



**THE CHRISTIAN  
COMMUNITY**  
MOVEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS RENEWAL

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# North American Newsletter

Spring, 2019

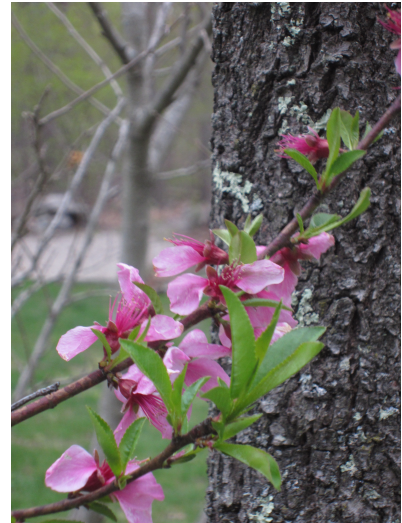
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## Born Again

Rev. Gisela Wielki

Down the block from the Christian Community in New York City, across the street in Riverside Park, lies a tree with its crown on the ground. All winter it looked so fallen, so resigned to its fate and so much deadlier than dead. The trunk of the tree had broken at the base and except for some bark and a sliver of a trunk, there was no more attachment to the earth, to the soil.

Now spring has sprung and passersby who notice the tree look at it in wonder. It has come back to life with new leaves. Buds on the branches have actually broken into bloom. It beckons the question how dead is too dead to no longer allow a way back into life? It certainly looks just short of a miracle to witness the power of the ascending sun draw a fallen tree back into life.



Life is indeed a miracle. Our own life hangs always only on a silver thread that could at any moment break. And yet we grow and thrive, some of us into a ripe old age. And when we die, and there are many ways to die before the last, it's not the food grown on the ground that calls the dead back into life.

Sometimes it is a gentle hand that pulls us back up into life.

Sometimes a word of encouragement bestows new life.

Sometimes another person's recognition of our pain can help us to recognize in our pain the potential for new growth, for new life.

Whatever it is that helps us to find our way back into life, it is never food of earth. It is always soul food, spirit food from beyond the earthly boundaries. And sometimes we just know deep in our heart it is His breath, His light, His love that makes us feel alive again. And in the last and final death on earth it is the power of the Risen One that helps us come to life and bloom in yonder world. It is the world next to the so-called living ones.

It is a miracle. Some call it: born again.

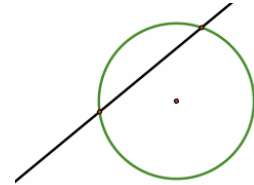
## The Line and the Circle

Rev. Rafal Novak

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When we see a straight line drawn on a blackboard, it is fairly easy to point out its beginning; the line always begins with point A and ends with point B. It is not as obvious in the case of a circle drawn next to it.

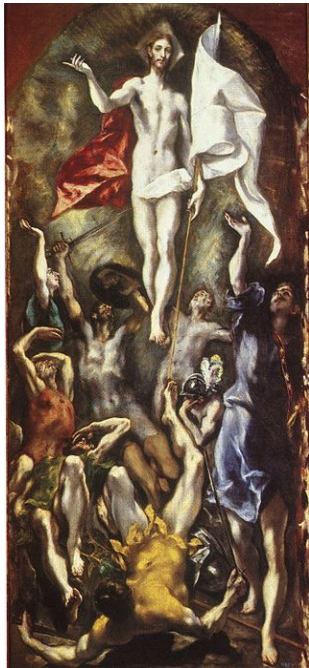
Indeed, it is only at a certain age that children who are asked, “Where is the beginning of the circle?” are able to observe that the circle has its beginning not in any place on the circumference, but in the single point in its center – the point which is not always visible on the blackboard.



This perception, this ability to see something that is not obvious, that is not immediately visible in the picture, is the skill of a mind which is mature enough to see more than what meets the eye, to perceive connections that are not immediately visible in the given, sense-perceptible world.

When we ask, “What is the central point of Christian faith, of Christian thought?” we must point not to any particular moral statement or rule, not to any socio-cultural form, or philosophy that have emerged with the history of Christianity – but to Resurrection itself. Resurrection is the beginning of Christian consciousness. It is the beginning of Christianity itself.

Yes, a super-sensible, super-natural event of coming back to life is at the very heart of Christianity, and the many wonderful moral, intellectual and aesthetic elements of Christian culture can not actually be grasped without understanding their central, most critical point – the Resurrection of Christ Jesus and His overcoming of the forces of death and decay after three days.



But we can only see in the world what we are able to think, what we are able to conceive in our thinking.

