston for California and Philip Nussbaum was sent to work in Boston. Susan awaited his arrival with great anticipation. Philip never arrived, due to the tragic and fatal accident on route. For the following years Susan worked alone, but often with the consciousness that her deceased colleague was working with her in the community. So she too will continue to help and work in the sphere where her heart was most: in the care and life of our sacraments at the altar.

The Holy Nights in Vancouver

A Report from Susan Koppersmith

In Vancouver, the Holy Nights were flanked, like bookends, by two important events.

On December 23rd we attended the funeral of our dear friend, Gail Tulloch, who had passed away of cancer at home on Dec 19th. She lived a life filled with caring and counseling of friends and children and volunteering at the Waldorf School as well as our Christian Community. We all stood as one person when her casket was wheeled to its final destination of fire and ash. Usually in December our city is awash with cold winter rains, but on the day of the funeral the sky was blue and we walked out of the chapel into a blazing hot sun. Summer had made a brief appearance!

On January 6th our congregation put on the Three Kings' Play, which was nothing short of miraculous. Since September our priest, Michael Kientzler, had tried valiantly to organize us into regular Tuesday evening practices. It was hard to get a lasting commitment from anyone. Some said they would take a part but then dropped out as family or work pressures increased. There was a glimmer of hope one Sunday in early December.

After the Service, a large group practiced the songs from the play and there were jokes and lots of laughter. A few people (myself included) realized that we might miss some fun by not being in this play and so we offered our time. After Christmas Day we began seriously working together, but in small groups: the angel with the kings and Mary and Joseph at one time and Herod and the Jews and the devil at another time.

But by now our Joseph had dropped out and we still needed a Casper, one of the kings. Two members of the community were persuaded to take on these two last parts and finally on January 2nd we assembled as a whole cast for the very first time. We had four days to learn our lines and bring it all together! In the meantime Abegael Fisher-Lang had taken on the task of directing. Earlier it had been a free-for-all with cast members directing each other. Too confusing! She asked us to hold our thoughts and contribute them at the end of the practice when we would have a sharing time. We had a structure out of which we could work and the Play, itself, could begin to work its magic on us without interruptions.

For me, at this moment, the play began to live with a life and purpose of its own. We each adjusted our priorities and this play became our most important work for the next few days. We were committed! There were long practices on January 3, 4, and 5 with growing momentum. The following night we presented the play to an enthusiastic sell-out crowd and raised a phenomenal \$700.00!

Now several weeks later, I am asking myself: what really happened to us all? Did another Entity (was it Gail?) begin to work with us? A situation that was fraught with problems and a lack of energy was suddenly turned around at the last minute into an experience full of power, joy and real community-building.

I know that I want more of this kind of activity with other people in the future!

SLEEPING, DREAMING, WAKING

Report of a conference for young people
held in Spring Valley, N.Y.

Jan. 2-4, 2003. by Kieran Riley

This was one of the most unique conferences I have attended. It felt like the beginning of something new, which I'm sure was partly brought on by the awesome energy of the new church in which we gathered. We all felt privileged to meet in such a sacred space. Although most of us have met at camps and youth conferences in the past, everyone brought diverse experiences, and we now had the opportunity to put our lives into perspective and share with one another. Building bridges and working with one another in a meaningful way is not so easy when you are 18-28 these days. But we all realized how important this is, and we'll do it again.

The first evening we jumped right in and got down to business with a lively, evocative discussion, which got us all on track. The next two days were full of activity, starting with the Act of Consecration in the morning. Brigida Baldszun then led us in eurythmy, mainly focusing on a passage from Christopher Fry's play, "Sleep of Prisoners". Although this passage is a rather serious and profound one, we all enjoyed doing the movements, and even had fun. There was also singing, music, creative writing, and exploring the "Dream Song of Olaf Asteson", who woke up from a deep sleep on the 13th day after Christmas. This all allowed us to take a break from the more intense processes of working with the theme. A healthy balance was struck in this beautiful chapel, allowing the elements of light, joy, and deep peace to penetrate throughout.

