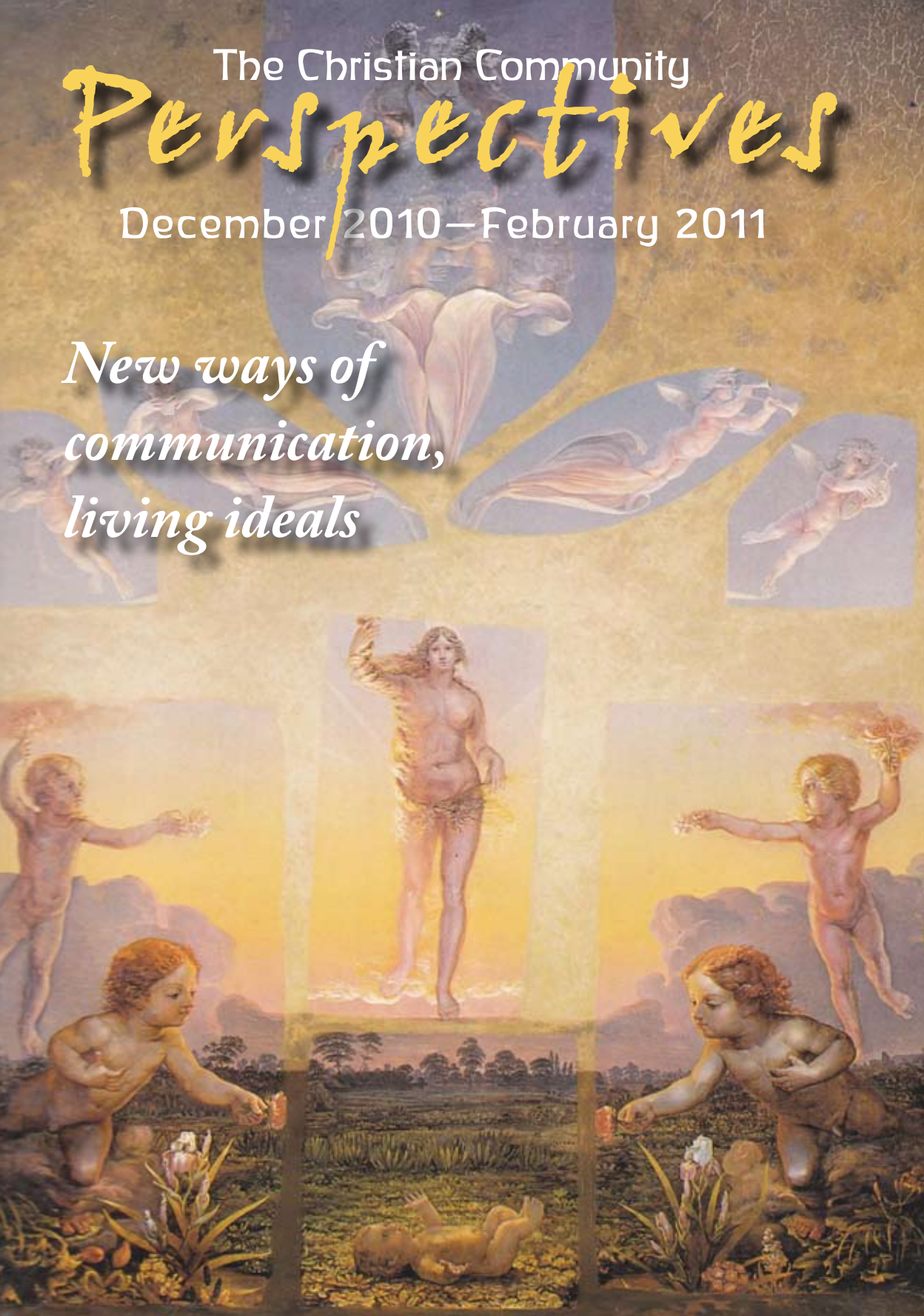


The Christian Community

Perspectives

December 2010—February 2011

*New ways of
communication,
living ideals*



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Perspectives

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This issue of Perspectives covers an auspicious date for our movement—the 150th birthday of Rudolf Steiner on 27 February 1861. Rudolf Steiner's help was the essential precondition for the foundation of The Christian Community in 1922. The urgent need for renewal which the founders of The Christian Community experienced was the outcome of the journey of the intellect that had emancipated itself from the unquestioned authority of the Church. Once religion was examined in the light of reason, it seemed to lose its power. We can see this as part of our journey towards freedom. However, if the human spirit stays on this trajectory, it becomes itself a slave to a world-view that excludes its own reality. Rudolf Steiner was the one who described the battle between those who defend faith by recourse to irrational authority, and those who seek to wipe out this irrational relic of bygone times. The way through this dilemma, which the founders of The Christian Community saw in Rudolf Steiner's work, has become if anything more relevant in the 90 years since June 1921 when they asked him whether a renewal of the religious life was possible and necessary. Rudolf Steiner gave his invaluable help in two forms: in lectures that showed that there need be no divide between faith and knowledge; and in practical advice on how to establish a priesthood and community forms that can be vessels for a renewed sacramental working. He gave us the vision of of a community life that respects each one's spiritual striving. Our gratitude to him is as alive today as it was when he promised his continued help to the founding priests nearly eighty years ago.

TOM RAVETZ

Three Women in the family-tree of Jesus

Neville Adams

The role of women in the Jewish religion in the past was quite complex. On the one hand women were subject to the will of their husbands and had no choice about whom they married. In the synagogue they were separated from the men and had no part in making decisions. However, in the home the wife and mother led the religious life and introduced the children to their first religious activities. Furthermore, Jewishness passes through the mother's line; if the mother was Jewish then so were her children. Conversely the children of a Jewish father were not Jewish if the mother was not.

Because of this one can understand the attitude of the Pharisees who bring the woman 'taken in adultery' to Jesus with the question as to whether she should be stoned. Today we would naturally ask why the man is not punished for committing adultery, but at that time it was considered more important that the woman be virtuous.

Bearing this in mind, we may find it strange, when we look at the genealogical table of Jesus in the Gospel of St. Matthew, that almost all the ancestors named are men. In fact, apart from Mary, only three are mentioned by name and one, the wife of Uriah, is referred to indirectly. In the Gospel of Luke (Ch. 3) no women are mentioned at all.

Matthew begins his genealogy with Abraham and descends through three times fourteen generations to Jesus. The three women with whom we will concern ourselves here are all in the first group which ends with David. At the end of the first 2 x 7 generations there comes a catastrophe. David takes the wife of Uriah for which he is punished by God. At the end of the second 2 x 7 generations is the Babylonian captivity. Only at the end of the third group is perfection possible: the Christ can incarnate, as the fourteenth generation of this group.

All three women mentioned in the family-tree of Jesus bring particular qualities and strengths into his blood-line. None of them is born into the Jewish people which is not surprising as it was necessary to bring in women from outside the narrow tribal group of the Israelites.

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Germany.*

Now we can turn to the first of the women mentioned by name. Her name is Tamar, which means palm-tree. (Genesis 38)

Judah married a Canaanite woman, Shua, with whom he had three sons, Er, Onan and Shelah. When his first-born was of age Judah took for him a Canaanite wife, Tamar. But Er was punished for his wickedness and died without a child. According to the custom of the time the second brother, Onan, must become Tamar's husband and raise children. These will however not be his children, but the children of his deceased brother Er. This does not satisfy him at all so, in order not to make Tamar pregnant, he 'spills his seed on the ground.' For this he too is punished. So once again Tamar is without a husband. The third son of Judah is too young to fulfil this duty and both Judah and his wife Shua do not wish to give their last son to Tamar. A Jewish legend also says that Shua hated Tamar and so did not want to give her last son to her. Humanly one can understand this. She has seen two of her sons die and blames Tamar for their deaths. Judah then sends the widow Tamar back to the home of her father till his son is grown up. This is a source of disgrace for her.

