



The Christian Community

Perspectives

March—May 2013

Facing the world with courage
hope — founded optimism — truth

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Perspectives

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How would you describe why The Christian Community is important to you? This question came up recently in a conversation with a group of seminarists. After a pause, one of them said: Because I can be part of the transformation of the earth by Christ! He was almost shocked by his own audacity, and quickly added that he didn't think it would be possible to say that out loud to a casual enquirer. His colleagues agreed—although this was their heartfelt conviction; it felt too big, almost grandiose, if they imagined saying it themselves.

At the Ordinations, which will have taken place by the time this issue of *Perspectives* is printed, ten candidates will have completed a pathway that began when they experienced something through participating in the Act of Consecration of Man. Although they might not have put it into these words, their experience probably had something to do with the penetration of the earth through the power of Christ. At a certain point, this experience became so strong that they decided to go into the priests' training. There, they made the step to learning about what they had experienced. This path reaches a kind of completion, which is itself a new beginning, when the candidates proclaim the gospel as part of their Ordination.

The priests' training is an intensification of what we go through in the course of the year. We come to the Act of Consecration because we experience something there. At Christmas, we are charged to understand Christ as the source of our experience. Then at Easter, we hear an exhortation to proclaim the reality of the Resurrection as the meaning of the earth. At this point we might feel rather like the seminarists I was speaking with—what words might we find that would express this reality in a way that could reach the hearts of other human beings? We might not use phrases from another time; we might even find that we don't want to use the name Jesus Christ a lot. Nevertheless in a world which yearns for true meaning, we have a contribution to make, if we can rise to the challenge of finding the words.

TOM RAVETZ

ASCENSION

*Loosed — like long hair
Is the Lord!
— parted and blown.
Far flung and wide
Like rain that has fallen
Mist that has risen
Cloud that is forming!*

*Cord of his Life blood
Milk white is streaming
Seamed with stars.
Sap of the pure plant
Torn from the green earth
Breaks into rose*

*Wine-dark the waters
on which he is walking;
Blue-robed the ether
In which he is coming;
white-hot and burning
the point he is turning
Wheel he is wheeling
Curve he is curving
Lemniscate-forging*

JOANNA JEMMET
Whitsunday, May 80

Apocalyptic times call for apocalyptic deeds

Aaron Mirkin

If we take an honest and clear look at the world today—both ‘out there’ with the ‘others’, and ‘in here’ with ourselves, it becomes apparent that one of the greatest challenges we face today is that of self-mastery—or rather the lack of it—the lack of the capacity to be able to act out of full independence and freedom in all that we do — freedom from the influence of others and freedom from the influence of those unmastered elements within our own souls. Can we imagine what life could be like if we were able to meet the world with absolute inner freedom and self-mastery? All unconscious and thoughtless behaviour would be replaced by stillness and inner calm, by the sovereign capacity truly to listen to what life is saying, and then, in all peace and serenity to ‘hear’ the inspirations of divine revelation that arise like after-images in the soul, guiding our actions with wisdom and warmth. Surely there can be no greater security than this?

Indeed, if we take an honest and clear look at ourselves, the greatest source of insecurity we face today is not ‘the others’, it is our own lack of true inner freedom. Today it is simply not enough to just ‘keep calm and carry on’. And no amount of insurance, safety precautions, legal protection and policing can ultimately make us feel more secure. We should have no illusions about this. Conditions in the world today, in this Age of Michael, are changing in such a way that this call to inner freedom can no longer be overlooked. The whole of humanity is called upon to take radical new steps.

If I ask myself ‘Who am I really?’ sooner or later I will have to concede that I am effectively the product of ever so many predetermining factors in the world. Everything I have, body and soul, is a gift of Nature and the gods. Indeed, even my usual sense of self, my usual I, is a gift from the past—a gift of Mankind’s development bestowed by the gods—and not by me. What have I done to make it truly mine; to make it truly me?

My I is like a king who derives his status entirely out of the past. His birth, his heredity and nationality, even the entire course of world history have all predetermined that he be a king. But just imagine him suddenly removed from all these determining factors.

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Is he then still a king? Such is our I today. We are such lost kings that perhaps one of the truest replies we would have to give to the question of who we really are today is 'I am not.' This statement by John the Baptist comes before the sevenfold 'I am' of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of St John. The priests and the Levites ask him 'Who are you?' and freely he confesses 'I am not the Christ.' (John 1:20) What an extraordinary thing to say! In many ways John was the first human being to experience the reality that 'I am not a king.'

And yet—what if the king could derive his status not from his predetermining circumstances but rather out of himself alone? No matter where he is? What would that look like? In other words: How can I be truly free if all that I am is ultimately determined out of the past? There is only one way. I have to become my own source of myself. Nothing in Heaven or Earth may determine me. I must become my own 'predeterminer.'

And if John the Baptist was the first human being to experience the 'I am not,' then the first to become his own 'predeterminer' is surely Lazarus.

We know that Lazarus was a rich and highly gifted ruler of the people. All that he had were gifts of the past—tremendous wealth, an influential family, the security of the Jewish Law. He truly was one who could say 'I am!' And then he is told, as the rich young man seeking a life that endures beyond earthly bounds, 'Sell all you have.' (Mark 10:21) Then comes the mysterious sequel to this in the story of the Raising of Lazarus: 'There was one who was ill.' (John 11:1) And the word used here for 'ill' in the original Greek is 'asthenay,' which literally means 'without strength or power.' And we recognize at once that Lazarus has done it. He has given up all that gave him power. He has succeeded in 'selling all' and letting go of all past attachments, all past determining factors in his life and allowed himself to enter the realm prepared by John the Baptist, the realm of the 'I am not.'

After hearing of Lazarus' 'illness' Christ delays two days before finally going to Bethany to see him. Why the delay? Then when he does arrive he is told by each of Lazarus's sisters, Mary and Martha, 'Lord if you had been here my brother would not have died.' (John 11: 21, 32) Did they really wish to blame Jesus for not coming quickly enough and healing Lazarus? No! They knew perfectly well that had Christ been present, Lazarus would indeed not have been able to 'die.' The mere presence of Christ's radiant power would have prevented Lazarus from being able to go through the full loneliness and depth of the 'I am not' experience—a journey that has to be made without any outside determining factor other than the individual alone.