Luckily, the cold, wild, and chaotic nature of the elements did not penetrate our space. We experienced an odd pattern of constantly changing wintry mixes, sometimes falling in flurries, or big, silent flakes, sometimes in splats of rain or sleet, and sometimes in wild gusts of hail, loudly pattering on the roof above. While it was bizarre, sporadic, and unpredictable outside, it was warm, deliberate (though I guess sometimes also bizarre) inside.

The presentations by Reverends Kelly (sleeping), Wielki (dreaming), and Dancy (waking), stimulated profound thought and discussions. We heard about the history of problems related to sleep, exploring what is behind sleep deprivation and the loss of respect for sleep, which are a completely modern phenomena. We were also presented with the idea of "the American Dream" and discussed its significance today. We are the only country with a "Dream" sought by so many. What does this mean for us? It is a "dream deferred" for so many; unfulfilled and waiting.

We heard the beautiful story of Paula Allende's dream, out of which came a deeply prophetic letter to her loved ones, saying farewell and asking them to let her cross the threshold, and not be afraid. She later fell into a coma, and upon reading the letter, her family let her go. She knew she had to go, somehow, from her dream.

We spoke also of the process of waking up, which seemed to be a theme underlying most of our intentions. One profound image which sticks with me is that of the

newborn baby, and what we see when one looks right at us. Their gazing eyes convey something carried over from a different world. Yes, we must all learn to wake up, but without losing sight of the dream, and definitely without losing sleep.

Our final plenum was a tremendous conclusion that we all gave and received something in this short time, and that we were able to consciously create a space where we could mutually “take a breath of fresh air” from the smog and confusion of our daily lives. Although it seemed so brief, our time together was packed with concentrated, continuous, meaningful interaction. I feel energized and inspired to continue building a strong foundation for 18-28 year olds, in particular, and look forward to having more great opportunities like this one.

Actually *Building* a Community around our Church

By Kathleen Williams

from the Taconic Berkshire Congregation

In the rural neighborhood surrounding the Taconic-Berkshire church, community is taking on solid form.

Three member families have built or purchased homes within sight of the church, and a fourth member has acquired a nearby parcel that lends itself to a small cluster of living units. Community land trust status is being investigated for a building project here in order to provide affordability for future generations.

At the moment the land is still in pine woods, with a small stream that cascades down to the Green River on the other side of the church. Deer, beaver and hawks are active nearby.

The location is in New York State at the Massachusetts border, a quarter of an hour's drive from Great Barrington MA, and the same distance in the other direction from Harlemville NY, home to a number of anthroposophical endeavors including a medical practice, the Rudolf Steiner Library and the Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School. Two Camphill communities are also nearby.

Although affinity with the church is not a prerequisite for residence, it is hoped that members and friends may find the site desirable, and come to share in neighborly endeavors and enrich the small festival celebrations that have begun.

Anyone interested in sharing ideas about the project may leave messages for Kathleen Williams at 413-274-6950 or email kawms@usa.net.

NEWS FROM SOUTH AMERICA

November 17, 1532 and 2002

Martin de Gans, *Buenos Aires*

On November 17, 1532, the Spanish conqueror Pizarro used treachery to capture Atahualpa, the last emperor of the Incas. The dramatic encounter between Atahualpa, highly gifted, magnanimous and courageous, and Francisco Pizarro who wanted to convert him to Christianity, is one of the most important historical moments in South American history. It is also starkly symbolic.

Every year this date is commemorated in our Lima congregation because this encounter happened in Peru. What happened at that time between Atahualpa and Pizarro should get our attention, as it helps us to distinguish between what is fundamental and genuine in Christianity and what the Catholic Church added - such as politics, manipulation of public opinion and the desire for power. A rather topical subject to this very day, and not only in Peru.

