



**THE CHRISTIAN
COMMUNITY**
MOVEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS RENEWAL

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North American Newsletter

Volume 25, No. 2, Michaelmas, 2017

Who is Like God? A Path through the Michaelmas Readings

September 29 is the festival of the Archangel Michael. On this day and in the four weeks that follow we hear in the seasonal prayer or epistle of the Act of Consecration of Man about the workings of the Archangel throughout the ages. The image of the battle between Michael and the Dragon in the heavens is brought before our souls as a mighty revelation and we are invited to follow the Archangel in gaining a new understanding of Christ's death and resurrection. Michael's mission is so intimately connected to that of the Christ being that he appears as the countenance of Christ and guards the mystery of transubstantiation as he guards the mystery of Christ's resurrection. At the core of these mysteries lies the permeation of earthly substance by heavenly being, the complete blending of human being and God. How can we understand this relationship between the divine and the truly human? What does this have to do with us who are incarnated today? And how do we actually relate to God: as something outside of us, inside of us, or both? It may not be mere coincidence that the guiding Archangel of our time bears the name Michael, which can be translated as the question Who Is Like God? It is a question whose answer is no longer a given, but which may accompany us throughout our lifetime together with a growing understanding or inkling of what it may mean.



As a path to a possible understanding of this question about the relationship between God and human being we can follow the Gospel readings that are read in the Michaelmas season. Like the epistle they are full of images. In Matthew 22, Jesus uses the image of the preparations for a wedding feast as a way to describe the Kingdom of God. The opening words of this parable, "The Kingdom of God is like a human being, a king," show the intimate connection between the

divine world and the world of human beings. It hints at the possibility of manifesting the divine within us, and points out a particular quality that most resembles the divine: the quality of kingliness. Instead of going into an exploration of all that this quality of kingliness may include, it may suffice at this point to say that the movement from human being to king assumes the possibility of and indeed need for an ongoing development of the soul forces of the human being.

To take hold of this development in the right way, we need to gain some understanding of the spiritual forces that work in the world to undermine this development. In Revelation 12 we hear again about the battle between Michael and the Dragon, and how the Dragon was cast down to the earthly realm where it now rages. The Dragon in its two manifestations of devil and satan tries to ensnare the human soul through spirit-denying materialism and earth-denying spiritualism respectively. It hinders the right relationship of the human soul to the realm of spirit and the realm of earth, and of the soul forces of thinking, feeling, and willing to each other.

An understanding of the workings of the adversary in our soul life and in world events can help us move from fruitless reactivity to a place that allows us to overcome and transform the powers of evil through the help of Christ. Christ appears in Revelation 19 as the White Rider, the Word of God who works in the world as the One who puts everything in right relationship. This process has often been envisioned as a great Judgment, but may well be understood as a balancing, healing process.

Finally, in Ephesians 6 we learn what it looks like when we allow ourselves to be permeated by the Christ being, and how we can strengthen our soul forces against the power of the adversary. The armor of God manifests itself as truthfulness, communion with the divine, peacefulness, and trust in the workings of God and in the healing that comes from Christ.

As we follow this path of the Gospel readings through the Michaelmas season, we can experience a growing hope and trust in the presence of the Divine in our lives as we are consciously working to balance out our soul forces and move from reactivity to steadfastness. It can become indeed a path of inner development, a preparation of our souls for the nearing of the Christ being during the season of Advent.



Florian Burfeind
Member of the Chicago congregation and
former student at the Seminary in Stuttgart,
Germany

Weather vane from the Castle Valkenburg, Netherlands,
WikiMedia Commons

Impressions of a Summer Up Above and a Winter Down Under

*“The adversarial powers can torment Christians until they bleed,
but they cannot prevent that they love each other.”*

Rudolf Frieling

During the summer we — students and directors of the Seminary in North America — attended the International Whitsun Conference of The Christian Community in the Netherlands. I have had the opportunity to be part of these exceptional events several times since the time I studied at the priest training in Stuttgart, and I have noticed that each time these conferences become more international in their nature. In 1980, at a conference in Stuttgart, there was just one language and one dominating German culture. It was still the era of the Iron Curtain; Eastern Europe was “invisible,” a few people from other European countries were present, America was hardly visible or audible. This changed just after the fall of the Iron Curtain, when in 1990 another international conference was held in The Hague, the Netherlands. People from Eastern Germany, Czechoslovakia and Russia were present. A new wind was blowing — not only in The Christian Community but in the whole world! During the next international conference that I attended, in 1997, in Hamburg, I had (together with a staff of young helpers) to take care of a group of 100 children, most of them from Europe — often trying to communicate with hands and feet. For the first time, children and youth joined the adults at the end of the conference for a short presentation with singing, dance and a little skit. We all felt at this time: This is how we should continue — bringing generations and nations together! The conference in Dortmund, in 2010, was still very German but more people from other countries attended and brought a completely different world with them. This time the youth conference took place next to the location of the adults so that at least we became aware of each other.

