

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

MOVEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS RENEWAL

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from: The Apocalypse by Albrecht Dürer

HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS AND MICHAELIC COURAGE: THOUGHTS ON OUR SACRAMENT OF CONSULTATION

Living with the Seven Sacraments we may not be aware that among the seven there is one of a very special blessing. For a long time it was used in the Christian Church as “confession”; people were encouraged to hand over the burdens of their lives to the church which was ready to bear them in order that the single member could go unburdened. Debts were carried which at a later time, might be repaid with more strength. Although this made things easier, it also bound people to the destiny of the church as a whole in an increasingly unfree way.

Today we are different and might not strive to get rid of our burdens, recognizing them as the most precious gifts of our destiny. We want to - and need to - carry them ourselves, because as “real” Christians we are not “slaves or servants” anymore but “friends” of the one who overcame death - and thus can become his co-workers. But in order to bear our own and “the heavy burden of our age” (2. Cor. 6:4) we need to be able to recognize the tools, as it were, i.e. to muster the necessary strength, and to become aware of that which is possible only if we are ready to receive help from above. This help from above will be the only means to balance our burdens to such an extent that we are able to deal with them ourselves. Now-a-days it is still extremely difficult to find these balancing powers anywhere else because we are constantly being pulled in this or that direction. When trying to find these powers without any help, we are merely doing “damage control” here or there and don’t find that inner “divine” equilibrium, on the ground of which alone we can begin to bear and transform our burdens.

Through our Sacrament of Consultation (the old name “Confession” is sometimes used) we become - after bringing, after lifting our situation, (the “joys and sorrows of life” as they are addressed in the Confirmation) into our consciousness and acknowledg-

ing them - we become honest with ourselves to such a degree that we realize and accept the following fact: good will is needed as a primary ingredient. We all know from the Christmas Message that it is the “good will of human beings on earth” which is the foundation of “peace” i.e. of that great equilibrium which we need. Through the Sacrament the word from beyond permeates our soul - that we may learn (yes, always again learning, even as adults) to offer our thoughts to the Divine World i.e. to keep them ready and open so that divine substance, divine “advice”, the very divine *will* even, can flow into them as gift of grace. Then our thoughts and our will will not be pulled down from the platform of life; while having difficulties to be kept “on board”, they will be able to be balanced peacefully in order that new relations to God and his world, new relations to human beings, to our fellow human beings can come about.

This makes a difference, because through balance of life we will be able to muster love, real love i.e. not that subjective liking (which is too close to disliking). In the peaceful divine equilibrium we learn how to muster objective love, muster that objectivity toward the other human being which is so badly needed in human relationships and without which we will come in conflict with each other time and again. Then instead of seeing our friend as co-sufferer and companion in striving, we will suspect an enemy, one who works against us. That however is not really the other human being but the enemy of Man who always comes in when and where we let go and not actively follow our paths and tasks as “Images of the Godhead”.

Human relationships are not always easy now-a-days, because we are still so much obsessed with “what is good for me” instead of with what is good for all. We also can be fanatical about our own freedom and not realize how we all the time infringe on our neighbor’s freedom. Also, have we ever thought that we might even infringe on the freedom of God? A daring thought, but still one which belongs in this context.

Because what do we do when asking for a sacrament or taking part in our Eucharist, The Act of Consecration of Man, and receiving the gifts from

above without first having made a “clean-house” in our souls, without first having sought that balance in our world of emotions? Are we not infringing on the freedom and love of God? We may not be very much aware of it but that does not mean that we do not do it. To be aware of it, to become aware of it time and again needs courage. Could that be the courage which is also called Michael’s Sword? It might not be accidental that Michael the Hero of our Age is portrayed with the scales in his hand, those scales which we now may take and use to bring ourselves into that spiritual balance through which alone we will be able to become true human beings, through which alone we will be able to create and foster genuine human relationships and through which alone we will be able not to infringe on God’s freedom and love when receiving and participating in a Christian Sacrament.

