



The Christian Community

Perspectives

The Care of the Soul
Transformation

September—November 2009

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The question of what might replace the old attitudes to religion becomes ever more pressing.

It is a striking phenomenon that for many people in Western Europe, religion is a matter of indifference or something for which they feel hostility. In a fascinating book, *New Christianity for a New World* (HarperCollins, 2003), John Shelby Spong put forward the hypothesis that the fall into extremism on the one hand, and the growth in addictive behaviour and search for distraction on the other, are the results of the loss of an old image of God as the one who intervenes miraculously in the world, and who punishes and rewards human beings for their good and bad deeds. He suggests that we need to find a way forward that brings us into relationship with ultimate reality—which he calls the Ground of the World—without forcing us into the position of slaves or guilty children. The need for what we strive to create and live together in our communities becomes greater and greater with the passing of time.

TOM RAVETZ

Before my mouth the threshold be guarded...

Hartmut Borries

There is a place for threshing; it's not in our homes but in the barn. In olden times, grain was taken into the barn and beaten with clubs to release the seeds. Afterwards the husks were blown outside—across the threshold, while the heavier seeds remained on the threshing floor inside. The threshold served to keep the seed inside the barn.

Door and threshold form the entrance to a house. They shelter us from the cold and wind and deter unwanted guests. They help keep the house clean and protected. A door without a threshold may well close but it leaves a gap at the bottom. All sorts of unwanted strangers are free to enter; cockroaches, leaves, dust and dirt. Much can still blow in even though the door might be locked.

What is that threshold before my mouth? Here we must deal with the expression of thoughts and feelings in response to others. In reacting to a situation, we may find ourselves saying something that, with hindsight, we later regret. This is how 'insects' creep across the threshold of my soul. But if I am on my guard then I might remain silent before responding with consideration. In that moment of silence I dismiss thoughts and words that sting and pollute the space between people. I do not allow them to enter my soul through word and speech. I keep the threshold of my mouth guarded, my soul protected and my speech pure.

We all know how it is to be inspired by an idea and say it to someone who responds with a lack of interest or some negative comment. This can be enough to destroy what seemed to be so precious a moment earlier.

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New Zealand.*

Like every newborn child, ideas also need to be protected before they cross the threshold of my mouth to meet the world. Within the quiet of my soul, ideas can grow and unfold before being shared with someone who cares. People can make a lot of hot air! I guard the threshold before my mouth so that precious thoughts and ideas will not be blown asunder.

The work of the priest in a clinic

Monika Schneider

What is a priest doing in a clinic?

Many patients of Park Attwood Clinic may ponder this question when they are offered a conversation with me.

I am a priest of The Christian Community and I spend one morning a week at Park Attwood, the anthroposophical clinic near Stourbridge, meeting any patients who have accepted the offer.

'Actually, I don't know why I said yes.' 'In fact, I don't have any particular question.' 'I don't know what to talk about, but I thought you may have something interesting to say.'

Often I hear something like this when I enter the room. Many people I see are at Park Attwood for the first time and they are keen to make use of everything that is available, of which a visit from a priest is part. Others are regulars, but they may not have been interested in a visit from the priest. They may have heard that I used to be a nurse myself and are curious about what I may offer. Then there are those who have a long standing connection with The Christian Community and therefore welcome a conversation.

What all these people have in common is that they find themselves in an extraordinary situation. They are ill, perhaps even seriously, separated from their daily routine and confronted with their own selves in a unique way. In the peace of the clinic and through the various therapies they meet their inner world and the important questions of life: about destiny, guilt and forgiving, faith and death. Often the questions have not yet been put into words. Sometimes the questions are clear, but the wish to share them, perhaps with a priest, has not yet risen into full consciousness.

In our time many people are turning away from Christianity, or from religion altogether, for various reasons. Even if they have faith in a higher, divine power, they no longer trust in organized religion and the churches. Religion is blamed for the conflicts and wars that have afflicted human history. The shortcomings of the human being cloud the view on the eternal truths that inspired the religions. The history of Christianity is full of such errors: the forced conversions of the 'pagan' peoples; the Inquisition; the

persecution of witches and antisemitism; the Crusades; and every kind of dogmatism. Today a lot is called Christian that is in fact narrow minded fundamentalism, and therefore the opposite of being Christian.

The Scottish philosopher and Quaker John McMurray (1891–1976) wrote:

Some of you will ask, I think, 'do you really mean that Christianity can save us? Are you telling us that we must go back to the old faith that has failed us?' My answer is, decidedly, 'No.' I do not think that Christianity will save us from the things we are afraid of. I think it would save us from the fear of them which paralyzes us. An outbreak of Christianity would be more likely to make short work of the makeshift society we have got. It seems to me that modern religion is mostly pseudo-Christianity; and my main reason for thinking so is that it is everywhere regarded, by its friends as well as by its enemies, as a bulwark of the present social system, as a social defence-mechanism, as a stand-by in our fear-struggle to uphold a tradition, in a word, as one of the expressions of our fear of life. Europe has never been Christian, least of all in the so called Age of Faith. I see the history of our civilization as a struggle against Christianity which has been successful in the main; or, if you will, as an effort to turn the one real religion, the religion of love and of abundant life, into a fear religion which would minister to our desire to be secured against the forces of life. Real Christianity stands today, as it has always stood, for life against death, for spontaneity against formalism, for the spirit of adventure against the spirit of security, for faith against fear, for the living colourful multiplicity of difference against the monotony of the mechanical, whether it be the mechanization of the mind, which is dogmatism, or the mechanization of the emotions, which is conformity.

All too often priests ally themselves with the powers that be, or misuse their position of power in society. It is quite understandable that people who have been judged and condemned by priests, who feel that they have not been taken seriously and listened to, and who have been fobbed off

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with holy platitudes, have no interest in getting involved with the church. To make Christianity into a dogmatic religion of fear and conformity, as John Macmurray describes, is to nail Christ to the cross a second time. Even the briefest acquaintance with Christ Jesus' life on earth shows someone who did nothing but fight conformism and dogmatism. He healed

people who had been suffering from their illnesses for decades on the Sabbath, even though—or just because—it was forbidden to do so. Sometimes we find ourselves wondering whether he could not have waited just one day to avoid trouble? He explained that the Sabbath was made for the human being, and not the human being for the Sabbath. With His breaching of the rules he wanted to make clear: rules are meant to make our life in community work better; it cannot be the aim of our lives to stay within the rules by all means. Jesus Christ surrounded Himself with the outcasts of society; he was their friend and guest. He said very clearly that He did not come to judge, but to heal.

Despite all this, many people carry in themselves an image of an authoritarian, punishing God. Perhaps he is a white-haired, bearded old man who sits on his throne in heaven, keeping tabs on our deeds, always prepared to tell us off. This kind of imagery is usually connected with a simplistic belief in good and evil. Above is light-filled heaven, below is dark hell. We make a constant effort to better ourselves and climb slowly the ladder into heaven, but we keep falling off it again and again. With this world-view—and many an atheist or agnostic is in the depth of his soul not entirely free from it—illness, or any other stroke of fate, is perceived as a punishment from God—punishment, whether it is just or unjust, that has been inflicted on us from outside and over which we have no power, which we have to suffer helplessly.

Could we change this situation by replacing the vertical duality of above-below, light-dark, good-evil into a horizontal triangle with a living, flexible middle between two extremes?

These examples may illustrate the above: When a person suffers from fever, which is a raising of the body temperature usually caused by inflammatory processes, then it would not help to make him freeze; the aim would be to help him to find a balance between too high and too low. In the realm of the soul there are similar situations. If you suffer from avarice, do not go and waste all your money, but learn to deal with your resources in a balanced way. If I feel incapable and useless, I need to find a balance in my soul—not become vain and conceited and fall into the other extreme.

Such a dynamic concept helps to understand life better and to accept and live with one's destiny. We can always stray from our life's path towards the left or the right. There is, however, always the possibility to find our way back to the middle. Often we have to be guided to the place where we can learn, grow and become. Sometimes we need a difficult situation like

an illness or another stroke of fate, which we can only suffer at the time, but which in hindsight appear to be pointers of destiny.

