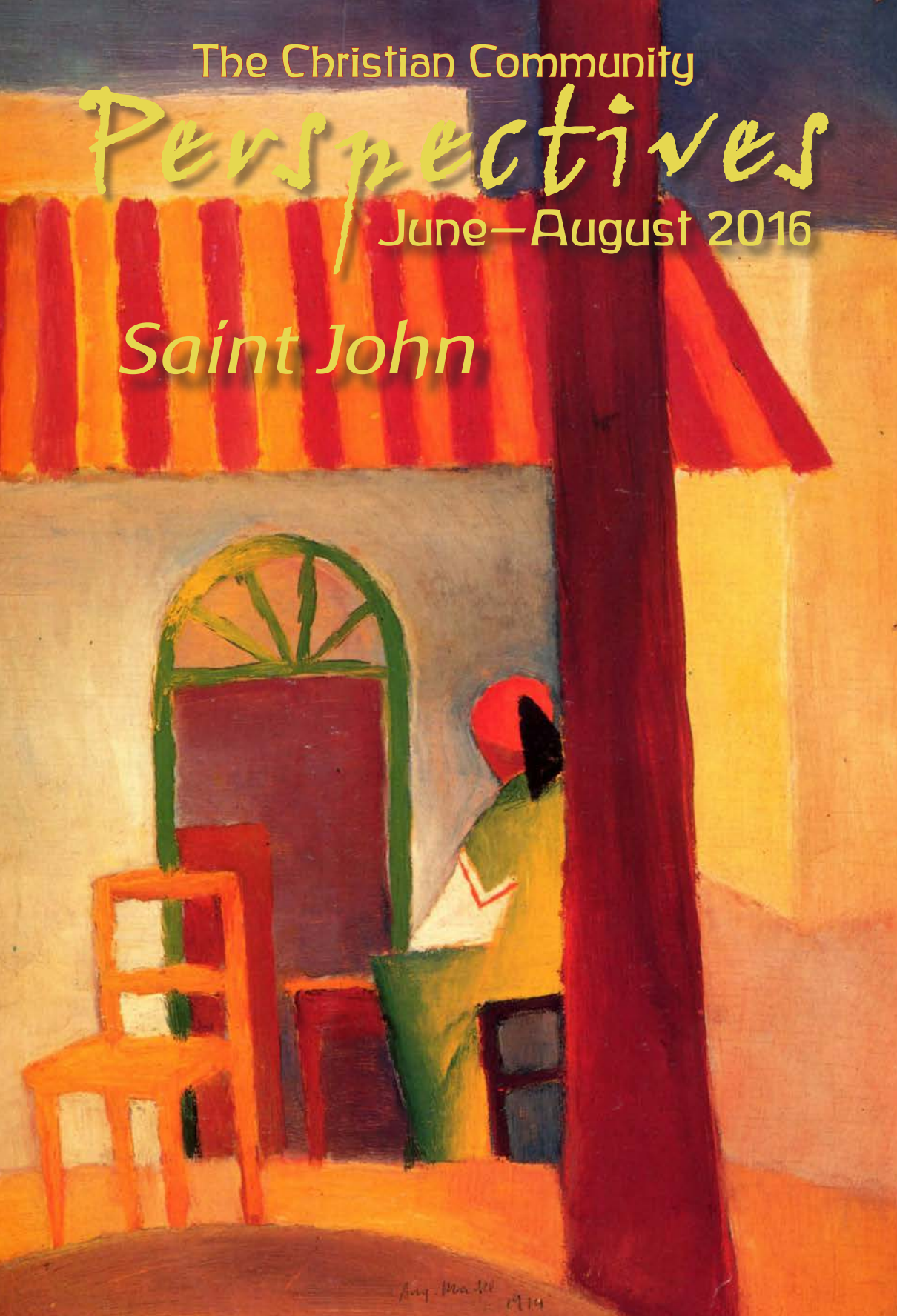


The Christian Community

# Perspectives

June—August 2016

*Saint John*



# Contents

<b>Losing one's head: Matthew XIV 1–12</b>	<b>2</b>
<i>Jens-Peter Linde</i>	
<b>Uriel—St. John—Conscience</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Malcolm Allsop</i>	
<b>Into your thinking...</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>Cynthia Hindes</i>	
<b>The Last Supper—Genesis of a new world</b>	<b>13</b>
<i>Louise Madsen</i>	
<b>I wanted to delight the world</b>	<b>17</b>
<i>Andreas Weymann</i>	
<b>More than morality— The good that one cannot simply do</b>	<b>21</b>
<i>Ruth Ewertowski</i>	
<b>Twelve days on Lesvos in Greece... Another world...</b>	<b>22</b>
<i>Verena Alders</i>	
<b>Reviews</b>	<b>24</b>

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# Perspectives

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Metanoiete! Transcend your thinking! Move beyond fixed forms of thought!

This call of St John echoes powerfully down the centuries. What can it mean to extend our consciousness? As we grow up and learn about the world, we develop habits of thought that are helpful because they save us thinking everything through from the beginning again and again. However, they can also trap us, cutting us off from the surprise that every new situation, every new encounter can bring. To cultivate this freshness is one of the greatest helps in inner development. It means that we can become receptive for the sphere of truth, which inspires new ideas which can give rise to new deeds. This is the true meaning of repentance: not to concentrate on past failings, but to find a new orientation to the future.

As a spiritual movement, we live in the dynamic of form and life. There cannot be life without form; there is no point having form without life to fill it. The Movement for Religious Renewal needs forms to provide a container in which its life can unfold. This duality of form and life is only completed when the sphere of wisdom is reached—this is where the purpose of our striving is contained. We need continually to renew our forms inwardly, behold the life that unfolds within them and find meaning in our purpose. Then our community life and striving will resound with the Baptist's call.

TOM RAVETZ

# Losing one's head: Matthew XIV, 1–12

Jens-Peter Linde

St. John lost his head because Herod wanted his brother Philip's wife. King David wanted another man's wife and 'lost his head' not physically, but emotionally. The 'chimp' in both men ruled their emotions and determined their destinies.

The book, *The Chimp Paradox*\* speaks about our thinking individuality being constantly challenged by something in us which is ruled by our emotions. This being, which in anthroposophy is called our astral body, is quick, clever and powerful and it could never be kept in check if we didn't train our 'I' to forestall it by learning to know its habitual ways.

Untold misery has come from the 'chimp' not being kept in check. For example, it has been described how the First World War came about because a small number of politicians succumbed to its deceitful drive. The Second World War then was a consequence of destructive emotions prevailing in the 'settlement' after the first War. Today we can clearly see its power with the countless numbers of irrational conflicts being waged between countries and individuals.

Yet, if we look at the consequences of people 'losing their heads' we can also see how machinations of the adversary powers working through people's astrality could be turned in due course into the good. Overcoming Goliath brought peace with the Philistines. Through Bathsheba who was seduced by David, he became the forefather of Jesus. And St. John's death opened the way for people becoming aware of him being a preparer for someone greater—who also had to die in order that his spirit could transcend his bodily existence and become an eternal source of healing.

Whenever we feel ourselves to be victims of something irrational, we need to take care that our own chimp doesn't get loose. Then we can look where the silver lining of a 'higher purpose' may be.

Meanwhile we can practise strengthening the tamer and trainer of our own 'chimp'. The sense of clarity which we can experience in the Act of Consecration of Man can become a guide in this. And when the 'chimp in us' threatens to take over, one can ask the priest for a confidential 'Sacramental Consultation' to think things through together and to ask for the strength of the spiritual world to help us not to lose our heads.

