

The Christian Community

Perspectives

December 2009 – February 2010



The economy – money – love

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by Rembrandt van Rijn
Christ driving the moneychangers from the temple,
etching

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The dramatic events in the financial markets over recent months have brought uncertainty and real hardship to many people. Some accepted truths have been overturned. Still, it is easy to feel baffled by the worlds that have been created by the hi-tech globalised economy. Such bafflement can make us feel powerless. Understanding more about the forces at work in money and the economy, and seeing their connection to what we can do in our everyday lives returns power to us. We hope that the articles in this issue will be a help in this.

TOM RAVETZ

the child

His I embraces instead of piercing.

He has no earthly power, so he doesn't compete with us.

He embraces us, so we cannot see him; we think he's not there.

Without competition, we are disarmed. Then we wake up.

We feel guilty, and we hear our conscience.

We might hate him.

We hear him. We want to hear ourselves.

We question who we are, and whether it is ever ourselves we hear.

We die.

The child troubles us. His innocence does not fit the world he wings into. He troubles us less once the wings drop off. But when he grows he may will his own into being.

He doesn't make sense. It's such a blessing! He loves us so well.

He cannot be found anywhere but in others and in God. He embraces.

Givers are invisible.

Keepers appear clearly, sharp as steel against the sky.

If we are looking for advantage we will never see him.

Pride is about being better than others by getting the better of others, humility about being others.

We cannot get what we want from him.

We can give to him.

We deserve to give to him.

IAIN CRANFORD HUNTER

Gold – sacred money – bad money – financial crisis

Michael Kientzler

When the great festivals took place at the temples and mystery-centers of old, people didn't go there for religious reasons alone; there was always some kind of fair or market held at the same time. This was the place to exchange goods: livestock, the cloth which the women had woven, weapons and jewellery, amongst other things.

Bartering filled a lot of the time which was not dedicated to the processions, the mystery plays, the devotion to the gods. We know what a complicated process that must have been if you had a bull, needed a sword and the armourer needed a horse. Thus the invention of money by the priests of the mystery centres was an enormous step forward. Symbols of gold were handed out with the image of the god imprinted which meant that it belonged to the temple, the deity. These symbols for goods and commodities created an increase of wealth. Less time was spent bartering and the economic sphere was growing. Gold had no value in itself, because neither weapons nor tools could be made with it, but it had the qualities of consistency, pureness and radiance—almost divine characteristics in the physical realm. Therefore it was most appropriate to be used as a symbol for earthly goods as well as a symbol of trust in the priests of the temples who represented the divine on earth.

It seems likely that the custom of imprinting coins with the face of a human began under Alexander the Great. It became widespread after his death under the kings who divided his empire between them.

Thus the origin of money lies in the religious sphere like almost everything else. It was a symbol for goods and not a commodity in itself and through the link to the divine it was originally protected from egoism and greed. In Hellenic and Roman times this changed.

Warehouse banking existed even before the emergence of coinage, when grain was stored and administered by the king or pharaoh who was originally an initiated priest. Other forms of money existed in other parts of the world.

A whole new step was taken during the crusades by the Italian City States and the Knights Templar.

Money orders and letters of credit were invented and used. All of this was based on trust. There can be no financial dealings without trust. The Knights Templar were trusted most because it was well known that the individual knights were sworn to poverty. Their castles were the safest banks and whole national treasures were entrusted to them. They seem to have been the only example of an institution, and the only individuals who were incorruptible by gold, since the time of money's origins in the holy temples. Their whole life was service to Christ. 'My blood does not belong to me it belongs to Christ,' was their motto. They had to be ready any moment to sacrifice their life on the battlefield. They attended mass every day.

All of this was a schooling in selflessness and created a spiritual shield against the temptations of gold which were powerfully at work in Philip le Bel (king of France from 1285–1314) of whom Rudolf Steiner said that he underwent a kind of gold initiation in the negative sense. With him the symbol of trust turned into its shadow. The other side of Gold was revealed. We might compare this contrast with the life-giving properties of the sun and the destructive burning, desert-creating side, something like the 'Sun-God' and the 'Sun-Demon'? Philip's greed for gold was insatiable and before his destruction of the order of the Knights Templar he tried to reduce the gold content of French coinage for his own gain, which caused an uproar during which he needed the protection which only the Knights could provide in their temple in Paris.

How can we understand the fact that only once was it possible to deal with great amounts of money in a selfless way, using it as a symbol for trust and as a means to further the welfare of the people, who were also nourished spiritually with folk tales and spiritual teachings by the knights? How does it reflect on the current crisis which has definitely not yet come to an end? Is there anything to learn from the way the Knights Templar dealt with money?

The fall into sin in the money sector happened when money was endowed with a value of its own; when the symbol became a commodity, 'goods', creating a 'money market'.

We don't have to go into the details of the current crisis. Much has been written in great detail; most of it describes symptoms but not the cause. The approach has been similar to the approach of modern medicine, which mainly treats symptoms, and often creates other conditions of illness through side effects which are sometimes worse than the original problem. One of the symptoms of the fatal social disease is the fact that debts

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were treated as assets. An even more important symptom is that there is a bubble of liquid assets floating around the world, money which is no longer invested in goods that produce economic activity, in factories and machinery, because the return on investment is much less than what can be made in the speculative 'money-market' which is basically a form of gambling, a chain-letter-economy. Capitalism had reached a state where it was much more profitable to deal with debts, credit and foreign currencies than with industrial products or raw materials and food. Since 1980 the volume of global finance has increased from \$12 trillion to \$196 trillion, an increase three times more than the world production. This has made some individuals incredibly wealthy, but at the same time has exported costs to developing countries and the exploitation of the earth, water and air with pollution that has created a 'nature-debt' that can never be repaid.

A new study by the World Institute for Development Economics Research has tackled that question and determined that the richest 2% in the world possess over half of all 'household wealth.' The comprehensive study, also states that the poorer half of the world owns less than 1% of the total wealth. For the purposes of the research, the authors took wealth to be assets less what people owe, to include land, buildings, animals, etc. In the case of many developing nations, however, wealth had to be estimated. Not surprisingly, researchers determined that wealth is more concentrated in North America, Europe and in places like Japan and Australia than in the rest of the world.

All of this shows the total uncoupling of money and goods. The 'symbol' has taken over, turning into a dark shadow and creating a fictitious reality.

A year ago neoliberal teachings were the unquestioned dogma in economics, an ideological driving force for the 'turbo capitalism' which we have experienced. Adam Smith's teachings seem to prevail. Smith believed that when an individual pursues his self-interest, he indirectly promotes the good of society:

by pursuing his own interest, [the individual] frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he intends to promote it.¹

We should however also remember that Smith also lectured that labour—rather than the nation's quantity of gold or silver—is the cause of increase in national wealth.

The 'pursuit of self interest' is a euphemism for egoism. The more an individual can pursue his or her egoism (greed), the better it is for society as a whole. This is the essence of this teaching. This is the ideology behind the greed-driven capitalism which has driven most of the economy in the

western world for more than 200 years and has now exploded since the beginning of the nineties because governments have loosened their regulation of the financial system.

How good can the system based on greed and self-interest be, if it results in such a crisis, instead of furthering the welfare of all, as it was claimed it would? What kind of politicians are they, who enabled or at least allowed the business behaviour of some mega-banks? What seems to be mostly missing in all of that are the attribute of a human Ego (Self): responsibility, accountability and consciousness of the whole. For a long time I wondered why the collapse which was expected had not happened. Now one could only read and hear, 'greed is still good, but less of it'. How does that come about?

Interestingly enough, this whole ideology which goes back to Adam Smith, is the exact opposite of Rudolf Steiner's 'Fundamental Social Law':

The well-being of a community of people working together will be the greater, the less the individual claims for himself the proceeds of his work, that is, the more of these proceeds he makes over to his fellow-workers, the more his own needs are satisfied, not of his own work but out of the work done by others.

