The Christian Community North American Newsletter

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MOVES

This summer, we are truly a religious *movement*. Several priests are taking up work in new places. Hartmut Junge of Detroit has retired to Paso Robles, CA. Michael Brewer is taking over in Detroit, MI. Franziska Hesse steps into Michael's spot in the Hillsdale, NY community, leaving Sacramento, CA with one priest. Oliver Steinrueck has relocated out of Chicago, IL to San Francisco CA, giving them their first resident priest in over ten years. Daniel Hafner steps into Chicago.

Meanwhile in December, the Washington, DC area will receive Patrick Kennedy, their first full time resident priest, who will be leaving Devon, PA in the hands of newly ordained Marcus Knausenberger. And Susan Locey leaves Toronto, ONT to serve in Vancouver, BC, which has also been without a full time resident priest since Michael Kientzler returned to Europe. Inken Koelmel is taking Susan's place in Toronto. Meanwhile Nadine Hafner is on sabbatical.

So things nationally are somewhat "up in the air" for a number of weeks. But as the dust settles, we wish all the communities much strength and renewed vigor.

LOOKING WESTWARD

Susan Locey

As my days in Toronto became numbered, I found that leaving was not easy. It became clear that I had to let go of the life and web of connections that has grown up like a tended garden, and be willing "to die and become." This is a process difficult both for me and for the community.

This is an ash process, whereby offering becomes a way for enrichment.



Celtic Tree of Life

The good that we have worked together will fall like ash fertilising a field to enrich the foundation for new growth, for receiving new impulses. It is not that the "old" is destroyed; it is that the old becomes fixed in its forms, like in the forming of a salt, where the crystal captures a particular stage. And in order for new life to spring up, a dissolving or yielding or metamorphosing must take place.

Vancouver itself looks out towards Vancouver Island, the Pacific, the Aleutian Islands, and the International Dateline, where today becomes tomorrow. Forces are at work on the Pacific rim that wash over and influence the rest of the world. Just think how Hollywood, Silicon Valley and recognisably West Coast ideals have ruled modern culture in the past half-century through popular and sub-cultures! Why do these new ideals and impulses rise up from the West Coast?

Is there something from the Pacific that is calling for healing, for a role in the creation of a new world, a new order?

Is it possible to meet the adversarial spiritual tsunami, so that the West is not swept away by its influence before North America has fulfilled its mission in the evolving of cultural periods? Does religion, the ultimate bridge-builder connecting heaven and earth, also have to work to build protective walls?

No wall can protect against the adversary, or prevent conflict – not in Berlin, nor in Israel, nowhere. Walls invite breeching.

A translucent veil may be more effective as protection, a fine veil that does not try to block what is rising up, but meets it, may filter it. What means do we have to filter and focus these up-rising forces so that they may ultimately be incorporated into a healthy process of evolution?

In strengthening our westernmost Christian Communities, we too can strive to direct the formative religious life of our continent towards the rising of light, towards the dawn of the return of the Risen One. And we can seek to recognise what is washing over the world from the west, to find a way actively to include this power in the healthy shaping of the future. We would be lifting up a veil of spiritual renewal in the far west to catch the Word spoken with the rising sun across all the continents from the east: "Christ in You!"

And when we have "caught" this word from the East, it may strengthen the Word in us and become a force for working in the meeting and transforming of adversarial forces. And in the future, we can begin to reflect back to the rising sun a transformed and transformative power for Renewal.

Susan Locey is a priest moving from the East to the West. To see the whole article, go to our website, www.thechristiancommunity.org

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

Michaelmas Weekend Conference, "The Sacred in Nature", Sept. 28 – 30, 2007, in Denver. For more information call Rev. Hindes 303-282-6424.

Knights Templars International Conference celebrating Templar courage in developing new soul and spirit capacities. Friday, Oct 12, through Sunday Oct 14, 2007 at Whitsun Hall, Camphill Soltane, Glenmoore PA (near Philadelphia). Keynote lectures by Joan de Ris Allen, Nadine Hafner, David Lenker and Edward Stone. Performance of a scene from *The Soul's Probation*. Choose among fifteen workshops. Go to **www.corpsdemichael.org** for more details and registration form. "Nature and Holy Spirit", a Canoe Retreat for Spiritual Renewal, in Maine. Oct. 11-14, 2007. Contact Sarah Hide, 207-865-0770, or Julia Polter, 617-552-2972.

