

# THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**MOVEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS RENEWAL**

North American Newsletter • Volume 5, Number 3

**1997 Advent - Christmas - Epiphany 1998**



Study of "The Representative of Man" by Rudolf Steiner

## ADVENT, BIRTH AND BAPTISM

Advent means ‘arrival’ and usually refers to the 4 Sundays before Christmas and the weeks following. This is the time when we feel connected with the past out of the darkness of which Christ came down to our earth. The closer He comes the more His light can be recognized i.e. old knowledge, messages, prophecies tell us about His advent. The impenetrable darkness lightens up and in our world of life becomes blue as the dark universe is blue to our sight. This is the blue of longing, the blue of intense devotion which we find at the altar during these weeks and which at the same time permeates our souls: expectation.

But beneath this devotional expectation there is a deep apprehension: what will happen when He arrives? Am I ready for the birth? Will I be finished with my preparations? Do I really know what I have to prepare for? Anxiety seems to overwhelm us because we feel: birth will make all things different, life will not be the same anymore. This is also expressed in our Advent Gospel (Luke 21, 25-36): the coming of the Son of Man, He comes with great confusion and upheavals. But we know, usually a birth is not just such a quiet and benign affair: it carries pain and suffering, also misery and tribulation. All this changes into joy and peacefulness when the child is born.

Now a quiet light can burn, the light of life which unites heaven and earth: The Divinity be revealed in the Heights, and Peace may be felt among those who live on Earth. We see these words at our Christmas altars but also hear the three Gospel Readings at the three services in the first Holy Night, encompassing the whole of the Gospel from the beginning of Matthew (who connects us with the Advent past) through the present of the very birth story according to Luke to the end of John who gives us a glimpse of the future in mentioning the destinies of Peter and John (“You follow me” and “I wish him to remain until I come”). Thus the end of the Christmas Gospel points to a future in the light. In this light of a new awakening (we have “white” at the altar) Peter was to follow and with him all who were rock-like; in the same

new light John and all who would open eagle-wings were spared for the time of a new coming.

Birth asks for Baptism as chopping wood asks for fire making; one is meant for the other, one fulfills the other! Christmas leads us to Epiphany, the Festival of the Appearance of the Son from Above. When He entered the ready human being it was the beginning of the future. But not a ‘solo future’, He was to unite with humanity, join the destiny of human beings. As it was the meaning of His unique Baptism, it is also the meaning of any Christian Baptism: to unite with the destiny of other Christians who are open to receive and ready to bear the new arrival. As Christ’s Baptism through John would have been isolated and fruitless without being aimed at and carried by humanity, so a Christian Baptism would be abstract and a sham action without a living i.e. worshipping community bearing it.

On the table with the baptism substances (salt-water-ash, which are in themselves an image of Advent-Birth-Baptism, i.e. the solid ground of the past, the birth from the waters of life and baptism to enkindle a new fire) we have the colors blue and red which at the Epiphany Altar are pulled together into that magnificent magenta showing how the receptiveness of the Advent Blue and the outgoing activity of the Easter Red (this is where the Easter-Resurrection comes in from the future) work together as the enhancing background of receiving Him (or any human being) into our earthly community.

Advent means Arrival, Pregnancy, Expectation, Prophecy. Birth means lighting of the candle in the present; from Night through Dawn into the brightness of Day. Baptism: Reception into Community for future deeds. All three belong together and we celebrate them together as Advent, Christmas and Epiphany.

*Werner Grimm*  
Vancouver

## STUDYING AT OUR SEMINAR

Growth in The Christian Community takes place on several fronts. The Community grows when new members find their way into its life. It grows as fami-

lies grow and children are raised in The Christian Community. It grows when members and friends deepen their relationship to the living Christ. It grows when the circle of priests is enlarged. Growth in any of these areas affects the whole.

Enlarging our priests' circle has become a pressing need in North America (and, indeed, world-wide) as retirement, illness and unexpected deaths reduce the number of available priests.

The Christian Community's only seminary is located in Stuttgart, Germany. It is housed in a lovely five-story building surrounded by a large garden on a hillside overlooking the city. The 50 or so students of all ages and nationalities study and live either there, or in one of the other two houses for students and faculty in the neighborhood. Each student has a single room.

Students take part in a number of ongoing courses related to the priesthood: speech formation, New Testament Greek, eurythmy, music, art. There is weekly work on the Gospels, on the lecture cycles and books of Rudolf Steiner, and later, on sermons.

