

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

MOVEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS RENEWAL

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Photo taken in small swedish church in Lake Siljan area

THE WOMAN, THE DRAGON AND THE TREE

In the autumn, gardeners and orchardists begin their work of pruning back the fruit trees. Pruning of course consists of removing dead wood. It rids the tree of what no longer is capable of growth. Pruning also removes extra branches, excessive growth. Forces of life, otherwise wasted, are channeled, so that the tree can produce not only lots of green leaves, but also fulfills its true function, bearing fruit. For it is the fruit with its seeds that is the basis of a life beyond the tree's own life span. The fruit allows the tree's stream of life to flow onward far into the future.

We too are to develop fruits - the fruits of a higher life within the soul. Our souls suffer upheavals, losses and reversals. But the Master Gardener knows what we need. Even the hard prunings of loss and adversity are a part of a larger plan. Such losses may be helping us remove some of the deadwood in our lives. They may be trimming some of our excesses. But ultimately they are intended to make us more productive. They serve a larger rhythm of our fruitfulness. Some soul upheavals come from the working of the adversaries. Revelations 12, read during Michaelmas, describes in mighty cosmic pictures the persecution of the woman by the dragon. The dragon chases the woman, but she is given the wings of the eagle with which to fly. The dragon spews out a river with which to drown her, but the earth swallows it. These are pictures for events on a cosmic scale. But they can also be pictures for the human soul. Like the woman our souls are opposed and persecuted by the adversary. Like the woman we are to bring forth the Spirit Child; the fruit of a higher life.

The fruits of the spirit that we are to bring forth are strength, courage, and patient endurance. Though the dragon pursues us relentlessly, though he threatens to flood and overwhelm us, we are nevertheless given gifts to help and protect us, to guard our spirit fruits. The woman in Revelations was given the two wings of an eagle to fly off to her place in the wilderness. The eagle's wings of spiritual knowledge and

spiritualized thinking help us rise above our troubles to a more objective picture of our lives. Perhaps we may even catch a glimpse of their true meaning.

When the dragon opened its mouth and spewed out a river to sweep the woman off her feet, the earth came to her rescue by swallowing the waters. And the earth itself comes to our aid. She takes into herself the floodwaters of our lives, for they do not belong to us alone; they are a part of the life of humanity on earth, and are therefore of greater significance than just for us as individuals.

The adversary storms and rages. But our souls are cultivated and looked after according to the Gardener's ultimate plan. In our trials he sends us his gifts and encourages us to develop our fruits of strength, courage and endurance. Developing these fruits is the working of Christ Himself within us. Our spiritual fruits do not only serve our own soul's lives. They are fruits the Gardener is cultivating on a very special tree.

For Christ the Gardener has turned the tree of the cross, the place of suffering and hardship, from a tree of death into a new living, fruitful tree. Our strength and courage and endurance, born out of our suffering and adversity, are our first fruits of His Spirit working within. Our spiritual fruits grow and ripen on the great Tree of Life that Christ is cultivating. This tree's life extends far beyond the span of our own individual life. This is the tree that insures a future of humanity as a whole.

Cynthia Hindes
Los Angeles

CHICAGO SEMINARY PLANS: FALL 2003!

In early spring, at the first ever Synod for all English-speaking countries, the leadership of the Christian Community announced that the third campus for priest training in the Christian Community should be in Chicago. The Synod, which represented four continents, preceded the two Ordinations cel-

ebred in English this past March in Forest Row, England.

Three priests from North America have been asked to play an essential role in establishing this third international Seminary. Rev. Erk Ludwig is to help in the initial phase. Rev. Richard Dancey will divide his time between leading the Chicago congregation and working with Rev. Gisela Wielki, who will be set free from congregational obligations to take up this new endeavor. Both Rev. Dancey and Rev. Wielki will move in 2002 to Chicago.

This decision places the English-speaking seminary, which is to serve the world, into the Heartland of North America and at the Gate to the West. It allows for a bridge-building between the East and West Coast. We hope that this seminary, conducted in a language other than German and located at the "outskirts", will foster the recognition and appreciation of what each, the center and the periphery, have to contribute to our movement and that it will lead to a fruitful exchange between the new and untried and the old and proven.

