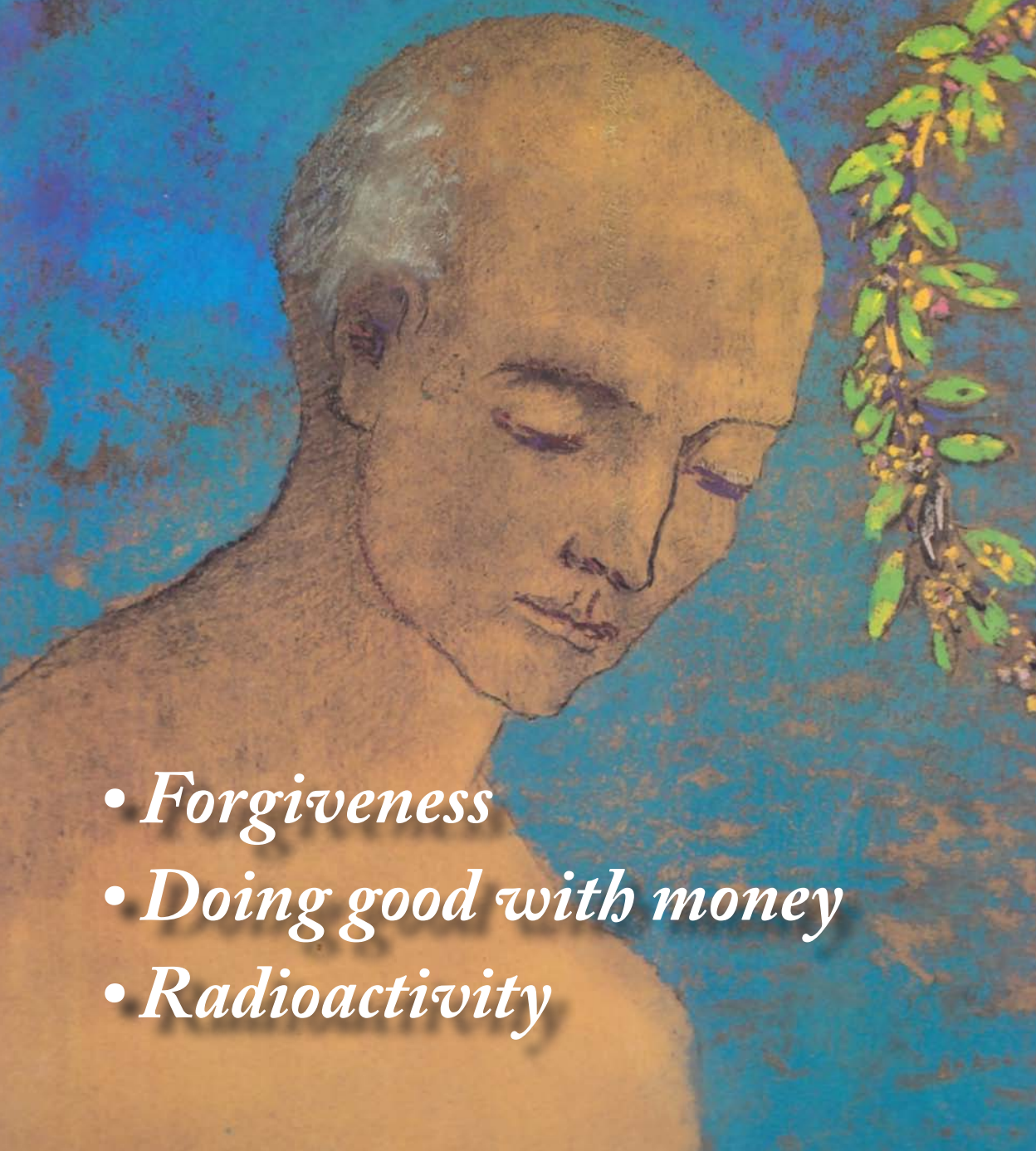


The Christian Community

Perspectives

September–November 2011



- *Forgiveness*
- *Doing good with money*
- *Radioactivity*

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by Odilon Redon

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Editors:

Peter Howe, Deborah Ravetz,
Tom Ravetz, Kevin Street

Subscriptions & Advertisements:

Kevin Street Tel: 01384 443 268

All correspondence: *Perspectives*,
22 Baylie Street, Stourbridge DY8 1AZ
Tel: 01384 377 190

Fax: (UK only) 0871 242 9000

email:

editor@perspectives-magazine.co.uk

subs@perspectives-magazine.co.uk

Lay-Up: Christoph Hänni

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c/o Roger Coutts Umstead,
1508 Goyeau St.

Windsor ON, N8X 3L4, Canada

encoreanthrobooks@sympatico.ca
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Australia: Enquire for price at:

Julie Sedgmen, 205 Cowper St,

Goulburn NSW 2580,

Tel. 04821 6122

New Zealand: Enquire for price at:

Gerald Richardson

62A Redvers Drive, Belmont

Lower Hutt, tel: 04 565 3836

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As this issue of Perspectives was being put together for printing, the news reached us that Taco Bay had died on the 5th August. Taco was the first Erzoberlenker of The Christian Community who had not been among the founding priests, an immense responsibility that he shouldered with the combination of gravitas and humanity that was his own. He was also deeply connected to the English-speaking world. As a young man he went to Camphill in Aberdeenshire. He worked as a priest in Edinburgh, from where he took the Act of Consecration to Ireland and reintroduced a truly cosmic Christian liturgy to the land from which the Irish monks had carried Celtic Christianity as far as Taco's native Switzerland. Even after his destiny as Lenker, Oberlenker and Erzoberlenker took him to the continent, he remained connected to the work of our movement in the English-speaking world through his many visits and the friendships and connections that he faithfully maintained. English was one of the astonishing number of languages that Taco could speak, celebrate and converse fluently in. All over the world, members and friends of The Christian Community will remember Taco's warmth, kindness and deeply-founded spirituality.

TOM RAVETZ

A full obituary of Taco Bay will appear in the next issue..

Maria in the Rose Bower

for Schongauer's 'Maria in the Rose Bower' and the Grunewald Altar at Colmar

*I remembered the thirty red roses
that decked the Christmas tree,
and the three white roses
for the years of Christ's work on earth:
and I saw the red
and the white and green in their beauty.*

*I looked at the Maria im Rosenhag,
where Mary is clothed in red entirely,
the blue of her mantle
having ascended to dress the two angels
who hover above her head.
They are bearing the crown of heaven
down towards the head of Mary.
And around her in a bower
I saw the great floppy petals
of the roses of Alsace,
those finely-scented and delicate blooms
set among the green leaves and the eager birds.
And there was one white rose among the many red.*

*I saw Nicholas pluck a pink rose
and wear it in his buttonhole:
and all at once
the flowers became the garments
of those who were near the Christ
at his departing: the crucifixion tableau
was already visible in the Virgin and Child image.*

*The red roses were the swirling drapes
of St Sebastian, were
the red robe of St John the Divine,
the folds of the dress of Mary Magdalene,
and appeared as the red garment of St Anthony.
And the white rose, which is beside the robin's breast
and level with Maria's brow in the Rosenhag painting,
turned into the milk-white head-drape
of Grunewald's Mother of Jesus;
and the spots of light that are
the Lamb, the loincloth, and the open Bible
were also roses;
and all was a flowering bush—
Mary and her Lamb of God
in the crucifixion tree.*

*Vanessa
Underwood is
a member of
the Forest Row
community.*

VANESSA UNDERWOOD
Written at Colmar, 11 May 2011

Getting real with Forgiveness

Douglas Thackray

The term 'swinging the lead' is used by sailors who want to find out how much water is under the keel of their boat. They throw a lead weight attached to a line with fathoms marked on it, in order to check the efficiency of their echo sounder, and then by placing a piece of ordinary kitchen lard on the end of the lead for a reading of whether it is sand or rock under the boat, they gain a further bit of useful information for making the best anchorage.