In 2017, however, it seemed as if the whole world (at least in a homeopathic dose) had come to the international conference. It was remarkable to see that instead of a single dominating German culture (or in this case, Dutch), many were present in the form of languages, performances, skits, singing, dances, art and so on. Next to the big halls, where a thousand adults gathered, 400 young people had their own conference. For the first time, we could experience whatever we chose from one or the other program, so that the generations became strongly aware of each other. Having experienced at least four of these conferences in nearly forty years, I began to understand for the first time, in a very concrete way, what the expression “the community of the Christ” means. I felt connected with each of these individuals even if I didn’t understand their language — and this connection remained with me after the conference. This experience grew and extended during the following months, when I was invited for a lecture tour in New Zealand and Australia. Celebrating the Act of Consecration in Hawkes Bay, New Zealand, I became existentially aware of the connection of the Act of Consecration with the earth; this is the place where the sacrament is born each day, together with the birth of a new day for the whole earth. During seven weeks of winter “down under,” where I visited six different congregations, I began to *experience* (not just to understand) what the community of the Christ is, feeling the connection with the many people and congregations that were somehow in my consciousness, feeling how the Act of Consecration moves with the sunrise over the earth.

Of course, in this impressive experience there was at the same time an awareness of *terra incognita*; places that are outside the reach of my consciousness and awareness of connections.

These impressions culminated at the end of my travels (I counted all together 14 flights!) in an inkling of our task for the future. The greatest danger for our small Movement for Religious Renewal seems to me that our often tiny congregations become isolated. (This feeling of isolation, by the way, is very strongly felt in Australia and New Zealand.) **In the struggle for life, each congregation is in danger, more or less, to survive on its own.** To put it in a classic quote: “We must all hang together or we shall all hang separately.” (Benjamin Franklin)

Our times, more than ever before, give us the opportunity to develop connections worldwide – also in our Christian Community. Looking forward to the centennial of our Movement (2022) the future task at least for me is: How can I become part, not only of a local congregation or of my region, but of The Christian Community worldwide, ultimately, of “all true Christians who are born?”

Rev. Bastiaan Baan

Chestnuts Snatched from Fire

“All paintings which I made of nature were chestnuts that I snatched from fire.”



In these words Vincent van Gogh described, in a letter to his brother Theo, the burning passion, the ongoing crisis and suffering, which accompanied him in his creative process.

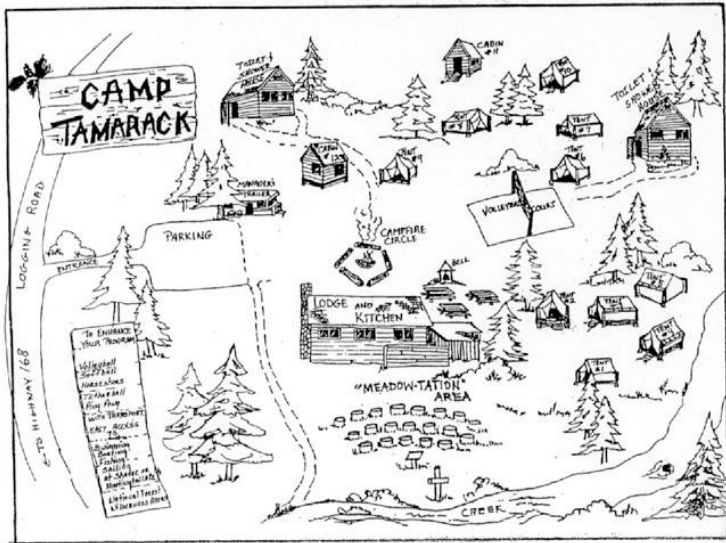
Every genuine artist can confirm these words: in order to reveal something purely supersensible in this world of matter, in order to manifest his work, the artist must give himself completely to his task – so that some day his work can resurrect in the eye of the beholder, in the ear of the listener – like the Phoenix Bird out of its own ashes.

Every Human Being who can perceive himself in the Light of the Resurrected One, can also confirm these words: in as much as we are able to work on ourselves, to work on our inner growth, on our selfless-becoming according to HIS image, we are all in essence artists.

For it is out of our efforts to overcome that in us which is imperfect, which is not yet realized, out of our efforts to overcome the ongoing crisis, which accompanies us on our way to our selves, that the angels snatch the seeds of our future, refined in the fire of our lives.