What does a priest have to do in the clinic; what is the particular task of priestly pastoral care? Rudolf Steiner, the Austrian philosopher and founder of Anthroposophy, said to the founders of The Christian Community: 'Familiarize yourselves with everything that is human.' I understand this as a challenge never to turn away from the human being. I may judge deeds, but I may never judge the human being himself. I need to practice compassion and acceptance. To this end it is beneficial that I myself have erred on my path in life, that I have lost myself in extremes and had to suffer the consequences, and that I have struggled to understand and find the middle between the extremes.

The apostles knew error and pain. They had lived with Christ for three years; they had experienced the Risen One for forty days; they had misunderstood Him at times, even abandoned Him in fear when He was arrested before the crucifixion; and they had denied Him. When they gathered at the first Whitsun, after Christ had left them at Ascension, awareness of their strayings filled their souls with pain. Rudolf Steiner describes what happened when the Holy Spirit came:

The Apostles felt as if there had actually descended upon them from the Cosmos something that could only be called the Substance of all-prevailing Love... It seemed to them as if they had been wakened to life by the primal force of Love pervading and warming the Cosmos, as if this primal force of Love had come down into the soul of each one of them...it seemed to people as if these men had been transformed, as if their very souls had been made new; they seemed to have lost all narrowness, all selfishness in life, to have acquired largeness of heart, an all-embracing tolerance and a deep understanding for everything that is human on the Earth. Moreover, they were able to express themselves in such a way that everyone present could understand them. It was felt that they could look into every heart, could read the deepest, innermost secrets of the soul and so were able to bring consolation to every single individual, to say to him exactly what he needed.

In Jesus Christ this love became entirely human, lived and suffered among us, was killed by us human beings, rose again and is with us to the end of all days. He is not a judging, punishing God, for He knows all that is human, because He experienced and suffered it for Himself, and is still with us, experiencing and suffering our lives and pains.

To bear witness to Him is the task of the priest. To form a vessel for him to become active for the healing of mankind in the sacraments—that is the task of the priest. To be with Him at the side of the suffering human being, to go with him into the darkness of human existence so that light may shine on the shadows and transform them—that is the task of the priest. Henry Nouwen describes in his book, *The Wounded Healer*:

A minister is not a doctor whose primary task is to take away pain. Rather he deepens the pain to a level where it can be shared.... Many people suffer because of the false supposition on which they have based their lives. That supposition is that there should be no fear or loneliness, no confusion or doubt. But these sufferings can only be dealt with creatively when they are understood as wounds integral to our human condition. Therefore a ministry is a very confronting service. It does not allow people to live with illusions of immortality and wholeness. It keeps reminding others that they are mortal and broken, but also that with the recognition of this condition, liberation starts.

To find the strength and courage to recognize our condition and face our weaknesses and failings, we need to experience that we are seen in that condition, and yet that we are loved and accepted and not rejected. With this experience we don't get stuck in feelings of guilt or being a victim, but can begin to accept our destiny, can begin to learn and to become.

The special situation of the patients in Park Attwood means that whatever preconceptions or even prejudices they may have about religion and about Christianity, their questions and struggles mean that they are ready to receive the healing that can flow from the living Christ, the one who stands in our middle and brings about harmony in our destinies. The work of the priest in the clinic is to make this process possible, and to give help to those going through it. Our own wounds and weaknesses are our treasure. They are the place where we may encounter the Risen One.

They are the wellspring of our growing and becoming.



Waist-length Figure of a Young Woman, Raphael

Alive

Milan Horák

So now I have seen my old man laid into the earth.

I stood in the middle, and yet somehow on the periphery. Someone gave an address. People snuffled and sobbed and wiped their eyes, and I wandered slowly through my memories.

Amazing, the things that stay in the mind! The colours, the touch, the scents. Yes, the scents, too. The scent of the summer that time when we wandered together along the shore for the first time, still too shy even to hold hands. And how the sun shone that time, just as it is shining today—the old man managed that well, I could wish for a day like that, too, when my turn comes eventually.

Of the two of us, he was the first. He was born as the first, and now he has passed away as the first. And as the first of the two of us he became really ill. It got worse and worse; I looked after him and nursed him for the last five years, sometimes at the limit of my strength. For the last months when he was still there, he was actually not really there. Strange—now he is no longer there, and yet he is somehow present.

At the end, all went well. At the end he found peace, I was suddenly so proud of him; he smiled gently and then he fell asleep and slept for such a long time, and then he had passed away without any more fear or pain. I was proud of myself, too, I had done it. It is right and proper that we should not desert one another, that we should stay together and care for and nurse one another if it has to be—and it had to be. Yet I feared that there would come a time when I simply would not be able to manage; after all, I am beginning to get frail, too ... but now it is over, I managed not to give in, I was able to accompany him to the end, it was granted me.

Thank God.

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How long is it since I went to church? In earlier times I went quite often, gladly even—it was somehow part of my life. Then my old man got ill and I couldn't leave him alone at home for so long. And—I see now—I almost forgot about going to church altogether.

Now I thought I would go again. I went and sat at the back, on the left, not as usual—I used always to sit at the front in the middle—but today I wanted to keep the overall view.

The church was nearly empty, a few people scattered within the large space. The organ sounded, the Service began, and then came the sermon. The priest spoke with such devotion; he stood at the lectern, keeping his right hand on his chest and gently gesturing with his left. I did not understand him—I could barely hear him, my hearing is, of course, not so good any more, and maybe the priests somehow speak more softly nowadays than they used to—but he was lovely to look at.

The sun shone through the windows, there was a light breeze and the shadows of the leaves danced on the church wall. Oh, yes, I can still see quite well, especially if something is a bit further away, like that wall.

I noticed ants on the wall. Hundreds of ants were crawling up and down, a proper ant-trail, almost vertical between a window and the floor, straight across the dancing spots of light.

It was lovely in the church.

And outside was lovely, too, when I went out again into the full sunshine and strolled beside the trees whose leaves had made the dance of shadows inside the church. I could only move slowly, especially after sitting for so long. Yes, I really have grown old; many things simply can't be managed any more, but walking is one thing I do still manage.

Thank God.

When will I follow my old man? Perhaps I will only be here until tomorrow, perhaps for many years yet ... But while I am still here I am simply here! I see the sun, how it pours its light over trees, walls, roads, houses. Others do not see it. They hurry past me, past a lonely old lady, past the world all around. They all have a lot to do, they probably have no time to look at the world, and so they just don't do it. But someone has to do it, and now—I—do—it. It is I who sees the sun, the ants, the shadows of the leaves moved by the wind. And—then—I shall also be able to say: I saw it all.

The sun will continue to pour its light over the town, the wind will continue to make the leaves dance, the ants will continue to climb up and down the church wall, or will it then be other, similar ants doing it, but I will have seen it, and it will have been seen by me.

After all, life is not a matter of staying alive at all costs. Life is simply a matter of living.

Thank God.

Translated by Jon Madsen

Transformation in Fairytales

Elke Blattmann

Fairytales are often about transformation: a person has lost himself and now appears in a different form. As the tale unfolds it describes the path of redemption, the finding of a new, often better and more beautiful humanity. On this path, help from others acting out of love is always necessary. The transformation may be the consequence of a curse or spell, as in 'Hans the Hedgehog' from Grimm's Fairytales; it may be given by destiny, as in 'The Donkey', or it is brought upon someone by himself and planned by adversaries, as in 'Brother and Sister'.

And some fairytales give a glimpse into the process of a transformation which is initiated by diabolic powers and whose outcome is at first uncertain. They describe how the protagonist of the story makes a pact with the adversary powers and thereby gambles with his very humanity. These fairytale heroes are often discharged soldiers. They are no longer needed for warfare, since peace has been declared. Now they enter upon another battlefield.

This is the kind of young fellow who appears in the story 'Bearskin' in Grimm's Fairytales. Discharged from active service and turned away by his brothers, he realises that he is in danger of starvation, and he despairs. Then the Devil appears and offers him money, as much as he could ever need. In return, he must live by the Devil's rules for seven years: 'if you die

before these seven years are up, then you are mine; but if you stay alive, then you are free, and in addition you will be rich for the rest of your life.' This deal is mortally dangerous, but the soldier who has so often confronted death decides to risk it again now—and agrees.