In the meanwhile Shelah grows up and Shua finds a Canaanite wife for him. After some time, Shua dies. After his time of mourning is over, Judah goes with his friend, Hirah the Adullamite, to Timnah to his sheepshearers. When Tamar hears that her father-in-law is going up to shear his sheep she puts off her widow's garments and puts on a veil and, wrapping herself in a cloak goes to sit at the roadside on his way to Timnah. A legend says that Judah wanted to pass her by but an angel of the Lord makes him turn back to her. Thinking she is a harlot he asks her to let him come in to her. Tamar wants to know what he will give her in payment. He offers to send her a kid from his flock to which she agrees but demands from him a pledge. In reply to his question as to what she wants as a pledge she replies: Your signet ring, cord and the staff in your hand. So he gives them to her and 'went in to her' and she conceived by him. After he has gone she gets up and goes home, takes off her veil and puts on her widow's garments again.

Judah has never seen her face as she has, as a proper woman, always worn a veil so that he could not have recognised her even without a veil. When Judah sends the kid with his friend the Adullamite in order to reclaim his pledge, Hirah is unable to find her. The people also tell him that no harlot waited normally at that place. Judah feels justified that he has attempted to pay for her services.

After three months Judah is told that his daughter-in-law has played the harlot and is pregnant. Judah orders her to be brought out and that she

should be burned. A legend tells that she was distraught when unable to find the pledge which had been hidden by the wicked angel Samael. But the Archangel Michael came to her rescue and she found the three articles. These are symbols which have to do with the coming of the Messiah. The ring is for a king, the cord the symbol of a judge and the staff for the Messiah. It is also said that Tamar had prophetic qualities and knew that she was destined to become one of the ancestors of a king (David).

As Tamar is brought out she sends word to her father-in-law saying that she is pregnant by the man to whom the articles of the pledge belong. Judah then acknowledges them and says that she is more virtuous than he as he did not give her his son Shelah as was his duty. He then takes her into his house but does not lie with her again.

Tamar is carrying twins and when the time comes for her delivery one of them puts out a hand on which the midwife ties a red thread. The other twin is born first and when the midwife sees him she says, 'what a breach (perez) you have made for yourself!' His brother is then born with the scarlet thread on his hand and is called Zerah (scarlet). It is Perez who then becomes one of the ancestors of Jesus.

The next woman who is mentioned by name is Rahab. Rahab is a harlot who lives in a house in the wall of the city of Jericho. Joshua has brought an army to take the city and in preparation sends two spies into the city to spy out the land. They come into the city disguised as pot-sellers. Towards dusk they enter the house of Rahab to take shelter there. The king hears that there are spies who have gone into the house of Rahab and sends soldiers to capture them. Rahab tells the soldiers that indeed two men did enter her house but when it grew dark they had left the city. If they are to be captured the soldiers had better hurry before they get back to their camp.

On the flat roof of her house she has hidden the two men under piles of flax. She tells them that she knows that they will destroy the city 'for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on earth beneath'. A legend tells that the Lord then spoke to Rahab: 'You have said of me that I am a mighty God in Heaven and on earth. You have spoken of things which you have not seen with your eyes. By your life, your son's son will arise and behold things which no prophet before him has seen.'

Rahab also thinks very pragmatically. Knowing that the city will be destroyed, she makes an agreement with the two spies. In exchange for her help she wants her whole family to be spared. They agree to this on condition that they all gather in her house and she must hang a red cord from her window, which is in the city wall, as a sign, so that the soldiers

will know which house must be spared. Rahab then lowers the men on a rope from her window so that they can escape unnoticed.

The city is destroyed but Rahab and all her family are spared.

The legends tell of Rahab that she was a harlot from a very early age and converted to the God of Israel and said, 'May I be forgiven as a reward for the red cord I hung out of my window.'

One book of the Old Testament is dedicated to the story of Ruth who is the third woman named in the genealogy of Jesus. It must surely be one of the most beautiful stories of the bond between a young woman and her mother-in-law.

Naomi and her husband Elimelech lived in Bethlehem (house of bread) when a famine comes over the land. They go to the land of Moab and remain there with their two sons. After Elimelech dies Naomi is left with her two sons who both take Moabite wives. Both sons die leaving Naomi with her two daughters-in-law. She decides to return home to Bethlehem. Both daughters-in-law want to go with her but she implores them to stay in Moab and find new husbands. Orpa whose name means the 'one who showed her neck' follows her wishes and stays behind. A legend says that she marries again and gives birth to Goliath.

Ruth wants to stay with Naomi and says to her: 'Where you go I will go; your people shall be my people and your God my God.' In so saying Ruth shows that she is different from the people of her time. So they go together to Bethlehem. The two women need each other—Naomi is no longer young and Ruth needs help to become accepted by the people of Bethlehem. Tamar had to act on her own in order to become a mother but here the two will work together.

Naomi has a relative, Boas, a wealthy man with fields of grain and many workers. Naomi agrees that Ruth go into the fields to glean among the ears of grain. Boas supports her in this for she has found favour with him. Naomi plans that Boas should marry Ruth. She sends her, washed, anointed and dressed in her best clothes, to the winnowing floor, where Boas and the workers are threshing the barley. There she should wait until he lies down to sleep and then uncover his feet and lie down at his feet. This she does and when he awakens at midnight he is surprised to find her there. She asks him to spread his cloak over her 'for you are next of kin.' It could also be translated: spread your wings over me. With this she is asking for his protection and marriage with him. Before he sends her home with a gift of barley he tells her that his older brother is closer related than he and this must first be clarified before he can marry her. This he does on the

same morning and it is agreed that he may acquire the land of Elimelech and take Ruth as his wife. Boas then takes Ruth as wife; she conceives and bears a son who is called Obed, which means servant, who is the grandfather of David.

The women say to Naomi, 'You will have someone who will bring joy to your heart and care for you in your old age; for you daughter-in-law, who loves you, has borne him, she who is worth more than seven sons. They also say: To Naomi a son is born.

We have looked at the lives of three women, each with a destiny that sets her apart from the women of her time. All of them came from outside of the Jewish stream and brought new strengths and qualities to the ancestry of Jesus, which made them special enough to be mentioned by name in the genealogical table of the Christ Jesus.



Boas and Ruth
Rembrandt

The Parable of the Good Soil and Mary: The Mystery of the Human Soul (Luke 8:4–15)

Rudolf Frieling

Luke, the evangelist of Mary

Luke, to whom we are indebted for the Christmas story, is in a unique way the evangelist of Mary. Repeatedly, we meet her in the two opening chapters recounting Jesus' childhood; she is the soul of this world of Advent and Christmas. First, the angel of annunciation appears to the virgin, in Nazareth. 'The handmaiden of the Lord' willingly and devoutly undertakes the part reserved for her in the coming salvation. Soon after having been greeted by the angel, she is blessed by Elizabeth, the other mother-to-be. Answering with the hymn 'Magnificat', Mary speaks the words: 'My soul magnifies the Lord'. In Bethlehem, having put her child in the manger, she ponders the words of the angels in her heart. When the time has come for their purification in the temple, we hear from afar the sound of Passiontide: 'and a sword will pierce through your own soul'. Confronted by the mystery of her twelve-year-old son she begins to feel sorrow, yet she takes the boy's peculiar words deep into her soul.

Again and again, people have seen something archetypal in what Luke tells of Mary in his devout and delicate way. There is, of course, its historical significance but, in its structure and images, the story of Mary lifts the veil of certain mysteries pertaining to the human soul. 'To be Mary and in yourself bear God ...' Tentatively, in the way Luke has painted her, the human soul recognizes itself in its highest potential in Mary.

'Receptivity' is a major characteristic of the soul. Whatever it is able to make its own from its experiences, it finds in its depths a motherly mould in which it may develop and come to fruition. When the soul in purity offers up its receptivity to the Divine, it becomes Mary the Virgin who bears the Christ Child by virtue of the Holy Spirit overshadowing her.

Reading on in Luke's Gospel one recognizes that the theme of the mystery of the human soul, incorporated in Mary, has not at all come to an end in the two childhood chapters. In an unobtrusive way, it continues to make itself felt wherever the female element plays a decisive role in Luke's gospel. We will not present them all here but will look at a passage which Luke shares with

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Matthew and Mark. Even when their stories seem rather similar, as in the well-known parable of the sower and the several conditions of the soil into which the seed falls, Luke's version reminds us of the mystery which Mary incorporates.

The Parable of the Good Soil

It would be rather superficial to believe that the New Testament simply recounts the same story three times. Looking more carefully, we find that in each gospel what seems to be the same has its very own context, highlighted in different ways. In Matthew this parable is the first of 'Seven Parables at the Sea' which together form a specific entity. In Mark it is the first of three parables. In Luke it stands alone, dominating the whole context.

