

# THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

MOVEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS RENEWAL

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## Michaelmas 1996



*The Polish Rider* by Rembrandt

Editor's note:

During the creation of this newsletter for Michaelmas, 1996, The Christian Community suffered the grievous loss of Rev. Phillip Nusbaum. We wish to extend our deepest sympathy to his family.

Along with the picture on our cover page, The Polish Rider, by Rembrandt - a favorite of Phillip's, we would also like to print here a verse, the writer of which we do not know, that he kept in the vestry of the church in San Francisco:

“Do not think that you will see  
the harvest from these deeds.  
You are here to sow the seeds.”

With Phillip's passing, some of the entries in this edition have been rendered partially moot with respect to certain points of information. Nevertheless we feel that with all this in mind, we will publish them unchanged.

Rev. Arie Boogert and Dale Brunsvold,  
*Editors*

## STEPS OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

One of the main features of the human being is that development is slow, especially in comparison with the closest mammals. Animals develop fast, Man develops slow, and not only bodily. Soul and Spirit first enfold parallel to the body but soon go on independently. Still, even then gaining maturity takes time; skills and knowledge need to be gained step by step if we expect them to be solid and genuine.

This also holds true when we become members of The Christian Community. Step by step we enter that organism of which we want to become a

part, an organ, a member.

This can happen 'parallel' to our bodily development or later on quite independently. That depends on whether destiny has put us into the context of a congregation when we were children or only later in life.

As children we make the first of three steps still through our parents and godparents. We are *baptized*, and with this received into the congregation which is now going to carry us and watch over our religious development. A first *beginning*; in the background we may hear 'The Father God be in us.' We are not members yet but belonging as to our *being*, we are received and will be carried.

A second step can occur when we receive the Sacrament of *Confirmation*. Parents and godparents are still in the background but a relationship to the One Who will be present in the 'joys and sorrows of life' needs to come about. This could be a real *breakthrough*; we experience the 'confirmation of our dignity as human beings'... and in the background: 'The Son God create in us.' Still we are not quite members, but share in the *life and existence* of the congregation.

Then it may take some time before that breakthrough really can become a full departure. Destiny, the Holy Spirit 'who blows where it wills' will give us the impulse: now your time has come to participate regularly in the altar sacrament, now you may want to receive *Holy Communion*, now you begin to feel one with the congregation and therefore want to make the third step to ask for *membership*. Now you are ready to become a conscious supporter of what happens at the altar. Then we hear, permeating everything: '*The Spirit God enlighten us.*'

Three weighty steps which as adults we can make, becoming slowly acquainted with The Act of Consecration of Man and the life of the congregation, lead us from a first beginning, 'INICIO', at our Baptism, to a tentative BREAKTHROUGH when we are confirmed till we eventually find the third step, the step of departure into and with the congregation: 'AUFBRUCH.'

INICIO, BREAKTHROUGH and AUFBRUCH

are the three theme words of the great Whitsuntide Congress 1997 in Hamburg, Germany, which is now being prepared by many centers and the full program for which will be available later this year.

Werner Grimm,  
*Vancouver*

## **A NEW HOME IN SPRING VALLEY/ CHESTNUT RIDGE, NY**

For many years The Christian Community in New York City has also celebrated services approximately once a month in a room at the Fellowship Community, an old-age home within a larger anthroposophical community in Chestnut Ridge/Spring Valley, northwest of the city. Study groups, large conferences and weekly religious instruction for children have been offered on the grounds of the nearby Waldorf School, and our priests occasionally teach courses at Sunbridge College, a center for foundation studies in Anthroposophy and Waldorf teacher education. Over the years the sacramental life has thus drawn ties between city and country folk, and many have wondered whether an additional base of activities might not one day be founded closer to the homes of the members and friends of the New York City congregation who live in the area.