But the central course work is divided into main lesson blocks of a week in length (sometimes two). Thus the content of this course is different every week. Naturally these main courses cover theological subjects such as Old and New Testament, the Sacraments, religious instruction, Christology, philosophy and world religions. But there are also topics one wouldn't necessarily associate with theological studies, such as geology, botany, projective geometry, medicine and architecture. Some of these include major field trips. But this is in keeping with the task of a modern Christianity, which is to integrate the outer world with the inner world into a whole in which God's working can be perceived.

But the seminary is not only a place for absorbing studies and lectures. Much of the day-to-day running of the seminary is done by the students; all the practical tasks, from arranging each student's course schedule, excursions, and field trips, managing student health and social functions, publications, building repair, and garden maintenance is divided up among the students. No one is exempt from cleaning, gardening and dish washing duties. This gives

the students a chance to practice firsthand the organizational, leadership and social and practical skills so necessary in the profession, as elsewhere in life.

Study at the seminary requires fluency in German. (While one may wish for an English-speaking seminary, the fact remains that the liturgies and primary literature were given in German. The majority of priests are German speaking, and all international priest meetings are conducted in German. Therefore knowledge of German is crucial, regardless of where one comes from.)

Most students learn German before coming to the seminary, either at home, or at an intensive language school in Germany before starting the seminary.

The "regular" course of study involves five semesters of course work, an internship of varying length, depending on the need, and an invitational last semester and ordination course. But few students follow the normal course straight through; the course of study may be lengthened or shortened according to the individual's strengths and needs.

Of course not everyone who studies at the seminary will be ordained. Some study without ordination as a goal; others decide to pursue another profession. While this doesn't result in large numbers of priests being ordained (an average of 11 per year in the last seven years), it could be compared with the number of students in any college or university who actually complete their first choice of major.

But like any truly spiritual endeavor, the seminary is a living organism. Just as a tree produces many, many seeds, far more than actually germinate, nevertheless those unsprouted seeds are absolutely necessary. They form a living web, an invisible support for those who eventually do go on to ordination. Those who choose to go out into the world in other professions become members and friends of The Christian Community who are capable of supporting it to an intense degree in other areas and in other ways. Time at the seminary is always well spent!

Currently there are 5 North Americans enrolled in the seminary. One is a single man in his middle years who was raised in The Christian Community. Another is a woman of similar age whose children

are grown. There is a woman in her thirties, another in her forties, and a young man in his mid-twenties. Yet another American woman is preparing for the seminary in a language school in Germany.

A year's tuition, room, partial board, and mandatory health insurance currently cost approximately \$7,300 per year. Students provide their own evening and Sunday meals and must cover their other expenses, such as transportation, clothing, books, travel, etc. It is expected that at least the first year's expenses will be covered by the student. For, although a deep inner life is certainly required for the priesthood, it is equally important that the will of such individuals be enough at home in the materialism of the 20th century to be able to raise funds and manage money responsibly. The student will also be expected to work if necessary during vacations, although it is currently becoming more and more difficult to find student jobs as the German economy tightens. The cost of living in Germany is somewhat high.

After the first years, tuition assistance funding exists if necessary. There is a general Christian Community Student Fund (for which students raise money in an annual cabaret), administered in Europe, which is available to promising students. It is expected that if studies do not end in ordination, the student will repay any tuition assistance received, in order to replenish the fund for others.

The North American Central Fund also administers a tuition assistance fund for North American students at the seminary. The fund welcomes donations from members and friends who are interested in supporting or even sponsoring students.

Individuals interested in supporting or attending the seminary should contact their local priest, or one of the following:

Rev. Sanford Miller, 3506 Eisenhower Dr., Sacramento, CA, 95826, (916) 334-7677.

Rev. Gisela Wielki, 309 West 74th St., New York, N.Y., 10023, (212) 362-7204.

Rev. Robert Patterson, 5236 N. Virginia Ave., Chicago, IL 60625, (773) 334-7677.

Orientation courses for the priesthood are held

in North America at regular intervals. Contact one of the above for further information.

Rev. Cynthia Hinds  
[ordained, May, 1997]

*As this letter is being penned, a Seminary Retreat is in progress at our church in Chicago. Fourteen participants have gathered from across the continent to share in a three week program oriented toward a deepening into the religious life of The Christian Community. While this conference has been designed to help further the development of our Movement for Religious Renewal in a broad sense, a more specific design comes from the hope that by way of this event individuals might be encouraged to consider preparing themselves to take on the life task of serving as priests.*

*We hope that those who present themselves as willing to undergo the process of becoming priests will have the resources, financially as well as constitutionally, to make it through the stages of preparation for ordination. And we hope that we will be able to support them along the way as may be needed. If you would like to make a donation to The Christian Community Central Fund for student support to help us be prepared to offer financial help, you may send your contribution to the Central Fund, c/o Robert Patterson, at the address given above.*

Rev. Robert Patterson  
Chicago

## CHICAGO CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY CHURCH CONSECRATION

A significant spiritual and historical event occurred in Chicago on the weekend of Oct. 11-12, 1997. **The "new" church was consecrated** and the foundation stone laid. Approximately sixty people attended the two-day festivities, which centered around three main activities: a Saturday night lec-

ture by Rev. Erk Ludwig of New York City, the consecration ceremony and Act of Consecration of Man, and Sunday afternoon celebrations.

