



The Christian Community

Perspectives

*Standing
Firm*

December 2013—February 2014

Contents

Dear friends in the Philippines	2
<i>Hartmut Borries</i>	
Gospel Reading: 2nd Epiphany week	3
<i>Peter Button</i>	
Finding peace in the face of world events	5
<i>Monika Knight</i>	
Witnessing the unsolvable	9
<i>Donna Simmons</i>	
Bringing myrrh to myrrh	15
<i>Michael Steward</i>	
Was Eve cursed?	22
<i>Jon Madsen</i>	
Obituaries	
<i>Julian Francis Sleigh</i>	25
<i>Arie Boogert</i>	27
The challenges and gifts of becoming a community of Christians	28
<i>Panjee Tapales</i>	
On Skellig Michael	29
<i>Jens-Peter Linde</i>	
Seamus Heaney and bearing the light	30
<i>Christopher Hudson</i>	
The Blessings of Convalescence	32
<i>Alfred Heidenreich</i>	
Reader's Letter	35
Cover picture:	
<i>Two White Clouds, Alexei-Jawlensky</i>	

Deadlines

March–May 2014 issue: 6 January 2014
June–August 2014 issue: 8 April 2014

Perspectives is published quarterly by The Christian Community, a registered UK charity. It appears at the beginning of December, March, June & September.

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

Subscriptions:

UK £14

Europe & Rest of World: £16

Please send cheque, payable to

Perspectives, to Subscription

Manager (address above), or send
for more information.

USA: US\$26

c/o The Christian Community,

906 Divisadero Street

San Francisco, CA 94115

(Cheques payable to: The Christian
Community San Francisco)

Canada: CAN\$28

c/o Dean Rachel,

5279 Oak Place

Delta BC V4K 1L8, Canada

email dnjrachel@yahoo.ca

(Cheques to: Dean Rachel)

Australia: Enquire for price at:

Julie Sedgmen, 87 Ian Nicol St

Watson, ACT 2602

Mobile : 0428 991 397

New Zealand: Enquire for price at:

Elizabeth Heybrook, 293 Winterslow

Rd. Staveley RD1, Ashburton 7771

Phone: 03-3030780

Advertisements:

Send ads five weeks prior to
publication to the Editor at the
above address.

Quarter page £40,

Half page £70, Full page £130

ISSN: 0967 5485

Printed by:

Neil A Robertson Printers, Forfar

Perspectives

Volume 84 No. 1
December 2013–February 2014

Steven Covey, author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, wrote about the difference between our circle of influence and our circle of concern. Our circle of influence represents the things that we can in some way shape or change. The circle of concern represents all the things that we worry about. Covey's ideal was that the two should coincide; we should reduce the radius of what we worry about to those things we can change. This may seem to be an extreme solution, and one we might not choose. However, it draws attention to the fact that in our modern world with its instantaneous transmission of images of disaster and suffering—such as are being sent from the Philippines as I write this editorial—we can feel concerned about things far away from us, over which we may feel we have no influence at all. It can be important to discover one's own limits: how much information can I take in without being paralysed even in areas where I can make changes? Are there times in my life when I need to stay abreast of world events, and others when I need to deepen my own capacities by concentrating on what is in front of me, and contracting my circle of concern? On the other hand, we may work with prayer and meditation in such a way that we discover that having influence does not need to mean unfolding outer activity. Then we can feel that our circle of influence expands to include events that are far away from us.

Learning this balance is one of the most important elements of leading a conscious inner life today.

TOM RAVETZ

Dear friends in the Philippines,

How much destruction, suffering and death! From far away in a little church in Auckland I watch reports of typhoon Yolanda on the Internet. For the time being we are safe here. However, what happens to you can come to anyone of us in one form or another. What happens to you is happening to all of us. It is an illusion to say that 'someone is far away and therefore who cares?' We are connected. What I buy here in the supermarket affects you in the Philippines. The storms you suffer may well have been caused elsewhere in the world where people are as comfortable as myself. Who can withstand winds of 300 km? How can we support one another? Thankfully people from all over the world are touched by your suffering and are getting in touch with their own humanity that enables them to respond.

In today's gospel reading we heard about John, who was banished to the island of Patmos (Rev.1). Within a world of change an island is a place of relative stability. While the sea is constantly in movement, as the wind plays with the waves, the land remains solid and stable beneath our feet. Yet, when a typhoon like Yolanda comes my way, where do I find any stability? No island or continent is safe from such an assault.

It was on an island and on a Sunday that John was lifted up to the world of spirit. Hearing a voice behind him he turned round and saw the Son of Man who touched him and told him not to fear, for 'I was dead and behold I am alive forever and ever, mine are the keys to the realm of death and Hades.'

We may find strength to live through any catastrophe by gaining a spiritual perspective. What happens when so many people die through the same natural disaster? So many lives not lived to their natural end, so many destinies that cannot unfold over years to come? When we are moved by grief and compassion, so are spiritual beings of love. For every one of us who suffers and dies our angel and Christ are right there with us. Fortunately no camera man can film that. This is the part we cannot watch on the internet - how spiritual beings are constantly working with us. We are welcomed on the other side by those who have died before us and who love us. Every death is a birth into the spiritual worlds and is being celebrated there with great joy. All those life forces that have not been used here on earth will be there for those who have died to take up new tasks in the spiritual worlds. Once we have died we do not disconnect with those who stay behind. We do not stop caring and loving. Like angels, everyone who died in one typhoon may well become helpers of humanity to inspire and support us later on. And we truly need all the help we can get in times to come. No life is wasted. Everyone who dies prematurely will be able to make a difference. We do not know how these many people crossing the threshold together, going through the gate of death at the same time, will form a new spiritual community of compassionate helpers in the future. This happens already in life after death. Imagine what will happen once they come back to earth and incarnate with similar impulses of social justice, love and care. There is hope for all of us.

*Hartmut Borries
is a priest of
The Christian
Community in
New Zealand.*

Christ holds the keys to death and Hades; he leads us from this life into the next. In a world of dramatic change and activity, the celebration of the Act of Consecration of Man – indeed all prayer – can become like the Island of Patmos. Wherever we are and on Sunday mornings we meet to lift up our souls to Christ. We listen to his voice in the gospels and we meet him when we receive communion in the sacrament of bread and wine, in the painting above the altar, or in one another.

On the first Easter Sunday it was Mary Magdalene who, opened by grief, turned and saw the gardener whom she recognised as the risen Christ. Again, on a Sunday morning, John was lifted up to the world of spirit and turning, he saw the Son of Man. Just now many who have died in the Philippines are being embraced by the world of spirit. Wherever we witness human suffering we can find Patmos. The island of Patmos is not somewhere far away in Europe. It is in the Philippines, it is whenever we enter the realm of the sacrament. Listening, beholding, and uniting with Christ in our hearts, we consecrate our humanity. Gradually we will become more aware of Christ in one another. In this world of change we can grow strong by finding stability of soul in our relationship with the Divine. A day without listening and seeking Christ's presence is like a day without sunlight. When we pray we create light! We send this light of prayer to one another around the earth wherever people are shaken by the elements or by one another.

With my best wishes to you all,

HARTMUT BORRIES, November 2013

Gospel Reading *2nd Epiphany week*

Peter Button

Luke 2:41-52

Every year the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover festival, and when he was twelve years old they travelled up for the festival according to their custom. At the end of the festival days when they set out for the return journey, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem but his parents did not realize it and thought he was with the company of travellers and they went a day's journey. Then they began to look for him among their relatives and acquaintances. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem in search of him. And it so happened that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting

in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and putting questions to them. All who heard him were amazed at his insight and his replies. When his parents saw him they were astounded and his mother said to him: Child, why did you treat us like this? Your father and I have been looking for you in great distress. He said to them: How is it that you looked for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house? But they could not understand the word that he spoke to them. Then he travelled down with them and came back to Nazareth where he lived with them, and his mother kept alive all these words in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom, in maturity and in grace before God and man!

The 12 year old Jesus in the Temple

The child who was born in a stable, who was not born in a human dwelling place but in a shelter for the animals, who was welcomed into the world by simple shepherds, travelled to the temple in Jerusalem to take part in the Passover festival when he was 12 years old. Legends tell us that his childhood life corresponded to the circumstances surrounding his birth. He was most at home with the world of nature, the birds and animals and also the world of the angels and was filled with warmth of heart and devotion.

What a great experience it was for that child to enter the temple of Jerusalem, the place that contained the Holy of Holies, for the first time consciously. He saw for the first time the wonder of the temple, the wisdom of its form, the secrets of existence woven into the building itself. He, whose own body was to be the dwelling place of the Christ, entered the place built of earthly substances which was the dwelling place of the Spirit of God. Within this place at this time the spirit of the wisdom of the ages entered into him. His simple nature was filled with the light of wisdom. Warmth of heart and spirit enlightenment had become one. A great mystery had taken place—small wonder that his parents could hardly recognize their child or even understand the words which he now spoke to them. But Mary, his mother, she who had spoken with the Archangel Ga-

briel and described herself as the handmaid of the Lord, praying in humility, keeps this mystery in her heart that in time to come she might understand.

The Holy of holies is now within the temple of man's body and we can enter its place when we truly pray. In prayer we may find the Light of the world and the light of prayer in our hearts can meet with yearning the world's light in the Star of Grace!

*Peter Button
is a retired
priest of The
Christian
Community
in London.*

Finding peace in the face of world events

Monika Knight

My first reaction when I read the email from one of the Perspectives team with the question whether I could write an article on this theme was: 'Finding peace in the face of world events? Oh dear, I wish I knew how to do that!'

At the age of 19 I was an ardent communist and when I tried to convince people to become active in making the world a better place, nothing would infuriate me more, than people answering my attempts with the remark: 'You can't change the world, you can only change yourself.' For me at the time that was nothing but a feeble excuse for not doing anything.

This sentence infuriated me more than any other response to my attempts to activate people onto a revolutionary path, although some of them were very offensive and attacked me personally. Why was that?

Perhaps it was the truth in that statement which stirred me; the truth that every change has to start within an individual and that indeed I had to start with myself if I wanted to change the world. Perhaps, though, I also sensed a kind of fatalism, indeed a kind of excuse to do nothing, because even now when I think back to those encounters, I am not entirely convinced that every person who tried to silence the enthusiastic me at the time really was working hard on changing themselves in order to make the world a better place to live in.

How do we react to the world events all around us, which seem to increase monthly if not weekly in drama, urgency, gloom and terror and all of which seem completely out of our control? Climate change; financial meltdown; ever-increasing levels of violence, be it on our streets, in families or in many countries and regions all over the world—these are only some examples of things that can preoccupy us.

Most of us may feel something like this: at first a strong impulse to do something, anything to stop these things from happening, a reaction of 'it cannot stay like this, something needs to be done.' This may be followed almost immediately by deep despair at the insight that nothing I can do right now will have the power to

Monika Knight is a priest of The Christian Community in Stourbridge.

change things instantly, if at all. Perhaps there will be anger at an ominous 'them' who could do something but don't, the government, the bankers, the military, the scientists—the list can be continued...

Next in the chain of our reactions may be relief that most of those things are happening elsewhere and we may push the disturbing news deep down into our soul with a resigned sigh: 'That's just how it how it is and there is nothing I can do about it'. Then we may turn to our daily tasks, seemingly unaffected, but in truth a little more frightened, a little more helpless and hopeless, a little more depressed, feeling not a little guilty somewhere in the depths of our heart and soul.