There is an equivalent to swinging the lead in the matter of forgiveness. The lead can be seen as equivalent to our willingness to find out what lies at the bottom of ourselves and others, and through this find our soul's firm anchorage.

The Vulnerable Self

There are many causal threads that lead back to an understanding of past influences on our conduct. There are certain tendencies to vulnerability that St Paul points to in 1 Cor.13:11: 'When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now I see through a glass darkly but then 'face to face'. Now I know in part but then I shall know even as I am also known.'

All well and good, but we know that under certain stressful conditions 'childish things' and attitudes can revert back with a strong emotional charge. When we don't forgive, we create a blind spot where that person should normally be, we lose the perception of who that person is and, as a consequence, we cannot access the full picture of how this offence came about. We will likely try to forget the incident altogether and avoid anything to do with that person. We can see this painful experience 'through a glass darkly'—a distorted view that estranges us from reality; an image that just won't leave us alone.

An incident of a lack of forgiveness not only obliterates the other person, but in some subtle ways it wounds us, it diminishes us because we will be less able to make sense of our own lives if an important piece of the jigsaw is missing and, if, too, we are forever avoiding intelligent confrontation.

Douglas Thackray is a priest of The Christian Community living in London

Incitement of the Will in regard to Forgiveness

In the New Testament there is a miracle described in Matthew 17, where the disciples need money in order to pay their taxes. To resolve this problem, Jesus predicts that if they go fishing, the first fish caught will have a coin in its mouth. One message of this parabolic miracle is that when we have a real spiritual need it will be met through our own striving for it.

If we then apply this teaching to forgiveness, the message becomes an injunction to dive time and time again into the deep waters of our soul until we have found the hidden treasure.

The well-known saying, ‘Seek and ye shall find’ can be illuminated by the seven parables in Matthew 13, which contain the same teaching in seven different contexts about the kingdom. All of them are involved with seeking — the treasure in the field, the pearl without price and the coin which is lost, and so on. The existence of this kingdom is a promise that we will find salvation when we show single-minded focus to search out what we need to overcome ourselves.

And, additionally, from these parables we can be assured that if we involve the Kingdom in our striving to forgive, the other person will be especially blessed—because then we will be attuned to God’s will for us, and consequently more likely to succeed thanks to the grace that He gives us to follow through.

Failure to forgive

Failure to forgive is not a sin provided we make an effort of good faith. Even the disciples had personality differences in their relationships—differences that hindered forgiveness. Peter asks Jesus how many times he should forgive his brother, and suggests that seven times is quite enough. Jesus comes back with seven times seventy as more fitting! In setting the bar so high he is telling us that forgiveness is not something that comes easily, but something that we need to learn to practise until it becomes part of our spiritual constitution, like say, compassion, or devotion.

Here he sets new parameters for his teaching. He is saying that we are required to strive to reach a stage of development in which we become free from our attachment to reacting. This new capacity will then enrich us and become part of our nature and of our faith.

In small and big ways we are all constantly attacked by others, from gossip to calumny. We can learn not to respond to such provocation, not be dragged into the slipstream of the negativity created, but stand on the ground of the higher self. What do I mean by this term, ‘the higher self’?

Jesus talks about the mustard seed, which can be interpreted as the fire element in the soul. This is the source which gives us the power to affirm the facts in a gentle way much as Christ did. We see how difficult it is to reach and maintain this 'higher self' when even the disciples seemed to fall short when they asked him to increase their faith.

Breaking the Ties of Repeated Failure

Everyone has tried forgiveness, and failed: not once but many times. So how can we make a fresh start on this issue when we have tried so many times before? The first thing is to set our mind in such a way as to forget all the negatives, and begin afresh as though it were the first time.

Trying again is at the heart of all our spiritual endeavours, as indicated in the lakeshore experience with The Resurrected One. (John 21). The figure which appears to the disciples asks them if they have caught anything. They reply that they have toiled all night and caught nothing. He then tells them to cast their nets on the other side of the boat, whereupon a great abundance of fish is caught, so many as to threaten the stability of their fishing vessel.

If we want to follow this advice and apply it to our unforgiving condition, we will have to look at the problem from another angle—from the point of view of the other, the perpetrating one who has caused the injury in the first place.

Usually at this stage, if we get this far down the road, we can hear ourselves crying out like the disciples 'increase our faith' and then we will be able to forgive. It is indeed very difficult to do this without help, without someone guiding us towards the possibility of the great abundance that is at the heart of Christ's message.

How can I get help from the Spiritual World?

In Job, Chapter 28, Job utters: 'But where will wisdom be found and where is the place of understanding? Men know not the price thereof, neither is it found in the land of the living.' The origin of forgiveness comes from above as stated in the Lord's prayer. 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.' Out of this grace flows the possibility of our forgiving the other.

The Sacramental Consultation (one of the seven sacraments of The Christian Community) can bring us to an awareness of the need to forgive. In the trial we have before us we, like Job, can seek the aid of the spiritual world. We go to the threshold, where it is possible to find forgiveness which

is at the centre of our heart's desire, which enables us to turn bitterness into love.

The Sacramental Consultation

The Sacramental Consultation can be likened to a fan which, when held closed in the hand, is hard and compact to our touch. When the fan is opened it becomes like a bird's wing, light like a feather, and often depicting a landscape or an image from nature. In a similar fashion the dialogue can open out between the priest and the person seeking help. The circumstances in which the injury took place may be described, and similar incidents, which occurred in the past, can be included in the conversation. There is an attempt to find the other point of view in which the other person is restored. Out of this perception an offering can be made as our part in what has taken place.

Now the Sacramental part begins. This is the moment where the possibility of grace appears as when Christ said to the disciples on the shore of the lake, 'Cast your nets on the other side of the boat.'

We began with the image of throwing the lead, to find what was at the bottom. Two people come to mind who seem to be more than most associated with the deep; the first is the prophet Jonah, who at the critical moment was swallowed by a whale and on a different level Job, who descended into the depths of darkness in the trials that Satan had put before him. When we see forgiveness as a challenge of destiny, when we have to courage to make this journey, we may have the grace to have Job's experience: 'I know that my redeemer liveth.'