Major tasks lie yet ahead of us, one of which is shaping the curriculum. We hope to work on the curriculum with our colleagues from the other English-speaking countries and the College of Seminary leaders in Stuttgart and Hamburg. At the same time, we want to allow this Seminary in the New World to have its own "flavor" and make its unique contribution to our Movement. We want to encourage Americans to continue to study for at least some time in Stuttgart or Hamburg, to become acquainted with the language in which the Sacraments were conceived, to get to know the Christian Community in the center and to bring their own gifts from the periphery. We hope that students from around the world, but especially from Central Europe will venture out and set foot on another continent for at least part of their training in order to experience the Christian Community in settings different from their own, allowing them to return to the familiar enriched and their consciousness broadened, as is the case with students who have in the past returned from Stuttgart and Germany to their often far off homelands. In the last three years 40 young Americans have accepted

an invitation by the Stuttgart Seminary to join the first year students in the summer semester for three weeks and take a firsthand look at the Seminary. This has very positively impacted our work in North America. A few of the participants have returned to Stuttgart to begin the actual training, and others are considering. It has also made a strong and positive impression on the students at the seminary. It was each time a short but intense breathing in and out between the center and the periphery. More of this and over longer extended periods can give our Movement and those who become priests more "world breath". Other major tasks are local and global Capital Fundraising, locating and purchasing a building suitable for student housing and related activities, and publicity about this exciting and important move.

We appreciate and are grateful for all good thoughts sent our way. For questions and comments feel free to contact us: Richard Dancey, 212 Old Lancaster Rd, Devon, PA 19333; Erk Ludwig, 309 W. 74th St., New York, NY 10023; or myself, also at the last address.

On page 4 is a report by one of the young people who attended the three week course at the priest seminary in Stuttgart this past June.

Gisela Wielki
New York

In order to bring together the two worlds of above and below in the proper way, it is not sufficient to have a share in both. There must be a powerful human écenterí. Otherwise it can happen easily that human beings forget their tasks on earth in looking upwards or; alternatively, they are put in chains by lower forces in turning to the earth, thus losing the connection with heaven. In wrongly seeking to escape from the world, they can become false angels, proud and loveless, or they can become worse than animals in their ignominious enslavement to the world. The power of the center, of mediation ñ the essentially human element ñ is missing.

Rudolf Frieling, *The Hope of the World*

Ordinations, March 17 and 18, 2001

silent waiting
is everything ready?
everything is ready
there enters a long silent line of men and women in
the robes of their office
silent waiting
are they ready?
they are ready
there enter the new ones, led in to the front
(why have they done this?
who are these with so much courage?)
It begins: out of silence, words -
so solemn, so gentle, so good
this is the moment
(will the heart stop?) -
take us with you, you who have changed

Christa Macbeth
Spring Valley, NY

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS AT- TENDING THE ORDINATIONS MARCH 2001

How grateful I am to have had the opportunity to have been present for the Ordination of Priests celebrated in English, not only once, but twice. For the ritual appears so whole, that for me, repetition and time are needed to allow my consciousness to penetrate into the particulars. My understanding was also aided enormously by the exploratory talks woven before and in between the two Ordinations and by the timely publication of a new booklet, *Priests Today* by Rev. Ann Klemm.

Rev. Roger Druitt, in his talk on Friday evening, prepared us by discussing the old forms of worship that physically moved from outer to inner sanctuaries, available only to a few. But the modern form of initiation present in The Act of Consecration of Man seeks to do this within the words and gestures of the

Service itself, with the active observation and participation of the congregation.