We tend to see the world in black and white; our thinking is in terms of either/or most of the time. Either I can think of an action which will stop Al Quaida from committing more acts of terror or I have to resign myself to the inevitable and simply do nothing. This attitude originates in a misunderstanding of our own being, about which we tend to think in similar ways: either I am limitlessly powerful and then I should be able to do something to put things right in the world; or I am a powerless nothing in the big machinery in the world and what can I do? So it's best not to worry about it all too much and just get on with my life.

As always neither is true; at least not alone and isolated. The truth is never 'either/or', but 'both, and'. The truth is multifaceted and paradoxical, always: I can do nothing *and* I am limitlessly powerful.

I cannot stop the war in Syria, but I can try and behave morally in my immediate community and family, with the people I meet daily. And I can pray, not only for the victims of the violence but also for the people in positions of power, who make decisions which influence the lives of many. I cannot hinder the terrible consequences of past human behaviour being played out but I can witness them, bear with them and thereby share the pain and the suffering they cause. I might even be able sometimes to accept what is happening as part of the still unredeemed humanity in us; I might find hope and stillness in the belief that what looks simply horrid on the outside may well be a necessary crisis to on our path of becoming, that it may help us to redeem what needs to be redeemed in me, in you and in all humanity.

None of this is easy, especially as it really needs to be done, not only thought of. It is not meant to be easy, because the very effort we put into our striving towards it becomes the power which can and will transform the world. Our sincere striving to learn how to love and to be truthful, truly to understand and to live real friendship, to forgive and to be still, to be

open for the love in the world, to trust in others, in our own best potential and in the divine guidance; all this striving and the effort we put into it is a creative, living power.

This continuous striving is our task, because only human beings can do this. It is what we are here for, it is the reason we are born; it is the way we can make the world a better place, because in this striving we work together with the angels and it connects us with the one who has overcome death. We are not meant to remain calm in the face of world events, not in the sense that we sleep through them or stop caring. We are to become more and more wakeful and conscious of what is happening in the world and why it might be happening, we are to become very active in our inner development, in seeking the connection with our spiritual origins and with the spirit that works in everything.

After I left the Communist Party at the age of twenty-two, I experienced the darkest times of my life, feeling utterly lost and helpless in facing all that was happening in my life and in the wider world. That only changed when I found anthroposophy and through it a way to find myself, to ground myself in the spirit here on earth. I found my faith, meaning and hope.

In October 1918 Rudolf Steiner spoke about the work of the angels in human beings, saying that

their aim is that in future times every human being shall see in each and all of his fellow men a hidden divinity....neither in theory nor in practice shall we look only at a man's physical qualities, regarding him as a more highly developed animal; we must confront every human being with the full realization that in him something is revealing itself from the divine foundations of the world, revealing itself through flesh and blood. To conceive man as a picture revealed from the spiritual world, to conceive this with all earnestness, all the strength and all the insight at our command...

It is of such importance that we practise meeting each other more and more out of this earnest and truthful realization of our true being, that when mankind will have achieved it,

there will be no need for religious coercion' for every meeting between one man and another will be of itself in the nature of a religious rite, a sacrament.

There is a lot we can do and it is of immense power, indeed it is the only way to make the world a better place to be. In order to remain calm in the face of world events without becoming complacent we need hope. Such hope can arise from the trust in the effectiveness of our striving for the

spirit and our deeds of love and connectedness and of prayer; this hope will spring from our trust in the divine leadership of the world and our calling and ability to work in harmony with it.

Former Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks was asked in an interview on the Radio 4 Sunday programme (25.8.13) about the future of the state of Israel and whether it will eventually cease to exist. His words are as true when we hear them spoken to every human being regarding the future of our earth and human race:

I have long laboured to make a distinction between optimism and hope. Optimism is the belief that things are going to get better. Hope is the belief that if we work hard enough together, we can make things better. It needs no courage, only a certain naivety to be an optimist. It needs a great deal of courage to have hope. No Jew knowing history can be an optimist, but no Jew worthy of his faith ever lost hope.

The Work of the Angels In Man's Astral Body

A Lecture by Rudolf Steiner, Zurich, 9th October 1918, GA 182

Advent

*Whispers of Advent 'round Mary's blue veil
Gentle glow colours, the deep and the pale.
Hush, what lies so still in the dark'ling gloom
Is it the heart where Love weaves its loom?*

*Tender at first, now brighter from far,
Cherries on moonbeams, the blue-falling star.
Their frosted cat-feet on the stone garden path—
The magic of Child in the soul dorms the wreath.*

VIRGINIA GILMER

Witnessing the unsolvable

Donna Simmons

Once upon a time, not so very long ago, one could, on a job application perhaps, or in the course of a dinner conversation, declare oneself interested in and well-informed about current affairs. With the help of the newspapers and a few journals and books, and with some degree of consideration and reflection, one could be reasonably certain of the ability to keep abreast of important issues.

But now?

How quickly the 'information age' has turned into the 'too much information age' or even the 'disinformation age'. Not only might the sheer volume of information on any given topic overwhelm us, but the mounting complexity and instability of world events can leave even the most determined of researchers bewildered. Who really knows what is happening in Syria, at Fukushima or Guantanamo Bay? Is climate change natural, natural but exacerbated by human activity, or totally unprecedented? Who really is Edward Snowden? Is he a hero, a traitor, a fall guy or something very different from what he might appear?

One can try bravely to read behind, between and beyond what is written or spoken by the corporate or even independent media and still find it hard to discern a consistent storyline about an event, yet alone discover the truth. The depths of the lies and the slipperiness of the half-truths promulgated by those whose interests do not lie in the dissemination of truth make it well-nigh impossible to understand very much about hugely important issues which affect us all on a global scale. Likewise, competing so-called conspiracy theories can also do more to obscure than reveal what is really going on.

All of which is not meant to imply that somehow 20, 30 or 50 years ago we lived in a golden age of honest politicians and benign corporate powers or that every Joe on the street could easily get a handle on world events. Nevertheless, modern politics, culture and technology and the machinations of those who manipulate the economy, coupled with the complacency of the corporate media, mean that our present situation can seem beyond comprehension. Though using the media to further the

*Donna
Simmons is
a member
of the
congregation
in Edinburgh.*

interests of elites is certainly nothing new, the magnitude of *stuff*, of extraneous, trivial, misleading and confusing *stuff*, in an era believed by most people to be one of information and meaningful global connection, is disorientating, to say the least. Our present civilization values the ability to think and to understand our lives, yet many seem ill-equipped to do this. Though they might not articulate it as such, the experience of alienation and of staring into the void is profoundly real for many, many people across the globe. To face the abyss without having consciously spiritually prepared oneself can be a devastating experience.

If one feels a responsibility to keep well-informed and to understand something of the current world situation, where does one start? Further, if one realizes that human events are not random and purposeless, but part of the cosmic order, then one also realizes that positive spiritual powers are not the only beings interested in human activity. Malevolent forces work to pervert the right course of human development. A characteristic of our modern era is the seeming contradiction between freedom and responsibility, when everything is open to question and the old forms, traditions and ways of being no longer serve. Such an atmosphere gives such Beings open license to wreak havoc.

But knowing this might enable us to find a way out of this mess—paradoxical though that might sound. In some ways, evil is very simple—it is its manifestation that is complicated. The more tangled a situation between individuals or groups, the more possible it is for evil to creep in and sow discontent. Though it might seem as if a modern-day Pandora has opened and dumped not just a box, but a football stadium-sized warehouse full of vices on us, we can also know that, living quietly amongst Greed, Perversion, Blasphemy, Hatred and all the others is Hope. And she too is larger and more powerful than she was back in the time of the Greeks. For today hope is filled with the power of the Resurrected Christ whose light cannot be dimmed no matter whose company He keeps.

In his lectures on the *Fifth Gospel*, Rudolf Steiner tells us that in his late twenties, Jesus visited an Essene community. Owing to their strict code of conduct and the particular spiritual path they followed, the Essenes were able to create communities of light and purity in the midst of an otherwise dying and decadent society. Jesus perceived that this very purity meant that Ahriman and Lucifer, two mighty lords of evil, were prevented from passing through the gates into these communities and were thus left to run amok amongst everyone else. This troubled Jesus

greatly. Our task is to identify evil and neither shirk from it nor push it away; at the same time, we need to avoid being confused, put off or entangled by the web of lies and half-truths it spins.

I suspect that a large part of our present earthly challenge is not to think in terms of overpowering, outsmarting, solving or conquering. It seems unlikely that real solutions to the plight of our earth and humanity are reachable now or in the foreseeable future. We are surrounded by forces that profane what is most sacred, most essentially human. Whilst staying focused and positive about our small victories and those world events which we can understand to some extent, we must, I feel, also recognize the depth of the perversity which pervades our present era. I would even suggest that we accept that we let go of ideas about solving the world's problems at this stage of human evolution. Right now and for the foreseeable future, we might simply need to learn to co-exist with the grossest forms of evil. We can strive to develop the ability to take in and face what surrounds us, but not with an outward 'doing something' gesture. Rather, it just might be necessary for more and more of us to step into this horribly uncomfortable void of not knowing, not (seemingly) doing, and to learn to 'hold the space', to live in the chaos without shying away from it. To choose to balance precariously but courageously on the rim of the abyss without pulling back or toppling in is a task we can each take up.

I can't solve the world's problems or lessen the world's pain. I can't even solve the pain of those most near and dear to me. But perhaps that's the point. Perhaps one of our tasks as human beings is not to solve or take away the pain of others (or of ourselves). Perhaps it's more a matter of embracing the pain of living in this world and just learning to live with it, developing the strength to bear such pain.

We can choose to withdraw into our little communities of light, trying to barricade the door against the pain and suffering that shouts without. We can also stride out into the world, wielding our light like a sword, slaying dragons left and right. But perhaps there is another way. Instead of trying to solve that which may not presently be solvable, we can work in an intensely active *inner* way by being witnesses both to the machinations of evil around us and to the pain of fellow human beings. This is in no way a call to be passive, or to disengage from the world. For those of us used to waving a banner or sitting firmly in the middle of a road, blocking police or developers or whomever else we feel needs to be blocked, this can seem like giving up or, worse yet, giving in. But

it seems to me that to discover the immense and unending power of the Christ and to work in his service can in no way be seen as doing anything less than one's all. At times this means outer action. At other times it means inner action. I suggest that right now there is a need for powerful inner action.

In the act of witnessing we open ourselves with courage and compassion to those around us. Munib Younan, Archbishop of Jerusalem, in his book, *Witnessing for Peace: In Jerusalem and the World*, describes how he took it upon himself to witness the acts of brutality by Israeli soldiers upon Palestinians. He did not solve the problems of Israel/Palestine. But through the powerful spiritual act of witnessing, he took up something of the suffering of those around him. Such a deed has mighty cosmic consequences and is similar in effect to acts of true forgiveness. Here one is not pardoning the wrongdoer or ignoring the wrong done. Instead, in an act of true forgiveness, one is taking upon oneself something of the other's karma and thereby working with Christ, who is Lord of Karma. Witnessing and forgiving are deeds of transformation, actions which serve to ameliorate and lessen the power of evil in our world. We take a step toward the ultimate destiny of human beings when we consciously and bravely become co-workers with Christ.