Rev. Rafal Nowak

Camp Tamarack, 2017



“Off the beaten track” is putting it mildly, a dad called out as four eager children poured out of his SUV on Sunday, June 25 this year. Camp Tamarack is at 7,200 feet in the High Sierras east of Fresno, California. Surrounded by tall pines, redwoods and other natural beauty, this site has been home to The Christian Community Children’s Camp for decades, with a slight interruption between 2009 and 2016. Last year, we got off to a good start. This year the camp was full with a waiting list!

Forty children and twenty staff members descended on this beautiful, rustic campsite to spend two weeks in the midst of a sheer overwhelming natural setting, leaving behind the joys and sorrows, as well as the screens and gadgets of civilization. An added feature of this campsite is the almost total lack of connection to the outside world: most cell phones have no reception; electricity is generated by two solar panels and serves the kitchen’s needs. This sounds mundane, but we observed some very positive effects on ourselves and on the children.

It’s a challenge... and that’s the whole idea! For some children this camp was their first time away from home without parents. For others it was the first time in such a wild setting. Thanks to the leadership of our excellent group counselors each child received the care and guidance necessary to find their place in the whole of the camp. Each one had the experience, at some point, that “I have come down where I ought to be” as the old Shaker hymn refrains. Social challenges galore!

Nature presented itself from a rougher side this year as well. Since (finally) a lot of snow had fallen in the mountains during the past winter, the rivers and lakes were running at much higher and faster levels than last year. IT. WAS. COLD! That did not keep our intrepid campers out of the water. And the fishing poles did quite a job too. One of the highlights for many a camper was catching, preparing and eating their own fish. Another highlight was the overnight hikes: one or two groups took off together into the wilderness and camped out at a scenic spot, sleeping under the stars.





As the campers departed, tired and dirty after their two weeks at Tamarack, their farewell greeting sounded like music in our ears: “See you next year!”

Rev. Craig Wiggins

Inspired by Matthew 22 – The Parable of the Wedding Banquet

When we first come into the world, the experience of our body and the impressions from the world around us fill us to the point where we must go to sleep. Indeed we must sleep in order to grow, and yet it is often not easy to transition into this state. To help a new baby find sleep, many people try swaddling. The baby is laid in a cloth that is snugly wrapped and tied around them and their jerky movements relax into the binding of their arms held down against the body and their feet tucked in.

When we seek rest as adults, we may still reach for the comfort of a heavy blanket or the arms of a dear one and feel the relaxation of being held. When we are out in the world going about our work, on the other hand, we both like and expect to have our hands and feet free. We often find, however, that though our movements seem free, we feel as though we are bound, and not in a comforting way. The question “Where do I go from here?” or “What do I do now?” can wrap around us, immobilizing us. Suddenly, faced with such unknowing, our hands and feet become useless deadweight.

To face such questions is part of the human experience. We have all, at some point, felt cut off — from ourselves, our community, from God. We have been (we are) the outcast, bound hand and foot. In such moments we can remember the swaddled newborn, whose bindings are there to help. Rather than helping us to fall asleep, they are there to help us awaken, to be able to perceive the one who stands where we do not know the way forward.

It is neither our hands nor our feet that will know he is there – it is our heart. In growing wakefulness, our heart will cease to be pushed and pulled by the changing tide of emotion and pure discernment can permeate its depths. This capacity slumbers within each human being and is called upon every time we face the unknown. Here Michael beckons, calling upon our courage: to be strong in our confidence and knowledge of the Spirit, that every human being is so much more than meets the eye, that with hands and feet bound, the muscle of our heart can grow.

Rev. Emma Heirman

Thinking, Feeling and Willing and The Act of Consecration of Man

One of the most striking things about the service called the Act of Consecration of Man is its quietness. It is not introduced by mood music, but by the silent time we spend in the minutes before it begins. It is a time to clear away the laundry list, the traffic, the hustle and bustle of every day life, each in his own way.

During the service we make three gestures of small crosses over our bodies. They are small motions with powerful meanings. They are not explained in the words of the service. Eventually, as the words we have heard many times release us into our own meditative time, we ponder on the meaning of crossing ourselves near our foreheads, our chins and our hearts. These gestures are connected with the three soul forces of man — thinking, willing and feeling. Each time we form crosses over the centers of our body which correspond to thinking, willing and feeling, these soul forces are strengthened.

It is pretty easy to connect thinking with our head. We can imagine the two motions which we make to form a cross intersecting at what the ancient Indians called the third eye— the place which lies behind the forehead and between the eyes.