Matthew, Mark and Luke, called the 'Synoptics' because of a certain similarity in their reports, all add the words of explanation with which Christ translates his word picture into thoughts. In this, Luke stands out by letting the classical wording: 'The seed is the word (the Logos) of God' (8:11) precede the interpretation. The seed is the word: the word is seed, and it is hearing, then, that is fertilized. Mother, in the parable of the sower, is the earth. From this interpretation we learn that, on a different level, the same event happens once more when the soul, surrendering itself in hearing, receives the seed of the Logos: to cherish it, carrying it to term and bring its fruit into the light. This is what we read in all three gospels. Yet in Luke's gospel the soul connection of the good soil has been more strongly underlined. as may be seen when we compare these passages:

Matthew 13: 23

The seed sown on good soil is the one who hears the word and understands it; he indeed yields fruit, some increased a hundred, some sixty and some thirty times.

Mark 4: 20

Those [seeds] are the ones where it is sown on good soil, who on hearing the word welcome it and yield fruit, increased thirty times, sixty times and a hundred times.

Luke 8: 15

Those on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and hold it fast in a beautiful and good heart, and bear fruit with endurance.

Each gospel has its own emphasis. In Greek, the language of Plato, the two words 'beautiful' (beauty being an outward sign of the inwardly good, noble and worthy) and 'good' have found each other: 'kalos k'agathos'. Luke, the Greek, incorporates these fruits of Greek high culture into his gospel: 'the beautiful and good heart'.

On Hearing

It may not be by accident that in Luke's gospel 'hearing' bears a special weight. Having explained the parable, Christ adds an admonition. In Mark he says: 'Take heed, what you hear' (4:24). In Luke, with a small yet significant difference: 'Take heed then how you hear' (8:18). We are reminded of what Goethe said: 'Consider What, yet more consider How.'

In all three accounts, the parable of the sower is given within a time sequence in which Jesus' mother appears. Full of apprehension, mother, brothers and sisters have come from Nazareth to gather him back into the fold of the family. Since his baptism in Jordan they have not been able to find a way to reconcile themselves with his changed being—that will only happen after his resurrection. Christ is surrounded by a great multitude and both Matthew and Mark describe dramatically how he asks: 'Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?' He then stretches out his hand toward his listeners, looking at them sitting around him: 'Here are my mother and my brothers!' This should not be understood to be a cold rebuff to those who are 'his own' in the physical sense. Now all that matters is to open the way for a community on a higher level, a level of soul and spirit. 'Whoever does the will of my Father in the heavens is my brother, and sister, and mother.' With this reference to doing the Divine will, Matthew and Mark make the transition to the parable of the sower.

Luke puts this scene after the parable. Again we observe a subtle difference in its concluding words: 'My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word (the Logos) of God and do it' (8:21). The emphasis here is on the 'word' and on 'hearing', rather than on the will. His mother is not simply seen together with his other relations; here, 'hearing' points to his mother, 'doing' to his brothers. 'Whoever hears the word of God is my mother.'

Matthew 12: 49–50

And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said: 'Here are my mother and my brothers! will of my Father in the heavens is my brother, and sister, and mother.'

Mark 3: 34–35

And looking around on those who sat about him, he said: 'Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother.'

Luke 8: 21

But he said to them: 'My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word (the Logos) of God and do it.'

Reading on, we find the story of Jesus visiting Mary and Martha, who were sisters, only in Luke's gospel. As Martha allowed herself to be fully occupied with things to be done in the household, Mary 'sat at the Lord's

feet and listened to his teaching'; she 'listened to his word' (10:39). Tradition has seen Mary Magdalene in her, and this is right; Mary who is called 'Magdalene' (the one coming from Magdala) is mentioned for the first time by Luke in the passage directly preceding the parable of the sower. Here, at the beginning of chapter 8, he mentions the women serving and providing on the road, among them one called Joanna and one Susanna. The woman mentioned first is 'Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out' (8:2 the seven demons are also mentioned in Mark 16:9). Rudolf Steiner has taught us to be aware in the gospels of the silent yet important language of composition: much can be said 'between the lines' in the sequence of one scene following another. Thus we may notice that preceding the mention of Mary Magdalene we find the story of the 'great sinner' which again is told only by Luke (7:36–50). The 'great sinner' who up to now has wasted her powers of devotion, has been exorcised, healed and transformed by Christ; thus the 'eternal-feminine' in her is able to emerge. In hearing the divine Word, taking it into her soul with full loving abandonment, she truly becomes 'Mary'.

Scenes which are related in an inner sense continue to be found like golden threads throughout the gospel. The one we have followed finds its conclusion in something which Luke, and only Luke, describes in chapter 11. Impressed by the words of Christ, a woman among the people who surround him raises her voice, blessing the mother of such a son (11:27). In looking at Jesus, would it be only a 'typically female' reaction to think at once of the woman who was allowed to be his mother? Christ sees its deeper meaning; in this beatitude of his physical mother he recognizes the soul's hidden deep longing to be Mary. Thus he enhances the woman's cry with another beatitude: 'Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it' (11:28). In essence, he says to her: You too may be my mother, you too may be Mary, in your soul to bear Christ.

The contrast: 'Remember Lot's wife'

The lofty call to be God's mother will be understood more clearly when we look at the possibility of failing this ideal. In the case of the 'great sinner', the demons of passion wanted to hinder the soul turning to the Divine. There are other ways of aberration, too. Until now, in the Christian world, people have concentrated on those adversary forces which threaten the soul from the side of passion. Yet as well as this 'hot war', a 'cold war' is waged which in modern times is becoming still more dangerous. Now, the soul may be caught by weariness, by resignation, indifference, hopelessness; it may lose its liveliness in cold, mechanical automatism, falling prey to torpidity and petrification.

All three synoptic gospels hand down the prophetic words of Christ about his second coming and its preceding catastrophes—the so-called Apocalypse from

the Mount of Olives. In Luke we find part of this at an earlier moment, when Christ is still on his last journey to Jerusalem (17:22–18:8). Here he speaks about ‘the day when the Son of Man is revealed’—‘apokalyptetai’ in the original Greek. Literally, ‘apo-kalypstein’ means: to reveal, to ‘unveil’. Looking at this future revelation of Christ, warning images of ancient catastrophes also arise. In the Flood, or in fire raining down on Sodom and Gomorrah, again and again future humanity’s nucleus is saved from destruction. The apocryphal book ‘Wisdom of Solomon’ has found amazing words to describe this deliverance. ‘In the beginning, as the reckless giants perished, the hope of the world (elpis tou kosmou), fleeing in the ark, left behind for the aeon the seed of new creation (genesis), guided by Thy hand’ (14:6). As Noah had been delivered from the waters, so Lot is delivered by the angels from the fires of Sodom. In both these remote disasters, apocalyptic happenings have been mirrored which are still part of the future. This is why Christ, speaking about the second coming, calls to mind those terrors from the past. In this context (again, only in Luke’s gospel) the words: ‘Remember Lot’s wife’ are spoken. Lot’s wife became rigid, turned into a pillar of salt because she turned back to the terrors that happened behind her. The angels who saved Lot and his people from destruction and set them outside the city ‘said to Lot: ‘Save your soul, flee for your life! Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley! Flee to the hills, lest you be consumed!’ (Genesis 19:17) With determination these people who, as ‘the hope of the world’ would become the link to new becoming, turned to the Divine, coming to meet them from the future, from above. ‘No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back ...’ (Luke 9:62). Looking back may assume other forms, too. It happens to those people who become fascinated by all that has made itself so perfectly at home in our world—contrary to the Spirit, alienated from God and carrying the seed of destruction in itself. Even when one rejects what goes to its doom, it may still enslave the soul—if one fills the soul only with criticism. The person who criticizes the phenomena of destruction may still not be able to snatch his soul from its spell—as happens when criticism leaves no room to turn to the future in a positive, constructive way. Being obsessed by rejecting what is wrong, not finding any time to pray, one will not really free oneself from what goes to its doom. How realistic, how topical the words of the angels in the old Sodom story: ‘Do not look back! Do not stop anywhere! Flee to the hills!’

Lot’s wife is not capable of going on, going up. As if mesmerized by the magic of what goes to its destruction, she loses all liveliness. Becoming

'mineralized' by the powers of death, she 'dies the death of matter'. Thus she loses her own capacity to reach into the future: to become God's mother, too, and in her soul to bear Christ.