Like Mary, who did not shrink away from the horror around her but stood by it to the end, we can take what we experience into our hearts. It is there that we find Christ. Deep in the depths of our trusting hearts, hope blossoms and we can find the unending source of all the love and compassion that we need to face the challenges of this world on whatever scale we choose to work.

We are uniquely blessed because we can meet the full power of the Resurrected Christ each time we participate in the celebration of the renewed sacraments. Each time we attend an Act of Consecration of Man or take the time to reflect and converse in the sacred space of a Sacramental Consultation, we have the opportunity to draw substance from the spiritual integrity and power of the sacraments which give us immeasurable help as we seek Christ on our individual paths.

Fortified in this way, it might well be that each of us chooses some aspect of modern day life that we feel drawn to and would like to grapple with. Quietly focusing on a burning issue and thinking deeply on it is also an intensely important spiritual act. If we let go of a desire to understand and solve everything, we will be better placed to take in and work with what can be culled from one's sources of information on one's chosen

issues, whether they be the economy, the destruction of the environment, the impact of social media on children for example.

Indeed, to be an effective witness, one can't simply take in everything. One needs to carefully choose and limit one's focus. Acts of witnessing do not need to take place on the physical plane. While Munib Younan witnessed those acts of injustice which took place in front of him on the streets of Jerusalem, it is also possible to work with an issue which is taking place across the globe.

Such an example could be the prison at Guantanamo Bay. One cannot travel there and though one could find creative ways to raise more awareness of the issue, it could well be that in an age when so many of us are over-saturated with bad news and horror, taking it into one's own inner room is a better proposition. Here one can mediate and pray on one's feelings and thoughts about Guantanamo. Better yet, one can break the possible trap of ruminating on the unsolvable, the unfathomable, and take on the powerful spiritual act of connecting with the actual human beings there. One could focus on the generalized horrors of being a prisoner and of being a prison guard at such a place—but it might be even more powerful to do some research and try to find names and biographical details and perhaps the faces of some of the individuals. One can then live into the possibility of sharing something of the burdens and pain that those actual individuals bear.

By acting in this way, one brings these real human beings into Christ's light in meditation or prayer, joining oneself to the cosmic powers which, ultimately, have the ability to liberate not only the men imprisoned on Guantanamo, but the men who keep them there and the rest of humanity which allows such a place to exist.

But such things only take place when we chose to act in such a way that we consciously and freely align ourselves with Christ's mission on earth. The spiritual power is there—but it only works on the earth when it works through human beings. And this is the key. The rightful evolution of humanity and the redemption of evil are not acts which the gods will take up either for us or for themselves. It is up to us. The power of Christ and of the Hierarchies is there, but without our consciously directed will for the good, it is not available. To choose to be a co-worker of the Christ in our dark, dark world is the exhilarating and awesome challenge that faces each of us.

Winter Contemplation

*Deep Winter earth in whose cold spirals
fiery icicles dwell,
Open your caverns that you may accept my spirit
And in that depth to which I fall,
 May I be redeemed by fire and ice.
 May the holiness of pain suffice.
 May that Child, both meek and mild
 take my embrace.
 May I meet my Double face to face.
 May I wake to 'Life in Death'
 and find that grace.
And may my heart, though oft-times heavy-laden,
Soar with singing psalms
 to Upper Heaven.*

VIRGINIA GILMER

Bringing myrrh to myrrh

Part One: HD and the aesthetic Christ

Michael Steward

The poet HD (Hilda Doolittle) is hardly known outside literary circles today. In these times, the initials HD stand almost universally for High Definition in electronic screens and she might have been amused by this, since she was one of the original members of the 'imagist' movement which insisted on purity and clarity of image, uncluttered by ornament. She, herself, played with these initials, naming her last major poem, 'Hermetic Definition'. Personally, I would add another to define her orientation, 'Hellenic Dreamer', since she was deeply in love with the ancient Greek world and this permeates her work. And, for the purpose of this article, another, which is 'Holy Diviner'. This is because, while her exquisite sensitivity was being pounded, literally and metaphorically, by the madness that was Second World War London, she produced three long, connected poems (known now simply as The Trilogy) which together form one of the most beautiful and profound mystical works in the English language. In this, she sets out, among much else, an inspired re-imagining of the Sophia and the Christ and their meaning for the world. Her vision and elaboration of the presence of Sophia is another article in itself, so this will focus primarily on her orientation to the Christ figure.

As the bombs poured down on London, she was traumatised, yet also profoundly thoughtful; preternaturally alert to the nuances of silence and unease that filled the spaces between air-raids, and to the tracery of intense emotion that crisscrossed the city through this time. Quite early in the first poem, we learn also that she detects a faint but luminous 'golden thread' shimmering in this dense web of feeling:

*...ruin everywhere, yet as the fallen roof
leaves the sealed room
open to the air
so, through our desolation,
thoughts stir, inspiration stalks us
through gloom:
unaware, Spirit announces the Presence...*

She teases this out further, a few stanzas later:

*but when the shingles hissed
in the rain of incendiary,
other values were revealed to us,
other standards hallowed us;
strange texture, a wing covered us,
and though there was whirr and roar in the high air,
there was a Voice louder,
though its speech was lower
than a whisper.*

Who or what this presence might be is tantalisingly indistinct at first...

*the Presence was spectrum-blue
ultimate blue ray
rare as radium, as healing*

...but, later in this first poem, she makes it more concrete:

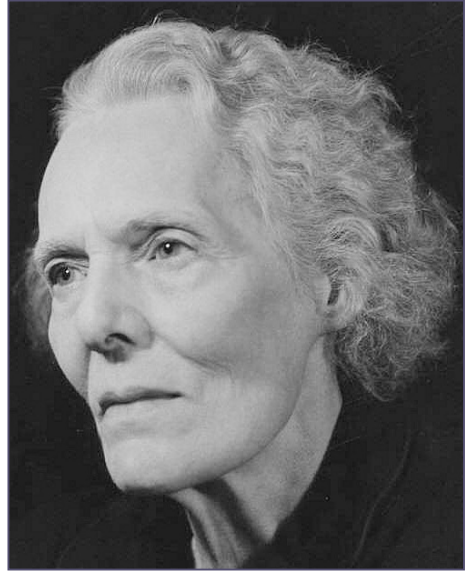
*I am hungry, the children cry for food
and flaming stones fall on them;
our awareness leaves us defenceless;
O, for your Presence
among the fishing-nets
by the beached boats on the lake-edge;
when, in the drift of wood-smoke,
will you say again, as you said,
the baked fish is ready,
here is the bread?*

Her roots in the Moravian church community of Pennsylvania had led her to an awareness of the Christ presence not merely as salvific, however, but also as radically transformative. She perceived the destruction around her as clearing the way for something that went far beyond cloying sentiment:

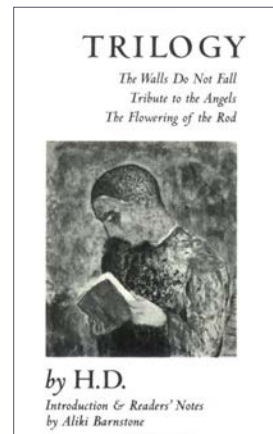
*...we have withstood
the anger, frustration,
bitter fire of destruction;
leave the smouldering cities below
(we have done all we could),
we have given until we have no more to give;
alas, it was pity rather than love we gave;*

*now having given all, let us leave all;
above all, let us leave pity
and mount higher to love—resurrection.*

So the ordeal of walking through devastation was purgatorial rather than gratuitously hellish: a kind of necessary, even natural, cleansing, like the sweeping away of old growth in a forest fire, to prepare the ground for what mattered most: the nurturing of the green shoots of resurrection. This echoes, incidentally, the stance of the 'imagist' poets, who were aflame with the commitment to spring-clean poetry of the bombast and clutter of decadent verse-forms and, in their famous phrase, 'make it new'. In her more mature later thinking, however, it is not so much a case of brushing the old aside to make way for the new, as creating the new out of the detritus of the old (using the decomposition of the old to fertilise the composition of the new). For HD, then, the incandescence of war represented:



*...coals for the world's burning,
for we must go forward;
we are at the crossroads,
the tide is turning;
it uncovers pebbles and shells
beautiful yet static, empty
old thought, old convention;
let us go down to the sea,
gather dry sea-weed,
heap drift-wood,
let us light a new fire
and in the fragrance
of burnt salt and sea-incense
chant new paeans to the new Sun
of regeneration;
we have always worshipped him,
we have always said,
forever and ever, amen.*



Much earlier, in 1919, in a tiny jewel of a prose work called *Notes On Thought And Vision* (also gestated in the horrors of a conflict, the First World War, which shellshocked her delicate nervous system), she had already posed this rather controversial image of the Christ ('the new Sun') as both deeply pagan and highly cultured; an image which, while clearly honouring his transcendent aspects, locates him decidedly in immanence, in the 'weave' of the world:

Christ and his father, or as the Eleusinian mystic would have said, his mother, were one.

Christ was the grapes that hung against the sunlit walls of that mountain garden, Nazareth. He was the white hyacinth of Sparta and the narcissus of the islands. He was the conch shell and the purple-fish left by the lake tides. He was the body of nature, the vine... as he was the soul of nature.

In a poem written around 10 years later (and at least a decade before the Trilogy), she encapsulates this sense of the palpability of his presence with beautiful economy:

This relationship of the Christ with 'substance' reaches its apotheosis, in

*The mysteries remain,
I keep the same
cycle of seed-time
and of sun and rain...

I keep the law,
I hold the mysteries true,
I am the vine,
the branches, you
and you.*

her mind, with his association with incense, specifically with myrrh. The whole sequence of *The Trilogy* culminates in the bringing of this third gift to the Holy Child. Throughout the last poem, she constructs a beguiling picture of Kaspar and his 'journey' to the threshold of the stable. As he approaches, finally, she emphasises his meekness and humility (which, perhaps, mirrors that of the Child)

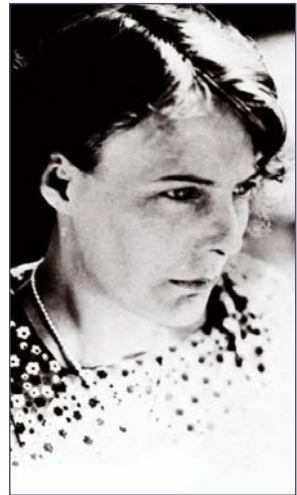
*And Kaspar stood a little to one side
like an unimportant altar-servant,
and placed his gift
a little apart from the rest...*

However, he is to be startled out of this self-effacement by Mary herself

*But she spoke so he looked at her,
she was shy and simple and young;
she said, Sir, it is a most beautiful fragrance,
as of all flowering things together;
but Kaspar knew the seal of the jar was unbroken.
He did not know whether she knew
the fragrance came from the bundle of myrrh
she held in her arms.*

This astonishing vignette (which never fails to bring tears to my eyes, though I have read it a thousand times) goes right into the centre of the mystical theology of HD and I think it is useful to elucidate some of the properties of myrrh, in order to understand her vision more completely. Etymologically, the name 'myrrh' is derived from the Ancient Greek 'murra', which is, itself, of Semitic origin with roots in the Arabic 'murr', the Hebrew 'mar' and the Aramaic 'marah', all meaning 'bitter' (n.b. in oriental medicine, this is the taste connected with stimulating and regulating and healing the heart and its associated suprasensory organ, the heart governor) and, in the second poem of The Trilogy, she sets this quality in a context which is overtly alchemical:

*Now polish the crucible
and in the bowl distil
a word most bitter, marah,
a word bitterer still, mar,
sea, brine, breaker, seducer,
giver of life, giver of tears;
now polish the crucible
and set the jet of flame
under, till marah-mar
are melted, fuse and join
and change and alter,
mer, mere, mare, mater, Maia, Mary,
Star of the Sea,
Mother.*



Medicinally, myrrh is no pussyfooting soporific to rock you into an escapist sleep. It is robust and definite and powerful; ecstatic, yes, but also exacting. That is, it brings the gift of challenge as well as healing. Traditionally,



it has been used for cleansing and for pulling things together (especially, the nervous system and the flow of blood through the heart). Myrrh compels coherence and dynamic movement. In ritual, it has a long history of use in ceremonies to do with the major transitions of birth and death. This locates it, as the above makes explicit, in the realm of the sacred feminine, the world soul, Isis/Sophia/Maria. It denotes for me the glowing pulse of Sophia in the heart of the Christ. Through the action of bringing myrrh to myrrh, the fissured Sophia is infused with the gift of herself and is made whole again, in and through the Christ, who

has come here, in the gnostic understanding, by her invitation and consent. His presence implies her recollection, her homecoming, as her presence underpins and impels his streaming out into the flow of the world. She prefigures him, just as he configures her.