Where the Theology of Rudolf Steiner becomes religious

Martin Samson

During the foundation of The Christian Community in 1922 Rudolf Steiner held a public lecture course for a group of French speaking visitors. The theme was Philosophy, Cosmology and Religion. The course follows themes of how we can find a gesture of renewal for these three areas of knowledge or consciousness. He begins with a description of the difference between those people who have chosen a scientific path of understanding and those who choose one of faith and describes a juxtaposition that could have been spoken of today. The scientific age has changed our concept of belief and it allows our philosophies to be guided by what is reasonable alone. Our cosmology includes an infinite spatial dimension based on physics and the mechanics of light. Our religious experience can be subjected to critical questioning to the point where it fades into non-existence; or it may be tolerated as a purely personal matter that has no bearing on reality. Those who still hold to other dimensions than the physically provable are left with faith in the dim memories of religious teachings. Scientific knowledge and faith stand side by side, one demanding the results of the attainable world of observation, the other calling us to extend our knowledge to religious experience and not to leave the understanding of spiritual things to traditions and dogmas that ask us to believe without a need to understand.

Steiner then continues through the lecture course and explores many different ways that we can find a renewed connection to philosophy, cosmology and religious consciousness. We are encouraged to place humanity and Christ within these three forms of understanding that are born of our conscious experiences of a supersensible world through imagination, inspiration and intuition. Interestingly enough, the renewal of the religious consciousness, out of which we can renew our religious practices, comes from the intuitive connection and communion experiences of the beings in the furthest dimensions of the starry cosmos. Religion can only be renewed through a renewal of our religious consciousness which is founded on a conscious connection or communion with the spiritual beings in the landscapes of the spiritual world. Rudolf Steiner's ideas on the renewal of religion

Martin Samson is a priest of The Christian Community in Adelaide.

are based on understanding our spiritual experiences. These experiences are in themselves religious ones as they are a conscious communion or connection with spiritual beings.

How does this process look for us? For while we may aspire to attain imagination, inspiration and intuition through following a path of knowledge, it would be difficult, if not disempowering, to say that we could only understand our religious experiences consciously once we have experienced initiation. When we try to understand our spiritual experiences we tend to create a philosophical and cosmological framework in which they make meaning in our lives. Prayers, meditation and ritual are all ways of entering into religious experience of other dimensions, and coming to understand them nourishes our faith. We can work constantly on broadening our philosophies and cosmology out of religious experience that has found reasonable understanding. In this sense we are all theologians, seeking through pondering, dialogue and study to integrate our experiences into a framework that guides our activity in the world. In fact until our understanding of these things actually changes our deeds, we might say that we do not have faith. Rudolf Steiner's renewal impulse is actually a description of our human nature.

In this sense, Steiner himself was a theologian. He too had his profound experiences of the spiritual world, communed with spiritual beings and went on a journey to bring pictures, imaginations and knowledge of these worlds into a philosophical cosmological framework in a rational way. While doing so he addressed many of the disciplines within theology. He was a biblical scholar who illuminated profoundly the mysteries of the Bible. He can also be seen as a true inter-faith theologian who illuminated many sacred texts, mythologies and cosmologies from other cultural traditions. His understanding of the earth as a spiritual being and the working of the divine feminine in the re-awakening of Persephone and Isis-Sophia demonstrate his deeply eco- and feminist theological understanding of theological anthropology: the understanding of the unique role of the human being in creation. Later he became a liturgical theologian through his far reaching understanding of ritual in the founding of The Christian Community.

But can we see Steiner as a systematic theologian? The great systematic theologians, such as Thomas Aquinas in the Middle Ages, or Wolfhart Pannenberg today, have developed 'systems' in which step by step the doctrine of God, of Creation, of Man and redemption are explained.

However, with Rudolf Steiner we have to read many different books and lectures and find a way of fitting snippets of information, contradictory

imaginations and some fairly left of field ideas together into a cohesive whole in our minds. We have to do the ordering in our own understanding to generate the theology. I think Rudolf Steiner consciously chose not to write a clear systematic theology as he wanted to create a spark within us that would do the work of ordering and understanding by forcing us to bring our experiences into relationship with his ideas.

This is the moment where theology and religion meet in Steiner's thoughts, where understanding and devotion nurture each other. As a process Steiner himself describes it as a liturgical theologian would. He says we can have experiences of the divine spiritual world which at first may be unintelligible to us. These experiences come in many forms such as rituals, prayer, walks in nature, watching the stars and in human relationships. At first these experiences may give rise to feelings that are difficult to articulate but generate a sense of awe and wonder. Our sense of awe and connection drives us to want to understand the experience. The process of finding words, analogies and philosophical frameworks to explain the experience is a theological one as it gives us the understanding upon which our life activities adjust and change. As we grow in our understanding and our life is enhanced through the growth of our philosophy and cosmology we feel a new drive emerge within us. This feeling is where theology becomes religious. It arises within us as a need and a drive towards expressing a religious deed in the world. A sense of needing to give gratitude and thanksgiving back to the spiritual world, the other person or to nature takes form in our soul. We could say that our growth in understanding now seeks experience again. This gesture towards the world is where our conscious communion finds its expression in an activity of reverence and devotion that brings with it the need for nurturing and caring for that other being. It is an outpouring of our inner experience of understanding towards the other in a form of creativity and love.

This was not a theoretical idea in the life of Rudolf Steiner. He lived this cyclical process of experiencing the Spirit leading to understanding and understanding leading us back into religious expression. The way he did it may not fit in with the more traditional definitions of what religious expression might mean. Normally we understand 'religious' to mean some form of church practice or ritual. However, Rudolf Steiner saw the principle of religious freedom as part of the path of evolution of consciousness within individual destiny. In his own life he continuously expressed his own growth in understanding his spiritual experiences in the world. This was always done with awe, wonder and deep love for humanity and

the spiritual world: a deeply religious experience. There are many stories of his growth and realization of the religious life. He would at times have tears in his eyes when bringing some experience of the spirit to the world. It was well known that he would pray the Lord's Prayer out loud in his room each day. His whole devotion to the growth of the various initiatives in the world and the care he showed for the people trying to establish the anthroposophical work in the world showed great devotion and religious action. It was a true expression of how the understandings of the spiritual experiences (his theology) became the framework for his action in the world (his religious practice). His theology, philosophy and cosmology led to action in the world that took the meaning of the word 'religion' into the free deed of the individual.

Where does Rudolf Steiner's theology become religious? I hope we don't expect an answer that says it is in the founding of The Christian Community. For me it is in observing how his own journey led more and more to his own freedom of religious expression in the world. As his understanding and confidence in his realizations grew so did his confidence in being able to draw attention to the power of prayer and spiritual activity in the world. It may seem strange to think that Rudolf Steiner himself had a biography in his own realizations and creative religious expressions in the world, but it is true and he himself spoke of how these things developed for him to the point of possibly losing just about everything he had stood for.

The example in Steiner's own life is also where he always challenged humanity, and especially those who would follow his teachings, to take up the process in their own lives. The question of where we seek our experiences of the spirit, and how we give something back in devotional practice to humanity and the spirit, is a completely free choice. A further development of this gesture is to develop reverence towards the destinies of other individuals and to liberate them into the full expression of their religious participation in the creative transformation of the world they act in. Rudolf Steiner's theology (the process of understanding our spiritual experiences) becomes religion (the process of devotional activity into the world) in the life of individuals who continuously follow the mutually nurturing path of spiritual understanding and religious experience.