\* Steve Peters, *The Chimp Paradox: The Mind Management Programme to Help You Achieve Success, Confidence and Happiness*, Paperback, London, 2012

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# Uriel—St. John—Conscience

Malcolm Allsop

Four of the Archangels most familiar to us lead us through the cycle of the year: Gabriel, Uriel, Raphael and Michael. Of those four, Uriel who is connected with and dominant during the time of the solstice and St. John's Tide, is perhaps the least known. Three further archangelic beings build a group of seven who, in turn, accompany mankind's evolution through the millennia. Emil Pales, a research fellow in the Slovak Academy of Sciences, has spent much time looking into the qualities of these seven spiritual beings and how their influence is reflected in the cultural epochs which they accompany.\*

From Pales' research and from indications of Rudolf Steiner, it is interesting to look at Uriel (also known as and presumed to be the same as Oriphiel) in connection with the time of John the Baptist. In the cycles of archangelic epochs—each lasting about 350 years—it is Uriel, the 'Light of God', whose regency falls at the turning point of time: from 250 BC to 110 AD. Pales goes further to identify shorter periods of the seven archangels' influences in each of the larger epochs—with about five such periods falling in any one epoch—and interestingly, one of Uriel's shorter periods also falls in his 350 yr. cycle in the decades where BC becomes AD. This event suggests a heightened influence during that time of the ruling 'Light of God'.

Are there identified qualities of Uriel which would support his being linked with John, the solstice and of that unique turning point in history? Pales refers to history and the archetypes of existence, the overcoming of death, megalithic culture and geology, astronomy, the law, hermits and penitents as qualities of which there is a preponderance during epochs under the regency of Uriel. To this comes a link with the planet Saturn. Rudolf Steiner adds the earnest gaze, the warning gesture and 'majestic movement' as related qualities (*Four Seasons and the Archangels* GA 229). All of this serves to emphasise the seriousness of the time and the task of John the Baptist!

As a member and a leading figure in the order of the Nazarenes, a precursor to the Essenes, John was steeped in this bedrock of monastic-like solitude and therewith an inner life all the more focused on the essentials of a spiritual path, aware of the eternal laws of the cosmos, of life and death and the growing

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need for an inner rebirth. The connection with Saturn underscores these links with the very beginnings of earthly existence, of humanity's path, 'majestic' through time and of the particular stage in evolution.

Into this equation we can take and consider a further factor, that of conscience, which is often spoken of in connection with John the Baptist.\*\* Steiner frequently referred to the birth of conscience before which mankind had an external experience of the wishes of the gods, of that which was deemed right or wrong in a particular culture...the Word of God linked us with our true origins but still as a voice from without. We can follow this path-to-birth of conscience through the Old Testament, the Gospels, the Acts and the Letters. The word 'conscience' itself does not appear in the Old Testament while 'guilt' and 'guiltless' are referred to in the Ten Commandments (Ex.20): 'You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain' and in Genesis with the brothers of Joseph aware of their guilt against him. Interestingly, Reuben, Joseph's eldest brother's conscience seemed to be 'awakening' when he suggested that his brothers not kill Joseph. On later occasions where something akin to conscience seems to be stirring, the word used is 'heart', for example 1 Sam. 24 where 'David's heart smote him' for cutting a piece from Saul's dress while he slept. Quite telling is the question posed in Proverbs 20:9—also attributed to Samuel—'Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?' These passages from Solomon are not easy to date, with estimates ranging from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. Steiner is more precise with his examples from Greek literature where this dawning conscience can be experienced, that is in 6<sup>th</sup> century BC which falls within this time period, bearing in mind that they are differing cultures.

Although the word 'conscience—in Greek 'sunoida'—only used once in the Gospels(in the story of the woman caught committing adultery, in John 8), the human potential is born and called upon to 'listen within' and to bring a sense of judgment concerning a given situation into connection with the 'voice of God': 'Change your heart and mind!' A call that goes out as far as to the likes of Pilate, Herod, Judas, as well as those drawn to John, or to the teachings of Christ, as in the parable of the prodigal son. Now it seems that each individuality entering life brings a new gift, the conscience, which meets the historical/ancestral stream of guilt, which comes from the realm of law and order. However, there is a great difference between acknowledging one's guilt about breaking a law, for example, and how one is inwardly affected, eg. if one feels remorse or feels justified.

At this point it is fitting to mention that the literal meaning of 'con-science' is exactly the same in the Greek 'sun-oida' and in the German 'ge-wissen'—a bringing together of like knowledge, the implication being that we draw closer

to a oneness with a 'universal conscience. Through striving to view a given situation with our potential for 'shared knowledge' and 'universal conscience', the fact of guilt or innocence as dictated by laws of the land or as outer instance, is complemented by the 'laws of inner reality'. A banal example would be a traffic offence which one can inwardly justify while dutifully paying the fine.

Reading on into the Acts of the Apostles and the Letters, suddenly there are many references to 'conscience'. There are Paul's reflections at the end of Acts on his own path (ch. 23 and 24); then his comment in 1 Cor. 8 that for some the conscience is still weak and how conscience can serve as an affirmation for one's actions (2 Cor. 1); and Peter's recognition that it is a gift of God (1 Pet. 3:21). It would appear then, that there was a time before which we didn't 'possess' the faculty of conscience or have an awareness of an inner dialogue possibly connected with 'the Word of God'. Can we say that this was placed onto the world stage at the turning point of time with the backdrop of Uriel and the incarnation of John? Can we also sense that through the subsequent steps of Christ's incarnation we received the possibility to school our conscience? This, in turn, suggests that conscience hasn't always been either present or absent in man, but that it is a young faculty, which individuals are honing and wrestling with. It was much easier, for example, to be told what was right or wrong as people were in the middle ages through the teachings of the church.

With the dawning of an age of new consciousness—a conscience consciousness—we also had the first great dramas exploring this side of our inner life, and landmark individualities such as Thomas More (an interesting parallel to the imprisonment of John the Baptist). Today one symptom of a maturing conscience is very clear and that is the increasing number of challenges to a rigid legal system including mitigating circumstances, risk-assessments and conscientious objectors in wartime. Each of these situations can lengthen the deliberations at court cases as those involved wrestle with the limitations of a quick-fix or a guilty/innocent verdict. An example in recent years, which highlighted this shifting line between law and conscience happened in England when a decision was made to ban fox-hunting. For many there was a strong feeling of failure that one had to revert to (trying to) implement a law about an issue that has increasingly become an issue of conscience. The ideal might have been for such this sport to re-invent itself or die out as bear-baiting did, out of individuals' own appraisal of their actions.

Finally, there seem to be clear indications of another development in the realm of conscience: the widening out beyond one's own soul boundaries, to a faculty that embraces ever wider circles. Michael Tapp, writing in *The Threshing Floor* (July 1981) points to the social conscience that started to appear 200 years ago with concern for inequalities in education and human rights, and how that has

developed into an awareness of the way in which we treat our fellow human beings and also the earth, that sustains us. With this there has been a shift from only looking back at deeds of the past to increasingly looking at the future with a conscience for our neighbours and the planet we share.

A burgeoning World Conscience is awakening that implies the spirit voice is resounding with what at first appears to be one's own inner voice. This approach will continue to grow and to fulfil that which was made available to all at the turning point of time. In the chapter on St John's Tide in her book on the Christian year, Evelyn Capel says the following:

*The conscience of which we should become aware in St. John's Tide is less personal and more universal. When each one realizes that he is individually a part of Mankind, a member of the race, responsible for the earth, one of the order of beings which form a hierarchy below that of the angels, he finds another kind of conscience. The history of Man becomes his concern. The human part in the order of the universe is of interest to him. The cosmic nature of the earth in community with the stars of heaven becomes real to his imagination.*

\* Emil Pales, *Seven Archangels* Sophia Books 2009.

\*\* See earlier articles in *Perspectives*, *The Threshing Floor* etc.

at [www.perspectives-magazine.co.uk](http://www.perspectives-magazine.co.uk) where there is an index.