Befriending Death, speakers and workshops at a weekend conference on preparing for death, co-sponsored by The Christian Community and Steinerbooks. Friday, Oct. 26 - Sunday Oct. 28, 2007 at the Taconic Berkshire Christian Community, 10 Green River Lane, Hillsdale NY 12529. For more information and to register contact Geraldine Olszewski, 518- 672- 6349.

Trustees Delegates Conference

Stephanie Georgieff

Nearly a year has passed since our last Delegates Meeting in Toronto. It will be a tough act to follow the fine Canadian hospitality so generously provided by the Toronto Congregation, but Northern California is busily organizing for the 2007 joint Priest Synod and Delegates Meeting in Sacramento. The dates are November 5 - 9 for the Synod and November 8 - 10 for the Delegates. It is always such a treat when the Synod and the Delegates Meeting overlap, so we can sit in a circle with all those who make The Christian Community a reality in North America.

This year's Theme is "The Countenance of The Christian Community," and will feature speakers, panels and breakout sessions designed to facilitate our understanding of who we are within our own movement and within the greater community in North America. We will also meet to discuss financial issues during our Annual General Meeting. Your individual delegate has received information on items for consideration and was asked to distribute these to their full board. We will be discussing a raise in the percentage each congregation contributes to the Central Fund, we will be seeking individual delegate or member participation in creating an endowment to meet our financial obligations, and **Planned Giving** will get a new push as another venue for creating financial solvency for our movement in the years to come. These materials were sent out in May to allow for full review and discussion by the respective Boards before the Annual General Meeting. We seek your input and advice on these key issues. Delegates should come prepared to the AGM to speak and act on behalf of their congregation.

Each of the Northern California communities will host a day of the Delegates Meeting. Sacramento, San Francisco and Santa Rosa are generously helping to provide meals and hospitality for one day each of the gathering. Sharon Bond of Sacramento has graciously agreed to arrange housing and transportation for attendees, and we thank her and the other congregations in advance for their efforts to provide a container for our work in November. Meeting organizers this year include Thomasina Webb of New York, Shelly Matthews of Montreal, Melissa Kay of San Francisco and Linda Folsom of Chapel Hill. This year, we will have a special **pre-conference for the community Treasurers** during the day of November 9th. Led by Denver member and Treasurer Bob Heberton, this gathering was inspired by our discussions in Toronto last year. A need was expressed from some of the Treasurers that they be able to come together to share information and ideas. It was felt that such a gathering would facilitate strategies on how to improve the related tasks that keep our individual communities and the movement solvent as well as to rovide an opportunity for Treasurers to create a network of support for one another.

The Annual delegates meeting of the Regional Board of the Christian Community of North America never fails to reinvigorate our movement. We hope each and every Community can send a Delegate and Treasurer. We also welcome members of affiliates to participate. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your community liaison, your congregational delegate, or myself, Stephanie Georgieff at 714-910-4295, greenstefka@yahoo.com. Please see our website at www.thechristiancommunity.org for conference registration and packet.

DANCING WITH THE DIVINE

Cynthia Hindes

Relationships are maintained through conversation. Conversation allows the care and love of the relationship to grow, to blossom and mature. The lack of heartfelt conversation can cause a friendship wither and die.

Prayer is essentially a conversation with the divine. On the one side there is the Being whose very nature is Love. From that side the love will never die. But the relationship between the soul and this Being of Love is something the soul itself needs to build and maintain from its own side. There needs to be regular contact, regular conversation, so that the soul grows and matures in friendship, deepens into love with God.

In conversing we practice not only speaking, but also listening. If one were only to discuss one's own feelings, thoughts and wishes, it would barely be a conversation at all. A healthy mature relationship consists in the alternating steps of a dance: one step forward in selfrevelation, then stepping back to listen, hearing and taking in what the Other has to say. Like all dance steps, skill develops from regular practice.