Rev. Ludwig's lecture, "Religious Renewal as a Demand of Our Time," provided a very sobering and soul-searching mood as he led us methodically through humanity's present spiritual tasks. Mankind is striving to gain a new connection with the spiritual world, culminating in co-creation with the divine. Our participation is of vital importance, and the sun seed within, given to us by Christ as we traveled towards incarnation, gives us the strength and courage to transform through the words of the Act of Consecration of Man, "Let us worthily fulfill . . ."

The Sunday church consecration was a ceremony preceding the Act of Consecration of Man in which the beings of the four directions were called upon to join in the spiritual world's blessing of the church. Water, and then incense, were offered by the priest and two servers in coordinated movements to each direction in turn. The presence of ten Christian Community priests lent added solemnity to the occasion.

The afternoon festivities were a joyous occasion, beginning with a serpentine, hand-held dance through the church. (One special note was a striking painting of the River Jordan found during church remodeling, which hangs behind the altar wall.)

Many people contributed with memories and wishes:

- Rev. Oliver Steinrueck, who described the dedication as the gift of saying "yes" to the spiritual, and vice versa. In describing the building as a sourdough starter, he honored the joining of old with new.

- Paul Riesen from the East Troy community, who had witnessed the original Oct. 7, 1950 foundation stone laying at the Dearborn building, briefly described the earlier proceedings.

- Rev. Rosemarie Bergmann, whose humorous anecdotes of the early history of the church warmed the hearts of the listeners. She expressed that although the numbers were small, the contributions of time and talent were great, making a quality atmosphere. "They have very few people in Chicago, but they are sturdy," was one quote.

- Rev. Andreas Weymann (Oberlenker from Ger-

many), who wished the church to be a place where questions can arise and be lived with, where the members can strengthen the work, and where all can be connected to the service.

- Rev. Peter Skaller, who with the help of the youth in attendance, made a human floor diagram showing each Christian Community in North America in relation to the others geographically. Rev. Robert Patterson then read the well-wishes of each Christian Community priest to the Chicago community next to the youth representing that location (these had been written earlier on a document to be buried inside the foundation stone).

- Rev. Hartmut Junge brought a bevy of gifts from the Detroit community: - recorder music by the Festival Players - new Michaelmas servers' vestments - shredded-tissue collage of Michael and the Dragon - three-tiered German chocolate celebratory cake - glass vase and plate.

- Rev. Oliver Steinrueck shared greetings sent from two distant sister communities: Hannover, Germany, and Lima, Peru.

- Rev. Robert Patterson laid the foundation stone under the altar.

- Beautiful closing music was played by the Festival Players.

I would like to make special mention of the foundation stone container. The pentadodecahedron (12-sided, each side a pentagon) was handcrafted by George Waylett (1901-1982), an active Christian Community and anthroposophical member in Chicago until his death. It was made out of copper, and in the middle of each side was one sign of the Zodiac in relief. It is a magnificent piece of workmanship which first laid under the altar in the Dearborn house, and anyone who was fortunate enough to see it was truly gifted with the sight.

The church consecration was a rare, unique, and extraordinary event. I'm sure that those in attendance will agree that the experience will remain with them for years to come.

*Kaye Mehre*  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

## **ANGELS, ARCHANGELS AND THE FUTURE OF AMERICA: a St. John's Tide Convocation**

In July of 1776, in a steamy meeting room in Philadelphia—as the city bustled along unnoticed outside—a small group of individuals labored over a seemingly insignificant piece of paper. Although the world saw them as criminals and rebels, they were to fundamentally change the future view of government and reshape the view of the station of humanity. After political and economic enslavement of one kind or another throughout history, those Founding Fathers affirmed the nobility and freedom of every human being and created a government that would support this view. They were guided by the deepest forces of the universe to an action the implications of which even they only dimly understood.

