# The Christian Community PERSBECTIVES

# Light in the Darkness

Advent Christmas Epiphany 2006/7

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by The Christian Community, a registered UK charity. It appears on the 1st Monday of December, March, June & September. Peter Howe, Rev. Tom Ravetz **Light Born in the Darkness** 3 Deputy Editor: Cheryl Nekvapil Deborah Ravetz Subscriptions & Advertisements: Rays of light in the darkness of our time 5 Kevin Street Tel: 01384 443 268 Michael Tapp **All correspondence:** Perspectives, 22 Baylie Street, Stourbridge DY8 1AZ May the Light of God shine upon you 11 Tel: 01384 377 190 Brigitta Waldow-Schily Fax: (UK only) 0871 242 9000 email: editor.perspectives@cairnlee.clara.net Pentecostalism 17 subs.perspectives@cairnlee.clara.net Lavout: Christoph Hänni Patrick Kennedy **Subscriptions:** Why we oxen and asses 24 UK & Europe: £14 Rest of World: £16 really belong at the side of the crib Please send cheque, payable to Ulrich Meier Perspectives, to Subscription Manager (address above), or send Interview with Gisela Wielki, 26 for more information. director of the Chicago Seminary USA: US\$24 c/o The Christian Community, Tom Ravetz 906 Divisadero Street San Francisco, CA 94115 Man & the Stars 31 (Cheques payable to: The Christian Hazel Straker Community San Francisco) Canada: CAN\$28 Reviews 33 c/o Roger Coutts Umstead, 333 Sunnidale Road, Unit 31 Barrie, Ontario, L4N 6H5, Canada encoreanthrobooks@sympatico.ca (Cheques to: Roger Coutts Umstead) **Australia:** Enquire for price at: The Christian Community, 170 Beattie Street, Balmain, NSW 2041 tel: 02 9810 6690 **New Zealand:** Enquire for price at: Gerald Richardson 62A Redvers Drive, Belmont Lower Hutt. tel: 04 565 3836 **Advertisements:** Send ads five weeks prior to **Cover picture:** publication to the Editor at the above address. Sea with Red Sun, Emil Nolde, 1938-45 Quarter page £36, Half page £65, Full page £120 **Deadlines:** ISSN: 0967 5485

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## Perspectives

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Coming as we do from the light-filled realm which is revealed to the children in the Christmas Service for Children, our meeting with the darkness of the earth is always hard. Two temptations beckon: to deny the darkness and seek to escape to an illusory world of light; or to abandon our hope of the light, and find the cold comfort of cynicism and despair. Our wrestling with these temptations is our wrestling to understand the message of Christmas: that the light that from eternity shone in the darkness was coming into the world...it was in the world. Such understanding does not come once and for all; it is tested again and again, and needs to be nourished until we embody it. We hope that the contributions in this issue will be of help in this.

TOM RAVETZ

#### This shaft of light

which is where The Grail streams in illuminates this single lily here. *It is all the hows and whys and maybes* that dance around us penetrated deep into the core. It is the emptiness cracked open it is water passing into steam it is feather and it is stone and it is beyond seeing: !t is yourself, full of legend, the genuine heart of your being. It is the new name which no-one hears except him who receives it. *It is alchemy* the spirit of transformation which breathes in you.

#### Sophia's Song

Hers is the heart hers is the pain and hers is the eclipse of the full moon, the wisdom that rises with the dew: and all that remains of the night is vanishing in her face reflected into the pale sky— She was the one who first sang to me the poetry of real life, the light shining through the shadows, and the tender conscience that holds this sacred space LUCY TREVITT where the colours change.

## Light Born in the Darkness

Cheryl Nekvapil

We had been watching and waiting on a mountain to see the sun rise. It was Easter Morning. A curve of brilliant radiant gold suddenly appeared at the horizon. Our vigil from darkness through dawn was broken in minutes as the great radiant orb was pushed up free of the earth. For years I had been alert to and looking at what the sun does on Easter morning because of what I had read in the *Sun Dances*:

Old Barbara Macphie...described in poetic language and with religious fervour...(that the sun on Easter morning) was dancing up and down in exultation at the joyous resurrection of the beloved Saviour of victory.'\* Well, on this morning, it didn't appear to dance, but without doubt, I had seen the crowning, delivery and birth of the Sun whose light immediately transformed the world.

The appearance of a Christmas image at Easter begs the question: How do we picture Christ's resurrected body emerging from the tomb, from the darkness of death? Was it like the sunrise with His Light being *born* in the darkness? Grünewald's painting of the Resurrection for the Isenheim altar boldly implies that the Risen Christ was born in a dark night into the world. The trailing shroud shines bluish-white, the colour of an umbilical cord which still pulsates, and connects Him still to the tomb. Christ is a radiant sun being, the world and sky are in dark night.