This might sound very complicated but what it means in simple terms is that the well-being of a community of people working together is the greater, the less egoism can prevail. It is the idea of the uncoupling of work and income. This is the principle of brotherhood or fellowship applied to the economic realm. It is still just possible to study how that works in societies with extended families. The same principle only has to be applied outside the blood relationship. Modern human genetics talks about modern man stemming from two or very few ancestors, which means that physically we are all siblings anyway. It might have been thought that this realisation would free us from the continuous and never ending wars that plague humanity.

Could it be that only the realization of the possible common ancestor from the future, the second Adam or the Christ, would enable us to create this kind of economic principle?

Studying bees and their behaviour, one has the impression that the fundamental social law might have been inspired by them! A bee that arrives in the hive with her sac full of nectar passes what she has collected immediately on to the other bees. Everything is shared from the very beginning. In this process the honey is produced, moisture taken out of the nectar, new substances added and then the honey is stored for the whole

of the colony. Every activity of the bees at every stage of their development serves the whole.

The bee colony is an image of selfless love producing a surplus of that substance which enables the colony to live through the winter, honey, which one could see as materialized love, and beeswax, which one could see as materialized light and warmth. The side effect of this is pollination of hundreds of plant species furthering the wellbeing of a whole landscape, of human beings and their health. This is a prophetic image of what might emerge in the human realm in a very far future, a community of selfless love.

All this might seem very good and idealistic, but what are we going to do now? How will we be able to work towards this goal in our time? The principles of a 'Threefold Social Order' will have to be adjusted to the necessities of our time. The will to do that will probably only come out of a major social catastrophe. If this does not happen, the aftermath of the financial crisis can only lead to greater catastrophes with the ensuing call for the 'Great Problem Solver' and a kind of centralized world government controlling egoism, satisfying material needs, and driving the spirit out of human civilization. We already seem to be on a fast track towards this and nobody seems to notice. Forcing people to be good is evil; any change can only be based on insight, inner freedom and responsibility.

A slogan in the German youth movement of the early eighties was 'yesterday we were a step from the abyss, today we are already a step further'.

Let us hope that a waking up will take place soon after the mighty 'trumpet blasts' which we have heard several times during the last hundred years. After First World War there was the chance to change the course. This was when Rudolf Steiner developed the principles of the 'Threefold Social Order'.

The Second World War was perhaps a similar 'trumpet call' and chance. Will this one in the economic realm sound unheard again leaving humanity in deep sleep as before? The least that could be done is to tame economics, to realize that the banking sector's task is part is to serve the public, to serve the flow of money towards the places where it is needed where spiritual initiative is either directed towards the economic sphere or the cultural-spiritual-social realm. Money has to be understood again as the symbol it is: for goods, initiatives and trust in a functioning social organism.

Could this be one of the meanings of the trumpet-blasts in the Book of Revelation?

1) Book IV of *The Wealth of Nations*

Politics, spirituality, the economy

Sebastian Parsons

Unlike physics or chemistry, which study the physical world, economics is a science of the spirit—of human decisions, intentions and wishes. Our economy is what we make it—it isn't separate from ourselves, it is us, it is what we do, it is the decisions we make, it is the actions we take. At least on one very important layer, economics is a matter of psychology, of human need and desire, of human group relations, of the human spirit at work.

The recent financial turbulence has seen economists around the world scratching their heads as the economic theories of the last decades fall in tatters around their feet. Their commitment to their economic theories had been absolute and had, in a real way, ruled the world, and yet the economy has simply not performed to their expectations and everywhere economists are struggling to find a new paradigm, a new set of rules, a new belief system. As ever, when crisis blows away our expectation, minds are opened and there is a chance for thoughts, long waiting on the margins, to be seen at last.

We are in a period of mass unknowing and the desire for inspiration is palpable. However, what is happening in the largest scale is something we are all used to. In knowing, we feel alive in our will and in our actions, bathed in the lightness of busyness. However, we are generally oblivious of our connection to the spirit. When unknowing brings our will to a halt the situation reverses: physical darkness, but if we are brave enough to stay in the unknowing, in time spirit dawning and spirit lightness appear.

With practice trust in this dawning grows and the unpleasantness of not knowing becomes a peaceful waiting for inspiration. I find myself called to this waiting by two lines from the Foundation Stone Meditation 'Thou livest in the resting head' and 'Practice spirit vision in restfulness of thought.'

This working out of the spirit, described by Otto Scharmer in Theory U¹ as 'leading from the future as it emerges' is possible in the smallest and biggest

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moments of our lives, as individuals, members of communities, and as nations. But what is the geography of this moment? In practical life, what lies either side of this unknowing?

I experience a rhythmical movement between review and planning which in time may move decisively forward into the carrying out of a plan. This movement might take me once, or perhaps several

times, into unknowing. Sometimes I may act out of the unknowing itself—conscious that I do not know, but that I have to act. Praying as I go—clear of my intention, but also clear that without a controlling plan I may need help from friends unseen. However, if I have time then I wait to act until I have a plan that I feel trust in, and a moment that I feel is right.

I experience ideas carrying me out of Not Knowing, and feeling carrying me through to action—the manifestation of my willing. At all times my thinking, feeling and willing are working, but in my consciousness, one or the other of them will be at the fore. In thinking my attention is carried inwardly away from myself, in willing it is carried outwardly away from myself, and in thinking I return to myself.

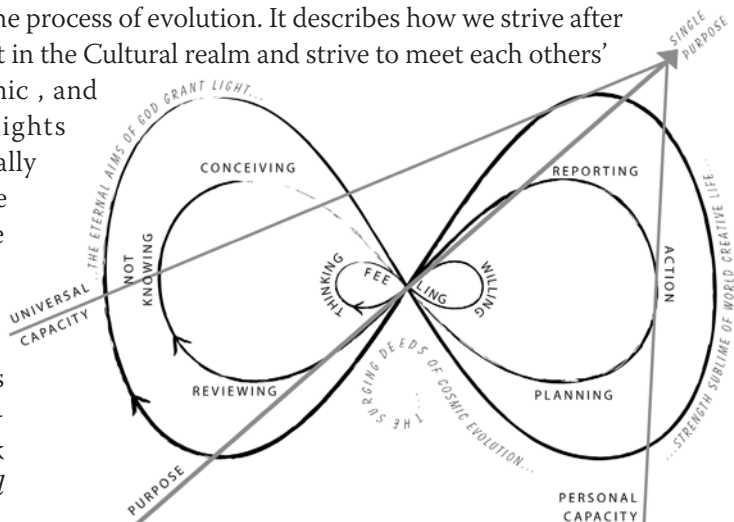
In my *Actions* my capacity is that of physical being. In its first verse the Foundation Stone Meditation speaks of ‘the strength sublime of world creative life’—my own I growing to full being as God creates our world *and* my I working toward full being as I shape the world that is around me.

In my *Not Knowing* I have access to the capacity of the Spirit: ‘which, from the eternal wellspring, opens for thee, the thoughts of the World’. Finally, in my *Deciding* I balance the ‘ideas of the World’ with my ‘strength sublime’ and shift from inaction (in-ner-action!) towards action (physical action), from thinking to willing, and feel ‘the surging deeds of cosmic evolution’ flow through me as the actions I will—in however small a way —reshape the world.

I make a decision by testing my plan against my purpose—do I feel that my proposed actions will serve the purpose? The Foundation Stone Meditation: ‘What with our heart we would found / And with our head we direct / With single purpose’. In other words, all the thinking, feeling and willing activity of my life is directed to a Single Purpose. But what purpose?

I experience Steiner’s Threefold Social Order as a road map for understanding our part in the process of evolution. It describes how we strive after personal development in the Cultural realm and strive to meet each others’ needs in the Economic , and how through the Rights Realm these potentially paradoxical aims are united in to one single purpose.