### **Having Slept on It**

*The dream she woke inside streams back to night  
behind her, as she rises with a haunting  
sense of being warmed with amber light,  
equipped to do a task that had been daunting.*

*She cannot know where she has flown in sleep  
so deep and so removed from what she now  
must bring about, her teeming mind keeps  
watch in regions of surmise and how*

*the robust world seems everywhere a-bloom  
with more adornment than it held before,  
like flowers that open out and their perfume  
along the walkway to a lover's door.*

*Ideas that flood resolve throughout the night  
inform intent in conscious morning light.*

Maureen Tolman Flannery



# *Into your thinking...*

## St. John and the Sacramental Consultation

Cynthia Hindes

John the Baptist urges us to change our heart and mind, to turn ourselves around inwardly, to think differently. This is important because we tend to harbor thought habits and ways of thinking that are untrue. We entertain and believe in thoughts that are not the way things really are. Such untrue thoughts work in us in an unhealthy way precisely because they are untrue. We call this untrue, unhealthy thinking the 'sickness of sin.'

Generally our thoughts come and go, flitting through our minds like shadowy ghosts. Most often our minds are just passive recipients of these shadowy entities. Yet thoughts can also be voluntarily chosen or generated.

It is important to realize that behind our thoughts there stand living beings. What we generally experience as thoughts are a reflection, a shadow of the real thing. We could compare our mind to a house. Some thoughts are beings who pass through; some come to visit; some we entertain for a time. Others live in our soul house with us and have their say whenever certain situations come up. There may even be thought beings living in dark hidden rooms of the mind, beings of which we are unaware. And there are thought beings, both negative and positive, who are waiting outside to come in.

Thought beings can enter the house of the soul from different directions. They can arise from below, that is, from the body. These thoughts can be healthy or unhealthy. We have all experienced that when we are tired or ill or stressed, cranky and irritable thoughts rise up. A healthy mind and soul has its basis in a healthy body. In fact Rudolf Steiner said that mental illness has its basis in the instrument of the physical body. (GA 350 Dornach, 28<sup>th</sup> June 1923)

Other thought beings come from the surroundings: thoughts expressed by other people. They enter our mind's house through the media, as thoughts from the culture, from conventional wisdom. These thoughts can be healthy or unhealthy, true or untrue.

And thought beings can come to us from above, from true wisdom literature, from spiritual and biblical sources, and even as inspirations from the angelic and the divine worlds.

Problems arise because we generally take our thoughts at face value, without questioning their validity. Our thinking tends to be

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passive. We tolerate those shadowy thought beings who wander through the house of the mind, if we even notice them at all; we automatically believe those thoughts that arise in protest whenever particular events occur. This passivity of thinking can turn us into victims of our own thought life, for some of these thought ghosts are destructive. They exude a subtle poison as they pass through. There are thoughts, and habits of thinking, that are unhealthy, poisonous, because they are untrue. Their unhealthy nature seeps down into our feeling life, creating negative, depressive moods. They sink further, chipping away at the strength of our will.

We can challenge these unhealthy thoughts by testing them. We can simply ask the basic question: is this thought TRUE? Does this thought-shadow express the way things truly are, from the highest perspective we can manage?

John the Baptist urges us to turn ourselves around, to think differently, because untrue thoughts are illusions. They are not in line with reality and are therefore unhealthy for us. Untrue thoughts sicken our souls.

There are several common habits or patterns of thinking that are distortions of the truth. They are so common in fact, especially in the nature of our modern culture, that we don't even think to question them. On the one hand we tend to think in overstatement. The steps from hyperbole to exaggeration to outright falsehood are often unconscious. Soon we are swimming in untruth.

One cluster of unhealthy, overstating distortions of thought involves a gesture of maximizing, of inflating or overvaluing a single event. Examples are:

- Overgeneralizing—one incident is exaggerated to become a thought cast in terms of always/never. ( I always....) Such absolutism is most often simply untrue. There are plenty of instances when I didn't.... Or there is a pattern of thinking in black and white—an event or a person is either good or bad, a success or a failure. In truth most things are grey-scaled, a mixture of both. This thought-being lacks subtlety and flexibility. Its binary nature is sclerotic.
- Blowing things out of proportion, catastrophizing. The 'maximizer' stubs a toe; a drama ensues—emotional displays, gathering a crowd, contemplation of a trip to the emergency room—for a bumped toe. Or one takes a single event and rolls it out as a series of future catastrophes. The Grimm's fairy tale called 'Clever Else' is a humorous illustration of this tendency—the manufacture of grim scenarios in the distant future out of quite changeable wisps of the present.
- Jumping to conclusions: thinking only of negative consequences. A test taker checks up on her answers afterwards and concludes that she got

17 wrong; she assumes she has failed the test, won't be able to take the next class, etc. However in fact her 83 was the highest grade in the class, she got an A-. Jumping to conclusions can also include mind-reading, assuming what the other person is thinking.

The basic question needs to be asked of each assumption, each thought, each conclusion— is it true? Can I absolutely know that it is true?

Another cluster of unhealthy thought patterns involves the gesture of minimizing. We understate, diminish, obfuscate. The positive in a situation is disqualified or discounted: if I am paid a sincere compliment I tell myself that they're just being nice. It is as though I wear a mental filter that eliminates the positive. Another pattern of diminishment is name-calling or labelling (myself or others). I do something stupid. The thought arises: You're such an idiot!

Is it true? Am I an idiot? Of course not. I am a fully normal human being who just did a stupid thing.

Besides maximizing the negative or minimizing the positive, there are at least two other sources of unhealthy thinking. One involves thinking the words 'should' or 'ought' or 'must'. This can be a 'besetting sin' especially for church people and spiritual strivers. Should/ought/must thoughts can be unhealthy when they lead to pressure and perfectionism, which eventually become self-loathing and guilt. Is it true that you must? Is it true that if you don't, something bad will happen?

Another unhealthy thought habit is taking responsibility for a negative event, especially in someone else's life. An example would be when a parent gets a report that her child is underperforming in class, and assumes that therefore she is a bad parent. Is that true? What is true is that we can only influence others, not control them. The negative report is of her child's behavior, not hers.

These unhealthy patterns of thinking that distort the truth are taken from and further discussed by David Burns, MD, in his book *Feeling Good, the New Mood Therapy*. As a psychiatrist he noticed that these unhealthy thought patterns create depressive moods. This is because our feeling life arises out of an interplay between our thinking and our willing. One can create a negative mood from the direction of the will by frustrating someone. The result is often anger. One can also create negative moods through unhealthy thinking. This is because the feeling follows the thought. Unhealthy thinking is one cause of depression.

Feelings however, are not facts. Just because I feel bad doesn't mean that I am bad. The constant drip of unhealthy thought patterns can create de-

pressive moods through a kind of water torture of the soul. We can stop the dripping by reflecting on our thought patterns, by noticing what is untrue and therefore unhealthy, and by then actively generating true thoughts in their place. We can do this because human beings are capable of thinking about thinking! Sometimes it helps to work back from the negative feeling to the unhealthy thought that generated it.

One effective way to counter unhealthy thoughts is described in Byron Katie's book *Loving What Is*. In her book she describes a four-step method. In her example, the questionable thought is: my husband never listens to me. The procedure is to ask oneself the following questions:

1. Is it true? Be inwardly still and the answer will arise if you really want to know.
2. Can you absolutely know that it is true? This question is particularly helpful when my thinking involves mind-reading or rolling out projections into the future. Using her example, can I absolutely know for sure that my husband never (overgeneralizing!) listens to me? Is he perhaps listening, but just not responding the way I want?
3. How do I react, what happens, when I believe the thought that he never listens? Who would I be without it? Example: when I believe that he never listens to me, I may feel unloved, even shunned. I feel disrespected and hopeless about our future. I may react by withdrawing, or by emotional outbursts trying to get his attention. If I could dis-believe that he isn't listening, we could have a calm conversation. (Helpful hint: don't believe everything you think!)
4. The turnaround. This is the important step, a step which John the Baptist would encourage. In it, I generate true, accurate thoughts in another direction. Perhaps I turn the thought in the more accurate direction of 'my husband sometimes doesn't listen to me.' Or perhaps, 'I can't always tell if he is listening to me.' Or perhaps 'he doesn't always respond the way I would like.' (I can influence, but not control!) Or the turnaround may even be in totally the opposite direction: 'Sometimes I don't listen to my husband!'