Another experience we can have of light born in the darkness is at a child's birth. We don't necessarily 'see' what appears or happens at birth unless we are consciously watching for it. Harry was a physician who had helped to deliver hundreds of babies. One evening he helped again at a birth and was holding the baby watching for her to breathe. 'Suddenly the baby opened her eyes and looked directly at him. In that moment, Harry stepped past his technical role and realized a very simple thing: that he was the first human being this baby girl had ever seen. He felt his heart go out to her in welcome

from all people everywhere and tears came to his eyes... He feels (on reflection) that in a certain sense this was the first baby that he had ever assisted in delivery.\*\*\*

From a darkness of apparent non-existence we 'see' a whole human being born into the world, as Harry saw the

Cheryl Nekvapil is priest of The Christian Community in Canberra. little girl in his arms. Another light of human consciousness and life shines from a physical body. This is a universal image that people everywhere can relate to at Christmas. But there is so much more to be aware of at a birth which intensifies our joy and that is the undeniable fact that the child's destiny on earth will include future suffering and death. Belief that the light of human consciousness will only be born anew and refined through life's trials, and not be extinguished even after death, is the greatest hope with which to greet a newborn child. This is a true Christ filled Christmas imagination.

On the panel of the Nativity for the Isenheim Altar, Grünewald painted Mary with a halo of light around her head holding her baby and watching him. We can see that her natural wonder for her child is heightened because she also knows that he is specially favoured by God—the painting depicts her in a landscape at the breaking dawn, with a concert of angels acknowledging this sacred happening.

But her new born child wears the tattered, torn loin cloth that Jesus Christ will wear on the cross, in striking contrast to Mary's rich attire. This seems to be an acknowledgement that the suffering and death of Holy Week and the triumph of Easter are integral to the pure moment of joy.

In the past, at Easter and Christmas, the Isenheim Altar was arranged to show the Resurrection and Nativity panels side by side for both festivals. They belong together. We can affirm that this is so, for these pictures have lifted our imagination to see how motifs we use for the same festivals—sunrise and the birth of a human being—are events in the world that also belong together, waking us up to see that light is born in the darkness here on earth all around us and within us. In working with sunrise and birth as motifs for religious thought (if not fervour!) they become tangible, living pictures of how immediate and close the heavens are to us.

Through this activity we are at inner place of heightened awareness to watch for a new birth, one which is heralded when the Advent epistle is spoken from the altar in The Christian Community: 'Hail to that which is born of light'. At midnight on Christmas Eve and at the early morning Christmas celebrations are we prepared to stand on the conviction that light has been born in the darkness? If so, we are ready to look with hope for the radiant light of the Risen Christ to be born in the world in our daylight, and in the light of our human souls. Then every sunrise will be Easter morning and every child born will be a Christ child.

- \* Easter Sunday, The Sun Dances, collected by Alexander Carmichael, Floris Books
- \*\* The Task Gets Between Us, Kitchen Table Wisdom by Rachel Naomi Remen, Pan McMillan

## Rays of light in the darkness of our time

Michael Tapp

When I was a history student, we had six departmental professors, a couple of readers and numerous lecturers, all experts in their fields and mostly also excellent in delivering their material. But only one of them ventured into making any statement as to what the history of humanity was actually about, what 'meaning' it might have. His definitive assertion was that it has no meaning, that there is no underlying meaningful impulse behind it. From an academic point of view this does not detract from the fascination of studying history. The academic study of history is concerned with establishing facts and interpreting them within the environment to which they belong. For any understanding of history this foundation is certainly required. But beyond this, history is actually the biography of the human race. It is remarkable how many biographies, autobiographies, memoirs are being written today, all of which represent an intense study of human lives. This material lets us capture the spirit of history, its inner aspect, far more than descriptions of what happened in political history. This might lead us to consider applying what we learn through human biography to our notion of history, past and still in progress. For ultimately it is whatever lives in human souls and spirits that actually creates history. The question of meaning arises far more readily in our individual biographies than in our view of history. In reality, the two are deeply connected, even to the extent that impulses in the course of history, good or bad, are invariably brought into the world by individuals, through individual biographies.

A characteristic of our times is the widespread concern about the big issues that confront the world which often present seemingly insoluble problems. Why are they insoluble? Surely because we have yet to develop the necessary capacities, or more accurately, the inner resources to solve them. The problems we face are the indicators of a developmental challenge. We cannot remain creatures of the past, but have rather to work out of what calls us from the future. For the future holds the meaning of the present and calls for new forces for its fulfilment.

The existence of these new forces in the world is very evident, as the following examples demonstrate.

#### **Silent Spring**

It was in 1962, with the publication of Rachel Carson's Silent Spring, that the first foundations were laid of what was to grow into the worldwide environmental movement that exists today. Whatever thoughts others may already have had, it was Rachel Carson who made the initial public impact with her scientifically based challenge to the overuse of pesticides which brought the attention of the world at large to the dangers which this practice posed. The agrochemical industry, Monsanto to the fore, immediately launched an aggressive defence, with the consequence that the whole issue became a matter of open debate, during which President Kennedy's Science Advisory Committee called for more research into the health hazards of pesticide use. The instigator of all this remained calm and collected and quietly stood her secure ground.