The weaving of the ritual of Ordination into The Act of Consecration of Man creates an archetypal birth at which candidates are asked to set aside their personal biographies. This marks the beginning of a new life. In this new life the candidates are to "feel the Christ" and to do nothing without this feeling. In his talk on Saturday night, Rev. Richard Dancy asked us to imagine a reverse iceberg - a mountain of flame coming from above, with the top pointing down toward the earth. We are only able to sense the tip of this mountain, as we sense only the "beginning of becoming". As the priest becomes a new person inwardly, the community is necessary to become his/her new body. The seriousness and necessity of this charge is carried within the words of the Ordination and was also taken up in a consciously awakened soul mood that permeated the formal and informal conversations among the lay community. Always, the social question was asked: How can we help support each other, the community, the priests?

After bearing witness to the common ground in which all priests participate, it is easier to distance myself from the narrow concept of *my* priest, *my* congregation and to move toward a wider acceptance and consciousness of all priests who speak with one voice: "Yea, so be it".

Madelon Holder
New York City

A VISIT TO THE SEMINARY IN STUTTGART

The building is large and unusual, our rooms all have names and before breakfast the halls smell of incense. Sculptures of wood and stone assemble along the stairs and stand by the doors of classrooms. They unfold, they metamorphose, they reach heavenward, they hide their weeping. We hear about menhirs and dolmen, we balance sticks on our fingers, we pass copper balls back and forth in rhythm,

we carve with chisels. I chip and shape and pound away eyebrows, nose and nostrils. Then all day and morning I watch people's lips to see how the lower meets the upper. I carve their faces, the mound of the mouth and deep lines from nose to corner of frown. I come to Stuttgart thinking, *the priesthood is not a possibility. not for me.* In my mind I carve the faces of women and men around me.

We play Frisbee in the Schlossgarten and Hans slips on wet grass; I am aware of him skidding across brick on his back as I catch the disk. Hans drips blood from his forearm and we play on. And she, a girl already a woman, she tells me, *I dreamt of blood all around me.* I say, maybe you're concerned about what's growing inside you. Maybe we all wonder if anything can or will grow inside us, will leap for joy, will call in our wilderness, *Prepare ye the way.* I count heart beats in the chapel and veins bulge in my hands.

We begin with death in our morning course, a journey from planet to planet, we talk about the beginning, in Hebrew and Greek. *The word of the Gospel.* Hans starts saying *logos* until I pick it up too, all at once it is hackey sack by the train tracks. If you kick it off the platform you get punched in the shoulder and before long my arm is numb, but we play on. We leave *Pfennig* pieces on the rails and search for them in vain after the thundering passing of the train. We juggle the hack downtown, in hallways and by escalators, we keep score and I have the most points - I buy a round.

We play canasta and night after night I win but no one gets hit and no one buys rounds. We dig up bushes in the garden and spread sugar beet syrup and chocolate and rhubarb jam on our bread. We scrub pots and wash dishes, sometimes we get coffee and cake. We run down the streets in pouring rain and thundering thunder. I wake up Hans and he wakes me up. He says he had dreams about this place. At ten at night it is *Ruhe* and we shower downstairs or not at all. I get lost in the hallways trying to find the phone closet or the washing machine.

We talk about *knowing* and *study* and *metanoia*, we sing together in the evening and the morning. Gisela keeps telling us how amazing it all will be

once we look back and I think well, *what if it's not?* But afterwards I know that somehow she was right and this was quite something. I know also that I will be able to recall the faces of our group, each one a star in this temporary constellation of coming and being.... Hans and I watch the solstice bonfires; flames lick the sky and children scramble on the earthen cliff banks like so many dwarves; horses graze the steep slopes. I walk with Patrick up the hill behind the seminary and from the top the sunset leaves the city lights spread out beneath us, and toy trains departing the Hauptbahnhof for unknown destinations.... If I think about becoming a priest I do just that. Not plan, or count on or hope, but just think about. Words from the service echo inside me, *Lasset uns würdig vollbringen...* We chip away at our sculptures, timid or bold; we travel to churches all around Stuttgart and sing in Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals and eat nine-scoop ice cream and kebabs on the *Koenigstrasse*.... *In the lifting of our hands*.... Suddenly the last week is there and gone and we're out of our rooms and I linger on with the trains and the streets for just a few days more and now a few hours... then off I go to a time change and hot and humid New England and thousands of miles across the ocean.