This kind of exercise involves our own willingness to be truly and sometimes excruciatingly honest with ourselves, to be willing to do the hard work of actively generating true thoughts, thoughts that adhere to the truth. (Byron Katie calls her method, *The Work*.) Instead we sometimes prefer to remain passive victims of shadowy, ill-making untruths housed in our minds, thoughts of which we may even have become rather fond, because they allow us to manipulate others into getting what we want.

So the process involves examining and reflecting on our thoughts, subjecting them to the litmus test of truth, and correcting our thinking by generating true thoughts. In the example of saying to myself that I am always such an idiot, this might mean generating three true thoughts: I am not always an idiot (or even an idiot at all in the strict sense of the word)—I sometimes do stupid things; but I can recognize my errors and I try to correct them. The feeling tone that follows generating such true thoughts is one of encouragement, rather than disparagement or even despair.

Such exercises can put our inner house in order. We can use them to prepare ourselves for The Sacramental Consultation and the Act of Consecration. The two are a pair, with the Sacramental Consultation being a preparation for communion. The first word in the Sacramental Consultation is the word 'Learn....' Learning means to acquire new knowledge and new skills. It implies that we are on a path of learning, a path of inner evolution in the school of life.

In the Sacramental Consultation, we are also encouraged to offer our thoughts to the good beings of the divine world—to our guardian angel, keeper of

## Digression

What came off the screen  
crept effortlessly into the lump of my brain  
as if by capillary action;  
and shortly the world stopped being,  
Creation vanished,  
all the aeons-long labour of the Hierarchies,  
and I was only a being  
by virtue of the bright squid-ink  
bleeding into and staining my thinking,  
by virtue of the illusion  
stimulating my thinking  
in the wrong direction,  
canalling it straight and diverting it  
to a dam that was not of my making.

That I nevertheless still lived mattered little  
to my misled mindset:  
I only knew that I was being done to  
as if needled behind my brow  
by an invisible tattooist;  
I found I'd fallen back  
upon simple sentience,  
had given up pondering my experiences  
when I was just on the point of progressing  
to spiritual cognizance.

What beamed from the screen,  
belonging but little  
to the Hierarchies,  
had become Creation.  
And before I knew it,  
the computer tattoo  
took the throne.  
of the lotus-bloom.

IRENE HUNTER

our higher self, to Christ, to the Father. Some of our thought patterns may need a bit of cleaning up and polishing before we offer them to God. The exercises above work in the spirit of the Sacramental Consultation by sharpening our awareness of what we are thinking, and how in learning to offer our thoughts, we might go through the exercises, and then as an imaginative visualization, put them on a silver plate and raise them up in offering. Then we set the plate aside and listen for the true, accurate thoughts that are to be generated.

Having polished our thoughts and practiced straightening out our thought processes, we will have worthily prepared ourselves to offer our purest, noblest and truest thoughts during the Act of Consecration. The great turnaround comes about in the Act of Consecration of Man itself. The bread is symbolic of what has developed up to now, the bread of all we have 'baked' up to this moment, our past. Christ is cited as one who takes the bread, who looks up to our Father in gratitude, and who unites His own thinking, feeling and willing both with His Father and with the bread, so that a healing substance can develop. He does the same with the medicinal wine so that the healing process will be strengthened. Then He offers these medicaments to us in communion.

In the Act of Consecration two key thoughts follow this great transformation. On the cross, and in communion, His Christ-permeated body becomes a new recognition of what the human being is, and is capable of becoming. And His blood flowed into the earth, flows into us in communion, as an expression of God's renewed faith in the human being. We are instructed to let this new recognition and renewed faith live in our thoughts.

By taking these two thoughts, these two high truths into our thinking—that we are capable of evolving and that God has faith in us—we can see why distorted unhealthy thinking has no value in our soul. Christ's permeation of suffering, of death, His victory over death and the ongoing revelation of His working become truths living within us. They are the true thoughts that operate in a living healing way in us, into the future. His body and blood become in us the Way to the Truth in Life. John 14:6

When we seek to generate true thoughts and healthy thinking habits, we are purifying, detoxifying our soul body. We are making straight the Lord's path into the soul. We are preparing to engage the Divine Physician of Souls, who brings us Himself as medicine for the sickness of sin. St. John pointed to the Way. The Archangel Michael gives us the courage and strength to pursue this path to the One whose very being is Truth.

# The Last Supper

## Genesis of a new world

Louise Madsen

In its fourth and final part, the Communion Service, the Act of Consecration of Man, culminates in the communion itself. In this concluding stage of the Service the moment arrives when the priest, and, if we so wish, we ourselves, unite through the consecrated bread and wine with the divine essences of body and blood of which these physical substances are the bearers. In the communion the relationship developed in the course of the Service between ourselves and the divine takes on an extra dimension: to what moves and stirs in our hearts and minds is added the direct connection with our physical, bodily existence. The consecrated substances enter into the very core of our bodily make-up.

Even though the taking of communion has been the practice for over two thousand years, pondering on its mysteries can still make one catch one's breath. It is a unique occurrence, the genesis of which lies in the Last Supper and the subsequent death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In that combined act of His word—at the meal, and His deed—on the cross, in fact lies the origin of the sacrament. Indeed it was, itself *the* original sacrament.

In all forms of the Communion Service, the taking of the sacrament, coming as it does at the end, appears as the conclusion, the culmination of the event. And, indeed, so it is. However, in the Act of Consecration, in the preparatory communion prayers, thoughts are expressed that shed a wholly different light on the matter; they open up entirely new vistas of what is to come about from out of this moment. We hear that because Christ is at peace with the world, it is possible to find the strength so to join with him in our thinking and willing that we also may be at peace with the world and *unite with the world's evolving* which takes and will take place *through him* in all future periods of time. In the sacrament, this apparently microcosmic act of uniting with Christ opens out a vision of our being able potentially to unite with the future evolution of the earth as it is able to come about through him. From such a 'small' deed a whole new world can emerge.

### Christ's Legacy

Before his death, Christ impressed upon the disciples some essentials about what needed to be done when he would no longer

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be physically present among them. At the Last Supper, as he shared out the bread and the wine, he said that this was by way of making a promise with them. In Paul's words, as he received them 'from the Lord himself':

*Lord Jesus took the bread and spoke words of blessing over it and broke it and said, 'Take this, it is my body! From now on do this to make my Being present.' In the same way he also took the cup after the bread had been eaten and said, 'This is the cup of the new covenant with God through my blood. Do this, whenever you drink from it, to make my Being present.' And Paul continues, 'So, every time you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you proclaim the sacrificial death of Christ and prepare for his coming.*

1 Cor. 11, 23–26

Following his resurrection, he told the disciples that, 'all creative power in heaven and on the earth has been given to me. [...] And see, I am in your midst all the days until the completion of earthly time.' (Matt. 28: 18/20) By taking this statement seriously, i.e. literally, we cannot allow ourselves to regard those events as having been merely 'one-offs' which, however earnestly we take them when celebrating the sacrament, we do so (only) in *memory* of what has taken place. If he is present with us 'all the days' (pasas tas hemeras) then, in the sacrament, we are acting *in his presence*. We may allow ourselves to rejoice wholeheartedly in this thought. He thus becomes truly effective in the sphere of the whole earth; of a memory no such effectiveness can be expected, out of a living presence one can hope for his real and active working with and in human souls; indeed, his activity initiates a process. The Holy Spirit, the great Enabler, facilitates and realises what thus evolves.