Finding one's true Self at the Altar

Julia Polter

Spiritual seekers of all traditions and times strive to access a realm, which lies beyond our everyday reality. Often the entry into this realm is connected with an altered or extended experience of the self. A transformed self-consciousness goes hand in hand with an understanding of the spiritual world.

Accordingly living with the Act of Consecration of Man and the other sacraments of the Christian Community very often gently changes over time the relationship to the world and to ourselves. Our understanding of the spiritual is deepened. What is happening at the altar and in our communities that allows this to take place?

Before we can answer this question it might be helpful to look at other traditions and their way to change the experience of the self. Following old teachings the Zen master Guishan Lingyu asked his pupils to contemplate a riddle:

Tell me in one word what your original being was before your parents gave you birth and prior to your capacity to discriminate things.

In their effort to answer, the students will be led back in time to the origins of their existence. Questions like this might come up: Where were we before we started thinking? Where were we before we received a physical body? Did your experience of the self exist before you were born?

Going back to the origins in the way described can bring us to a point where we might feel that our individual, everyday thinking does not lead us anywhere but into nothingness. We might conclude going back in time that we did not exist at all as an individual self; or that we were an unidentifiable integral part of a 'great cosmic consciousness' before we were born. As a result, the experience of our self may be perceived as a transient illusion, which will not lead us to higher knowledge.

Another way to gain a new relationship to ourselves is, not by going back to our origins like the Buddhist teacher suggests, but by being aware of ourselves in the present moment. The contemporary spiritual teacher Eckhart Tolle describes this as a life changing personal experience:

*Julia Polter
is a priest of
The Christian
Community in
Chicago.*

For years my life alternated between depression and acute anxiety. One night I woke up in a state of dread and intense fear, more intense than I had ever experienced before. Life seemed meaningless, barren, hostile. It became so unbearable that suddenly the thought came into my mind, 'I cannot live with myself any longer.' The thought kept repeating itself several times. Suddenly, I stepped back from the thought and looked at it, as it were, and I became aware of the strangeness of that thought: 'If I cannot live with myself, there must be two of me—the I and the self that I cannot live with.' And the question arose, 'Who is the 'I' and who is the self I cannot live with?'

Tolle describes how with this experience of an 'observing uninflected self' his 'unhappy everyday self' collapsed and stopped playing the major role in his life. He calls the newly found liberating entity in himself the 'I AM'.

In this spiritual experience the suffering 'everyday self' becomes a step-ladder to a new awareness of a second self, which is always there. It was just not perceived before. The 'lower self' starts to acknowledge the 'higher self' as a living reality and authority.

The sacraments can promote a similarly transformative experience. Central is here the celebration of the Act of Consecration of Man. This is a collaborative happening, in which everybody present is equally invited to engage in the process by being fully there, with all senses, awake in the present moment. The foundation of the Act of Consecration is a sensory experience, honouring the presence of our so-called 'lower self'. But when the first words are spoken another layer is added to our participation: 'Let us worthily fulfill...' The participant will soon realize that this is a challenge. Distracting thoughts come and go; the feeling of tiredness can be overwhelming. But if the will and interest to contribute to the service actively are there, sooner or later a living awareness of the self will develop which is comparable to the experience of Eckhart Tolle. One can realize that there are 'two of me'—'the self which distracts itself' and 'the self, which can tune in, which feels perfectly at one with what is said.' This realization might be accompanied with the feeling that through attending the Act of Consecration inner turbulence grows calmer, and a growing sense for one's own direction in life is developed. This is because—like Tolle—we consciously or unconsciously also start to live more intensely with the question: 'Who is the I? The true self?' And the Act of Consecration of Man starts to offer answers. The perception of our lower self, our higher self and the being of Christ start to merge in our experience. That can be very inspiring because it gives us ideas about our future as humanity and individuals. Where are

we going? What am I called to do? So instead of leading us solely to the origins of our existence all sacraments invite us to see the future aspects of human evolution as well. We engage in a process in which we are allowing our everyday consciousness to have a conversation with the eternal in us. As observers of this conversation we learn to embrace and to nourish in us the Christ consciousness, which lives in the renewed sacraments.

i thank You God for most this amazing

*i thank You God for most this amazing
day;for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky;and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes*

*(i who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday;this is the birth
day of life and of love and wings:and of the gay
great happening inimitably earth)*

*how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any—lifted from the no
of all nothing—human merely being
doubt unimaginable You?*

*(now the ears of my ears awake and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)*

e.e.cummings

The Business of doing good with Money

Odilia Mabrouk

There are many real-life examples of irresponsible business practice, from Shell's actions in Nigeria to the experience and disappointment of having bought cheap, faulty products from a local market trader. The destructive principles of hard-nosed corporate behaviour are known to bring out the worst in people.

However, all activity involving money and power (whether on the part of a government department, community organisation or individual) is prey to many of the same pitfalls as business. This is useful to bear in mind whilst reading this article.

Business as the way forward

As one of the largest bodies of influence, the corporate world is able to revolutionise and revitalise life on a massive scale. This starts to occur when we question ourselves and, as a result, move our focus away from the traditional profit-based format to seek solutions with recourse to the positive images of business. Business can become a vehicle for healing when its identity and practice are re-imagined and a paradigm shift occurs.

Progress in many areas is already being made, some examples are mentioned below.

- *Sustainable Development is a concept which encompasses care for the environment and society rather than simply focusing on wealth generation. Organisations such as Forum for the Future (www.forumforthefuture.org) are a useful resource in this regard.*
- *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) looks in particular at the social impact of corporate life and may, for instance, lead to companies donating to charity, or a company policy which requires employees to spend part of their working week volunteering in the community.*
- *The growth in Social Enterprise has led to a necessary blurring of the line between charity and business and brought grassroots initiatives into the arena. In the UK there*

*are regional support agencies precisely for this purpose
(e.g. <http://www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk>).*

Making money is still very important

Economic activity is important as without it poverty, ill health and the breakdown of communities ensue. As Juriaan Kamp writes in his article 'The New Sustainability' (Ode Magazine, Volume 8, Issue 2) 'It's wrong to think economic growth and sustainability are mutually exclusive', we can address the 'bottom line' of business income whilst caring and acting responsibly for other beings around us.

Developing positive images of business — Designing for resilience

We may not always be able to keep our good intentions intact through the passage of money, but as William McDonough and others point out: we are able to do this to a greater extent when we design something for use in the world. When designing a product or service, the driving motivation need no longer be about just making money, but about bringing to birth a series of actions that support life and its systems in the future. This also means designing in adaptability (built in obsolescence is at the opposite end of where we want to be); a product is best designed to have several lives and be reused or recycled when its initial purpose has been exhausted.

Co-creating with intent

Co-creation is a practice whereby end users are included in the product development process, enabling people to consider the potential product/service from different perspectives. A key 'add-on' to the practice of co-creation, is where the 'creators' have a shared vision through concern for the impact of the result. Without the shared intent for good it is merely a marketing and functionality exercise.

Our understanding of 'beauty' is varied, but something can be beautiful not just visibly, but because of the thinking behind it, the joyful and nurturing intent which brought it into being. Where many people have been involved in creating something which is based on a beautiful and 'gallant' idea, the story of its development is able to spread with much less need for advertising; word of mouth is almost good enough.