Francis Wolf, age 24

We may only call our time "apocalyptic" if it does not appear terrible to us simply because of the extraordinary extent of the disasters; if these disasters appear to us as one - less important - side of the whole reality of our century. We are only presented with full reality when the light-filled figure of the resurrected Christ is revealed to us, Christ who wants to make the existence of his increasingly powerful supersensory presence felt.

Rudolf Frieling, *The Hope of the World*

LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE IN TORONTO



Exactly nine months after we in the Toronto congregation held the groundbreaking ceremony, we prepare to lay the foundation stone of this, the third purpose-built church for the Christian Community in North America. It's Sunday, 24th June 2001 and the sun shines hot and bright, a heaven-sent St. John's day, perfect for our celebration. To such an occasion, the Reverend Susan Locey brings a special and rare kind of joy, and this is the permeating mood that radiates through these hours. Friends have gathered from east, west, north and south, as well as far and near. Earlier, at The Act of Consecration of Man, not a spare seat was to be had in our lower-ground, temporary chapel.

After being fortified and refreshed by a pot luck lunch, we gathered downstairs again for speeches, the reading aloud of greetings and good wishes from those not able to be with us. We also had a final chance to view the copper dodecahedron, hand-crafted by Leed Jackson. First we heard words of thanks, spoken by Building Committee Chair Robert Massoud, to those individuals who have brought us so far toward the realization of our dream, most notably to "our indomitable" Susan Locey, and to Jan Wintjes, our builder, adviser and promoter for his "tireless, total effort"; and not forgetting "the guidance and inspiration from those members of our congregation who have passed on". In this connection, Robert brought our attention to the fact (conveyed to

us in a special letter of greeting by Thea Nusbaum) that more than ten years ago, Phillip Nusbaum had looked at a possible site across the road, and not more than a hundred feet away.

Robert concluded by saying that, miraculously, we are only \$200,000 Can. short of the funds required to finish the whole building. An eleven-member speech chorus brought to us the prologue of St. John's Gospel and the last two verses of the Foundation Stone mantram from Rudolf Steiner. Now Susan Locey came forward to speak, characterizing first the usual requirements of a building's foundation - that it should be firm, capable of supporting the structure. But the foundation we seek to establish is different. We build it, not on the ground, but in the future. It is a foundation in the power to develop, to become.

Over the past months, we have collected twelve small stones, samples of the foundation of the New



Jerusalem, to remind us of an ideal, something we're going toward, connected with the future of our earth. The stones express "becoming" in their innate nature, express virtues that lead the human being further. Here we think of John the Baptist, virtues as goals that lead us into transformation - hope for formation, for becoming, working with qualities in ourselves that connect us with the One who makes these virtues real, who works through transubstantiation. On the path of transforming ourselves we enter into the sphere of Christ's working. Our foundation stone is a stone of the future, connected with the star of the

future. From it may we receive this enlightenment, this light.

Susan then produced a sheaf of heart-warming greetings which were sent by absent friends (Peter Skaller being one of these) and other congregations. These she read out for us.

The mood shifted to one of thankfulness to what we're doing as a community. Susan presented miniature platonic solids to five people who have been particularly active in our endeavors, at the same time characterizing the qualities of that person through the qualities of the shape.

To close this indoor section of our celebration, Sarah Findlay played a five-part Bach partita on the violin.

Lifted into sublime realms, and in the abiding hope that our structure will soar, that our building will rise to be as beautiful as the music we listened to together, we proceeded out onto the terrace. There parchments, inscribed by many members of the congregation with words of meaning to them, were folded and placed into the copper dodecahedron. The twelve small stones were dropped into a small velvet bag by representatives of the younger and future generation and these too were put into the dodecahedron.

Now we follow the eight foot high, leaf and flower-bedecked cross along the stone pathway, up to the chapel. Already, the concrete floor for the complete building shows us the area and shape-to-come; wooden struts abound, making skeletons to future rooms. The concrete-filled, foam block walls of the chapel reach eight foot high, so we can sense the space, the lovely space, that it will become.