As fate would have it, in 2002 The Christian Community in South America moved forward in a twofold way on this famous date, the 17th of November, which fell on a Sunday last year.

Consecration of the Botucatu Church

The foundation stone had been laid on June 14, 2002. Renato Gomes, a Brazilian who has been our colleague in Buenos Aires for almost ten years, was able to guide the whole building process. Our architect Michael Moesch as well as our construction engineer Ricardo Montero, both belonging to the congregation in this small ‘cultural oasis’ 6 miles from the city of Botucatu, **and three hours by car from Sao Paulo**, were at hand at all times. With a great team of construction workers and very simple technical devices this 26 feet high church was built in less than half a year – and this for less than \$40,000 at the moment of writing [December 2002]. A stunning detail: the massive granite body of the altar, weighing about 2.1/2 tons, cost a total of \$100, including transport and installation.

The church was not yet entirely finished on the day of its consecration; nevertheless, it was far enough along for the community to celebrate a radiant consecration festival on Saturday evening and Sunday. Around a hundred people attended the Act of Consecration of Man; music had been composed for flute, violin, cello and ‘Bleffert gongs’ especially for this occasion. Forty children were present at the Sunday Service for Children, all of whom, except two, having also attended religious instruction, which just had started. Thanks to its height, even when it became extremely hot outside, the church itself was cool on the inside.

A promising and radiant beginning!

Founding of the congregation in Cali

As previously reported in this newsletter we had intended to begin construction of the church in Cali in August, 2001. However, changes in zoning laws and official interactions have not run as smoothly as hoped; as a result approval has not yet been given. But the congregation has not lost heart for some progress is made with every initiative.

What we had hoped for could not be accomplished: the founding of the congregation in the new church. Emilia Hosmann, the Argentinean priest who has been sent from Lima to Cali, almost was not able to immigrate to Colombia – as she lost all her papers a week before her move to Cali. But sometimes the paper mill of bureaucracy is able to work overtime, especially in case of adversity. Thus on November 14 she was able to travel to Cali, and the congregation was founded November 17. With its own priest, Cali now is no longer a ‘daughter’ but a ‘sister’ of the Lima congregation.

November 17 the Act of Consecration of Man was celebrated in the Waldorf School, and this continued for at

least a week. In the meantime, the two floors above a health food shop have been rented and now provide space for all our activities as well as an apartment for Emilia.

Full of thanks, the congregation is in good spirits!

See, too Emilia Hosmann's contribution in this newsletter. Renato Gomes wrote about *The Christian Community in Botocatu SP, Brazil*, and its church in our last (Advent-Epiphany) issue.

LETTER FROM CALI, COLUMBIA

By Emilia Hosmann

On November 17, 2002, nineteen members founded the Christian Community in Cali, though one of them is at present in the Frankfurt community learning German so as to begin studying in the Priest's Seminary in Stuttgart. We are a small group still; only eighteen are left to support our work here. At the periphery of the congregation there are many who are interested in what is offered: the renewed cult, the sacraments, the courses, religion lessons for the children and the celebration of the festivals.

The people here begin their day very early: usually at 5 am they are all awake and on their way. (The girl who comes to open the bio-shop underneath shows up at 6 am!) They have then a full day, without the typical south American siesta (midday nap) and by 9 pm are dead tired. So, any courses offered must begin by 7 pm at the latest so they can be home in time to rest from the long day. The school begins at 7 am also and goes until 2:45 pm.

What do the "caleneos"(sic) (pronounced ca-lay-nee-ose – as in nose, but with an ee in between) look like? Our congregation is a good example: there are Afro-American, Indians and Spanish white, pure and mixed. One can recognize the features in hair, skin, eyes, cheekbones. Cali is rich in water, so the people take two showers a day, usually cold! The buses are full of music always and the people are very polite to each other. You hardly ever see someone rude or nasty on the street.