Werner Grimm
Vancouver

JOHN HUNTER

On Sunday, July 26, he still celebrated The Act of Consecration of Man in the little chapel in Scheidegg in the morning. In the afternoon, he drove to a nearby overlook with Mrs. Hunter, taking a short walk with a wonderful view of the whole Alps. In the evening they went to a concert of Bach cantatas in nearby Hindenberg. Afterward they said goodnight. Next morning she prepared breakfast and went to a painting course. When she returned and found the breakfast untouched she looked in on him. She found him lying on his side, unconscious and breathing with difficulty. The doctor was called; he diagnosed a stroke, and John was taken to the hospital in Hindenberg. Without recovering consciousness he crossed the threshold at 3:30 PM when Elisabeth had stepped out of the room.

He lay in state in the chapel at Scheidegg until Part I of the Burial Service on Thursday the 30th, which was celebrated by Rev. Manfred Weerts. Since

none of the Oberlenkers could come, the Lenker, Michael Heidenreich, came to celebrate Part II of the Burial Service at the cremation in Lindau on Friday, July 31. Seven of his fellow priests stood round the coffin and a large number of members from the Wangen congregation filled the chapel. Their participation shows how very much John Hunter was appreciated in Allgaeu, where, although living in semi-retirement, he still took a strong part in the life of the congregations from Lindau to Wangen to Oberstdorf over the last 10 years.

John Hunter’s life began on October 29, 1917 in Edinburgh, Scotland. His father was a leading employee in a brewery. The family attended the Presbyterian church regularly. He was twelve years old when his father died, and he turned away from the church. “Serious inner battles concerning the purpose of our materialistic way of life took place in me,” he wrote in a life-sketch. And then: “In the 18th or 19th year, I received a strong religious impulse and a vision...” At that time he received a commercial education and had a strong interest in mathematics. But his inner experience led him to the question: “How can human beings receive this experience of the active Christ, which I now see as the sense of human life?” From now on, he wanted to apply himself to this task. He decided to study theology and become a minister.

In 1939, at 22 years of age, he refused military service as a Christian conscientious objector. At the beginning of World War II no one in his surroundings could understand that, and this alienated most of his friends. It was a hard trial for him, but one that he could overcome through his newly won insight. He swam against the stream.

In 1940 he got to know George Macleod, leader of the Iona Community, which attempted a kind of religious renewal, in connection with the old Iro-Scottish Christianity. From 1940 to 1946 he was a member of this community and worked in several of its congregations, alongside his studies at the University of Edinburgh - this included not only theology but also literary and philosophical studies which concluded in 1944 with a Master of Arts degree.

At a conference on Iona he met Alfred

Heidenreich in 1942, who together with George Macleod and some others had arranged the conference. At that time he “easily took up a few anthroposophical ideas” but at that time didn’t pursue them further.

“From 1945-47 I gave sermons on a probationary basis in about 60 congregations of the church of Scotland, and as secretary of the Student Christian Movement in Edinburgh, I had many connections to the situations in other churches, and also some insight into questions of Christian unity in the World Council of Churches.”

During this time, John Hunter had a friend, Duncan MacNeil, who was also a minister in the Church of Scotland. He wanted to go fishing with him. John waited for a long time, but Duncan didn’t come. When he finally arrived he gave the excuse of having to visit a person who was dying. John asked, “What do you say to a person in that situation?” Duncan replied, “I tell him about life after death, and perhaps even of a possible reincarnation.” “How do you know this!?” Then Duncan told him that he’d been reading Anthroposophy since 1938, and had known The Christian Community since 1941. Throughout the whole following night they spoke with one another about these things - all new to John.

Evelyn Francis Capel came for a visit to the congregation in Edinburgh in May 1947. Here John experienced The Act of Consecration of Man for the first time; the thirty year old recognized: that’s it! Now he wanted to get to know more about this, so he attended a conference over New Year at Albrighton Hall, at that time the conference center of The Christian Community in England.

Among the considerations about whether he might eventually join The Christian Community as a priest, was a visit to the seminary in Stuttgart in 1949. Then he met his future wife for the first time. She was then studying Eurythmy in Stuttgart and wanted to work in a family in England. In search for a translator of her letter of inquiry she turned to John Hunter. They saw each other later in London and Albrighton Hall.

