

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

MOVEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS RENEWAL

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Michaelmas 1999



EASTER AND MICHAELMAS

Back at Easter the altar was clothed in red and green. That may have seemed strange because we are used to thinking of red and green as Christmas colors. But in the vocabulary of color, red means love and courage and green is the color of life and hope. So perhaps it is not so strange after all that red and green appear on the altar at Easter. For through the red of his love and his courage Christ overcame the blackness of death. He did so not by eliminating death - for we still die - but inhabiting death. He injected the green of His life, His hope, into the place where death is. He made death live, and bear fruit. Since His resurrection, death is no longer the place where God's love and life are not.

Michaelmas stands opposite to Easter in the cycle of the year. And at Michaelmas the altar is once again clothed in a kind of red and green. But now the colors are of a subtler hue. It is the tender green of new plants, the delicate blushing of peach blossoms.

Back in early Spring, depending on where you live, Passiontide may have seemed oddly out of place in the midst of green grass and spring flowers. Or else Resurrection may have been hard to reconcile with late snow storms. Now at the opposite side of the year we have the opposite question - why do we see spring green and blossom pink in the fall, when all of nature is about to turn black?

The spring tones of the altar at Michaelmas remind us that here in the northern autumn, when nature dies back, we human beings are not meant to die back with it. Instead, autumn is the time to begin to grow and tend a kind of inner landscape, an inner garden. Michaelmas is a time when a renewal of inner life begins to germinate within us. At Michaelmas the life which is being freed from the physical in nature begins to blossom within us. Michaelmas is natural life raised to a higher level within the human being.

At Michaelmas we work on the 'fall plantings' of our inner garden. We sow right and true thoughts; we create beauty and order in our feelings; we devote ourselves courageously to the task of inner weed

ing and tending good and right actions and deeds.

In the congregation where I work we have a Michaelmas festival garden for the children. Like the Advent Garden, a path is laid out on the floor, not in a spiral, but in a horseshoe shape. The arms of the path are decorated with fall foliage and flowers. And at the curve at the top there is a banquet table laid out with braided breads, grapes, sheaves of wheat, red roses and a lighted candle. It suggests both an altar and a wedding banquet table, since the story is a re-telling of the wedding of the King's son, Matthew 22.

In an alcove behind the table stand two 'angels.' The children have brought along a flower, which represents his or her 'best.' Each child brings his blossom up the path to the angels, who collect them all in a golden bowl. It can be very difficult to give up your best! But a surprisingly beautiful bouquet is created when everyone contributes his best. After the angels have received the blossoms, they 'disappear' with them for a moment, and return with the bowl filled with golden felt bags, and a basket of sweet rolls. The children walk up again and receive the transformation of the sacrifice of their best: sweet nourishment for now and a bag full of wheat seeds for the future. The seeds are to be saved for spring, when they will be planted and sprout as Easter grass. This festival garden is a gentle picture of what happens for all of us adults during the Act of Consecration of Man. We all offer the best and purest of our thoughts, our love and our devotion along with the bread and the wine. These invisible elements are carried by the angels through Christ to the Father, who transforms them into nourishment for our souls in their present state, and into capacities which will live in us in the future.

What is missing in the children's festival presentation of this mystery is the fact that as adults we have to create our own 'blossoms' for the offering. We grow and tend our own inner garden of thoughts, feelings and actions, in order to be able to bring them to the Act of Consecration, so that we can offer them to the Father along with Christ. In offering them we follow in His footsteps. We bring to the altar the red of our love, the green of our hope. We offer them

there in sacrifice We begin our own work of resurrection. What Christ completely accomplished, the enlivening of death, we are only just beginning That's why at Michaelmas our red and green are nascent spring hues. We are just beginning to learn how to make death bear fruit.

Cynthia Hindes

Rev. Hindes was ordained in 1997 and is currently working in Los Angeles along with her husband, Rev. James Hindes.

WE HAVE A BEAUTIFUL NEW HOME



Miracles do still happen! First we had to get along without a resident priest for a year. When Rev. Skaller came to us last September, he noted the obvious: We need a new chapel. Eight months later we have moved. The Christian Community in the Taconic-Berkshire Region (formerly also known as Western Massachusetts) has moved from cramped rented quarters to our own beautiful home. Nestled between the Taconic Range and the Berkshire Mountains in the peaceful Green River Valley, at the geographic center of our congregation and easily accessible from major highways, we now own four landscaped acres, planted with a great variety of trees and flowering shrubs. Fox, rabbit, deer and weasel have been seen and bird song is always to be heard.