My Cultural life is the journey of my ‘I’, in *freedom*, towards full being. My Economic life is the work I do that is *directed*



by your needs, to help 'YOU' on your journey towards full being. My Rights Realm life is the way 'WE' *agree* how we will be together as we travel towards full being. I, YOU, WE, in every moment, always.

Our evolution towards freedom, articulated in so many ways by Rudolf Steiner, depends on our capacity to work together. Without community of effort the task of survival becomes all consuming. Community of effort and the division of labour combine our actions to meet each other's needs and in so doing create spare time, create value, give us the chance to think about something else apart from when and how we will eat again.

Businesses, hospitals, schools, children's homes, families—in all our organisations we work together so that we get everything we need done quicker and with less effort. Without the development of the economy how could we have found time to create the wave of emancipation that has carried freedom from Kings and Lords, through to men and now all of us? Without freedom for all there is no Rights Realm, and without the Economy there is only the I. Imagine life without washing machines (and if you think this would be just fine, are you a man?)

What amazes me about this picture is that it describes what is happening already. The difference between one successful but truly mercenary company, and one successful but truly ethical company is not the forces that are working through the company but the way the people at work understand their organisation.

In other words, it doesn't matter what an entrepreneur thinks is driving his business, he is successful to the extent that he meets people's needs by mobilising the personal capacities of his team through the agreements that he has made with them. To the extent that he motivates with fear and greed, the people in the organisation will struggle to unite themselves in freedom with their tasks. To the extent that he motivates out of love, perhaps by inspiring team members to work out of their own initiative, the people in the organisation will have the chance to act out of their own freedom.

It is perfectly feasible, as we well know, for an organisation to be physically successful pulling against the spiritual stream and motivating with fear. The approach a leader takes does not necessarily determine whether the organisation will succeed or not. The difference is in effort, physical and spiritual, that has to be continually exerted. It may prove, for an individual, unsustainable, and lead to personal burn-out.

I have a yearning for the threefold nature of society to be recognised, but not for it to be created. Seeing it offers the usual competitive advantage that a more exact understanding always offers. By taking account of this threefold nature, an organisation can become more efficient, can create more spare time and more value, with less effort, and help us move further on our journey through 'cosmic evolution.'

In an organisation people combine their effort with the purpose of meeting another's need. Whatever the product: healthcare, education, food, clothing or narcotics, the underlying gesture is towards another, whatever the nature of their need. It is a reaching out, and critically, the organisation is only successful if it achieves this, if it does meet the need. That is the freedom of the Cultural Realm—rule number One.

Underlying this gesture of giving is a very strong force, the force of love. The sort of love we might call *brotherly*, as befits the Realm of fraternity, of working in community. The main driving force of our economy is love. Whether or not an individual is aware of this does not change the underlying dynamic at work.

So a company that is striving to be ethical, that is striving to be conscious of the threefold nature of society will begin to be conscious of the role of love in what they are doing. They will begin to be aware that working together as part of a team they are held in a basket woven of love for the purpose of their combined activity, which is sending out in to the world something, imbued with love, which will, in meeting needs, be sharing their brotherly love with their wider community. Consciousness or unconsciousness of the force of brotherly love determines, not the success of the organisation, but the sense of fulfilment of the organisation.

By working together to meet each other's needs we create freedom and spare time. In working together we are directed, we are not free, but by working together we become more efficient. This efficiency generates time and wealth with which we win the chance to exercise choice. It is deeply purposeful, and, willy-nilly, it is the 'Thoughts of the World' that have, through us, organised our society in the way it is.

The opportunity offered by the *Credit Crunch*, this colossal moment of collective 'Not Knowing', is the chance to notice the reality of our society and rejoice in it, rather than stay slavishly focussed on our communal fantasy of the selfish economy. Whatever your job, you can choose to do it to meet the needs of whoever will benefit from your work. Rather than trying to find motivation for working from the money you will receive it is actually in everyone's power to unite themselves in freedom with whatever task they are doing.

If a Chief Executive makes this transformation, the effect will, perhaps, be more quickly obvious. The truth is, though, that whatever your job—cleaner, teacher, doctor, engineer, drain clearer—you will transform yourself, and in time those around you, when you transform the inner gesture you hold towards your work into a gesture of loving giving to whoever's need you will be meeting.

When a workplace is full of bullying, fear, darkness and so on, this workplace is in denial of the love that is flowing through it, the love that is generating the

success it is achieving. The transformation of consciousness does not change the love, it simply changes the denial. Working ethically is more efficient because it means that all our capacity becomes available to devote to the task in hand, that of meeting another's needs. Our load is lightened as all the negative, heavy feelings fall away. Suddenly we are rowing with the stream.

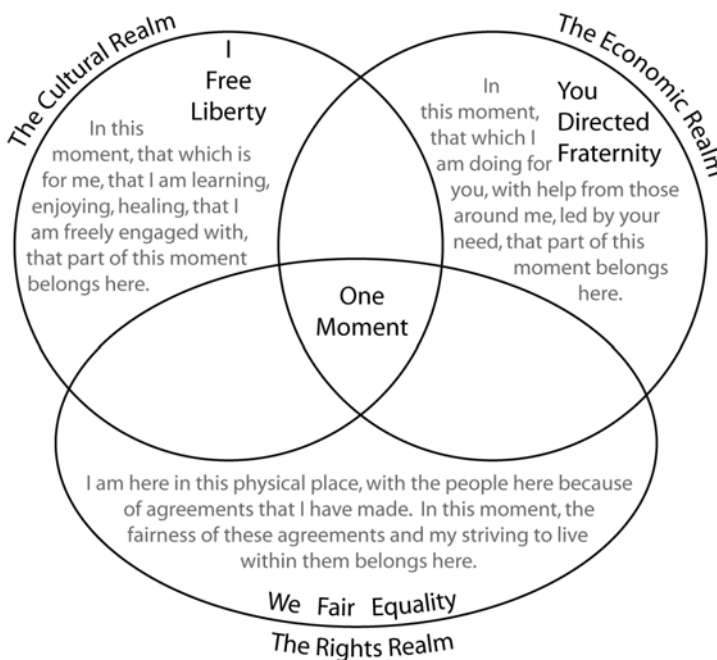
Critically though, an ethical organisation is not a *lovely* organisation. It is not an organisation that puts its co-workers first. An ethical organisation is one which puts all human beings first—its co-workers and those who receive the organisation's output. When everyone is put equally at the centre of the loving endeavour then something potentially deeply sustaining, purposeful and effective is born.

In an ethical organisation a co-worker who does not manage their own feeling life successfully and lays it off on their colleagues in emotional manipulation is breaking the Rights realm agreement of the organisation. They are putting themselves before everything else. Ethical organisations sack people. Ethical organisations experience fear and doubt. Ethical organisations die if they stop meeting need. But in an ethical organisation the real fear of existence is faced, named and worked through

In the developed countries we have currently lost our sense of knowing. We had expectations which failed us. Our long held paradigms have been proved false. However, the economy has not stopped, it still exists. Need still exists, and need is still being met. This is a moment when a new thought can

come to the fore. Not a new way of doing things, but a new way of seeing why we are as successful as we actually are. It takes energy to live in denial of the love that is the driving force of our communal life. With this energy freed we open up capacity to carry out ever more healing and positive transformation.

1) C. Otto Scharmer, *Theory U—Leading from the Future as it Emerges, The Social Technology of Presencing*. Published by Sol, 2007.



A dollar, a yen, a buck, or a pound

Kevin Street in conversation with David O'Dell

For some time now, I have had a strange vision of a future without money—no, not personally, though it often seems close to that! Instead, it is a situation in which the whole world wakes up tomorrow morning to find that money no longer exists. It's all gone—banks of blank computer screens greet the stock markets and financial centres as they log on, all hard cash has turned to powder in pockets, purses and wallets. The miser's hoard blows away in the breeze, whilst the upturned piggy banks yield nothing more than grey dust. Credit card statements, bills of demand, accounts—at home in filing cabinets, or in transit in the post—all evaporate as the sun rises on a new, cashless, creditless future. And the mortgage account? Gone! The rent book? Gone! The phone top up card—a blank space amongst the other non-existent bits of plastic that were, only yesterday, the siren voices of 'buy now, pay later' temptation.