First of all the Devil tests him to see whether he is afraid: he causes a great bear to come lumbering towards him. This does not frighten the soldier, he 'shouldered his gun and shot the bear in the muzzle, so that it collapsed and no longer moved.'

Then follow the Devil's stipulations:

'For the next seven years you may not wash yourself, nor comb your beard and hair; you may not cut your nails, nor may you pray the Lord's Prayer. Then I will give you a coat and a cloak which you must wear during that time.'

The cloak mentioned was the bear's skin: 'Then he drew the skin off the bear and said: This shall be your cloak and also your bed, for on it you must sleep and may not lie upon any other bed. And because of this garb you shall be called Bearskin.'

These, then, are the Devil's stipulations:

1. *to be without fear*
2. *to refrain from washing*
3. *not to comb beard and hair*
4. *not to cut his nails*
5. *not to pray the Lord's Prayer*
6. *to wear the Devil's cloak*
7. *to wear the bearskin as cloak*
8. *to have no bed*

It is unusual for the Lord's Prayer to be mentioned in a fairytale. Here it comes

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from the mouth of the Devil in the form of a prohibition. And that appears to be the adversary's strongest weapon. All the Devil's stipulations are intended to cause the soldier to lose his humanity. In the first instance these attacks are aimed at his outer appearance, but the ban on the Lord's Prayer strikes at his inner nature, it concerns his soul.

It was the unusual reference to the Lord's Prayer that made me examine this prayer more closely. In doing so, I noticed that it has the same number of stages as the Devil's pact with 'Bearskin', and so I placed them next to each other:

1. *Our Father Who art in the heavens (Fear)*
2. *Hallowed be Thy name. (Washing)*
3. *Thy kingdom come (Combing hair)*
4. *Thy will be done, as above in the heavens so also on the earth (Cutting nails)*
5. *Give us this day our daily bread (No Lord's Prayer)*
6. *And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors (Devil's coat)*
7. *And lead us not into temptation (bearskin cloak)*
8. *But deliver us from the evil (bed)*

In comparing the Lord's Prayer with the Devil's stipulations, I noticed first of all that the prayer for the forgiving of debts corresponds to the Devil's green coat whose pockets contain a never-ending supply of money with which 'Bearskin' can forgive debts. This spurred me on to investigate and compare further. And what I found astonished me, for the Devil's stipulations are, pictorially, the opposite of the Lord's Prayer, line by line. In a sense, the Devil's pact is a negative Lord's Prayer, as I shall show:

1. *Our Father Who art in the heavens.* With reverence and awe ('fear of God') the supplicant turns to God. The Devil demands that the soldier should have no fear; in the gunning down of the bear there is truly no place for reverence or awe!
2. *Hallowed be Thy name.* 'Bearskin' may not wash himself. Already in the second year his face was so covered in dirt that if cress had been sown there, it would have sprouted! He loses his face, he can no longer be recognized. He loses his identity, his name.
3. *Thy kingdom come.* A kingdom is an ordered, structured system that is governed. 'Bearskin' may not comb his hair and beard, he may not put them in order and structure them—there is to be chaos. His face was almost obscured by his hair, his beard was like a piece of coarse felt.
4. *Thy will be done.* The supplicant puts his own will last and asks for the will of God. Hands and feet are the instruments of the human will. The will can be expressed through the limbs. These organs of the will 'Bearskin' is to allow to his fingernails and toenails to 'grow wild'—his fingers had claws, already in the second year! In the course of the following years his hands became less and less human.
5. *Give us this day our daily bread.* This is countered by the ban on the Lord's Prayer. That makes clear the significance of this prayer in the story. It is the daily bread that sustains our human nature, that nourishes the soul, and it is this that the Devil denies 'Bearskin'.

6. *And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.*

The Devil's surfeit of money, too, could be the soldier's undoing; it could lead to him overestimating himself. But 'Bearskin' does not succumb to this. Although he never failed to do anything that was good for him and bad for the money, he used it sensibly, did good deeds where he could and paid off other people's debts.

7. *And lead us not into temptation.*

Linked to this prayer comes the Devil's stipulation that the soldier must crawl into the bear's pelt and take on the name 'Bearskin'. The youth is to become a bear, an animal. Now, as regards their splendid one-sidedness, their special abilities, animals are far superior to human beings in many things. On the path to the creation of Man, the animals came into being; they were satisfied with their various specific abilities and exhibited these. Looked at in this way, every animal is the image of a temptation. Human beings refrained from developing any specialized skills and so retained the capacity to learn and create culture—and ultimately to be omnipotent.

8. *But deliver us from the evil.*

'Bearskin' is not to sleep in a bed. He is to crawl into the bearskin like an animal. It is part of being human to sleep in a bed. Human beings remove their everyday clothes and surrender themselves, almost naked to the nights. In this way they can let go and give themselves up to sleep. An animal sleeps differently—it always remains watchful.

The Devil is a master tempter, and his tactics ought rightfully to have been suc-

cessful. The transformation of the soldier's external appearance was to make the soul of 'Bearskin' forfeit to the Devil. Initially, when the soldier realized with whom he was speaking, he had said: 'If it does not endanger my salvation; otherwise, I will have nothing to do with it.' To which the Devil had replied: 'You shall see for yourself.' And 'Bearskin' truly did see for himself and did not enter upon anything that could hurt his innermost being. Thus he was able to preserve his soul.

Yet the faithfulness and love of his bride were also indispensable; she did not take fright at his monstrous appearance but was aware of his good heart. Furthermore, he was helped by the many prayers of intercession for him by the grateful beggars that he had helped. Thus, despite the ban on the Lord's Prayer, his connection with the divine world was retained. And he knew whom he had to thank for his release from the demonic transformation: 'By God's grace I have regained my human form and have become clean once more.' And he was much handsomer than he had ever been before.

But although the soul of 'Bearskin' slipped through his fingers, the Devil did not give up—and even presented himself as the winner in the end. For the bride's two sisters who, appalled, had turned down the unsightly 'Bearskin', were finally so angry and furious that they killed themselves, one of them by hanging, the other by drowning. Thereby their souls became the booty of the Devil. And so he gets to speak the last words in the fairytale: 'You see, I have now got two souls in the place of your one.'

A harsh ending!

Pastoral Points

‘Let us worthily fulfil...’

Julian Sleigh

The Catholic Tridentine Latin Mass opens with the celebrating priest intoning the words *Introibo ad Altare Dei* (I will go unto the altar of God). It ends with the priest turning to the congregation and saying ‘Ite, Missa Est’ (Go your way, it has been sent, dispatched, released: from which the word ‘mass’ is derived).

Our Service begins with the words *Let us worthily fulfil the Act of Consecration of Man*, of mankind, of humanity. And it concludes with *Thus it has been*.

Similarity or radical difference? In various ways, both.

A main difference is the inclusion of all persons present in the process that is about to take place, and indeed souls and spirits connected to the congregation as well.

And what is it that is to take place? The consecration, the blessing not just of those who are present but of mankind, near and far. The Act is indeed a cosmic reality and a deed of healing for all who are on earth, in particular for all who are suffering sorrow, trauma or distress. Our guides and guardians in the angelic world become involved. Through the sacrament the sublime being of Christ draws near to those who are ‘fulfilling worthily’, enabling them to aspire to that high ideal of human life, namely to serve the Good and to see that it endure.

It is not so much a matter of ‘being good’ as of doing the Good. And here we

meet our limitation as earthly beings: we are bound in place and time. We cannot reach out to the wider needs of humanity: we do not have the means to know who is in danger of being raped or murdered, or who is in acute pain or devastatingly lonely or depressed. We need the help of the Angels: they are able to sense where help and healing are called for, but they require as spiritual energy the substance of Christ-endowed *human love* generated by the process and fulfilment of the Act of Consecration of Man.

Our Service is a means of creating a spiritual, practical, blessed power of healing and goodness which we give over, indeed *send* to the angelic world for the Angels to use wherever help is needed. So attending the Service is not primarily for oneself or for one’s community but potentially for all of humanity—for Man. Our support for the Service is a selflessly social deed in line with empathy.