The myrrh-Christ, then, is not reducible to the image of him as merely a bland dispenser of anodynes to the ill and poor and otherwise deserving. The healing is not of his *doing*, but through his *being*. His presence is so enmeshed with the warp and weft of the world, so radiant with the everyday aliveness of things, that he heals simply through seeing into the core of our being: through seeing us as we truly are, behind our imagining of dis-ease. He represents the fact that there is only one sickness, which is our story of separation from the heavenly, and reminds us that the story is simply not true. HD sees him (...arguably, in her own image) as the perfect aesthete, bathing and renewing the world in his serene gaze, his immaculate perception. In her Notes On Thought And Vision, she states baldly:

The Galilean conquered because he was a great artist, like Da Vinci.

And she adds that, like Leonardo, he fell in love and identified with the sheer vitality of all phenomena, seduced by entrancing patterns and enchanting colours wherever he went. She goes on to paint a fuller picture of what this acute sensitivity to beauty might have implied for his inner experience of engagement with the world:

He looked at the blue grass-lily and the red-brown sand-lily that grew under the sheltered hot sand-banks in the southern winter for hours

and hours. If he closed his eyes, he saw every vein and fleck of blue or vermilion. He would breathe in the fragrance with the wind and the salt. He would rest for days along the shores of the sea-lakes.

*Then, in the town, there would be some tragedy and he would send the friends and wailing relatives out of the way. He would be angry, as he looked at the little girl's face, that she was surrounded by such ugliness. He would look at her for a long time because of the beauty of the little straight nose and the eyelids, the hair clinging like seaweed to the fine little skull, the very white hands. He would like to have stayed looking at her for hours, like the blue-grass lily. But he was afraid they would break in suddenly again, with their heavy black clothes and ugly voices. So he said,
'Daughter, I say unto you, arise.'*

So here it is. The promise he embodies and later articulates, which we mostly ignore but is, nevertheless, there at any time and for all time and for anyone, and to which HD also refers directly in *The Trilogy*:

*...seeking what we once knew
we know ultimately we will find
happiness; today shalt thou be
with me in Paradise.*

And, somehow, as recorded in the *Mysteries* poem of the inter-war years quoted above, HD is presciently aware that the fragile serenity of this quiet address to the 'daughter' will infiltrate even the great ugliness of the conflict to come:

*Dark days are past
and darker days draw near...
then voice within the turmoil,
that slight breath
that tells as one flower may
of winter past...
one flower,
slight voice,
reveals
all holiness
with
peace
be still.*

*Michael Steward
is an independent
minister. His main
work is helping carers
respond to very
'damaged' children &
young people.*

Was Eve cursed?

Jon Madsen

The Lord of the Old Testament is a hard taskmaster, isn't he? More than that, he seems positively vindictive and cruel, which has led many to feel that if that is what God is like then he is not the sort of God they can relate to.

Take that incident with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden. Admittedly, Adam and Eve had been warned that they must leave it alone, since eating of it would lead to their death, but when all is said and done it was the Serpent who led them astray; and he was actually using an argument that was, in its way, true: 'Your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' This is even conceded by the Lord: 'The man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil' (Gen 3, 22). So is not the punishment visited upon them, particularly upon Eve, out of all proportion to the offence? 'I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children'? It seems disproportionate, doesn't it?

The key point here seems to be 'knowing good and evil'. That must surely be a desirable thing—the human being in his evolution moving on from the stage of unawareness of himself to an ever-increasing consciousness of his own inner life and responsibilities? But, as Adam and Eve are to discover, with self-knowledge comes pain, suffering and mortality, albeit Eve is also granted the power of bringing forth new life (the name Eve means 'life-giver, living')

The inner advance has been accompanied by physical modifications (fossil remains show this); on earth, homo sapiens ('wise human') has developed a skeleton that diverges considerably from even our nearest animal relatives (the chimpanzees). The skeletal structure that makes the upright gait of the human being possible is one aspect. But even more striking is the metamorphosis of the skull: the jaw recedes, a vertical face appears, and within the rounded dome of the head there is a brain of greatly increased size.

Jon Madsen is a retired priest in Stourbridge.

These changes go hand in hand with the human capacity for self-awareness, for 'knowing good and evil'—something not granted to even the most gifted chimpanzee.

And what are the physical consequences of these developments? The head of a full-term baby is so large that it is only just

able to pass through the birth canal, thus giving rise to the pain of child-birth. Is this now Eve's punishment—or is it an inescapable consequence of advancing human evolution? If the latter, perhaps we should not blame the Lord, but rather realize that 'I will greatly multiply your pain' is not an act of vengeance but a prognosis of the unavoidable consequences, bad and good, of 'eating of the tree of knowledge.' Not a curse or punishment, then, but rather the first step towards the ultimate 'becoming like one of us' (Gen. 3,22).

And in fact, the Lord is quick to help, once the long progression of physical human procreation has begun: when Cain is born, the first human being to be conceived in this way, Eve recognizes that it has happened 'with the help of the Lord' (Gen 4,1). And perhaps it is also the Lord's doing that, ever since, 'Eve' can pass through this pain, sustained by the expectation of the incomparable joy of receiving her newborn; a joy that goes beyond physical and even emotional relief, because the child brings with it a 'taste,' an 'aura,' of Paradise, the world in which Eve (and Adam) lived before they knew good or evil.

With every human birth on earth, this wonder is repeated. It fades away as the child grows up, but if we as mother, father or teacher—in short, as adults having contact with children—are receptive to what Wordsworth calls this 'clouds of glory,' it can lead us further, helping us to 'become as children' as advocated by the Gospel. (Mark 10:15, for example).

This is an arduous task, for the Lord has placed 'a flaming sword, turning every way' (Gen. 3:24), so that there is no simple going back to Paradise—every child must leave the Garden of Eden, nor is it even really possible for us as adults to return there—not now that we have set out on the path to knowing good and evil. Again, not so much a punishment but the inescapable consequence of the direction our evolution has taken. The only way we can become as children is for a birth to take place—which means that the arduous labour of Eve becomes the lot of every human being, male or female.

When, to their distress, Jesus tells his disciples that he is about to leave them, he refers to this mystery of birth: 'A woman giving birth must suffer pain; for her hour has come. But when she has borne the child, she no longer considers the anguish for joy that a human being is born into the world' (John 16:21); and he goes on to tell them that they will see him again with a joy that no one will take from them. The pain and distress of losing the immediate contact with the paradisaical world will be mitigated by the 'birth' of a higher human being: the Son of Man.

In the Birth at Christmas we can contemplate the great gesture of conciliation from above. Going before us in infinite compassion, a human being, born on earth by a human mother into a human family, is to prove worthy to become the bearer of the Christ, the Son of Man. And, since we have foreknowledge of what is to come in the course of this unique life, we are aware that this birth, too, will be accompanied by pain and suffering—yes, even the Christ Himself has to endure this process, though not for His own sake, but for ours. The word of the Lord: ‘I will greatly multiply your pain...’ is, we now see, a statement of an evolutionary fact: the way to a true knowledge of good and evil lies, inescapably, through suffering.

But Christ overcame suffering and death, and if we can learn to look upon our own sufferings as birth pangs, we will be able to find Him in those sufferings. ‘Unto us a child is born,’ said the prophet of old. When we in our time contemplate the babe in the manger, our relationship to the birth of Christ can go beyond traditional Christmas celebrations if we hold before our inner eye the great panorama of the Incarnation, the Life, the Death and the Resurrection of Christ. Only then, really, do we understand the full meaning and magnitude of this moment. ‘A Child is born...’: God became a child, he became ‘like one of us’ and began His path on the earth to accompany and stand by us human beings in our labour towards a true knowledge of good and evil: ‘a Son is given...’

Faite Romhat - Welcome to Clare so Fair!

Guest Rooms at The Christian Community, Co Clare, Ireland

Tuamgraney is situated near Scariff and Lough Derg, north of Limerick and forty minutes from Shannon airport. Just a good hour away are the Atlantic coast and Cliffs of Moher, the Burren, Galway etc.

Bed and Breakfast (£/Euro 25 pppn) and special rates for longer stays and self catering.
(all rooms are on the ground floor)

For further enquiries and bookings contact us on
(00353) 061 640 967 or 087 2185560



Obituaries

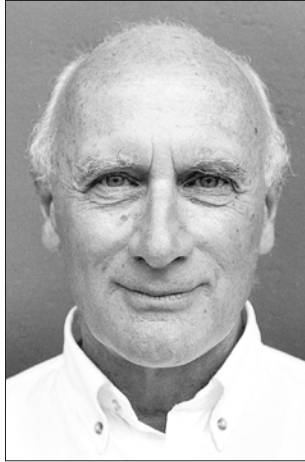
Julian Francis Sleigh

6th October, 1927 – 2nd October, 2013

Funeral Address by Rev. Peter van Breda

Dear Community of Mourners,
We are gathered here today to bid farewell to our very dear friend and brother Julian Sleigh.