So then—what has changed?

The sun has risen, rain continues to fall, and the high mountains are still covered in snow. The shops and markets are still stocked, crops continue to grow in the fields, sheep graze and salmon leap. Electricity is still available at the flick of a switch, and above all this—human ingenuity, love, hate, compassion, fear and intelligence still are in place. Do you go into work though? You are obviously not going to get paid—and wow! That incredible Mark 3 digitalised gnomometer that you've been planning to buy at the weekend is now sitting on the shelves—with no price tag. Help yourself! Unfortunately 57 other people have the same idea—and there are only 4 in stock. Join the crush, the throng, the pushing and shoving masses who are all converging on the retail park with a single minded determination. And what is there that the police can do? They are part of the throng...

By now, my vision starts to waver, and I realize that for this future to work at all, human nature has to take a quantum leap. All the centuries of conditioning, the protestant work ethic, the scrimping, saving and hoarding—all has to be re-

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and David O'Dell
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Stourbridge.*

thought in an instant. For if the refuse collector refuses to work, the bins go unemptied, the fabric of our environment begins to rot—in all senses. Instead of working for money, you work for the common good—if you don't do your bit, the shops will soon be out of stock, cars grind to a halt as fuel deliveries dry up.

And what of the Third World, and its crippling debt? Their need to grow cash crops to export to Western markets in exchange for more western sponsored debt? Are we to expect out of season goodies grown 2,000 miles away to appear on the supermarket shelves? Suddenly, the 'common good' takes on global dimensions, demanding an expansion of consciousness that we have never been required to use before.

Money suddenly seems a comforting bastion of our cosy western life-style, insulating us from the need to grapple with basic questions of human worth, self esteem and motivation.

*The rich man in his castle,
The poor man at his gate,
God made them, high or lowly,
And ordered their estate.*

Although this verse of 'All things bright and beautiful' is understandably omitted in modern versions, its shadow still stains our assumptions. We are separated from each other by money, a means of defining your worth and status. School assessments, exams, university degrees, diplomas, qualifications for this that and t'other—all are a part of helping to define where you start on the pay spine, and how you might progress in the future. There is more to it than this—someone with no more science than GCSE perhaps isn't the best person to remove your gall bladder, but does the fact they have an advanced degree in the neuro-surgery of microscopic gall bladder removal entitle them to a higher place in the pecking order and a pay cheque to match?

Has my hazy day dream, my wobbly vision of the future, done anything to reorder a view of society, and to question the validity of our whole economic system? Perhaps not—and so what follows is an attempt to raise further questions, and is based on an evening's conversation with a member of the Christian Community in Stourbridge, David O'Dell. David is a member of our Finance Group, and has thirty years experience of working in the financial sector. For him, what has been most interesting is his self employed status (apart from a short spell in insurance), leaving him free of targets and the agendas of others. David's extensive experience has left

him with the belief that money can be a vehicle that transports us—quickly and superficially—into the lives and experiences of others. On the other hand, it can be the starting point of creative and meaningful interpersonal development and community building.

What follows is my take on the evening's conversation, and must be read as just that—I cannot with any certainty say that David said this, or I said that—readers are invited now to add their own comments and thoughts, to send them to me, and perhaps, in a future issue, this debate can then be furthered.

The world will suffer another financial crisis, former Federal Reserve chief Alan Greenspan has told the BBC: 'It is human nature. Unless somebody can find a way to change human nature, we will have more crises and none of them will look like this because no two crises have anything in common, except human nature.'

And can human nature ever change? What is it in our history that has got us to this point, when we seem to be going round in circles, looping the financial loop with no sign of an end?

The recent discovery of the Anglo Saxon treasure in Staffordshire underlines the importance of gold as a basis for visible wealth, and this 'gold standard' has underpinned our financial systems for thousands of years. Gold—that substance reflecting the mineral power of the sun, burnished, glittering and in short supply. The medieval alchemists' quest was to turn base metals into gold, but their work went further than the mere acquisition of wealth, for underpinning this alchemical process would be a formula that would reveal immortality. For if gold is everlasting, then it should be possible to transfer this immortality to human kind, once the right balance of elements was found.

As society grew more complex, the old systems of barter and local trade had to be replaced by an easier method of indicating value, and the issue of coinage that did not actually carry its face value, and then of notes of exchange became crucial. Into this banking system came the notion of trust—that society had to be able to rely on the honesty of those to whom they entrusted their wealth. It was within this context that Quakers became respected early bankers—though usury in a variety of forms had long been associated with Judaism.

Ultimately, it was the lack of trust at many levels that nearly led to the implosion of the finance system over the summer and autumn of 2008, when the immorality and murkiness of dealing became clear to so many. It is the old picture of everyone suddenly demanding their money in cash

from a particular bank—and of course, that bank has no way of honouring such demands as so much of its assets ('our' money) is reinvested at the moment of deposit to boost the bank's profitability. And why do people want the cash in their pockets? Because they no longer trust the bank to handle their property in a reliable way. Why not simply print more money to meet demands? Again, unless there is the actual value of gold in reserves to honour this process, the money printed becomes as worthless as the strange vision I had at the beginning of this piece—you might as well abolish money as print it like confetti.

As human beings we are programmed for survival. Survival depends on food, shelter and warmth—without these three our physical existence is severely compromised. Starvation, famine, natural disasters and war all undermine this, and there is a collective fear of these. Over the millennia, in the western world, our needs have become ever more sophisticated, and society stands convinced that survival is infinitely more complex than the earlier triad, and that anything that threatens 'lifestyle' gives rise to the collective fear, that deeply embedded human terror of extinction. It is more than simple greed (though this plays into it too)—it is the conviction that a recession, a collapse of the current financial system, a total reorganisation of how we handle material wealth, will undermine our very survival. The great unspeakably dark chasm opens under our feet, and collective fear takes over positive creative thinking, driving us forward to hang on to the status quo, no matter what.

Yet alongside all this stand other streams of thought and example. The power of the Golden Calf was challenged by Moses as he returned to his tribe with a very different view of what God required, and this human, spiritual religious path was finally redefined by Christ—the new sun, the new standard on which all else human will be developed. Storing up treasures on earth, rendering unto Caesar, not worrying about what you are going to wear tomorrow—all injunctions that we can recite by heart, but that we are very slow to take to heart. We are not going to change the financial system over night, but if we allow ourselves to be mindlessly drawn into the collective fear mentioned earlier, we will be unable to nurture that part of our 'nature' that needs leading out gently by the hand like a small child, taking its first steps to spiritual maturity, allowing the positive power of God to work through us, in us. None of this actually implies turning our backs on money, but demands of us a more mature and creative approach.

A couple of examples will show this. Several years ago, a school I was involved with looked long at the basis of why teachers are paid. They cannot

be paid by results—these results are so vast and far reaching to be of immeasurable value. And so, we concluded, they are paid to live—to be able to buy those goods and services necessary for them to come into school and teach. Usually, when a new teacher is appointed, they are paid at the end of the first month. Why? During this month they have to eat, buy fuel, pay a rent—it's no good sweeping through the checkout with a bland 'Pay you at the end of the month!' We therefore decided to pay all staff at the beginning of each month, to enable them to live, to enable them to teach our children. Similarly, when for health reasons one member of staff had to work part time, we decided that her needs were no less now, and that her normal salary would be honoured.

On a wider stage, and still connected with school finances, we attended a workshop hosted by Mercury Finance (the predecessor of Triodos). We were waxing lyrical about the ethics of such moral banking, when we were pulled up sharply with the following: that in order to practice banking in this country, Mercury had to place a sum of money as liquidity in one of the 'Big 4' banks. In other words, there was no such thing as totally 'clean' money, and that we still had a duty to work creatively and consciously with all money, whether sourced from Barclays or Mercury.