Christ would have been a determining factor and taken away the crucial point of freedom on Lazarus's inner journey. For such is the lofty value

placed by the spirit worlds on human freedom. That is why he delays for two days. The human being must make the first step towards letting go, towards 'dying even while he lives,' then only can the Christ come and raise him to a completely new life. And what sort of life is that?

Lazarus is now entirely liberated from the past—even from his name. From now on he is known in John's Gospel only as 'the disciple whom the Lord loved.' Lazarus has indeed died. He has changed completely. He can now work out of a completely new inner place—out of himself as a free human being—as the first truly free human being on Earth who is able to live out of every moment new and fresh with absolute sovereignty and calm. Nothing outside of himself determines his actions—neither the Jewish Law, nor the laws of Nature, nor the will of the gods. He has become a king out of himself—no matter where he is. He bears an atmosphere of true independence and freedom with him and there is something quite new in all that he says and does. This was something never seen before 2000 years ago and it touches many who now experience him like this. He brings the promise of the New into a fragmenting world of the Old and through him many thereby find faith in Jesus. Because of this, suddenly the chief priests, the guardians of the old order, want to kill Lazarus as well. (John 12:10)

Indeed—this is why we are in many ways afraid of true freedom, for we know it means we become a threat to the established order. We become seen as mavericks who 'rock the boat' and 'buck the system.' Every individual who finds this true freedom has to endure being perceived as a menace to the status quo that clutches so desperately to the past, to the 'way things have always been' out of fear and uncertainty. It takes courage to become a source of the New in the world.

And like Lazarus we must die on our own indeed. None can go that path for us. And there is no certain outcome—no guarantee that the inner abyss will be crossed. For if there were no point of utter helplessness where would be the true letting go? Where would be the true letting come? And it is there—just there that we first understand the true meaning of these words 'Eli, Eli, lamah sabachthani? My God, My God why have you forsaken me?' For it is the cry of all mankind longing to be raised...—And just there we meet the Christ. And He dies with us. And He rises with us. We enter alone and return with Christ.

Thus do we recognize the three steps to freedom:

I come to myself. — *I am.*

I die to myself. — *I am not.*

I rise with Christ. — *Not I, but the Christ in me.*

‘No-one can take my life from me; but in full freedom I myself offer it up. I have the power to give it away, and also the power to receive it anew.’ (John 10:18) This is the open secret of the Mystery of Golgotha. God creates himself anew as the ‘Arch-predeterminer’ of all creation in the world; and in human hearts. But not just once—again and again—through human beings who have the courage to be free. This is how He can ‘make all things new’—in every moment. And Lazarus is the first human being to embrace this secret. He is the first true Christian. For Christianity is not a belief system. Neither is it a set of moral teachings. Christianity is a deed. It is a deed that must be done again and again and again. The three steps to freedom are not once and for all. They are steps that must ever and again be taken. Our ‘I’ must daily die and become—remaining in constant flux like a flame shedding its warmth and light into the world. Friedrich Nietzsche captured this so essentially in his ‘Ecce Homo’:

*Yes I know from whence I came
Ever hungry like the flame
Glowing, I consume myself.
Light becomes all that I seize,
Coals are all that I leave.
Flame I am indeed!*

Only in this way may we become true receivers of divine inspiration from across the threshold for all that we do and say—becoming true bringers of The New. Our I must become apocalyptic. And the apocalyptic I never performs predetermined deeds. It becomes the threshold itself—ever and again a source of new revelations for the world.

And how do we begin to practise this? ‘No man can have greater love than this, that he offer up his life for his friends.’ (John 15:13) It is in serving the needs of our fellow human beings around us that we learn to enter the realm of John, of the ‘I am not.’ We learn to die for our friends and — where two or three are gathered... He is there too. We die together. And we rise together. We rise into a new kind of community—apocalyptic community, liberated from the forms of the old, open to the future. True Christian Community built on free individuals who know how to rise with Christ. And it’s not something big—just meeting the needs in front of our noses—offering ourselves as humble flames of self-mastery and freedom. And there is no greater source of security than this.

Stages of Transformation

of the Elements Water in the working of Christ

Bertolt Hellebrand

Water plays a particularly significant role in the Gospel of John, beginning with the Baptism in the Jordan and continuing through to the washing of the feet. An examination of the changing of water into wine, the sign at the wedding at Cana, contains one such associated path of exploration, which we shall pursue here.

Water as 'Element'

We can hardly imagine today what the ancient Greek felt, when he spoke of the element of water. Perhaps we can approximate a reproduction of their experience of this element if we observe and ponder its various properties. Our very first corporeal existence, for example, floats weightlessly in a paradisiacal condition carried in the amniotic fluid. Water carries us in bathing and cleanses us from dirt. Even huge ships can be carried by water. It inclines always to encompassing as small a surface as possible and tends thereby towards forming a droplet. And one could perhaps claim that water, in its incessant streaming towards the sea, appears to transform the earth itself into a perfect droplet suspended in space. So we find that the quality of water is a droplet-form striving towards substantiality, which can be a selfless carrier for other substances.

Yet even in the droplet, water remains in constant movement. Streaming, surging, undulating and meandering are characteristic of water. The waterfall is one of the greatest forms in which it manifests: in a thorough observation, we see in the pouring water-clouds, in the cascading water-waves, and in the spraying clouds and scattering mist, how water is not only material, but also coursing.

Similarly, in the quicker surging of standing waves, one can observe how a continually changing substance flows through a steady, durable form. The cascade as a process can become ever clearer, and eventually outweigh the impression of the substantiality of water.

In all living creatures, water is also the bearer of life.

The processes of life in the plant can only occur through the water which is taken in through its roots as part of the great circulation of life. In animal

and human, the circulation is closed off from the environment, and remains in the bodily fluids.

Thus, we have described water in a double quality: It can bear something higher than itself; and in pouring and streaming, it is as such the expression of that which is alive. Water as a substance, however still belongs to the 'earthly' element. We can only begin to think and grasp the truly watery element when we understand it in its gushing processuality, as an occurrence in time, as something really alive.

'Born out of water and spirit'

'Amen, Amen, I say to you: unless one is born anew out of water and spirit, he is powerless to enter the kingdom of God.' (John 3:5)

Those who wish to strive towards the Kingdom of God are required to be prepared to be born anew (see above), and not purely out of water, but also out of the spirit-breath of the air element. This may imply that one must not only bear witness to the fluid possibility of thinking and cognition, but also acknowledge the independence of the spirit, which like 'the wind, blows where it wills' (John 3:8).