In the five days following the closing there was a tremendous flurry of work rendered by many. We were able to clear and paint the house and transform the large living room into a chapel.

We were graced by a lovely sunny day as over

one hundred people joined in our festive opening on May 30th, the second Sunday of Whitsuntide. The Sunday Service for Children was held in a pine grove. After the Act of Consecration of Man we gathered



outside in a large circle for words of gratitude and blessing. We were joined by Rev. Arie Boogert, who read a letter for the occasion from Rev. Robert Patterson. Thea Nusbaum was also present. After a potluck luncheon a merry procession could be seen strolling across our land carrying buckets and using pine branches to sprinkle bio-dynamic preparations on the ground.

During the summer work has been going forward to transform the garage into a chapel, freeing the house which will be needed before cold weather arrives for community space and children's work. Our goal is to build a worthy sanctuary near the other buildings, creating a courtyard between them. We have had some initial meetings with architects. But we realize the ultimate chapel building will involve a longer process. While we were able in just two months to raise the first \$150,000 needed to purchase the property and begin renovations, it will take longer to raise the next \$150,000 for the chapel. If you would like to help, contributions would be gratefully received by the Christian Community, PO Box 658, Housatonic, MA 01236.

In addition to fund raising we also need to go through a process of growing into our new home through the seasons. We need to learn what belongs to a chapel worthy of the sacraments. For community development we plan to share in a series of artistic workshops. The first was led by Christiane Boogert on the first St. John's Sunday with Bleffert

musical instruments. We look forward to offering our space and our congregation to the North American Priest's Synod in October and to receiving the blessing of their activity in our new chapel. In joy, wonder and gratitude,

Jonitha Hasse,
Copake Camphill Village

CONFIRMATION IN WASHINGTON DC

The Christian Community of Greater Washington DC and Baltimore has been a small and dedicated community for over 20 years. Selflessly served by Reverend Richard Dancey of Devon, Pennsylvania, who makes the three hour drive south once a month, the Act of Consecration of Man has been offered to the community at the Waldorf pre-school for the area, Acorn Hill, all these years.

Over the years, there usually have been two or three confirmands per year. It is customary for the confirmands to travel to Devon, to be confirmed in the chapel there, joining the confirmands from the Devon community. Families of the confirmands make the trip up to Devon and stay Saturday night with local families in order to be nearby for Sunday morning confirmation.

This year, however, provided an exciting new challenge to this arrangement. As a testimony to the increasing strength of our community, an unprecedented thirteen young people were to be confirmed this past May. Plans were made to hold the confirmation in the local Washington area.

Since the eighth graders were not going to have much time to meet their peers at the time of confirmation this year, Reverend Dancey and Reverend Ludwig of New York City arranged for a retreat weekend to be spent together in Devon with the confirmation classes of Spring Valley, New York City, Devon and Washington. It was a lively group that gathered in the rambling farmhouse of a Kimberton family that cold, wintry night in February for warm food and social get-acquainted games. It was a weekend of

conviviality, confirmation preparation, a few highjinks, and a Children's Service in the chapel at Devon.

The Lenker for North America, Reverend Robert Patterson flew in from Chicago to celebrate the confirmation. Reverend Dancey indicated that this would provide a depth of experience and exposure for the confirmands, showing that Confirmation as a sacrament introduces young people into The Christian Community as a movement for religious renewal, beyond local as well as national boundaries.

There was standing room only that day of confirmation at Acorn Hill. Watching all these fine young people stand so straight and tall and listening to the powerful words being directed to them was a deeply moving experience. The service unfolded with tremendous power and grace. The blessing upon these young men and women was palpable. The gift of this event to the community through the instruments of these young people was evident to all.

The Christian Community of Greater Washington & Baltimore is unique in that there is a thriving and vibrant community with no full-time priest and, as yet, no chapel. This can be credited to many factors: a strong Waldorf school community, a gifted priest willing to serve the community far more than his monthly visits might indicate to the outside observer, many professional community members who are willing to donate their energy and time to a cause in which they believe strongly, a strong connection by many community members to loved ones who have crossed over to the other side, and a generation of youth guided with much care and love.