One aid in learning the dance might be to practice a kind of breviary, with prayers of a meditative nature for the time of the day, for day of the week, the month, and the year. This kind of regular conversational prayer help us tune our souls to attend to where the divine wants to lead us in our dance with Him through time. An excellent aid can be found in the book *Meditative Prayers for Today*, by Adam Bittleston, a late priest of The Christian Community.

The prayer for the morning helps us grow in gratitude for the world of earth and the world of spirit. The prayer for evening prepares us for an encounter with Christ and our angel in the world of sleep. Prayers for each day of the week help us sense the nuanced qualities of each day's task. Prayers for the months of the year and their religious seasons help us find our place in the greater cosmos.

> And so Thou comest to our sorrowing heart In the pure rhythms of the earth, sun, stars,--Linking our being's pulse to Paradise,

And so Thou comest to our questioning head Revealing how the slain and buried Good Takes on new body from the Invisible.

And so Thou comest to our faltering will Speaking to each of us our own true name, Calling us from our graves to work with Thee. *

Taken together, the regular practice of this kind of prayer awakens us to the subtle qualities of God's speaking. The divine spirit doesn't shout; it whispers. Learning to listen and hear, developing 'conversational skill', helps our souls to create a healthy relationship to God. We begin to create and maintain our relationship; we learn how to dance with Him.

*Meditative Prayers for Today, by Adam Bittleston, page 23, "Easter". Another good source is Prayers and Graces, by Michael Jones These books can be found on booktables in local congregations, or through Steinerbooks, online at www. steinerbooks.org.

Cynthia Hindes is a priest of The Christian Community working in Los Angeles

OPEN COURSES 2007

Give yourself a retreat week at the seminary with one or more of these open courses:

Oct. 1 - Oct. 5 - The Gospel of John - Rev. Daniel Hafner
Oct. 8 - Oct. 12 - The Transition from the Old to the New Testament - Rev. Oliver Steinrueck
Oct. 22 - Oct. 26 - Christology - Rev. Erk Ludwig
Oct. 29 - Nov 2 - "Money Makes the World Go Round" - Money Rules,
Can it Serve? - Rev. Hans-Bernd Neumann
Nov 12 - Nov. 16 - Perspectives on Life: Biographical Phases,
Dorit Winter
Nov. 26 - Nov. 30 - The Riddles of Philosophy: From the Pre-Socratics to Plato - Rev. Julia Polter
Dec. 4 - Dec. 8 - The Seven Sacraments - Rev. Gisela Wielki,

For more information on these courses open to the public, and to register, go to seminary-chicago.org and click on "Open Courses". Or call Gisela Wielki, 773-472-7041.

BREAD FOR THE WAY

Fourth Christian Community Conference of the Americas Melissa Kay

The fourth Christian Community Conference of the Americas was held August 20-29, 2007 in Botucatu, Brazil. We came together



from 11 countries, 136 friends, members and priests. We included in our community many long-time members, the Erzoberlenker, a new Confirmand, and at least one individual who was experiencing The Christian Community for the first time. We were old friends from previous conferences, and new friends -- 26 from North America, 4 from Europe, 106 from Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Uruguay. We spoke three languages officially, with German often the common fourth.

In this lovely, peaceful outer landscape –- sometimes blessed by warmth and sun, sometimes by rain, cold and wind –- we entered together the inner landscape of the Lord's Prayer, exploring one scene, or sentence, each day in lectures and conversation groups. So that only one translation of each lecture would be needed, we followed different paths –- the Spanish-speaking friends on one path, the English and Portuguese speakers, on another. Nevertheless, we were walking the same ground.

Each day began with the Act of Consecration of Man and ended with the Close of Day service, offered in a weaving of languages. In the afternoons, we participated in 13 workshops -- on dying in life, priesthood, the divine in nature, the seven "I am" sayings, the flow of money, working together, bread-making and transformation, encountering the Lord's Prayer artistically, biography, and Islam. In the evenings we gathered in a huge tent for music, drama and dance, as each country brought its artistic offering to the group -- concluding on Saturday evening with a stunning musical offering by the Demetria chorus, under Marcelo Petraglia, of five musical settings of the Lord's Prayer.