Rachel Carson, born in 1917, grew up in rural Pennsylvania and was greatly inspired by her mother's love of nature. When she went to university, she chose to study marine biology. She was set on a writing career and made her name as a naturalist and scientist with three books about the life of the sea. For a time she had academic teaching positions and then worked in government service, becoming the Editor-in-Chief of all the publications of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

From 1952 onwards she devoted herself entirely to writing. Among her many articles was *Help Your Child to Wonder*, a theme which surely came straight from her heart. It was in these later years that she became concerned about the overuse of pesticides and turned her formidable scientific gifts to raising public alarm. Although her scientific arguments produced the evidence, it was her love of and for nature was surely a prime factor in her motivation. In a television interview following the publication of *Silent Spring* she said:

We still talk in terms of conquest. We still haven't become mature enough to think of ourselves as only a tiny part of a vast and incredible universe. Man's attitude toward nature is today critically important simply because we have now acquired a fateful power to alter and destroy nature...

But man is a part of nature, and his war is a war against himself...

Now, I truly believe, that we in this generation must come to terms with nature, and I think we're challenged as mankind has never been

challenged before to prove our maturity and mastery, not of nature, but of ourselves.

Just a year later, in April 1964, she died after a long battle with cancer.

Rachel Carson's science arose out of her great love for the natural world. She has been described as 'the essence of gentle scholarship'. She obviously felt deeply about her work, but never defended herself or her work with emotion. She saw clearly that nature was under attack. The remedy was for human beings to change their attitude to nature. So the answer lay not so much in science, though this remains vital in seeking for remedies, as in human beings themselves. It was to take quite some time for this thought to become self-evident.

#### The Peace People

We move on twelve years, to August 10 1976. On that day in the streets of North Belfast a car driven by a young republican was being pursued by a vehicle belonging to the British Authorities. As the latter closed in on the vehicle in front a shot was fired. The young republican was killed and the car swerved into a family, killing three children and injuring their mother. Betty Williams, who lived nearby and happened to be in the street, rushed to the scene. Later she recalled:

A deep sense of frustration at the mindless stupidity of the continuing violence was already evident before the tragic events of that sunny afternoon of August 10 1976. But the deaths of those four young people in one terrible moment of violence caused that frustration to explode, and create the possibility of a real peace movement. As far as we are concerned, every single death in the last eight years, and every death in every war that was ever fought represents life needlessly wasted, a mother's labour spurned.

A sad sequel four years later to this event was that after trying to begin a new life in New Zealand the mother of the children took her own life.

Betty Williams, divorced from her husband, worked as an office receptionist, alongside bringing up her two children. She was baptized

a Roman Catholic, though her maternal grandfather was Jewish and her father Protestant. Her erstwhile husband was also Protestant. For a short time she joined the Irish Republican Army. In 1973 a British soldier standing in front of her was shot. Her reaction, which incurred the wrath of her Catholic neighbours, was to kneel beside him and pray. But it was the deaths of the four young people three years later

Michael Tapp is a retired priest of The Christian Community and lives in Stroud. that galvanised her into action and brought her into public prominence. Through this event she met the sister of the children's mother, Mairead Corrigan. Together they immediately acted, in the first place to organise two marches to the graves of the children, the first attracting 10,000 and the second 35,000 participants. A petition for peace was drawn up which was signed by some 6000 people within a couple of days. And then, when they had been joined by a journalist, Ciaran McKeown, the Community of the Peace People was founded. Such a public stand demanded great courage. No one could afford to stand out in the troubled situation without putting themselves potentially at risk, even if the Declaration of the Peace People threatened no one.

In December 1977 Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan travelled to Oslo to receive the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize. The presentation speech was made by the Vice-Chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, Egil Aarvik, who gave a full and moving account of the work of these two women, beginning with a description of the original tragic event. Towards the end he said:

The two women who share the Peace Prize for 1976 have refused to bow to bleak scepticism: they simply acted. They never heeded the difficulty of their task: they merely tackled it because they were so convinced that this was precisely what was needed. There was no talk here of ingenious theories, of shrewd diplomacy or pompous declarations. No, their contribution was a far better one: a courageous, unselfish act that proved an inspiration to thousands, that lit a light in the darkness, and that gave fresh hope to people who believed that all hope was gone... Their action harmonised with what is the very basis of our civilisation, and it sprang from a vision which shines like a bright torch into the future. What they have built—to quote Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson—is:

A rainbow bridge of prayer above earth's fretful air, a beacon light for man, ablaze with Christ's belief that love would conquer grief, for thus his promise ran.