It was in this manner that John the Baptist could say: 'I baptise you in water for a change of heart and mind. But the one who comes after me...will baptise you in Holy Spirit-wind and fire.' (Matt 3:11). The baptism in water should be capable of transforming our mind, our perception, and our forms of thinking. Water is initially augmented here by Spirit-wind, and then by a third element, fire. Therefore, the Greek reader of the Gospel pictured in these three elements (water—air—fire) ascending steps of development for the human being on Earth. In following this path of development, it becomes apparent that transforming thinking to a more fluid, vital state (water) will not suffice. We can infer from this that we may benefit from a study of not merely the quality of water, but also that of air and fire.

The transformation of thinking and perception that John wished to bring about, in order to prepare for further steps towards change through the air and fire baptisms, can best be demonstrated by the events at the Wedding at Cana. This is the first of the 'signs,' a prototype of the deeds of Christ, which stands close to the beginning of John's Gospel (2:1–11).

The Wedding at Cana: Transforming of water to wine—a 'present'

What actually turns an everyday object into a gift? What gives an object that has been given to us as a gift a value far greater than its actual price? Why do gifts possess an inner significance for us? Something has connected

itself with the object which we receive as a gift: The intention of the giver and the receiver's capacity to accept it create something unique. The external object becomes a carrier, a receptacle into which something can be present-ed. Its status as a 'present' actualises a 'presence'.

The mother of Jesus notices at the wedding that the wine is running out, and calls her son's attention to this. He replies with an idiomatic Greek expression, which if translated literally would be: 'What both to me and to you, oh woman?' and elaborates that his hour is not yet come. Nonetheless, he begins to act and gives the servants the instruction to fill with water the jars which are intended for the purification rites. From this, they should give the master of the feast a sample to taste. If we wish to understand this event not merely literally, nor as divine magic, we have to begin to move the question inwardly: Does this story concern a wedding in the literal sense?

In the juice of ripened wine grapes, the fluid sap of the plant finds its completion. In the fruit, the concentrated sweetness of the juice produces the seed for new life. However, this juice is not in a steady state, but rather quickly inclines towards decomposition, whereby the resulting alcohol produces durability. But the effects of alcohol on people are double-edged: in the pre-Christian cults, the wine rendered a union with the divine-spiritual possible, in an ecstasy consummated by the alcohol: this is the old form of the 'wedding'.

We can read in the fact that the wine runs out at the wedding in Cana as an allusion to the exhaustion of this old possibility. Instead, in modern Christianity, the encounter with God is striven for in full consciousness. Accordingly, Christ prepares for a new cultic wedding-meal by purifying the water as the bearer of a new connection to the spirit.

Although the master of the feast knows nothing of the quiet deed of Jesus Christ, he can nonetheless recognise in the (again literally translated) 'water, which had become wine', the 'good wine'. Could this have been a person who was capable of recognising the transformation of water to a 'gift', a 'present'? Namely, water as a 'vessel' which had received the wine quality of Christ present-ed into it ('water, which had become wine')? Could this be a priest, who has perceived the dawning of a new epoch, a new ritual prepared by the Christ Himself?

The Transformation of wine to blood in the Last Supper

The new 'good wine' that has been prepared at Cana undergoes a further metamorphosis at the end of Christ's activity on Earth. On Maundy Thursday, at the Last Supper, Christ gives the disciples the cup with the juice of the wine, with the words: "This is my Blood" (Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24). In

wine, the mineral water itself becomes alive. The new wine aligns the selfless element of water with the power of wine to enthuse. The Last Supper may also be seen as a Present-metamorphosis: Christ gives us his blood in the receptacle of the wine. The pure wine becomes the carrier of the blood. The Last Supper too may be perceived as a 'marriage': the marriage of Christ with his disciples.

Blood, in its pulsating capacity, is a 'very special fluid' (Goethe). It is the bearer of our life, but also—in the immune system- the bearer of our (biological) individuality. Insofar as it connects us to the higher animals, it appears to have a special affinity with the soul. Strong feelings in the soul affect the flow of blood, in a flush of embarrassment or when we blanch with horror.

The purification of egotistic desires is accomplished by the blood of Christ, as the sacrificial Lamb of God, on Golgotha. The blood now capable of selflessness can become a bearer of a gift that Christ wishes 'present' to us. Once again, it is the qualities of the fluid which bear here the working of the blood in a metamorphosed form.

A third marriage

In order to understand the Christ event, our thinking has to acquire a certain degree of vitality. This could be represented as a thinking schooled by the fluid element. To proceed further, our thinking must become more receptive and transparent for the spiritual. If we wish truly to understand the series of events described in the Gospels, then we must be prepared to make this effort. But what quality of the fire of which John spoke should augment our efforts? Fire is in fact not truly visible: embers are material and therefore belong to the 'earth' element. The flames are streaming, and thus have a 'watery' quality. The light of fire comprises attributes of 'air's' expansiveness. Ultimately, fire is a power, which transforms the combustible material into light, warmth, ashes and gas. Something completely new arises out of wood and coal. Are we capable of being so 'transformable' in the face of the descriptions in the Gospels, so ready for something completely new, that our thinking begins to transform us into another, into a new person?

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Everyone who drinks from this water, will become thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water which I myself shall give him, will for all time never thirst again; because the water which I shall give him, shall become a spring of water in him, welling up as a source of life beyond the ages. (John 4:13–14).

Since the event of Whitsun, a further marriage is being prepared in humanity: In the Sacrament of Communion, the community of

Christ unites itself with His blood and body. In its flowing from the cross, the Blood of Christ becomes in turn a selfless bearer of something greater. In The Act of Consecration of Man, this third transformation of the fluid is made apparent: In His Blood, the new Belief will flow from the cross. This 'gift' of his Blood, a sign of the new covenant, should be taken into our thinking. There, the Deeds of Christ—his death, resurrection and revelation—may begin to live.

Is our thinking vital enough? Is it capable of transformation? Is it open to the spirit so that a new Belief may unfold? This new Belief that He brings to the Human Being, prompts us to ask whether we are capable of worthily continuing His work and Creation. And it is a new Belief that can continually bring forth the new. That which He has given to us may become a spring within (John 4:13), since He does not wish to 'ground' Himself in a fixed content (earth), like a dogma, but rather 'inspire' us toward the spirit-openness of the air, and the transforming power of the fire. In this fashion, the new belief may become the bearer of a higher life in us, in which we first begin to become truly human.