And so in order to see the forces of resurrection active in our world, in order to perceive and understand Christ's Resurrection itself, we need to find access to the sphere where the Risen One is always present, is always active. We need a form, a picture to which we can turn and from which we can develop the ability to think spiritual thoughts – to see the spiritual-eternal in the material world. A form which will allow us to develop new eyes and ears: eyes that see life even in death and darkness, and ears that hear and recognize His voice amid the overwhelming noise of lies to which we are subjected. Eyes and ears built not out of the substance of crumbling matter, stained with the sting of error and decay, but grown from the very substance of the Body of the Risen One himself.

Painting: El Greco, *The Resurrection of Christ*. Image from Wikimedia Commons.

It is in the ancient form of the act of consecration of bread and wine – *in the Act of Consecration of Man* – where we find this sacred space; where we contemplate the living picture, which is the true icon of our times.

The Risen One gave us this form – the Sacrament – on the night when the Mystery of His Death and Resurrection began. He left us a device, a place of meeting, where we are to remain in living communion, living contact with Him until we grow the capacity to see life instead of death; to see angels where others see strangers; to see Him, the Risen One, in every phenomenon of the created world, in every moment of our life – even beyond the point of death itself.

## About Our Southern Region

Rev. Carol Kelly

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The affiliate in Chapel Hill, North Carolina has been in existence since 1996. The small congregation there has been carrying The Christian Community sacramental life without a permanent priest for 23 years! They have had quarterly, bi-monthly or monthly priest visits, depending on the availability of the east coast priests.

The affiliate in North Carolina is resilient! They have had many confirmations and many funerals. They have rented many places and had to set-up and break-down after every Service. They remain steadfast in their desire to have a permanent priest and are hoping that this will happen in the next few years.

On Sunday May 19<sup>th</sup>, the Sacrament of Confirmation was celebrated in North Carolina for eight young people from DC, NC, Florida, Atlanta and Texas. This is a picture of our “Southern Region.”

Rev. Emma Heirman has been leading the young people in Atlanta and Texas, while I have been the priest for the people in DC, North Carolina and Florida. There is a great need for priest visits in Atlanta, Nashville, Auburn, and Gainesville. The whole southern region is open and ready for growth if only we had priests.

It is wonderful to know that there are many people who have enthusiasm and joy for The Christian Community! We also look forward to the upcoming A.S.K. (Ask, Seek, Knock) Conference in Atlanta in June, 2020. This is sure to be an amazing gathering of creative spirits, inspiring thoughts, artistic endeavors and good will! June 24-28<sup>th</sup>, 2020. See you there!

## Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday

Rev. Craig Wiggins

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### palm sunday

black earth  
    tiny seed  
        human hand sows  
            will it sprout?

sun-baked city  
    divine seed  
        godly hand sows  
            will it unfold?

dying earth  
    resurrection seed  
        Christ sows in us  
            will we rise?

march 24, 2013

### easter sunday

seed in earth  
has sprouted  
lost form revealing

Christ in death  
newborn  
Adam's body shining

we in thought  
resurrected  
step out into the world

san francisco, march 31, 2013

## Some Thoughts on the Different Income Streams that Support the Life of a Congregation in The Christian Community

Rev. Franziska Hesse

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Each congregation usually has income from three different sources:

### **Gifts from Legacies – an income stream from the past**

Legacies result from fruitful productivity in the past. It is best to use those funds to support capital expenses, i.e. building a church, buying equipment, maybe even a major repair or remodeling the church, putting in a parking lot etc.; lasting items that form the bedrock for our activities. On the other hand, a legacy can also be designated to a particular purpose and thereby reach into the activities of the other income streams.

*We can relate this income stream to the realm belonging to the being of the Father.*

### **Pledges and One Time Gifts – an income stream from the present**

These are moneys that derive from current activities of the donors. It is money that comes out of life and is best applied to the ongoing life of a congregation. It covers the day-to-day expenses, supporting the priest, utilities, cars, etc.; covering all that is necessary to fill the building with activity and life.

*We can relate this income stream to the creative realm of the Son.*

### **Offerings after Attending One of the Sacraments – an income stream that comes to us out of the future**

All of our sacraments are future-bearing; their gifts are not exhausted in the moment, but manifest in inner growth over time. Leaving a spontaneous offering in the basket after the service is a way to say thank you and to acknowledge what we have just received. It is an exchange that is entirely between you and your God; it is not recorded in your name - as are pledges and legacies - and entirely serves the future.

*We can relate this income stream to the secret working of the Holy Spirit.*

We could engage in an interesting conversation about how to rightly apply this income stream in the life of the congregation. Maybe towards items which are needed at the altar, including vestments? Maybe for beautifying the spaces, artwork etc.? Or to reaching beyond our sphere?

A congregation's life is healthy when these three incomes streams are well balanced and can sufficiently support the respective areas. Each is a necessary part of the whole and in their inner qualities are reflections of the working of the threefold aspects of the Divine into the life of the congregations.