This farewell is filled with so many rich and never to be forgotten memories, so many precious human meetings, so many outstanding and far-reaching happenings that we would need days to honour them all. Each part and phase of Julian's biography would be a tale in itself: he was born in Florence, where his father was a lecturer in the British Institute. Julian was baptised in the great baptistry of the Duomo in Florence. He spent his early childhood in that city which meant so much to him, before moving to England, where he passed the war years and was evacuated from London. Already as a schoolboy he showed leadership qualities, being a patrol leader and then troop leader in the Boy Scouts. During his national service he was selected for officer training. While working in Anglesey, Wales as an assistant for an engineering company he met Trevor Ravenscroft (author of *Spear of Destiny*), and through him heard of Rudolf Steiner and anthroposophy. This led to his discovery of the Camphill movement and his growing identification with Camphill which became his home, to begin with in Aberdeen where he worked with Karl König. The destiny meet-



ing with Camphill provided Julian not only with his central life's task; it was also the place where he met the love of his life, Renate. They say that behind every great man one finds a great woman; Renate, not only stood behind Julian but also alongside him and not seldom in front of him leading the way forward. Their remarkable community of life has born an exceptional harvest of fruits. Apart from

their five children, this place Alpha where we commit Julian's body to the earth was a result of their constant hard and devoted work. Julian left Camphill to study for the priesthood in Germany and Britain, and he was ordained in 1965. He immediately returned to South Africa to become, together with Heinz Maurer, the founding priests of The Christian Community in Southern Africa. Julian Sleigh worked as a priest in the Camphill Village for adults with special needs near Cape Town. For many years he was involved in the telephone counselling service, Lifeline. This work led him to write his book, *Crisis Points*, which has been translated into a dozen languages.

Turning our gaze towards Julian as a human being and placing before our mind's eye this physically dapper, not so tall man, who constantly radiated an aura of warmth, we can only be filled with gratitude. Julian constant-

ly exuded a mood of positivity. Wherever he was present in the social life it became a better place for his being there. He strove to work out of the sphere and realm of his heart. In my experience Julian was seldom judgmental of his fellowman. Some even complained that this was an inherent weakness in him and that he failed to be critical and consequently lacked decisiveness in deed. This trait or talent to genuinely enter into the joys and sorrows of others often left him with much personal pain. He had to a remarkable degree a capacity to empathise with others—resulting perhaps from a mixture of English reserve, irradiated with the warmth of the African Sun and the Italian love of life. Over many years he helped people to feel good about themselves, whatever woes or errors they possessed; there was always a new sun-filled morn awaiting them.

At an early age Julian embarked upon a life long journey of learning and cultivating in himself the art of love. This motif of love stretched from the lofty love of the divine to the intricacies and darts of Cupid. In all of this there lived in Julian an ideal picture of man. I am fairly sure he would agree with the inspired words of Hamlet when he speaks: what a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form and in moving, how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension, how like God!

There can be no doubt that Julian strove throughout his life to serve the spirit in this way. He gained through his striving a heartfelt capacity for reverence and devotion.

With these forces streaming within him, he developed a real wonder for all that was above him; he possessed also a conscience for all that is to be found below us in creation and he lived out of

Peter van Breda is a priest of The Christian Community in London.

an empathy and responsibility for his fellow man. This inspired confidence in his priestly work: what he spoke and celebrated with reverence was something that he could stand for. He knew that he stood at a holy threshold and that to cross this threshold one needs to bow not only one's head but also one's knee. Julian loved the sacraments, and he loved being a disciple and bearer of the word of Christ. His many helpful books bear witness to this.

In Camphill Julian was an innovator and leader. Along with Renate and other co-workers he transformed the barren, sand dune landscape that was all that was here into the Alpha Community, a centre of life and mellow fruitfulness. His diligence, love, loyalty and service to Camphill and especially to Alpha, coupled with the companionship he shared with so many villagers would be hard to sum up in words; they live on in countless hearts.

Should Julian be listening in at this moment he will probably be saying—'Okay that's all well and good, but please don't miss out the mention of three additional aspects that I loved in my life!' The first was his deep connection to Italy, the second his relationship and kinship with William Shakespeare, and third is the confirmation of his undying love for his children and grandchildren.

Julian was intimately connected to Renaissance Italy; it was as if he had been born into this renaissance age. Quite often he would say to me: 'Ah yes it was there that we first met on the steps of the great Duomo opposite the ancient Baptistery where I was christened.' The cobbled streets and lanes of Florence and the river Arno that separates the old city from the new were inscribed into soles of his feet.

His other love was undoubtedly Shakespeare. I am almost sure that Julian attended almost every production of Shakespeare in Maynardville Park over many decades. Julian

sensed the greatness of Shakespeare's gift to humankind. Shakespeare not only enriched the English language through the word but also ushered in a new consciousness. This new consciousness can if we so will help us to become cosmopolitan human beings, ones who wish to dedicate themselves to serve the greater needs of the world. Julian carried this Michaelic task into his work. His particular destiny meant that he filled this with a Franciscan empathy and ethic.

Finally a short but heartfelt word about Julian's ongoing relationship to his family. They can best tell you of the wondrous tales, events and incidents out of their family life. Julian loved his children and was unabashedly proud of them. Whatever they were going through he always spoke in radiant terms about them all, which of course includes his grandchildren.

Julian has now left the restrictions of his mortal body and has entered into the immortal world of the so-called dead. From this place he will gaze down on us as he takes up his new task as a spirit amongst spirits. We on earth can lift our souls with gratitude to this place where he now is. We may seek his help, continue our friendship and feel his love.

Whenever Shakespeare introduces music in his plays, it indicates that we are traversing a bridge from the temporal world into the sphere of the eternal. In the last minutes of his life Julian was drawn to music. It played in his room as he passed on. 'Where could this music be?' asks Ferdinand in the *Tempest*—'is it in me, in the air or in the Earth—all at once it sounds no more but be sure it waits upon some God on another island shore.' Julian has crossed the eternal bridge into the music of the Spheres from where he will move on ever on upwards, up into the atmosphere of the supreme orchestra of all creation in which each one has his part to play.

Arie Boogert 1933–2013

Arie Boogert crossed the threshold on Wednesday, 4 September 2013, in The Hague after a long and dedicated life as priest of The Christian Community.

He was born in Holland but travelled widely and worked in several different communities and countries.

He arrived in Sydney to work together with Rosalind Pecover after Michael Tapp had moved to Australia. Arie brought with him his wife, Christiane, who was a fine musician and especially of Christian Community music. So we were introduced to the lyre and several different recorders and our music repertoire was expanded.

The work in Melbourne was nurtured by Arie and grew quite substantially. I remember him preparing and sending out letters to the diaspora, to the communities he could only visit periodically while based permanently in Sydney, which contained stories for the festivals, music and other spiritual articles.

Arie had strong administrative skills and was comfortable on the computer (in 1986, we were mostly beginners on the computer).

During their time in Australia from 1989 to 1991, Arie and Christiane Boogert made strong connections with the Australian continent and with Sydney in particular.

A pointer as to Arie's connection with Australia is that although he was born of Dutch parents, his place of birth was Java (now part of Indonesia) and this is, of course, located in the southern hemisphere, as is Australia.

A further pointer in relation to Arie's destiny is that his birthday (26 January 1933) coincides with 'Australia Day' which is celebrated each year to commemorate the landing of the First Fleet on 26 January 1788.

And so Arie was 80 years of age at the time of his crossing of the threshold and it is right to record that when Arie and Christiane were asked to continue their ministry in Los Angeles, California, it was with a very heavy heart that both of them left Australia and the many friends that they had made while in Australia.

Rose-Marie van Hoogstraten and John Shaw
Sydney, Australia

The challenges and gifts of becoming a community of Christians

Panjee Tapales

Sustaining The Christian Community in the Philippines is no easy task. Economically, one can count on one hand, the number of members and friends who can—and do—donate enough funds to cover the airfare and living expenses of visiting priests. These living expenses include gas and toll fees, as our situation is such that the priest lives a considerable distance from the city where services and other activities are held. For the priest to live in the city, it means renting quarters, which is even more prohibitive than gas and toll fees. Members and friends live on opposite sides of the city and not many are able to house priests, so there is just no way around this particular situation yet.

Part of this challenge is that we do not have our own space. We currently share a venue with a kindergarten, which means we come in on Friday afternoons, put the little chairs and tables away, bring our irons and ironing boards, iron vestments and altar cloths, and basically create our church for the weekend. Sunday afternoons find us disassembling the church and recreating the kindergarten. This is how we roll for every weekend of the visit. Too soon, we are orphaned again, with no church or priest until the next cycle. In a way, this is good, as members must come together to get things done and prepare the space. This is always wonderful for the social aspect, catching up as friends, and weaving ever stronger bonds—and there is definitely something to be said for beginning anew each time. However, the inevitable flip side is a yearning for a touch of permanence, to

be done with packing and unpacking, traveling, learning and re-learning, forgetting and remembering.

Apart from the economic challenges, the Philippines is a predominantly Catholic country, the only one left that legally prohibits divorce. There is much guilt, apprehension, and familial pressure around leaving the Catholic Church. Many still attend both the Act of Consecration of Man and Catholic services. Though there has been progress over the years, some still carry habits presumably from other churches: coming late, chatting in the room before the service, leaving before the service is over and even getting up to go the bathroom in the middle of the sacrament. This is a source of great disturbance and frustration for some, and discussions continue on how to create boundaries without creating alienation. We are looked upon as a service, with one side providing and the other merely receiving, rather than a community where, hopefully, not just the fruits are shared, but the labours as well. That was true and had to be in the beginning, but must change and evolve with time. We look at familiar faces each visit, each one thankful for what is being offered, but perhaps unaware that he or she could do and be more, if this initiative is to thrive. In this world of everyone trying to do everything, The Christian Community could be the one place of solace where most people feel they can rest. But should it be? Have we not reached out and asked enough? There is also the matter of understanding the sacraments and approaching

them with the weight they deserve, for what happens when renewed sacraments are met with old consciousness? Truly, there is much to be done. We are not there yet.

Today we are faced with our own internal questions about what it means to be a member— not just in declaration, but in active participation. There are many conversations about what it means in terms of sustaining the community for years to come, as those who carry much of the load are beginning to bend at the considerable weight, after nearly a decade of holding things up. On the one hand, we want this community of Christians in our country to outlive us, but on the other, it needs an active, purposeful community, as merely a handful cannot make this happen.

For now, we live with the struggles and questions, sustained by the strength we receive from the priests' visits and the celebration of sacraments, thrice each year. Could we indeed have a regular priest, if at three visits we are struggling? We are often saved from sliding into the quagmire of doubt and thoughts of cessation by our children. As we sit and listen to the priest tell the story before the Children's Service and watch the little faces before us, as we remember how our older confirmands have been inwardly awakened and enlivened by the spiritual

substance and guidance they continue to receive, we can only be affirmed in our work and effort. We reflect on the richness of the experience of housing priests—the friendships and connections forged across the globe, polished through time over shared meals, heartfelt conversations, laughter and also many tears, evolving games with the children, the stories and remembrances of our children (now grown) over these visits, all the planning of what lectures might be relevant, the emails that go back and forth, Skype conversations, sometimes the silence in the car after a long day and now the ride home in unbearable traffic, and how we all have grown together and apart as striving human beings. It is impossible to quantify the amount of healing we have been able to receive and give, even to those who came but once. It is ever and again necessary to remind ourselves that it was never about us to begin with. We think on all that was, is and what can still become, and somehow we manage to go one visit more.

Somehow we are lifted from the threshold and find ourselves planning, preparing and exploring possibilities with newfound creativity, and suddenly there we are again, at the next visit. And the next. And the next.

And so we go again!

On Skellig Michael

Jens-Peter Linde

I am washing the dishes. The freezing water, the rough sand for wiping, the murmured prayers—they're just not powerful enough to get the mutton grease from these stacks of wooden bowls!

Mind you, I was pleased to eat mutton for once, when day in day out it would be potatoes which we grow on the saddle between our hill where the beehive huts shelter us from the worst, and the Peak to the West

where wild storms buffet the lonely soul who will have to hold out there, by himself for a full moon's cycle!