John Hunter was ordained by Emil Bock in Stuttgart on August 5, 1951, and was sent with his

American fellow priest Richard Lewis to Glenilla Road in London. He did not, however, desire to remain in England. After short work stations in London, Albrighton Hall, and Shrewsbury, he followed a call to New York with the hope of being able to work there with Rudolf Frieling. However, Frieling welcomed him there with the news that he himself would have to return to Europe. Thus it came about that Hunter led and developed the New York congregation for seventeen years with the help of Frederick Burgevin, Gregg Brewer and others; he also helped found several affiliated congregations.

The wedding with Ute Elisabeth Hoppe was celebrated in November 1958; Richard Lewis came from Chicago to officiate. In 1969 John became seriously ill and had to take a leave of absence for nine months for rest and rehabilitation in Arlesheim, Switzerland. As the successor of Rudolf Koehler he was then named Lenker for North America in 1972, and made the move to Boston. Many long flights by plane were required to care for his region. By 1980 he began preparing for a successor. In 1981 Robert Patterson also became a Lenker. For seven years they carried the Lenker responsibilities for North America. They divided the task; John Hunter took care mainly for the congregations in the Eastern U.S.; Robert Patterson did the same for the West.

In 1988 John Hunter laid down his office. While seeking an appropriate location for retirement, Frau Doctor de Ruyter offered them her dwelling in Scheidegg. He and his wife accepted this and then moved to Europe. The remaining 10 years in Allgaeu resulted in many valuable human contacts. John Hunter was a welcome guest at the German Lenkers Conferences and at the Southwest German Regional Synods until his full retirement a year ago. At age 80 he said farewell to these groups, telling funny stories out of his life, and said, “Enough is enough!” In his 48 years as a priest he attempted to bring to realization what had been imparted to him as an inner religious impulse by “the activating Christ.”

Two years ago, while on a trip through Scotland, he again met with his old friend Duncan MacNeil, and in June of this year he could one again visit the island of Iona with his wife. On the one hand he was

deeply disturbed by the present tourist commercialization of the island which he loved so much, but on the other hand it led him back to his original religious point of departure, and many memories became vividly alive again.

Michael Heidenreich
(translated by Richard Lewis)

JOHN HUNTER, 1917-1998

*Within these holy halls
Revenge cannot be found
And if any man falls,
Love leads him to duty again...
Then he walks by friendship's hand,
Led into an even better land.*

Many found John Hunter difficult. He had a Scots temperament, sometimes penurious, an attitude which extended beyond just money matters. Many did not see his generous side. I did. Eight years I worked with him, side by side in New York, and the dependent congregations in Boston, Pennsylvania and Washington. During those eight years, and in the years after, I saw more than one example, where the quotation above, from Mozart's Magic Flute, was fulfilled in him. He could indeed extend a loving hand of friendship.

John Hunter came to Stuttgart in 1949. I am not sure just when. But I remember going to meet him where he was staying in a house across the street from Ameisenbergstrasse 76. He was on his way to Dornach; but since he, a licensed preacher in the Church of Scotland, had, as one of his options, becoming a priest in The Christian Community, he was making a stop in Stuttgart in order to meet with the leaders. It was thought that I, as a potential beginner of the work of The Christian Community in America, also ought to be one of those who should talk with him. Our talk was not exactly Earth shaking. I do not think that the possibility that he might eventually come to work in America even came up, though in

years afterward he admitted to me that even then it was a kind of secret longing.

I had not been long in America, when I learned that John Hunter had in fact joined the Priest Seminary. He was ordained as one the great "Ausslaendergruppe (eight non-Germans) of August, 1951. His first years were not entirely happy ones. He was mainly in Great Britain, in Shrewsbury. His desire to come to America grew, and was no longer secret. This desire was fulfilled in 1955. He came to New York as a replacement for Dr. Frieling, who was returning to Europe.

In 1956, I came to New York as Verner Hegg's replacement. Verner had gone to California to start the work there. I must have had a good karma with John. Although we did occasionally have sharply divergent views, in the main we got along very well. I am aware that there are those who have found him difficult. I would not deny that he did have some ways that some, even I at times, would find difficult. But underneath there was fierce loyalty to our cause. There was also an equally fierce loyalty, though not uncritical, to those who were also the bearers of our task.

During my years at Camphill Village, I often saw John at synods, and in connection with very intensive work on the re-translation of some of the sacramental texts. After he had moved to Boston, from time to time I would fill in a Sunday for him while he went on vacation.