In observing water as an element, we may be led on to a path on which we can recognise three steps of a metamorphosis of marriage:

- *In the sign of Water at the wedding at Cana: the new, good wine.*
- *In the sign of Spirit-breath at the Last Supper: the Blood of Christ*
- *And in the sign of Fire in the Renewal of the Eucharist: as source of the new Belief.*

I am the bread of Life. Whosoever comes to me will hunger no more, and whosoever believes in me, will thirst no more. (John 6:35)

Peter

*The cockerel can crow
as much as it likes come dawn —
guilt will not make
a pitiful cripple of me.*

*The Christ will not have me
hobbling along silly
feeling sorry for myself
and dragging my shoes.*

*I'll put my conscience to use
get behind the plough
and work not for me but for you.*

IAIN KINZY

The Blue Rider

One Hundred Years of The Blue Rider 1912–2012

Andreas Weymann

‘Now they fantasize with brush and pencil as if delirious with fever’, ‘unimaginable, crazy’, ‘shameless bluffers who pander to our time’s craving for sensation’, ‘fraud, insane madness’ ... this is but a small selection of comments with which the public reacted to the paintings of Wassily Kandinsky, Franz Marc, Alexej Jawlensky and other painters who are seen today as the greats of the modern era. In the evening, the gallery owner who dared to exhibit the works of these ‘madmen’ had to wipe away all the spit from the paintings. What we now see as so influential was controversial and misunderstood 100 years ago. The Nazis were in tune with the populist view when they outlawed this art as ‘degenerate.’

Where did it all begin? Looking back to the beginnings of ‘The Blue Rider’ Wassily Kandinsky wrote 1939:

We thought of the name ‘The Blue Rider’ in the summer house in Sindelsdorf; both of us loved the colour blue. Marc loved horses, I loved riders. The name created itself. And the magical coffee of Mrs Maria Marc tasted even better.

One would have to add more to this cheerful story to do justice to the serious intentions of The Blue Rider movement.

‘Both of us loved the colour blue’ Merely this remark: ‘Both of us loved the colour blue’ can give rise to a deeper exploration. Kandinsky writes in his book *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* (Concerning the Spiritual in Art) in 1910/11:

‘Blue has a great tendency for deepening. The darker shades are more intense and inward. The darker the blue, the more it evokes in human beings the longing for infinity, purity; in essence the supersensible. It is the colour of heaven The colour blue elicits profound peace.’

This description points to the inner relationship of the artists of The Blue Rider to German Romanticism as expressed for instance by The Blue Flower of Novalis.

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is a retired priest
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The motif of the rider We can also deepen the concept of the rider. We are helped by Kandinsky’s words that describe his task as an abstract artist who is no longer allowed to rely on the world of sense perceptible objects as a kind of scaffolding.

All the forms emerged as if by themselves during the artistic process, in a way that was often surprising even for myself. Over the years I have learned to master this creativity to a certain degree. I taught myself to control this force, not to merely let it run its own course, but to guide it ... The horse carries the rider with strength and speed. However, the rider guides the horse. This is the element of consciousness in the creative process.

The figure of St. George The element of consciousness, this phrase of Kandinsky's with which he describes the guiding and restraining power in the creative process, can throw light on the figure of St. George who guards the human soul—the princess—from the attack of the dragon, who threatens the whole city with his poisonous breath. Saint George is identical to the Blue Rider. Venerated in both western and eastern Christianity, Saint George has often been depicted on icons. Konrad Onasch, in his book on icons, begins the description of St. George, the legendary martyr and knight with the words:

George, who clears forests and builds roads, George who protects the people from the barbarism of materialism, George who overcomes the dragon, the symbol of the barbarism of materialism....

The dragon Kandinsky and Marc could also have spoken about the barbarism of materialism. Marc calls it 'the general lack of human interest for spiritual values.' He considers himself to be engaged in a conflict when he writes: 'The spirit storms fortresses,' or when he starts the second essay in *The Blue Rider* with the words: 'In this epoch of the great battle for the new art we fight as disorganized 'savages' against a well-organized, established power. The fight seems unequal. However, in what concerns the spirit numbers are not decisive; what matters is the strength of the ideas.'

Saint George in Moscow and in Murnau Kandinsky had been familiar with the figure of the dragon slayer since childhood. Saint George was considered the patron saint of the Grand Duchy of Moscow. In the Kremlin, in the Dormition Cathedral, where the Tsars were crowned, he is depicted on the iconostasis larger than life. When Kandinsky decided in 1896, aged 30, to leave Russia to study art in Munich, he felt at home straight away in the alpine foothills not far south of Munich. The countryside around Murnau is dedicated to St. George. The Murnau coat of arms shows the slain dragon. The wood carving that serves as the title picture of the *Blue Rider* almanac shows St George high in the saddle and the princess he is about to free from her shackles.

St. George, the helper of St Michael When looking at biographies it has always been considered helpful to pay attention to the rhythms, for example the seven year rhythm, or the rhythm of the moon nodes. According to Rudolf Steiner, the 33 year rhythm, the length of the life of Jesus Christ is an important rhythm in history. Rudolf Steiner also pointed to the year 1879 as the beginning of the regency of the time spirit, Michael. If you add 33 years onto 1879 you arrive in 1912. At this time many new impulses took hold. One could say that through Saint George, Michael's helper—the 'blue rider'—Middle Europe received a mighty Michaelic impulse.

The Blue Rider — book title and exhibition title Initially the plan was to publish an almanac every year that would make an on-going contribution to thinking about art. This did not happen. However the first and only instalment was reprinted many times. Moreover, beginning in 1911/12, exhibitions under this name were organized, which travelled to many cities of Europe. This is the other sphere of activity of The Blue Rider. Unlike the painters who formed the group called Die Brücke, The Bridge, The Blue Rider never represented a group of artists.

'There was never an association or group of any kind by the name The Blue Rider, as is often reported incorrectly. Marc and I chose freely what we felt was important to us without concerning ourselves with anybody's opinions or wishes. We decided to lead The Blue Rider in a dictatorial fashion, and naturally, Franz Marc and I were the dictators.'

This is the description of the common efforts of these two congenial editors and exhibition curators in Kandinsky's own words.

...And the walls came tumbling down... Franz Marc, whose mother came from Alsace, spoke and wrote French fluently. Kandinsky kept his connections to Russia. Thus the cultural spheres of Russia, France and Germany were the focus of their attention. The Blue Rider was a European initiative, not a national one. There ought to be no borders between countries. Equally the idea should be abandoned that art is only valid when recognized by academia. Anything that is genuine and truly experienced in the human soul was to be shown: Aboriginal art, artefacts from old cultures, traditional Bavarian glass painting, Chinese and Japanese paintings, children's drawings—all this was permitted in the almanac.