There is no wealth but life'

writes Ruskin.

If you want to measure a man's success

Don't count money, count happiness'

sings Ken Dodd.

How does this wisdom impact on the way we handle money as individuals, or as a church finance group? Conventional advice has spoken of the need to save and invest, but at present this is almost turned on its head, as we are being urged to spend, as hanging onto money is starving the very economy that it depends on. We are being asked to keep money in circulation, as only by buying goods and services will people be kept in employment, and national and international economies be kept vibrant—or renewed to a pre-recession level. This movement is interesting, as it is an approach that has long been urged by those who view money through a spiritual perspective, that if the movement of money stops, then all manner of sclerosis follows. Indeed, the word 'currency' is related to 'current', that which flows. If the parable of the talents does nothing else, it should be a wakeup call to all who might be tempted to bury their heads, their wealth, and even their money, in the sand until all this blows over.

The flow of wealth is one that should also concern us as communities, too. When The Christian Community was being established in Australia, the call went out for financial help to acquire vestments. Taco Bay, who was at that time Erzoberlenker, spoke about this, and said how crucial it was for all communities to contribute, regardless of their own perceived financial problems, as only in this way would money flow back to them. A prospective student of the seminary was advised to place 'Finance' on his list of obstacles to overcome in order to move to Stuttgart—but at the bottom of the list. To place it at the top would have resulted in paralysis.

Money separates, divides, corrupts, undermines, and destroys lives—either in its excess or in its absence. Finding the right balance is a challenge that is more than 'just' earning enough, and calls on us to exercise all that is truly and nobly human. It is a constant thread in our evolution, an evolution that is more than physical and will ultimately see human nature—that Alan Greenspan seems to doubt is capable of changing—redeemed and able to order society on a basis that places human worth beyond coins, credit cards and stock markets.

The Tribute Money, Rembrandt van Rijn, etching



The shadow of memory transformed

Hartmut Borries

Two people are trapped in an argument; one explains why she is right to be angry; the other justifies her past actions. Both are afraid, having hurt each other too often in the past. Yet each longs for understanding, acceptance and love from the other. What keeps them separate are painful memories of being labelled and rejected. These memories from the past invade the present; interrupting the lines of thought with recollected events that are used as justification or witnesses by way of defence. The conversation becomes emotional, voices are raised and old hurts are renewed and confirmed. In the end, the distance between their souls expands to become an abyss.

This is the shadow of memory at work. Our not-so-happy and perhaps even traumatic memories can push their way into the present and determine how we speak and act. When this happens we are living out of the past. These memories are not our friends. They isolate us from one another as well as from the world around us. Filling our souls with resentment, they decide for us what to say and how to be, defining how we react. Such memories make us unfree; they are tyrants whom we need to depose. How can this be done?

I can write my memories in all detail, as much as I can recall. Instead of going over and over them in my mind I will, by writing, quickly realise when I'm beginning to turn in circles. Having repeated myself once or twice I quickly get bored and move on. But there is another reason for writing. By putting everything out on a sheet of paper I externalise what, until now, had a chaotic life of its own within me. I begin to create order. Later on I can step back and look at my recollections with some detachment. I can ask whether this is all that has been bothering me or whether there is more.

Through this self-reflection I can evaluate the past and look for other possibilities. What were the consequences of my deeds at the time and is this the life I want to create? If I were in the same situation today what would I do differently? Perhaps

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nothing. But it could also be that I have learned and changed over the years so that today, with greater experience and knowledge, I might act very differently. Should that be the case, now I might choose to address the wrongs of the past. I may seek clarification from someone else about something I previously hadn't understood or I might apologise for my own misunderstanding and failings. I can revisit old relationships and try to heal them.

So what have we done? We have taken three steps; in writing down our memories we have brought them to clear expression; in stepping back and pondering the events of the past we have learnt from them; and finally, we have tried to address unfinished business. After all of this there is no longer any need to revisit the past. No longer is there a need for these memories to pop up at the most inconvenient times, only to interfere with our lives. Now we can let go of them and old wounds can heal. We move on with our lives and begin to live more fully in the present.

This is one way of working with the shadow of memory. Another is the sacramental consultation. In meeting with a priest before the altar at which Christ offers himself to us, our memories may be explored in conversation. I am no longer on my own; instead I describe what happened in my life to someone who listens. Of course to make this happen I have to overcome myself. Most of us have memories about which we feel ashamed. Do I have the courage to speak about them? Can I trust that the priest will continue to accept and support me or will I be seen in a different light once I have spoken? I may no longer be able to continue living as if nothing ever happened. Once the words have been spoken and I have been heard, I might have to take responsibility for the past and do something about it. Since I do not know what that could be, each consultation is a step into the unknown—and that is normally a source of fear. To speak about the shadow of my memories requires the courage to meet my fears.

Likewise, the priest must also learn to overcome himself or herself. To listen means to be selflessly interested and withhold all personal criticism, knowledge and life experience. The priest may have heard many similar stories and yet must continue to listen with openness and interest as if hearing this one for the first time. Only when this effort is being made does the conversation become a sacrament. When both participants overcome themselves they can be fully present which means being open to what becomes possible in the moment. Then does

the inspiration come that enables the relevant question to be asked or thoughts and feelings spoken that could not be expressed before. In such conversations the new can be born.

Something else is needed before a consultation becomes a sacrament. I ask myself how my deeds affect my relationship with Christ. Having dwelt in a human body, there is nothing in the human biography that is foreign to Him. In becoming human, Christ has shown us new possibilities of further development and transformation. Consequently, in the gospels we can always find an example that corresponds with our own life situation. Christ is able to bring healing to everything we encounter. So in learning from him, we try to look with his eyes and listen with his ears. Withholding criticism, we begin to read the language of life. As long as we reject what we have created we will find it hard to make sense of our biography. Once we learn to observe and accept we realise more clearly what are the next steps on our path. Neither the priest nor Christ will tell us what to do. Although we explore different possibilities and their likely consequences together, the decisions are for me alone to take. Whatever we go through, we will also experience that we are never alone—even though at times it may seem so. Christ has connected himself with our destiny and helps us to shoulder it.

When I sit at my desk writing down the memories of the past, I begin to free myself from the shadow they throw into the present. Meeting in sacramental consultation with a priest can do the same and something more. Where two people meet in Christ's name then he can reveal himself in our midst as the lord of karma. Destiny that had been put on hold can begin to work again. The past no longer dominates the present; overruling it by replaying well known and well feared events. The future can begin to reach into the present, allowing for new insights and opening up new possibilities. No longer will that future seem barren—an endless repetition of past trauma. The shadow of memory can be transformed in order that the present may become fertile ground for new creativity, life and joy.

Pastoral Points

Self esteem: Some aspects

Julian Sleigh

I venture to say that we all enjoy receiving a compliment. Even the most eminent of persons likes to be congratulated. He may be shy, modest or proud: he will be glad to get appreciation for what he does or has achieved. It is as if all of us have taken into ourselves a doubt about our worth which gnaws away at our satisfaction with ourselves. In many people there is a void where there should be a sense of joyful fulfilment.

Often, indeed all too often, there is an uncomplimentary voice emitting an almost constant attack on our feeling of self-regard. This toxic or critical voice seems to be lodged securely somewhere within us. It provides a stream of judgements which effectively undermines our buoyancy and confidence in ourselves. This voice will comment negatively on more or less everything we do: 'That was a dumb thing to say! You notice that the others are all ignoring the points that you tried to make. Better just dry up. How is it that when X comes into the common-room everyone turns to greet him but when you arrive no-one takes any notice!' and so on. And what is more, one generally has to agree with what the voice says!

Julian Sleigh is a retired priest, living near Cape Town, South Africa.