Between "spiritual feedings" we were nourished on delicious biodynamic food from the Demetria farm, shared over tables of lively conversation as hearts leapt over language barriers to deeper understandings.

We left with profound gratitude to the organizers of the conference and for the communion among us, and with new fire in our hearts for the tasks of our Movement at this critical time in world evolution, abundantly supplied with bread for the way through deeper insight into this central Christian prayer as the Lord's Prayer -- not simply a series of petitions, but an inner activity in which, united with Christ's own praying, we strive to pray ourselves into the Father's will.

Melissa Kay is a member in San Francisco, CA. For a series of in-depth articles on the Lords Prayer by Michael Brewer, go to our website, www.thechristiancommunity.org.

THE BIRTH OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

With reflection from some of the founders in honor of our 85th anniversary Patrick Kennedy

In September 1922, a group of 45 courageous, devoted, and enthusiastic men and women were gathered together in Dornach, Switzerland. There, with the help of Rudolf Steiner, the inaugurator of modern spiritual science or Anthroposophy, the events took place which led to the founding of what we have come to know as The Christian Community. For a year and a half they had been meeting,

planning, and seeking for a way to renew the religious life. It was poignantly felt that one could not authentically pray and experience the Spirit in the traditional forms anymore. Many of them had been through the trench-warfare and destruc-



tion of the first World War and come home to a spiritual life that was bankrupt in the face of such horrors. Although the vast majority of them were under 30 (Emil Bock was 28, Rudolf Frieling, 21) all of them, young and old, had come to recognize the spiritual giant who could lead them to the wellspring and source of religious renewal: Rudolf Steiner.

Alfred Heidenreich, who pioneered the work of the Christian Community in England, North America and South Africa, tried to express what Rudolf Steiner meant to the movement in his moving and personal book on the events surrounding the founding entitled *Growing Point*: "The significance of Rudolf Steiner for Christianity is not confined to the foundation of The Christian Community. He was himself, simply as a being, an event in the history of Christianity. In the memorial article which Dr. [Friedrich] Rittlemeyer [first leader of the movement and one of the most well known Lutheran ministers in his day] wrote after Rudolf Steiner's passing:

"In earlier ages, the fact alone that such an all-embracing genius gave witness to Christ as being the greatest reality in earthly history, would have had a profound effect. But in Rudolf Steiner much more was present. One could put it like this: he comprehended all branches of learning so spiritually and so deeply, and he recognized Christ in such big and broad dimensions that eventually Christ shines forth as the true light in all spheres of life. He observed strictly the necessity for each sphere to form its own method according to its intrinsic laws. He never carried religion into anything from without. But he illuminated all realms of knowledge with such powerful light, that Christ became visible in it. A Christ, it is true, far greater than the Christ of the Churches; but a Christ related to the Bible and to the Christ of the early Christians.

Thus he advanced the science of language to the point where it could understand why Christ is called 'the Word'. Thus he carried medicine to the point where medicine could understand again 'the body of Christ'. Thus he carried astronomy to the point where Christ became visible as the true 'Light'...he taught how science could again become reverent and devout. He built a temple for all sciences, so high and so broad, that their servants could work in it without sacrificing an iota of their personal freedom or of the special characteristics of their province. He united the learning of the age with Christ, and Christ with the learning of the age"."

Rittlemeyer's description opens up a vista for the future. The condition of the Middle Ages when Church and civilization were identical is not likely to be repeated. If it were, it would be a relapse into a past phase of evolution. We must move towards a future where Christianity and civilization become identical; where the very methods of scientific research will be Christian, and where it will be felt that what is not Christian is not scientific.

In this civilization the 'Church' will have its special place. Like the mother whose children have grown up and become independent, the Christian Church of the future will be able to concentrate on its particular task. It will practice the personal meeting with Christ as a Being.

Heidenreich reveals the most important aspect of this founding in a last sentence. It was not a startling new teaching or religious philosophy that was formulated. If that were the case, our movement would long have faded away. No, at the beginning of a new Christian priesthood and sacramental stream stands an event: On September 16th, 1922, the first Act of Consecration of Man was celebrated by Friedrich Rittlemeyer, and in that moment the movement was granted the grace to work in Christ.