## News from the Newly Ordained

Revs. Luis Gonzales, Matthias Giles, Cheryl Prigg

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*On March 29-31, 2019, Cheryl Prigg, Luis Gonzales, and Matthias Giles received the Sacrament of Ordination in Spring Valley, NY. All three had been students at the North American Seminary. Many community members (and priests) from the USA and beyond were able to be part of this special event. (Photo: Before the altar in Spring Valley, left to right – Luis, Matthias, Cheryl.)*

**Luis Gonzales** — It is now just over a month since I arrived in Fair Oaks, Sacramento! It has been a time to familiarize myself with celebrating at the altar, to get to know, little by little, the community that has been so welcoming, and to learn about different aspects of community life. For all of this I am counting on the enthusiastic help of my colleague, Sanford Miller, and members of the community who have helped me to create my home, given me singing lessons, helped me with my English and storytelling, invited me for dinners, taken me on outings and shopping...

It is also a moment to sense what it is that I could offer to the community and how it could start to unfold. These are the first steps of a transition from being engaged with the 'Being' of the Seminary to being engaged with the one of the Community. While the presence of the later is only starting to reveal itself, the former is still working through me.

Meanwhile, it is the first time in my life that I have lived next to a river. I take long walks along it, continually astonished by how this stream of water moving in one direction can adopt so many different forms, make so many sounds, and have such varied plant and animal life around it. Some nights, when I close my eyes in bed, that running stream comes to me and I ask my angel: could you explain to me — what was the sacrament of ordination about?



**Matthias Giles** — In our first week following the ordinations in March we had the unique and happy fortune to be able to participate in a North American priest synod. This was a remarkable way to begin priestly life. Surrounded by those who are now colleagues, I found myself part of a new community — a community of diverse generations, life experiences and personalities, all dedicated to the living substance of Christ in the sacraments. Through this circle of priests, each bearing a deep connection to the angel of their congregation, the broad and varied life of the Christian Community in North America entered into my experience in a new way. I could sense



more clearly my newly transformed connection to this movement and this region. This accompanied me as I entered my own community in Denver, Colorado.

It is no small thing to enter into a congregation in Holy Week, in many ways the central Christian experience. Through the daily Act of Consecration of Man, and a short study on the events leading up to the cross, my first week as a priest in Denver brought an immediacy and potency to my meetings with the congregation and its members. As someone who had been part of the Denver congregation as a seminary student and intern, this time brought a powerful sense of my new role and relationship to the community that I already knew and cared for. Carrying the sacrament through the depths of Passiontide to the living joy of Easter has been a wonderful way to begin my work.

**Cheryl Prigg** — Warm greetings to you from Auckland, New Zealand – ‘Land of the Long White Cloud’- where Hartmut Borries and I celebrate the first Act of Consecration to herald the beginning of a new week – probably while you’re still asleep.

After the most wonderful week of Ordinations, first celebrations and the North American synod, I arrived and celebrated for the first time in the Australia / New Zealand region in the Melbourne congregation on Palm Sunday. Spending Holy Week and Easter Sunday there felt like another home coming. I’m sure everywhere a priest celebrates is ‘home’, and now I am lucky enough to have a ‘home’ at the altar in Stuttgart where I took my vow, a home in Spring Valley where I trained, was ordained and celebrated for the first times, and now I have a new home at the altar in Auckland. I was inducted into the Auckland congregation on April 28 after a regional synod, which meant all my colleagues were present to enjoy the warm, generous and welcoming festivities that followed.

I look forward to exploring another very different country and culture. I also hope that I can stay in touch with you, who have had such an instrumental and important role in play in my journey to my new life in a new land.



## Remembering Natalie Robinson Brewer

March 27, 1927 — April 1, 2019

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Natalie Josephine Robinson was born on March 27, 1927, in a house in Milford, New Hampshire. Her father was Lewis Byron Robinson and her mother was born Miriam Juliette French. Miriam's father owned the hardware store in Milford; her sisters were both Baptist missionaries to the Far East. Lewis's father was a farmer in Pembroke, and Lewis himself found his career in teaching vocational agriculture.

When Natalie was not quite two, her mother died. For the next several years she lived with her grandparents John and Lurabelle Robinson. She got her love of cooking by helping at her grandmother's side, and had a lifelong love for the farm in New Hampshire.

When her father, now living on Cape Cod in Massachusetts, married again, Natalie moved down to them. Norine, her stepmother, was a teacher. She stepped into the role of mother for Natalie, and Natalie grew up from then on in Falmouth, with school friends whom she kept in contact with for years after. She was active in 4H, and good at making things. From that time came her skill in crafts and her knitting prowess, which has benefited her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

The main drawback in her life in Falmouth was that Norine brought a son from a previous marriage into the house. Bill was delinquent and untrustworthy; Natalie was never able to become friends with him.