#### The West Eastern Divan Orchestra

We move on thirty years to the present, 2006, when the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is daily news. In this year the BBC invited the pianist and conductor Daniel Barenboim to give its annual Reith Lectures. His family moved

to Jerusalem when he was ten years old and he became one of Israel's many distinguished musicians. In the last two of these lectures, held in Jerusalem, one in the Palestinian sector and the other in the Jewish, he describes a unique approach to the conflict out of his professional musical background, a project which he initiated with the Palestinian scholar and author, Edward Said. Their starting point was that culture can bring peoples together, not least in the sphere of music. The idea came when they met in Weimar in 1999, the year it was the culture capital of Europe, to form an orchestra out of musicians from Israel and the various Arab countries and Palestinians. Weimar supplied the inspiration for the name of the orchestra through a poem of its most famous citizen, Goethe, who, after being given a copy of the Koran was so enthused that he immediately started learning Arabic. Later he read the Persian poet, Hafiz, which inspired him to write his set of poems, the West Eastern Divan. Barenboim describes the present-day sequel:

Goethe's poem then became a symbol behind our experiments in bringing Arab and Israeli musicians together... Now, when you play music, whether you play chamber music or in an orchestra, you have to do two very important things and do them simultaneously. You have to be able to express yourself, otherwise you are not contributing to the musical experience, but at the same time it is imperative that you listen to the other. You have to understand what the other is doing. And the other may be doing the same as you, if he is sitting next to you if you are a string player, or he may play a different instrument and be in counterpoint to what you are doing. But in all cases it is impossible to play intelligently in an orchestra concentrating only on one of those two things... the art of playing music is the art of simultaneous playing and listening. And this is the main reason for this workshop. Edward once said, separation between people is not a solution for any of the problems that divide people, and certainly ignorance of the other provides no help whatever...

And when we played in Ramallah last August there were people who said, how can we look at Israelis, Palestinians and other Arabs playing together when the Israeli tanks are here, and when we have the situation that we have now. But, as Edward Said said—I quote—'My friend Daniel Barenboim and I have chosen this course for humanistic rather than political

reasons, on the assumption that ignorance is not a strategy for sustainable survival. When Palestinians and other Arabs meet Israelis in music, the primary quality that is missing in the political life, namely the equality, is already a given...

These three very different examples of human beings responding, one could say, out of their own biographies, out of their own humanity, to the very real needs of our contemporary history, illustrate the interweaving of personal destiny and the course of human history.

The light that shone in the soul of the scientist Rachel Carson was her love of nature and her deep concern for its future. She saw clearly that human exploitation would condemn it to a slow death. Eventually a spring would come and it would be silent.

The light that shone in the souls of the peace women was kindled by their compassion for the victims of violence and by their determination to face up to the forces that fostered it. Their stand was an important milestone on the long and tortuous path to peace.

The light that shone in the souls of Barenboim and Said was their conviction that the cultural sphere can stand above politics and unite individuals on both sides of the divide in creative activity.

The examples, small and large, can be multiplied indefinitely. The challenges in our world are enormous. But they themselves provide the indications and the impulses for their own solution. They are then the pointers to the why and the wherefore, to the question of meaning.

A concluding thought. We have seen the close connection of human biography to history, each biography being a small segment of history. But there is one human biography that contains the whole future of human biography to which every individual human biography can relate: the human biography of Christ. For we see in his life a continuous confrontation with the powers of darkness. It begins with the Temptation which in its three aspects was an attempt to make Christ misuse his divine power. He had to establish and maintain an absolute selflessness (which is in reality the ultimate strength of selfhood) throughout his earthly life to be able in his final sacrifice to overcome the powers of darkness and death. He was and is indeed the Light of the World. In his life, in his words and deeds, each succeeding age of history will be able to discover, from its particular experience, through the challenges it meets and the responses asked for, the substance and wisdom that holds the key to fulfilling both our individual biographies and the biography which we call the history of humankind.

## May the Light of God shine upon you

#### Christmas Woodcut by Maria Hiszpanska-Neumann

**Brigitta Waldow-Schily** 

A looming dark cross, around its middle a bright halo with a star—this is an unusual Christmas image. Why has the artist placed Mary and her child before such a cross?

Almost every year, the Polish graphic designer and artist Maria Hiszpanska-Neumann would create a woodcut to use as her Christmas card. The motif changed through the years, until she finally found a version which expressed most fittingly what she saw as the 'birth of the divine light in the darkness of earth and of time.' In this version, the Cross was central. Mary holds her child in front of it. The woodcut, a mere 21 by 13 cm, was made with the most primitive, partly improvised tools in Maria's flat. The artist brings Christ's birth, passion and resurrection in a simple picture that nevertheless has many layers. The longer one looks, the more one discovers of the fine connections between the different parts, and of the complex texture of the picture.