"...The event was astounding. But the reality was as plain as a sunrise. You do not dispute the sun. You bow to its rays." (Heidenreich).

This experience became the bedrock of the founders' ability to proclaim Christ, for they had experienced Him. It was not an abstract theology but an experience of the divine in the ritual that became the foundation for their and all future work in The Christian Community.

On Sunday, September 16th, 2007, in congregations around the world, we celebrate together before the altar on the 85th anniversary of the birth of our movement and hope that we might be deeply united with those bold and visionary souls who began the work of The Christian Community.

Patrick Kennedy is a priest in Devon, PA, soon to begin in Washington, DC.

A Different Angel

Hartmut Lux

A different angel Stepped in front of the sun, His heart gathered its rays Together

Already the trees are burning Already the leaves fall Already the shadows write The Tree-Word

Christ

On the shining Developing Earth.



PERSPECTIVES

To subscribe to The Christian Community's themed quarterly journal *Perspectives,* send your name and address along with a check payable to The Christian Community to Perspectives, 906 Divisidero St. San Francisco, CA 94115. \$24 per year

MEMBERS' WEEK, "WALKING WITH CHRIST-WORKING FROM CHRIST August 27 – 31, 2007, sponsored by the seminary in Chicago Donna Simmons, Viroqua WI

Having been a member for around 10 years and never having participated in anything like this, I signed up eagerly when I heard that Richard Dancey, Gisela Wielki and Christa Macbeth were offering a week for members at the seminary in Chicago this summer. I was keen to deepen my relationship to The Christian Community and having been regaled by stories of the wonders of the seminary "team" by my husband, Paul Newton, who recently completed his first year there, I wanted to see what all the fuss was about.

The "fuss" was this – a week of the most in-depth and wondrous conversation and sharing I have ever participated in. From discussions on the four gospels, to examination of different aspects of the Act of Consecration; from opening up possibilities with the Lord's Prayer to reflecting on what it might mean to "walk with Christ, work from Christ", each conversation was a precious elixir which I felt nurture and deepen my spiritual awareness.

Nine of us journeyed from North Carolina, Wisconsin, California, New York and Massachusetts to participate in this members' week. Two others joined in part time – a local from Chicago and a visitor from Toronto who was spending time with her daughter. Judging from the comments we shared with one another during breaks and in the last session when we discussed how the week went, the others also felt their relationship to The Christian Community to have been greatly enhanced and deepened as a result of the week

Most of us were members but a couple were not. This worked fine and Gisela and Richard have assured us that this event will become annual and will continue to be open to non-members as well as members. But in the course of the week, we turned several times to this question of membership – of "membering" to The Christian Community. And over time I grew to appreciate that being a member has nothing to do with level of commitment. Rather, the importance of membering is to create a spiritual form through which the spiritual worlds can work. To member then, is to act and by this acting one works more consciously with the spiritual worlds.

Each day began with the celebration of the Act of Consecration of Man. For me it was moving beyond words to participate in this sacred ritual on a daily basis – had the week only consisted of this, it would have been worth every effort to be there. But to then also work with the others in the course of our lectures and conversations was moving and profound. I now feel that I have some inkling of what a "movement for religious renewal" might look like.

Every day was full and most lasted well into the evening. Each day also included an hour of "speech fun" with Christa Macbeth that provided a bit of welcome relief. Not to say that speech formation isn't also enriching and serious – but – well, let's just say that Christa was very patient and sympathetic with us as we became rather silly and giggly during her sessions!

Working in the garden and an afternoon downtown in Chicago also gave us a bit of a breather. And the comradery between us during our wonderful shared meals (thank you to all the Chicago cooks!) was another place for an out-breath. But all in all, it was an intense experience, and one which I heartily recommend to anyone wishing to deepen their relationship to The Christian Community.

MATERIALS FOR AFFILIATES

For information and support materials for conducting lay services in Christian Community affiliates, contact Rev. Hindes, chindes@yakmilk.com. 818-893-0668

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