This summer The Christian Community acquired 2.75 acres, two sides of which adjoin the land of the Threefold Educational Foundation, in a residential neighborhood that is home also to Muslims and orthodox Jews. A dilapidated house on the new property will need to be replaced by a structure suitable for services and other activities, and we hope that eventually a chapel can be raised on the site. But the grounds - now cleared of 17 tons of rubbish, including three rusted cars and seven television sets - are already lush and invite cultivation, a process begun one bright Sunday afternoon this past July.

That was when a congregation - in a most literal, visible sense - descended in carloads from both city and country and unpacked before the driveway of the property, making sure to leave enough room for the wrecker's trucks that were hauling the last of the large items - including a 1949 Packard - from the lawns. About 50 of us shared out mowers and weed-whackers, scythes and pitchforks, wheelbarrows and pruning-hooks, and, borrowing the occasional sledge hammer from the workmen, spent the day redistributing masses of stray branches, wooden planks and boards, bricks, rocks, tin cans and other detritus left by a caretaker of the property who, judging from the state the place was in, had surely missed his true calling.

We wondered aloud about the possibilities in store for us; if the house needs to be razed, what will replace it? (Architects are already contemplating this task.) A grill was identified among the ruins, which produced speculation as to whether future barbecue fare would be exclusively vegetarian. (No! responded one of our priests with even greater than normal conviction.) Each of us worked at his own pace to spruce the grounds up; city-slickers learned which plants in the extensive garden merited exemption from mowing; country-folk furnished a snack-laden picnic table and lent their landscaping expertise to the proceedings; a lithe eurythmy student, flinging cinder blocks into neat piles, evoked startled admiration from the professional wreckers struggling with the carcass of the Packard. We were assured by those who had been on the scene at an earlier date that nothing had been salvageable from the house or lands, but several exploring children, when they weren't pumping well-water for their exertions and ours, flushed out from the corners of the land a crystal inkwell, remnants of a Grecian-style vase, a rusted cast-iron spiral machine-part whose function none of us could determine, a tattered Bible (opened to St. Matthew) and a lively family of moles - all promising subjects for a future storytelling session. By the end of the afternoon, which boasted shaved grass, cleared paths and bushwhacked gardens, one of our longer-term members who had been promised the privi-

lege of surveying the proceedings from a folding chair, evidently found the newly-shorn lawn irresistible, abandoned pride of place and was on her knees, determinedly picking up shards of glass from the ground by hand before the youngest among us might do so by foot.

I, for one, returned to the city sore, bone-tired and thoroughly happy in my grass-and mud-stained clothes. I also sported an open blister on my thumb, incurred through my maiden encounter with a weed whacker. A week later, contemplating the trace remaining of the memento, I began to wonder: What exactly had caused it to improve? What agency had invisibly relieved the pain, restored my hand to usefulness, reintegrated the nature part to serve a larger whole? Once I would have answered: A spontaneous, wholly natural, unconscious process. Today, awakening to the same healing presence at work among human beings, I am no long so superstitious.

Michael Ronall,  
*New York, NY*

## MUSINGS

Geoffrey Hodson had, among other skills, the ability to view the Akashic record and, in 1925, published an account of the celebration of an ancient cultic mystery within which the celebrants would retire to their cave, enter a trance and receive from the gods that apocalyptic inspiration which was to be given them. It seems to be similar to the very early mysteries of transubstantiation which Rudolf Steiner has referred to as the Act of Consecration of Man as it existed in the very early of the ancient mysteries. This description unfolded in Ireland in a Druid circle. Hodson's observation of this act of consecration took place in August, 1922. Somewhat into this description he continues his observation: "The effect of the cultic words is remarkable; the very heavens appear to open, and an enormous downrush of force pours into the central square formed by the people on three sides and the altar stone on the fourth. The people again stand

erect, and the angels become active, their chief concern being to see that the maximum force reaches the people, with a minimum of flow and waste. The down-flow continues for some time, forming a veritable pillar of living power, whose appearance I am at a loss to describe, as any words of mine would inevitably fail. The nearest description I can give is to liken it to liquid, fiery mother of pearl, opalescent and tinged with an inner coloring of rose. It penetrates downward far into the ground and reaches out of sight into the heavens. The high priest plainly sees it, as do some of the other priests, the people feel its presence, but few appear to see anything. All adopt a highly reverent attitude of mind and body, and realise the sacred nature of the occasion."