Cali is full of trees: big beautiful trees, some with yellow or lavender or orange flowers. Rivers run through Cali, all along or cutting through. It is within a large valley surrounded by green hills. But Cali also has an important cultural life: there are many universities, libraries, theaters, artistic groups.

Like many countries in South America, it is at present hard for many men to find steady jobs, so many homes are supported by the women who seem to be able to hold theirs. It is a very frustrating situation for the men and for the women who have to leave their home all day and come home to a person who feels useless and can only manage to bring in bits and pieces to the family income. We are looking for creative ways to raise money without putting more of a strain on the already tight budgets. The money destined for construction of the church is not being touched. We are living with what we collect every month. With this we pay for the rent, other expenses and for the priest's needs. We are trying to manage without financial help, but are most grateful for any received! For example: there is a great yearning and

need for beautiful cards with religious motives or reproductions of well known masters. If any one cares to donate some please contact your local priest. In September Emilia plans to go to the Seminary in Stuttgart to meet with those priests who were ordained with her (Craig Wiggins, Jens-Peter Linde, Oliver Steinrueck, Anand Mandaiker, Kirsten Rennert). Thank you so much for any help given or yet to come! We will keep you informed on how we are doing. Greetings from sunny warm Cali!

NEWS UPDATE FROM CALI

By Emila Hosmann

At last we are installed in our own space: a space for the sacraments, for the community and for the resident priest. We are renting it but hope to be able to start building as soon as possible. Meanwhile, we can work very well here.

What we have built, and we consider it a sign of the importance we give to the sacraments, is the vestry, adjoining the altar room. It is a small space and the material used for building it was "guadua", the typical Columbian construction material consisting of beams of a very thick cane filled in between with a curtain of thinner canes and covered with cement. The house itself is a three story house upon a hill, with cool breezes all day long and a view to both hills dominating Cali: the one with the three crosses and the one with the Christ with outstretched arms. We occupy the two top floors.

The very top is our altar space: in it we are celebrating three times a week. We are gradually forging a space for the services on a Sunday. Many people are accustomed to using Sundays for recreation partly due to the catholic church offering the Mass already on Saturday evening! But, I don't know if it is the novelty or the conscious need, but our 30 seat space is nearly full! There are many young people here. Cali is a young congregation: many children, youth, young couples.

But, fortunately, there are also some middle aged people (between 40 and 50), ready to give of themselves and with a great capacity for sacrifice, which is what is most needed at this stage. For the first time the congregation will be able to attend all Christmas and Epiphany services. We are receiving the festivals with great joy in our hearts. Thank you for your support and for bearing us in mind. We appreciate all your good thoughts and wishes.

Conference for Confirmands from New York and Massachusetts

From Carol Kelly

A group of 20 confirmands were taken by surprise, to a movie (!) during their confirmation retreat Feb., 7-9 at the Taconic Berkshire Christian Community. . The retreat was conducted by Rev. Peter Skaler, Rev. Carol Kelly from Spring Valley , Laura Summer (artist) and Sue Conlon.

The movie was the new documentary about the sculptor Andy Goldsworthy. He creates his works in natural settings, using only natural materials: snow, ice, leaves, sticks, flower

petals,stone..... The young people were split up into groups and sent out into the beautiful landscape surrounding the church, to try and create their own nature sculpture. They took up the challenge! The results were amazing and the mood was good! Then we could settle in to discussions of angels, our relationship to the spirit, the Ten Commandments, The Lord's Prayer and Christianity.

Now they are really ready! It was a good experience for all and hopefully the beginning of a new tradition between the two congregations.



Central Fund and Trustees Delegates Meeting

A report from Cynthia Hindes

On November 7-9, 15 delegates, the 6 Central Fund members (which includes 3 priests), and 4 other priests met in Chicago, under the theme, "Working Together". Each day began with the Act of Consecration of Man and ended with a Close of Day Reading from the altar.