It is not difficult to think of feeling in connection with our heart. Our language is full of heart words—heartfelt, hearty, hard-hearted, heart-broken, heartily, etc. We know that feelings of fear make our heart contract, feelings of hate make it pound, while feelings of love can overpower the heart, making our cup “runneth over” with tears of joy.

Thinking, willing and feeling live together in man and are difficult to separate because each affects the other. Will is the hardest concept to understand correctly. I used to think that willing was *doing*. It is more complicated than that. Will lies *within the forces* which *do*. For example, willing is not the decision to get up from a chair, but all the muscle coordination it takes to let us get up! Will lives within the forces which enable us to get out of the chair. This means that the will is, for all practical purposes, almost impossible for us to grasp consciously. Our will is a creative force yearning to be awakened. Rudolf Steiner says that it will become an actual creative tool for man in the future. It begins to do so already when we think with such concentration that our will forces are “pulled up” into our thinking. There they live as free will to aid in our thinking, to manipulate thought-life creatively, to take thoughts apart and put them back together in a different way, to draw correct (or incorrect) conclusions.

Strengthening for this thought/will activity comes when we make the sign of the cross over our chin. We could say that the chin, as a bony protrusion, represents our will, but I suspect it goes even deeper than this. Behind the chin, in the throat, lies one of man’s most important organs — the larynx. It is the center for speech, which can become an organ for experiencing the spiritual world with conscious perception.

Christ’s power and love live in the three crosses. His Word can become a creative force in our daily lives, helping us to live as He lived. By learning to balance our thinking, willing and feeling, we will gain the gift He promised — peace with the world.

Margaret Shipman (member of The Christian Community in Los Angeles)

Summer Youth Conference 2017: I AM the Bread of Life! Hillsdale, New York

Sixteen teenagers met in Hillsdale the last week of August for seven days of laughter, singing, adventuring in rivers, on a mountain, attending Shakespeare and Co's presentation of *The Tempest*, baking bread in the kitchen, learning to serve at the altar, and making new friends and seeing old ones. Art, conversation, and many new experiences were created together. Revs. Hugh Thornton and Liza Marcato were joined by seminarian Nils Cooper and helper mom Monika to nourish and guide the young people. For the last years we have taken one of Christ's "I AM" statements, and have been thus guided by Him to offer these "emerging selves" a chance to get to know this most essential helping guide on our path to becoming human.

Enjoy a few pictures from our time together!



New Beginnings...

Two firsts in North America: the Act of Consecration of Man was celebrated in Auburn, Alabama and in Nashville, Tennessee. Both these places are budding initiatives that are connected to our affiliate in Atlanta, Georgia.

There was also a new beginning for the Sacramento Community, as they moved into their new permanent home in Fair Oaks.

Auburn, Alabama —

The service was held on Saturday, September 9, 2017. For quite a number of years, first Rev. Jonah Evans and then Rev. Patrick Kennedy visited Alabama to give talks and have conversations with friends there in the initiative. They were delighted and moved to have a chance to experience the renewed Eucharist.

“We experienced a really deep spiritual encounter, earlier in September, as Rev. Patrick lead us in a moving talk on Friday evening and in the Act of Consecration on Saturday morning. He was able to find time to experience local geography and hospitality, too, including a trip to Tuskegee. Thanks to all those who made this weekend possible: folks from Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Vancouver, British Columbia.”

Katherine Jenkins, contact for Atlanta, Georgia



The Auburn event was hosted by long time member, Helene Burkart, in her home where she has had a study group for many years. She wrote:

“I have the feeling I still live in the radiation of this very special event. I experienced a peaceful, holy atmosphere in our ‘little chapel.’ Jonah opened the door and together with you we could enter. You brought the wedding forces from heaven to the earth, Auburn, Alabama, where they can ring out. Hope there is a possibility to celebrate the service again in 2018.”

Nashville, Tennessee —

Our weekend with Rev Patrick Kennedy brought together friends who have known each other from all parts of Nashville’s anthroposophical community, along with visitors from Alabama and Georgia. We gathered around a clear common intention to make a home for The Christian Community here, and several people commented on how this moment enabled us to meet in a new way. Barbara’s home became a sacred space, with a beautiful, serene chapel. Patrick brought us teaching and the sacraments, and each one present brought gifts as well – Helen’s paintings, Karen’s bread, or simply open-hearted attention. It was a time of holy exchange, in which all gifts met to open the way for a deep experience of Christ.

The Nashville Service was held on May 13, 2017 at Barbara Bittles home. The paintings are originals by the painter, Helen Chamberlain. There will be a second visit to Nashville at the end of October.