But at what point is the soul-substance given over? When can we say *missa est!* I venture to say: at the moment when the Server extinguishes the candles and they release their sevenfold light to the Angels.

Then we can say with the Priest *Thus it has been!*

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The Act of Consecration of Man and the Twelve Human Senses II

Hans Werner Schroeder

The Act of Consecration stimulates a wide range of other impressions which are perceived by the eye. We are dealing here with three elements:

Symbols, Movements and Gestures.

Everything that we see in the service is symbol: not only the altar with its three steps, the altar cloths and their colours, the seven candles and the picture over the altar but also the following:

- *The priest's vestments: cassock, alb, girdle, stole, chasuble, biretta.*
- *The vestments worn by the servers.*
- *The ritual book and the Bible.*
- *The cup, the paten (the vessel for the bread) and the cloth covering the cup.*
- *The incense holder and the rising incense smoke.*
- *The jugs with the wine and the water.*
- *Finally, the bread and the wine themselves.*

If all these things are symbols, it is important to think carefully what we mean by this. We don't mean any kind of thought out mechanical symbolism.

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These are true, living symbols which portray a higher spiritual reality and which, to a certain extent, embody this reality in themselves. They are surrounded by it like a sheath, and in

the case of the bread and the wine they are permeated by it. The bread and the wine are not only declared in an external symbolic way to be the body and the blood of Christ, but during the course of the transubstantiation they truly become the body and the blood of Christ in the sense that the Resurrection body and the life forces streaming from the Resurrected One combine with the bread and the wine. They penetrate the bread and the wine so that they become parts of the very being of Christ.

In the case of the vestments or the cup, no such profound transformation takes place. However in the vestments—in the white alb and in the colours of the chasuble with its particular forms, there appear before our eyes true images of the spiritual. We behold with our physical senses what otherwise belongs to our human make up as a supersensible and invisible reality.

As human beings we exist in many layers of reality. Our body with its bones and organs, with its blood and nerves, is only one layer. Our life forces and our soul capacities are two other layers of 'sheaths' in which our true ego lives. In the service we perceive something of this appearing as three 'sheaths'.

- *The black cassock as a symbol of our perishable body.*
- *The white alb as a symbol of the life forces which have been purified by Christ.*

- *The colours of the chasuble as a symbol of the soul moods with which we strive to approach the spiritual world during the service.*

As the priest moves to the altar wearing these three vestments we are able to see something of the supersensible being of man with our own eyes. What belongs to the life forces and the soul forces normally remains invisible for us (or only visible to the clairvoyant eye as the aura). These now enter our field of perception. It is however not an expression of the personality of a human being who is at the altar but it shows the 'colouring' of the sheaths which comes about when a human being is imbued by the Christ spirit or, as St. Paul expresses it, he 'puts on' Christ.

Our eye has the wonderful capacity to see more deeply. In language we have a whole variety of words and expressions for seeing:- seeing, looking, observing, beholding but also staring and gawping. Our language offers us a whole range of nuances between active and passive seeing. Antoine de Saint Exupéry expresses the deepest seeing with the words 'we only see well with the heart'. We need this seeing with the heart when we are in a service. If one were to keep one's distance and observe coldly what takes place there, one would find it difficult to penetrate to the reality.

When we look at little children, we realise that they have naturally this capacity for seeing with the heart. We can sense that something of the shining light that they bring from the spiritual worlds still lives in them.

Many people today can still open their heart-filled seeing to a rose or a fruit tree in blossom, or they can learn again how

to do it. We see not only the colour or the shape of the rose blossom but we can be deeply stirred when we gaze at it. A deeper dimension of the world around us begins to speak to us.

Of course much of modern life encourages the detached, cold way of 'seeing'. Indeed, we need it when driving, or when we are out shopping. Because of this, many people no longer engage any of the other qualities that the eye also possesses. The rituals can become a way of schooling our seeing. Sometimes, special occasions such as conferences or ordinations can open our eyes. When several priests enter in their white albs at the beginning of a service we can feel deeply stirred. Why is this? Because we are having a spiritual experience without being clairvoyant. The sense impression awakens in us pictures which we saw in the spiritual world before birth.

There are two further things that can help us. Firstly, the awareness that besides our material body we have other layers which appear, as we described above, in the priest's vestments. Second, the feeling of reverence accompanying the activity at the altar. Reverence and devotion open our hearts and our eyes to the true essence of the ritual.

The Rising Incense

We shall now look briefly at this second example of a real symbol that is at work in the ritual. It is an image of the forces dwelling in the soul, seeking to rise above the ordinary earthly level. We strive to lift the soul so that what is bound to the earthly can 'rise to the heavens'. It is particularly in the Offering that this direction upwards makes itself felt. In addition to

the rising smoke, there is the raising of the cup and of the arms that indicate this direction.

We should not see the smoke of the incense as something merely external. It reveals the working of a spiritual reality. The prayers of the congregation are a super-sensible substance which is immensely valuable for the spiritual worlds because it originates from the best forces of the human heart and the innermost freedom of the human being. We hear the words: 'out of the christened soul may the smoke ascend'.

The gestures

There is one gesture that returns again and again, when the priest turns to the congregation and speaks the words 'Christ in you.' The right arm is raised and the left arm is turned downwards to a certain extent. Both arms are somewhat bent. The palms of the hands face the congregation and the fingers form a threefold gesture. If we allow this to work on us we see that it expresses balance and harmony: between right and left, between above and below and between what is behind and what is in front. What we hear in the priest's words we see before us. With every experience of Christ there is this element of balance. We can feel how we stand in the middle between our different forms of one-sidedness.

This gesture appears at the end of each part of the service. It presents to our senses what desires to come close to us as the essence of the service.

The movements

From the beginning to the end of the service we witness a wide variety of different movements. This starts when the priest

enters with the servers, moves up and down the steps and moves to the right or the left of the altar. There is too the carrying of the book from one side to the other and the making of the three crosses as the Trinity is invoked, and much more.

As we have seen, the second part of the service is full of movements emphasising the direction from below upwards: the raising of the cup, the rising of the incense and finally the raising of the arms. These movements focus our inner experience with our own soul forces. When the cup is raised, we too are raised in our best forces, in our thinking, feeling and willing, and these are turned to the divine worlds. When the incense rises it is expressly said that this is a picture of the power of prayer rising up from the congregation. When the priest's arms are raised we can experience how the hands are permeated by a higher power, bestowing blessing.

These gestures upwards correspond to those in the third part when the priest kneels when offering the bread and the wine. Once again we feel how we accompany these movements. Not only the priest is kneeling, we too kneel inwardly at this moment. Perhaps the fact that the priest kneels only once in the Act of Consecration of Man, and the congregation remains seated, makes it possible to accompany this gesture all the more intensely in an inward way.

It is a special situation when the priest makes the sign of the cross and invokes the Trinity. Those in the congregation can also make a cross over the brow, the chin and the heart region. This is also perceived by the sense of our own movements and we shall return to this at a later point.

Listening in the rituals

Before the service, our sense of hearing comes to peace. Just before the service starts we experience this profound sense of peace when all is quiet. During this silence we can immerse ourselves in peace and come into contact with the deeper forces in our soul. We prepare ourselves for the moment when the words resound.

There are two further moments in the service when a deep peacefulness descends. First, when the priest makes three crosses over the bread and the wine. The second moment is when the priest takes the bread and wine. One can feel how that peace that was evident at the very beginning now returns in a more concentrated and transformed way. We can really say: here the peace has become audible.

The initial moments of the service begin with perceptions for our eyes: the lighting of the candles. Into this brightness there then resound the three rings of the bell. The stillness is permeated by sound. This silvery sound encourages us to awaken an inner light and inner activity. The metals for this bell have been taken from the depths of the earth and it is as if they call to us 'in the depths of your soul you too can be filled with this brightness and this activity'.