There the cross is placed in the east, where the altar will be, on the floor behind the square hole left for the copper dodecahedron. But before Julian Mulock places this with due ceremony into the earth, Leed Jackson, assisted by Gerhard Rudolf, Robert Massoud and Susan Locey, performs the alchemy of soldering the pentagon-shaped lid shut. Leed spoke then particularly of Alfred Korber, how he loved metal work, and how Leed had felt his guiding hand when he was fashioning this shape. He said it had been a great honour and privilege to be of service to this community and to have brought something of what

Alfred would have done if he'd been alive on the earth today. He reminded us of the symbol of five, connected with our present period of earth evolution, how the five fingers of our hands have the opportunity to create either good or evil. Also, the twelve sides, representing the twelve world views, six from the cosmos and six from the earth.

The dodecahedron was covered with sand and then sealed in place by ready-prepared concrete. We were invited to take our turn with the beribboned birch mallet, to help tamp down the cement and at the same time speak any words we held in our hearts. People spoke good wishes, or they tamped in memory of founding members of our community and others who had passed on. We were reminded of the building that is never finished - the building of community.

To end the afternoon we all joined in the singing of three rounds. These had been prepared by Dorothy Haller and were led by her and the choir.

So our foundation stone is placed, not too deep in the earth, but in the soil. There it will be also a promise to the earth to serve the greater good and in the becoming to build towards the New Jerusalem.

Brenda Hammond,
Toronto

"THE HOPE OF THE WORLD"

Contemplations and Aphorisms by Rudolf Frieling, published to mark the centenary of his birth on 23 March 2001 (110 pages, hardback; Floris Books, Edinburgh)

Please send letters and literary contributions to Arie Boogert, 20 Lake Street, Arlington, MA 02474-8526, Phone/Fax (781) 646-4644 (E-mail: arieboogert@hotmail.com). Due date for the next issue is November 15, 2001.

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN THE AMERICAS

Regrettably, the *North-South Conference of the Americas* can not take place in July 2002, as no location was found to be available. We will meet in 2003!

Early this summer, the Council of The Christian Community (Foundation International) has sent out a German language appeal *to raise funds for the church building projects* in Cali (Colombia) and Botucatu (Brazil)

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN NORTH AMERICA

Congregations and their Priests:

Two newly ordained priests have moved to the United States, Carol Kelly to take up the work in Spring Valley, NY, now emerging as a separate congregation. Nadine Hafner, joining her husband Daniel Hafner, has begun working in Chicago.

As Gisela Wielki wrote, describing the plans for a Seminary in North America (see pages 2 & 3), both Richard Dancey and Gisela Wielki will move to Chicago in 2002. At that time, Daniel and Nadine Hafner will move to Devon, PA, while until her move to Chicago, Gisela Wielki will continue to serve both the New York and Spring Valley congregations. James Hindes has accepted a temporary one-year assignment to the Denver congregation, but his ties to the community in Los Angeles will be sustained by regular visits.

West Coast Summer Camps:

Deepest thanks and appreciation to Dale Robinson for his innumerable years of faithfully carrying the West Coast Children's Summer Camps. Dale has served in the past as camp director and continues to produce the brochure. Thanks, Dale!

Also our deepest appreciation goes to Carrie Ashby whose long-standing support of the camps and willingness to step in as camp director in recent years has contributed so much to their success. Thanks, Carrie!

[Signed] The (present and former) West Coast Priests

In October, the Hillsdale (NY) congregation will host both the North American Trustees Conference/Annual General Meeting of the Central Fund and the North American Synod.

Congregations and their Addresses:

CORRECTION Please use the correct area-code for Eugene, Oregon USA: Contact Jo Forkish (541) 686-3204 (Or contact Vancouver)

On the Web:

www.thechristiancommunity.org

Since Christ enters into us through his sacrifice and allows that sacrifice to continue working "in us" and "through us", he turns us into kings and priests, as the Apocalypse says.

The royal power of Christ in us permits us to say: "I am". The priestly activity of Christ in us permits us to place this "I" at the disposal of the divine.

Rudolf Frieling, *The Hope of the World*