A personal vignette: From 1956 to 1962 the Brewer family lived on the top floor of the house at 309 West 74th Street in New York. John and Elisabeth Hunter were married in the autumn of 1958; and after that they lived on the second floor. A few months later, on the day that Natalie and I brought our new baby home from the hospital, we stopped at the Hunter apartment for Natalie to rest before ascending the rest of the stairs. I have the image in memory, of John and Elisabeth passing the baby back and forth, while we were waiting there. They were never to become parents. But John did accept to become Godfather to this baby; he even asked to be Godfather. This was the only time he was a Godfather. He

fundamentally did not think that priests should be Godparents.

Twenty five years later, I was not present at the dedication of the Chapel on Washington Street in Brookline. I had to choose which of the two Sundays I could be absent from my usual post. I chose the second one, which was the silver wedding celebration of John and Elisabeth. And I was to be again a witness, as I had been at their first wedding.

John Hunter retired in the springtime of 1988. He and Elisabeth moved across the sea to Scheidegg, down by the Austrian border. We exchanged letters, we even talked on the telephone; but we never again met face to face. He died there on the 27th of July. On the following Saturday, in the quiet of the provisional chapel in our retirement house on Cape Cod, Natalie served while I held The Act of Consecration of the Dead.

Eight days later, I was in Boston, there in the chapel where almost 15 years before we had celebrated the Silver Wedding of John and Elisabeth. There we came across John Hunter's footprints. "He was so strict, so fussy, he made rules," said the Treasurer, "and not just about the money things - but about *everything*." But we did love him so..."And he loved us!"

This is what I command you - only this - that you love one another! (John 15:17)

Gregg C. Brewer
Falmouth, Cape Cod, Massachusetts



SOME MOMENTS WITH JOHN HUNTER

The first time I saw John Hunter was in the church (at that time in the house of the Schwaben Bruderverein next to the Waldorf School in Stuttgart) immediately after The Act of Consecration of Man. I was walking toward the back. He was stand-

ing in the center of the seats looking around uncertainly. I felt he was looking for help, so I went over and asked in German if I could be of assistance to him - I thought he was a German. In inadequate German, then, he alerted me to his English accent, and we soon talked in English (which had a Scottish accent). I had been correct; he had been seeking aid, and I helped with information. He had just come from Rome. A little later he joined the students at the seminary.

One time as John and I were walking down the Heidehofstrasse, above the Bubenbad Restaurant, a smaller valley to our left, leading into the larger valley of Stuttgart City, with some large birds flying across our field of view in the distance, I suddenly realized and exclaimed, "Christ is the only being who has been able to really deal with matter!" For a few minutes we were caught up in a sense of awe and wonder. That was a special moment for both of us.

Several students lived in the top floor of the Urachhaus. One day John came to visit. In the small kitchen a few of us gathered. There was a new unfinished wood chair that John sat in. When he leaned back toward the wall, the chair began to come apart, so John braced his feet on the floor and his shoulders against the wall, just as the chair fell to pieces beneath him. John "rode" the chair down until the last moment. Everybody had a good laugh.

As part of John's ordination group, I was present as he celebrated his first Act of Consecration of Man. I was sitting on the left, half way back, in the chapel at Traubergstrasse. I became aware during the transubstantiation that a self-contained cloud-like organism came into perception at the back, mobile and vital, and moved like golden fleece along the right side toward the altar. Just as it approached the altar, it faded from perception. I felt as though I had glimpsed the monstrosity in its process of condensing as it approached the substances at the altar. I have always been grateful to John's service for this experience.

I remember working with John on the children's festivals in London: in an Advent skit a boy gave an uncanny imitation of the snake slithering into Paradise; John was a very impressive, heavily bearded bishop with a large record book when St. Nicholas

came; and his carrying out the double arm rotating symbol for the Sun at St. Johnstide was very effective. While I was in London, he saw to it that I experienced Walter Johannes Stein and Karl Koenig. Later on in New York I worked with John in the early months of 1956.

Some years later at a synod I was attending in New York, while John was celebrating, I sensed that he was experiencing a struggle with weakness, so in a not fully conscious way I was able to communicate strength to him. He himself commented on this later not knowing the source of the strength, which enabled him to continue. I felt this to be a kind of compensation for my "golden fleece" experience.