A significant event in Natalie's childhood was a trip across the country (in the 1930's) by car, to help settle her Aunt Katharine in Seattle. Her Aunt Ruth French was on the trip, and used candy rewards to encourage Natalie to learn Bible verses by heart. She was the one who took every chance to bring Natalie to church; the Robinsons were not regular church goers.

On finishing high school Natalie went to study at the University of New Hampshire, where her father and Robinson uncles had gone. Her major was English, and she planned to become a teacher, perhaps in Alaska. But all that changed when she had a blind date with a young Bowdoin student just returned from the war. His name was Gregg Brewer.

They met several times in the following months. In the winter, returning from Bowdoin to the UNH they were in an accident which landed them both in the hospital. While they were in the hospital, Gregg proposed marriage to her. With a fair amount of common sense, she said, "Wait until we are in better condition to consider such a thing." But by the end of the academic year they were engaged. She continued her studies while he went to Switzerland for a year's graduate study abroad.

In Switzerland Gregg discovered The Christian Community and resolved to become a priest. He wrote to Natalie, saying that if she did not like the idea, he could give it up. She wrote back that she could not think of marrying someone who was not true to his ideals. So it happened that in August of 1948 she traveled by boat to Europe. On August 18, they were married at The Christian Community in Zurich.



It was about a year before they could go into Germany. By the time they came to Stuttgart, their son Michael was on his way to join them. He was born, Gregg was ordained, and in March of 1950 they sailed to America. Natalie stayed in New England until Gregg had the chapel and house in Chicago ready.

They were in Chicago for six years. In 1951 they were joined by Susan. The family lived in a half basement, directly under the chapel. In 1956 the family moved to New York, where the children went to the Rudolf Steiner School. A second daughter Kristin joined the family in 1959. When she was old enough to start nursery school, Natalie joined the School as assistant handwork teacher.

In the 1960's Gregg fell ill, and the place where the family could go was Camphill Village in Copake, New York. There Gregg did not die as originally expected, and there they lived for 21 years. Natalie worked in many roles: as housemother, as craft master, for a few years as class teacher in a fledgling Waldorf school, and even in the finance office. In 1985, they left Camphill and returned to Chicago for several years, afterwards retiring to Falmouth.

There they lived peacefully for a number of years. By this time she was also a much-loved and loving grandmother. But during that time she developed a heart arrhythmia. In the first stages of treating that, colon cancer was discovered. She recovered well, and was able to be present for Gregg in his final illness. During the last years Susie was with her to help with many of the practical issues to which Gregg could no longer attend. After Gregg's passing in 2003 she joined Michael and his family, first in Hillsdale New York, and then in Michigan. Wherever she was, she was appreciated by those around her, whether for her wisdom or for her potato salads.

For many years she was able to be independent. A second occurrence of colon cancer weakened her considerably, and in the last year and months her heart condition led to ever greater weakness and dependence. This was her final ticket into the spiritual world.

In her last years she often wondered why she had to wait so long to rejoin Gregg. Perhaps this time gave her an opportunity to tell *her* story. During their marriage, Gregg was the storyteller. One of the great gifts of regularly taking her on shopping trips has been to hear the stories in her voice. That quiet voice is still there; we simply have to find a new way to listen for it.



Photo: The Brewer Family in 1952

## Of What Use are Priests Anyway?

### Religious Freedom and Community Worship

Rev. James H. Hinds

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*Recently a member wrote to me because of her surprise at finding the text of the Act of Consecration of Man on the Internet, posted by a friend. She wrote to the friend explaining that the service was meant to be heard and prayed **not** published and read or examined as a theological text. He responded by pointing out that texts of all The Christian Community rituals had already been published in German, indeed, by the organization that had the legal rights to Rudolf Steiner's legacy. He added that in our time there is no need for churches, priests or organized religion in any form. Anyone, he asserted, could use these texts to celebrate their own sacraments. These ideas were disturbing to the member so she asked me what she should think of them. Here is my response:*

Dear Friend,

Fred (name changed) is right about some very important things. Since the corporation legally responsible for Rudolf Steiner's literary works in German (and world rights) published all the lecture cycles to the founding priests in the past ten to twenty years the Act of Consecration of Man has been available for anyone to purchase in any German bookstore. They were forced to do this by the laws governing copyright in Germany and Switzerland; it was a good idea for two reasons. A literary work must be published within 75 years of an author's death or the copyright is lost and his name is no longer attached to the work. A copyright protects the work from distortion by others. The other reason was that pirate copies of the lectures were in circulation, editions with changes and falsifications. It was necessary to put something out to the public that was definitive and authorized as correct.