Similarly, the dividing lines between the arts should be ignored. Several essays were about music, including samples of scores. The overlap of painting and music was discussed.

Finally the longing for the 'Gesamtkunstwerk', the total work of art, announced itself in Kandinsky's essay 'The Yellow Tone' that concluded the book. There was a colourful symphony of light, word and sound. Part of the walls that were set to tumble was the mysterious revolution in painting. The stability of the visible world dissolves like snow in the sun and the painters, one after another, freed themselves from the compulsion to depict nature in a 'naturalistic' way. Meanwhile this task was taken on by photography. The outrage spoken of earlier was sparked off mainly by this revolution. The artists felt an 'inner necessity' to be creative with colour and form as freely as the musicians. They wanted to 'make music' with colour and form, create new compositions. It would be worth dedicating an entire essay to the path Kandinsky took from realistic art to abstract art, which he called 'concrete art'. Colours and forms were to him real beings. It is of interest that he was inspired to take this new direction in painting by some lectures of Rudolf Steiner that he attended in 1908.

To have a sense of the times Some artists grow more sensitive through their activity, so that they may sense more clearly than others what their age is about. Two examples may demonstrate this.

Franz Marc said before the Great War: 'Today, art moves in a direction our fathers could not even dream of. We stand before the new works of art as if in a dream while hearing in the wind the Horsemen of the Apocalypse. There is artistic excitement in the whole of Europe. Wherever one looks, new artists greet each other. One glimpse, one handshake is enough to understand each other.'

When in 1922 Kandinsky was appointed professor at the Bauhaus in Weimar—the professors were called 'masters'—he paid his first visits to his colleagues. Lothar Schreyer recorded their conversation immediately after their meeting and summarised his notes later in an essay. Their discussion became a conversation about religion, moving from the portraits of Egyptian mummies to Russian icons and the state of the Church at the time. Kandinsky said: 'The church must and will renew itself through the power of the Holy Spirit....There are spiritual streams active today which point towards new ways of religious worship.'

A few days later, in Dornach, the first Act of Consecration of Man was celebrated. The Christian Community came into being. It is possible to see a relationship between the movement of The Blue Rider from before the Great War to the spiritual efforts after the war, to which The Christian Community also belongs.

Wagner's Parsifal and the mysteries of the Grail

Christopher Cooper

After the blossoming of the story of Parsifal in two medieval romances by Wolfram von Eschenbach and Chrétien de Troyes, the story fell into a slumber for some 600 years. No new version appeared and no playwright adapted it for the stage. It was only in 1857 that Richard Wagner had a flash of inspiration and in the course of one morning on Good Friday of that year sketched out the substance of the three act opera (or sacred music drama as he preferred to call it).

This year we celebrate the 200th anniversaries of the two greatest opera composers of the 19th Century: Verdi and Wagner. Both wrestled with the theme of love: erotic love; love of power and domination; and finally the most elusive form, spiritualised love. Verdi appealed most directly to the feelings, Wagner increasingly appealed to human consciousness, especially in his final opera Parsifal.

On Michaelmas Day 1812, barely a year before Wagner was born, the 'child of Europe', Kaspar Hauser, was born and in his short life of 21 years he revealed himself to be an extraordinary individual. Almost from birth he was thwarted and hindered in his development, although gradually his special faculties shone through. Born of royal blood, he was destined to play a big role in the development of Europe. However, his life was cut short by a hired assassin working for certain secret societies in the West. Thanks to Rudolf Steiner's research we get a glimpse of what this individuality could have achieved had he lived his full span of life. Steiner discovered that Kaspar bore within himself a deep connection with the Mysteries of the Grail and had his circumstances permitted he would have nurtured a new Grail culture in Central Europe, working from a throne in South Germany which was rightfully his. Due to his premature death in 1833 only a few

fragments of such an extensive Grail culture were left, the greatest of which was in Wagner's opera.

In 1857 Wagner had taken refuge from his persecutors and creditors in Switzerland and was living by Lake Zürich. In his autobiography he describes the beautiful morning and

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the green meadows and the wild flowers not far from the shore. It is as if nature tells him it is Good Friday.

Now there was beautiful spring weather; on Good Friday I awoke for the first time in this house, filled with sunshine. The garden was so green, the birds were singing and at last I was able to sit at the top of this little house to enjoy the stillness and peace I had longed for. Filled with this mood I suddenly told myself: this is Good Friday today and I remembered how important this was when I had been reading Wolfram's Parzival. Since my days spent in Marienbad when I had been working on my Mastersingers and Lohengrin I had not involved myself any more with the story. But at this moment its ideal form approached me in an overwhelming way, and, starting with the motif of Good Friday, I was able to sketch out the whole drama in three acts with a few quick strokes of the pen. ¹

It is perhaps not too fanciful to imagine that in these moments of inspiration, the great spirit of Kaspar Hauser was present. He, the one who had been destined to be a modern Grail King, drops a seed into the soul of one of the most significant composers of those times. This seed, however, took some twenty years to germinate before Wagner was ready to pick up a pen and write the libretto as well as the music for a six hour opera. It must have been two very intensive years, 1877 to 1879, when he composed the opera, completing it just as Archangel Michael was taking over the regency of the new age that was just dawning.

Wagner must have realised that the seed for the opera had to wait twenty years as he matured spiritually and overcame, like Parsifal on his wanderings and errands in the original story, many weaknesses and areas of temptation.

We owe it to one of the very first Waldorf teachers, Walter Johannes Stein, who gave the first Main Lesson on Parsifal to a Class 11 in about 1920 and thereby gave Rudolf Steiner the occasion to take over part of the lesson on one of his many visits to the School in Stuttgart. He showed the children the difference between the Knights of King Arthur—the Knights of the Sword and the Grail Knights—the Knights of the Word. He also showed that the story was based on real historical figures who had lived in the 9th Century. Stein was able to ask Steiner many additional questions, one of which was: what is meant in the story by the need of the future Grail Knight to ride through 60 miles of dense forest until he reached the Grail castle? Steiner said that this really represented 60 years of travelling with all the possibilities of getting lost and 'falling off one's horse.'² This helps us to understand why Wagner himself had to become a man of at least

60 years old before he was ready to approach the full mystery of the Grail Community and evoke it in so many majestic passages in his score.