Sorry, no mutton for him! He is prepared to brave hunger and cold as he freely has said, 'I will do it!' While the rising sun may give us some warmth—if He gets through the clouds on occasions—the hermit on the Peak may see the sun setting—to prepare him for yet another night of wakeful battle with powers of darkness.

I heard that some lonely souls have not come back from the Peak, and I have heard from some who've not taken a turn to climb that steep slope before the night of full moon. I am new here, will I, will I ever dare?

Or will I be happy washing the dishes? On other days it's easy. Potatoes may turn a bit gluey at times; if the porridge has burned I'll have to scrape harder and if we had herring I'll need to look keenly that no bones remain in small cracks of the bowls. But that is ok.

I know that all this would not make sense if the man on the peak did not will to endure for the sake of us here in our monastery's shelter, and if our community wasn't praying with fervour for that soul's endurance. And, if on

Jens-Peter Linde is a priest of The Christian Community in Aberdeen.

the saddle between us, where potatoes grow and oats and parsley, the Son of the Sun was not giving in, giving peace into depths of the earth, underneath the ocean's tossing of waves, the glaciers' caps, the deserts' dunes to well up, a spring of love, wherever He's needed.

There once lived a man I've been told, Patrick by name, who stood up to kings and who wrestled with demons. Indeed, I've heard he even haggled with God to save poor souls from eternal damnation. I admire that man, as I also admire our hermits.

I have heard it say that before we came to this isle there were druids here who braved the elements' fierceness as we do, because they could feel that the Lord of the Elements thanked them for that—he who was born in a stable's abode.

Twixt crib and earth's palace, between huts and peak power, in the space in between, in such saddle, the Christ rides from morning to evening, from evening till morn.

Between scrubbing the dishes and being astounded, I'm waiting. I prepare to be brave. And just as that sheep gave its life for our lives, so will I climb that steep hill and die to my past while holding on to the life of the world. And, though I'll be alone, I know that I'll not be alone. I shall be all-one with the One.

Seamus Heaney and bearing the light

Christopher Hudson

As I write, news has just filtered in that Seamus Heaney has died. I last heard him reading his work at Oxford as recently as March, so his death strikes me a little more personally than it might otherwise have done. Although the setting was academic, the occasion was popular (Times Literary Festival), so we heard very accessible Heaney: St.

Kevin and the Blackbird, for example, and St. Francis and the Birds, with its eternally breathtaking ending:

*Danced on the wing, for sheer joy played
And sang like images took flight.
Which was the best poem Francis made,
His argument true, his tone light.*

Light was such an important word for Heaney, as it was for his master, Dante. Only Dante's light was that whose antithesis is darkness. In Heaney, light stands opposed to weight; as levity is opposed to gravity. The centrality of this polarity for Heaney was identified and elucidated for the first time by John F. Desmond in a study entitled *Gravity and Grace, Seamus Heaney and the Force of Light*. Desmond showed how Heaney's collection from 1996, *The Spirit Level*, drew enormous inspiration from *Gravity and Grace*, a collection of the pensees of the mid-century radical French thinker, Simone Weil. 'For Weil, gravity is both a physical law and a natural spiritual force: 'all the natural movements of the soul are controlled by laws analogous to those of physical gravity. Grace is the only exception.'

The title of Heaney's collection *The Spirit Level* is typical of his work, the surprising employment of an item from the bricklayer's or carpenter's toolbag as a metaphor for an inner state. So much of Heaney's poetry maintains its rootedness in the vocabulary of ordinary toil. A particularly good example is 'Weighing In', in which the extraordinary phenomenon of equipoise is described: the way in which, on a weighbridge, when one dead weight perfectly counters another, the resultant miracle is lightness:

*Gravity's black box, the immovable
Stamp and squat and square-
root of dead weight.
Yet balance it*

*Against another one placed
on a weighbridge -
On a well-adjusted, freshly
greased weighbridge -
And everything trembled,
flowed with give and take.*

The whole Christian promise, the poem continues, may hold good against against the dead weight of human deeds, 'only as long as the balance holds, The scales ride steady and the angels' strain Prolongs itself at an unearthly pitch.' (Nice play with the word 'strain', that).

Only once did Heaney write a poem specifically about a passage from the New Testament. It was the poem 'Miracle' from the 2010 collection, *Human Chain*. The poem describes the moment in Mark 2 and Luke 5, when a person sick with palsy had to be lowered through the roof so that he could be brought into the proximity of Jesus. Again, the gravity and levity are counterpoised: the levity of the one who eventually takes up his bed and walks, as against the prior experience of his dead weight to those to whom it fell to lower him into the packed room through the roof, to be healed.

*Not the one who takes up
his bed and walks
But the ones who have
known him all along
And carry him in—*

*Their shoulders numb, the ache
and stoop deeplocked
In their backs, the stretcher handles
Slippery with sweat. And no let-up*

More playfully, Heaney often explores the child's natural exploration of this ubiquitous polarity: 'The Swing', for example which can lift the child so thrillingly out of gravity's clasp, reminiscent in its humble plainness, of the scene at Bethlehem:

*the shed mouth
Sunstruck and expectant,
the bedding straw
Piled to one side, like a nativity*

*Foreground and background
waiting for the figures.
And then, in the middle
ground, the swing itself
With an old lopsided sack
in the loop of it,
Perfectly still, hanging like pulley-slack,
A lure let down to tempt the soul to rise.*

Or the kite in 'A Kite for Aibhin' which seems to take its enchanted motion, from a higher plane of being:

*Air from another life and time and place
Pale blue heavenly air is supporting
A white wing beating high
against the breeze,*

And yes, it is a kite !...

*The longing in the breast and planted feet
And gazing face and heart of the kite flier
Until string breaks and—separate, elate—*

The kite takes off, itself alone, a windfall.

And finally, in the title poem of his last collection, Human Chain, in which the back-breaking strain of heaving sacks of grain onto a trailer for eventual distribution to refugees, is compensated by the sublime relief when the sack has been let go: a release so intense that it seems a premonition even of the moment of dying: the definitive moment of counterbalance of weight and light. Which comes to all.

Christopher Hudson is a member of the congregation in Stroud.

*The eye-to-eye, one-two, one-two upswing
On to the trailer, then the stoop
and drag and drain
Of the next lift. Nothing surpassed*

*That quick unburdening,
backbreak's truest payback,
A letting go which will not come again.
Or it will, once. And for all.*

The Blessings of Convalescence

Alfred Heidenreich

Convalescence is one of the happiest and most significant experiences of human life. Just as illness is always a crisis of the whole personality, affecting many sides of our existence, so convalescence can be a resurrection of the whole man, a rebirth on all levels of our being.

In the first place the return of health in the physical sense alone is a joy and a source of thankfulness. One rarely realizes what it means to be healthy until one has been ill. One takes normal health so easily for granted, as one's due, as it were; a somewhat prim-

itive attitude to life. It is good to be reminded sometimes that health is a state of balance which needs to be readjusted and re-created from time to time. And great can be the joy when this re-creation has been achieved again. But along with the sheer physical recovery goes a deeper sense of progressing and growing, which is otherwise a rare experience once we have left childhood behind. In convalescence one of the basic gifts of childhood, the sense of tangible improvement can be ours again. How delighted we were as children and young people by the

simple steps of natural progress. The annual moving up at school, the first long trousers or skirts, the first party, the growing sense of 'seniority', the first successful examination; how natural it was to advance step by step. This sort of thrill, which is ours as a matter of course while we grow up, becomes rare in late life and often vanishes altogether. In convalescence we can recapture it. The first restful night, the first day without 'temperature', the first normal meal again, the first time sitting up in a chair, the first walk on the landing in a dressing-gown, how much do we enjoy these stepping stones up to the day when we return to our normal pursuits. Before long, alas, the daily routine takes over again and makes the days and hours tick away in the usual clockwork manner. In convalescence we become once more children who grow up, and we can renew our first-hand acquaintance with an essential quality of youth.

While accepting the necessary benefits of drugs, we need to be wary of excesses which might spoil our convalescence. And as things are today, they can often do away with convalescence altogether. Present-day medical technique possesses the chemical means of suppressing or at least of cutting short many illnesses. This is a very dubious blessing. For the illness cannot do its proper job, and instead of a week of blessed convalescence to follow, we may have weeks or even months of hangover before us. We are left as walking cemeteries of micro-organisms which the 'wonder' drugs have killed in our body.

When the tide turns after the crisis, we have sometimes a rare opportunity of observing the pure forces of life flowing back into our body. I have known people for whom this returning flow of etheric forces

formed itself into the picture of the Virgin Mary, who of course from immemorial times has been a visionary symbol of the virginal forces of pure life. But also those to whom this gift is denied will recall that vast innocent pleasure when life returns and seems to carry soul and spirit with it into the remotest particles of our body; we remember the sense of relaxation and integration which follows after the first good night's sleep and which gives us a real awareness of what health and well-being means.

But the blessings of convalescence are not exhausted by what Nature provides freely from her bounty. There are other blessings to be gained, if we seek them. We have said above that convalescence can be a resurrection and a rebirth. Towards this gift we find a guide in the New Testament. The classic conversation about being born again is contained in the third chapter of the Gospel of John. The two teachers, 'the teacher come from God' and 'the teacher of Israel' meet at night, and converse about rebirth in life. Christ describes two steps: 'unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God'; and 'unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.' These two steps can be taken in convalescence, one after the other.

Illnesses are mysterious challengers. But during convalescence we can try to fathom their meaning. Earlier, while the illness is working itself out with full force, we can often not do much more than submit. The illness must take its course and we must bear it, as best we can. But when it recedes, when its assault ebbs away, we can begin to ask: What was the

Alfred Heidenreich was one of the founders of The Christian Community and the first Lenker for Great Britain & Ireland.

meaning of all this, what was the message wrapped up in this parcel of pain and discomfort? What is the place of this crisis in the pattern of my life? Schiller says:

*There are moments in the life of man
When he is nearer to the
spirit of the world
And given leave to question Destiny.*

Convalescence is such a moment. The veil which hides the guiding stars of our life is then a little thinner than usual; we have the time and leisure ('enforced' leisure as we often call it) to trace their beams; and like Jacob we wrestle with the departing angel who has tested us and say: 'I will not let you go, unless you bless me.' (Gen. 32:26). This is how our convalescence can become a rebirth, and in this process of being reborn we can probe more deeply into the secrets of life, we can gain a glimpse of the spiritual order of the world, we can indeed 'see the kingdom of God'.

However, this is only the first step. The second step is to enter the kingdom. This calls for acts of will, for change and honest adjustment. Every illness is an instalment of death. We must train ourselves from time to time to face death for the sake of a birth into the kingdom. It is always worthwhile after an illness to ask oneself, what would have happened if I had died? Are my affairs in order, am I in a state of mutual forgiveness in my human relationships, are they as honest as I can make them, can I face the crossing of the threshold?

Christ speaks of this second stage of the rebirth as a rebirth through 'water and spirit'. Christ uses the sacred language of the hidden temples. The deeper meaning of these symbols has not been preserved by organized Christianity, but it has been handed down through other channels, such as

Freemasonry. From this source these symbols have found their way for instance into Mozart's Magic Flute, where the hero and the heroine have to pass through the 'trial by water' and the 'trial by fire'. The trial by water means an experience in which everything on which we have instinctively relied is shaken, when the firm routine of our life, its established rhythm, dissolves; when the certainties to which we cling become fluid; when the human spirit must learn to move in loneliness and humility on the surface of the deep waters. It tests our faith.