Contact for Atlanta: katjenks@negia.net

Contact for Nashville:
blbittles@comcast.net



Sacramento's new chapel —

As some of you may know, the congregation in Sacramento moved into our new permanent home. On Saturday, Sept. 9, we celebrated the first Act of Consecration of Man in this temporary chapel, which we managed to put together in exactly one week. We are working on necessary arrangements before we begin with the much anticipated remodeling of the space.



Rev. Rafal Novak

Our new address is:

The Christian Community in Sacramento
10030 Fair Oaks Blvd.
Fair Oaks, CA 95628

Retiring?

Rev. Cindy Hindes Moves into a New Phase of Priesthood

Hard to believe that I am already of an age (70) when Christian Community priests are to be relieved of the responsibility of running a congregation. We can, of course, still be asked to work; priesthood is, after all, a lifetime vocation and commitment, not a job. Yet there comes a time when one is grateful not to have to be in charge. I am active in the local congregation and I am doing a lot of substituting for priests who are away.

I look back with deep gratitude on twenty wonderful years of serving the Los Angeles congregation. (I was ordained at fifty.) When my retirement was approaching, one member said, “But you’re the new priest!” Those years passed so quickly for all of us. I miss you all! I am grateful to Sanford Miller for stepping in to supply visiting priests there.

I have relocated to eastern Pennsylvania. This allows me to be within half a day’s drive to ten of my thirteen grandchildren (and their parents). We will be able to celebrate Thanksgiving together! At the same time, I am a short drive away from the congregation in Devon, with a wonderful group of people and a terrific colleague, Nora Minassian. And close enough to other east coast colleagues to be able to attend collegial gatherings.

Furthermore, I have the great privilege of living in a lovely apartment supplied by Erika Asten, a generous benefactor to our movement, as well as to sister movements like Camphill. The apartment is located within the Camphill Village Kimberton, surrounded by green rolling hills, farmland, and often empty country roads. So beautiful! And there are instant friends, many of whom are active in the church. We hold a weekly gospel study group in my living room.

At the same time there is an active cultural life, both within Camphill and in the surrounding areas. There are historical locations – I drive through Valley Forge Park on the way to church – arboretums and estate gardens, and smaller museums in the area. And Philadelphia with its cultural riches is an hour away.

So how is retirement? Wonderful! My deepest appreciation goes to all who helped make the move and transition so seamless. And for the wonderful welcome here in Pennsylvania. I just haven’t figured out how to slow down yet!



Rev. Cindy Hindes

Remembering Rev. Richard Lewis

October 23, 1922 - August 8, 2017

Our dear and much loved Reverend Richard Lewis died on August 8, 2017, three days after the 66th anniversary of his Ordination on August 5, 1951.

Richard was born on October 23, 1922, a little over a month following the founding of The Christian Community in Reading, Massachusetts.

In his senior year of high school he met Gregg Brewer who was to become a life long friend and also a priest of The Christian Community. They both attended Bowdoin College in Maine and were introduced to Anthroposophy by their German professor, Fritz Koelln. World War II interrupted Richard's studies and he served in the Navy in the Pacific as an officer. After the war he completed his studies in German and harboring the hope of becoming a diplomat, he and Gregg Brewer entered a graduate program of the University of Maryland in Zürich, Switzerland.

In Zürich Gregg became immediately involved with The Christian Community while Richard was reluctant. But when he chose the poet Christian Morgenstern as his dissertation subject he was encouraged to meet with the local Christian Community priest, Rev. Rudolf Meyer, an expert on the work of Morgenstern. This eventually led to Richard gradually warming up to the idea of attending the youth group in the Zürich congregation, where he met his future wife, Tamara, after which he was a dedicated participant. Gregg began his path to priesthood and Richard followed a year behind.

Following his Ordination he spent nine months in London, returned to Switzerland and married Tamara and then was sent to Chicago where Gregg Brewer and Rosemary Bergmann were already. The three of them were "pioneering," founding the congregation. As can be imagined there wasn't sufficient financial support for the three of them and Rosemary and Richard went out to get jobs to supplement the congregation's meager income, while Gregg did the house maintenance, the plumbing, carpentry, and electrical. Chicago was Richard's base for the next nine years, but he helped out, often for months at a time, in New York and Toronto. Two children were born to Richard and Tamara: Veronica in 1958 and Andrew in 1960.

He was then sent to San Francisco in February 1961 and in 1963 began alternating between there and Los Angeles in April of '63, finally moving to L.A. in September. He was sent to Sacramento in 1974. He officially retired in 1987, but continued to celebrate, preach and do pastoral work as if he hadn't. He ceased preaching in his early 80's and stopped celebrating a year or so later. Since then he has been at every Act of Consecration of Man, with but few exceptions, until April 12, 2017, the day following his heart attack.