It isn't difficult to imagine any one of us musing over a journey to one of these places in order to find a sense of those old and marvelous mysteries. I hear, not infrequently, a voice longing after the possibility to experience Ephesus and another's passion to go on a pilgrimage to Chartres all of which can certainly provide an experience and even nourishment from the past. On the other hand, I can't help wondering at what seems to be little understanding that The Act of Consecration of Man has been celebrated in its changing forms since before there were written records and that these sites of the Act of Consecration of Man, i.e., the Druid Circles, Ephesus, Samothrace, and other mystery centers were there to celebrate and make possible a time sequenced unfoldment of mankind's apocalyptic development. I look among some who I know and even those who I don't know and wonder that we who have the privilege of exposure to The Act of Consecration of Man fail to realize or even appreciate the fact that we are actually in the midst of a mystery center and are participating in the new mysteries.

One day in the future, there might likely be individuals who seek out these places of the new mysteries; but not in our nostalgic sense, rather in the sense of what will either be deep appreciation of what men did in these times to protect (further?) mankind's (Christ filled (?)) evolution or in dis-

may at the failure of those who were actually there and wouldn't bring themselves to recognize what had been offered in their destinies toward this end. It could even be one of us.

Lyman Jackson  
*Denver*

## **REV. CARL STEGMANN**

### **3/15/97 TO 2/16/96**

Carl Stegmann was the last active member of the founding priests of The Christian Community. It was mainly through Rudolf Meyer that he entered that circle. At the 'East-West Congress' in Vienna in 1922 he asked Friedrich Rittelmeyer if he would be welcome in the new religious movement, since he was not a university student. His whole life he was proud of his heritage as a working man. In his native city he had been apprenticed to a locksmith before World War I, which intervened, and after the war he had applied himself to the socialist ideas of Marx and Lassalle. In Breitbrunn, where the future Christian Community founders held a meeting before going to Dornach, he spoke enthusiastically about the mission of the workers, and that their motives were actually of a religious nature. He became one of the first priests in Hamburg. After moving on to Essen, he founded the Free Workers School which was closely connected to The Christian Community. By 1933 the Nazis had closed it down. However it had made a decisive contribution by penetrating and correcting socialistic thinking in a Christian way. During World War II, after he was briefly imprisoned by the Nazis, Carl was active in a business run by his brother. Thereafter, for 25 years, he worked as priest in Mannheim. He became an Oberlenker in 1966.

At the age of 73 he led a group of younger priests to help in the already established work on the West Coast of America. After seven years in Oakland, he moved to Sacramento, where he provided the impulse for founding Rudolf Steiner College and the Ralph Waldo Emerson Foundation.

His book, 'The Other America' challenged the reader to find the spiritual America hidden beneath the materialism. His 'Ralph Waldo Emerson, Forerunner of the Future' concentrated on the spiritual destiny of America. His 'The Third Call' was an extension of that effort. After 15 years he returned to Mannheim, his wife died soon after. His last years were spent at Oeschelbronn, an anthroposophical senior retirement home and medical facility; he was the beloved and honored priest-elder there, where he died in the presence of a son.

He was the personification of what was best in the working class: will, absolute integrity, and forthrightness. The idea of The Threefold Social Order lived in him. He saw a new christian-oriented social order approaching, and he looked to America for a major contribution toward it.