In July of 1997, in steamy meeting rooms in Kimberton, small groups of individuals met again to revisit the meaning of this nation. When the ideal of material freedom is taken for granted in most parts of the world, the nation now continues to struggle to find true spiritual freedom. Now, on the eve of a new millennium, at a crossroads of human development, as a new archangel overspreads the continent, the challenge was to look deeply into the meaning of the nation and find ways to bring it to full fruition. For human beings are not only meant to be free from the yoke of tyranny; they are also meant to be spiritually free and independent - freedom and independence gained through consciousness.

Freedom and consciousness are gifts of the world of spirit to mankind. What is asked of us in the light of these concepts which serve to call forth our highest ideals and guide our best actions as individuals and as members of society's institutions and corporations?

Angels, Archangels and the Future of America, a St. John's Tide convocation, met in Kimberton, Pennsylvania, July 2-5, for the purpose of thinking and praying as strongly as possible about the confirmation and the safeguarding of the sanctity and sovereignty of the individual at a time when strong forces

are at work attempting to suppress, repress, and oppress the human being. Through focus groups, discussions and artistic activities, we wrestled with the questions of how common citizens can work individually, with one another and with the spiritual world to bring forth a new moral impulse.

The focus of the conference was not on politics, but on angels. In today's world angels have no place in politics, so the first question was how these concepts - angels, archangels and the future of America - could be brought together at all. In the course of the conference this juxtaposition made absolute sense, but it required a deeper understanding of what it means to be an American. As we stand upon the threshold of a new millennium, we see an increasing denial of the I in the other and an increasing assertion of the egotistical lower self, both individually and collectively. Many of us have lost connection with the spiritual world, and with this dimming of consciousness comes a dependence and enslavement to the material. Many of us have lost the ability to connect with the world of spirit through thinking and feeling. We have lost the ability to connect with the impulses streaming from the world of spirit - from the angels and archangels. Through lack of individual and collective will we fail to bring healing impulses into earthly reality. A general increase in the collective coarseness of soul and ugliness of culture, a general forgetting of who we are and where we have been as a nation, hinders clear vision of where we need to go in the light of what the higher powers are asking of us if we are to evolve into truly free human beings. Hence, the urgent need for this convocation of spiritual resolve.

The conference strove for an understanding of deeper spiritual forces that sparked creation of the nation and will help guide us as Americans and as individuals, to our higher selves. It considered the inner inspiration and struggles of George Washington and other founders of the country. And it examined our responsibility as Americans to continue on this spiritual path as a nation. The major questions examined were 1. How can spiritual impulses be brought to government, and 2. What changes need to occur in our corporations and institutions which

would allow them to recognize the sovereignty and sanctity of the individual?

At the conclusion of the conference each participant left with new insights and new resolve. Each carried away the personal self-imposed task of listening and acting out of freedom and consciousness within the context of his or her own life's work. In the face of questions, conflicts, and struggles we are facing in this nation today, there arises a sense in many of an inner call, an inner urging for new social forms. From where is this call coming, how can we hear it most clearly, and what can we do as individuals to act out of clear consciousness and the gift of spiritual freedom? Our hope is found not in the current reality, but in the very real and tangible presence of angels. This presence could be felt at the conference, and was perhaps the most inspiring part of it. Angels are waiting to aid us with "unrequited love," in the words of a poem by Christian Morgenstern translated and read by one of the participants. It is up to us to turn toward them. To discover and act in response to this offering is the new task of the people, for the people, to be carried out by the people.

*Jeff Benton and Robert Gunther*  
Devon, PA community

The thoughts and feelings representative of a handful of people in one small working group are expressed as follows:

#### *A Declaration of Spiritual Independence*

When, in the stream of time, a nation finds itself tyrannized by materialism and demoralized by the separation of spirituality from governance, it must rise to the call of true freedom.

We, the people of America, having liberated our political and economic life, now are impelled to liberate the spirit. At the threshold of a new millennium, we stand at a crucial point in human development. Our greatest threats are not from external political and military powers but from the erosion of moral vision from within.

We testify that every truly free human being is

called by the Creator to take on an unalienable responsibility to act out of spiritual consciousness. Having called together this nation through individual and collective will, we now arise in true freedom to deepen its purpose. The spirit of the time demands that we burn away the veils of illusions to create not only a new nation but a new race of people.

We, as individuals, resolve to take up the internal task of spiritual awareness and development so that the force of the spirit can be felt from the plains to the mountains to the sheltering heavens of this great nation. We, as Americans, resolve to bring the fire of sacrifice into the management of human affairs, to revitalize our nation so that it might become a burning light for the world.