As I was celebrating the Hunter-Hoppe wedding in New York City, after I had tied the sticks and raised them, I noticed that I had not turned the page in the ritual book. So, holding the sticks high, I said (soto voce) to the reliable server, "Turn the page." When I next glanced down, I saw that he had turned two pages! So again (soto voce) I said "One page." Fortunately he understood and did so (turning the second page back) and all was in order - except the brief hiatus in the flow of speech. Later John said that he experienced something spiritual in that interval (not perceiving the interruption) which gave the wedding a very special meaning.

At the time of his being named and elevated to Lenker status, I had been at the Dornach synod with him, commemorating 50 years of The Christian Community, Movement for Religious Renewal, in 1972. We were enroute to Stuttgart for the official ceremony. We were almost late arriving at the train in Basel, but at the last moment leaving me on the train with the luggage, he rushed off. After the train had started moving he swung aboard with two boxes of the most luxurious lunch I have ever eaten - tasty, with variety, and different courses, but not too much. It was a very nice surprise. I was present at the Service the next day when he was given the collar indicating he was a Lenker.

When I celebrated their Silver Wedding in Boston (my second such ceremony), one of the original witnesses, Gregg Brewer was able to be present. The other witness, Mimi Reif, had passed on but was re-

placed by Ursula Schaefer. It was a little difficult for John not to "direct" some of the details, but he graciously submitted to the process, and all went well.

The last time I saw John was at the elevation of Taco Bay to the office of Erzoberlenker in Stuttgart in 1986. We corresponded every couple of years. My last longer phone call with him occurred around the time of his last birthday. He sent me a postcard from Mount Saentis.

Richard Lewis
Sacramento

JOHN HUNTER **(October 29, 1917 - July 27, 1998)**

Thirty three years of his life John Hunter offered to the work of The Christian Community on this North American continent. When he was 33 he was ordained in Stuttgart by Emil Bock in 1951, then spent some time in England before he was sent to New York in early 1955, at the age of 37 (just about two moon node periods into his life). For the next almost 18 years he worked in and out of the New York center serving quite a few filial groups, among them Boston, which later on was to become his destiny. His first visit to Boston took place in September 1956 with many to follow. In 1972 he moved there with his wife Elisabeth and became the resident priest. This was also the year when he was appointed Lenker for the work of our Christian Community in North America.

During the 16 years from 1972 until his retirement in 1988 he did much organizing for our work. Not only that the work of re-translating our ritual texts for North America was carried by him (together with Gregg Brewer and Werner Grimm) our much needed North American Central Fund was created with Rosemarie Bergmann and Werner Grimm and later Muriel Morris as helpers, archives were started and many other things which do not always please workers used to the laissez-faire of a beginning and pioneering situation.

But the form-giving strength of John's work will be appreciated by all workers in the vineyard. While he worked in New York together with Gregg Brewer the New York Newsletter developed out of their program sheets. Many articles by John appeared in the course of the years and later on were collected in a book *Just for To-day* which has given sustenance and stimulation to many.

For almost exactly 33 years John has worked in North America; he left this continent in 1988 after having prepared for his successor and the possibility of his retirement for about three years. He moved from Boston to Southern Germany where through our movement he had found a place to live and help. In the little chapel in Scheidegg/Allgaeu he celebrated regularly but also substituted in Lindau and Wangen occasionally.

In the last conversation with him at the end of June he mentioned that he had just come back from his native Scotland and that it probably had been the last time he went there; he also was wondering how he would eventually know when to stop celebrating. He probably felt that his time was close. Little more than four weeks later his time had come.

Werner Grimm
Vancouver

MEMORIES ABOUT THE FIRST YEARS OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN NEW YORK

Verner Hegg had his wife Dorothy started The Christian Community in the United States in 1948. Verner was not only the first priest in the USA, but what was important is that he was a full blooded American. He must have been about 42 years old.

The building in which they lived was and still is situated on the West side of Manhattan, near the Hudson River on 74th street, a rather quiet street, certainly for New York.

The Heggs lived in the basement, the chapel was

at street level. I think there were three floors. Rooms were rented out to bring in much needed income.