Odilia Mabrouk is a freelance facilitator and director of The Hub Stourbridge CiC working to create a shared workplace in the West Midlands to support responsible business practice alongside creative and community activities.

Business schools such as Knowmads (www.knowmads.nl) are active in bringing together co-creation and sustainability.

Deepening trade relationships

Finding a way to make money that has positive impact is not easy. Imagine the life of a coin from its birth in the mint to its demise at meltdown, and consider how many conscious and unconscious human interactions have directed its fate.

Our intentions to ‘do good’ with money last only as long as we have the money in our possession. The minute we pass it on, the new ‘owner’ is free to cause further joy or pain through the next transaction and we generally have no say in the matter. Where there is a breakdown in our communal relationships, money and trade seem almost to have a life of their own, causing havoc or help according to random sets of human behaviour.

If the relationship between traders is developed to be based on a sense of shared responsibility, it will become relevant to the buyer to know where their money has been invested and for the seller to be responsive to that. This can enable more trust and transparency based on a shared motivation to do good.

Transparency in a nurturing environment

In the corporate and political worlds, the concept of transparency to one’s stakeholders is a feature. This means that those with a ‘stake’ in the institution are not seen as being restricted to the shareholders, but including anyone affected by or interested in the organisation’s activities. But being transparent is not necessarily easy, as it opens one up to attack and a weakened organisation is less able to be competitive in the marketplace. Developing a culture of trust where organisations can become vulnerable without damage from the consequences of attack, but at the same time are able to process criticism, is one way to move forward in creating a corporate arena that supports life and the positive impact of money.

Collaborating to shift awareness

More and more organisations and individuals are choosing to seek greater meaning in their work than simply a way to earn money, and it is key that we begin connecting the dots and learning how to be resilient enough together to adapt to a fast moving world.

Part of this can be through engaging with or passing on the word about organisations that step out of their comfort zone to become more sustainable and responsible. Examples of this include a nationwide food company that takes up the fairtrade banner; a local factory that champions the usage of recycled packaging; an outdoor clothing group that structures a company so that any employee, regardless of role, can lead on innovation; and a carpet company where every employee is well versed in sustainable manufacture.

Similarly it is important to continue to come up with solutions for those corporations and institutions (including political ones) that are stuck in the old way of doing things, continually flagging up the destruction left in their wake and suggesting solutions for change.

Being connected

Getting together is another way of helping things to moving forward. Sharing ideas and plotting a map of innovation—it doesn't matter how small the innovation is, as long as it is born out of caring for the world.

Finding the places to meet and engage with this shared energy and sense of value can be hard. But again there are online places and physical spaces where this can happen. The Hub movement (www.the-hub.net), which is a shared workspace with a difference, welcomes and supports small and large initiatives in a conscious role as facilitator and host of a global movement for change.

Finding 'breathing space'

It is important to create enough space in our lives to be considerate in the widest sense of the term. This means taking time to consider the impact we have on life whilst simultaneously enjoying the gift of living. Stewardship in service of life can better fire our behaviour if we take the time out to 'breathe'.

Stepping forward and showing up

Accessing our sense of community and becoming considerate and collaborative creators is what can inspire us to lead our lives rather than just go through our experiences passively.

This may involve leaving behind an old identity, perhaps re-assessing the role one is playing in the web of monetary interactions, giving up the drive for status or the perceived need for stability, and reworking one's life in a new mould fashioned out of a desire to see good things happen. We will get there if we continue to try, together.

On the Death of a young Person

Susan Vos

*Though I am dead
Grieve not for me with tears
Think not of death
With sorrowing and fears;
I am so near that
Every tear you shed
Touches me although
You think me dead
But when you laugh
And sing in glad delight,
My soul is lifted
Upwards to the light
Laugh and be glad
For all that life is giving,
And I, though dead,
Will share your joy in living.
Anon*

What a beautiful poem, what simplicity and yet, what wisdom! What is this?

*Laugh and be glad
For all that life is giving*

How can one as a parent who has lost a child laugh and be glad? Surely it is not possible. Our precious child has been taken away. It is as if the end of our own life has begun—the very, very end. It is the cruellest thing, the most awful, living nightmare for a parent. One expects to lose ones parents but losing a child severs the parent-child connection in quite another way.

How can one transform ones pain into joy? Is it really possible? Is it not simply a question of allowing time to heal the pain?

To me, it is possible. It is also necessary for us to do this if we truly care about our child, about their soul. When we embrace joy and love, we can be found by those who have left the physical plane, and in their soul form they

Will share your joy in living

as well as be set free to move forward in their realm. Through living in a new way and embracing joy, our own pain will be transformed into

something quite beautiful. However, this new way of living requires effort, dedication and commitment: it means 'taking up our cross and bearing it' in the most meaningful way possible, working with it and, in so doing, transforming ourselves. When we do this, the burden that initially appears impossible to lift, —quite, quite impossible — is lifted or lifts of its own accord.

How can this be? And what is this new way of living? Where does one begin? One feels so gripped in utter despair, numbed with pain.

For me there is only one way that true transformation can take place. It means choosing the path of gratitude, living in absolute trust and, most creative of all, cultivating an awareness that the soul who has 'left', is still present, just in a different way. To start with, we need to want to begin the journey. It might be 'easier' to give up and remain in a state of hopelessness and despair. But once one has made that decision, one can begin this task which is a life-long journey, one that requires absolute dedication and commitment. But as time passes, the journey to the light becomes easier and easier.

The path of gratitude is well known. When confronted with a tragedy or challenge of this nature, gratitude has to become just as important as breathing, it has to permeate our lives so that it becomes part of our daily living. Everything which we do must be imbued with gratitude. The more we work with this, the more our eyes are opened to what there is to be grateful for.

With gratitude comes the question of living life in the fullest and in the most meaningful way possible. In my case, this is where my own son, Simon, the one I 'lost', has helped show me the way.

In life, Simon was a great teacher, sharing with others whatever he knew. He also taught others how to live by example, through caring, sharing his joy of living, encouraging, motivating, understanding and 'working' with love. Many have said he was here to teach us. Often when I walk in the forests and mountains, I ask 'how did you feel in your own body, how did you see things around you—for you to have lived in such a way that I can only aspire to live? What was it like to be in your skin?'

I have experienced strongly that what is required of us is of great importance to the departed soul. If we are able to see life as just a part of the soul's journey through many incarnations, we come to understand that our love is vitally important to this soul. We need to give as much love as we can possibly give, pouring it out to the soul in question, our loved one. With gratitude and love, we are enabled continually to refresh our memories of

what he or she did bring to us, those times of shared happiness and the ways in which our lives were enriched by their existence, and so allowing unhelpful thoughts to fade away.

With the path of gratitude, one almost effortlessly begins to walk through life with absolute trust, knowing that life will always bring to us what we need, and that whatever is to come will come. Gratitude is the highest form of prayer, a prayer without a petition. When we adopt this way of life, everything we ask for without actually asking, absolutely everything we need, is given to us. The path of gratitude brings with it so many gifts. These gifts are gifts of the spirit, gifts of overwhelming love, divine love which fill our hearts and minds and bring us to this state of joy, and thus we are able to effortlessly

*Laugh and be glad
For all that life is giving*

Our joy is not only our own joy; it is a shared joy, a joy we share with those living and with those who are 'dead.'