Richard was a tireless researcher, translator and archivist. He produced five different volumes of translations out of the work of Rudolf Steiner on different themes. He would choose a subject, such as Angels; Death of Children; Love, Sex and Marriage (his bestseller!) and then comb the lectures and written work of Rudolf Steiner selecting and translating the relevant passages. Proceeds from the sales were to support the Retired Priests Fund. He was also a founding member of Rudolf Steiner College, inspired by the work of Rev. Carl Stegmann.

He gathered reams of information about working with children in our congregations, and additionally, anything and everything connected with the growth and development of The Christian Community in North America.

His wife Tamara died in 2015 and his son, Andrew, died in 2016 from anaphylactic shock following a bee sting.

Following Tamara's death, Richard, good soldier that he was and ever adaptable, moved out of the house he and Tamara had occupied for the last twelve years and moved in with Johanna Frouws in the congregation's house in Fair Oaks. They moved one more time as the congregation was figuring out where it would ultimately land. Then came the heart attack in April, in Holy Week 2017 and Richard began a slow, but steady decline. When it became clear that he needed more care than Johanna and his daughter Veronica could provide, he was taken in by the Dorso family and two congregation members signed on with Veronica's help for 24 hour coverage. The decline was a tough passage for Richard and he was released from his struggle in the early morning hours of Tuesday, August 8, 2017.

While we are glad that he was finally able to cross the Threshold, we will miss this deeply devoted priest of The Christian Community, a true friend to so many. We will miss his cheerful, kind, ever diplomatic and caring presence.

Rev. Sanford Miller

Reflections on the Conference in Santa Cruz — *Cultivating an Individual Relationship with Christ*

On August 25th and 26th, Rev. Patrick Kennedy traveled from Spring Valley to Santa Cruz and Rev. Craig Wiggins came from San Francisco for a weekend conference entitled *Cultivating an Individual Relationship with Christ*. Initially, we expected about 20 people, but actually more than 60 people arrived for a truly wonderful event.

Twenty years ago, Patrick had attended a study group here on the St John gospel led by Bruce Bischof and myself which he described as a very important stepping stone for him towards the priesthood.

We met in the lovely Paloma Hall at Camphill Marimi and it was a kind of homecoming for Patrick; his father Marty was present and there were many joyous greetings with old friends. The second day began with the Act of Consecration of Man. In three very direct presentations,

Rev. Kennedy shared many stories of the Disciples and their relationships with Christ and then led us gently on a path of spiritual development to where we could see our way to find for ourselves an intimate experience of the presence of Christ in our own heart. The three Sessions that Patrick led were enlightening and refreshing. The whole conference had a heart-warming mood and in the intervals, many valuable conversations took place. Kristin Ramsden led us in several challenging and inspiring eurythmy explorations. We were given a delicious organic lunch catered by Terry's Table.

I believe there were many for whom this was a life-changing event. I heard a repeated hope that Revs. Patrick and Craig would be able to host another such conference. Our thanks go out to all who helped to make this possible; in particular Cindy Brooks, Armand Ruby, David Leighton, Kathryn Rycroft and Kristin.

Daniel Bittleston

Open Courses at the Seminary

Chartres: The School of Philosophy and the Cathedral

November 6 at 7:30 am - November 10 at 1:00 pm, \$150

with Rev. Bastiaan Baan

Topics include: Michael and the School of Chartres, Celtic Origins, Platonism and its Fruits in the School of Chartres, The School of Chartres and Natura, The Seven Liberal Arts, Notre Dame de Chartres, The Cathedral: Architecture, Sculpture, Windows, the Labyrinth.

St. Paul II: Building Christ Community

November 27 at 7:30 am - December 1 at 1:00 pm, \$150

An open course especially for affiliates. All are welcome!

with Revs. Bastiaan Baan, Patrick Kennedy, and Oliver Steinrueck

In this open course, we will investigate how community in affiliates and congregations of The Christian Community can be built up.

- Body, soul and spirit of a community
- Pioneering situations: How to begin?
- Organization, finances and practice
- "You are the Body of Christ": A Theology of community building

Location: The Seminary of The Christian Community in North America,
7 Carmen Court, Chestnut Ridge, NY 10977.

For more details and to register online visit www.christiancommunityseminary.org.

For more information email info@christiancommunityseminary.org or call 845 356-0972.