And for the support of this declaration, with a firm Reliance on the Protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

*Kimberton, PA July 4, 1997*

## **1997 MICHAELMAS CONFERENCE**

Fourfold presence of mind, with the four priests who presented, reflected the spirit of the Michaelmas conference in New York City titled, "Expanding Life's Boundaries." Friends and members from the eastern seaboard congregated over three days - October 24-26 - for prayer, thought, conversation, fellowship, and art, and the activities were by turns solemn, enlightening, and relaxed.

All the talks advertently alluded to the singular urgency of our time that calls for widespread inner wakefulness, prayer and meditation. Dwelling on the imminent new millennium at the end of a century that has ingeniously surpassed many boundaries yet been reigned by deadly catastrophes, Rev. Gisela Wielki queried what yet might be humanly attained before the twentieth century is finally tallied and weighed. Despite the massive number of youthful war casualties, among others, the unprecedented numbers on

earth point to the renewed spiritual light. If the splitting of the atom, Rev. Wielki expounded, represents the frightening disintegration that people today feel prone to, unlike the self that for centuries past, experienced matter as a self-gathering, the caring eye for oneself and the other can become the restoration of community, the emerging periphery of the center.

Drawing on the diverse life experience of Franklin, Whitman, Mozart and C.S. Lewis, Rev. Richard Dancy accentuated each man's awareness of death that enhanced and intensified his life under way. Life and death are sacramentally polar, so awakening closeness to the threshold enlarges understanding and possibility. Rev. Dancy likened thresholds of a day, in the light of prayerful momentary attentiveness to a life's spanning. Yet death, too, is the spirit of modern mechanomorphic culture that is overwhelming the planet. But the sober, long suffering endeavor of prayer through Christ can turn earth to the good.

Rev. Erk Ludwig addressed the reality of our time's proximity to existence before life and after death. Yet the approach thereto requires steeped preparation. One ready to incarnate desires earthly weight, whereas the purgative journey after death culminates in witnessing the exalted, unfolding, Divine Human Being. Such witness orients one for the lifetime to come, its rightful whereabouts. The individual experiences in all humility the hierarchical presence that will continue to guide. As the openly loving child has descended from the heavenly sphere of the will, so adult love wrested echoes this will's domain. Creative love that brings newness, Rev. Ludwig emphasized, on earth is the providence only of human beings. The threatened, child-bearing woman of the Apocalypse underscores the need for courageous reverence that attends freedom.

Guest speaker, Rev. Mechtild Oltmann, from Berlin (whose presentation in German was complemented by Rev. Ludwig's translation), inquired into the Apocalyptic tenor of the world we know. Revelation's fallen-to-the-earth third of the firmament signals the current reign of human will freed. Portraits from the Renaissance devolve on faces searching for identity, individuals now responsive to the

ancient call, "Know Thyself." Biography is the modern sequel to portraiture. But the search for unity largely has been wrenched. Sevenfold cycles are now six - observe the onset of puberty in twelve-year olds.

Rev. Oltmann pointed out that the circumstances of everyone's life can wrench destiny awry. Yet each can behold a star of destiny; we must bear the wakeful witness that the times demand. The illusion of the modern eye is the mirror image except for the reflected self recognized in another's loving eye. Parsifal, deprived and innocent, yet ultimately at fault and responsible, epitomizes our stage. Our privilege is to understand Christ's beckoning countenance.

Those who attended this conference could feel gratified by and grateful for this gathering of community that transpired.

Michael Vode  
New York City

**THE FIRST NORTH AMERICAN  
CONFERENCE FOR BOARD MEMBERS OF  
THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND  
FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF  
THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE CENTRAL  
FUND OF THE CHRISTIAN  
COMMUNITY IN NORTH AMERICA.**

*Held at The Christian Community in Chicago, September 12 and September 13, 1997.*

An important step for the Movement for Religious Renewal took place in Chicago this past September. In this 49th year since the founding of The Christian Community in America, each of the North American communities can now participate fully in the affairs of the Central Fund, a fund which all communities support - and which supports all the communities as well. Board members from all the North American Communities were invited to attend the conference as representatives of the whole movement.

We came together in the new church in Chicago, which is being carefully renovated to meet The Christian Community's needs. During our opening meeting, we were first welcomed by Rev. Robert Patterson,

Lenker, and Rachel Flug, who is the president of the Central Fund. A short description of the history of The Christian Community in North America was given - with reference to the way the financial needs were approached in the past. We were also asked to introduce ourselves to the group, and then express our hopes for the conference. It took a while for everyone to have their say, but we were able to close the day together without it becoming very late.