Large and powerful, the cross fills the picture to its very edges with its beams, which narrow towards the ends. The middle of the cross opens up in a bright halo, recalling the Irish sun-crosses, with the addition of a star with irregular arms. Mary stands directly in front of the cross, surrounded by its upright beam, her head and shoulders reaching into the halo. The star of the birth and the sun meld into a kind of aura or halo—Mary is a cosmic Madonna, crowned by sun and stars.

The child sits in a relaxed pose on Mary's lower arm. His upper body is upright, and his arms are stretched out to the sides, so that he seems to be

presenting himself in a kingly pose. This child radiates the message of the angels, which is written on the sides of the picture: 'Be not afraid!'

The open embracing gesture of the child is emphasised through its continuation by the circles that surround the 'sun'. The child's gesture grows beyond itself and becomes a part of the surrounding halo. The child's breast and head Brigitta Waldow-Schily is a lecturer in history of art. She lives in Kleinmachnow, near Berlin.



are lifted into the starry realm of Mary's radiant face. At the same time, the out-stretched arms take up the movement of the horizontal beams of the cross—a prophetic anticipation of the quality of self-surrender, with which this child will take the destiny of the crucifixion upon himself.

The dark cross is a sign with many meanings. It reminds us of the passion, of suffering and death. As a kind of symbolic archetype—the world cross of Plato—it embraces the coordinates of the earthly world, uniting above and below, right and left. In its form, this cross, which is slightly asymmetrical, seems more individual—it is a being. It stands there in its greatness, a protector for Mary and the child.

Mary's clear, slender outline stands before the cross. No feet anchor her to the ground, which emphasises her uprightness and the fragility of her form. Her outline looks like that of a bud or a seed; her coat is a seed-pod, which opens in the realm of the breast, allowing new life to spring forth: the child, which she is bearing.

She bears the child on her disproportionately great hands, carefully protecting it, yet at the same time leaving it free. One hand gently supports the child's upper body; the other is not in fact touching the child, but is pointing upward. The movement in her hands' gesture runs counter to the outstretched arms of the child—a kind of coming to herself, taking into herself; yet at the same time, a gesture of being able to receive and take in through her open hand. Mary is someone who can 'take things into her heart'.

Everything seems to be concentrated on the middle realm. The cross has its middle in the sun aura with the star; like the cross, Mary stands upright, in her 'open' middle her crossed hands bear the child; the child too opens his middle through the out-stretched arms. Through this gesture, the figures are united with the cross with its the cross-bars and the outline of the aura in the middle.

In this humble woodcut, we enter the realm of archetypes. The figure of Mary has a central position. She is the mediator, she makes possible, brings forth; she is also the one who bears, who suffers with the child. She stands as an image of the human soul, which accompanies the destiny of Christ and experiences with him all the light and darkness he must live through.

In her life, Maria Hiszpanska experienced the suffering, the passion of the cross, far more deeply than we might at first imagine when we see the great protective gesture that she expressed in her woodcut. Decisive biographical experiences in German camps, and later the exhausting struggle of everyday life in communist Poland made a deep impression on the artist. Her artistic work was an illumination, wrested from the phases of inner emptiness, paralysis and darkness, as well as material deprivation, with which she had to live ever and again. The struggle between light and darkness was an existential experience for her.

As an art student aged 23, she distributed leaflets against the Nazis, and in 1941 she was imprisoned by the Gestapo. She was taken to the concentration camp in Ravensbrück and later to the camp in Neubrandenburg. In the age in which young people normally learn new skills and test their strength, and begin to discover the world, Maria Hiszpanska had an extreme encounter with life and death. Four years of 'passion', four long years, which let her see 'into deepest and most atrocious abyss of human suffering, of debasement, of dehumanisation, of barbarity'. (13.10.1965) She survived, but something inside her was broken. There followed 'a period of inner emptiness and despair, of suicidal thoughts...'

Emerging from this, she met her future husband, Janusz Neumann, the brother of a comrade from the camps. Through him she met Anthroposophy. 'I owe him my knowledge of the teaching without which I would not know how to live.' This friend 'rescued the human being within me.' He encouraged her to learn German—the language she had experienced as the language of inhumanity—so that she could read Rudolf Steiner in the original. Soon she had mastered German so well that she was translating books into Polish. Her letters to German friends display a richness of vocabulary and an expressive capability, which few Germans can equal.

Life in communist Poland demanded further sacrifices. Everyday life is 'grey and demoralizing.' The economic shortages are an important factor; but the spiritual small-mindedness, dishonesty and corruption can 'make a relatively sensitive, incurably "unadjusted" person, one who will never "adjust," sink into a deep depression, she wrote in 1979. Artistic work and commissions came through the Catholic Church or in cooperation with various publishers who need illustrations, mainly of mediaeval subjects. Her Christmas woodcuts are private works for family and friends. But their themes of birth, death and resurrections come from the innermost experience of the artist.