The thirteen young people confirmed in the Christian Community on Mother's Day this past May are a testimony to what is possible in a community guided by love, care and wakefulness. Now, of course, for them, the real adventure starts. As they continue to grow and make their own choices in life, we all have the hope that 'well begun is half done', and that they will remember the Christ within as they strive to make the world right.

Beth Sanders
*for the Christian Community of Greater Washington
DC and Baltimore*

SECOND NORTH AMERICAN CONFERENCE AND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CENTRAL FUND FOR BOARD MEMBERS OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY Chicago, November 13-14, 1998

The transformation of the Central Fund of The Christian Community in North America from an Illinois based non-profit corporation to a 'membership corporation' has brought along something new that has nothing to do with money: The board members of all the North American communities are invited to share the life of their congregations with each other once a year. This is called the North American Conference for Board Members. Why do we owe this wonderful innovation to the Central Fund? To explain this, I need to describe briefly, and for some of you again, the structure and meaning of the reorganized Central Fund.

The members of the reorganized Central Fund are the Christian Community congregations in North America, each of which contributes a portion of its income to the Central Fund. This Fund is managed by an elected Board of Trustees. Its tasks are to finance the work of Lenker's office, to support priest-students, retired priests, the families of deceased priests, the worldwide movement ('Foundation'), and to distribute excess money from 'well-off' congregations to communities in need. The congregations are represented by at least one of the Board of Trustees members.

The Central Fund Trustees must be approved in an election by the Central Fund members - the congregations. The annual election or re-election of Central Fund trustees is the purpose of the annual Central Fund meetings. To say it in advance: that was the business part of our last meeting in Chicago, together with the discussion about the financial report given by the treasurer of the Central Fund, Reinhard Rosch. I just want to mention one fact that stuck in my mind in this context: Isn't it remarkable that 10% of the people who donate to The Christian Community provide 90% of the income?

Now, if the board members of all the North American Christian Community centers meet any

way, it is natural to use the opportunity to widen our consciousness beyond the boundaries of our local centers to the North American movement as a whole. How can we do this? It all starts with thinking about possible contents that we would share with each other. Rachel Flug, the president of the Central Fund, said that she had started thinking about the main theme six months before the date of the conference.

As the year before, the Christian Community church in Chicago hosted the conference. We were welcomed with dinner in the freshly renovated basement of the church which shelters, among other things, a kitchen and big dining area. Everything was excellently organized: There were lists, name tags, table place cards, and everybody received his or her host's address plus descriptions of how to get there. By new seating arrangements for the different meals, we had a chance to get acquainted with everybody. It was a joy to see familiar faces, but I am also deeply thankful for all the new people that I had a chance to get to know. All the sessions took place in the main body of the church. For our opening session of Friday night, 26 people were gathered together in a circle. Together with the invitation notice, we had been asked to prepare to tell how we met The Christian Community. It was amazing to me how something very characteristic, very personal came out in each of these short reports. Some of us made the connection based on a deep feeling of being at home in our church service, although often with a struggling and resisting mind. Others were seeking for satisfying answers to basic questions; through all detours in their lives, they never gave up, until they finally realized that they had found what they were seeking for in Anthroposophy and The Christian Community. For me, each of the reports in an indirect way revealed something of the divine driving force that leads and guides us in our lives.

On Saturday, our group talks revolved around the basic question of how our Movement for Religious Renewal can grow. How can we as communities reach out and attract other people? From the experiences in all the centers it was easy to see that a friendly and welcoming atmosphere and the institution of a potluck meal after the service on Sundays

help to invite newcomers. But how do we get newcomers to step through our front doors if there is no sign big enough to be recognized even from a short distance? Shall we advertise? There were no simple answers for all these questions, and there were different opinions, too. As it appears to me, solutions may be approached on an organizational, or on a more personal level. Some of the participants supported strongly an organized informative campaign about The Christian Community. On a personal level it is our daily religious work and certainly grace that enables us to come forth with the inner awareness, presence and creativity for what is needed in a given moment in our daily life, and in the life of our congregations at a certain time.