This has largely been lost sight of (the festival of Whitsun and its huge significance has simply dropped away), and yet, without allowing for the active presence of the Spirit, it is all too clear that Christianity will eventually be doomed to die out; *without* it, Christian life can only be carried on out of what *has* been. It can only draw from the forces that streamed into the world through the events of two thousand years ago, and what is done in Christ's name will only be done in memory of that 'one-off' world changing event. The Spirit, sent into the hearts of human beings, becomes the lifeline; he provides the life blood and the forces essential to fostering our conscious awareness of the presence of Jesus Christ as the active, living author of his work on earth. The Spirit, sent *into* the disciples, brings about the sphere in which, after his resurrection, Christ works within human beings. By the working of the Spirit, Christian life is upheld. John Taylor\* says, 'The New Testament speaks of the risen Christ not *as the crown of man's development through the past millennia but as the first fruit of a new creation*. The Holy



Spirit is the Spirit of the perennially present God! (Italics L.M.)\*\*

### **The Act of Consecration**

In this modern form of the Eucharist the whole human being is addressed. It is celebrated in full cognizance of how it affects not only our soul, but also our body and spirit. In the transubstantiation we hear that we are to take the new confession and the new faith, arising from Christ's words at the Last Supper, spoken in the so-called 'words of institution', into our thinking and, moreover, that thereby the central events in the life of Christ, his death, resurrection and revelation, begin to live in us; in our thinking and feeling they take on life in us, and in so doing become part of our own inner life; they have *their* place in *us*.

This may sound very radical and, indeed, it is because it is an entirely new departure: in the moment of our deepest devotion we are asked to bring our power of thought to bear on the whole process; not to lose ourselves in it, but rather to be awake and present in spirit. This is the very crux of the matter. To take something into one's thinking is to become involved, to engage actively with it; we do not only accept it, we make it our own. This, one can say, lies at the heart of the renewal of religious life. It is the step needed to take forward the work of Christ in a positive and healthy way. If we do not consciously engage with him, he has to work in a hidden way, below our consciousness, causing much alarm and distress because we will not know what is

## **Albion**

Chorus:

*Tell me, tell, Oh tell me true,  
Say where can you be found?  
The secret spirit of Albion  
Lies deep in the heart of the land.*

It's not in the might of state nor monarch  
Nor the power of riches and gold,  
Nor in ownership of our sacred soil  
And it cannot be bought or sold;  
Nor is it found in the oil or the gas  
Of the rocks that lie under the ground.  
The true voice of Albion's deeper than that,  
It's the voice of the heart of the land.

It hides in the words of our language,  
When spoken or sung from the best  
Of the tales of the folk

    who have settled these shores  
From north, south, east and the west.  
It's not found in the glory of conquest,  
Nor of empires we built in the past.  
When we wake from the nightmare  
    of power and money,  
Shall we wake to our treasure at last?

The mountains, the hills and the valleys,  
The rivers and lakes and the streams,  
The marshland and moorland

    are speaking to us  
From the deep underside of our dreams.  
Where the buzzard soars

    and the dolphin dives  
With the hare and the deer running free,  
Albion sings for the future: 'Awaken  
And rise into what you could be!'

*Whatever we think as we walk this land,  
Or dream that we could do,  
The sacred spirit of Albion  
Is living inside us too.*

Song lyric © Jehanne Mehta 19 Jan. 2015

happening to us. 'If you will not awake, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you.' (Rev. 3:3) And Paul says to the Thessalonians, 'You yourselves know well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. [...] But you are not in darkness, brethren, for that day to surprise you like a thief.' (1 Thess 5: 2/4). Christ's offering of himself takes place inasmuch as he is in us and, as is described in our Easter service, he does so at the altar of the soul.

In the service we pray that the Holy Spirit may 'enlighten us,' that he may shine his light into our thinking and that he may 'receive our knowing into his life, shining with spirit.' If this takes place through his power we see how he has his vital role in this most intimate moment between the human soul and the Godhead. '... the Spirit of Truth [...] will not speak out of himself, but what he hears he will speak, and he will proclaim to you what is to come. He will reveal me; for what he draws from my being he will proclaim to you' (John 16: 13–14).

### **Communion and the future**

In the preparatory prayers addressed to Christ before the receiving of the consecrated substances we ask that certain soul conditions may arise in us, through him, so that we receive his body and blood for the health, not the harm, of our soul —as someone at the point of starvation being suddenly given too much or the wrong kind of food, may die rather than recover. The first prayer is that Christ may so give strength to that in us which we have set free from our sinful nature that it may find peace with the world and thus enable it to unite with the future evolution the world, which can come about through him; that in us which has been so transformed that it is no longer subject to the powers of the earth, but has been released from them to become attuned to heavenly powers, and may go forward with Christ on the further evolutionary path of the earth.

This, in essence, is what the Christian life is about, namely that 'He will in time unite for the advancement of the world with those, whom through their bearing, he can wrest from the death of matter.'

Communion is the conclusion of the Christian service, with its intimate moment when, in the bread and the wine, we receive his body and his blood into our body. He who came to 'save the world,' to 'turn it around' by uniting himself with it, and also by uniting it again to the world of the Father, may 'in time' transform us by 'overcoming the sickness of sin' 'for the preservation of [our] life, destined for eternity'.

\* *The Go-Between God* by John V. Taylor / \*\* R. P. C. Hanson, quoted by Taylor

# I wanted to delight the world

August Macke, a centenary tribute (3 January 1887–26 September 1914)

Andreas Weymann

On hearing the news that the painter August Macke, then aged 27, had been killed in action at the beginning of World War I, Franz Marc wrote in his obituary: 'His death is to the culture of a nation like cutting off a hand, like blinding an eye.' August Macke was seven years younger than Franz Marc. He was appreciated by the public for his 'cheerful, light, 'Mozartian' nature but generally less taken note of than Kandinsky and Marc; they drew world-wide attention through their writings, in particular as founding fathers of the almanac *The Blue Rider*. However, the 'cheerful, light' Macke did contribute to the almanac a noteworthy article called *The Masks*, in which he expressed the depth of his thoughts. The following quotation gives us a flavour:

*Inconceivable forms. Conceivable only through our senses as a star, thunder, flower, form. Form is a mystery, an expression of mysterious powers. Only through it can we begin to grasp the mysterious power, the 'invisible God.' Our senses are the bridge between the inconceivable and the conceivable. The observation of plants and animals means: sensing their mystery. Hearing a thunder is: sensing its mystery. To understand the language of form means: getting closer to the mystery, means to live. Creating form means: to live.*

This article and another along similar lines with the title 'Thoughts on different styles in art and life', which prefaces his booklet *Journey to Tunisia* (printed in 1958) are the only texts that Macke ever published. Through these Macke, the intellectual artist, expresses himself. When we look at his pictures, the creative artist speaks to us. Macke the man is revealed to us through his letters, for example, his correspondence with Franz Marc. We witness how their friendship evolved and developed and that besides occasional disagreements, it never suffered. Macke could at times express his dislikes vehemently. A case in point is his remark regarding some pictures by Arnold Schönberg, which Kandinsky included in the Almanac: '[Schönberg] really got me into a rage. These green-eyed rolls soaked in water with their astral glance...'

In a letter to his wife Maria, sent from the battlefield on 13.4.1914, Franz Marc speaks about his sorely missed friend August Macke:

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Berlin.*

'He was my annual recuperation. When he was around it felt like being on holiday.' Macke radiated cheerfulness as a human being but also through the colours of his pictures. With this in mind, Marc concludes his obituary for Macke with the words: 'He was the one amongst us all who managed to give colour the brightest sound, as clear and bright as his whole being was.'

For a while every artist needs somebody whose work he can admire and who points him in some direction until he has found his own style. For Macke it was initially artists such as Hans Thoma and Arnold Böcklin. After a visit to a Thoma-Boecklin exhibition in Heidelberg, Macke got involved in a conversation with a young art lover who was rather critical about Thoma but enthused about the French Impressionists. Macke wrote: 'He made me think and although I argued with him and could not accept his point of view I appreciated that he had opened my eyes.' We catch a glimpse of the artist's soul, which is still clinging to something that actually needs releasing, in order to allow the emergence of something new.