Blessed is the person who can silence this critic and be free of it. It may well have its origin in the way an angered father may have 'torn off a strip' of his little son,

or a teacher in school humiliated a pupil in front of the class, or a classroom bully who mocked one of his classmates. The event fades but the impact lasts. And the wound gives rise to critical self-judgement which is subsequently reinforced and generalised. Our self-esteem is shaken; the structure of self-confidence is weakened and joy drains away. It is pathetic.

Yes, pathetic but sometimes helpful. The critic sets you a higher standard, a greater awareness, indeed a degree of self-knowledge. If one really listens to that voice, even making a written note of its criticism, this can focus one's attention and willpower to work on one's weaknesses. The critic can become an ally, even a friend. It can become less negative and out to put you down if it is listened to and acted upon.

There is an interesting question: is the critical voice the same as the voice of conscience, that small voice that sounds out of the Spirit component of one's being? I believe that the two are very different. The conscience works out of love. It wants to raise you up, not to put you down. It is 'on your side' and does not resort to scathing sarcasm: it wants you to be OK, at one with yourself even when it uses a stern voice.

The toxic voice is probably based on guilt, and there are ways of working on oneself to become free from even deep down guilt. Here we touch the value of counselling and the grace of the Sacramental Consultation. And then there is

the role of the concerned person who asks the question: Brother, what ails you?

Ultimately self-esteem has to do with friendship and love. It calls up the virtue of our time, empathy: we are called, in this age of solitary individuality, to recognise

and cherish each other and to enhance each other's feeling of self-worth through the expression of sublime feeling: Not I but the Christ in YOU!

This could be one of the meanings of 'Christian Community'.

The Act of Consecration of Man and the twelve human senses III

Hans Werner Schroeder

What the ear perceives is only partly due to our hearing. We must also take into consideration the activity of our speech or word sense. When we hear a human being speaking, both senses are working together.

When we look at the young child we can see how it possesses an organ to distinguish all the different sounds and noises from human speech. It learns to reproduce the sounds of speech and gain a mastery over them. The child can then enter a realm with all those beings who are quite different from the animal realm.

Language is not only an instrument for information. In the sounds of language much deeper things are hidden. In the vowels which permeate all our speaking we can experience a very broad spectrum of human feelings with many subtle nuances. Through the sounds of the vowels we can perceive the soul qualities of other people. When we come to the consonants something quite different happens. In them we meet the formative forces living in the world around us. There is the hardness of the K, the softness of the M, the flowing quality of the L. The prologue to the Gospel of John

tells us an exact truth when it says that the world arose through the Word. The forms of the human body also show this primordial link to the word.

When language is used in an artistic way and not merely made to convey information then we enter the world of dynamic forces which underlie our human nature. Layers of our soul are touched which are deeper than those our normal consciousness can grasp. It is only a short step to the Act of Consecration of Man for this text has not been created by some very gifted individual but comes as a direct inspiration from the spiritual worlds. Something of a much higher reality wants to speak to the deepest parts of our human souls. It calls forth that in us which belongs to the future.

Let us take a particular example. The word CHRISTUS has a special combination of vowels, the 'I' and the 'U'. We have a shining ego quality in the 'I' and this is led over into the deepest being of the Son in the 'U'.

Hans Werner Schroeder is a retired priest of The Christian Community living in Stuttgart.

We can now turn to a third sense which plays an important role, namely the sense of thought. In our words there are not only sounds and rhythms but thought content which we can understand. When we listen to a foreign language this sense of thought cannot be active because we can't grasp the concepts linked to the various words. Normally when we listen to a familiar language the sounds and rhythms disappear into the background and we concentrate on the thought content. When we listen to the service we must learn to turn our attention away from just the thought content and enter the realm of sounds and rhythms.

In earlier times religious services excluded the sense of thought. As long as the mass was celebrated in Latin, most listeners had no access to the service in its thought content. The main emphasis was on the mantric power in the sounds. The congregation's capacity for understanding was not addressed, instead, what was expected was a faithful devotion to the event itself. When the Latin mass was translated, for example, into German it became only a shadow of its former reality. The sounds and words lost their original power. The thought content became the important thing. Many people inside the Catholic church still feel that only the smallest element of the original mass is still living in it, because the thoughts contained in the mass are accessible to the modern intellectualism only with difficulty.

In the Act of Consecration of Man we have the newly created Mass containing a complete balance of mantric sounds and thought content. Sounds and thoughts are two sides of the same reality. For this reason it is possible to enter into an experi-

ence of the service with a completely clear understanding. It is no longer necessary to leave your thinking and your comprehension behind at the church door.

It is significant that in the text of the main service the usual words 'God' or 'Godhead' are no longer used but we meet new formulations. At the beginning of the Offering we hear of the Divine Ground of the World, then in the Transubstantiation the Father God is addressed, leading to the Lord's Prayer, the Our Father. If we look at the various epistles from Advent to Michaelmas we meet other new formulations:

Father Ground of the World (Advent),
Fatherly Ground of the World
and *Fatherly Ground of all*
Existence (Christmas)
and *Father God* (at St. John's
and Michaelmas).

At the Burial Service for Children we can hear

Eternal Ground of the World
and *fatherly origin of all*
mortal human beings.

In the ordination of priests the words

Eternal Ground of all transitory
existence, the One who is in all Being.

So we can begin to see that every sentence of the Act of Consecration of Man and the other sacraments has something that speaks to our sense of thought and develops our grasp of the deeper elements of Christianity. This way of experiencing the service with our sense of thought can continue right through our life. Again and again we can make new discoveries, for example the way the words 'I' and 'we' alternate and the way the three main soul faculties of thinking, feeling and willing are spoken to.

We now turn to the sense of movement, meaning the sense of our own movements. We can activate this in the different parts of the service when the three crosses are made over the brow, the chin and the heart region. We can make these crosses with the three fingers of our right hand (thumb, index finger and middle finger). We join them in a unity (in memory of the Trinity). This happens seven times in the service. We are invited in a subtle way using our sense of movement to unite ourselves with the sign of Christ, the cross. It is important not to do this just mechanically but penetrate this with piety and devotion. Erwin Schühle who was once a priest in Stuttgart brought a very apt picture. When we are on a beach and write something in the sand, the next wave can come, filling it with water for a few moments. So we can say: on Sundays we have seven opportunities in the service to place our own body at the disposal of the workings of the spiritual worlds.

There are two other moments in the service when the sense of movement is active. Once when we rise to our feet for the gospel reading and again when we stand up and go to receive communion at the altar. Now both these sorts of movement belong to the everyday but we can deepen them and shape them in a particular way. Standing at the altar for communion can become a standing facing the divine world. The walking to the altar is a way of approaching the divine.

The earlier movement of rising to our feet before the gospel is read is accompanied by the words of the server: 'we lift up our soul'. The lifting of the soul is copied by our body. It is involved in this raising up.

At this point the German text draws our attention to the word for Resurrection. It

is also based on the word for standing—*auferstehen*. Our standing up to listen to the gospel is like a preparatory exercise for this final aim of all earthly evolution when the body has been spiritualised.

Our sense of movement can also perceive other movements at the altar, for example the mounting of the three altar steps, the lifting of the hands in the Offering, the raising of the cup, the rising of the incense and the different gestures made by the priest when speaking the words 'Christ in you' and finally the movements on the right and on the left hand side of the altar. I would also like to point to another movement of central importance; the kneeling. When the priest kneels, the congregation in its own way inwardly kneels.

There is another sense closely linked to our sense of movement. This is our sense of balance. We see this already when we make the three crosses completely evenly. We see it again when we stand at the altar facing the divine world. We not only stand upright. We experience our body in perfect balance between right and left, between the front and the back and between above and below. However, this kind of standing has to be maintained by an active force in us which holds us in balance. It is good to penetrate this intimate force with religious feeling. We can also experience balance in certain of the priest's movements, for example the arm gestures when the words 'Christ in you' are spoken.

Finally we can notice the symmetry within the service, for example the mounting of the altar steps at the beginning is mirrored by the descent from the altar at the close of the service.

Text from Die Christengemeinschaft magazine, 1993, abridged and translated by Christopher Cooper.