The Close of Day Service in the evening, and the Act of Consecration of Man in the morning provided a solidly supporting frame. The last session consisted of a short review and resulting suggestions for the next conference. After an excellent dinner cooked by Rev. Rosemarie Bergmann, we again enjoyed a 'dessert concert' presented by the Chicago Waldorf Recorder Ensemble.

I definitely feel one of the results of the North American Conference for Board Members: My heart reaches out to all the other congregations that have become familiar to me through their representatives, although I haven't been there yet. Thank you Chicago, thank you everybody who made this possible.

Dietlind Kionke-Thoemmes
San Francisco

This year's North American Conference and Annual Meeting of the Central Fund for Board Members is again scheduled to be held in November.

THE SENSES UNBOUND - LIMA 1999

'We want to baptize you, not with water, but through your senses', Emilia Hosmann told us as she welcomed us to Lima on the opening evening of the

second Christian Community Congress of the Americas - 'Opening Roads to a New World; The Senses Unbound at the Frontier' (July 23-29).

In the following six days, our senses would be touched, bathed, awakened, and renewed through a symphony of languages, joyful meetings with new and old friends, music and movement, searching and challenging ideas and ideals, and the many impressions that greeted us as we journeyed twice daily through the streets of Lima between the Waldorf School and the Christian Community church, which together housed our conference. Some 220 participants, including 12 priests, came together from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Mexico, the United States, Canada, Germany and Spain for this event, which was also the first conference to bring together the several congregations of South America (Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, Lima, and their affiliates).

Our days began with the celebration of The Act of Consecration of Man in the beautiful church of the Lima congregation which, with its great stone altar, evoked deeply moving resonances with the Inca altars of Machu Picchu and other sacred sites some of us had visited before the conference. The service was accompanied by choral and instrumental music composed and directed by Lothar Reubke, who also led the congregation each morning before the service in very quiet, very gentle listening and intoning exercises that awakened our ears and our voices for the liturgy that followed.

Following a coffee break, we reassembled in the church for the morning lectures, given in English and Spanish (with the aid of translators) by Susan Locey, Richard Dancey, Douglas Sloan, Erk Ludwig, Douglas Thackray, and Michaela Glöckler. We then returned to the Waldorf School for the remainder of the day. There we enjoyed delicious catered meals served in a large tent especially constructed for our event, attended our several workshops, and sang again with Lothar Reubke in preparation for a concert which, on the final day, we would offer in the plazas of Lima. After dinner, we assembled under another tent for a wonderfully refreshing variety of artistic presentations prepared by the participating congregations. Each day ended with a Close of Day ser-

vice, introduced by an offering of tone eurythmy.

In the opening session, Martin de Gans, lenker for South America, likened our situation to that of the pioneer-sailors who, 500 years ago, had set out in small, fragile ships to cross the great ocean, confident that they would find a new world. Today the 'great water' we must cross to a new world of perceptions is the life-sphere that, like a spiritual ocean, weaves around and through the physical earth. Like those sailors, we too are subject to the dangers of sinking into the sea or losing our direction. The 'ship' that will carry us safely, Martin said, is spoken of at the beginning of the John's Tide Epistle, the thankfulness of our hearts: thankfulness which individualizes and frees us from dependence on the one to whom it is directed, and the heart which, as *the* religious sense-organ, alone perceives correctly the direction and the goal, the Being of Christ.

As the sailors looked to the stars, so we must look to lofty ideas and ideals to guide us on our way in the ocean we have already entered, knowingly or unknowingly.

In the following days we were offered a treasury of ideas and ideals to guide us, impossible to summarize here, but hopefully to be made available in booklet form within the coming year. For now, I can only express deep, heartfelt thanks to all who made this conference the rich festival it was - to all who came, and especially to Paul Corman, Emilia Hosmann and the whole Lima congregation for the extraordinary warmth, generosity and labor of their preparations and hospitality. No time and place were set for the next time - but that there will be a next time is certainly the deep hope and strong intention of that common heart which one can feel coming to birth within The Christian Community of the Americas.

Melissa Kay
San Francisco

THE MILLENNIUM BUG

The whole fascination with Y2K has shifted the attention from understanding the actual beginning of the new millennium. Everywhere it is taken for granted to begin with the year 2000, while said year naturally and logically is the end, the last year of the second millennium of our counting of time.

