

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

MOVEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS RENEWAL

North American Newsletter • Volume 3, Number 3

1995 Advent ~ Christmas ~ Epiphany 1996



Maria mit Kind by Grünewald

MAN - THE WORLD-CHILD

The cause of Man stands or falls with whether he will be able to fulfill his mission. His mission however is determined by what was given to him at his beginning: "Created in the Image of God". Being a Child of God, a descendent of the Divine World, Man inherited a divine destiny; this divine destiny was the greatest gift and is the keenest challenge with which to be confronted. As "in the Image of God" not only signifies his past - a child bearing the features of his ancestors - but even more so points at his open future - a mature human being taking up and developing the cause of his spiritual fore-bears through his own strength, initiative and creativeness.

When a child is born it bears the features of a human being, is born "in the Image of Man", which means that at first the child cannot act as a mature human being and has even to be helped to take hold on this earth, but by its features we know that the time will come when he will take over his own life and be a full member of mankind.- When Man was born, he spiritually bore the features of a divine being. "Created in the Image of God" says: the time will come when he will have grown to be "a God", a fully creative being. But he first had to be helped along to become and to take over himself; without taking over himself he never could fulfill the "prophecy" of his birth. As long as he was still a mere creature, wholly dependent on his Father, he could not take up his true mission, to become creative himself.

Paul writes to the Corinthians (1. Cor. 13:11): "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I felt, I thought like a child; when I became a man, I gave up the world of children." He wants to tell them about that great change-over which began to happen with Christ's coming: The time of being just Children of God is over, you cannot stay wholly dependent, you have to give up the world of children and become - Sons of God. Christ came to make it possible for Man slowly to take over. This was the most intricate mission ever done, as He had to do something, to give help, which would in no respect enforce the dependency of Man, either by convincing thoughts or overpowering deeds, but leave him free. Christ Him-

self gave the direction through "to give up the World of Children", to give up the dependent past. But this meant: Death; Christ Himself went that path to maturity and freedom through Death into that "other life", that life of independence and maturity, of understanding and creativity which, when wholly achieved, can be called Resurrection. For Man this could mean a new birth, the first having been dependent, this second birth is our independent one - purely out of love for one's realized task.

But a new birth brings a new childhood. "Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it" (Luke 18:17). This new life is "the kingdom of God" where we are to get hold of our own kingship, learn to rule ourselves in wise harmony with the world both earthly and heavenly. But here we enter again as children; rather we become sons of God in following God's Only Son. No "big things", "big actions" are necessary to walk this path; seemingly simple child-like steps will lead our feet; we cannot make the second or third step before the first.

This is what one could call "spiritual play", trying out the great power of quietness which leads to the truth of the world, opening one's eyes and ears to the beauty everywhere around and supporting what is good in heaven and on earth. Here the child's inventiveness, creativeness and devotion are needed. In his "Philosophy of Spiritual Activity" Rudolf Steiner calls it "moral intuition." In everyday life we rather speak about becoming observant for the little miracles in life as they can be experienced anytime anywhere. This world of life expresses itself in the plants, in the clouds and the weather, in the circulation of water through both. Thus we may ponder about the last rose, watch the clouds through the seasons, understand the water as the element of life. Then we also will feel that it is a higher truth when the Child born each Christmas is called a rose blooming in winter, that the Risen One told Us that He would come again "in the clouds", that He will guide Man to the springs of the Water of Life.

Seemingly simple and innocent observation leads us into the realm of the World-Child. Here Man begins the fulfillment of his mission, the fulfillment of what

at his beginning has been a mere prophecy, that he was created

“in the Image of God”.

Werner Grimm
Vancouver

ST. JOHN'S CONFERENCE (Part two)

Following the morning's lecture the change of location from Kimberton Hills to the Kimberton Waldorf School assisted the shift from whole group to late morning and mid afternoon small group activity. In fact, the ride twice a day from one place to the other turned into five minute mini sessions which offered surprising benefits. Often the number and identity of passengers varied for each car each trip. In most cases anecdotes, interchanges of comments about anything, or successful attempts of two people to communicate without an interpreter appeased the need to meet on a more personal level. This was also a time for two or three who otherwise wouldn't be together at all to share some time.