This development was inevitable in keeping with the spirit of the times. Esoteric no longer means hidden away from the public at large in any physical way. Esoteric is what a person does with the material. It's not what you have; it's what you do with what you have that makes it esoteric. Steiner once said that all the deepest wisdom of the Seven Indian Holy Rishis had been revealed in the writings of Hegel—but it is still esoteric because only a few can actually understand Hegel.

The text of the Act of Consecration is, of course, meant to be heard. As you said, its full reality is only present when celebrated by an ordained priest with the congregation, both dead and living, present. But printing it today, publishing it on the Internet, does not mean that its spiritual potency when celebrated under the above conditions is in any way reduced. Your shock comes from seeing the skeleton of a religious celebration with all the life removed. Those who do not know the service will see some religious, intellectual ideas in print. Hopefully, the abstractions in print will not detract from what that individual experiences personally when he or she one day does experience the service. But it is inevitable that all our sacraments and meditations become public; this is the karma of the age in which we live. And as Fred says, 'Most people will not show any interest in it.'

Fred is also absolutely correct that every individual human being can find Christ and experience transformation in his or her life. No pastor, priest or church or community is needed. This insight or knowledge is about 500 years old but some people must still fight for the truth that modern man's spiritual autonomy must be inviolate. Indeed, in our time it is entirely legitimate that atheists, like all modern people decide what they believe and live their lives based on their own convictions, not those of some other authority. These are Fred's truths, which are profound and an absolute necessity for our time.

However, he is apparently not aware of the power of community in prayer and the spiritual efficacy of a sacrament carried out following instructions from the spiritual world. All The Christian Community sacraments and rituals were found by Steiner in the spiritual world and then passed on to the original community of priests. Just as with the doctors, teachers and First Class readers to whom he lectured, he told the original circle of priests that their lecture cycles were not to be published and that the Act of Consecration of Man and other sacraments were to be published only verbally, i.e., through public celebrations. But, in my opinion, one area in which Rudolf Steiner erred was in his estimation as to how fast our world would change. Those who have published all these 'esoteric lectures' felt that the time had come for everything (well, almost everything) to be made public. Protection of esoteric materials is now achieved through different means—not by hiding it from the public. Even the Catholic Church no longer publishes its 'Index,' that is, the list of books that Catholics are forbidden to read. In keeping with the spirit of the Catholic Church, however, the list has not been abolished. In spirit I feel exactly the same as Fred about freedom and openness today but I also feel that there are some experiences that he may not have had, that there are some spiritual dynamics involving communities that he may not be aware of.

For example, he does not seem to understand the principle of priestly authority, which today rests upon an entirely different foundation than in the past. The spiritual power to fulfill a sacrament is actually only what an initiate would once have had. If I may use a superficial comparison with totally arbitrary numbers: a true initiate, someone having attained continuity of consciousness, who lives awake in the astral world as well as in upper and lower Devachan, I will assign the arbitrary number of 95 degrees of spiritual development compared to most of the rest of us who bounce up and down between seven and, on a good day, maybe 17. However, initiates, of which there are truly very, very few, have other tasks than fulfilling sacraments.

But the world needs the sacraments, so God, or if you will, the spiritual world, strikes a 'deal' with suitable souls: if someone promises to constantly be working on him- or herself and is in this sense 'on the way' to becoming an initiate (if only three incarnations later!), then for the time of celebration of the sacraments that individual is invested with enough spiritual power to perform the sacred act. I used the word 'suitable' very advisedly because, of course, no one is really worthy to be a priest. The question is: who can be used. That determination is made by a group within the priest's circle entrusted with this task. In concrete terms, in order to become a priest in The Christian Community, there must be years of training followed by a vow to meditate three times per day for the rest of one's life. This means one promises to be a priest for the rest of this incarnation. One also promises to work in the congregation to which one has been assigned and to follow the internal rules of the circle of priests. Basically, one can teach anything one wants, there is no orthodoxy with one logical exception: one vows never to voluntarily change the words of the rituals and it is against the rules for a priest to teach anything that