Rev. Erk Ludwig opened the conference by speaking about Sacramental Community. He explored the two ancient words for "church"—*ecclesia* (those called out by the God for inspiration), and *kyriake* (that which belongs to the Lord, the place of his presence, especially the architectural or dogmatic vessel), and contrasted them with The Community of Christians, where individuals who feel Christ's presence *within themselves* unite to create a community. This gesture of uniting counterbalances the natural tendency of the age of the consciousness soul to separate and concentrate on the individual. We as a Community of Christians need the courage to look toward the future—to work on becoming the Community of Christ. The future lies in the Act of Consecration of Man—that we unite for the offering.

An individual's past, he continued, is characterized by indebtedness—to parents and teachers, to God, for body, soul and self. The truly human self wants to bring an offering of thanks as a way of paying off indebtedness. We sacrifice the highest and best in us (what we think we know of Christ), creating a free, empty space, which becomes a new point of departure. This Not-I emptiness becomes the place where we can experience Paul's "Not I live, but Christ lives in me." (Gal 2:20). Meeting Christ in the empty space within results

in our being sent out by him to others who wish to unite themselves for the offering, to become the community of Christ. The Christian Community is not a church of those specially called out by God for inspiration (*ecclesia*); nor is it a building or particular spiritual knowledge (*kyriake*). It is the sacramental *community* of those who are working toward becoming Christ's community, creating a space for him in their midst through their offering.

Four sessions on Friday were given over to **Caroline Estes** who explored with us the Quaker method of **decision-making by consensus**. She explained that the Quaker use of the term consensus does not mean that some or most are in agreement, but rather that a sense of the meeting, a sense of the whole is striven for. It requires that everyone in the meeting participate so that the group as a whole can move forward toward an implementable decision. She gave us much wonderful material, which should help our board and decision-making meetings operate more smoothly, efficiently, and effectively. We came away with a richness of materials.

The unique **life of each community** was addressed when each community's delegate gave an answer to questions: describe the moment, event or circumstances when your community really came together to become, be or achieve something good or great or simply memorable; and looking ahead, what is the biggest or most important challenge and objective for your community in the next 12-24 months? What is needed (other than money) to make it happen? Is your community well positioned to succeed? On Saturday The North American Central Fund Board held **elections** (the reason around which the trustee delegates meet.) The current Central Fund Board members are Rachael Flug, President, Jennifer Crebbin (Vice President, whose term ended with this meeting), Barbara Remboski (Secretary), Reinhard Rosch (Treasurer), Arie Boogert (Bookkeeper), Oliver Steinrueck (Lenker), Robert Patterson (retired Lenker), and Erk Ludwig. The Central Fund meets twice a year, with several conference calls in between. The North American Regional Central Fund is mandated to support the Regional Coordinator (Lenker), retired priests, priests' widows and dependents, and priest training.

Oliver Steinrueck, Coordinator, spoke of Alfred Heidenreich's post-WWII impulse to span the North American continent. After the war, the New York, Chicago, Los Angeles congregations were founded in quick succession. Such an expansive reach has resulted in communities being far apart in perception and awareness. It has taken 50 years to realize Heidenreich's original vision of a **regional consciousness**—the CF Board and Trustee Delegates meetings for the last 6 years have been instrumental. Oliver announced that Washington has officially been accepted as the Central Fund's 13th member congregation.

Barbara Remboski, Secretary, announced that 83% of the CF's income comes from the congregations, and that 49% of its disbursements are for retired priests. The CF, which had a deficit of \$66,000 last year, is currently running a deficit of \$11,500. Rachael Flug, president, explained that the large deficit last year was due to one-time extraordinary expenses. Additionally there was a loss of interest income, which should be balanced out by the income generated by the rental property in Chicago which Robert Patterson

donated to the CF. **Legacies given to the CF, along with direct donations, are encouraged.**

Elections: Stacey Jostad moved that the nominations of Barbara Remboski and Erk Ludwig for re-election be accepted. Stephanie Georgieff seconded. Vote: 11 yes, no abstentions.