After a quick drink of water, the special interests turned toward a St. John's theme, or an important aspect of human life, or an artistic activity. Fans in the rooms kept the hot air in motion as participants encountered one another in groups of maybe six or ten or more. Content of the study/discussion groups included thoughts about Elijah, John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, marriage, a life of prayer, social forms, and the nature of festivals. Artistic workshops included eurhythmie, painting, Bothmer movement, Bleffert instruments, singing, drawing, and speech formation. The priests who brought the services and the morning lectures also numbered among the leaders of some groups. It contributed to the spirit of community when they joined other groups as participants rather than leaders.

Most of the time the thread of connection between the morning lecture and the following workshops seemed to lurk out of sight. But the continuity could be readily discovered. One example is as follows. The topic of the first morning's lecture began

with a discussion about how the content of conversation between people may or may not be living speech, and then continued to describe how the gospel is the living word. This lecture was, for some, followed by a workshop entitled *The Spirit and Power of Elijah*. As this small group read from the Old Testament about Elijah, it discovered that the role of human communication was significant, that the conversation had to be living in order for something to take place. Later in the afternoon in the Bothmer Movement workshop, a living communication (without speech) between two people was necessary for the success of a physical task.

Translation worked well in the small groups as it had in the large group. But there is another story in this. In the group *New Social Forms* the participants started off by waiting for the translation of English into Spanish. Then they decided that since there was so much ground to cover on the subject and so little time, they would resort to simultaneous translation. Very soon they realized that this wasn't working. Simultaneous translation resulted in a North American conference which excluded the South Americans from a real participation. So the group returned to the sequential translation process, realizing that the intellectual content wasn't as important as their social form.

Between the morning and afternoon workshops everyone assembled in the gym for the main meal and then scattered for a rest period. Perhaps the high ceiling or the fact that it was a large area without direct sunlight kept the area a degree or two cooler than anywhere else. Participants found no discomfort in forming the line for the buffet and using the time to visit with whomever they found near them. These conversations, similar to those in the car trips between conference locations, provided a chance for more personal visiting. Hilde Maria Frey mentioned that the line reminded her of a dream she had before the conference in which she had joined a group of people walking in the same direction seeking the Christ child which really was to be found within. In general, the dinner and supper hours were opportunities to seek out new or old friends or to become acquainted with someone not yet met.

Often what happens behind the scenes of an event is not so fully in front of participant consciousness, particularly when everything goes smoothly. Margaret Dancey gave a minimum of 100 hours of her time, effort, and expertise to feeding approximately 120 people. She found a source for supplies that let her buy what she needed in such a way to avoid both overstocking and inadequate stocking. She and her crew of eight teenagers prepared crowd pleasing mid-day and evening meals. They set the buffet tables with white cloths, flowers, and dishes with artistic labels, making sure to accommodate the flow of the double line of diners. They kept an easily accessible and cheerful space to serve the continuous need for drinks during the day. It was noticed that the heat from the cooking accumulated in the kitchen during the four days without any nighttime ventilation so that it finally exceeded the heat elsewhere. One of the teenagers remarked that the work for the conference was the hardest he had ever done. Margaret's gift was truly a deed of life and love.

This segment (part 2) of the St. John's Conference report was prepared by Patricia Sankewitsch with the help of the Devon community.

THE ST. JOHN'S FESTIVAL IN KIMBERTON,

July 1995

[Editor's note: On the final morning, Erk Ludwig spoke on "Behold, I am near." Paul Thaxter, in a report to the Sacramento congregation on this lecture wrote:]

It was once said by the controversial "action" or "performance" artist, Joseph Beuys, a creator of modern art "happenings", that now the only appropriate way to present Christ in art is through movement, through "happenings", because Christ's relationship to us has changed: he is near to us as never before. The Act of Consecration of Man is in fact such a "happening", a "performance", within which we can experience the presence, the nearness of Christ. And

just as with very abstract modern paintings, many people seem to find that it doesn't "speak" to them, perhaps they should develop silent, selfless, wakeful beholding.

Paul Thaxter

[Ed. note: We hope to bring you this article in its entirety in a forthcoming issue]

HEIMDALL ON THE SPANISH RIVER: THE CURE

First it was Lake Noganosh in 1993, then the French River in 1994. In January 1995 there arose within a longing for crystal-clear water, the sound of paddle pushing melodious spirals through the water, campfire smoke and not washing oneself, loons calling, the thrill of navigating through rapids, real air and deep quiet. Now among canoeists this is a well-known affliction for which there is only one known cure; to plan to get out into the wilderness again, and then to DO IT! I assumed many co-adventurers of past trips were suffering too, so I sent an announcement that a cure was known and available. Thus, our Heimdall Camp Canoe Trip for 1995 was called "**THE CURE.**" There must have been many afflicted souls, because the applications poured in.