Just as we quoted earlier Saint Exupéry's words 'we only see well with the heart', so we can also say when we are speaking of what the ear receives: 'we only hear well with the heart'. As we saw earlier with all

the expressions for seeing, there is a wide range of nuances in our language about hearing: to listen, to hearken, to give ear, to overhear, amongst many others. We also experience in everyday life moments when our hearing reaches a great intensity: when we are awaiting a message of crucial importance to our life, for example. We can also learn much from children who on some occasions 'hang on every word' when, for instance, they are listening to fairy stories. If one addresses, or is part of a larger group of people, whether this be in a lecture or a service, we can notice how the quality of listening changes during the event. There are certain moments when it achieves a certain density and fills with substance. One can also experience how hearts open and the deeper forces in the human soul begin to resonate.

Experiencing the Act of Consecration of Man can become a real schooling for our listening. In the Gospel of St Luke the destinies of the Word are compared by Christ to seeds that fall on four different types of ground. Only in the well prepared ground can they bear their full fruit. This culminates in Christ's words: 'So pay heed how you listen' (Luke 8: 18). These words of Christ can awaken in us when we begin to listen to the service. Have we developed enough strength to listen with our heart? As the service develops, in particular in the third and fourth parts other senses come into play and these can further support our listening.

*texts of 1993
edited & translated by Christopher Cooper*

Three communities in the service of Michael

Taco Bay

Thoughts about the conference 'Community Building in the Light of Michael,' 24–27 September 2009 in Dornach

In the years around the foundation of The Christian Community, Rudolf Steiner spoke on many occasions about the being of the Archangel Michael, the leading time spirit of the epoch that started 1879, whose light shines on the present destiny of mankind. He spoke too about how in this time, Ahriman is preparing his incarnation. The most important spiritual event of our time is however Christ's re-appearance now in the ether sphere of the earth, in the realm of life.¹

Rudolf Steiner described how Michael has stood at the side of Christ since the fall of Man, remaining faithful to mankind through all evolution, and keeping open man's path towards freedom and back to the heavenly world.²

Michael's task is made all the more difficult since the Incarnation of Christ, as he only intervenes when human beings turn towards him for help.³ This gesture of renouncing one's own will can perhaps only be compared with parents watching their children's first steps towards autonomy.

We owe our knowledge of Michael's relevance for our time to the spiritual research of Rudolf Steiner, whose central task was to show mankind a Christian way to reincarnation and karma, as opposed to the ancient eastern way.

Only through this knowledge can the human being be seen in his true nature, as a spiritual being. With this background I shall attempt to describe three aspects of the working of Michael that express themselves in three movements, which have their origin in anthroposophy. To begin with I would like to describe three areas where Michael has been at work in humanity's journey.

First, we see Michael at work in the development of thinking. In ancient Greece thinking was not yet individualized, but received directly from the spiritual world. Human beings felt inspired by spiritual beings directly in their thinking, and the thoughts themselves were spiritual beings. In the *Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts* Rudolf Steiner describes how thinking gradually loses its connection to the spiritual world and becomes increasingly abstract. We are free to think the right way or the wrong way. The possibility to err is a great gift of the spiritual world. The Greeks were not free to think wrong thoughts.

Greek philosophy shows this step towards freedom of thinking. The logical arguments of the Sophists were a first attempt to employ thinking *against* thinking. They showed that the experience of thinking had changed; thoughts were now unreal. Today we can think as we like, without feeling responsible for the consequences of thinking wrong thoughts.

The realm of thinking is the realm of freedom. We may imagine that God has withdrawn his creative power from this realm in order to let us experience this freedom.

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He freed the realm of thinking from his power, in order to give us the possibility to develop in it our freedom to help the divine world to find expression in it again—or not, if we so wish. Michael is intimately connected to this realm. His silent question may be heard in this way: Will mankind learn to think in a way that leads not *away* from the divine, but *towards* it?

Michael sees what remains invisible to human beings: the thoughts that are not turned towards the divine are usurped by Ahriman, the being of spiritless abstraction.

Lucifer—the being who tempts us to escape earthly reality—also plays a role in our thinking. He desires to use human freedom in thinking to draw man away from the earth. From the 15th and 16th centuries, another kind of thinking develops according to Ahriman's realm. It is a mathematical intelligence. It sees structure everywhere and wants to fix down everything that appears in its sphere. It understands nature as totally structured and fixed dead and suggests to man that all is determined entirely by mathematical natural law, utterly devoid of any freedom. Nobody can argue against mathematics. It is Ahriman's will that there be no freedom whatsoever.

It is of concern to Michael that the middle, the heart shall become the organ through which man can find his relationship to the divine in the balance between Lucifer and Ahriman. The wisdom of feeling however knows neither order nor structure.

Michael extends his help and stirs the question: how can the inner logic of thinking become the middle of the human being, his wisdom and orientation.

The answer to this is remarkable: this comes to pass through Christ entering the evolution of mankind. Christianity is

not merely a religion. It is a universal impulse in mankind, cosmos and earth.

This is the greatest hope of Michael and his wish for the future: that human beings will learn to think with their heart. This we find in Rudolf Steiner's lectures about Michael's mission for earth evolution. It is echoed too in the Michaelmas prayers in The Christian Community.

This heart-thinking leads us into the second area of Michael's working. The thinking heart can become an organ of perception of the reappearance of Christ in the realm of life, which is itself an echo of the so-called pre-earthly deeds of Christ, in which Michael helped to avert the threat of chaos and egotism engulfing human beings through the working of the adversary powers in the realms of the senses, the bodily organs, and the human soul-forces.

The third realm of Michael's activity leads to the impulse for community building. Besides the forementioned fact that Michael was the guardian of cosmic intelligence and his preparatory activity for the incarnation of Christ, he was also the folk spirit of the people of Israel. Michael was known in pre-Christian times as the countenance of God. From the beginning of the Christian era Michael became the countenance of Christ. The face reveals the most intimate, inner aspect of Christ.

The Old Testament describes the history of the Israelites who are guided by Michael. Wherever the Old Testament mentions 'the countenance' there is testimony to the activity of Michael.⁷ The most beautiful example is the blessing of Aaron:

*May the Lord bless you and guard you –
May the Lord make His face shine on you
and show favour to you –*

*May the Lord lift up His face on you and
give you peace
Through this blessing shines the being of
Michael.*

New Community in the Light of Michael

Community building is entirely different since the Mystery of Golgotha. This is apparent clearly since the beginning of the current leadership of Michael in 1879. The community of Israel was formed on the basis of blood ties; now, freedom is the community forming principle. Michael aims for communities of people who unite in freedom for a common goal in the interest of the earth, mankind and Christ.

He is opposed by the retarding forces of darkness who use the outdated impulses of heredity of the blood for their aims. Before Michael became the leading time spirit he vanquished the powers of darkness in the spiritual world for the sake of mankind, and freed thereby the path for the new communities.⁸

A community that wills to serve Michael comes about when human beings unite around a concrete earthly task and are willing to subordinate their personal will impulses in freedom. Anthroposophy can become real in situations where human beings strive together towards aims higher than what any single one of them could achieve on his own. These are for instance social endeavours, religious and therapeutic communities. People join together too in the service of the earth and mankind, for the care of the land, in agriculture. The uniting factor is now the conscious will of the individual and no longer the blood tie.

What Michael achieved as folk-spirit in the times of the Old Testament is now transformed. He supports communities who unite with his aims for mankind. The adversary forces try to continue community building on the basis of the old heredity principle, as we see in nationalist movements that hark back to an older kind of community life.

Three communities that serve Michael with different forces

These three impulses of Michael find a threefold reflection inside the anthroposophical movement:

The Anthroposophical Society, and especially the School of Spiritual Science, have the task of researching reincarnation and karma through cultivating the kind of living thinking we have described above. The results of Rudolf Steiner's research are studied and meditatively deepened on the basis of his lectures and written work. The confusion of Steiner's teaching with other, primarily eastern streams of karma knowledge must be avoided. The path of knowledge in the light of the leading time spirit Michael needs to be pursued with study and meditation. From this, new impulses can flow into all aspects of life.

Michael is at work too in The Christian Community, the movement for religious renewal. Its sacraments, which stand under the protection of Michael, can enable Christ to work right down into the depth of our earthly existence with all its karmic implications.