We also had a session with Dagmar Brockstedt, the manager of the **Foundation International**. The Foundation International is the legal body (sort of the Central Fund) for The Christian Community worldwide. She spoke about its structure and purpose. It is a Dutch foundation, with a backup in Switzerland. The 18 regions of The Christian Community worldwide send a maximum of 3 delegates to a meeting every two years. General strategic decisions, usually originating with the priests, for the work of The Christian Community in the future are funded through this body, which also discusses general content, philosophy, and policy such as whether monies should be invested. The Foundation's Board consists of two priests nominated out of the Circle of 7, plus 3 lay people. The board meets quarterly. The overall budget is approx 1 million Euros. 40% supports the Circle of Seven, 25% a contingency/emergency fund; 15% covers administrative costs, 11% goes to support the regions in need, and 5% for additional costs. The income for this international fund comes as contributions from the 18 worldwide regions, just as the monies for the North American Central Fund come from the individual communities. [15% of our congregation's income is donated to the regional central fund; a percentage of the *region's* income is donated further to the international foundation] Most of the income of the Foundation comes from 6 German regions, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. The Foundation is currently running a 10-15% deficit. It faces a demographic bubble of retiring priests, similar to the situation in the North American region, and expects its assets to disappear by 2004. Its Board is considering an apportionment of 1% of each region's spending.

We looked at the upcoming **bilingual North/South Conference of the Americas, being planned for this coming summer, July 26-Aug 1, 2003. It will take place at St. Mary's College in Orinda, CA (East Bay area in Northern CA), hosted by The San Francisco Bay area community.** The conference fee of \$375 will include dormitory housing and cafeteria, with a large room for plenum and classroom. The conference title is "**The Way of the West: Rise from the Fall**". **The content will be around the theme of Sacramental Consultation.**

Each community was requested to offer \$400 to the conference, either through direct donation or a fundraising event, since the conference fee will not cover the cost of the event. It has been kept low so that the cost is not prohibitive for South Americans. S.F. has already donated \$5,000 to the conference. **Anyone wishing to support this initiative should send check to their local community, clearly marked North/South Conference.**

A further topic was the **English language Seminary**, opening in Chicago fall, 2003. Enquiries have been worldwide. Major

donors have contributed \$170,000. An additional \$40,000 has been pledged, and The Foundation International has pledged \$95,000 contingent upon the business plan. General fundraising (North America): out of 3,500 households, 230 responses have raised \$30,000. A \$50,000 interest free loan has been offered. The seminary has found a 16-unit apartment building a block from the church. Purchase price: \$1.1 million. It would be student and faculty housing, classroom, library, office, and possibly rental income. The next 6 months are crucial for a healthy beginning. A detailed brochure will be coming out soon.

The Website

Our English language website, thechristiancommunity.org, continues to be frequently visited. We average 2387 requests for pages a month, 77 a day, both from North America and from all over the world.

The site received forty emails to the website in September and October. Topics range from asking for information about service times in a particular community, to possibilities of establishing services in new areas, to how to make contact with the seminary. Other requests are about theology, requests for prayers or for our brochures. Each email is answered.

The website's functions as a world-wide bulletin board for the movement, or like a phone switchboard. It is a way for friends and newcomers to "talk" to someone to get questions answered. It is also a resource for written materials and articles. The majority of the North American Newsletters are archived there, along with other informational materials.

Forms of Love

A man and his dog were walking along a road. The man was enjoying the scenery, when it suddenly occurred to him that he was dead. He remembered dying, and that the dog walking beside him had been dead for years. He wondered where the road was leading them.