The trial by fire tests the strength and purity of our heart; it tests our love and selflessness. The flames burn up our possessiveness, our egotism, the primitive claims which the flesh takes for granted. The flames reduce us to our essentials and show up our 'mettle'. They bring out the measure of magnanimity, courage and self-denial which we possess.

Convalescence which follows illness is the time and season for a fundamental adjustment. In children the readjustment through childhood illnesses is usually automatic. Typical children's diseases like measles, scarlet fever, mumps or whooping-cough can almost be said to be natural stepping stones in the process of 'incarnation'. In an adult, an illness rarely works automatically on the moral or spiritual level; he has to gather the harvest consciously and intentionally.

In another article I have pointed out that the only context in which Christ uses the word 'sorrow' or 'pain' in connection with an illness is in reference to a woman 'when she is in travail'. We read the mind of Christ aright, if we think that he would wish us to look upon every illness, in the deepest sense, as a pregnancy. What matters is that the true human personality—the Son of

Man in us—should be born. Convalescence is the time when this intimate process can be deliberately furthered and ratified. In convalescence we have a chance to enter the kingdom a little more. Even if it is only a tiny step, it is worthwhile.

In this process a second opinion can be of decisive value. This is why during convalescence it is advisable to invite a priest to call. Priests' skill and experience in human affairs, their training to see human life from the aspect of the world of spirit, can be of great help. A priest's co-operation could be crucial.

Furthermore, convalescence is a special condition in which to receive the Sacrament. Rudolf Steiner emphasized this point in his advice to the founders of The Christian Community. During convalescence, the forces which carry the active blessing of Christ can

penetrate into great depths, they can operate right into the rebuilding of cells. After an illness the whole organism is in a special state of 'fasting,' and exceptionally capable of absorbing the gift of the Lord of Life.

But what of an illness with a fatal outcome? I believe that in a very true sense life after death can be described as the very archetype and pattern of convalescence. The comprehensive adjustment, the trial by water and the trial by fire, the rebirth and growth of the spiritual self, these are the characteristic events and experiences of life after death. There they work in fullness and undiminished strength. Perhaps we cannot sum up better the whole burden of what we have attempted to describe than by saying: convalescence can be and should be a foretaste of life after death accepted and worked out in freedom and conscious endeavour.

Reader's Letter

Marriage—Partnership—Friendship

After reading the last issue of Perspectives about 'marriage' I got quite worried.

It is good if The Christian Community goes forward into the future and embraces new challenges. She should also be allowed to make mistakes. Nevertheless whatever is done should be founded on an understanding of the underlying foundation. And I ask myself: what are the foundations on which the decision was based to introduce same gender blessings in The Christian Community?

I don't feel I am an expert but I would like to make an attempt to write down my understanding and would welcome any enlightenment.

Marriage: the most future orientated sacrament for a man and a woman who want to work on the healing of the separation of the sexes for the good of mankind. For this task the etheric bodies of male and female are harmonized through the sacrament and it is a task which, without the sacrament is not possible.

Partnership: We are not all in male/female relationships and also not everybody sees it as his or her task to be married. Nevertheless people live and work together and form partnerships. It could be a life partnership or a business partnership. And we should have the courage to form partnerships of any kind and take on responsibility for them. We may

even want to have it protected and included in a legal framework.

Friendship: Christ says that to be a friend means to lay down one's life for him or her. Friendship can't be fixed neither in a sacrament nor a legal framework, because it is not formed for a task but it is a grace in one's life to have a friend or meet a friend.

Are we not all looking for a soul mate either in marriage, in a partnership or in a friendship?

What of people who are attracted to the same sex?

Peter Howe speaks about being male with a female soul. Is it so?

And certainly there is a difference between the female and the male constitution of the soul in relationship to the ego. That is why we have these mysterious words in the sacrament of marriage. But we all have in our soul the male/female aspect. What is the female soul in the male body seeking?

Could it be that someone with an inclination towards the same sex experiences him or herself in the etheric body and seeks unconsciously through his or her constitution the fulfilment in the physical of the other or vice versa?

Whatever the exact explanation is, there is no problem to meet on a soul-spiritual level but the longing on the etheric/physical level seems to me difficult if not impossible to fulfil and will create a certain challenge in the life of this person. In our etheric bodies we don't have this polarity. But do we not need this polarity?

Jacques Lusseyran describes in a book his experiences on an etheric level when a man is intimate with a woman. He describes how the man totally releases (looses) his power while the woman is able to take it up and transform it.

Rudolf Steiner says in a lecture that perversities — and I want to use this word as a neutral expression without any moral judgement — are relationships which have their right on a spiritual level but have sunk one step too deep into the physical.

A late priest in Hamburg told me that Rudolf Steiner advised one of the first priests who had this inclination towards the same gender to be careful and not overdo it in this direction.

For me this is an indication that Rudolf Steiner saw the same sex inclination more as a karmic task than something which should be carried through a sacrament into the future evolution of mankind. But I also see it in the light of how Friedrich Rittelmeyer put it: 'Physical chastity is a wrong monkish ideal... which leads only to a bad conscience.'

By taking part in the Act of Consecration we start to carry each other's burdens, each other's destinies. Whoever is part of The Christian Community should feel they belong whether they are male, female, handicapped, black or white or whatever. We shouldn't fall into the politically correct tendency that every minority has to be acknowledged in a special way and may be needs its special blessings or sacraments. It is the individual which we want to acknowledge in his or her wrestling with karma, in his or her idealistic striving to become fully human. There is nobody of us who does not carry his or her burden.

When we acknowledge that in each one of us is this striving to become fully human then we can say in the spirit of St. Paul without moral judgement: We have been adulterers, thieves... but now we are in Christ.

This doesn't mean we don't have to wrestle with certain difficulties in life that our constitution has totally changed, but now we have a different direction and the help of Christ and he is the only one to whom we want to confess.

What about prejudices? We all have them and the first step is to acknowledge them. Then we have to start to understand why we have them, otherwise we can't transform them and start to integrate what was foreign to us. If we don't want to understand, then we easily become prosecutors or feel we are victims.

When asked whether women could become priests in The Christian Community, Rudolf

Steiner had to look into the spiritual world to find the answer that it is now possible and even necessary to have them. He had no problem if someone who had a same sex attraction wanted to become a priest but it seems to me that he felt that, karmically, it is not easy.

Do we need a special blessing?

If one is wrestling with one's ideals and one's weaknesses there is a place in the Sacramental Consultation where one can speak one's very ideals, one's weaknesses and place them into the presence of Christ. And then Christ will show us through life and its challenges what is true. Help is given to us.

We are continually blessed when we take part in the Act of Consecration and we are meant to carry these blessings into the world and have the courage to do so.

There is this movement of 'Interfaith ministers' who offer blessings for whatever one wishes, tailor-made for every occasion. Is it possible to tailor-make the spirit regarding our own wishes, desires, needs, ideals? Who are the beings with whom one connects through such blessings? I know that many Interfaith ministers think they are a step ahead; I wonder though whether they actually work out of an old understanding of religion where the priest is supposed to have magical powers which he or she can give by bestowing a blessing.

In the Sacramental Consultation of The Christian Community the priest doesn't bless any decision but everything is put in front of Christ. It needs courage to go on our way and on this way we will find whether Christ blesses what we do or whether he shows us that we are on the wrong path.

We are all part of the same body, which is Christ, and we have to try to love each other and ourselves with all the errors we make. But without wrestling and trying to understand there can be no religious renewal.

Wolfgang Flaig, Forest Row

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*.

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

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

Breakfast is served in the ground floor Dining Room looking out over

the quiet, secluded garden. A library provides a space for relaxation or quiet reading. All the rooms are well appointed and comfortably furnished, the two double rooms being deluxe rooms.

All prices include breakfast and are per room:

- Single room from £64 per night, with/without shower and second companion bed;
- Twin-bedded room from £88 per night.
- Deluxe double room from £102 per night (£75 for single occupancy)
- All rooms have hot and cold water.

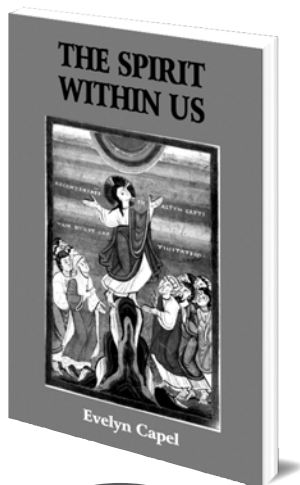
For any further information or to make a booking, contact:



Temple Lodge Club
51 Queen Caroline Street
Hammersmith
London W6 9QL

Tel: 020 8748 8388

e-mail:
info@templelodgeclub.com
www.templelodgeclub.com



THE SPIRIT WITHIN US

EVELYN CAPEL

Many people today find themselves in situations with which they cannot cope. How often do we have to make decisions for which we feel we don't have enough wisdom? How often do we have overwhelming experiences?

Most of the time, we have to find our strength from within ourselves. This doesn't happen quickly, or by simply wishing for it. Evelyn Capel argues, however, that each one of us has a source of strength within ourselves: the spirit of Christ. By developing an active inner life, the spirit within us can be found and brought into our consciousness.

Doing this requires thought and care, and in this inspiring book Capel offers practical and compassionate advice.

192 pages | paperback | 978-086315-748-6

£8.99
Available
Now!

SAINT PAUL

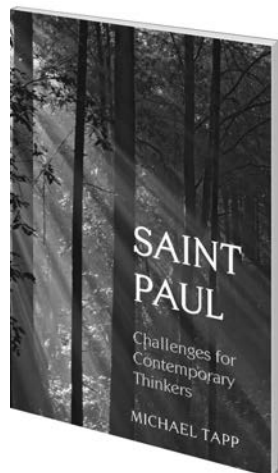
Challenges for Contemporary Thinkers

MICHAEL TAPP

The writings of St Paul in the New Testament are full of challenges to contemporary ways of thinking. Paul was carrying Christianity beyond the Jewish community and inevitably that resulted in cultural and social clashes.

In this readable little book, Michael Tapp explores Paul's claim to spiritual authority. He looks particularly at the themes of freedom and morality in Paul's epistles, and how they are connected to individual responsibility.

64 pages | paperback | 978-086315-922-0



£6.99
Available
Now!