The next morning, following The Act of Consecration of Man, everyone contributed a picture of the life of their Community, identifying struggles we all have in common and those unique to our own center. Care was taken to also bring to consciousness those elements in our centers which are our strengths. Having formed a picture of the life of The Christian Community in North America, we were ready to look at the history and tasks of the Central Fund. This took place in the next meeting, with Robert Patterson as opening speaker. Rev. Erk Ludwig and Rev. Sanford Miller then described how the Trustees of the Central Fund work together. Jennifer Crebbin (who is the Secretary of the Board) then spoke about the relationship to the Centers, Reinhard Rosch (Treasurer) gave a financial report, and Rachel Flug (President) spoke about the Trustees picture of the next five years. A question and answer session completed this session, which had examined the needs of the movement. After a thirty minute break, we were ready for the official Annual General Meeting.

This (first) Annual General Meeting was more than a simple following of legal requirements, it gave a new form to the way all the centers of the Christian Community in North America will work with the Central Fund. During the meeting the election of members of the Board of Trustees of the Central Fund took place (with priest and lay people serving together) and the new legal form was described and approved. From a local, Illinois based "not-for-profit" corporation, the Central Fund was transformed into a "membership corporation" and its members are the various communities. Each congregation of The Christian Community in North America designated by the Lenker is eligible to become a member. The Central Fund Board of Trustees is no longer a self-

perpetuating body. The bylaws provide for the election of two or three of the Central Fund Trustees each year by the member congregations. (For a full picture of the new legal form and a listing of the Board members, please see the comprehensive article by Dietlind Kionke-Thoemmes, which will be published by the San Francisco Community.)

Following the AGM (and a half hour break) we reconvened for a meeting during which we looked to the future and shared ideas about how we might accomplish some of our aims. We could have continued for much longer.

The Conference closed later that evening with a shared Close of Day, which was preceded by a delightful concert kindly presented by members of the Chicago Community.

I would like to close this report by expressing the thanks of all those who came from far and near to everyone who worked so hard to make this conference a success. The Trustees of the Central Fund had fully prepared the content of the meetings, the housing of the delegates was well organized, and the meals and refreshments gave us pleasure as well as nourishment.

*Robin Mitchell*  
Denver

## LIMA '99

A long way to go until then. Who can tell what changes will have come about in our city by then? Lima is changing day by day, and the difference is noticeable. The once beautiful city - garden city of America - had turned, through negligence and abuse, into a dump! It was filthy, stinky, and falling to pieces. Now, everyday one finds a renovated balcony, a painted house, plants, beautiful patrolled paths, enticing corners. What the interest and will to do something can do is amazing!

It was a challenge to the mayor and he took it. Brooms, paintbrushes, hoes, spades, hammers, nails, caring hands, creativity are doing the miracle. The sphinx is arising out of the ashes. Now people go for a walk to Lima on a Sunday, investors start setting

up business and everyone discovers each time some new wonder to be happy about.

Of course Machu Pichu is fascinating - but that is Peru's past. What a little love and care is doing to Lima reaches far into the future as a force of resurrection and hope.

Come and see for yourself and bring your warm interest and help it revive. We will be more than happy to show you around.

See you in July '99!

*Emilia Hosmann*  
Lima, Peru

(You will only reach Paul Corman in Lima by phone or fax when using the right number: 011-51-1-442.9703 (phone/Fax). Our apologies for omitting the area code in our last issue.)

## **HEIMDALL BY CANOE, 1997 - GREY OWL'S RIVER**

The Mississagi River flows over the pink Canadian Shield granites in the remote forests northwest of Sudbury, Ontario, and then empties into Lake Huron. It took 11 bus-hours from Toronto to reach the access point. Much of the drive was over rugged logging roads. We were 22 teen-agers and 8 adults, and were organized into 3 groups of 10 (4 canoes per group) for the journey downriver. Most of us live within 3 hours of Toronto, but 4 came from the Kimberton, PA area; others were from Vancouver Island, Florida, and New York. This 11-day canoe trip offered the greatest diversity in experience of any of our trips so far. We encountered small and huge lakes, difficult and easy whitewater, majestic waterfalls and marshes, and many portages, including 3 long ones (ca. 1 km each).

This was the beloved terrain of Archie Belaney, an Englishman who left his suburban upbringing, to settle in the bush of Ontario in the early 1900's. He was "adopted" by an Ojibway family, was given the name Grey Owl, and became a trapper. While living

with his wife in a remote cabin along the Mississagi, he had a "conversion experience" brought about largely through his relationship with a beaver kit. His transformation led him to become Canada's first outspoken and world-renowned activist on behalf of aboriginal peoples and conservation. His biography is a riveting and mystifying story of the emergence of a man's inner ideals striving to shine out through a destiny plagued by 4 broken marriages, alcoholism, the continual conflicts brought about by his attempts to reconcile his British and Ojibway "selves," and his contradictory passions for both the isolation of the bush and the need to proclaim his message of respect for its peoples and creatures in the limelight of great cities.