*I am so near that
Every tear you shed
Touches me although
You think me dead
But when you laugh
And sing in glad delight,
My soul is lifted
Upwards to the light*

When we live as if the 'departed' soul is always with us, and with joy and gratitude in our hearts, we shower that soul with love and warmth from our own soul. We are giving this soul a gift. We are also enabling ourselves to become vehicles through which the highest intentions of that soul in his or her earthly life may continue and not be lost.

Many have said to us of Simon 'What a loss to the world' to die at the age of not quite 25 years. If we look at the lives of people who seem to have been cut down in their prime and could have done more for the world, is it really a loss? What have these 'departed' souls given to the spiritual world for its own working for the further development of mankind? Can we find a way out of the 'quagmire of grief' to allow all those who have 'left' us as well the angelic beings, to work through us and alongside us and, in so doing, find a real place for Christ to be present in our lives?

Though I am dead

When the leaves of the trees scatter and fall to the ground, they nourish the earth through their dying. How much more can the human being, created in God's image, nourish the world when he or she dies?

*Though I am dead
Grieve not for me with tears
Think not of death
With sorrowing and fears;
I am so near that
Every tear you shed
Touches me although
You think me dead
But when you laugh
And sing in glad delight,
My soul is lifted
Upwards to the light
Laugh and be glad
For all that life is giving,
And I, though dead,
Will share your joy in living.
Anon*

Susan Vos

With additions by Rob Vos

3 November 2007

A year after the death of Simon (16 December 1981–14 October 2006), Susan was inspired to write this reflective piece for the priest of The Christian Community who celebrated Simon's funeral. Susan lives in Brisbane and is a friend of The Christian Community in Australia. She has facilitated workshops on the sacred subject of death, grief and awakening to our dead for the Canberra and Melbourne communities.

For a copy of her Ebook collection of readings, quotes and meditative verses: Meeting Death, Transforming Life, Awakening to Those Who Have Died, email Susan at svos@bigpond.net.au

Radioactivity—an Attack upon Human Life

Hans-Bernd Neumann

After the catastrophe of Fukushima there has been an increased awareness—at least in Central Europe—that the commercial use of nuclear power also entails enormous dangers. The main hazard arises from the release of radioactive radiation which has a particularly damaging effect on all living things. This statement appears to be contradicted by the recurring reports from Chernobyl, which tell of a new multitude of animals within the exclusion zone around the ruined reactor. In this territory abandoned by human beings, wild boars weighing more than 100kg have been seen, catfish over 2m long swim in the waters in the zone, and feral horses and herds of bison congregate. Despite the most intensive radiation, which is still present to a certain extent even now, the life of flora and fauna appears to be thriving. Can we conclude from this that radioactivity is after all not so bad as we are told by the biophysicists?

The nature of the danger posed to life by radioactivity

The first thing to establish is that radioactive radiation is not perceptible to man or animals. Our senses cannot disclose to us that an area is radioactively contaminated. We need technical aids in order to have any way of detecting radioactive rays. They can do this because radioactive rays ionise matter, i.e. they generate carriers of electrical charges (free electrons and radical ions). That is why one speaks of ionising radiation in connection with radioactivity. Now, ions and free electrons immediately strive for electrical equalisation; they do this by simply seizing hold of the necessary missing charges from the nearest atomic environment and, in doing so, ionise that environment

likewise. This process within that microscopic world continues until the free electrons and radical ions finally find and mutually neutralise one another. In the course of this ‘pacification’ of the free bearers of charges at the atomic and molecular level, molecular bonds are broken and larger molecular formations are destroyed.

If radioactive radiation comes into contact with living cells or organisms, ions are generated within them; but ions in the cel-

*Hans-Bernd
Neumann
is a priest of
The Christian
Community in
Tübingen.*

lular fluid are lethal for the life-functions of the cell, because they rupture the large molecules of the cell nucleus—especially its DNA—and thereby destroy them. Although cells with destroyed or damaged DNA can still function for a while within the organism, at the moment of cell division, at the latest, the cell dies. This means that radioactivity as ionising radiation is particularly harmful to living things at those places in the organism where cell division occurs most frequently. This property of ionising radiation is made use of in the irradiation of tumours, since the cells of tumours usually divide much more quickly than the surrounding tissues. When subject to radiation, tumour cells die faster than healthy tissue. Conversely, substances (such as Amifostin) that absorb free radicals are used to reduce a tissue's sensitivity to radiation.

In the case of adult mammals and human beings, the digestive organs, the mucous membranes, the blood-forming bone marrow and also the germ cells react with particular sensitivity to ionising radiation, whereas muscle, nerve and fatty tissues are relatively insensitive, as this cell tissue no longer divides. For this reason, one may be given a lead apron to protect the body when having one's teeth X-rayed, whereas a lead helmet is unnecessary, as the nerve cells in the head no longer divide. In summary, one can say that radioactivity has a particularly damaging effect on those parts of an organism in which life processes are taking place, on those areas which are continually renewing themselves through cell division. For that reason, infants and children are at particular risk, as all their body cells multiply through cell division during the phase of growth. It is entirely sensible for pregnant women to avoid travelling on high-altitude flights for the first three months after conception; the embryo, in the process of becoming, is especially sensitive to cosmic (ionising) high-altitude radiation. This effect of radioactivity applies to all living creatures: plants, animals and human beings.

Genetic changes due to radioactive radiation

A particular problem with radioactive radiation is the fact that it can alter the genetic code in the germ cells. In the 50s and 60s of the last century, it was shown in mice and also in some larger mammals that even a single brief irradiation with a dose corresponding to the annual natural radiation measure of 2.5 millisievert was enough to engender genetic changes in their descendants. What was unexpected was that these changes only really appeared in the third to fifth generation—in some cases it took until the thirtieth. Only in the future will genetic changes due to radioactive ir-

radiation emerge as a great problem for mankind. Even though the results of the animal experiments of the 50s and 60s cannot be transferred directly to human beings, it is regarded as proved that genetic changes will also only appear in large numbers in man in the third to fifth generation. That is to say: the genetic damage caused by Chernobyl will only be observable in massive numbers of human beings from the middle of this century onwards. Changes caused through the Fukushima catastrophe will only become apparent at the end of our century. Since, our time being what it is, nations and races fortunately intermingle more and more, this problem will concern mankind as a whole!

Interpreting the reports from the exclusion zone around Chernobyl

For hundreds of years the main danger for wild animals and plants, particularly in cultivated landscapes, has been man. Wild animals and plants are decimated through hunting, through agriculture, through the use of pesticides. All this applies quite particularly to a long cultivated area such as the Ukraine. In 1986, because of the radioactivity, people had to flee this landscape precipitately, thereby leaving the world of animals and plants to itself. This means that the main danger to these living beings has been removed. Certainly, radioactivity is still present in this area, but when an animal—a wild boar, say—falls ill, it is eliminated, in accordance with the laws of the animal kingdom. Only healthy and strong animals (and plants) survive. The number of single animals perishing in the natural environment around the reactor is relatively low over against the previous extermination by man. The individual animal of a species is still threatened and endangered by the radioactivity, but the whole animal species profits from the absence of man—as can be seen by the immense wealth of life in this region. Similar phenomena are known from other exclusion zones. In the last forty years, large areas of the former border-territories of the German Democratic Republic have developed into veritable biotopes as a result of the absence of man.