After a while, they came to a high, white stonewall along one side of the road. It looked like fine marble. At the top of a long hill, it was broken by a tall arch that glowed in the sunlight. When he was standing before it, he saw a magnificent gate in the arch that looked like Mother of Pearl, and the street that led to the gate looked like pure gold.

He and the dog walked toward the gate, and as he got closer, he saw a man at a desk to one side. When he was close enough, he called out, "Excuse me, where are we?" "This is Heaven, sir," the man answered.

"Wow! Would you happen to have some water?" the man asked.

"Of course, sir. Come right in, and I'll have some ice water brought right up." The man gestured, and the gate began to open.

"Can my friend," gesturing toward his dog, "come in, too?" the traveler asked.

"I'm sorry, sir, but we don't accept pets."

The man thought a moment and then turned back toward the road and continued the way he had been going with his dog.

After another long walk, and at the top of another long hill, he came to a dirt road that led through a farm gate that looked as if it had never been closed. There was no fence. As he approached the gate, he saw a man inside, leaning against a tree and reading a book. "Excuse me!" he called to the reader. "Do you have any water?"

"Yeah, sure, there's a pump over there". The man pointed to a place that couldn't be seen from outside the gate. "Come on in."

"How about my friend here?" the traveler gestured to the dog.

"There should be a bowl by the pump." They went through the gate, and sure enough, there was an old fashioned hand pump with a bowl beside it. The traveler filled the bowl and took a long drink himself, and then he gave some to the dog. When they were full, he and the dog walked back toward the man who was standing by the tree waiting for them.

"What do you call this place?" the traveler asked.

"This is Heaven," was the answer.

"Well, that's confusing," the traveler said. "The man down the road said that was Heaven, too."

"Oh, you mean the place with the gold street and pearly gates? Nope. That's Hell."

"Doesn't it make you mad for them to use your name like that?"

"No. I can see how you might think so, but we're just happy that they screen out the folks who'll leave their best friends behind.

Perspectives

The **English language Christian Community quarterly, Perspectives, is available by subscription (\$24 a year)**. Send a check or credit card information c/o The Christian Community, 906 Divisadero St., San Francisco, CA 94115 .

CONFIRMATION DATES 2003

April 27: Devon, Chicago

May 11: Denver, Washington DC, Seattle, Toronto

May 18: Boston, Detroit, Taconic-Berkshire

May 25: Sacramento, Spring Valley

CAMPS

EAST COAST CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY SUMMER CAMP for boys and girls ages 8-13, July 31 – August 16. Costs \$475.- At Camp Glen Spey in Glen Spey, NY. For information call Rev. Carol Kelly at (845) 426-3144.

SUMMER CAMP IN THE MIDWEST

On Pleasant Lake outside East Troy, MI, August 7 – 21. For information phone Rev. Oliver Steinrueck (773) 989-8558.

HEIMDAHL BY CANOE For inquiries about this year's canoe trip please call Bill Warnock at (802) 862-7001.

WEST COAST CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY SUMMER CAMP for children ages 8 -13, at Camp Tamarack in the High Sierra of California, June 29 - July 16. Contact Rev. Sanford Miller at (916) 362-4330.

YOUTH CONFERENCES

EAST COAST CONFERENCE for Teenagers, August 18 - 23. For information and contact Erk Ludwig, 309 West 74th Street, New York, NY 10023. Phone (212) 877-3577.

Second Altar Picture Conference

Laura Summer and Hartmut Junge

Second Altar Picture Conference for artists and priests, July 17-20, 2003 in Hillsdale, New York. Encouraged by last year's participation (and accommodating some people's schedule), we would like to continue our efforts and hope this invitation comes early enough.

A detailed schedule will be sent to all who are interested. Please contact Laura Summer, 651 Harlemville Road, Hillsdale, NY 12529; Phone and FAX:518-672-7302.

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AS OF FEBRUARY, 2003

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6242, jhindes@earthlink.net. Due Date for next issue is
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