As it is in a decade, which runs from 1 to 10, that 10 is the last of the ten (otherwise it wouldn't be a decade but only 9), thus it is with centuries and millennia, they begin, as we always do when we count, with 1 and end with the full 100 or full 1000.

Our counting of time has begun with the year 1. A first millennium, 1000 years, was accomplished by the end and not by the beginning of the year 1000. The second millennium consequently comes to an end when the whole 2000 years are 'fulfilled', that is, at the end of the year 2000: December 31, 2000. At the end of 1999 only 1999 years will have gone by and the whole 2000th year still lies before us.

The new, third millennium does not begin before January 1st, 2001, because that is the first year, again starting with a One, which leads to the year 3000. From 2001 to 3000 then would be our third millennium, to which many seem to look with apprehension.

Werner Grimm
Vancouver

ANNOUNCING

A CONFERENCE ON HUMAN EMBRYOLOGY

WITH REV. PEARL GOODWIN,

New York, September 24-26, 1999

Rev. Pearl Goodwin studied embryology in Edinburgh, Scotland, and worked at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from 1960 to 1964. She was ordained as a priest in the Christian Community in 1977 and works in the congregation in Stourbridge, England. Phone (212) 877-3577, Rev. Erk Ludwig; Phone (212) 362-7204, Rev. Gisela Wielki; Fax (212) 874-5395

**'WORKING FROM CHRIST',
A THREE-WEEK STUDY-RETREAT**

San Francisco, October 24 - November 12, 1999

Three weeks of inward concentration and study at our Center in San Francisco, for those who wish to deepen their relationship to the background and substance of The Christian Community, as well as those who would like to learn about the vocation of the priest. Grounded in the daily celebration of the Act of Consecration of Man, this Study-Retreat offers a balanced experience of study, artistic activity, exercise in observation, and conversation. Phone Melissa Kay at (415) 928-1715 or (415) 469-0705.

WEB SITES

The Boston Congregation has now a web site which is part of their outreach program. The web site includes study group announcements, up-to-the-minute program changes, the latest church news and calendar, information on how to contact the priests, and a short animated 'movie.' It is all work in progress and in its infancy, so expect changes! Please e-visit us at www.angelfire.com/ma/christiancommunity. Your helpful comments are welcome!

Similarly, the Sacramento Center has a web site at www.angelfire.com/ca2/christiancommunity. It includes information on Christian Community events in Sacramento, Meadow Vista, San Francisco, Santa Barbara and Santa Rosa.

The Los Angeles Community is building a home page on the Internet which will contain local, national and international Christian Community information, at www.thechristiancommunity.org.

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN NORTH AMERICA,

Corrections, Additions since February 1999
(* Not now regularly visited by a priest)

Rev, Michael Kientzler, who for 19 years has been working is our Stuttgart-Sillenbuch congregation in

Germany, has been assigned to work in our Vancouver congregation.

'Western Massachusetts' will now solely be known as the 'Taconic-Berkshire Region', following the acquisition of property in Hillsdale, NY.

CONGREGATIONS

Detroit USA

Please note the new area code for the church phone, (248) 546-3611

For Western Massachusetts, USA, now read:

Taconic-Berkshire Region USA (518) 325-5757

75 Route 71, Hillsdale, NY

Mailings: P.O.Box 658, Housatonic, MA 01236

Rev. Peter Skaller (413) 274-6032

AFFILIATED GROUPS

Copake Camphill Village, New York USA

Contact Taconic-Berkshire Region

* Dallas, Texas USA Changed Area Code:

Contact Linda Kemp (972) 238-0610

* Honolulu, Hawaii USA

Contact Bill Sakaguchi (808) 988-1264

(Or contact Los Angeles)

Montreal, Quebec CANADA

Contact Taconic-Berkshire Region

Northampton, Massachusetts USA

Contact Donna-Marie Trostli (413) 253-0398

(Or contact Taconic-Berkshire Region)

Please send letters and literary contributions to
Arie Boogert, 20 Lake Street,
Arlington, MA 02474-8526,
Phone/Fax (781) 646-4644.

Due date for the next issue is November 15, 1999