In her letters the theme of light and darkness comes ever and again, full of powerful images:

Already I can feel autumn coming ... the nights are very cold, the days are getting shorter and shorter, in the allotments everything is blossoming wildly. The autumn colours have such an endless power of melancholy within them, they seem to say to the death of winter, which is so close: 'so what!'—a shattering selflessness of blossoming.

Everything is red, purple, violet, a many-coloured flame under the early autumn sky, which grows colder and more distant. The stony chasm of autumn opens up irrevocably: a little test, a little annual rehearsal of the descent into Hades. Descend, cross over, you sun-loving, lazy, timid human soul! No excuses, the craggy steps lead down. That is autumn. (22.8.1967)

We descend into a steep, craggy, cold valley, ever steeper and deeper. Here we grow anxious, everything frightens us here; the sun can still be seen, but less and less. Blessed are they who can see the sun at midnight! (21.9.1968)

Maria Hiszpanska-Neumann develops the picture of the *Path of Autumn* as a descent into the earthly, physical, solid world, a path that she experiences leading into frightening constriction in a world filled with heaviness, suffering, darkness and the powers of death. To bear this and to transform it demands a grace-filled power of light, which comes from Christ's working.

The festival of Christmas contains a wonderful symbol: the spiritual light in the physical darkness of the world. Life has more than what is dark, ugly, cruel and unjust ... may the light shine out in the darkness of earth and of the ages. (1966)

May the light which is soon to be born anew in the darkness of the earth, show us our true paths. May it warm our hearts, and enlighten our heads. May it bless us and lead us. (1969)

In these lines the deep feeling of the human need of redemption shines through, a sentiment that the artist often clads in the words of the Psalmist: 'out of the depths I cry unto Thee, o Lord.' The descent into increasing cold and darkness which starts in autumn reaches its deepest point at Christmas. Just there, in the midst of deepest earthly darkness, our task is to help the inner, spiritual sun to birth. Blessed are those, who can see the sun at midnight! In the birth of Christ as both an inner and an outer event, there is both promise and hope that these forces of darkness will ultimately be overcome.

Maria Hiszpanska goes a further step when she connects the event of Easter with that of Christmas. Christmas cannot be understood without considering Christ's continued path towards the earth, for Christ himself goes the 'path of autumn'. His incarnation is the descent into the narrowness of physical existence. He descends into Hades and enters the realm in which he finds death and overcomes it.

The cross and the resurrection stand before Maria Hispanska like an octave or a fulfilment of the processes of autumn and Christmas. The sun

at midnight appears again as the Easter sun in the sunlike aura in the middle of the cross.

Because Christ has passed through the realm of death, the Easter sun is more than mere promise; it signifies transformation achieved; the forces of death have been overcome. This is the ultimate aim of the event of Christmas, and for this reason Maria Hiszpanska puts the two motifs together: birth is connected both to death and to new life.

In her life, the paralysis and the darkness remained with her; her struggle with them became ever harder. Towards the end, her inner fire often seemed on the point of being extinguished. At the same time, however, her conviction of the reality of a humanity that surpassed all national and religious boundaries grew and grew.

This conviction can be seen in one of the few descriptions she gave of her time in the concentration camp. She sees the power of inhumanity not only in the culprits of the crimes committed there, but recognises its potential in herself. *Saints* are those who maintain their humanity without thought of background, religious confession or any other such factors. In the letter quoted above (13.10.1965) she continues:

These were years in which one got to know one's own weakness, one's animal nature, the inhuman in oneself in the inhuman circumstances—even if one did not show them outwardly, nevertheless one could feel them as potential. One got to know fear, anxiety, hatred, contempt, hunger, the drive to live and so on; that is, the whole lower nature of the human being, which one saw in various others, as well as in oneself. There were people who became saints in those circumstances. There were those who lost their Christian faith forever. There were those too, Christians or communists, who did not lose their dignity, or their ideals.

Such situations show how humanity, which is the highest good, can appear in an utterly individual way. In essence, Maria traversed the utter depth of the *autumn path* in this time of encounter with evil. She found light where humanity was preserved. The working of Christ is pure humanity in its highest form, not only to be found in the light of spiritual heights, but also in concrete human encounters and in human love.

Maria Hiszpanska's interest for all human life was expressed in her great openness; her trust which came quickly and was given without reserve, her hospitality which often turned her house into a gypsy camp, although there was precious little to share. In her later years, this interest took on a new nuance: she became fascinated by the mystery-character of human

life, and in human encounters: what a mystery-drama is human life, is every human life! (13.1.1978)

Through her letters and in her work a human being with a unique destiny speaks to us; it is a destiny which stands too as a parable for the events of the twentieth century. She suffered, worked on and formulated the fundamental questions concerning life and *what is Christian*, as she called it, in a completely individual way. If one lives with this biography and with her works, one gains insight into the soul of a fascinating, deeply artistic human being, and the apocalyptic nature of the twentieth century gains an individual face. Looking at her presentation of the image of Christmas and letting it speak to one can enrich and deepen one's understanding of Christ.