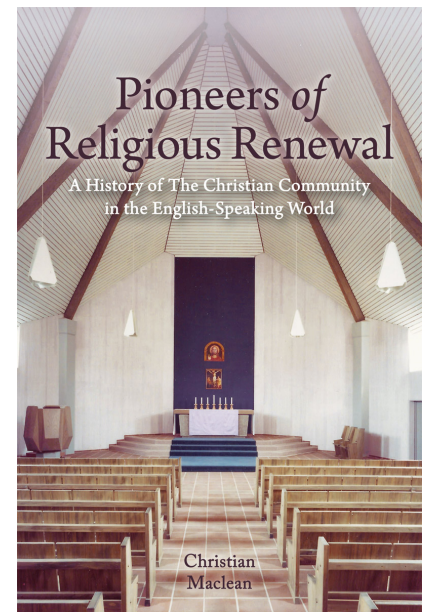
From The Christian Community Bookshelf

Pioneers of Religious Renewal

Christian Maclean

In 2016, Christian Maclean, a dedicated member of The Christian Community and manager of the English language publishing company, Floris Books, published a book that bridges a missing link in the history of The Christian Community. Relatively much is published about the origins of the Movement for Religious Renewal, the help of Rudolf Steiner and the beginnings of the work in German. This book tells the story of The Christian Community in the English-speaking world.

Christian Maclean is the “predestined” author to write this book – active in The Christian Community for more than 40 years. The biographies of many of the founders are enriched by his own experiences and anecdotes. In addition to many of the early publications, that show the bright enthusiasm and idealism of the founders of The Christian Community, the story that is told by Christian Maclean shows not only light, but also some of the shadows that were cast by initiatives and individuals which affected the growth and ripening of our movement.



Christian Maclean notices, looking over his own shoulder to his product, that in the future the role of the members and friends of The Christian Community, who acted as birth-helpers, should be more emphasized. In this book, there is a first attempt to show their role. Taco Bay, the former Erzoberlenker of The Christian Community worldwide, used to say often: “We have to develop from the pioneer-stage of a priest-church to the stage of a member-church.”

Here at least we begin to see our movement through the eyes of a member: a fresh approach with a typical English sense of humor!

Rev. Bastiaan Baan

The Chymical Wedding Christian Rosenkreutz — A Commentary on a Christian Path of Initiation

Bastiaan Baan

In the face of the challenges of our time, it can be tempting not to love and value these times. We may feel dread at their challenges and give in to nostalgia for other, seemingly less fearful times. This book is the perfect antidote against that temptation.

Helpfully before introducing us to the Chymical Wedding, the author gives the context with a brief history of the Rosicrucians and their writings. This foundation supports our understanding as we are then introduced to the text of the Chymical Wedding a day at time. The book ends with a brief but powerful few paragraphs entitled “Who is Christian Rosenkreutz?” These help the reader to understand the depth and width of that question and of the fruitful nature of this extraordinary personality.

What is so special about this book is the subtlety with which it explores and reveals its subject. The author makes it very clear that he is not dealing with a black and white, rational content. Rather what is being shared is a living mystery which can be contemplated and worked with over many years, sometimes enlightening us and always stimulating us to deeper and more thoughtful questions and processes. Bastiaan does not explain the images and content of each day. Rather, he explores each day's images and concepts in order to plant them in the soul of the reader. Then they may serve as starting points for what can become personal interpretations and insight maybe far into the future at a different point in the reader's biography.

In his book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, Viktor Frankl advised his readers to ask themselves "What is my life asking of me?" rather than to see themselves as the victim of something that life was doing to them. This gesture towards life shines through anything that has to do with Christian Rosenkreutz. We are asked to penetrate the nature of our world rather than to shy away from it. We are asked to seek transformation not for ourselves but for the world. It is this that makes the work so helpful for saying yes to now, to this time in which we live.

Recently Netflix, the internet based television provider, announced that their chief competitor in the battle for human attention was sleep. It is well known that many people binge-watch whole series of soap operas and dramas, sometimes losing days or weeks of their life. Millions of human beings seek distraction in virtual worlds instead of seeking the stillness they would need to face their problems and frustrations. What might such a temptation be asking of us? How can we grow when faced with it rather than be devoured by it? The challenges we meet are exactly what we need if we are to develop inner resources and strengths, to become free in the face of all that can pull us away from our true nature.

Bastiaan's book encourages us not to flee our experience of life but to engage with it wholeheartedly. In order to enter the process described in this text it is necessary to be open and to live with images that ask more than they tell. This means being willing to take time with this content, perhaps a lifetime. We need to put ourselves in the uncomfortable position of living with rather than answering questions. It is also necessary to be humble, or teachable. We also need to face the dark sides of life. Sometimes we need to face what Bastiaan calls the desperation and fear which are evoked when we receive revelations from the spiritual world. All these demands are the exact opposite of the distractions we are offered by the modern world. It is these attitudes and experiences that can prepare us to live in our time in such a way that it begins not to be our enemy but the necessary resistance if we are to gain the strength and the qualities needed to understand the world and meet its demands as free human beings. In this way I see this book as something that can become a friend to its readers, something they will carry around and read not once but many times, which can become a friend and a guide.