Reviews

***The Life and Times of Rudolf Steiner:
Volume 1: People and Places***

Volume 2:

Origin and Growth of his Insights

Emil Bock

Translated by Lynda Hepburn

Floris Books, Price: £16.99

ISBN: 9780863156588

Reviewed by Rev. Nicholas Wijnberg

In this book, Emil Bock describes and deepens aspects of the life of Rudolf Steiner in a very helpful way. The individual chapters were originally given as lectures to members of the Anthroposophical Society in Stuttgart during the years after the Second World War. These lectures, given over a period of many years, were then ordered into individual chapters towards the end of Emil Bock's life and published in German in 1961. Bock shares with us his profound recognition of Rudolf Steiner and the significance of his spiritual mission for our times.

Though not originally conceived as a book, the chapters have been arranged in order to provide a chronological continuity. This book will probably be of most interest to those who already have a grasp of the details of Rudolf Steiner's life and are familiar with anthroposophy. For such readers, this book can help to broaden and deepen their understanding of the earlier part of his life. In turning to specific biographical situations, Emil Bock provides us with much fascinating and illuminating detail. Steiner's encounters with contemporaries, such as Friedrich Nietzsche, are described with great insight. The immediacy of these descriptions enables these encounters to become alive and real for the reader.

The enthusiasm with which he addressed his audiences is still palpable for the reader. Key periods in Steiner's life are described with particular attention for the people who played a role in his life at any given time. The

reader is given a marvellous insight into the times in which Steiner lived and the many, often quite colourful individualities who were part of his life, particularly from his early student years until around the beginning of the 20th century. Vienna, Weimar and Berlin are the predominant stations during these years. The reader can gain a greater sense for the times during which anthroposophy emerged into the world and of the struggles and encounters in the life of Rudolf Steiner which were part of this.

With his imaginative use of narrative, Bock also relates many incidents from his own research into the life of Rudolf Steiner. For instance, he describes the adventures which led to him discovering the place where Felix the herb gatherer had lived as well as various encounters he had with members of his family. The places and people shine forth vividly through the different life situations which are described. The broad and imaginative approach enables spiritually significant themes to be shared without losing a sense of down-to-earthness and, at times, delightful humour.

The book is well presented and laid out in an easily readable fashion and is accompanied by a good selection of photographs. The English translation flows very smoothly with one exception. For future editions I would hope that 'humankind' (this rather jarring expression appears quite often!) could be replaced with 'mankind' or 'humanity'.

In this book, Emil Bock, a great pioneering figure of The Christian Community and of anthroposophy, pays a profound tribute to Rudolf Steiner and his spiritual message for our times. It can perhaps be seen as fitting that this book, together with its continuation in Volume 2, has now become available to the English-speaking reader in this year which marks the 50th anniversary of Emil Bock's death. The reader feels encouraged to explore further.

Whilst Volume 1 follows a chronological path in portraying aspects of the life of Rudolf Steiner up to around the beginning of the 20th century, Volume 2 takes quite a different approach.

Here Rudolf Steiner's life from the beginning of the 20th century until his death in 1925 is looked at from the perspective of individual themes from anthroposophy and how they emerge out of this life path.

Emil Bock shares insights from lecture cycles and themes from anthroposophy and describes them in relationship to specific circumstances in the life of Rudolf Steiner and anthroposophy with great clarity and immediacy. Insights are given, for instance, into Rudolf Steiner's life and work in relationship to the Christmas festivals in the years between 1910 and 1923. His relationship to the Theosophical Society is described in detail, also the place of mantraverse in the course of his life's work, and much else too. The golden thread—the core of Rudolf Steiner's message—is drawn together in such a way that the reader can sense that here is someone speaking truly out of anthroposophy and not about anthroposophy.

Particularly in the last three chapters, Bock places Rudolf Steiner's mission into a historical context reaching far back into the past. With great insight, he gives a broad historical presentation which focuses especially on the spiritual situation in the 4th and 9th Centuries and how the thread of history continues to work into the 20th century and the spiritual impulses of anthroposophy.

Though there is a certain amount of repetition, by approaching themes from different angles, Bock is able time and again to place important historical and esoteric themes into a meaningful context.

Emil Bock is able to communicate and make accessible his enthusiasm and understanding of anthroposophy and Rudolf Steiner's mission in these two volumes. The reader can certainly feel animated to explore further.

The Shack **William P. Young**

Paperback: 256 pages, Hodder Windblown; ISBN-10: 0340979496

Reviewed by Simon Cohen

This book has made a deep impression on me. I am at present weaving it into the way I look out into the world, which is being subtly changed, for the better.

I will call it a modern day parable in which God appears in his three parts, depicted with insight and humour. God, the father, appears in different forms, according to the needs of the moment. She can appear as a large, welcoming black woman who cooks all the best things you would like to eat. Or else as a man with a pony-tail, dressed for walking. This serves not to belittle God, but to show his power and also tact.

The story centres around a man called Mack. He had left home at thirteen, to get away from his father, who drank too much. He is now middle-aged, married, with five children. His youngest daughter, Missy, has been brutally murdered. The trail of the murderer leads to an isolated shack, where Missy's blood-stained dress is found, but not her body. Mack blames himself for neglect, though there is no good reason for this. At the time Missy was abducted, Mack was altogether absorbed in rescuing his son from drowning, following the capsizing of a canoe. Mack is nevertheless bitter and ashamed.

This lasts for a number of years. Then, one particularly cold day in March, he receives an invitation ostensibly from God. Mack is invited to meet God at the shack. The following weekend he decides to go, partly because he is afraid of making a fool of himself.

A lot of things happen in this meeting. I will select one incident from a chapter called 'Here come da judge'. Mack meets God in the form of a very beautiful woman, called Sophia. She invites him to sit in

the judgement seat. Mack is terrified, as he thinks he will be judged. God says: 'No, you will be judge, you have had plenty of practice.'

God goes on: 'Now Mack, you have five children. You must choose two who will live in eternity in heaven and three in eternity in hell.'

Mack is distraught. What he finally decides is not for me to tell you. It would spoil the story.

I suggest this matter of judgement is central to the idea we conceive of God. God does not judge us, nor did Jesus, nor does the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, God invites us all to exercise our freedom, in a responsible fashion.

Then we can become, one day, like God, as it is written in John 10:34: 'Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are Gods?''

I find this prospect appealing and daunting at the same time. After all, I am so exceedingly ignorant and helpless by comparison. However, a promise is a promise.

I will finish by calling to your mind the following sonnet by Shakespeare, which I spoke as a blessing at the recent wedding of my daughter.

*Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests
and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown,
although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool,
though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's
compass come:
Love alters not
with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out
even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.*

For 'love' read 'God'. God loves us indeed. We are all his children. There are no exceptions.

Spirit Communications

Bob Woodward

Paperback, Athena Press, 2007, £5.99

ISBN-10: 1844019594

Reviewed by Anna Philips

Communicating with beings on the other side of the threshold between life and death is a daunting experience. Bob Woodward held this possibility at arm's length for many years while being unable not to be interested in spiritual healing and all it involves. Twelve years ago he took the step to become actively engaged in channelling healing energy. His background in curative education—Bob has lived and worked for many years in Camphill Thornbury caring for people with special needs—was already an expression of his healing/therapeutic interest and ability.

This book charts his path through spiritual healing to communicating with spirits. It grows in confidence as he progresses, just like his confidence in his abilities grows slowly and steadily. One can tell from his sometimes elaborate explanations and repetitions that he struggles with his academic mindset, training and experience.