### Pentecostalism

**Patrick Kennedy** 

This is the first instalment of a two part essay concerned with the growth and phenomena of Pentecostal Christianity over the last century. The first will deal with its historical roots and the movement's own self-understanding. The second will look into the work of the Holy Spirit and between Pentecostalism connection and the events of Christ's return and will attempt to provide the basis for a judgment regarding this world phenomenon.

Jack Hayford and S. David Moore make the strong statement that the last century saw the beginning of a renewal in Christianity, the likes of which had not been seen since New Testament times. Signs, wonders, healings and tongues—the gifts of the Holy Spirit—have been poured out over the faithful in these last days. It is understood as the 'latter rain', a sign of the 'spiritual awakening' that will precede Christ's coming. It is what has come to be known in the world as Pentecostal or Charismatic Christianity.

According to most statistics, Pentecostal denominations make up the fastest growing wing of Christianity, with some 35,000 converts per day world-wide<sup>1</sup> Pentecostal churches are second only to Catholicism in numbers of adherents. At the start of this phenomenon, around the turn of the last century, mainstream opinions were that this form of worship was an

aberration and would remain on the margins. It was at worst devil worship and at best a manipulation of simple people. No one could have predicted the level of continued growth that has taken place, nor the extent to which Pentecostalism has become part of the mainstream. Why has this movement thrived and what draws people to the promise of the Holy Spirit? And what, if anything, does it have to do with the reality of Christ's coming?

#### The Asuza Street Revival

These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

Acts 2:15–18. From Peter's Sermon on the morning of Pentecost.

One hundred years ago, in the city of Los Angeles, an event took place that is seen by many as the spark that lit the fire of the Pentecostal revival. <sup>2</sup> In February of 1906, a humble African-American preacher by the name of William Seymour came to L.A., bringing with him this dramatic understanding of scripture: speaking in tongues is the only real evidence of having been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Seymour brought this message with him from Texas at the invitation of a small African-American 'holiness' congregation. After telling the congregation that they had not received the Holy Spirit unless they had spoken in tongues, he was quickly asked not to come back. Mr. and Mrs. Lee, a couple from the congregation, had compassion on the preacher who had given up everything to come to California, and took William Seymour into their home. Over the next few days they became more open to his message, moved by his sincerity and humility. Soon, he was invited to a friend of the Lee's to join a prayer meeting. Moved by his message, this group asked Seymour to lead the meetings and began earnestly to pray for a Los Angeles 'revival'. In preparation for Easter, the group decided to spend ten days together, fasting and praying every night together. Mr. Lee had fallen ill but didn't want to miss the evening meeting on April 9th, so William Seymour prayed over him and as he prayed, Edward Lee began to speak in tongues. That evening, upon hearing the testimony of the two men, two other members fell to the floor and broke into in tongues-speech, another ran through the house, and 'one young woman went to the piano and sang in a tongue she thought was Hebrew.' 3 The longed for 'revival' had begun.

As news spread, many people—black and white, rich and poor—began to come to the house where they met. Over the next three days, hundreds visited Seymour, heard him preach and witnessed or received the 'baptism of the Holy Spirit'. On the fourth day, Seymour him-



self spoke in tongues for the first time. Realizing that they would need a much larger space to serve this 'outpouring' of the Spirit, Seymour and his prayer group rented an old, abandoned church near the center of town at 312 Azusa Street. They named it the Apostolic Faith Mission, reflecting their understanding of their experiences as a return to 'New Testament Christianity' and the experience the Apostles had at Pentecost. With makeshift benches and a wooden platform for a pulpit in the center of the room, they prepared the building for Easter Sunday.

At first, the meetings were small, but three days after they had opened their doors, a newspaper printed an article with the headline 'Weird Babel of Tongues'. The article described the worshipers at the Apostolic Faith Mission as being in a 'state of mad excitement' and their 'swaying back and forth in a nerve-racking attitude of prayer and supplication.' The Mission itself decried fanaticism and explained its intentions in this way: 'We are not fighting men or churches, but seeking to displace dead forms and creeds and wild fanaticisms with living, practical Christianity.' One of the earliest sympathetic witnesses of this revival, Frank Bartleman, described the experience of Azusa Street as being full of spiritual presence:

Someone might be speaking. Suddenly the Spirit would fall upon the congregation. God himself would give the altar call. Men would fall all over the house, like the slain in battle, or rush for the altar en masse, to seek God. The scene often resembled a forest of fallen trees. Such a scene cannot be imitated. I never saw an altar call given in those early days. God himself would call them. And the preacher knew when to quit. When He spoke we all obeyed. It seemed a fearful thing to hinder or grieve the Spirit. The whole place was steeped in prayer, God was in His holy temple. It was for man to keep silent. The shekinah<sup>4</sup> glory rested there. In fact some claim to have seen the glory by night over the building. I do not doubt it. I have stopped more than once within

two blocks of the place and prayed for strength before I dared to go on. The presence of the Lord was so real.<sup>5</sup>