August Macke never lingered if he felt there was no progress within a situation. He therefore left school prematurely, very much against the will of his father, and entered the College of Art in Düsseldorf. His initial enthusiasm for the paintings of Kandinsky waned rapidly when he became acquainted with the painter Delaunay and his pictures.

*My present state as a painter let Kandinsky gradually fade away and opened Delaunay's studio doors to a new conception of vivid colours.*

In 1912 Macke and Marc visited Delaunay in Paris; it was the beginning of an intense exchange of ideas. They were unanimous in their enthusiasm for Delaunay's paintings. He had introduced new aspects: the experience of colours as beings, which are detached from material objects and communicate and even make music together.

Apart from occasional ventures into the abstract, August Macke always drew inspiration from the real world. To Bernhard Koehler he wrote:

Nature needs to be re-created within us. It is a process that we experience ever and again from childhood onwards. A work of art is our experience, our marvelling at the measure of all things; rhythm in art is a parable for the rhythm in nature (30.3.1913).

He elaborates on the way he expresses his artistic creativity to his school-mate Hans Thuar:

*I am now terribly busy. Which means, work for me is permeating everything with joy: nature, the blazing sun, the trees and bushes, people and animals, flowers and pots, tables, chairs, mountains, water and watch its emergence...*  
(7 April 1910)

Looking back at a major exhibition in Berlin 1913 under the banner of 'Erster deutscher Herbstsalon', where 75 artists from 12 countries were represented and which was badly received by the press, Macke writes to Bernhard Koehler the ominous sentence: 'What mattered was that the event itself was meaningful in this short life' (16.10.1913).

A highlight in his life was a trip to Tunisia in April 1914 in the company of Paul Klee and Louis Moillet. Many of his most wonderful watercolours were painted there. Altogether, that year, until the outbreak of the first world war, was a very productive phase as far as his creative output is concerned. His brother in law, Walter Gerhard, met August Macke in September 1914: 'I walked a little with August. His face was black with dust and for the first time there was sadness and not the usual smile on his face.'

In 1914 Macke wrote to his wife Elisabeth from the front line:

*I would be so happy if I could come home, into your arms, and if I could paint again (this is just a dream now). But if I think of the children then a sense of desperation overcomes me, because I might never see them again...We all have but one thought: peace...War is sorrow without words. You are gone before you know it...But amidst all the gunfire there is a bright cloud passing by that is the love for you all, my dears!*

(9 September 1914)

### **The Tight Rope Walker**

To conclude, we will look at one of his paintings. The oil painting *The Tight Rope Walker* dates from 1914, painted just five months before his death, hangs in the Museum of Art in Bonn. If one begins to look at it from the periphery, taking in the shapes only, one will notice that an area enclosed by straight lines restricts the bottom left hand corner and a rounded shape the opposite right corner. In the top left corner we find a corresponding square and in the right corner arches. One could say that the left half of the picture predominates with square and the right half with rounded shapes.

Striking but also disturbing are the three prominent straight lines crossing and dissecting the picture. If we now move from the shapes to the colours, we notice that red is the dominant colour, in parts changing to a lighter red, orange, yellow; warm colours prevail; blue, almost turning to black- part of the sky above, the back of a spectator at the bottom right; the bright blue dress of a woman, intensified by the adjacent darker areas.

People viewed from behind, the 'Rückenfigur', often occur in Romantic paintings, for example those by Caspar David Friedrich. Seeing a figure from behind can act as an invitation to the viewer to be 'in the picture'. In Macke's

picture, figures are facing the tight ropewalker above the rooftops of the houses. He has just moved forward a step with his left foot on the swaying rope. His horizontal balancing-pole keeps him steady. Parallel to his pole and beneath him is a safety net, again horizontal. We witness man between heaven and earth, above and below, in front and at the back, calm within movement—the search for equilibrium.

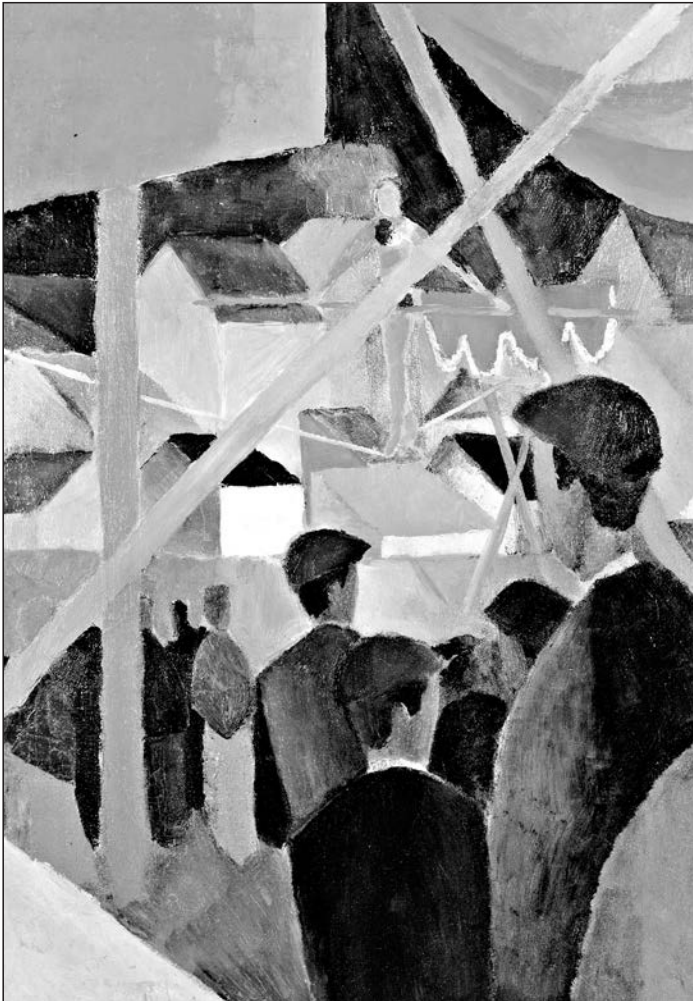
There are some words of August Macke that could have been written as a commentary on the Tight Rope Walker:

*What makes a painted canvas come alive is a stirring in the spectator through the simultaneous interplay of red, blue, long lines, curves etc. The way an artist overemphasises red in a picture, intensifies blue*

*colours, the way he arranges these contrasts is the highest form of mathematics, impossible to express in words.*

This picture too is a joy to look at and an example how August Macke succeeded in ‘delighting the world.’

*Translated by  
Gabriele Kuhn*



*The Tight Rope Walker*  
August Macke, 1914

# More than morality

## The good that one cannot simply do

Ruth Ewertowski

Duties and virtues both belong to the realm of ethics, but they are clearly distinguishable. Duties indicate a 'should, or an 'ought to' while virtues point to 'ways of being'. The modern use of virtue, however, has an unpleasant aftertaste of bourgeois morality, because one thinks of duty, ie he who fulfils his moral duty is virtuous.

In fact, virtues belong neither wholly to ethics nor to psychology but rather to one's character. They describe the good characteristics of a human being that are not in-born, but rather have been worked on for perhaps many years. They are capabilities gained from practising 'the good' and can become a part of one's being. They are not permanent possessions but once gained they always remain available.

The polar opposite of virtues are the tendencies for 'the bad' which become habits that are enforced through repeated failings and excesses.

We can only really speak of virtue if we see human beings as fully responsible for their actions, acting within their nature and out of freedom. In this situation, virtue is at the same time describing the individual's 'state of being' as virtuous. This way of being, however, is not 'set in stone' and is always subject to the individual's dynamic will.

There are a great number of virtues but since the time of the Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle, four of them are of special importance: prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. These are the four cardinal virtues that the human beings can acquire if they have the will to do so. However, striving for these qualities for the sake of one's own perfection would be to turn virtues into vices and succumb to moral narcissism—mistaking an image of one's

self for reality. We dream of being the brave hero, but when it comes to the test we may try to disappear into thin air.