The transubstantiation of bread and wine at the altar is the central event of The Christian Community's life. One of

the greatest challenges Rudolf Steiner gave to the founding priests was to recognise the working of the same laws that are at work in karma and reincarnation in the transformation of bread and wine at the altar. The knowledge that flows out of anthroposophical research becomes earthly reality in the sacraments.

The third community which concerns us in this article was not founded by Rudolf Steiner. The Camphill Community owes its existence to the initiative of the circle around Karl König, who willed to 'do anthroposophy'⁹ in the service of Michael, at a time when Hitler's rise to power revealed the forces of darkness in unprecedented clarity. The Camphill community strives to form human life- and working communities that attempt to heal the distorted image of the human being and the suffering earth.

The Camphill community does not have its own esoteric foundation, but tries to work out of anthroposophy and side by side with The Christian Community.

Camphill communities, which work with curative education and social therapy, originally aimed to practise new ways of dealing with money in such a way that human beings' connectedness through the spiritual laws of karma destiny could become visible.

Karl König put the healing forces of religious life at the centre of the community, for instance in the Bible Evening on Saturday evening. Anthroposophical research is undertaken, particularly in the fields of the study of the human being, curative education and social therapy. A multitude of life and work communities have grown out of this impulse and form together a kind of Michaelic family.

In Michael's activity as the leading spirit of the current epoch we can see three ideals that want to become reality in our time. It is a living, active, creative trinity that is at the same time a unity, and in which one may see a reflection on earth of the divine trinity. It points towards an ultimate goal that expresses itself in the three tasks: To recognize the laws of karma, to live the laws of karma, and to make visible the laws of karma.

It has to be said that in all three movements the struggle to realise the original ideals is by no means over!. What Rudolf Steiner said at the end of his lectures on *The Mission of Michael* still holds good today:

I have often stated the profound truth that we need to take into account the world-historic significance of the Anthroposophical Movement, looking past trivialities, but seeing also the small impulses in their earnestness and greatness.¹⁰

- 1 e.g. Luke 21 and Acts 1
- 2 GA 194 & 26
- 3 GA 26 *Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts*
4. GA 26
6. GA 26: *The world-thoughts in the working of Michael and in the working of Ahriman*
7. The place at the river, where Michael fought through the night with Jacob, is called 'Penuel', which is translated 'countenance of God'. When Moses encounters Jahve at the Sinai mountain his countenance radiates so much light that he needs to hide it before the people.
8. e.g. GA 177: *The Spiritual Background of the Outer World. The Fall of the Spirits of Darkness. Spiritual Beings and Their Effects*, Volume 1
9. See GA 217: *The Younger Generation*
10. GA 194, 30 Nov. 1919

The Shell Temple in Margate England An Ancient Mystery Centre

Neville Adams

There lies a treasure hidden under the earth in the South East corner of England on what used to be called the Isle of Thanet. It is a treasure of immeasurable worth but sadly recognised as such by only a few. It is hidden, but accessible to the public for a modest fee. It is known as the Shell Grotto in Margate. In the true sense of the word it is not a grotto for it was hewn out of the Chalk, which underlies Margate, by human hand at a time which cannot be determined.

One can either write it off as a hoax or folly or take it for, what it surely must be, a Mystery Centre used in times long past for measuring the seasons and for rituals connected with the initiation of people—a place where priests held these rituals and read the seasons for the good of their people. It is not even vaguely imaginable that so much time and effort would have been expended for a hoax or as a folly. The people who made this temple must have known what they were doing and had an intention which can only have been of a religious nature.

There are many places in England and Europe which served similar purposes.

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Some of them are above the ground, others hidden below or covered with great stones and an earth-mound. If one looks at a map showing these holy places it may at

first seem that they are randomly situated but on closer inspection it becomes apparent that they are very often placed along what one might call ley-lines. These may run north-south or east-west. One line which runs east-west is well known and runs approximately along the latitude 51°18 North. Some of the most well known holy sites along this line are Glastonbury, Avebury, Stonehenge and Canterbury. In Saxony in Germany there are more sites along this line; Nebra where the disc was found and Goseck where there is a sun-observatory which has been reconstructed with staves as it was originally. It is well known that Stonehenge, the Nebra disc and Goseck were used to observe the equinoxes and solstices.

Two of these sites, Stonehenge and Goseck, could well have been used as temples for the celebration by the people, led by their priests, of the festivals which derived from these observations. These festivals were not only important for agriculture but also for the rites of conception and the celebration of the life-cycle of the sun. The sun was not seen as merely a ball of fire in the sky, but was seen as a divine entity, the giver of life on earth. Other sites were much smaller and could only be used for more intimate rituals. Such a centre is the Shell Temple of Margate which is situated on the same latitude as Stonehenge. Those centres which are large and situated above the earth could be termed public or exoteric temples. Those like Margate

which are hidden below the earth could be termed hidden or esoteric centres.

The shell temple is accessed through the shop 'Shell Grotto' on Grotto Hill in Margate. One enters down a short flight of stairs which leads into a serpentine passage dug into the chalk. This was originally much narrower and lower. At the end of this plain passage there is a Portal which opens into a circular passage divided into two unequal parts by a tall beehive dome. From this dome a third Portal leads into a serpentine passage which in turn leads into an almost rectangular altar-chamber.

All the passages have a pointed arch form—like the Gothic arch, but this does not indicate that the temple was built in the later Middle Ages or renaissance period. There are examples of similar formed passages dating back to pre-Christian times.

From the circular passage or rotunda right through to the altar-chamber the walls are decorated from the floor to the top of the arches and to the ceiling in the altar-chamber with mosaics made entirely with shells of many different kinds and sizes. It is estimated that there are 4.6 million shells covering 200 square metres.

The images on the walls awaken within one a feeling of awe and wonder. If one is even slightly sensitive to such things one can feel that this was built as a holy place. Through the passages one feels as if one is in a kind of paradisal state and place, cut off from the outer world.

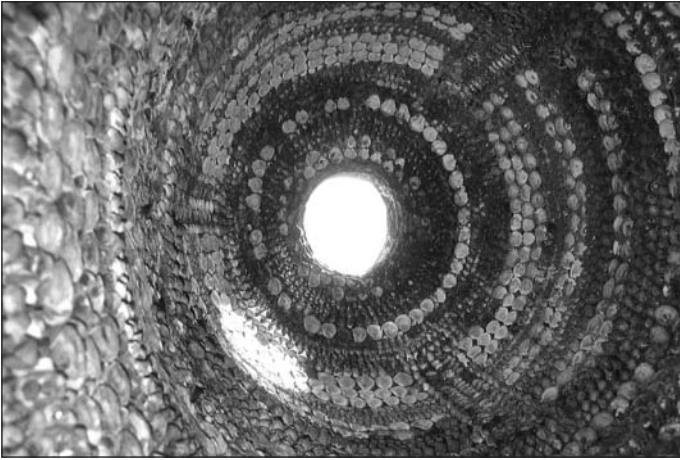
The entrance passage was originally so low that those entering had to do so in a crouched position, one could almost say in a foetal position. Only on arriving at the first portal could one stand upright. Today

the whole complex is lit by electrical light but originally it would have been very dark. Only by being in the dark for some time did the eyes begin to see more details. Did the people who built and used the complex have a different, more acute sense of sight?

The images are divided into pointed-arch panels separated from each other by a panel which widened to the top. Looking at the 'between-panels' one sees a three-foldness: at the base and going throughout the whole complex a rather static base of shells, sometimes wider than at others; above this images of a plant-like or ensouled quality; then at the top, star images, and in the serpentine passage, hearts. The panels belong to this middle section, having also the base. This gives us a division into a mineral, physical world below,



The Circular Passage or rotunda



The high dome: showing the opening to the sky, the rings of shells and the vertical lines.

then the plant and animal world, above which is the world of the stars—differently stated: Physical, aetheric/soul and then spiritual. Man as a being of body, soul and spirit.

The images on the left, the eastern side of the rotunda depict the female aspects of reproduction, while those on the right, the western side seem to show a masculine world of reproduction. Here we meet also the first of a number of images which seem to represent the faces of Beings, divine or human—it is not easy to define them when we use our modern concepts.

Here we have the panel which is directly opposite the entrance portal. It would appear to connect the panels on the east side with those of the west side standing as it does it is one of the three on the inside wall of the east passageway but tends to be close to those in the west.