directly contradicts the ideas contained in the rituals that the priest celebrates publicly. That would be contradicting oneself. In practice I have never known of any colleague to get into trouble for this. The priest's spiritual autonomy is, of course strictly respected by his or her colleagues, especially those in a position of leadership. This has to be, otherwise there would be no priests, i.e., no colleague I know would be willing to subject him- or herself to any kind of obedience in the spiritual realm. Furthermore, the spiritual authority to celebrate a sacrament is only present in an individual at these special times because he or she is a part of a community of priests working together worldwide, all of whom have taken vows to meditate the same verses for the rest of their lives. Rudolf Steiner made this all very clear when The Christian Community, Movement for Religious Renewal, was founded. He did not give the sacraments to everyone, but only to the priests to celebrate. (Before the formation of The Christian Community, the Waldorf School movement had received from Steiner a ceremony for a children's service. But a ceremony is not the same as a sacrament.) The circle of priests forms a sacred vessel able to receive and protect the sacraments and their power because its members strive together spiritually making the same sacrifices. The priests have limited their freedom with respect to vocation (we can't change it again in this lifetime) and location of work (we are assigned to our congregations). And because the priests limit themselves in this way internally within the organization, yielding authority to others to decide these earthly matters for them, they are creating a spiritual home of total freedom for members and anyone who wants to look in on our religious practices. No one must promise to believe anything to become an official member of The Christian Community. One can disagree with any part of the theology and write books about the problem and still be a member. In our modern world participation in religious events must be entirely free. If people don't like what they find, they simply need not come back. Occasionally a member drags a friend or spouse to church on Sunday who really does not want to be there, i.e., the newcomer is very reluctantly present. I can sense this immediately and just hope their discomfort doesn't bother them or others more than necessary. In the past everyone in a community had to be in church or they were in trouble socially. Today, no one should be pressured to enter into any church unless they expressly want to attend.

Fred is very clear about representing an overarching truth for our time. But there are other spiritual truths, truths concerning spiritual communities which he does not seem to be aware of. Fred said that 'the time has come when we need to take personal responsibility for this' (our relationship to Christ). This means that anyone can be 'in charge of doing the Eucharist.' The first sentence is absolutely true. But the second sentence certainly does not follow from the first. It is true that anyone can make up his or her own service today (it's done often for weddings for example). And anyone could take the Act of Consecration of Man and try to celebrate it according to their whim. But without the event being embedded in a worldwide spiritual web of prayer and meditation sustained by individuals whose entire lives are dedicated to the celebration of Christ's renewed presence in the sacraments, without such grounding upon spiritual bedrock an isolated service would be of limited significance.

Communities are governed by laws different than those for individuals. Individuals do not need leaders, communities do. The Eucharist does not only help bring Christ to individuals in the form of bread and wine; just as importantly it actually builds community. Rudolf Steiner spoke at length about the community building power of ritual in his June 1921 lectures to the people who a year later founded The Christian Community. It is not the case that churches today must be the same as the church in the Middle Ages and that the priesthood today is also the same as in the

Middle Ages. They are not the same or Rudolf Steiner would not have inaugurated The Christian Community, with his emphasis on what it means to be a priest today which is contained in the 1921 lectures now available in English. There one can see that from the beginning The Christian Community was intended as a renewal of the Christian church, and not merely as a nebulous 'religious renewal.' Of course, not everyone agrees with everything Rudolf Steiner said. It is true that not everyone needs to worship God in any church or community setting. But this does not contradict the fact that something is possible through worship together with others that is not found elsewhere. Those who, for karmic or other reasons, do not need or want corporate worship should not project onto others what is karmically correct for themselves. Of course, the reverse is also true. No one should ever imply that someone else should attend church. I would not worry too much about these text publications and Fred's ideas. He seems to be aware of most great spiritual truths of our time and defends them in a public forum. That is good. Not everyone understands how a religious community should work today. Many may well have had a belly full of church in past lives. They may even have experienced, or been in some way touched by the worst abuse that the medieval Christian priesthood perpetrated in centuries past. If that were the case, then it is no small wonder that such individuals have an instinctive aversion to anything priestly or church like, unconsciously assuming inevitable abuse of power. Such people in my experience are often devoted Christians with an interest in the deepest truths of life. But they may have a deep karmic need to be free of church in this lifetime. I have no idea if Fred is one of these people for I have never met him. But he is certainly right about one thing: today no one needs to be a member of a church in order to be a good Christian.

Warmly,  
*Jim Hinde*

## **East Coast Christian Community Camp**

Rev. Carol Kelly, Director

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### **Harmony Lake — Christian Community Children's Camp in Maine August 1-17, 2019**

"One of the most wonderful, if not the most wonderful events that happens on earth." This is how a former camper and counselor has described the CC children's camp. In today's world of technology, falsehood and fear, there is no better healing for a child than two weeks in nature, with singing, arts and crafts, swimming and great friendships. The counselors are models of good will, cheerfulness and cooperation. They lead the children into daily adventures. The whole camp hums with harmonious community life!

This year we are especially seeking campers from 3-6<sup>th</sup> grade. We are working hard to make sure that every child has the possibility to attend who would like to come. Applications are being accepted! Come one, come all!