Those first years were pioneers years. Hard work, few members and hardly enough money for the daily expenses. But the Heggs were full of trust and believed that they would manage.

And so they did. I remember helping to make vestments, etc., how peaceful the atmosphere always was. A warm unsentimental devotion was felt.

Dr. Frieling and his wife Margaret arrived quite soon after the foundation. This was a tremendous help for The Christian Community. Dr. Frieling had a keen sense of humor. I remember when I would be a server at times that I said to him "Dr. Frieling, I can't remember what to do, I might make mistakes." (In those days only one server was used - there just weren't enough people available.) Dr. Frieling: "Don't worry, your ether body will help you."

Mrs. Frieling and Mrs. Hegg shared the kitchen. I only mention this because it was the only kitchen in the building.

Dr. Frieling was quite happy in the USA. He was a mild man, and it is therefore that I remember when during one of his lectures he very forcefully and in a loud voice said: "Materialism is sheer stupidity."

Joan Roche
Zeist, Holland

THREE WEEKS AT THE PRIEST SEMINARY

(June 14 - July 5, 1998)

The peaceful, unassuming hillside town of Stuttgart dozed in the early summer sun. The bumblebees hummed, ripe cherries fell off drooping branches, and Anthroposophists glided just above the sidewalks from one mauve building to another. But a little way off there was another movement happening: a steady trickle of the world's most "feared and least understood segment of humankind" was entering this peaceful haven - American youth - to say

nothing of their South African cohorts.

The 27 of us were greeted with overwhelming generosity and kindness. Nearly every spare room had been prepared for us to stay in, we were each given a key which could open the doors to every building, and the students had even gone so far as to build an extra shower just for us. This generosity and warmth from the Seminary continued throughout our visit in the form of our inclusion in all their daily activities, of offerings by the seminarists of folk dancing, a skit, and any assistance they could give.

Our days began together at 7:00 with The Act of Consecration of Man. For many of us this was the first time we had had the opportunity to experience a daily service. We strongly felt the effect of beginning the day together in this way. Breakfast, which followed, was one of the times for us to get to know and pose questions to the seminarists. We would then join the first semester students in their main lesson courses, traveling once as far as France to study the history of some of the church buildings in the area. Everything in the courses was patiently translated and gave us much whole-grain food for thought.

The rest of the morning included a clay-modeling course whose theme centered around the inner, generative forces and their balance and dialogue with outer, formative forces - a theme which became pertinent on many levels for the obvious reason that we were nearly 30 impulsive students attempting a graceful immersion in a priest seminary. Gisela Wielki and Sanford Miller led us in the afternoons in some work with the New Testament, an examination of John the Baptist, St. Paul, and Rembrandt, as heralds of the light, prompting many lively discussions. Several afternoons also involved classes in eurythmy, Bothmer gymnastics, and speech formation. We would often form smaller groups in the evenings, cooking, going into town, chatting, or reading together.

While this was the general schedule of the conference, the intensity and meaning it had for us cannot be found just in these events. It happened in individual interactions, in the experience of sharing this life with the seminarists, and in the process of becoming a group together. We are all very grateful to

the seminary and to all who had a hand in bringing this about.

Angela Nusbaum, 22 years old
Boston

SEMINARY RETREAT

What is it like to begin each day with The Act of Consecration of Man? What grows between the individuals that participate together each day? In the Fall of '97 and Spring of '98, these questions were answered for me. They were not answered through study or lectures but through the day to day experience of the Seminary Retreats at the Chicago, USA, Christian Community.

For three weeks, 12-14 of us were blessed and privileged to experience the fullness of a "Christ Community" living and working together. The true substance of such a community became a tangible reality for me and for many others. Our study, lectures, speech work, Eurythmy, discussions, even our meals and outings were permeated and held by this Christened substance. All of our work rested in the foundation created during The Act of Consecration of Man.

Though the seasonal festivals were Michaelmas and Ascension when we gathered in Chicago, we faced the reality of John's call in the wilderness to "make straight the path of the Lord." Our inner being was challenged and at times profoundly shaken. Working from and with Christ, we tried to prepare the Way by changing and challenging our hearts and minds. Through this experience a renewed and strengthened commitment to the further work of The Christian Community arose within each of us. As we returned to our homes and local communities we felt more able to continue "Working from Christ" in our daily lives.