The threefoldness which appears within the circle above speaks also of the 'trinity': mother, father and child. Below this is a horizontal (lying) lemniscate—the symbol of eternal life.

The images seem to speak of the earth mother and reproduction. In the lower section could be the representation of the closed womb out of which we are born and into which we must again enter in order to be reborn.

The Tall Dome: the two sides of the rotunda meet, each through a portal, in the high, pointed dome. Here we find ourselves in a space with three niches between the portals

each of which has a plant form reaching upwards. Above the portals there are no more images, only differentiated rings of shells which grow smaller as they approach the top where there is a round opening to the daylight. One's gaze is led upwards as if one would be drawn to the light, rather as in a womb going through a narrow opening to be born. Was this the experience which the neophyte was to have in order to find the path to an inner re-birth, a birth to a higher knowledge of the spirit?

Here we encounter also the sun-observatory of the temple. At the spring equinox the sunlight is able to enter for the first time into the dome. After the autumn equinox the sun no longer shines into the dome. The rings of shells are interrupted by three vertical lines of shells dividing the ringed dome into three sections. At a certain point, as we go from the top downwards, the diameter of the rings increases slightly. It is just this point, at the base of the northern vertical line of shells, which is reached by the summer-solstice mid-day sun as it shines furthest down into the

dome. This causes the shape of the disc of light to change from a round to an egg-shape! The egg has been the symbol of fertility the since most ancient times. Could this have indicated that the time for human procreation had come? Mid-summer madness! If so then the children would have been born at the spring solstice and would have had a better chance of survival.

We have here the possibility of an accurate measurement of the seasons. The curve which the disc of sunlight draws in the dome would begin very shallow and as the sun climbs higher in the sky towards summer it would draw an ever deepening curve. This would reach its climax at the summer solstice as described above. Undoubtedly the rings of shells could be used to measure the growing power of the sun. From this one could read the seasons.

Spring is the time of the fructification of the earth by the power of the Sun-God. So would begin the cultivation of the earth and the sowing of the seeds. Sown into the earth they would geminate. Mother earth takes in the seeds and becomes fructified. Goethe described this as the true fructification and not that which happens in the pollination of flowers!

Our birth is a birth out of the earth into which we must enter again in order to be reborn. This is celebrated at mid-summer.

The autumn-solstice is the sign for the end of the cycle of the plant life on the earth. The harvest has been gathered in and thanks-giving can be celebrated.

Above each of the portals there is a rectangular opening which opens into the three passages. The reason for them is un-



The representation of a woman

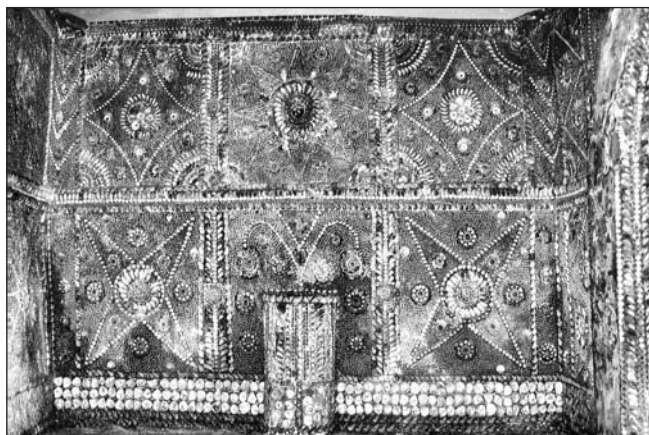
certain but one can bear in mind that the only source of daylight into the temple complex was through the dome opening.

The Serpentine Passage

Here the forms begin to change in character. As we enter the passage there is on the right hand a tree of life. The male and female images have now changed sides: on the west, the female and on the east the male images.

The Altar Chamber

The Portal leading into the altar chamber is more massive than any of the four which we encountered before. This gives an impression of entering a different and



The west wall with a pedestal altar and fountain of life

more important space. Here the images are completely different. Gone are the plant forms—no longer are we in a paradise on earth. We have entered the spiritual world, the world of the sun and the stars which also affect our daily life and the celebration of the festivals.

There were three altars one of which, on the east wall, was destroyed by a stray bomb in World War II. The two altars on the east and the remaining one on the west wall are small pedestal altars similar to the one found in a Mithraic temple during excavation work in Cologne, Germany. Above this altar we see what can only be described as a fountain. Out of the altar and the sacrifices brought there, the fountain of life wells up.

Chalk and Flint

It is not only interesting to know on which latitude or longitude a site is found. It is also important to know something of the geological structure upon which it is placed—or, in the case of the Margate Temple, in which it is made.

The geological underground of Margate is the same as that which can be seen

in the white cliffs of Dover which are up to 106 metres high: Chalk! In Margate the chalk is not particularly visible, but present below the surface. Entering into the passageway which leads to the actual complex one finds oneself surrounded by chalk—a rough-hewn passageway which was originally so low that one had to crouch down in an almost foetal position in order to

progress along the passage or tunnel.

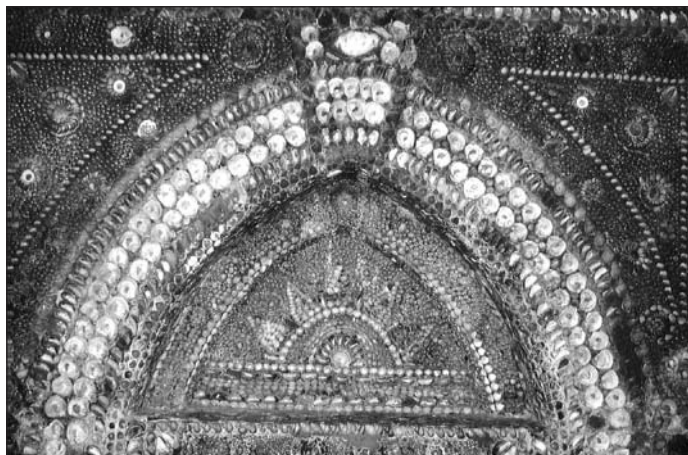
Chalk is the substance of which the shells and other simple living creatures are made. There must have been billions of such living beings which gave the substance of which the chalk is composed: Calcium Carbonate. In the Chalk one also finds cherts which are a form of Silicon Dioxide, silica or Flintstones. These one can find in abundance on the beach at Broadstairs as the result of weathering of the chalk.

But why should the people then have chosen to create a temple in chalk?

The answer to this question is very complex but to try and understand this we must look deeper at these two substances: chalk and flint.

At the time in which the chalk was formed, the Chalk-Period, the living beings were held in their form from outside through the formation of shells or similar structures. This period was the time when the transition took place in the form of the living beings. The animals which were developing now no longer reproduced outside of themselves in eggs, but took this process of reproduction into their bodies. This meant the development of a skeleton

and bones to protect the new life within them. This enabled mammal and man to take on a firm physical body. So we find a change in animal life, from the shell to the skeleton. And in the developing human a change in the experience of death and the need to find immortality, which meant finding re-birth, not only in death, but also during life.



Over the Niche-altar we see the rising sun.
The sun which had died at sunset is re-born.

Supported by the forces of the chalk in this geological formation the priests of that time sought to create a place where the forces of death and re-birth could be found and to find a relationship to the Beings of the Spiritual World, particularly to the Sun-God who gives new life to the earth in spring after the cold of winter.

The complex is a place of mystery and marvel leading us to ask who and why this place was created. One thing remains clear though; that it must be seen as a

whole. It was designed and planned as a totality. The workmanship throughout is of such a high quality that one cannot imagine that any of the arguments brought against its authenticity could be taken seriously. Also the imagery is so unusual that it must come from a culture other than the British-English. Many of the images would seem to indicate an oriental influence. Perhaps even the idea of it having Phoenician origins needs to be seriously considered.

Obituary

Reverend William Davie
2 August 1930–27 January 2009,
Ordained 29 January 1956

William Davie, who has died aged 78, was born in Fetterangus in north Aberdeenshire. At the age of two he moved with his mother to live with her uncle in Bielside just outside Aberdeen. One of his earliest memories was being taken, aged three, to St. Devenick's Episcopalian Church in Bielside, and he happily attended there throughout his childhood.