Rev. Carol Kelly  
Camp Director  
[Carolkelly.cc@gmail.com](mailto:Carolkelly.cc@gmail.com)



## A Hundred Years of The Christian Community (Part 2)

### What can we gain for the future by looking back in time?

Rev. Ulrich Meier in conversation with Dr. Peter Selg and Rev. Vicke von Behr, Erzoberlenker

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*The idea for this conversation came from Vicke von Behr, as preparation for the centenary of the founding of The Christian Community. This article was originally published in Die Christengemeinschaft. The following is a reprint of the translation which appeared in Perspectives.*

**Ulrich Meier** | Considering the common history of the anthroposophical movement and The Christian Community, which we looked at in the first part of this conversation, the question of the future arises: What can we do today, and what can we hope for for the next generation concerning the relationship between The Christian Community and anthroposophy? How do you experience the present situation in the context of your work?

**Vicke von Behr** | I believe that the importance of Christianity and of Christian churches in relation to our social life has changed completely in the past hundred years. Consider the experience Emil Bock had when he came to the Gendarmenmarkt in Berlin in the summer of 1916 and saw the crowd of people pouring into the church where Rittelmeyer was preaching. Rudolf Steiner had to take into account the role that denominational Christianity occupied at that time within public opinion, which could be strongly influenced by representatives of larger churches. Now, almost one hundred years later, the circumstances are no longer comparable. It may well be that in a few years or decades we find ourselves in a similar situation to what we have in the US, where political correctness forbids the name of Christ from being spoken in the classroom, even in Waldorf Schools.

In contrast, until a few decades ago, we avoided using anthroposophical terms within the proclamations of The Christian Community. Now we are free to use these terms because we are in a position to present people with a concrete idea about the task of a future Christianity. Today the attacks come from a completely different side than from the church.

**Ulrich Meier** | For me, the variety of phenomena is a forceful signature of the times. My experience is that there is a firmer objectivity today, which outweighs the weakening of tradition and education about Christianity. Today I can easily say on the street that I am a Christian priest and it is not offensive. This was different thirty years ago.

**Vicke von Behr** | Yet thirty years ago, the profession of priest, together with doctor and teacher, was still amongst the top three professions in terms of respect in our central European culture. Today, neither doctor, teacher, nor priest holds this position; all three are listed further down the rankings. I believe the priest doesn't appear among the first one hundred.

**Peter Selg** | It is a complex situation. In a way, things are more relaxed because major national Christian churches no longer raise the accusation of heresy against us. However, there are still forces effective against both the anthroposophical movement and our 'movement for religious renewal', which I see as part of the anthroposophical movement. I am also active at universities, where if you make it clear that you consider Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy to be a true spiritual science, a real science of the mind, you will no longer be taken seriously in an academic context.

Militancy has changed its form, without having developed into a peaceful tolerance or even an acceptance of ideas. This should be out of the question, at least in academia. Nevertheless there is a certain tempering; when we speak of The Christian Community, I believe that in the multi-cultural world in which we have arrived, there is also tremendous opportunity for communication with the representatives of other religions, at least when we talk about the image of the human being and about ethics, and at that point introduce our own spiritual perspectives and intentions. For me, it has a lot to do with the questions of language and of finding common human values.

In my opinion, it is important that The Christian Community learns to see itself in broader contexts and to consider its contribution as a specific one, but not as the culminating one into which everything flows. I think there is plenty of room for it — “In my Father’s house there are many mansions.” (John 14:2)

Today we can describe a lot more about our spiritual sources in an objective way, instead of keeping them private and esoteric. It is also urgently necessary to do so, because the substance of many of our endeavors is growing increasingly thin. This applies to all anthroposophical daughter movements, including Waldorf Schools, therapeutic homes, etc. If one can address and live anthroposophy in a new way, then in many endeavors something new can arise, despite reservations. Perhaps it’s more a question of having the strength and capacity to reach people — I mean our capacity. This is often the real problem — not just the old prejudices.

These are my experiences, also internationally, which, despite the catastrophic situation in the world, makes me rather optimistic, spiritual optimistic. We must experience the dire straits the world is in, take them seriously, and connect to those who also work for the ‘continuance of man’s being,’ albeit often in a different way than we do.

**Vicke von Behr** | I also think we have gone through a development in the decades since the foundation. The question is, whether it is sufficient. There is a nice memory, relating to the foundation of the esoteric youth circle. The latter came into a kind of dissent with the young priests, when it was said that the youth circle served Michael, while The Christian Community served another spiritual entity. Fortunately, Rudolf Steiner was asked about this and we received an illuminating answer that is helpful even to this day, namely, that the anthroposophical movement and the movement for Christian renewal each have their own spiritual beings that are united in Michael. For me, this is an image that shows that we belong together, but that we should unfold our powers from different sides, letting those forces from the spiritual world, which further develop humanity flow into civilization today. I experience how wonderfully these two currents of Michael complement each other: on the one hand we can experience in the rituals which were entrusted to us, the way in which the divine world wants to interact directly with us (Rudolf Steiner even called it a cooperation); on the other hand, through anthroposophy we have the possibility of perception which allows us to understand and grasp this cooperation more deeply and intensively. This is one of our common tasks for the future. In this respect, I am always hoping that the angels will continue to gaze down upon us with a certain patience.