During the 20's and 30's, Belaney lectured throughout Britain, Canada and the U.S.A., donning full Ojibway dress, a well-practiced scowl and the name Grey Owl. He was continually afraid that he would be "found out" and wrongly judged to be a fraud, and yet the fire of his ideals and sense of mission revealed a core of inner certainty. He had no use for organized religion, yet his devotion to the human being's dignity beyond ethnicity and to the need to respect the earth and her creatures, makes him an important Michaelic warrior in our century. (Read: Grey Owl, the Mystery of Archie Belaney by A.G. Ruffo, Coteau Books, Regina. 1997.)

After 2 days of mostly lake-paddling we came to Grey Owl's log cabin at the mouth of the river proper. As one stood there gazing out at the island studded lake spreading to the south and east, the river flowing west, the cumulus clouds sailing above, and the shafts of sunlight flooding the entire scene, as one felt what lived *in* these impressions, one knew this to be a sacred place. In this humble cabin in the middle of nowhere, yet obviously "somewhere," amidst beaver, loon and moose, a struggling soul became a vessel for ideals which were just beginning to descend to the earth, and which today are acknowledged and championed throughout the world. "*The spirit-wind blows according to its purposes, and you hear its sound, yet its origin and destination are shrouded in mystery*" (John 3:8).

As the trip organizer, I always carry anxiety over

safety. Whitewater is the greatest concern. Without some degree of risk, of course, the challenges would be meaningless. But the greatest challenge for a group leader is be able to discern that line when risk slips into foolhardiness. The teen-agers, particularly boys, naturally have the line placed much farther towards the latter. Upon arriving at the head of a rapid, the standard procedure, except in cases where the run is fully visible ahead and obviously easy, is to pull ashore and scout from the shore boulders. The hope is always that there will be a passageway which can be navigated with the skills we have, that the water level is neither too low nor too high, that there won't be any steep drops, that standing waves are not too formidable, or that there are no "strainers" (fallen trees) which could filter the paddlers from their canoes. A decision not to shoot a set of rapids then requires shooting the rapids of disappointment and often confrontation with those whose adrenaline was already set a-pumping in anticipation of an exhilarating test. Furthermore, rapids not run would have to be Yuk!, portaged, or at best lined (guiding the canoes with ropes).

This year one group experienced a capsized resulting in a canoe getting pinned by the water's force against a boulder. The group had to learn about water-flow and the use of rope-aided leverage to gradually pry the canoe loose, which thankfully was accomplished. At another rapid a strainer had to be sawed away in order to free the passage, and at another, we began the descent, only to have to turn upstream to find a portage around impassable strainers and a "rock garden." This was the price paid for insufficient scouting. At one particularly complex set of rapids, we all examined things carefully a number of times, first decided to portage the gear and shoot the rapids with empty canoes, then decided to portage the canoes also except for one which would be shot through by two eager, moreover excellent, paddlers. I scouted one more time, this time going to the very bottom of the rapid and looked upstream. When my heart began migrating up into my throat, I changed my mind and ran back over the portage to be sure I'd intercept the adrenaline flow that was already underway above. I simply said, "No way, there's no safe

opening at the bottom, put the canoe on your shoulders and carry it," and walked away. I wasn't vindicated until the end of the trip when we learned that the other two groups made the same decision.

There's a special enjoyment that comes when someone with less experience, and who may have walked while others shot certain rapids, takes the first plunge into testing what they have been taught, and does things successfully. The resultant smile is one of the events making these trips worthwhile. Towards the end of the trip we came to a bridge where an elderly couple were picnicking. There were some hefty rapids there, and we got out to scout. The man said "T'ain't no one ever gone through *them!*" We saw a clear way through, however, and shot them with no problem with our less experienced paddlers handling things, as the couple watched. Ho-hum.

My state of worry is undoubtedly healthy for a group leader. I remember the moment, however, when my anxiety passed, and from then on was able to relax somewhat. This occurred when we passed through the place known as Hellgate Falls. The name itself filled me with dread! Why was it named as it was? Well, we did not miss the portage, which was a long trek around a series of raging falls and chutes. We camped above them, and slept bathed in the roar of the plunging river. The main fall was awesome in its power, and to stand above such a fall in the midst of the wilderness is breathtaking.