Once we become capable of reading anew the language of biblical images, we may begin to divine what this short sentence means which Christ uses when speaking about the second coming: 'Remember Lot's wife.' From year to year, a caution, a warning like this is becoming more relevant. When, in the mood of Advent, we look to the future, looking and striving upward, we are already following the ministering angel's invitation: 'Save your soul!'

SOURCE: Rudolf Frieling's article 'Das Gleichnis von der guten Erde und das Mariengeheimnis der Menschenseele' (Journal 'Die Christengemeinschaft', December, 1966) now can be found in Volume 3 of his *Collected Works*, Stuttgart 1982. © Trans. Arie Boogert and Muriel Morris, 1998

Deeply Hidden Treasures – Working in Prison

John Bunyard

As I came to the close of my physics degree course, I decided that I would teach. The achievement of ideals through teaching seemed to be part of my destiny. Before retiring I had taught in schools, colleges and universities and with the Open University. I had worked with undergraduates in prisons where I felt comfortable. Therefore when the opportunity arose to teach basic numeracy to young offenders I was drawn to it. My prime motivation at the time was to help develop in prisoners an enthusiasm for and understanding of mathematics. I was convinced of the usefulness of this learning and considered it could contribute to their rehabilitation. In 1910 Winston Churchill commented that we should have, in the treatment of criminals, 'an unfaltering faith that there is a treasure if you can only find it, in the heart of every man.' I often brought this injunction to mind during the three years I spent working part-time in a Young Offender Institution. What I didn't realize was how difficult it would be to maintain this faith and how challenging the teaching would be.

Most of these young prisoners were brought up on the streets of Wolverhampton, Birmingham and Coventry. Many were from broken homes or care homes and had contact with drugs and gangs. In contrast, I had a very sheltered upbringing, brought up on a farm and going through primary school and Grammar school without a single fight. I could not have imagined the difficulties I would face and the obstacles I would have to overcome to discover the 'treasures' in the hearts of many of the prisoners.

Some of my students wanted to learn and saw the value of numeracy qualifications in helping them to stay out of prison. However, they had to contend with the many worries and preoccupations facing young men in prison. They were all slaves to their hormones and fantasized about women. They all escaped from physical incarceration by traveling outside the prison in their minds. Some would dwell on the support of family and friends, others worried about broken relationships and family problems, including isolation from their own children and partners. Inside the prison they may be

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concerned about cell mates, bullying, prison food, treatment by prison officers, imminent court cases, visits etc. If I were to teach these students effectively, it became very clear to me that I would need to make sympathetic personal contact with them. With up to 10 students in a class, being sensitive to the needs of individuals was seldom easy. Students allocated to my classes were set out on daily registers which I was able to collect early enough in the morning to give me time to hold individuals in my thoughts before they arrived in my classroom.

Establishing real contact with students was even more important for those who had no inclination to learn and employed a variety of strategies to avoid maths work. Finding the 'treasures' in their hearts meant overcoming obstacles not only in them but in me. Firstly, there was the antipathy aroused in me by behaviour such as swearing, talking about women as merely sources of sexual satisfaction, spitting, boasting about crimes and violent exploits and lying. Secondly, I needed to cope with personal abuse, aggressive verbal and non-verbal attacks and rejection. Comments were made about my physical appearance and about the clothes I wore. I was threatened with physical attack, had various objects thrown at me and many students refused initially to let me stand or sit near them. At first I found it difficult not to take this type of behaviour personally. During my first three months I often felt saddened and dejected by what had happened, wondering if I was having any positive influence in the prison.

Eventually the source of much adverse behaviour became apparent. I was a man, which roused aggression in some; I was a teacher which called up painful experiences of school in others. Status was much prized in the prison and confronting me could be a way of improving status. Confronting me was relatively easy and at worst might see them brought before one of the governors and deprived of privileges for a few days. A prisoner might refuse to work, tear up the worksheet I had given him, use the worksheet to make paper darts or screw the pages up and throw them at me, refuse to sit down and wander round the classroom, complete a worksheet with random responses or copy from a neighbour, and so on.

Confronting me also often served another purpose, that of avoiding working at the maths I had set them to do. Avoidance techniques were many and varied. Asking personal irrelevant questions was a common ploy. Claims that I hadn't given out equipment was another way of wasting time and setting up an argument with me. Unfortunately one of these attempts escalated in one of my classes when Leon claimed I hadn't given him a calculator. Previously one of the calculators had been smuggled out

of the classroom and I was very careful to ensure that each student was issued with one. I confronted him with the possibility of the whole class being searched and asked him to produce the missing item. During our altercation I noticed a calculator under the table where Leon was sitting. He still refused to admit that I had given it to him and he had anything to do with it being on the floor. At this point, I decided to send him back to his cell and write a Governor's Report (one of the sanctions available to teachers for unacceptable behaviour). From the blood rising in his neck it was clear that he was angry. I opened the door for him to leave having called a patrolling officer over to my classroom. As he walked in front of me he stopped, stood very close to me, looked straight at me and butted my nose before walking through the door. I was startled by the assault which, because of the glasses I was wearing, drew blood from the bridge of my nose. The prison took the assault very seriously although the damage to me was slight. I was given the option of pressing charges against him but had no thought about doing so. Leon was 18, had a partner and young child. He also had a striking tattoo on his right cheek showing a pair of boxing gloves over an obscenity. Through the prison restorative justice system a meeting with Leon was arranged and he told me, that on the day of the assault, he was having a bad day with unsettling news from outside. He apologised and we parted amicably, shaking hands.

My initial meeting with some prisoners made the task of establishing personal contact with them seem impossible. They came into the classroom with aggressive defenses raised high: 'Don't talk to me', 'Get away from me', 'Don't sit near me', 'I'm not doing no work', 'Why am I in this class?'. Ashley was one such student. He was 20, had a strong stocky build and was brought up in one of the poorer districts of Birmingham. Exclusion from schools meant he had missed out on much basic maths teaching. He seemed bright and articulate from his descriptions of his criminal and sexual exploits outside the prison. He made it clear that he was doing no work in class, that maths was no use to him and that the prison had no right to make him do 'kids' stuff'. I sympathised with him, agreeing that coming to a maths class should be his choice. I explained to him the position I was in and the responsibility placed on me and that the choice to work would be his. I provided him each lesson with a worksheet and pen and initially went to sit by him but he wouldn't have it. However, his curiosity about me did get the better of him, wondering at my age why I wasn't at home with my feet up. He eventually realized that I wasn't the enemy and on an occasion when other class mates were working he called

me over 'How do you do this boss?' I never did get a lot of work out of him but he did learn from my help and showed obvious pleasure in mastering numerical skills that he should have learned in primary school. 'Give me some more of those,' he said when he had just got his first short division calculation right.

There were many other occasions when I caught sight of the 'treasure' I was after. Sometimes it related to learning maths but it could be the sharing of a worry about a coming court case or the fear of been attacked on the way back to the wing. I have been asked to write letters in support of prisoners attending court cases. I have been asked to help write letters home and have been shown poems written to girlfriends. More generally I have been given smiles as students left my class, a 'Cheers boss!' and sometimes the greeting in the form of proffered knuckles of a fist to be met with my own.

I also had the distinction of being chosen as a teacher that Amos would tolerate. He was 19, over six feet tall, muscular, black and weighed 17 stone. He was prescribed medication to help control violent mood swings and was generally under the wing of a special needs teacher. He said the medication made him feel like a zombie and he often didn't take it. He was put into my class when he agreed a numeracy qualification would be helpful to him. He generally had an amiable, confident manner but he did lose control and rip a whiteboard from the wall of my classroom after an argument with another teacher.

With my individual attention Amos made progress but left on his own he was in the habit of holding the attention of the whole class with a loud voice and strongly held opinions. My requests to let others work in peace went unheeded and so I used a prison sanction of docking points. The following lesson I asked him again not to distract the class and told him I had taken points off. This was a relatively minor punishment, but Amos was not used to being crossed and was clearly surprised and then furious that I had done so. I was sitting at my desk at the time. He came over to me with a face like thunder, stood over me and shouted 'Stand up, I don't hit people sitting down!' I didn't stand up, but talked to him quietly and eventually he moved away and sat down. Later on in the lesson he called over to me 'I think I owe you an apology John.' From then on we rubbed along well and in time he was awarded a numeracy certificate.