Hence, to be virtuous also means to be at one with oneself. Ultimately this means 'to be whole'. To this belongs a certain unawareness of oneself in relation to one's ethical actions and aims. Whoever wants to be 'just' does not achieve this goal if rectifying an unjust situation is his exclusive interest. For the truly virtuous, the task at hand is all that matters. The industrious sister in Mother Holle fulfils her tasks as a matter of course. When she is helpful she is perfectly at one with herself. Indeed, the doer must not look at himself while committing his deed as not to run the risk to act for the sake of being virtuous.

### Divine virtues

Another very relevant perspective opens up when we complement the classic cardinal virtues with the three divine, or theological, virtues. Since Pope Gregory the Great (540–604), these three virtues of which St Paul speaks in his First Letter to the Corinthians—albeit without calling them 'virtues'—are part of the canon: faith, love and hope.

According to Aristotle's Ethics, the four Greek virtues can be developed through constant practice until they become relatively reliable characteristics of the human being. If this happens, one is then called wise, just, brave or prudent. Faith, love and hope, on the other hand, are not subject to will and habit.

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- However much I might desire to believe, it is not in my power to do so.
- If I lack hope I will not gain anything from wrestling for it, unless it is given me by grace.
- And love, the unconditional, spiritual and liberating bond between human beings and between humans and God, is not to be willed.

The three divine virtues are not moral virtues, and, without them, all moral virtue is meaningless. Only those who have faith, love and hope fulfil the prerequisites for the joyous fulfilment of Mother Holle's industrious helper. Through them, their desire to be 'good' is safeguarded against monstrous perfectionism.

The human being wants to become capable of the three divine virtues. And only

they in turn enable him to develop all the other virtues without vanity and cramping. They comprise the justification of human existence in a theological sense, which is far more than not having broken any rules. They enable a meaningful, fulfilled life, a healthy life, in alignment with the divine. They are not only aiming at 'well-being', but at divine salvation.

Faith, love and hope are not moral, but therapeutic virtues that help the human being to come to himself. They are not by merit, but by gift. Theology calls this grace. The Greek word for grace is *charis* which also means gracefulness. A virtue without gracefulness has a sour taste. With gracefulness, however the virtue radiates effortless goodness. It is lovely and a cause for joy.

## Twelve days on Lesbos in Greece... Another world...

**Verena Alders**

What can I tell now that I am home again about the difficult moments that I experienced in Lesbos, Greece...the suffering, the people who drowned, the rainy weather, and all of the things that could have been better? Or about everything which worked fine, the committed people—volunteers and locals, the good human encounters, the fine weather, the warmth and friendliness, the beautiful landscape and the feeling to have contributed something important and the joy in many small moments?

The situation in Greece is not black and white or grey even. It is VERY colourful and a composite image arises. There are many aspects to take into consideration when trying to understand the situation and it's too easy to be critical. Who has more right for asylum than those who are seeking it here? Who is only interested in money and

a good job? Who is selfish? There are no easy answers...no right or wrong.

But there is something that I want to scream out: this war must end and people must have free choice about where they live. Beautiful towns and countryside must not be destroyed by unnecessary war, no matter who or what has started the conflict....including Western countries and especially them. It is a paradoxical situation that so many volunteers from Europe are helping to save people during their difficult journeys and complicated travel routes to safety and a better quality of life.

Stephane Hessel, a member of the French Resistance, a concentration camp survivor and author of the book *Time for Outrage* wrote:

*It's time to take over! It's time to get angry!! ... I wish all of you to find your rea-*



*son for indignation. This is a precious thing. When outraged ... you will become ... strong and engaged. You will join the great course of history as it flows toward greater justice, greater freedom... In 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed a Universal Declaration of Human Rights. If you encounter someone who is robbed of these rights, pity her and help her claim those rights.*

### **A drop in the ocean...**

Although relief organizations are doing their best to help, it was very gratifying to contribute to the people in ways that the big NGOs aren't able to. Every afternoon the team I was with on Lesbos had activities for the young people in the refugee camp. Moria, for example, led artistic activities, such as painting, singing, movement and storytelling. Maybe it sounds strange but it wasn't merely the physical needs like food and a roof over their heads which were big. We also gave the young people spiritual nourishment and hopefully strengthened their faith to cope with the next few weeks and months that it might take them to reach their relatives in Europe or to fend for themselves.

Bernd Ruf, a Waldorf teacher and Director of the Parzifal Centre, a special needs education centre and Managing Director of aid organisation 'Friends of Waldorf Education' which heads emergency education crisis interventions in war and disaster zones once said:

*Emergency education seeks to activate and strengthen the powers of self-healing in trauma victims, whether they are children, adolescents or adults... It is first aid for the... soul.*

We also noticed that many Greeks themselves seemed to be aware of what was needed. In the city Mytilene and everywhere on the island actually there were refugees and tents, particularly at the ferry terminal, and the police would not chase them away. There weren't any obstacles for the

people to sit down and to rest. Of course, I was only there for a few days but this made a big impression on me. One of the leaders in the camp Kara Tepe said 'These people are our guests.' I will not embellish reality but we met this attitude of friendliness and openness in many Greeks. Our voluntary work was really appreciated and it was possible to make a contribution, even for the short time that we were there.

There are many organizations you can contact. In major crisis situations it is not always easy to travel to where the crisis is, to do something. Now it's here in the middle of Europe, just outside our door and it needs people with common sense, practical abilities and a warm heart. One can give a lot and also get so much back. A crisis can call upon the worst in people, but certainly much more the best! Not everyone needs to go to the Greek islands, or Eastern Europe, where the need is even bigger. To engage yourself in your own city, in the local community, is equally important. Help is needed here and now!

I wish that the causes of this situation did not exist, that the war did not exist and there was only peace but this is not the case. Perhaps it will be at some point. For now, as long as we can and are allowed to contribute, we must step in.

A phrase I have thought every day the last two weeks since I've been home is: 'What a strange world we live in.' While I was in Greece, I told unaccompanied minors who are without family on their journey that they have to stick together on their way through Europe; that I would think of them and pray for them; and that I would carry them in my heart. It felt strange to sit on a comfortable plane and take the easy journey from Mytilene via Zurich to Oslo after having said goodbye to these young people. Now I am in another world. I will try to follow some of the young people that I met on social media but now they are left to themselves and hopefully some good people that

they meet along the way. The youngest of these young people traveling alone was only 12 years old.

A man from Syria who recently came to Oslo, said, when he came forward to the police station where registration takes place with a sigh 'That was the longest time I have travelled in my life ever'. I know many of them will have very long journeys ahead of them.

I came home to Oslo to be absorbed once again in my tasks here which is also good, but I will not completely let go of the commitment I have to peace and to people. One

of my first activities here was singing 'Stabat Mater' by Anton Dvorak in a concert with my choir. This was a consolation for my soul. I could sing for all of the children who suffer and for those who lost their lives and for the parents who mourn their loved ones. Dvorak completed the work after he had lost his three children, one after the other, and it is a beautiful work full of sorrow, but also full of hope. It was a help and a comfort to be able to experience it and it was a pleasure to be able to help on Lesvos and to be able to continue helping here in Oslo.

## Reviews

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### ***School as a Secure Base: How Peaceful Teachers Can Create Peaceful Schools***

**Kevin Street**

Worth Publishing

Review by Deborah Ravetz

Many readers of Perspectives will know Kevin as our former subscriptions manager and the editor of the UK newsletter. These are voluntary roles. In his professional life he has worked for many years as a teacher, attended the Seminary in Stuttgart and led the education team for SWIS Foster Care in Birmingham. All those years of dedication, commitment and research working with children and the spiritual life have led to the writing of this book, *School as a Secure Base. How Peaceful Teachers Can Create Peaceful Schools*. It was written for teachers, support staff, head teachers and governors. It is an affirmation that teachers and all those concerned with young people can help to create environments in which teaching and learning can be as fulfilling as they are meant to be.