**Floris
Books**

www.florisbooks.co.uk

If you have difficulty obtaining these books from your local bookshop, you can order them direct from:

BookSource, 50 Cambuslang Road, Glasgow G32 8NB, UK
Tel: 0845 370 0067 Fax: 0845 370 0068

Quote PR1213 to receive a 10% discount on these titles

Gospel Readings 2013–2014

Advent

Sunday, December 1 Luke 21:25–36
Sunday, December 8 Luke 21:25–36
Sunday, December 15 Luke 21:25–36
Sunday, December 22 Luke 21:25–36

Christmas

Wednesday, December 25
Midnight Matthew 1:1–25
Dawn Luke 2:1–20
Morning John 21:15–25

Epiphany

Monday, January 6 Matthew 2:1–12
Sunday, January 12 Luke 2:41–52
Sunday, January 19 John 2:1–11
Sunday, January 26 Matthew 8:5–13
Sunday, February 2 Luke 7:1–10

Sunday, February 9 Matthew 20:1–16
Sunday, February 16 Luke 8:4–15
Sunday, February 23 Matt. 18:21–35
Sunday, March 2 Luke 18:18–35
Sunday, March 9 Matthew 4:1–11
Sunday, March 16 Matthew 17:1–13

Passiontide

Sunday, March 23 Luke 11:14–36
Sunday, March 30 John 6:1–15
Sunday, April 6 John 8:1–12

Holy Week

Sunday, April 13 Matthew 21:1–11
Thursday, April 17 Luke 23:13–32
Friday, April 18 John 19:1–15
Saturday, April 19 John 19:16–42

Easter

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

Ascension

Thursday, May 29 John 16:24–33
Sunday, June 1 John 16:24–33

Whitsun

Sunday, June 8 John 14:23–31

Wednesday, June 11 2 Peter 1:16–21
Sunday, June 15 2 Peter 1:16–21
Sunday, June 22 2 Cor. 3:5/6–18

St. Johnstide

Tuesday, June 24 John 1:19–34
Sunday, June 29 John 1:19–34
Sunday, July 6 John 3:22–36
Sunday, July 13 Matthew 11:7–15
Sunday, July 20 Matthew 14:1–12

Sunday, July 27 Mark 8:27–37
Sunday, August 3 Matthew 7:1–14
Sunday, August 10 Luke 15:11–32
Sunday, August 17 Luke 9:1–17
Sunday, August 24 Luke 18:35–43
Sunday, August 31 Mark 7:31–37
Sunday, September 7 Luke 10:1–20
Sunday, September 14 Luke 17:5–24
Sunday, September 21 Matthew 6:19–34
Sunday, September 28 Luke 7:11–17

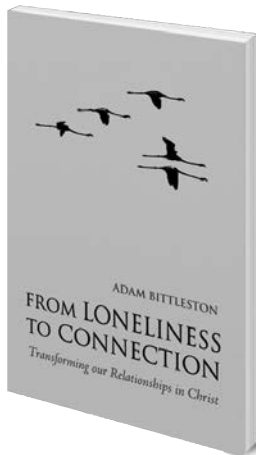
Michaelmas

Monday, September 29 Matthew 22:1–14
Sunday, October 5 Matthew 22:1–14
Sunday, October 12 Matthew 5:1–16
Sunday, October 19 Revelation 1:10–20
Sunday, October 26 Romans 4:13–25

Sunday, November 2 Rev. 3:7–13
Sunday, November 9 Rev. 4:1–11
Sunday, November 16 Rev 7:9–17
Sunday, November 23 Rev 14:13–20

Advent

Sunday, November 30 Luke 21:25–36



FROM LONELINESS TO CONNECTION

Transforming our Relationships in Christ

ADAM BITTLESTON

In our busy world, it's easy to feel isolated from those around us. Even (and sometimes especially) people surrounded by family and friends can sense a hole in their lives, which we sometimes call loneliness.

Adam Bittleston argues that this is natural, since we were created with a natural desire for oneness, unity and connection, both with God and with other people. In practice, our relationships often fall short of fulfilling that need.

In this practical book, he offers examples of how we can connect to the world through our senses, connect to people through genuine speech and inward listening, and connect to God through Christ and the Holy Spirit.

120 pages | paperback | 978-086315-957-2

**£7.99
Available
Now!**

ADAM BITTLESTON

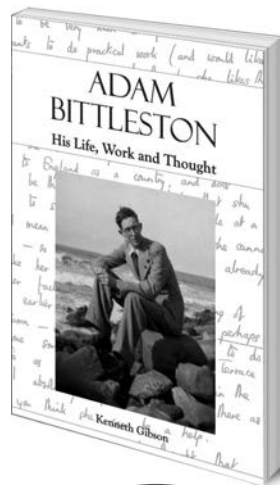
His Life, Work and Thought

KENNETH GIBSON

Adam Bittleston (1911-89) was an ordained priest of The Christian Community. This book is the first biography of a fascinating and influential individual, presented alongside a selection of his writings, including all his articles on Shakespeare.

Bittleston was very gifted with the written word, as well as being a much sought after spiritual counsellor. He was also recognized as one of the foremost theologians of the Christian Community in Britain. He was able to translate spiritual ideas into modern life and in keeping with modern times, and was the author of several books including *The Seven Planets* (1985), *Loneliness* (1987) and *Counselling and Spiritual Development* (1988).

288 pages | paperback | 978-086315-782-0



**£16.99
Available
Now!**



**Floris
Books**

www.florisbooks.co.uk

If you have difficulty obtaining these books from your local bookshop, you can order them direct from:

BookSource, 50 Cambuslang Road, Glasgow G32 8NB, UK
Tel: 0845 370 0067 Fax: 0845 370 0068

Quote PR1213 to receive a 10% discount on these titles

Guest Rooms

The Christian Community, 23 Chapel Street, Buckfastleigh TQ11 0AQ

The Christian Community in Devon is situated in Buckfastleigh, halfway between Exeter and Plymouth. It is located on the edge of Dartmoor and is 40 minutes drive from the coast and South West Coastal Path. The attractions of Cornwall, including Tintagel & the Eden Project, are within 1 to 2 hours away by car.

There are four small guest rooms at the top of the building. Three of the guest rooms have a wash basin; toilets and shower are separate. There is a kitchen for self-catering needs.

Unfortunately we do not have disabled access and there are steps and stairs inside and outside the building.

**Suggested contribution
£12-£15 per person per night.**

Further information and reservations:

Steve Eyles 07792-805154
or the church: 01364 644272
tccdevon93@yahoo.co.uk



NEWTON DEE COMMUNITY

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

A long-term or short-term career change or break

- A sabbatical
- A gap year
- Something different
- An opportunity to meet special people
- A very different experience of life
- A possibility to lead a holistic and inspirational life
- The chance to live in and create a home with adults at risk
- Work on the land, in craft workshops, homemaking, administration, producing plays, music, celebrating the Christian festivals, training opportunities

If any of this appeals to you as a short-term opportunity or a long term commitment and you would like to discuss your aspirations and our opportunities - please contact

Vibeke Sunddal - Sunddal@onetel.com

Further information about Newton Dee Camp Hill Community is available at newtondee.org.uk

Newton Dee is a Camp Hill Community living and working with adults at risk.

Centres of The Christian Community

AUSTRALIA

Adelaide (08) 8339 6466
3 Anzac Ridge Road (P.O.B
216) Bridgewater, S.A. 5155
Canberra (02) 6295 3752
Civic Square P.O. Box 651,
ACT 2608

Melbourne (03) 9029 2769
and (03) 9029 7812
319 Auburn Road, Hawthorn 3122
Sydney (02) 9810 6690
PO Box 965, Rozelle, NSW 2039

CANADA

Toronto (905) 709 4544 901
Rutherford Road,
Maple, ON L6A 1S2
Vancouver (604) 415-0600
5050 Hastings Street,
Burnaby, BC V5B 1P6

NAMIBIA

Windhoek +264 (61) 225791
Uhland Street 3, (Box 11359)
Windhoek

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland (09) 525 2305
10 Rawhiti Road, Onehunga
Hawkes Bay (06) 878 4463
617 Heretaunga Street East,
Hastings

SOUTH AFRICA

Camp Hill Village
(021) 572 5922
PO Box 1451 Dassenberg 7350
Cape Town (021) 762 0793
39 Timour Hall Road, 7800
Plumstead

Johannesburg (011) 789 3083

46 Dover Street,
Randburg 2194
(Box 1065, Ferndale 2160)
KwaZulu Natal (031) 768 1665
148 Kangelani Way,
Assagay 3610

UNITED KINGDOM

Aberdeen (01224) 208 109
8 Spademill Road,
Aberdeen AB15 4XW
Botton (01287) 661 312
Danby, Whitby, N. Yorkshire,
YO21 2NJ

Bristol c/o Meyer: (0117) 9502 512
20 St. John's Road, Clifton,
Bristol, BS8 2EX
Buckfastleigh (01364) 644 272
23 Chapel Street, Buckfastleigh,
Devon, TQ11 0AQ

Canterbury (01227) 765068
57, Wincheap or 730882
Canterbury, CT1 3RX
Edinburgh (0131) 229 4514
21 Napier Road,
Edinburgh, EH10 5AZ

Forest Row (01342) 323 205
Hartfield Road, Forest Row,
E. Sussex, RH18 5DZ
Holywood (028) 9042 4254
3 Stewarts Place, Holywood,
Co. Down, BT18 9DX

Ilkeston (0115) 932 8341
Malin House, St. Mary Street,
Ilkeston, Derbyshire, DE7 8AF

Kings Langley (01442) 245603

The Priory, Kings Langley,
Herts. WD4 9HH
London (020) 8748 8388
51 Queen Caroline Street,
London W6 9QL

Malton/York (01653) 694 391
The Croft, Highfield Road,
Old Malton,
N. Yorkshire YO17 9DB
Mourne Grange (028) 4176 0110
Newry Road, Kilkeel, Newry,
Co. Down, BT34 4EX

Oaklands Park (01594) 516 658
Newnham, Glos. GL14 1EF
Stourbridge (01384) 377 190
22 Baylie Street,
Stourbridge

W. Midlands DY8 1AZ
Stroud (01453) 762926
73 Cainscross Road,
Stroud, Glos. GL5 4HB

IRELAND

East Clare +353 (061) 640967
Dewsbororough
Tuamgraney
Co. Clare

UNITED STATES

Boston (781) 648-1214
366 Washington Street,
Brookline, MA 02445
Chicago (773) 989 9558
2135 West Wilson
Chicago, IL 60625

Denver (303) 758 7553

2180 South Madison Street,
Denver, CO 80210
Detroit (248) 546 3611
1320 Camden at Wanda,
Ferndale, MI 48220

Los Angeles (818) 762 2251
11030 La Maida Street,
North Hollywood, CA 91601
New York (212) 874 5395
309 West 74th Street,
New York, NY 10023

Philadelphia (610) 647 6869
212 Old Lancaster Road,
Devon, PA 19333
Sacramento (916) 362 4330
3506 Eisenhower Drive,
Sacramento, CA 95826


San Francisco (415) 928 1715
906 Divisadero Street
San Francisco, CA 94115
Spring Valley (845) 426 3144
15 Margetts Road
Monsey, NY 10952

Taconic-Berkshire Region
(413) 274-6932

10 Green River Lane,
Hillsdale, NY 12529
Washington, D.C.
Baltimore Area,
also Chapel Hill, NC
(301) 935-2727

The Parish House
4221 Metzertott Road
College Park, MD 20740

OTHER CENTRES IN: Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Czech Republic, Netherlands, Belgium, France, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Japan

An abstract painting with a dark, moody atmosphere. The top left features a bright, swirling area of white, pink, and blue. A large, dark, almost black shape dominates the upper right and middle sections. Below this, a horizontal band of light blue and white brushstrokes stretches across the width. The bottom section is a vibrant red with dark, circular, textured spots. On the left side, a vertical, textured orange-brown shape, possibly representing a tree trunk or a post, extends from the top to the bottom.

December 2013–February 2014

£ 3.50

ISSN 0967-5485