Towards the end of my three years at the prison I found myself increasingly at odds with the management of the prison and the education department. When I started, the prison housed juveniles between the ages of 15

and 18 years and young adults aged between 18 and 21 years. Initially I taught groups of juveniles for periods of 45 minutes. Then the class time was doubled, without consulting teaching staff, to 90 minutes. After a change in government policy, the juveniles were shipped out of the prison and I was allocated young adults who had been given no choice about attending my classes. Most of them came with very vocal negative attitudes. Soon after this change, class time was doubled to three hours, again without consultation. I had never been subjected to such long periods of maths even during my A level and university courses. I refused to co-operate. As a consequence, special arrangements were made for maths and English classes to swap giving us periods of 90 minutes but the reduction in staff numbers to save money left no one to cover when the English teacher was absent and so once again I was left with students for three hours. I argued that this was professionally unjustifiable and would do more harm than good. I left the prison rather than teach, which led to my dismissal for 'gross professional misconduct'.

Despite the low priority that rehabilitation had in the prison and regularly seeing prisoners, who had re-offended, return to the prison after being released, I feel very grateful for the experience of teaching there. The 'treasures' I discovered in the hearts of prisoners have enriched my life. To some of the young men in my classes I was an old man wasting his time. To others I was someone who helped them to be more confident in their abilities and to question their life styles.

The Search for the Deep Self and the Directory of Gratitude

A Social Sculpture by Deborah Ravetz

'There is never any knowing which of our actions, which of our idlenesses, won't have things hanging on it forever.'

E.M.Forster, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*.

I recently completed a Masters in Social Sculpture at Oxford Brookes University. The intention of the course is to teach the creative strategies that make it possible to find the themes and questions which lie closest to the students' hearts. I attended this course because I found myself looking at the suffering of the world and longing to respond to it creatively. The form of social sculpture as described by Joseph Beuys gave me a new language so that I could be involved in painting in my studio on the one hand and involved in the world through this extended definition of art on the other. Through these creative strategies it has become possible for me to articulate what my concerns were. The course in Social Sculpture helps the artist to find forms which invite individuals to engage with their concerns in a free space. How these forms can be created and how sensitively they must be presented is what we were there to learn.

The question that resonated with me as I embarked on this process was: How can we learn to develop such a strong experience of our innermost self that we can put aside ambition and the need to be recognised as someone important, and direct our strength towards our true purpose in our field of work and life?

For me this was not an abstract question. I had spent my whole working life connected with Anthroposophy, working in idealistic institutions. Despite a vast body of knowledge describing exactly what attitudes one needed to cultivate to be able to serve the good, I had seen endeavour after endeavour fail because it had not been possible for individuals to make the movement from knowing the right thing to doing the right thing.

This question suddenly crystallized for me when I read an article about Bill Wiseman, who was visiting Britain from the USA as part of a group campaigning against the death penalty.

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Wiseman described how he had become involved in politics not only to serve the community but to a great extent because he was trying to bolster his fragile sense of who he was. This resonated with the experiences I had had in my working life where the agenda of our work could often become secondary to this craving for self-validation on the part of someone in the group. At that time it was not possible to be involved in American politics without supporting the death penalty. In order to keep his seat in the legislature and therefore his sense of being someone, Wiseman had chosen to vote for the death penalty, something he did not believe in. Having done this he began to think of ways that he could placate his troubled conscience. Without any background in medicine, he and a friend came up with the idea of the lethal injection. It was his intention to remove the 'pain and stench' of the death penalty. His invention was quickly adopted and he became a celebrity, appearing on countless TV shows as the man who had made the death penalty humane. Campaigners against the death penalty warned him that it was precisely the horror of the death penalty that would be the most powerful argument for its abolition. Wiseman describes how he simply refused to listen. He said that all that mattered to him was the wonderful sense of being someone he got from all the attention he was receiving. Only after eight hundred people had been executed using this technique was Wiseman finally able to become quiet enough to listen to his inner voice and acknowledge that his actions had been governed by his phantom self and not the self he really wanted to be. He renounced everything he had done, thereby losing his seat in the Legislature. He then began his campaign.

This story had a profound impact on me and gave me a new clarity. Through it I sensed that my deepest concern had a universal significance. Out of this I asked myself what I could do as artist to put something into the world that could address the problem of the phantom self usurping the place of the deep self. I felt it was a fundamental growing point which I needed to understand better. It was clear to me that no matter what we know or how we structure any social group, if we do not give this issue a central place in our endeavours, countless opportunities will continue to be missed in our efforts to work for the good.

One of the fundamental principles of Social Sculpture is that it wishes to avoid interfering with the will of the participants. Its aim instead is to warm and inspire. With this intention, I began to work on creating a space where this extraordinary moment of letting go of the phantom self and reconnecting with the deepest self, no matter what the cost, could be honoured and celebrated.

All my life I had been helped in my own work by reading of other people's moments of courage. Individuals such as Martin Luther King and Sophie Scholl all describe moments of coming to selfhood. I began to collect these moments. At the same time I realised that many people I knew had similar experiences of coming into relationship with their true self, even if they did not seem to be part of world history. I felt these moments were as important as those which had entered the canon of history. Out of this observation I then spoke to these people and asked them if I might have their stories. I also continued to read about and observe contemporary people who were doing something of value in the world. I wrote to these people or went to meet them and began to gather their moments of self-realization.

I then took what had been shared with me and began to create my work. The piece consists in an exhibition of portrait photographs and texts. Beneath each photograph there is a short description of one of the moments when the subject of the photograph found themselves on a deeper level. The stories and photographs are exhibited on banners set up in a circle and which can be put up in almost any setting. There is a short introduction to the work at regular moments during the exhibition. I am always present, and there are spaces to sit and talk or write either to each other or with me as well. The exhibition can be used in this form, particularly to explore the theme of becoming one's true self. However it can also be used as a space in which people meet to work with any pressing questions. People enter the circle and begin to read the stories. The whole room naturally becomes silent. Almost without fail, reading the disclosure of each story evokes a mood of self reflection. It is possible to walk away or to stay. If one stays, the conversations that follow can be profound and life changing.

As I was making this work where so much is revealed by those giving



me their stories, it became clear that I also needed to find a way to reveal myself. I decided to make that part of the work an oral presentation of an aspect of my life which I called the Directory of Gratitude. It arose out of a turning point in my own biography. When I was thirty three years old, everything I had tried to do in the way of community

building had ended in failure. In the throes of depression and feeling a deep-seated anxiety that I would never find work in which I could truly believe, I found myself reading the work of a beloved author who made the statement, 'We come onto the earth to do the work of love.' I sensed that if I could understand what this meant I would be able to work my way out of depression. I found Friedrich Rittelmeyer's description of God's love, which is so abundant that it bestows existence on us. Throughout our life, we will experience finding ourselves through the interest or work of others. In this sense, they create us; their love is a faint echo of the creative love of God. Rittelmeyer describes how the work of love consists in turning to the world with the same interest and doing the same for others. The Directory of Gratitude is a space in which I share the stories of many of the people who have done this for me. Describing these experiences gives rise to awareness of our interdependence. The experience of alienation is replaced by an experience of living in a stream of humanity to which we too can contribute.

The first time I showed my work, a young woman from Venezuela came and asked me to create it in a portable version so that she could take it home to her friends. She said she wanted to show them that they too had a chance to be who they truly were. I then created the kit form of the exhibition which can be taken away in a box and includes a DVD of the Directory of Gratitude. It is also possible to see the work on the internet where there is a page to post comments. The work is growing all the time as more people see the work and then give their stories. Accompanying the work is a small book, in which I try to explore this and other themes at the hand of my own biography and at the hand of contemporary thinkers who are working with new forms of leadership and communication.

I once read that we develop our character in the full flow of our life and our gifts on our own. The balance between our responsibility to ourselves and our responsibility to the community of mankind is an ever present question. I long for a way to breathe between the two poles. This work is my way of finding that breathing space. I believe Oxford Brookes University is the only place where it is possible to study and take part in the process of making Social Sculpture. It is an opportunity to find one's questions and to learn to create the forms whereby they can be put into the world in the spirit of love and concern. I am deeply grateful that I have had the opportunity to encounter this learning experience.