Wagner was a hugely complex man with many contradictions alongside his undoubted genius. How could the same man who portrayed the spiritual ceremonies of the Grail brotherhood also have written the infamous essay on Anti-Semitism? Despite these contradictions he had immense strength of character which already shows in his earlier years when he had a passion for gambling, with an almost magical touch for winning money (and losing much of it). One evening after returning from a casino he realised that such an activity was unworthy of him and he vowed never to gamble again. He kept this vow for the rest of his life. Now, how many ordinary mortals can break an addiction in one night? Powerful soul forces are needed. Wagner needed these too in those times when he was being pursued for his outspoken views in revolutionary times. Some wanted him imprisoned, or even put to death.

Wagner's life, like some of his characters, seems to have something almost superhuman about it and much of his music has the power to spellbind. Some Wagner enthusiasts once asked Steiner who the composer had been in an earlier life and he replied that Merlin was the key to this. Merlin was the great magician who was born, according to legend, in the cave beneath King Arthur's Castle in Tintagel in Cornwall. The exploits of Merlin are retold in many legends and we get glimpses of black magic, grey magic and white magic. These reflect in some of the opera's main characters: Klingsor who leads the anti Grail forces; the complex woman Kundry, who appears in many guises in the opera: as messenger to the Grail; as a demented rider who bursts onto the stage in Act I; as the wily seductress working for Klingsor in Act 2; and finally as the shattered penitent longing for redemption in Act 3. Steiner, in some very early lectures (1906) on Wagner's Parsifal, calls her a force of nature, beset by her amorality for most of the opera. The white magic shines out at the end of the work as Parsifal awakens to his true mission and is able to bring healing to the tormented Fisher King, Amfortas, who succumbed to temptation and failed in his role with the Grail Community.

Steiner only very rarely spoke about any works of music, so it is very interesting to read of the aspects of Wagner's music which he wished to highlight. Particularly in the solemn Prelude to Act I, and the serene Good Friday music one can sense an unearthly beauty and a radiant spirituality. In Wagner's music for Parsifal 'the etheric body receives special vibrations. This etheric body is connected with changes in the blood. Wagner understood the mystery of the transformation of the blood. In his melodies one

can feel the vibrations which must be in the etheric body when it is purifying itself as this is necessary for it to receive the mystery of the Holy Grail.¹³

This is not to imply that the whole opera is on such a high level. Some passages are clearly less inspired. It also does not imply that any of Wagner's earlier music has a similar effect on our life forces.

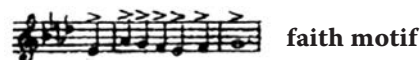
In the opening Prelude to Act I, Wagner unveils some of the key leitmotifs. The first is announced majestically by the rich tones of the strings and is called the Love Meal theme (referring to the Grail Knight's ceremony with the bread and the wine).



The actual Grail theme is not an invention of Wagner's but the so called Dresden Amen which comes from earlier times. (Wagner heard it as a boy in the Lutheran Church of the Cross in Dresden.)



Another central theme is called the Faith theme.



Woven into many a scene is the theme of Compassion which plays a great role. Parsifal's inability to respond to Amfortas' suffering with a question to him during his first visit to the Grail Castle leads to his banishment. Only at the end of the final act is he mature and awake enough to ask the question.



Almost twenty other leitmotifs are woven together in this truly amazing score, and these include melodies connected with Klingsor and with Kundry in her different moods.

The most dramatic scenes come in Act 2 when Parsifal wanders into Klingsor's realm and experiences the beautiful flower garden and its beguiling Flower Maidens. Klingsor's castle looms in the background. Kundry appears as the archetypal femme fatale trying to whip up his desires and

passions. He resists and this brings on the fury of the black magician who from the edge of the stage hurls his demonic lance at Parsifal. Parsifal catches it above his head and then makes the sign of the cross. Almost immediately the whole realm of Klingsor begins to disintegrate, leaving only a desolate pleasure garden and wilted flowers. There can be few other moments in any opera or play when the triumph over evil by the forces of white magic is shown so dramatically.

The final act contains many memorable moments including the anointing of Parsifal by his wise old mentor Gurnemanz, the baptism of the repentant Kundry and the entry of the new Grail King into the Grail Castle holding the purified lance (a memory of Longinus' spear which pierced the side of Christ). He heals Amfortas of his enormous suffering and as the curtain falls Amfortas, Kundry and Gurnemanz kneel before Parsifal with a host of Grail Knights in the background.

It is significant that at this point the voices include sopranos, showing that Wagner fully saw the need for a Grail body that embraced men and women. In this way he anticipates by more than 40 years the practice of The Christian Community, where male and female priests stand on the same footing.

One may hope that in this year of Wagner celebrations many an opera house in the world will be bold enough to offer a staging of his final opera. This could give thousands of souls glimpses of a new form of Christianity as expressed in the opera. Although the Grail stream is ancient, it continues to flow into our times and a long way into the future. Wagner's opera embodies many of the elements of a kind of Christianity which many people are seeking for. One can be so grateful to his genius for shaping one of the greatest expressions of the mystery of the Grail to date.

Central to the medieval epic are three archetypal stages in a human life. First a stage of naive innocence ('tumpheit'). There follows a period of 'zwivel', literally doubting and eventually there can come a breakthrough into 'saelde', a state of blessedness in which spiritual realities begin to reveal themselves more & more.

Wagner's opera focusses mainly on the second great stage when human souls face the full impact of the sickness of sin in its differing forms. The strayings, the errings, the devastating misjudgements, the temptations of the sense world are shown quite graphically. These are modern souls-like Amfortas, Kundry and Parsifal- who meet the adversarial forces in a much more explicit way than in the Eschenbach original. One can sense that in the 600 years since then the human soul is so much more exposed and needy. The urgency of moving from the state of doubting into a new ope-

ness for the spirit ('saelde') stirs in so many modern souls. It is ultimately a longing for the redeeming powers of Christ. Wagner glimpses these new communities of people who are sustained by their sacred Christian rituals and also a profound and active compassion for the suffering in the world ('durch Mitleid wissend').

Throughout the world today there is emerging an Order of people called to serve humanity. They are working with compassion even in the direst of situations; in refugee camps in the hospices, in the soup kitchens, in the slums and ghettos, in Camphill communities, in leper colonies, in orphanages and many other places. Even though their consciousness is not usually as elevated as Parsival's at the end of the opera, they appear like noble grail knights in training all over the earth.