Radioactivity and the human being

We see, then, that the immense enlivening of nature in radioactively contaminated areas is due to the absence of human beings. As far as the individual organism is concerned, the lethal danger posed by ionising radiation remains. A dying creature is very soon replaced by another creature of the same species. Genetically altered individuals are as a rule easy prey for predators, and they disappear. This rule does not apply to human beings.

If a human being is exposed to radioactivity and falls ill as a result, he or she is cared for and nursed. If a person is born with some genetic damage, we do not deny him or her their human dignity and worth; rather, that person will as a matter of course become a carrying member of humankind. Radioactive damage that shows up as cancer or genetic impairment is retained in mankind, because, simply by virtue of their being human, we grant each individual their human dignity and value, regardless of his or her temporary or chronic illness and regardless of his or her genetic status. This gives rise to a thought that can also be derived from religious sources (e.g. Koran, Sura 5: 'Every human life is to be as prized as though it were the entire world'. Or from the Gospel of Matthew 6,26: 'Are you not much more than the birds of the sky that are nourished by the heavenly Father?'): viz. that every individual human being is a species in his own right. As an individual, he or she is an important element in the progress of the world. That is why in the future the life-destroying effects of radioactive radiation will affect mankind more than the plants and animals. This should be given particular consideration in the discussions about the effects of radioactivity, but also in such discussions as, for instance, those concerning pre-implantation diagnosis, which will take on increased weight when genetic changes caused by radioactivity begin to appear in greater numbers within humanity.

Translation: Jon Madsen

Letter from Ireland

Malcolm Allsop

In the early Summer of 2011 Barack Obama visited Ireland, as did the Queen and The Christian Community held its first official Open Day. There were other events which received media attention around that time—a political leadership swing from the right to the more liberal Fine Gael party, ongoing financial concerns, knifings and Ireland's entry for the Eurovision Song Contest. However, the three events first mentioned will be particularly remembered: Obama was the latest in a long stream of famous (American) visitors to these shores who are able and keen to trace their roots back to this mysterious and wise people and their unique isle (although comparisons have been drawn with Sicily...). N.B. less famous visitors, but with similar ancestral claims, do make for a sizeable percentage of the Irish tourism trade. The visit of the British queen was felt by the vast majority of the population to have been a successful and timely and significant statement in the 'peace process'; unthinkable even ten years ago.

As for the open day of The Christian Community, Movement for Religious Renewal (Ireland) Ltd, on Whitsunday in Co. Clare, well, it too was preceded by a similar mood of trepidation and anticipation,

Malcolm Allsop is a priest of The Christian Community in County Clare, Ireland.

as were the two state visits, and it too was deemed by all who attended it (and gave feedback) a great success. Three still singular events, at the time of going to print, from the

past twelve months. As for the other news, the political swing is followed with interest, the financial concerns have continued to be existential for thousands; simmering aggression seems to be chronic in the cities at least and things may come and things may go but the Eurovision Song Contest goes on for ever.

The Christian Community is still in the category of a visitor to these shores. Already a lot longer here than the brief state visits of 2011, we can find some shared motifs nevertheless which hopefully can be developed for future good.

One such motif is that of roots. The past plays an important role for nations and people alike: whether exploring or denying it, resolving, exaggerating or covering up certain parts of it, or simply nurturing a connection with it. A (still) 'new world' and its citizens have an understandable longing to trace some roots or ancestral connections, after the pioneering forbears have gone, or had to go in search of pastures new, leaving much behind. An 'old world' carries many grievances and still to be buried hatchets, calling for dialogue or silent deeds, reconciling what has gone before.

In our case it has to do with how Christianity has lived in, been practised upset even, a particular land and its people, i. e. the environment into which The Christian Community enters. Are there points with which we can connect, points which often lie below the surface of outer practice. ...or malpractice? Even a contribution towards healing, towards deeper under-

standing of that which lies at the heart of Christ's connecting with the earth?

Celtic spirituality has long since been (re-)discovered and sensitively 'led' by the likes of the poet and scholar John O'Donahue, shared in the story-telling Padraic Colum, Ella Young, and nurtured at grass-roots' level by thousands of people, born and bred here, out of their sense for the spiritual heritage of forts ('raths') and wells, elemental influences, legends and customs going back over centuries. (Even a local horse fair traces its existence back over a thousand years, never mind Celtic history.)

These two words, 'Celtic spirituality' seem to belong together for very many people, whereas to enquire about Celtic Christianity—even in a Christian bookshop—draws blank expressions here. The general focus is on the two main churches of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism (Church of Ireland). But haven't they inherited anything of Celtic Christianity, its customs or consciousness? (A local vicar—Church of Ireland—did respond by saying: 'Yes, in our sense for autonomy in each of our dioceses') On the other hand there are various authors, with an anthropological background—for example Jakob Streit, Hans Gsaenger, Christopher Bamford, Cornelis Los etc.—who have made Celtic Christianity their theme.

Perhaps to find a wider audience another expression is called for, such as 'Christuality', which would build or at least indicate a bridge between two interconnected worlds, held at arm's length by many in today's spiritual v. religious divide.

For The Christian Community the question remains: to what extent do the ideas and practices of a Celtic Christianity flow

into that which we are 'renewing'? As stated above, wherever The Christian Community has gone, it has been interested to connect with the existing spirituality of that region. When looking, almost in vain, for exponents of Celtic Christianity (see footnote), one is gradually thrown back onto the question: are we, The Christian Community, a main bearer of such an impulse (and not just within Irish shores)? And what is meant by Celtic Christianity? Some examples:

1. A meeting and merging of Christianity and (pre-Christian) spirituality as happened so naturally and 'martyr-free' in Ireland, ('A wonder', says Christopher Bamford);
2. A belief in the working together of divine grace and mankind's 'creative grace', a freedom given us by the Logos, by Christ (see Jakob Streit 'Sun and Cross' on the theology of 4th century Pelagius);
3. The creation of autonomous (monastic) groupings, rather than over-arching hierarchical structures. (See Dara Molloy, Nora Chadwick etc.)
4. 'Peregrination pro Christo' a wandering, travelling pilgrimage, not so much to a set destination but more about being homeless with the spirit of Christ.
5. Christ as Lord of the Elements: finding the divine in nature yet being distinct from it.
6. A merging of the Cain and Abel streams... (A story quoted by Christopher Bamford, H Gaessinger etc.)
7. A sense for the multi-faceted nature of the spiritual worlds. ('Polytheism', D. Molloy would say)

...And more besides. Suffice it to say, the question (above) regarding the bearers,

the representatives of Celtic Christianity today, is justified, as can be seen from at least some of the above points.