I wrote in this newsletter 2 years ago about our first canoe trip to Lake Noganosh.. Last year we paddled the French River, which provided incredible beauty, challenging winds, and above all, for many their first taste of white water. I'm embarrassed to say that the cure may be a bit like a drug which requires larger and more exotic doses in order to still the craving. So the plans for 1995 had to include more solitude, a longer trip, more white water, more wildlife, more and better food!

Whereas the French River had about 10 sets of rapids, was 3 hours from Toronto, and had some buildings and motorboats along the way, the Spanish

River had between 40-60 sets of rapids and ripples, took 8 hours to reach, was truly in the wilderness, and would require paddling 144 km over 8 1/2 days. Being more challenging, the minimum age had to be increased to 12. We had 26 campers, a dog, and 9 staff divided into 3 groups, with an average camper-age of 13+. Our staff came from all over, and once again my old friend Irwin Gooen joined us. You'll have to read the Noganosh report for an introduction to this man. This year he added new force to his teaching of wilderness ethics. When someone was caught violating a basic principle (no washing dishes in the river!)... I'll confess...that someone was me...he simply asked: "Am I the only one here?" By the end of the trip Irwin, already a legend, had ascended to the mythical because, as the exited paddlers in his group announced to all: "He canoed over the Graveyard souse hole by himself! "

The Spanish River (just northwest of Sudbury, Ontario) flows south through the granites, sometimes pink, of the Canadian Shield, and empties into Georgian Bay. There are beautiful cliffs and rounded granite hills ("plutons") all along the river. Rounded cobbles and boulders left from the glaciers form the bed in many areas. The forest is second-growth, primarily white and black spruce, tamarack, white, red and jack pine, paper birch and balsam poplar. Black alder often lines the banks. The river flows like a canoe-teaching clinic. First there is a string of 11 narrow, often cliff-lined lakes in which to get into the flow of paddling. Then relatively simple and short rapids appear here and there so that even white water beginners can learn the basics. Then they build. By trip's end, many had developed impressive canoeing skill. This skill involves not only paddling amidst the sleepers, pillows, strainers, boulders, standing waves, eddies, and sharp curves of fast water, but also in scouting the river to either plot a safe route, or to afford the opportunity to say: "This is beyond what we can handle. Let's portage or line (using rope to guide the canoes from shore). " If the scouting is forgone, then you can get what happened to 2 canoes in a group that got "cocky." The standing waves were too big, the boats went down, paddlers and gear were welcomed into the river. Fortunately the only price

was lost time in retrieving canoes and gear, lost food and wet sleeping bags (yuck!).

We were on the river for 2 days when rain came. There was a window in the weather when we set off early in the morning under cloudy, but dry skies, but soon the heavens opened. At first one inwardly recoils, but then I discovered that paddling in the rain is beautiful ! The raindrops pelt the water's surface, sending up a white splash-drop which falls back sending out complex patterns of ripples. As the rain's intensity changes, so do the splash patterns. When it is pouring, the river's surface is covered with white explosions making a continual roar. After the rain stopped and there was a gentle mist rising, my canoe was in the lead and we came to a widening. Suddenly I saw a dark form moving amidst the bulrushes of a small marsh. A moose! The first one I'd ever seen in the wild. Now part of my winter's illness consisted of wanting to see a moose...the cure was taking effect!

In the summer, when our senses so willingly allow themselves to be drawn out to dance with the light, the soul, if given over to this, can expand and feel itself as part of Creation. The real "cure" has to do with the soul, battered and hardened from year-long encounters with techno-life, feeling put back together as the senses reach out into God's world of beauty and natural order. Experiencing the wilderness' deep quiet helps this process. But there can be an obstacle to this, namely a group of campers who may be only marginally interested in "quiet." A group of 4 canoes can be noisy indeed with all the jokes, stories, singing, teasing, complaining, and conversations sometimes carried on between canoes 50 feet apart. And then the quiet-hungry leader gently suggests: "Maybe we could make less noise so we could experience the quiet and perhaps see some interesting wildlife." "A good idea!" all agree...and it lasts for maybe 1 minute, as though an irrepressible force were building up inside, the talk-force, let's call it. The good fortune of seeing the moose occurred because, my partner (my son Philip) and I decided to pull ahead to escape the noise for awhile. I had another experience like this days later. Again, my partner (a different one) and I opted for quiet in the lead.