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Experiencing Salvation II ‘Becoming’

Tom Ravetz

*Near are we, Lord,
near and graspable.*

*Grasped already, Lord,
clawing at one another, as if
the body of each one of us
were your body, Lord.*

*Pray, Lord,
pray to us,
we are near.*

Paul Celan, *Tenebrae*

In the first article in this series we saw that one way of experiencing the reality of what Christ did for us is to ask: what was the danger? What was the problem that he needed to address for us? The many different ways of answering this question give rise to the many images of salvation which we shall encounter on our journey through the year.

It was one of the great turning-points in history when the ancient view of time as an endless series of cycles gave way to the view that we find in the Old Testament: time that has a beginning, a middle and an end. In this view, time has direction and purpose. The Gnostics developed a vision of Christianity that drew on the old cyclical consciousness of the Eastern religions. Their visions of creation through many aeons were progressively excluded from the early church. In the stark picture of the journey from Creation towards the Last Judgment we see the stringency that

was needed to wean humanity off the old kind of consciousness and make human beings aware of the unique urgency of every moment

In its most extreme form, this Western view of time became quite abstract. God created the world ‘out of nothing’, after which he was no longer involved in the world. Human beings are on their own in a world without God and—according to Augustine—they cannot even do anything to change God’s decision, which was made before they were created—of what their eternal fate will be. So whilst there is a strong sense of the direction of time, and of the importance of every moment, God has become a timeless abstraction.

The Advent Epistle leads us into a fuller picture of reality. The mediator between God and the world is the Creator-Word. The beautiful poetry of the Advent Epistle echoes the thinking of the earliest theologians who set themselves the task of understanding the reality of the divine Word, the Logos.

The God of the Greek philosophers—really the God of Plato and Aristotle—was seen to be utterly other than the world. Everything that we are as creatures in the world, God is not. We are imperfect—God is perfect. We change—God is unchanging. We suffer—God cannot suffer. Our knowledge is limited—there is nothing that God does not know. Such a God cannot ‘become’. After all, he would

either become better or worse. If God became better than he was before, it would have been wrong to affirm that he was perfect before the change. If he became worse than he was before, then he is no longer perfect.

Greek thinkers had grappled with the question of how this God, who is utterly transcendent or other than the world, could create a world. Drawing on the wisdom that had been cultivated in the Mysteries, which predated philosophy and drew on quite different sources than rational thought, they arrived at the philosophy of the Logos, the divine Word. God had always had the thought of creation within him: the *logos endiathetos*. Creation came about when the Word was spoken out: *logos prophorikos*. The word was the divine energy in the world, responsible for bringing order and meaning into the chaos of pre-existing matter. In the Stoic philosophy, the idea of the *logos spermatikos* or seed-word developed: human beings are capable of reason because they have a germinal power of the Word within them. Clearly this philosophical language gives a background for the Prologue of the Gospel of St John, although it is important to be clear that the Prologue is far more than a compendium of Greek thought. Something quite new is revealed when the Prologue points us to a reality where the Word is part of godhead, and is also a person.

The earliest theologians carried on developing the doctrine of the Logos until the fourth century. It may seem strange to us, but in this period, Christians were

more likely to speak of Christ as Word than as Son. These were the centuries in which the concepts to understand the Trinity were only just coming into being.

In the disputes of the Fourth Century, however, theologians felt that they had to decide between the picture of the Logos as Creator Spirit at work in the world, and the Logos as Son of God. Part of the dynamic which is inherent in the doctrine of the Trinity was lost. The doctrine of the creation from nothing, the *creatio ex nihilo*, became the teaching of the Church. There is no connection between God and his creation; no gradual evolution through cycles of time, the aeons of the Gnostic world-view. In this way, the dogma of creation from nothing distorts our relationship with time. Creation is not an ongoing process; salvation happens without our co-operation. The way is open for the static vision of sin and grace that becomes dominant in the western church after St Augustine's: we were created in a state of grace; through the Fall, we fell into a state of sin; only through the Church can we come into a state of grace once more.

It can give cause to wonder that the wise guidance of the spiritual world arranged it that just in the time when the first missionaries were sent to the Germanic tribes which were encroaching on the borders of the Roman Empire, the kind of Christianity that was favoured in the Court was Arian. Thus these peoples were introduced to Christianity through a vision of Christ at work in the world, as

the creator-spirit; the one who, as the first and greatest of all the creatures, shows us the way towards divinization.

I suspect it is also no coincidence that within a decade of the foundation of The Christian Community, Teilhard de Chardin was starting to formulate his great vision of a cosmic Christianity—cosmic meaning in this context in and of the world. This recovery of a cosmic Christianity—often with rather unclear concepts—has continued since that time. Many people describe their joy when they encounter the Act of Consecration of Man and the writings of Rudolf Steiner, and experience that it is possible—now with the benefit of clear thinking—that the one who saves us is also our creator; that the Son of God is at work in our world, re-enlivening it and imbuing it with heavenly forces.

The Advent epistle connects creation and salvation. The creative word is also the word that saves. Creation is salvation; salvation is a new creation. What we see around us as world is the outcome not of blind chance or a creation out of nothing, but is part of the divine process. The new creation we hear about in the Advent reading, Luke 21, which happens in a world in dissolution into chaos, is as it were typical. Chaos is the raw material for new creation.

There is a foretaste of this insight in the ancient mythologies which found their way in a mildened form into the Hebrew scriptures. In the Babylonian creation myth, creation is seen as a deed of overcoming the chaos monster, Tiamit. It is

echoed in the insight of modern philosophers, who see the traces of God's creating in the fact that the world is orderly and intelligible. For Greek philosophers, this would have been evidence of the working of the Logos, the divine word or thought, which was God's agent in creation.

Christ's deed as we experience it through the Advent Epistle restores to us the possibility of becoming—of growing, developing, and advancing on our path. And in a moment of immense significance, this Epistle gives us a new motive for wanting to take hold of this promise, in the revelation that our becoming means something to the divine world; that God becomes in us and through us. This gives all of our striving a new dimension. We are not to seek our own perfection for its own—and our own—sake; we may realise that our journey, and the journey of the whole of humanity, is significant for God himself.

Sometimes poets grasp such realities more clearly than theologians. Paul Celan seems to be doing this in the poem quoted above, with its surprising reversal of what we would expect. What can it mean when the poet tells God to pray to us? Surely nothing other than that the way we exercise our freedom and develop and grow is of the greatest significance to the divine world. There is an echo of this in the legends of the Jews which describe how the angelic beings came and worshipped Adam when he had first been created, because they senses his limitless potential for development, for becoming.

All of this might prompt us to ask: were the classical theologians just wrong? Is God really becoming then? Is the Father-God also in movement? This would leave us with a lot of problems to deal with, more than we can go into here. The kind of problem that arises can be made clear through an example: if God is bound up in the process of time, how can it be right to think of him existing over against his creation in sovereign freedom? Thinking about the Trinity demands of us that we think trinitarianly, to coin an ugly expression. Only when we can think that ultimate reality is at once the unchanging ground (the Father) and the growth and becoming of all things (the Son), and the drive to evolve with purpose towards selfhood and love (the Holy Spirit), and that all are part of one reality and each involves the other in its being—only then we are thinking with the Trinity.

It has become a fashion amongst scholars of religion to be rather critical of the preoccupation with the identity of Jesus that is there from the very beginning of Christianity. It is easy to present the disputes that raged through the first millennium of church history in a rather ridiculous light. If however we realise that it is through understanding the nature of the Trinity that we can find a relationship to our true destination in life, the disputes take on a different light. This shines through in the Christmas prayers, where what has been revealed in Advent reaches another stage. In words spoken from the middle of the al-

tar, the priest instructs the congregation to 'know' the reality of the Incarnation of the one who brings healing to humanity. His incarnation is both healing and revelation of the Ground of Being.

This prayer is deeply Trinitarian. Typically, the Holy Spirit is not mentioned. He is the medium of 'knowing'. All knowledge of the Father is an awakening to consciousness of deeply slumbering experiences. All knowledge of the Son is bringing into clarity what lives in our fundamental trust in the ongoing reality of life, which gives us courage to take another step, and take another breath. The Holy Spirit is contained in the 'know'.