Richard Lewis,  
*Sacramento*

### ***Book Review***

## **I Am With You Always**

true stories of Encounters with Jesus  
by G. Scott Sparrow, BANTAM 1995

The author is described as a psychotherapist in private practice and a lecturer on topics such as meditation, mystical experiences and dreamwork methods. His book now has 'Jesus' in its title, but already in the introduction to it the author switches over to talking about C h r i s t appearing and C h r i s t being experienced and then lays out how he is going to arrange and look into the reports he has been able to collect. For instance: physical healing during a Christ encounter -emotional healing; confrontational encounters - closer relationship with Christ; initiation experiences - communion with Christ (pg. 3). He talks about the difference between Christ as a mere cosmic being and his incarnation into flesh as significant (pg.46). He is open to the idea of reincarnation (pg.115 & 186).

What else do we want? Mostly the people who report on their Christ encounter lead a life of

prayer and meditation or go to church - even though some were not even adherers to the Christian faith. All who report on their experience agree that Christ approaches them with great serenity, surrounded by bright light, usually dressed in white. His gaze is full of understanding and compassion. He sees "through" everyone. His words are always words of encouragement. There is mostly one or another thing in the encounter that even strikes the recipient as strange, but this often prevents the scene from appearing as sentimental.

Assuming that we are all on the path towards meeting Christ we also have to imagine, and that is supported by what we read, that this will be a very individual experience. Thinking now of our own altars with the picture of Christ over the shining candles, do we not all feel challenged to either add to or subtract from the picture which happens to be there? We have to bring it to life. Even if we have to admit that this has to do with our subjective likes and dislikes it is also true that no one picture, be it old or modern, can do complete justice to the risen Christ's spiritual presence. Our inner activity is a prerequisite for the Christ encounter. And this does not mean that a process of purification of our own attitudes, approaches and yearnings would be superfluous! Hallucinations will also be in our way. Many veils need to be drawn aside!

This is quite striking in Scott Sparrow's report about his own Christ encounter. In connection with the writing of this book which meant countless hours before the computer he had a dream: he remembers, "The computer monitor suddenly opened up like a stage curtain to reveal Jesus from the shoulders up, just a few feet away. A soft purple light surrounded and bathed him. He asked me, 'Do you love me?' I said, 'yes'. Then he asked, 'Do we love Mary?' I was puzzled by this —" This was only a dream and I am glad that the reality of the computer and its "virtual" reality had to be drawn aside, as has been sense reality, before we arrive at the ultimate reality: the reality of the spirit.

Hartmut Junge, *Detroit*

## ***Book Notice:*** **Prepare the Way:** **The Act of Consecration of Man as** **a Path of Christian Renewal**

A new booklet has been produced that contains the morning lectures given at the St. John's Festival Conference in July of 1995. It is entitled "Prepare the Way: The Act of Consecration of Man as a Path of Christian Renewal." Copies may be obtained from The Christian Community, 906 Divisadero St., San Francisco, CA 94115, for \$5.00 each, which includes mailing costs.

This reviewer found himself pleasantly surprised by the gentleness and pastoral quality of the various talks. Yet this is not to say that there are not the great challenges of our times presented with clarity and heartfelt earnestness by the various presiding priests.

After the introduction by Rev. Werner Grimm, we are taken, step by step, through the four archetypal movements of the Ritual. Rev. Martin de Gans's talk, "Hear the Living Word" speaks to the Annunciation, the proclamation of the Good News. Rev. Susan Locey then moves us into thoughts on the second part of the Ritual, Offering, in her lecture, "The New Offering." And then the Transformation, or Transubstantiation is forcefully portrayed by Rev. Pablo Corman in "Transform the Given." Finally, Rev. Erk Ludwig discusses the final movement of Communion in "Behold, I Am Near."

All proceeds from the sale of the booklet will be donated to the next Inter-American Festival Conference, planned for 1999 in Lima, Peru.

Dale Brunsvold, *Editor*

## CHANGES IN SAN FRANCISCO

Once again, the San Francisco community is experiencing a time of transition as the congregation looks forward to an indefinite period without a resident priest. On August 11, we said goodbye to Rev. Phillip Nusbaum, who has served our community for the past five and one-half years. A community meal was followed by a special concert prepared by Phillip and some of his musician-friends.