Suddenly she exclaimed: "Beaver!" I gazed ahead where she was pointing, but was confused. It didn't look or move like a beaver. The head was too round, the swimming too smooth, and then it dove under, but without a "clap" of the tail. The tail wasn't flat, and the dive was so smooth, like a sliding down, hardly leaving a wake. Gone! "No, it's an otter!" I exclaimed. We waited. It surfaced and went ashore, clearly revealing itself.

Throughout the trip we encountered many species of duck, often with their broods, such as teal, mergansers, redheads, canvasbacks, and of course also loons and grebes (not ducks!). Paddling quietly...this is the key to seeing and hearing things. By "things" I don't only mean wildlife. Water in motion...this is when it can reveal its Being. Observing carefully, one sees and hears it do similar things over and over again. The little dimples, the little whirlpools spontaneously arising here and there, the eddies and the "pillows"(billowing up as the river flows over a submerged rock), the swirls of mist rising, the wake spreading out ahead of a small stick sticking up, both the benign and ferocious standing waves, the falls and souse holes, the complex yet predictable patterns made by pollen swirling on the surface in a gentle back-current near the shore, the splash forms made by raindrops, dew drops dangling on the end of pine needles...seen as a whole, one feels closer to knowing water. The crowning experience of water came for our group at the famous souse-hole falls at the end of The Graveyard. As we were lining and lifting our canoes over the rocks, people exclaimed: "Look at that! " To the side of the falls, some of the river was taking an alternative route, spilling between smoothed-out cervices into plunge-pools. We decided to spend the rest of the day right there. One plunge-pool was just big enough to allow all of us to fit in. We experimented with putting our heads under the inflowing chute, and making wierd sounds. We delighted at the funny forms the water made when gushing over heads held in various strange positions. And then, if you positioned your rear-end just right into the crevice above, you acted like a dam. A dam-break was always a riot! Everyone took turns sitting quietly in the pool alone, some much later when no one

else was nearby. We gazed at the water moving in the pool when it was empty. Then we saw it! It was swirling about in a lemniscate pattern, gently sloshing from side to side. Just below this pool was another, smaller one, doing the same thing even more dramatically. We had discovered natural flow-forms! This was a thought-blitz. The flow-form was not a human invention at all...it was a discovery made through knowing water itself. Under certain conditions of flow and basin geometry, water reveals in fullness what it is always seeking to do, and in all the forms and flows ones sees in a natural river, one sees a segment, a piece of this "desire" of water to swirl in a lemniscate and rock back and forth. According to flow-form researchers, this motion enlivens water, making it healthy. In a very natural way, we found this out ourselves through being aware of how enlivening it was to bathe in this river. The group chose to spend the night sleeping on the rocks, close to the roar of the Graveyard Falls and the melodies and swirling of the water spilling through crevices. It wasn't just the water. The whole area, the air, the trees, the rocks themselves, were taken up in this dancing of life. And if this were not enough, it was the night of the full moon, which beamed down through the mist rising from the falls. One member of the group said it was the most beautiful thing they had ever seen. Sitting in that pool and camping on those rocks was another part of "the cure."

Rev. Peter Skaller *Toronto*
(Part 2 will appear in the Easter issue)

'RENEWING CHRISTIANITY'

Floris Books' new September 1995 catalog announces another volume in the series 'Rudolf Steiner's Ideas in Practice', which already features 128 page books with many black and white illustrations on Biodynamic Agriculture, Living Architecture and Children with Special Needs - a series developed together with Christofoor, our Dutch publishing house.

James Hindes has written *Renewing Christian*

ity, a concise introduction to Steiner's ideas in which he, priest in Great Barrington, MA, also describes The Christian Community.

We understand that this book, which in its Floris Books' edition will not be available in North America before the end of the year, will be published by Anthroposophic Press, even if none of its recent catalogs have carried it.

Arie Boogert
Denver

How Like the Dawn

How like the dawn the the gentle sower comes,
Casting from fields of light
Bright seeds of Godliness
Into our furrowed hearts.