Gail Tulloch
North Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

THE STREETKIDS

A situation quite common in many of the Latin-American countries are the children hanging around, washing cars, selling bonbons, stealing or even drug addicted. Many a time it hurts us, especially in extreme cases, but we can also reach a stage of indifference, we don't even see them anymore or count them to the normal outlook of the street.

But it is quite sure that everyone of us has asked at least once: What can I do to improve this situation? And we feel bad and we are unable to give the right answer so we decide we better forget the question. I think that many people are getting a bad conscience if they forget this question, especially if one asks what will become of these young children in 10 or 15 years? Will they help the community, will they adapt or will they take revenge for the indifference of the community? Community, that is all of us. To think about this is terrible, because these are children, people who will influence the community life. Follows this question: What can I, what can we do to improve this situation?

In our youth group we didn't find an answer, but still we can tell about our experiences with half-orphans of a home where we worked for a period. If any of you have similar experiences, you can write us.

This is how it all started.

In one of our regular meetings we had a heated debate. We started talking about the situation of our country, the politics, the extreme poverty and the shortage of jobs. We blamed the government, the church, the politicians, and the business-people for their indifference toward this situation in Peru.

In fact we blamed everybody for this situation in which we have to live, but we forgot - as often happens - to look in the mirror, at ourselves. This chaotic situation in which we live is present, is fact, and just having pity on ourselves wouldn't solve any of these problems. And there came the next question: If everything is that bad, and all around is just chaos, what is there that we can do as a first step to improvement? A deep silence fell between us, and

then happened something gripping, full of energy and power of action.

We asked each other: "What do we do?" Now the big step from passiveness to activeness was made. Then came the idea to work with half-orphans (the enthusiasm was so big that we almost wanted to seal this day with blood brotherhood). We invited teachers, we talked to our priest, asked him for good advice, we read books and so we started our project.

After we fixed the home and the working times, the day of our first visit came nearer. Our plan was to visit the home for the first three months on the Sundays in order to gather some experiences and to get to know the work and the responsibilities. From 11:30 till 1:30 PM was the time given us by the counselors, sometimes we could stay a bit longer. There were between 8 and 17 kids, 4 to 14 years of age. Every Sunday four or five of us (always changing) went to the home. Our visit started with the introduction of all of us, our names and ages. Some of the children were too shy or afraid to say their names, but that came all right and in the course of the day they too joined the group. Then we did some games and after that we sat together and sang. We went in another room and, after saying grace, we ate something. Then we put the chairs in a circle, one of the children lit a candle, and one of us told a fairy tale. Young and old listened with interest. To finish the day we said a poem and we took our leave till the next Sunday.

Christmas was approaching and we prepared Advent with them. We also did a small Christmas play together. At first we doubted whether we could make them join us in the play at all, but in the end we were astonished how enthusiastically they were working on it.

This was a unique experience of twelve Sundays, a treat for the children as well as for us. Many of these half-orphans just miss love, care and real interest, and that was what we could give them. We too went home with full hearts.

Of course there were conflicts and unpleasant situations. Very aggressive children whom we didn't know how to treat brought us totally out of balance. Sometimes we were at our wits' end and it looked

like everything was out of control. But that too we mastered. It was a great experience with mistakes but also many happy moments. Now we want a break, so we can improve ourselves. We think about asking more professional people so we can treat these children even better. It is a grain of sand that maybe can contribute to the improvement of our country.

Carlos Zamalloa
Lima, Peru

This article has been written for the Summer 1998 issue of Roundabout - international Forum of The Christian Community Youth Movement (to subscribe: ask your local priest!) By the way: Young people from all over the world are preparing a grand Sun-Conference, August 1999, in Stuttgart/Germany.

FOR THE ALL-AMERICAS CONFERENCE, LIMA, PERU, July 23-29, 1999 Contact your local congregation, or write to:

La Comunidad de Cristianos
El Ovalo de San Isidro 250
Lima - San Isidro 27
Peru

By phone: Rev. Paul Corman, Phone + Fax: 011-51-1-442-9703 or Rev. Emilia Hosmann, Phone 011-51-1-421-5632

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY BUILDING INITIATIVE IN CHESTNUT RIDGE, NEW YORK

In the summer of 1996 The Christian Community of Greater New York purchased, with the help of a legacy, a three acres piece of property in Chestnut Ridge, adjoining land of the Threefold Educational Foundation.