During his time in San Francisco, Phillip has purchased, set in order, decorated, and repaired our community house and chapel on Divisadero Street. For this, as well as for his many thoughtful talks and sermons and wonderful violin, we are deeply grateful, as we are to Thea Nusbaum for her always warm and gracious hostessing. We wish them both joy and fulfillment in their new home in Boston.

Although we will be without a resident priest, we anticipate bi-weekly visits from Sacramento by Rev. Everett Moraine and Rev. Sanford Miller, who will also visit the congregations in Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa.

Rooms in the community house will be rented out to members of the community and the secretary of the board, Melissa Kay, will also serve as administrative secretary to the community. Lay devotional meetings are being planned for the Sundays when there is no Act of Consecration of Man, and there are also plans to inaugurate a community newsletter.

This year, the San Francisco congregation is marking the fortieth anniversary of its founding by Rev. Verner Hegg. It is our deep hope that this life will continue until a priest can join us once again.

Melissa Kay, *San Francisco*

## That Peace Be Our Bread

*in grateful memory of Phillip Nusbaum*

Let us  
our grieving, aching hearts bear  
worthily  
that sorrow become strength,  
and loneliness, a pure and patient love -  
a fount from which we can  
fulfill  
in radiance of hope,  
in confidence in Christ,  
the Act  
most holy and most wholly ours  
of Man's  
heart-healing,  
life-renewing,  
world-transforming  
Consecration:  
that Peace be our bread,  
eternal Joy, our wine.

*by Melissa Kay*

## FROM THE LENKER

Rev. Phillip Nusbaum, priest in The Christian Community, who, this summer, had been reassigned from our San Francisco congregation to our Boston congregation, while driving east across the continent, was in an automobile accident in Lancaster, Ohio, in the morning of Saturday, August 24, 1996. He was air-lifted to the Ohio State University Hospital in Columbus with serious head injuries.

He received the Sacrament of Anointing the next day and died at 12:45 a.m. on Friday, August 30th, 1996. The first part of the funeral service for him was celebrated in Columbus at 6 p.m. on September 2nd for family and close friends and the second part was celebrated at 3 p.m. on September 3rd with family, 14 priests and about 50 friends in attendance.

Phillip's wife, Thea, plans to move with her mother to Boston, where the furniture has arrived. Their children Robert, Francis and Angela will continue their university studies in California. A great swell of love and compassion has arisen across the country to help them all on their ways.

Robert Patterson

## OUR CONGREGATIONS

Rev. Sanford Miller has arrived at his new assignment in Sacramento and has been officially introduced and welcomed into the community.

## Corrections and Additions, February, 1996 Address List

The Chicago Congregation has again moved:

**Chicago USA** (312) 989-8558  
2135 West Wilson, Chicago, IL 60625  
Rev. Robert Patterson, Rev. Oliver Steinrueck

Rev. Sanford Miller has left Boston for Sacramento:

**Sacramento USA** (916) 362-4330 or 366-9545  
3506 Eisenhower Drive, Sacramento, CA 95826  
Rev. Sanford Miller, Rev. Everett Moraine

San Francisco is now without a resident priest:

**San Francisco USA** (415) 928-1715  
906 Divisadero St., San Francisco, CA 94115  
Contact Melissa Kay, (415) 469-0705 (or contact the Sacramento priests)

Both San Francisco affiliates please now contact the Sacramento priests:

**Santa Cruz, California USA**  
Contact (408) 423-4025, Bruce Bischof  
(Or contact Sacramento)

**Santa Rosa, California USA**  
Contact (707) 542-2304, Elizabeth Hecht  
(Or contact Sacramento)

Please send contributions (preferably typed) to Dale Brunsvold, 2740 South Ogden, Englewood, CO 80110-1744. Or send via e-mail to dbrunsvold@aol.com. The deadline for the Advent/Christmas/Epiphany issue is October 15