Theologians sometimes distinguish between objective aspects of the Atonement—things which happen for everyone, whether they know about it or not; and subjective ones—things which depend on our consciously making what has happened our own, through our understanding and our conduct in life. The Christmas prayer with its instruction to 'know' implies that there is a new possibility of our knowing. In this way it is a kind of promise of a new possibility that we have been given. It tells us too that it is of the greatest importance to know the reality of Christ ever more deeply. This knowledge is not about chopping the logic of theological formulae; it needs to become a heart knowledge, which issues in our clear resolve: if God's becoming is bound up with my, our, becoming, then my reason for wanting to become, to grow and develop on our path could not be clearer.

Future Now: Impressions

Simon Cowen

Well, it was big in all senses of the word: throngs of people, like an orderly anthill, coming from forty-one countries and all continents. Their combined voices make a murmuring not unlike the rustling of many ants' feet amongst the pine-needles, but louder.

We all gather in two halls—the Festhalle, the main hall of the school, isn't big enough for one thousand four hundred people. We are greeted by two priests, a man and a woman, heralds, who welcome us in English and German. Their role is serious; their style light-hearted. They keep us informed of what is to happen each day. There follows a cello concert with twenty five cellos, playing Beethoven and Bach and some more modern pieces, with a swing.

Then comes Vicke von Behr, a slight figure with a shock of greying hair: the queen ant, to continue the metaphor. It is to be hoped that the day will come when ants and mankind will be in a position to learn from each other. He welcomes us; gives thanks to the many people who made such a meeting as this possible.

He gives thanks for the 'Himmelswetter', calls on the elemental kingdom, the nine hierarchies; reminds us that there are two

hundred branches of The Christian Community all over the world, each one with her angel. He informs us that there is now a priest in Madrid for the first time and that this will bring for Spain a new angel and a new impulse: a Whitsun event.

To close the opening ceremony, young people walk down the steps from the back of the hall; as they advance, they say, 'I. When they come to stand in a line in front of us, they become 'we'.

After supper, Anand Mandaiker speaks about how we are all called upon at this time to create, out of our hearts' fire, a new organ to perceive the Whitsun Event. (I am reminded of Frank Chester's 'Ches-terhedron', and his contagious enthusiasm.) This comes from selfless listening and genuine interest in the other. He mentions Gandhi and the concept of 'Ahimsa', reverence for life; also Greg Martensen, who built, with local help, fifty schools, five thousand metres up in the Himalayas, so that women in particular could receive a proper education.

Tom Ravetz spoke about St. Paul: 'It is for freedom that Christ has made us free.' At the crucifixion, the apostles ran away, most of them. Then at Whitsun, their shame was taken away. We can all become free from our past, in order to create something new for the future. This is altogether necessary in our time, when there is so much old, stale thinking around. Let the Holy Spirit in! The Sacramental Consultation has this function within The Christian Community.



Ylwa Breidentstein then spoke about how we can make each day a celebration, by remembering birthdays, for example. With a little bit of imagination, we can create new festivals: Pillow-Fight Day or Buy Nothing Day, or Greet A Child Day. Children are the 'Future Now', and they are an endangered species throughout the world, for all sorts of reasons. They need our protection. For mere animals, one day is much like another. Is this a lost art, she asks. The Act of Consecration of Man is such a special moment.

The programme unfolds: we have The Act of Consecration of Man at the day's beginning, in different languages. The Festhalle is a vast space and requires a special effort to make oneself heard as far as the back of the hall, particularly as the priest has his back to us. I have a warm memory of Roger Druitt on one of the later days making himself clearly audible, in English. The lingua franca was German, though translations were available for anyone who needed them.

Wolfgang Schad spoke about the beauty of the earth as seen from outer space. The earth is coloured blue, veiled in clouds, on a black background. The earth stands in the mid-point, between the planets nearer the sun that have no moon and the further planets that have many moons. The shadow of the moon at an eclipse covers the earth exactly. This would seem to betoken a kind of celestial symmetry that is not readily explainable as the result of chance or accident.

I learnt that in Hungary, there are as many as twenty-seven Waldorf Schools. The law is such that if you have one hundred people wanting to start a school, then



the law allows this to happen. Within The Christian Community one Sunday, four baptisms were held in the morning and a further three in the afternoon. However, it was decided that this was too much, and there is now a waiting list.

It is not possible to mention everything; the time was very full. I remember important meetings; with Johannes in his electric wheelchair, bravely coping with difficulties that we, who think of ourselves as 'normal', are barely aware of. Also, my German friend, Thomas, who was so patient as to explain to me details in one of the lectures that I had missed.

Vicke von Behr gathered the threads of the three days together and told of the different situations in which The Christian Community has to struggle to survive. In Georgia, for example, the only way of knowing where the service is to be held is by the colour of the door. In South Africa, members of the community had to hide under the floorboards when the police arrived unexpectedly. At the close of his address, I had the strong feeling: 'we love this man.' Not 'I', but, we. A community perception.

I will finish with his joke: What is the difference between France and the USA? France has one church and a hundred sauces...

Review

Presence—Exploring profound change in people, organizations and society

by Peter Senge, C.Otto Scharmer, Joseph Jaworski and Betty Sue Flowers

Nicholas Brealey Publishing
ISBN 1857883551, £14.99

Review by Monika Schneider

This is a book with the potential to give hope in our seemingly desperate times. The four authors come from different backgrounds but have in common a longstanding involvement in management, leadership, organizational learning, sustainability and networking. They do research in those areas, graduated in it, teach and most of all try to live it. Otto Scharmer is the author of *Theory U*, a very detailed book about learning how to work out of the future, how to let go of old thinking and habitual ways of learning in order to let what is truly new come towards us.

Presence is about this too, but instead of the schematic approach of Theory-U it draws us into the process through stories. The authors invite the reader to listen to their conversations and to participate in their journey, often finding the right questions rather than quick answers.

What can make us so desperate today is the feeling of utter helplessness. The problems we face in our world seem overwhelming. Power seems to lie exclusively with globalised companies whose decisions, which have strong impacts on our lives, seem far beyond our influence. It is obvious that profound changes are needed in order for the earth to survive and we with her. But where to begin? By changing the way we think, suggest the authors of *Presence*.

When I was 21 and a communist hardly anything could enrage me as much as

someone telling me 'You cannot change anything but yourself'. I thought that was a poor excuse of people too cowardly or lazy to do anything to change the world into a better one. Perhaps it also enraged me because it often was used as a kind of cliché and I couldn't see how anybody changing himself would have an impact on pressing global problems like social injustice, poverty, exploitation and war.

The authors of *Presence* struggle with that very question. They have conducted hundreds of interviews with people from all walks of life, with innovators and managers as well as artists and Zen masters. They found that we mostly think along habitual lines without being aware of it. Where we need to be creative—to bring something utterly new into being—we all too often simply reproduce the old. Worse: we don't even notice that this is what we are doing. 'As long as our thinking is governed by habit—notably by industrial 'machine age' concepts such as control, predictability, standardization and 'faster is better'—we will continue to re-create institutions as they have been, despite their disharmony with the larger world, and the need of all living systems to evolve.' (Introduction, p. 9)

We are not machines but living, spiritual beings. The society we live in, the communities we are creating are also not mechanical, but living, evolving beings, which can be transformed by the transformation of their members. The inventor of the polio vaccine spoke of tapping into the continually unfolding 'dynamism' of the universe, and experiencing its evolution as 'an active process that...I can guide by the choices I make.' (Introduction, p. 12)

Nature can be our teacher and everything the authors have to say in their book starts with 'understanding the nature of wholes, and how parts and wholes are interrelated.

Our normal way of thinking cheats us. It leads us to think of wholes as made up of many parts, the way a car is made up of wheels, a chassis, and a drive train. In this way of thinking, the whole is assembled from the parts and depends upon them to work effectively. If a part is broken, it must be repaired or replaced. This is a very logical way of thinking about machines. But living systems are different. Unlike machines, living systems, such as your body or a tree, create themselves. They are not mere assemblages of their parts but are continually growing and changing along with their elements. Almost two hundred years ago, Goethe, the German writer and scientist, argued that this meant we had to think very differently about wholes and parts. For Goethe, the whole was something dynamic and living that continually comes into being 'in concrete manifestations.' A part, in turn, was a manifestation of the whole, rather than just a component of it. Neither exists without the other. The whole exists through continually manifesting in the parts, and the parts exist as embodiments of the whole.' (Introduction, p. 6)

We create the world we live in and therefore are far from being helpless, we are limitlessly powerful! Presence takes us on a journey to understand the truth of that, helping us understand that the way we think, feel and act creates the reality we live in. It also gives insight into the possible process of changing the way we think, feel and act and thereby changing the world we live in. In that sense it is a deeply michaelic book. 'The changes in which we will be called upon to participate in the future will be both, deeply personal and inherently systemic.' (Introduction, p. 5)



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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*.