An Ontario river like this is paradise for the fisherman. We ate Northern Pike galore, some being over 2 feet long. The preferred mode of dining was to first behead and clean the fish, fry it in well-garliced olive oil, and then to have the entire group simply pick at it, with fingers or forks, out of the fry-pan. Genteel manners fade into meaninglessness, but thankful appreciation takes on new meaning. Fishing tackle had to be kept to the essentials: nets were not allowed. My canvas hat took hold of a number of pike, thereby becoming coated in fish-slime which these fish produce copiously. But even on a trip like this I scrubbed my hat carefully before placing it back on my head. There *are* limits!

We had a powerful experience encountering an Osprey. As this huge raptor soared from its perch one

could feel the entire locale permeated by a *consciousness* into which we were invading. There was a kind of supersensible battle. Trespass! One felt somehow uneasy, could one say *guilty*? As though one had violated the flaming swords at the gates of Paradise? In this way the Osprey became a link to Grey Owl's love at the center of his madness. These are *holy spaces*.

On the day before our scheduled rendezvous for The Act of Consecration of Man, I was scanning the shoreline for a possible chapel-site. Suddenly I saw two huge boulders approximating a cube and a sphere and knew immediately that was the place. We then checked out the site finding a little amphitheater of granite outcroppings, and a great, lichen-covered wall facing east. Perfect! We set up camp across the river and the next morning the server (Ricardo Toledo) and I met early to set things up, only to find that clouds and wind were gathering ominously. Now the cube-shaped boulder was tilted as it rested on the side of the spherical one, and this created a cave-like opening underneath. We cleaned out the debris, exposing rock ledges which were perfect for sitting. One couldn't stand in this space, so we built the altar, as always, out of stacked equipment boxes, just beyond the cave's roof, and draped a large tarp from the boulders out over the altar and held it up with guy lines. For the Communion line, people would have to come out of the cave and stand around the altar. The canoes from all the groups, which were camped over a two km. stretch of the river, arrived on time, and the chapel filled. When the rains did come, we were cozy in our catacomb.

After the service we began the westward journey through Rocky Island Lake, a huge lake which would require at least 2 days to paddle, and possibly longer if the usual prevailing winds from the west would be active. But Lo!, the winds were easterlies, and although they brought bad weather we sang in the rain with the wind at our backs. At our next campsite we rigged up driftwood masts with a tarp and the next morning zoomed over the lake with such ease that now and then people would drift asleep lying on the packs! The funny thing is, there was always this silly little grin on the faces of those dozers. Well, the

rest was needed, because soon we would have to deal with the grueling portage around Aubrey Falls. Thoroughly "bushed," we spent 2 days camping on a pure sand deposit, swimming, making sand castles, lighting sparklers, reading, playing cards, fishing, eating, exploring, spying a moose, and in general doing nothing at all.

The 1998 trip has not yet been set into motion. It is possible that there will be a beginner's trip for younger, inexperienced children who would like to get started (6th grade and up), as well as another difficult trip for seasoned people. Any children, youth and adults who might be interested could already contact me (Rev.P.Skaller, 91 Centre Street West, Richmond Hill, Ontario L4C 3P6, Canada), although no commitments can be made yet. I am particularly looking for staff (18+ years old). Probable dates would be late-July to early-August.

Peter Skaller  
Toronto

### PERSPECTIVES

Receiving a letter in the mail is one of life's small joys..."Who has had me in mind?", "What news will it bring?" In Chicago, our creaky mail-slot has been clanging steadily as requests for "Perspectives" subscriptions come to us for the first time..."Where does this person come from?", "Is it a new subscriber?" Each envelope confirms that there is indeed an interest in an English language journal of The Christian Community. Soon the Advent/Christmas issue will be arriving in many new and "renewed" homes. It will be a vehicle for us to share our insights and struggles as Christians standing in today's world. If we read it!

Our British friends have generously allowed us to lower our rates to **\$20 per year (\$15 for gift subscriptions)**. We will only be able to "survive" at this level if our readership expands. Our subscription rate to date is 53 issues to individuals and about 100 copies to congregations. So, if you are curious about this journal and would like a single copy or a year's subscription please contact us or your local Priest. It is our turn to spread some joy. We guarantee a "letter" every 3 months!

Suzanne Steinrueck  
for the Chicago congregation's "Perspective Subscriptions",  
2145 W. Wilson Ave., Chicago, IL 60625. (tel) (773) 989-8558.

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Dale Brunsvold, 2740 South Ogden, Englewood,  
Colorado 80110 or by e-mail to  
dbrunsvold@aol.com