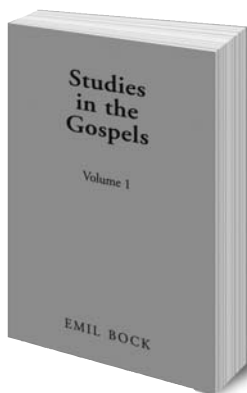
The book starts off with extracts from spiritual readings he received upon questions concerning his healing abilities and progress. Through these he is told about his spirit guides, whom he gradually learns to trust and communicate with himself. The teachings he shares from his personal spirit guide (another one deals specifically with his healing activities) are indeed very personal to Bob. They deal with his need to be reassured that he is doing the right thing. He calls himself aptly 'a doubting Thomas', being a thinker by nature. In this way he also shows that the spirit leaves him perfectly free; every new step he takes is up to him as it is his questions that will lead him on his path of spiritual development. His gift for clear thought communication has been developed over many lifetimes and he is encouraged to share this gift with others. The result is this book. *continued page 30*

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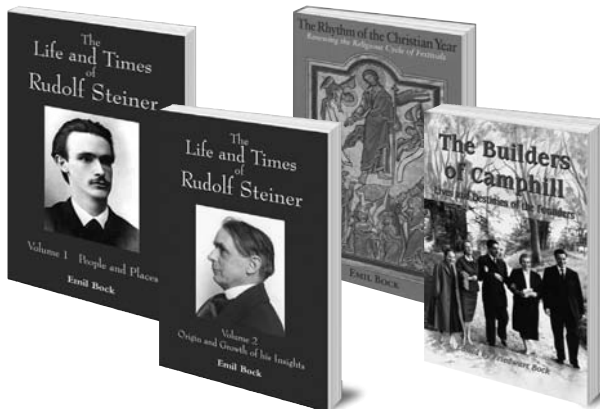


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Volume 1 looks particularly at the relationship of the New Testament to the Old, at St Matthew and the Sermon on the Mount, at Judas and Peter, and concluding with Simon of Cyrene and Joseph of Arimathea.

Available from 19th November.

Emil Bock was born in Wuppertal, Germany in 1895. He studied German and Theology, receiving his licentiate in 1921. He was one of the founders of the Christian Community in 1922, and led the movement from 1938 until his death in 1959.



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After the introduction of what spirit communications can be like, Bob Woodward addresses the reader directly and provides practical advice for those interested and perhaps drawn towards spiritual healing. The teachings are divided over several chapters, separated by short breaks as in a self-help book. Each chapter therefore takes on the form of a session, after which one is asked to reflect. In that way we can see how and where these teachings might be generally relevant by becoming specific to each person.

There are a few messages about the state of the world which is at the same time warning us and awakening us. The upheavals we experience through natural catastrophes and otherwise are necessary to engender change.

The last section concerns messages relating to his family. Bob bravely includes these in order to offer comfort to those readers who need reassurance that loved ones who have passed over can be contacted. It also generally tells of what 'life' is like on the other side.

Bob Woodward is careful, attentive and seems above all dedicated to the truth. It is clear that it has been a struggle for him to accept his abilities and the responsibilities that come with it, but the result so far seems well worth it. I am glad he has made the effort to share these experiences and doubts with us. In his matter of fact, quiet way he encourages us to ask questions and to keep up the struggle towards increased spiritual awareness. There is a huge community of souls and spirits on the other side waiting to for us to open up and ask. I am reminded here of Christ's saying 'Ask and it shall be given to you.' This special book will hopefully stimulate more of us to do just that.



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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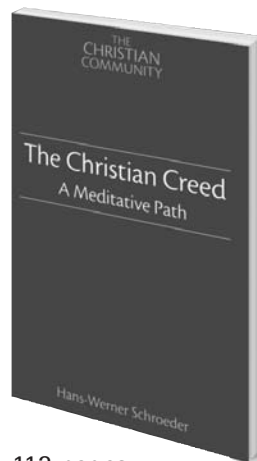
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Hans-Werner Schroeder, born in 1931, is a priest of the Christian Community. He teaches at the seminary in Stuttgart and is the author of *The Cosmic Christ*, *Necessary Evil*, *The Trinity* and *The Healing Power of Prayer* (all Floris Books).



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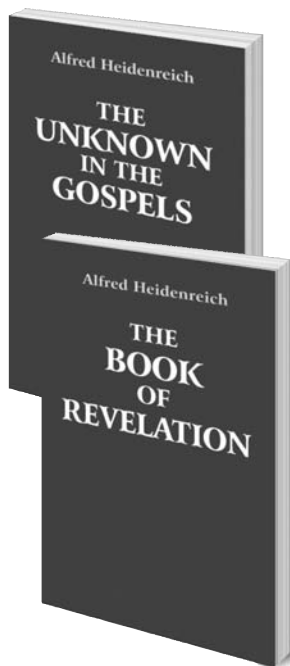
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Gospel Readings 2009–2010

Advent

Sunday, November 29.....Luke 21: 25–36
Sunday, December 6.....Luke 21: 25–36
Sunday, December 13.....Luke 21: 25–36
Sunday, December 20.....Luke 21: 25–36

Christmas

Friday, December 25
MidnightMatthew 1: 1–25
Dawn..... Luke 2: 1–20
Morning..... John 21: 15–25

Epiphany

Wednesday, January 6Matthew 2: 1–12
Sunday, January 10..... Luke 2: 1–12
Sunday, January 17..... Luke 2: 41–52
Sunday, January 24.....John 2: 1–11
Sunday, January 31.....Matthew 20: 1–16

Sunday, February 7..... Luke 8: 1–18
Sunday, February 14Luke 18: 18–34
Sunday, Febr. 21Matthew 4: 1–11
Sunday, Febr. 28..... Matthew 17: 1–13

Passiontide

Sunday, March 7.....Luke 11: 14–36
Sunday, March 14.....John 6: 1–15
Sunday, March 21.....John 8: 1–12

Holy Week

Sunday, March 28.....Matthew 21: 1–11
Thursday, April 1 Luke 23: 13–32
Friday, April 2.....John 19: 1–15
Saturday, April 3..... John 19: 16–42

Easter

Sunday, April 4..... Mark 16: 1–8
Sunday, April 11..... John 20: 19–31
Sunday, April 18.....John 10: 1–18
Sunday, April 25.....John 15: 1–27
Sunday, May 2John 16: 1–33
Sunday, May 9.....John 14: 1–31

There is a basic annual pattern for these readings within which there may be some variations.

Ascension

Thursday, May 13 John 16: 24–33
Sunday, May 16..... John 16: 24–33

Whitsuntide

Sunday, May 23..... John 14: 23–31

Wednesday, May 26 1 Cor. 12: 1–12
Sunday, May 30..... 1 Corinth. 13: 1–13
Sunday, June 6..... John 3: 1–21
Sunday, June 13..... John 4: 1–26
Sunday, June 20..... John 17: 1–26

St. Johnstide

Thursday, June 24 Mark 1: 1–11
Sunday, June 27..... Mark 1: 1–11
Sunday, July 4 Luke 3: 1–21
Sunday, July 11John 1: 19–34
Sunday, July 18..... Matt 11: 1–15

Sunday, July 25..... Mark 8: 27–38
Sunday, August 1Matthew 7: 1–14
Sunday, August 8.....Luke 15: 11–32
Sunday, August 15..... Luke 9: 1–17
Sunday, August 22.....Luke 18: 35–43
Sunday, August 29..... Mark 7: 31–37
Sunday, September 5 Luke 10: 1–20
Sunday, September 12 Luke 17: 5–24
Sunday, Sept. 19..... Matthew 6: 19–34
Sunday, September 26 Luke 7: 11–17

Michaelmas

Wednesday, September 29 .. Matt. 22: 1–14
Sunday, October 3.....Matthew 22: 1–14
Sunday, October 10..... Revelation 12: 1–12
Sunday, October 17.... Revelation 19: 11–16
Sunday, October 24..... Revelation 3: 1–13

Sunday, October 31.. Revelation 1: 1–20
Sunday, Nov. 7..... Revelation 7: 9–17
Sunday, Nov. 14 Revelation 21: 1–7
Sunday, Nov. 21 Revelation 21: 9–27

Advent

Sunday, November 28..... Luke 21: 25–36



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