Plow straight his paths!
Prepare with prayer the ground:
In hope, the world waits
Their flowering, their fruit.

Melissa Kay
San Francisco

NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

This year the end of World War II, fifty years ago this spring and summer, has been on many minds: the end of the war in Europe and the end of the war in the Pacific after the two atom bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. For those who were present a time to remember, for all a time to evaluate and re evaluate. During this time I was glad to be able to read Rudolf Frieling's New Testament Studies, 1994 published by Floris Books. A very ap-

pealing volume, combining 16 smaller essays on the New Testament with two major studies, "The Transfiguration" according to the various gospels, and "Agapé" on Divine Love in John. Frieling had a masterly touch in bringing the words of the Bible to life. "He could create vivid Images in a single sentence, often breaking into the inner substance of a word and laying it before the hearer in the simplest yet profoundest of ways", as the preface states. This element can be found in his written word, too, not the least in his astonishing review of the Transfiguration event. And I was especially glad to read this study again, as it has always stuck me as significant that the first atom bomb used in anger was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6 (1945), the traditional date on which the event is remembered where Christ took three of his disciples with him onto the mountain to experience his transformation. - Light released from matter in an utterly destructive way, light able to transform living being: two events which history has brought together in one date. And we can be sure that when in our thoughts, in our heart Christ's transformation comes alive, we will be better able to deal with the nuclear realities surrounding us.

Arie Boogert
Denver

ON DYING AND DEATH

What is Religious Renewal? How does a priest view death and dying? Although a single priest of The Christian Community cannot necessarily speak for all lest a dogmatic aspect perhaps slip in to the living reality of the movement for Religious Renewal, nevertheless, one can speak from one's own experience as a Christian Community priest. Rev. Arie Boogert does just this in his absorbing, disarming, and all together readable pamphlet, "On Dying and Death, a perspective offered out of The Christian Community."

Since the services surrounding the Death and Dying process are not mere perfunctory routines, but are filled with a clear intention and awareness of the

experiences undergone by one passing the threshold, it is fascinating to hear first hand one priest's contemplations on his ordained duties.

As well, his more than thirty years as a priest and the practical experiences reaped in those years, bestows upon us practical tactful suggestions concerning many possibly difficult situations that can occur between, for example, a grieving family who might otherwise be unaware of the way The Christian Community views such moments of destiny, and help them to understand the wishes of a departing person.

I found myself again and again saying, "Oh!, now I see why this is said, or why that is done in that way!". Some of the subheadings discussed are: 'Facing Death', 'Preparing for Death', 'Considering your Body', 'When Death Announces Itself', 'When Death Comes'. While some of the main chapters concern, the Wake and The Funeral.

At the back of this informative and practical pamphlet one finds a document called, "Declaration Regarding Disposition of Physical Body After Death", which can be used as a guideline for a legal document in your respective state and concerns the way one's body is kept free of various 'normal' practices that The Christian Community regards as particularly invasive and which might disturb the processes of excarnation following the physical death.

The creation of this book was intended to serve as a fund raising effort for The Christian Community in general, and the Denver Center in particular, so its purchase does not generate 'profit' in the normal sense of the word. As well, Rev. Boogert has another pamphlet: "On Dying and Death, Prayers and Verses by Rudolf Steiner and Others." It is an excellent companion volume.

Prices are \$5.00 and \$1.50 respectively. For further information on obtaining these pamphlets you can contact your local priest. If necessary, with mailing costs added, it can be purchased from the Denver congregation directly.

Dale Brunsvold, *Denver*

UPDATED CONGREGATIONS AND THEIR ADDRESSES

Chicago USA

Rev. Robert Patterson, Rev. Oliver Steinrueck
Present phone number and address: (312) 465-3375
1545 West Pratt Boulevard, Chicago, IL 60626.

New Address from December/January 1996:

6711 North Bosworth, Chicago, IL 60626;
Phone either (312) 465-3375 or (312) 262-2588.

& AFFILIATED CONGREGATIONS

Minneapolis, Minnesota USA Contact **Chicago**

**Please send literary contributions and letters to
Dale B. Brunsvold, 2740 South Ogden,
Englewood, CO 80110-1744. If possible, e-mail
would be the most convenient. My e-mail
address is dbrunsvold@aol.com.**

Editors: Arie Boogert, Dale Brunsvold