The book begins by naming the problems that arise out of being part of a highly stressful environment which includes

burnout, conflict with children and parents and powerlessness. Obviously inspired by the importance of the role of the teacher and the importance of the role of the school in every child's life, Kevin then proceeds to offer us a method whereby these challenges can be turned into opportunities to transform the individual teacher and their community into a viable and highly successful place of mutual learning.

I lived for some time in the same congregation as Kevin. In that time I learned about many techniques and movements which showed how our world with all its problems is giving birth to new ways of being that are profoundly life-affirming. In this book many of those techniques are described and made available to help us to meet the challenges presented by the initial problem of unhappy teachers and unhappy children. Kevin's aim is to help the teacher to develop the inner resources to become the creators of positive physical and emotional atmospheres in the schools where they teach. He says, 'We need to remind ourselves and each other that teachers are the most important elements of our schools. If we are stressed agitated, depressed and disengaged, our pupils will rapidly mirror this back to us. If we only muddle through so will they.' Taking us

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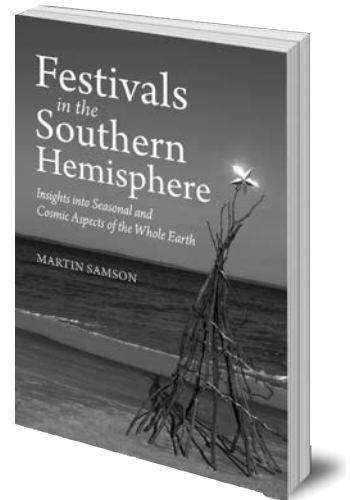
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Martin Samson has been a priest of The Christian Community for over twenty years, and has worked in Australia since 1992.

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through his method we have a sense that if his book becomes part of a movement of re-empowering teachers, something broken can be mended.

This is a well constructed workbook that deserves to be in the library of every teacher training institute. It shows Kevin's work in a mainstream world, which has been nourished by his involvement in The Christian Community. Never has the education of our children been more troubled, never has such thinking and its application been more needed. I would warmly encourage everyone concerned with education to read this book. It is an example of the power of renewal taking hold in the world.

### ***The Art Of Being Human***

**Deborah Ravetz**

Paperback: 160 pages

Vala Publishing Cooperative Ltd

ISBN: 978-1908363152

***Reviewed by Rev. Monika Knight***

The author Adam Kahane says in his foreword to Deborah's book:

*If we want to make a difference in the world around us, and to do this without violence, then the only instrument we have is our selves. And so if we want to develop our capacity to make a difference, then we must develop our capacity to make a difference, then we must develop ourselves. This work of authentic self-development is necessary but also extraordinarily, even existentially challenging. Most of us therefore shy away from this work,*

*preferring the lazier path of pretending that we are fine and that it is others who must develop themselves. This ordinary path is futile and worthless. Deborah Ravetz's book is outstandingly valuable because she has not shied away from her own work. She has reflected profoundly, courageously, and patiently on her own experiences, both gross and subtle, and through this reflection has developed her self and her capacity to make a difference...Her text is so honest and lyrical that it cannot but inspire us.*

Many people have participated in Deborah's project 'The Search For The Deep Self' and were touched and most likely opened and changed by it. With this social sculpture Deborah presents stories of the lives of people: stories of choosing the narrow path of living in truthfulness to oneself, accepting the challenges of life, the not knowing, the pain and the dead ends as necessary pathways to self-development, to becoming the person we are meant to be. In her book *The Art Of Being Human* Deborah shares her own story (as well as some from her project): from her childhood in Africa to the beginnings of her social sculpture and beyond, the story of her becoming the person she is: tirelessly seeking deeper understanding and becoming in uncompromising honesty and authenticity, helping others in their becoming through her own. This book is an indispensable companion and helper on the narrow path to true creativity, joy and redemption.

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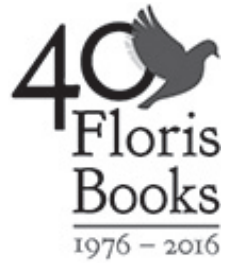
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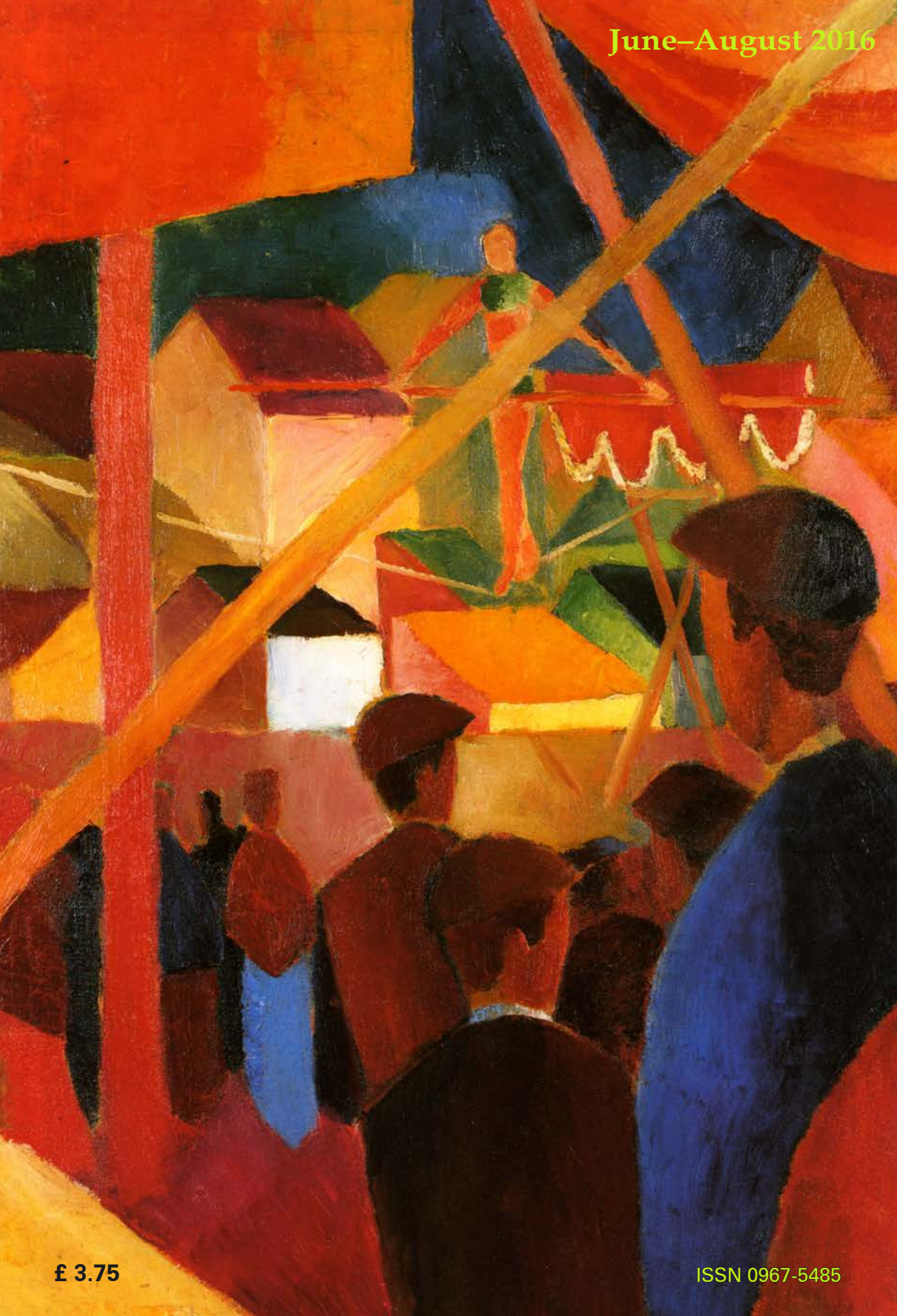
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