A Mrs. Fairbrother, a distant relative, had a handicapped child in Camphill, and this brought her into contact with anthroposophy and The Christian Community. Through this, William also came into contact with Camphill, The Christian Community and later, with the works of Rudolf Steiner.

When William reached the age of fifteen, his mother's uncle died and the boy had to leave the school which, however, had brought him little joy. He began working in a firm of solicitors in Aberdeen, and at this



time Karl König invited him to join the beginnings of the Camphill Seminar.

After the war, in 1947, William was one of 120 young people present at the first International Youth Conference of The Christian Community at Albrighton Hall in Shropshire, at which Emil Bock and Gottfried Huseman were present. It was the first time since the war that people were allowed to travel to Britain from the Continent.

It was at this time that the idea of working in The Christian Community began to awaken in William.

First he did two years of military service in the RAF, and later lived in The Christian Community house in Aberdeen and became a protégé of Rev. Donald Perkins. After training, he taught in the Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School and continued to attend Christian Community youth conferences. Ormond Edwards, who was to be his colleague, recalls how, at the conference in 1951, William taught some of the participants a number of his repertoire of traditional Scottish songs.

William entered the Priests' Seminary in Stuttgart in 1952, aged 22. His health was not robust and, although the other members of his group entered the priesthood in 1955, he was ordained a year later, in 1956.

After a short spell in London, he went to work with Rev. William Sawkins in Sheffield. He was resident there for the rest of time as a congregational priest. During those years he also faithfully visited the small congregation in Manchester. The congregations, for all that they much appreciated and were fond of William, remained small, and in the mid-eighties his work there came to an end. He went to live with a close friend of his, before moving back up to Scotland, to Edinburgh.

Whilst in Edinburgh he was called on to help out, and unstintingly gave of his time and energies to travel to Temple Lodge in London, where for two years he visited regularly in the time between the death of Rev. Rachel Shepherd and the arrival of Rev. Peter van Breda. Here, too, his attentiveness and concern for the members of the congregation was much appreciated.

William's great loves were art and music. He travelled across the Continent, visiting its great art galleries, whenever time allowed. He taught himself to play the violin, and gave lectures and wrote about paintings and artists, and in that capacity held evening classes in the Workers' Educational Association in Sheffield.

When in later years he talked of the early days, his words were filled with lightness and joy as he recalled, with precision, memories of his early life, and also when he talked about the subjects of which he was so fond: art and music. Later on, his illness cast a gloom over his life which became increasingly overshadowed by hospital visits involving a succession of treatments for leukaemia. In the end, even a radical course of chemotherapy failed to control the illness and he was content to await the outcome.

He received the Last Anointing from Rev. Michael Jones shortly before midnight on 27th January, and passed away a few minutes later, two days before the fifty-third anniversary of his ordination. His final resting place, next to that of his friend who died

Become part of the spiritual conversation. In the first book of its kind, Tom Ravetz systematically explores the theology of the Christian Community.

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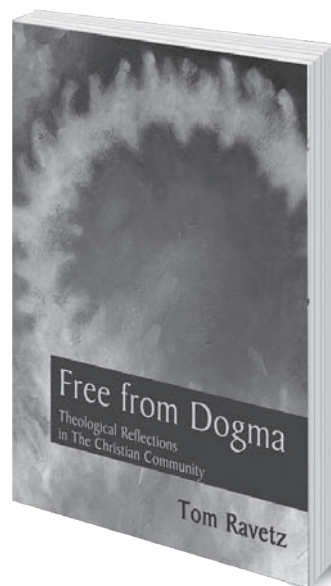
Theological Reflections in the Christian Community

TOM RAVETZ

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Rev. Tom Ravetz was born in Leeds in 1964. He completed the training for the priesthood of the Christian Community in Stuttgart and studied theology at the University of Aberdeen. He has been involved in training priests in Germany, and works in the UK and Ireland. He has written and spoken on a wide variety of theological and spiritual topics.



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one year before William, is in the church yard in Pitlochry, less than 150 miles from William's birthplace.

Louise Madsen, from recollections
by Ormond Edwards and others.

Thinking of William Davie

In a game for young children, two or three of them take hold of a golden ribbon, and then move about the room as music is played. Each time it stops the other children have a chance to take hold of this ribbon, and so a larger and still larger community of young souls, who are in movement, is formed. This could be seen as a picture of how spiritually, before life begins, a destiny group takes shape.

William grasped his ribbon of gold consciously, quite early in life, and it led him first to an understanding of the earth and mankind as it lives in Anthroposophy, and then to the movement for religious renewal, The Christian Community, in which he was ordained in January 1956.


Yet, despite his spirituality and his concern for human beings, he remained a loner through much of his life—perhaps because he found it hard to deal with some of the blows of destiny, which met him.

After ceasing his work in the Sheffield and Manchester congregations, as they grew smaller, he gave himself more fully to the classes in art appreciation, which he had built up steadily over the years.

Then, later in his life, when the Hammersmith centre of the London congregation had no priest, he was asked to visit there to celebrate, and be among people he knew from earlier times. This seems like a late affirmation of his priestly task, and was in its way a reaching out towards the golden ribbon of the destiny, which he had taken up as a young man. His gratitude was always apparent for the friendly contacts and greetings which came his way.

Peter Allan

Temple Lodge Club a quiet oasis in the middle of London



Temple Lodge—a Georgian Listed Building in the middle of Hammersmith—was once the home of the artist *Sir Frank Brangwyn*. Whilst his studio has been converted into a chapel with a **vegetarian restaurant** on its former mezzanine floor, the house itself is given over to accommodating bed and breakfast visitors. They come from four corners of the world to enjoy the *quietness and tranquillity* of the house. Many have described it as a really peaceful haven, despite being a stone's throw from the centre of Hammersmith and its busy traffic interchange. The absence of a television in the house and rooms *adds to this atmosphere*.

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Two classic titles by Hans-Werner Schroeder

Hans-Werner Schroeder, born in 1931, is a priest of the Christian Community. He teaches at the seminary in Stuttgart. In addition to *The Healing Power of Prayer* and *The Christian Creed*, he has also published *The Cosmic Christ*, *The Trinity* and *Necessary Evil*, all with Floris Books.

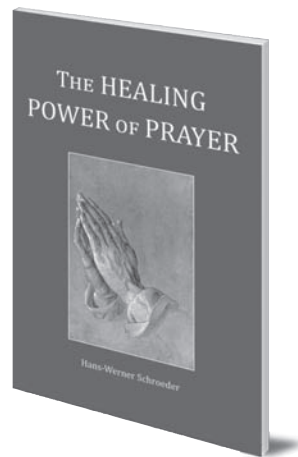
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There are times in our lives – for instance, a bereavement or a sudden job loss – when we need to work to find some inner peace to help us through. Often, we may feel that we want to turn to something greater than ourselves for support.

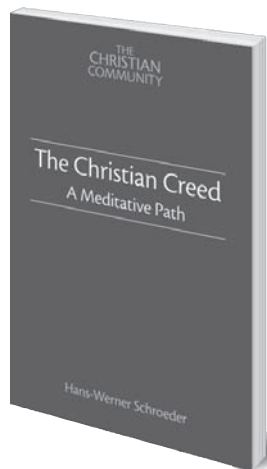
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the scientific basis of faith; the biology of hypnosis; and on the effects of too much choice, and for Dispatches on Channel 4 on the hidden detrimental effects of moderate dieting. His health and psychology book *Getting Physical* won The Times Educational Supplement's Information Book Award.

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Arthur Zajonc is professor of physics at Amherst College, where he has taught since 1978. He has been visiting professor and research scientist at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris, the Max Planck Institute for Quantum Optics, and a Fulbright professor at the University of Innsbruck in Austria. His research has included studies in parity violation in atoms, the experimental foundations of quantum physics, and the relationship between sciences, the humanities and meditation. He is the author of various books

and is director of the Academic Program of the Center for Contemplative Mind which supports appropriate inclusion of contemplative practice in higher education. Arthur is also a member of the Crossfields Institute Academic Council

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