This is a reworking of a talk given to members and friends of The Christian Community in South Devon, England, during the Holy Nights.

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1. Richard Wagner: *Mein Leben*.
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3. Lecture by Rudolf Steiner: 'Das Gralsgeheimnis im Werk Richard Wagners' ('The Mystery of the Grail in Wagner's work', untranslated) July 29, 1906.
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an anthroposophical study of the opera, untranslated

The Dropped Fleece at Easter

*I do not want that to be a ram
dumped like a rag or unfashionable rug
by the pasture gate
the locks of its back
sprayed with a circle
of red paint.*

*I want it to spring to its hooves
turn and batter me onto my back
for having the audacity to think it dead.*

*The blood at its forehead
belies my soft tread.*

*The ewes watch and chew at a distance
their chins alone moving.*

IAIN KINZY

International Youth Camp

Helen (Leo) Keller

While we huddle under our blankets in front of our fires, warm drink in hand, the freezing weather finally disappearing into the memory of 2013's first snow, allow the gentle thought of summer to touch your minds. The International Youth Camp is an intense and inspiring summer experience. IYC is a place to discover and challenge yourself physically, mentally and spiritually. It is a place to build close friendships and have an endless amount of fun! The IYCamp creates a community in which there is time

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See you there!

Book Reviews

Holy Week—A Spiritual Guide from Palm Sunday to Easter

by Emil Bock

Floris Books, 2011, £8.99

Reviewed by Anna Phillips

The text in this compact and handy edition was first published as part of the book *The Three Years in German* in 1946 and in English in 1955. *The Three Years* covers the life of Jesus from the baptism in the Jordan and the incarnation of the Christ Being to the events on Golgotha three years later. Emil Bock states that Holy Week is a concentration of the three years of Christ's life on earth, a condensed echo. Holy Week, which is identical to chapter 10 in the English edition, is now a book in its own right.

In this book we can follow the events of Holy Week from day to day. Each day has a chapter devoted to it. Three chapters are devoted to Easter Sunday. The first one focuses on the nature of the joy we can experience that day, the second chapter examines the relationship of the four gospels to these events, which are distinctly different yet complement each other, and the last one

is on the nature of the angelical beings encountered by the women at the tomb.

On the left hand page we find the corresponding bible texts from all four gospels in translation by Jon Madsen (2000), and on the right the insights Bock has written down for us. Initially this left/right division can be confusing as both texts run over into the next pages with the bible text always on the left and Bock's text on the right. After a while, however, one gets used to turning pages back and forth.

The commentary by Bock serves, in the words of Tom Ravetz who wrote the foreword, to '...satisfy the need of modern human beings not only to feel deeply the pathos and grandeur of what is described, but to understand the events in order to penetrate to deeper layers of meaning.' Ravetz points out that although they have stuck to the original content for this edition, Bock himself might have re-written it to take into account the latest research findings into the material. Bock's introduction to *The Three Years* is also included after the foreword, which helps to make clear the connections the seven planets have to each weekday.

Through Christ's penetration into the old mysteries during Holy Week, their forces were renewed, and humanity can move forwards once again.

Bock writes with great reverence and clarity. His storytelling is luminous and vivid. He has the ability to transport the reader right into the events and places described, drawing our attention and holding it with gentle care. It is clear that he knows intimately the geology and geography of where the stories took place. His deep involvement with Christ's life; his truthfulness towards events and his love for this Being are palpable throughout his narrative. He has the ability to describe everything to us in such a way that we become witnesses on all levels: spiritual, earthly and human. His writing is secure and confident but never overbearing; authoritative yet uplifting. He serves his subject in great humility and provides a service to all who are seeking to deepen their understanding and relationship to this Great Week, as it is also known. Bock makes the most profound mystery understandable and intimate. What is hugely complicated is made to sound simple, because he seems to tell the truth and the truth simply is.

This is a good sized hardback volume with a bookmark attached to keep track of the pages as you progress through the week. It is bigger than a pocket sized book but small enough to fit comfortably on a bedside table and, with its handsome loose leafed cover, would make a special present for anyone.

Brothers and Sisters

Karl König

3rd edition, paperback 192 pages

Floris Books, £9.99

Review by Rosa Ferris

There can be no doubt that special traits of character and mental makeup are found in children and adults who belong to the different ranks in the order of birth. KARL KÖNIG

Karl König's, 'Brothers and Sisters' (1963), published here in its third edition, is the clas-

sic text exploring the influences of birth order amongst siblings within the family constellation. Over the years it has become a definitive text on the subject and a valuable tool for parents, teachers, carers and therapists. This edition presents valuable additions to the original text including an extended introduction and two new essays: 'The Two Sisters,' and 'Brother and Sister' as well as lecture notes and transcriptions by the author.

König's work on the influence of sibling-constellations originates in a great compassion with and for the world. It is written to help people to understand their destiny, work with their karma and develop a loving, caring sense of brother/sisterhood in our communities. His approach seeks to empower us to be both responsible and compassionate in following our life paths. As such, in the first place, his study is a healing path for the reader. Healing needs an integration of thinking, feeling and willing: the will to heal and bring to light what has been stored away, to accept all the feelings, using our heart to feel with loving compassion for ourselves, without judgement, and the use of our thinking to understand and integrate this understanding as self-knowledge.

König has built a framework for the family constellation here, describing the roles and characteristics of each place in the birth order as well as the type of challenges each position presents and how they interact with each other. He takes into account all the other influences on our being and on our individual journeys.

Alongside the central concept of choosing one's family of birth, König states that one's position in the family is also chosen so that we are confronted with our karmic challenges. By choosing a particular position, characteristics belonging to that position are developed, particular challenges are brought to the fore and relationships to siblings in other positions are established. These circumstances provide the conditions each person needs to work with their karma and find their destiny. Thus, the family is the blueprint not only for our social behaviour

in the world, but also our means of learning to work with karma and destiny. When we regard families from König's perspective, they become what he calls, 'a vibrating musical melody,' providing us with the key for understanding our life's tasks.

Like works by Rudolf Steiner, König's book cannot simply be read to be understood, but needs to be worked with. From my perspective as a psychotherapist, this means not only thinking about what he says, but becoming aware of our feelings. It is only through feeling our experiences that we can truly recognise our own sympathies and antipathies and make a real living connection between our thoughts and our actions.