It is important to see this new venture in a 50 - year historical perspective. In 1948 the first center of The Christian Community in North America was founded in New York City. Since then members and

friends sharing together in the life of the sacraments - and providing the financial support to maintain a physical structure - have together built up a strong and viable congregation.

This solid foundation in Manhattan has drawn more and more individuals and families from the Spring Valley area, especially during the past twenty years. Bridges of intention have crossed the Hudson River as car after car has carried children and adults to Sunday services. The Hudson River bridges have also been crossed frequently by the priests, who, over the decades have made countless trips to teach classes, lecture, conduct study groups, and offer the sacraments to the Spring Valley community. Sometimes as often as four times a week. This continuous travel between locations has prompted many individuals and families to feel the need for The Christian Community to found a physical structure in the Spring Valley area in which congregational life can ripen and mature. This project has come about in response



to the wishes of the people in the area to integrate The Christian Community into their daily lives.

We believe that after 50 years we are ready to take this rather bold step, keeping one foot firmly planted in Manhattan while at the same time placing the other in the Spring Valley area. We expect to get the building approval from the local authorities in early Fall. This would allow us to still break ground before winter. We hope for the building to be completed in the Fall of 1999 and expect the total cost of the project to be around \$550,000 - including purchase of the land. \$475,000 has so far been locally

donated, legacies included. We need to raise another \$75,000.

A Christian Community chapel never serves only the geographical area where it stands, but it serves the world. Donations are welcome and so are good thoughts.

to: The Christian Community
309 W. 74th Street
New York, NY 10023
earmarked: 'Chestnut Ridge Chapel'

Gisela Wielki
New York

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Programs will be available in the congregations)

The Christian Community 50 years in New York

THE LIGHTNESS OF GRAVITY - THE DIALOGUE OF THE CITY

A conference celebrating the place where The Christian Community set foot on this continent.

Talks, conversation about Street Art with the artists, Excursions; Presentations by friends from Pforzheim/Germany and by friends of the New York congregations.

New York, Friday, October 23, 6 PM - Sunday, October 25, 3 PM, 1998 (Mail or Fax your registrations form by October 15).

CHRIST AND THE FUTURE

New York, Friday, December 11 - Sunday, December 13, 1998

East Coast Conference, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the work of The Christian Community in North America.

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN NORTH AMERICA, CORREC- TIONS, ADDITIONS SINCE FEB- RUARY, 1998

Rev. Peter Skaller has arrived at his new assignment in Western Massachusetts and will be welcomed into the community at the end of September.

Boston USA (617) 926-2615
366 Washington Street, Brookline, MA 02446
Rev. Arie Boogert, Rev. Susan Lowndes

Denver USA (303) 758-7553
2180 South Madison Street, Denver, CO 80210
For the moment, Denver, Colorado, is without a resident priest. Contact Dona Totten (303) 733-9908 or contact Rev. Robert Patterson in Chicago, (773) 334-7677.

Toronto, CANADA (416) 224-2011
1766 Avenue Road, Toronto, Ontario M5M 3Y9
Rev. Susan Locey

Western Massachusetts USA (413) 274-6014
The Granary, 37 Rosseter St., Great Barrington, MA
Rev. Peter Skaller, 1070 Main Street, Housatonic, MA 01236

Affiliated Congregations:

Burlington, Vermont USA Contact Bill Warnock (802) 862-7001 (or Western Massachusetts)

Chapel Hill, North Carolina USA Contact Mindy Kash (919) 967-5672 or Margaret Heath (919) 933-6496 (or contact Philadelphia)

Montreal, Quebec CANADA Contact Erika Keipert (514) 691-2093 (or contact Western Massachusetts)

Contributions for The Christmas Newsletter are due by November 1. Send to Dale Brunsvold, 2740 S. Ogden, Englewood, CO 80110 or email: Dbrunsvold@aol.com (typed manuscripts preferred)