Deborah Ravetz

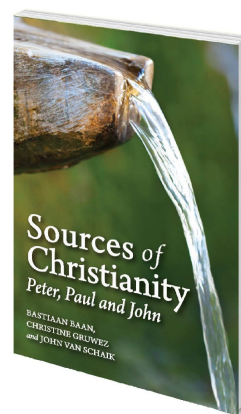
Sources of Christianity

Peter, Paul and John

**BASTIAAN BAAN, CHRISTINE GRUWEZ
& JOHN VAN SCHAIK**

The three apostles Peter, Paul and John are the most important starting point for understanding the beginnings of Christianity. Each brings a different background and language: Peter's Old Testament imagery, Paul's connection with Greek culture, and John's independent lyricism.

This fascinating book paints a vivid picture of the three, exploring what they had in common as well as their significant differences, and demonstrating their continuing relevance today. It shows that all three are needed to truly approach the reality of Jesus Christ.



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Bastiaan Baan was a Christian Community priest in the Netherlands and is currently director of the priests' seminary in Spring Valley, NY.

Christine Gruwez was born in Belgium and has written on Manichaeism and anthroposophy, freedom in Islam, and Dionysius the Areopagite.

John van Schaik has published many books on gnosticism, mysticism and esoteric Christianity.

234 x 156 mm | 224 pp | 978-178250-429-0 | paperback | £14.99 | 17 August 2017

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Seminary Fundraiser — Books by Bastiaan Baan for Sale

Five books by Rev. Bastiaan Baan are now available in English translation. Half of the cover price supports the Seminary of The Christian Community when you place an order directly with the seminary.

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Cover price \$20.00 with the exception of *Sources of Christianity* and *The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz* which are \$25.00; all orders are plus shipping. *Books are lovely gifts and may be mailed directly to recipient(s) if a mailing address is provided.*

With deep gratitude for your support!

Janice

Janice Morgante
Management Consultant for
The Seminary of The Christian Community in North America

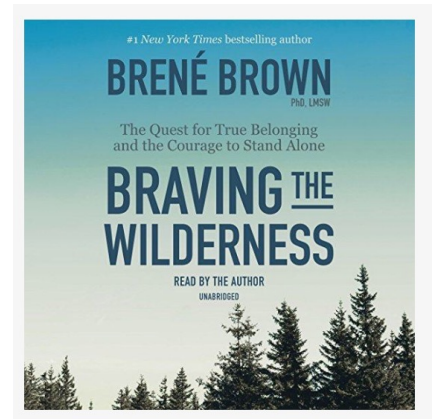
Book Tip by Rev. Liza Joy Marcato

I am drawn to authors who seem to have their finger on the pulse of our times and who offer insight into the becoming human being, as we wrestle in our time to face new challenges and rise up despite everything trying to make us less human and humane.

“Courage is contagious. Every time we choose courage, we make everyone around us a little better and the world a little braver.” — Brené Brown, from her website

Brené Brown is a social researcher and storyteller who has spent her career studying fear and shame, and vulnerability — which she discovered as the essential experience of showing up for life with your whole self. Her book *Daring Greatly* is a wonderful expression of what she means by vulnerability, and it changed my thinking around this topic so central on the path of following Christ.

I want to especially recommend her newest book, *Braving the Wilderness*. It is so Michaelic and so relevant to struggles of the current, post-election 2016 cultural climate, I find myself referencing it constantly. I think others within The Christian Community would greatly benefit from reading it, and implementing some of her suggestions into our work on our Boards, and in our life in The Christian Community. There is still so much that can be done to develop the culture of our movement. Our liturgy is our bedrock, but everything else surrounding it — how we build community together, that is actually quite malleable, and in terms of incarnating The Christian Community into the North American cultural landscape, helping many souls find their way to our fountains of living waters or quenching their thirst some other way — that is an ongoing project that we can all help with. If you are open to it — read Brené Brown!



* * * * *

Autumn Sun

Christy MacKaye Barnes

Down through the hastening
Cloud reefs of heaven,
Over the darkening
Wastes of waters,
Sun-swords strike
Light'ning-like,
Waking the world at last,
Striking the dahlias
And gongs of the great sun-flowers,
Warming red petals,
Red haws and asters,
Till they glow back again,
Fiery, sun-like!

Strike, too, O Michael,
Red human hearts as well
Lightning-like let surprise
Waken our clouded eyes.
Kindle our thoughts with sight
Till they leap crystal-bright.
Forge us, O Autumn Lord,
Fiery, sun-like
Into your sword.