It is also important to note that as parents and practitioners we need to work in this way with ourselves before working with others. Otherwise, we will remain subjective and, bound by our own feelings about unresolved experiences, we will choose solutions that suit our own needs rather than those we are working with.

As König rightly states, we must not, 'let them (children, but equally clients, students, ourselves etc) become just as we wish or want them to be, but as it arises from the child (person/self), that is of the greatest importance' (König, B&S, pg 155).

We therefore need to ask ourselves questions like: How did I feel in my family with my siblings? Was it good with some and terrible with others? How do I feel about this now? What was my place, my role? How does this affect how I interact with others? Having done this, we need to allow ourselves to hear and feel the answers, without judging them, either as a critic or a victim. No easy task.

Reviewing this profound and insightful book, I feel that if it lacks anything it is a means of enabling practitioners to work in a living way with it and as a psychotherapist I feel compelled to offer some support to the reader to this end. So, here are two exercises to help you practice while you read. You can work on them individually or with your team.

Exercise 1: Helping yourself

Introduction:

The founder of Family-Therapy, Menuchin, describes the 'meeting' as a parallel situation, in which adults replay all the dynamics and roles, complete with the unresolved issues, of their family of birth. Meetings are therefore a good place to start to explore your position in the family. Try the following:

1) Make half an hour of 'space' for yourself at home after you have been in a meeting. Lie down, relax and bring the meeting into your awareness. Picture it.

2) Close your eyes and imagine yourself as your angel, flying above and observing, without opinion or judgement, the interactions that took place.

3) Become aware of how you interact and notice how you feel about it. Do you recognise any similarities between this and the role you played in your family of birth? Name the similarities and bring any feelings that you experience to your awareness. Ask yourself:

- *Do I feel heard, ignored, manipulated, pushed?*
- *Was I able/unable to express my opinion?*
- *Is it me who takes tasks upon myself because nobody else does?*
- *Do I feel victimized? Do I feel invisible?*
- *Who makes me feel empowered? Who brings out the Christ in me?*
- *Do I look for allies before I assert myself?*
- *Do I complain outside of the meeting?*
- *Who annoys me most? Who brings out the Devil in me?*

Read König's book to recognise yourself and others. Keep in mind that you chose these situations and your position to enable yourself to work through your karma. Recognise your challenges. Choose one.

3) Allow for the feelings which accompany your chosen challenge. Feel them where they are located in your body; in your heart, stomach etc. Feel them, feel through them until they are gone. If you need to express your feelings, do so safely; do not take them out on others please.

4) Accept all of your behaviour. Don't try to change it. Show compassion for yourself. Remove judgement.

Repeat steps 1 to 4 until you notice that desired changes in your challenges have taken place. This takes time and will, but with perseverance, it will happen. This can be done anywhere and everywhere; travelling, waiting, during sleepless nights etc. Appreciate your achievements in overcoming your challenges.

Exercise 2: Helping Others

Imagine two or three children in a family who have regular arguments. Perhaps they are your own children or those of friends or relatives. You wish to help them to work through the conflict between them, to support them in their challenges. First, bring to your awareness that these children have chosen each other to help them on their path.

1) Prepare yourself in the same way as Exercise 1.

2) From above, what do you observe about the dynamics between the children? Now focus on yourself. What kind of feelings are stirred up in you? Fear, anger, fear of anger? Others? With whom do you feel sympathy/antipathy? Do you feel a need to control the situation?


3) Be aware of these feelings and process them as in exercise 1/3.

4) Now observe each child free from your own sympathies, antipathies and pre-judgments. Observe their struggling with compassion. Recognise how each child feels behind the shield of their behaviour: frustrated, sad, insecure, unloved, rejected.

5) Now, holding each child in loving empathy, and thus accepting their feelings without judgement, imagine what you would say, from a place of compassion, to each child individually. Then, imagine how each child can contribute to solving the argument.

*Rosa Ferris is
a Pre- & Perinatal Psychotherapist,
specialising in Trauma & Abuse.*

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 tranquility* 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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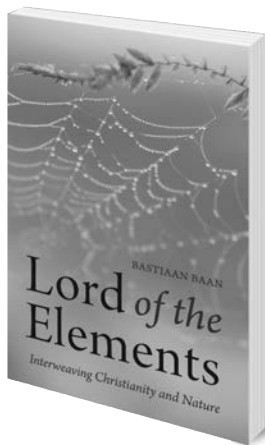
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LORD OF THE ELEMENTS

Interweaving Christianity and Nature

BASTIAAN BAAN

The four classical elements of earth, water, air and fire are present in Genesis and the New Testament. But while traditional Christianity moved away from seeing the spiritual in nature, other streams of thought – such as Celtic Christianity, the School of Chartres, medieval mystics like Hildegard von Bingen, and the alchemical search for the philosopher's stone – continued to emphasise the importance of the elements.

In this unique book, Bastiaan Baan, an experienced spiritual thinker, brings these elements together with ideas from Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy. He considers in particular how elemental beings – nature spirits – relate to the four elements, and explores the role of elemental beings in our world.

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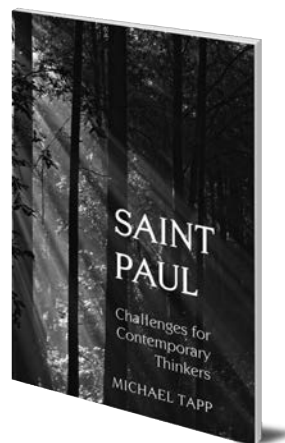
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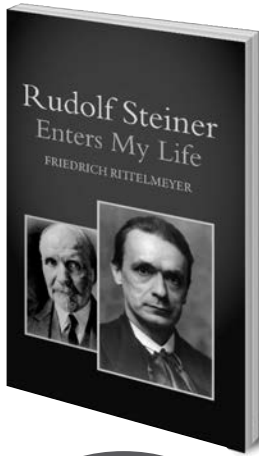
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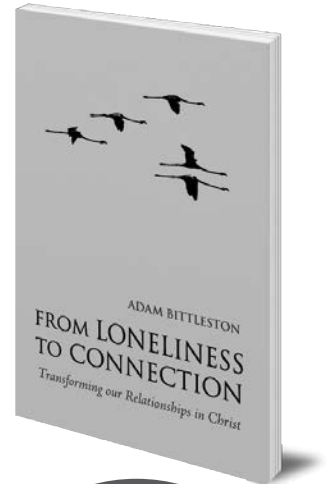
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