There is a quiet secluded garden. Most rooms look out over this large and **sheltered garden**. Two rooms look out over the front courtyard and garden.

Upon becoming members of the **Temple Lodge Club** (£1.00 annual membership) visitors seeking Bed & Breakfast accommodation may share in all the facilities the house has to offer.

Breakfast is served in the ground floor Dining Room looking out over the quiet, secluded garden. A library provides a space for relaxation or quiet reading. All the rooms are well appointed and comfortably furnished, the two double rooms being deluxe rooms.

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THE GREEN SNAKE

An Autobiography

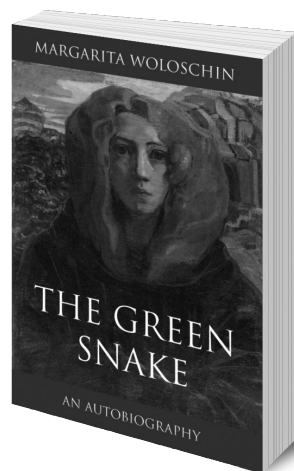
MARGARITA WOLOSCHIN

Told from the perspective of the anthroposophical artist, Margarita Woloschin, this is a first-hand account of her privileged upbringing in Russia and subsequent life.

Instrumental in the introduction of anthroposophy into Russia, Woloschin recounts the construction of the original Goetheanum and its ultimate destruction. The narrative is interspersed with the artist's personal memories and insights of Rudolf Steiner.

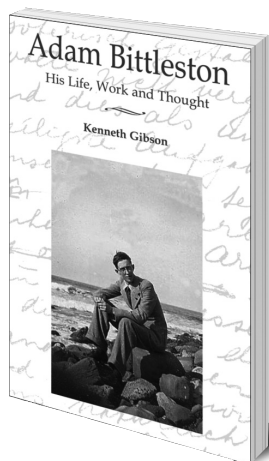
Set against the extremes of tsarist Russia and the Bolshevik Revolution, this haunting, historical memoir is testament to a fascinating and inspirational life.

Margarita Woloschin was born in Moscow in 1882. She first met Rudolf Steiner in 1905 and from 1908 followed him on his European lecture tours. In 1914 she went to Dornach, Switzerland, where she worked on the construction of the first Goetheanum. In 1917 she returned to Russia but left in 1924 for Stuttgart where she lived until her death in 1973.



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Bittleston was recognized as one of the foremost theologians of The Christian Community in Britain and was a much sought after spiritual counsellor. He was also very gifted with the written word. His knowledge of Shakespeare was equal to that of any academic or writer of his time. This biography contains a selection of his writings, including all his works on Shakespeare.

Kenneth Gibson is a lecturer at the University of Derby and specialises in adult education, history of education and seventeenth-century ecclesiastical history.

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Gospel Readings 2010–2011

Advent

Sunday, November 28.....Luke 21: 25–36
Sunday, December 5Luke 21: 25–36
Sunday, December 12..... Luke 21: 25–36
Sunday, December 19..... Luke 21: 25–36

Christmas

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

Epiphany

Thursday, January 6.....Matthew 2: 1–12
Sunday, January 9Matthew 2: 1–12
Sunday, January 16..... Luke 2: 41–52
Sunday, January 23.....John 2: 1–11
Sunday, January 30..... Luke 4: 31–37

Sunday, February 6... Matthew 20: 1–16
Sunday, February 13 Luke 8: 1–18
Sunday, February 20 Luke 7: 36–49
Sunday, February 27 Luke 12: 35–48
Sunday, March 6..... Luke 18: 18–34
Sunday, March 13.....Matthew 4: 1–11
Sunday, March 20..... Matthew 17: 1–13

Passiontide

Sunday, March 27..... Luke 11: 14–36
Sunday, April 3..... John 6: 1–15
Sunday, April 10..... John 8: 1–12

Holy Week

Sunday, April 17.....Matthew 21: 1–11
Thursday, April 21... Luke 23: 13–32
Friday, April 22.....John 19: 1–15
Saturday, April 23... John 19: 16–42

Easter

Sunday, April 24..... Mark 16: 1–8
Sunday, April 1..... John 20: 19–31
Sunday, April 8.....John 10: 1–16
Sunday, April 15.....John 15: 1–27
Sunday, May 22.....John 16: 1–33
Sunday, May 29.....John 14: 1–31

Ascension

Thursday, June 2 John 16: 24–33
Sunday, June 5 John 16: 24–33

Whitsuntide

Sun–Tue, June 12–14..... John 14: 23–31
Wednesday, June 15..... Luke 12: 1–12
Sunday, June 19..... Luke 12: 1–12

St. Johnstide

Friday, June 24..... Mark 1: 1–11
Sunday, June 26..... Mark 1: 1–11
Sunday, July 3 John 1: 19–34
Sunday, July 10 John 3: 22–36
Sunday, July 17 Matthew 14: 1–12

Sunday, July 24..... Mark 8: 27–38
Sunday, July 31 Matthew 7: 1–14
Sunday, August 7 Luke 15: 11–32
Sunday, August 14..... Luke 9: 1–17
Sunday, August 21..... Luke 18: 35–43
Sunday, August 28..... Mark 7: 31–37
Sunday, September 4 Luke 10: 1–20
Sunday, September 11 Luke 17: 5–24
Sunday, September 18 Matt. 6: 19–34
Sunday, September 25 Luke 7: 11–17

Michaelmas

Thursday, Sept. 29... Matthew 22: 1–14
Sunday, October 2..... Matthew 22: 1–14
Sunday, October 9..... Matthew 25: 1–13
Sunday, October 16..... Ephesians 6: 10–19
Sunday, October 23..... Revelation 1: 1–20

Sunday, Oct. 30... Revelation 3: 1–6
Sunday, Nov. 6..... Revelation 3: 14–22
Sunday, Nov. 13..... Revelation 4: 1–11
Sunday, Nov. 20..... Revelation 21: 1–7

Advent

Sunday, November 27..... Luke 21: 25–36

STUDIES IN THE GOSPELS

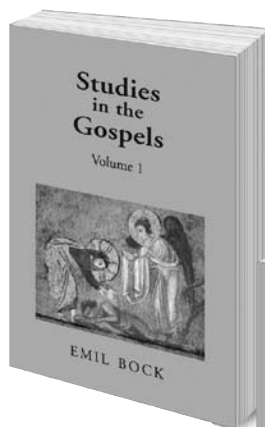
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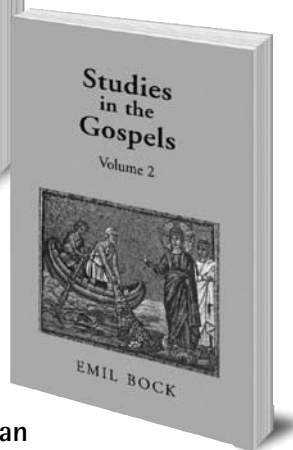
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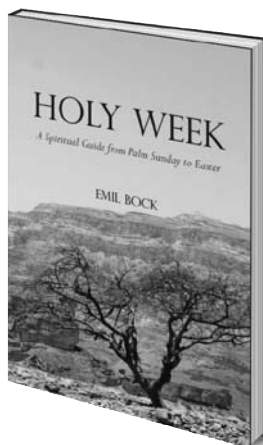
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HOLY WEEK

A Spiritual Guide from Palm Sunday to Easter

EMIL BOCK

Easter Holy Week is a unique time in the Christian calendar, containing both dramatic lows and highs, as well as time for reflection and meditation.

This lovely little book offers readers an inspiring guide from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday. It vividly brings the events of Holy Week alive, enabling us to follow the mystery drama of the Passion.

It also provides opportunities for prayer and contemplation, with each day accompanied by the gospel reading.

Emil Bock (1895–1959) 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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