**Peter Selg** | There is also the question of the future of the Anthroposophical Society. I believe it is clear that the local branches and the Society itself, as they have evolved over the decades, are no longer sustainable. There are many people who think that the Anthroposophical Society is no longer necessary because anthroposophy itself has entered daily life. However, I still have a kind

of vision and hope that an altogether new kind of Anthroposophical Society will arise: a real union of people for whom anthroposophy is essential and who see the task of pursuing, along with The Christian Community, the aims of civilization given by the Archangel Michael.

To return to the three Erzoberlenkers who were spoken of at the beginning of this interview — Friedrich Rittelmeyer, Emil Bock and Rudolf Frieling — what always greatly impressed me was their commitment to the Anthroposophical Society.

It would be good if those responsible in both movements could meet and ask: How can the Society arise anew as a heart-organ, with the School of Spiritual Science as its innermost chamber, so that it can reach the next stage of development? Also, what can The Christian Community contribute, in addition to the reality that it fosters through its services? What can all of us, together, contribute so that the Anthroposophical Society and its School of Spiritual Science, whose destiny is also ours, may re-form or arise in a new way?

**Ulrich Meier** | I think this question is a crucial point for the future: How can mutual support and encouragement develop further?

I would now like to move on to a practical consideration — the question of how the readers of this journal can contribute to the book project mentioned in Part One of this interview.

**Peter Selg** | For Emil Bock, a complete biography by Gundhild Kacer-Bock and a part of Bock's correspondence has been published. With Friedrich Rittelmeyer, we have the somewhat peculiar situation that apart from the beautiful depictions of him that exist, we are without a comprehensive biography. There is also a lovely book about Rudolf Frieling which the author, Andreas Weymann, does not regard as a complete biography.

For the sketches that I want to write, there is firstly an earnest request to the archives of The Christian Community, and to those who hold the estates of these three individuals, to look at what is there. Original documents are essential, especially correspondence, for example with their colleagues, and also their own records, as I intend to introduce them as Erzoberlenkers, without intruding on their privacy. How did they manage the administrative organization of the priesthood in The Christian Community, both within itself and also in relation to the anthroposophical movement and the Society? Are there still documents from this period in family estates or recollections to be shared? For example, something original can still be discovered in what someone's grandfather has heard or written. My main question is how they related to the essence of anthroposophy, Rudolf Steiner, the Anthroposophical Society, and the School of Spiritual Science. As persons, they are largely well characterized; I am not concerned with details of family life or personal biographical facts. But if readers or others consider that a document or memory can contribute to characterizing their style of working inwardly, then sending it to The Christian Community Archive would be very helpful — and I would rejoice in that.

**Ulrich Meier** | It would be a great pleasure for the editors to support you in this work. For I believe that just now as we are approaching the threshold to our second century, it could make a significant contribution to the way we can embrace the future if we can revisit the historical developments in the right way. Thank you both for today's meeting!

## Movement in Our Movement

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Rev. Craig Wiggins is the new North American Regional Coordinator (Lenker). He is also the community priest in Chicago.

Rev. Oliver Steinrueck was inducted into the World Leadership group (Circle of Seven) in December and now carries the role of an Oberlenker. Oliver relocates to Berlin in June.

Rev. Paul Newton will be the new community priest in Spring Valley, NY. Paul will leave his community in Edinburgh, Scotland to be inducted in Spring Valley in mid August.

Rev. Patrick Kennedy, along with the North American Seminary, is relocating to Toronto this summer. There Patrick will continue his work as Seminary Director, along with Rev. Jonah Evans. Jonah is also currently the community priest in Toronto.

Rev. Matthias Giles, who was ordained in March in Spring Valley, was sent to Denver, where he joins Rev. Emma Heirman as community priest.

Rev. Louis Gonzalez, who was ordained in March in Spring Valley, was sent to Sacramento, where he joins Rev. Sanford Miller as community priest.

Rev. Cheryl Prigg, who was also ordained in March in Spring Valley, was sent to New Zealand, where she joins Rev. Hartmut Borries as community priest in Auckland. Cheryl is a native of Australia.

### ***Canadian Residents wishing to subscribe to Perspectives:***

Rev. Susan Locey has asked that it be announced that there is an error in the subscription information provided by the *Perspectives* periodical, which is published out of the UK.

Dean Rachael is not the contact person for Canada. Instead, Canadian residents should subscribe through the following website:

<http://thechristiancommunity.co.uk/perspectives/>

Thank you.