It is just possible that the President of the United States might return—Shannon Airport was miffed that they weren't chosen for this auspicious trans-atlantic flight. A head of the British royal household might also come again now the way has been levelled (and a strong shared interest in horses could well continue to be a link)

Another Open Day? Why not? We sent off over forty white balloons on the day. Attached were 'finder' postcards, with the promise of a prize for the one found farthest away. Only one has been returned so far, found by a young boy 'on a mountain'(he wrote), north-west of here. So there is still plenty of 'outreach' work to be done. And things move at a gentle pace here (thanks, in part, to the 'blow-ins' who like the idea of 'Irish time').

May our bungalow become a beacon amongst bungalows. May we be spared the For Sale sign which over-shadows so many properties since the Celtic tiger, (tail between its legs or laughing all the way to a different bank?), and be able to speak the language of at least some of those souls re-emerging from the rubble of the last two

decades' highs and lows. For many these years were short enough that they have not completely forgotten the values and customs held dear over centuries. Part of the shake-up period has nevertheless also hinged around the central church institutions—see national press for details. Their turmoil has been challenging for quite likely all their members and friends, in many different ways. As the dust starts to settle around the economic upheavals, are there still credible religious/spiritual institutions to support the inner life of the individual? Is there a task for movements of religious renewal with a sense for (Ireland's) spiritual/religious heritage, for freedom of thought(Pelagius) or a Celtic-Christian future and for the depth of soul life that seems to me to characterize the Irish people and those drawn to these shores? A rhetorical question.

Footnote: Mention should be made of Dara Molloy as one example of someone exploring Celtic Christianity, albeit still tinged with bitterness regarding the church in which he grew up and first practised. He has a 'Centre for Sustainable Living in the Celtic Spiritual Tradition' off the Galway coast and writes, lectures, holds blessing ceremonies etc. as a 'Celtic Christian'.

Sent out among Wolves

Till Haase

We are being swallowed up: by time, by work, by people around us—who has not felt this, again and again? And we lose ourselves through being submerged in this way by other things. But this is our path in the world, drastically described by

Christ Jesus: 'I send you as lambs among the wolves' (Luke 10:3).

At first, this picture calls up a premonition of mortal danger, for are not lambs devoured by wolves? And everyone knows that we can be torn apart inwardly by the

confrontations and perils of life (the picture obviously refers to what happens among human beings). The disciples sent out by Christ will be 'gobbled up' by 'human wolves'.

Many will feel this to be a cheerless prospect for a Christian, and will turn their backs on a religion that forsakes human beings and sacrifices them. But, on the other hand, we can also become aware of a secret of human nature, and thereby change our viewpoint. This secret is revealed when we consider nutrition. The quality of our nourishment is not a matter of indifference. It is precisely the cosmic-spiritual quality of what we eat, what we 'incorporate' into ourselves, that builds up our body to be a fitting instrument for the 'I', indeed it invigorates it. And ultimately, in Communion, in bread and wine, we take into ourselves the highest quality of nourishment as a leaven for the future: resurrection forces for our bodily nature. And thereby the quality of our humanity is enhanced.

As 'disciple-lambs,' should we not strive to form ourselves into 'quality nourishment' for the 'wolves'? As Christians, we will quite certainly be 'incorporated' into the so-called 'wicked world'; but just this is our charge: to change it from within, to quicken the eternal 'I' through our presence within it and thereby to conquer the demons.

We shall be devoured, and that is indeed painful; yet Christians can become spiritual nourishment for those who hunger in the spirit through the power of communion with the Being of Christ. This is the earnest, but at the same time inspirational mission and sending out of the disciples of Christ.

*Till Haase
was a priest of
The Christian
Community.
He died in
2009.*

*Translated by Jon Madsen
From Die Christengemeinschaft
September 2009.*

Review

The Spirituality Revolution The emergence of contemporary spirituality

David Tacey

Routledge,

paperback ISBN 1-58391-874-4

Reviewed by Carmel Iveson, Devon

For approximately 1,600 years until near the end of the 20th century the Christian church had a dominant role in Western society and its values shaped its life, but now Christianity must compete with many other values. What is happening in Western society can be summed up by

the answer to the question as to one's religious faith or affiliations: 'I am not a religious person but consider myself to be spiritual.' The implications of such commonly held points of view for organised religion (Christianity), for individuals and for society is the content of this book.

David Tacey writes in an insightful, interesting and accessible way about the religious/spiritual phenomena of our time, examining the demise of religion and the upsurge of spirituality in contemporary society, looking at its causes and its positive & negative effects. Today, he says,


there is a split between religion and spirituality or between religious 'practice' and religious 'feeling.'

He believes that not only has the time of traditional values and beliefs come to an end, but that the 'modern' period, when secular society emerged and God was declared dead is also at an end. We are now in the 'post-modern' age—in a post-secular society where there is an emergence of spirituality and the idea of God has become attractive again. He postulates that there are two responses to this situation; a reversion to fundamentalism or a turning to spirituality. The former is a fearful response to the complexities of the modern world. The latter, spirituality, has a more trusting relationship to the sacred, and can remain with questions. The new spirituality is a result of the compensatory and salvational desire for reconnection.

David Tacey believes that the upsurge of spirituality is not simply a 'New Age' fashion but an emotional, urgent reaction to widespread alienation, disempowerment and disillusionment. But the 'free/individual' spirituality of today often lacks 'form' which is important for spiritual experience because he says Spirit needs 'form'—for 'form' is an organ of the Spirit. And 'form' is needed for the Spirit to reach out to others—to express itself in communal or social activities. Religion as the 'form' aspect of the Spiritual is the foundation of communal human life.

This fascinating book takes a comprehensive view of the soul/spiritual state of our western world today dealing with topics from 'the tyranny of the secular' to 'technological connectivity as a parody of spiritual connectedness.' It is well worth reading.

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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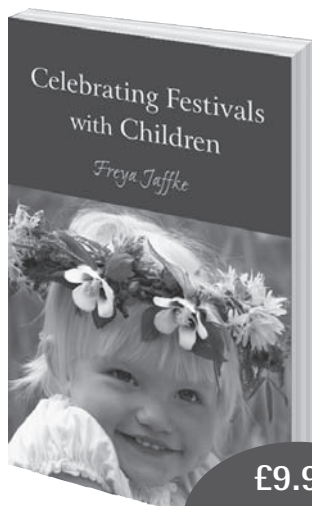
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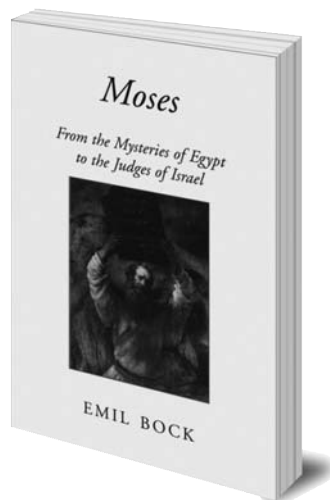
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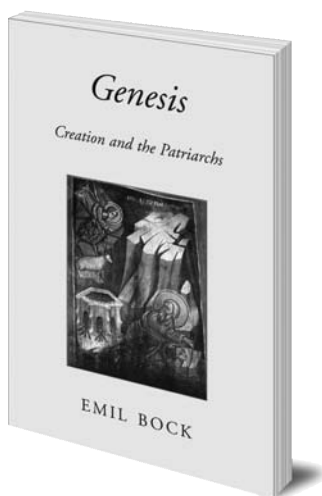
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