Many of these descriptions have become familiar to us now as the typical features of Pentecostal worship- people falling down, shaking, speaking in tongues, and shouting out with hands raised. In 1906 Los Angeles, it drew the attention and criticism of the press and clergy, making it an even greater sensation in which many people flocked to participate. The first article, referred to above, made the biggest impact, including in it a prophetic predictive prophecy given at the Azusa Street meeting regarding the fate of Los Angeles itself. 'Awful destruction to this city' was promised unless its inhabitants were to believe 'in the tenets of the new faith.' The next day, the great San Francisco earthquake struck, sparking a spate of Last-Days pamphlets and articles. The signs of End Times were apparent: the earth was shaken, the spirit was being poured out over the people, and Christ was coming soon. People began coming to Azusa Street in their thousands.

#### The Expectation of Christ's Coming

This is a world-wide revival, the last Pentecostal revival to bring our Jesus. The church is taking her last march to meet her beloved.<sup>6</sup>

A driving force behind the Pentecostal movement and most evangelical revivals has been the fervent hope and belief in Christ's immanent return. These hopes peaked at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century in radical Christian circles in the United States. Both the closing of the century and the advance of industrialization and secular humanism helped to increase the desire for Christ's coming.

In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Enlightenment thought and western science had taken over as the dominating cultural force and countless pastors and theologians began losing the ground in the battle for the faith against the application of a cold intellect on the scriptures and tenets of Christianity. We need only think of Darwin and Haeckel's work on the origin of man that shook the foundations of the story of creation to get a sense for the impact of the scientific world on Christians in the West. The philologists and historians who sought to apply the scientific method to the New Testament also began coming back with findings that threw into question any faith one could have in the Bible <sup>7</sup>. Subsequently, a crisis emerged in the congregations as pastors could no longer fully and honestly proclaim the gospel, declaring Jesus an admirable—if fanatical—oriental who mistakenly believed the Kingdom of God would be ushered in during

his lifetime.<sup>8</sup> Doubt in the bible was growing, faith in science and reason growing, and human thinking became more and more turned towards the physical world. The process of secularization was underway.

Two distinct yet related responses to this crisis in faith came out of grass-roots and conservative Christianity (respectively). The first is what we know of today as Christian fundamentalism; the belief in the unerring, infallible and complete nature of the Bible. In this context, complete means that no further revelation exists beyond it. For the Fundamentalist, the Bible is God's Word. The second response to the spiritual crisis of the 19<sup>th</sup> century represents the forerunner of modern day Pentecostalism.

Itinerant Christian preachers, declaring secularization a sign of the End, spread throughout North America bearing with them a radical call to return to New Testament Christianity. And they proclaimed not just the doctrine of the New Testament, but the healings, signs and miracles of the days of the Apostles. No longer able to feel and experience God through the intellectualized life of the congregation, self-made preachers increasingly turned to 'signs and wonders'. There were often also many healings reported. Exhorting the crowds into a 'state' that led to cries, shaking, rolling on the ground and mass conversions, these preachers sought not to speak about God, but to make God's presence felt. They learned to lead people to the threshold—and over it—to a direct experience of something beyond themselves.

The historian Nathan Hatch describes it this way:

... the most dynamic and characteristic elements of Christianity during this time <sup>9</sup> [were] the displacement from power of the religious people of ideas by those who leaned toward popular culture; the powerful centrifugal forces that drove churches apart and gave new significance to local and grass-roots endeavors; and the stark emotionalism, disorder, extremism, and crudeness that accompanied expressions of the faith fed by the passions of ordinary people. <sup>10</sup>

As the 19<sup>th</sup> Century drew to a close, radical Chritianity gained new momentum in the Midwest and South of the United States. Many were certain that the close of the century would bring Judgment Day and with it, a restoration of the true faith. Various groups gathered around preachers and personalities who made the call to 'return' to the true, 'New Testament' faith, and to await the coming of the Lord. Using passages from the Bible describing the 'rainfall patterns of the Holy Land, they likened the Holy Spirit's coming on the day of Pentecost to the spring rains that watered the freshly planted fields. Now they awaited eagerly the 'latter rains' that came in the fall just before harvest. This was a metaphor for the coming revival

that would ready the church for a great evangelistic ingathering right before the consummation of the age.' 11

One such group was connected to the preacher, Charles Parham. He had opened a Bible school in Topeka Kansas in October of 1900 and began teaching his students what he described as the 'indisputable' Bible proof of Holy Spirit baptism: speaking in tongues. Convinced that world evangelization—a necessary step before Christ's coming—would be made possible through the gift of tongues, Parham and his students earnestly prayed together and sought the outpouring of this gift. In addition to studying the Bible throughout the day, the students would gather for hours of prayer in the evenings. This fervent prayer and pleading for the gift of the Holy Spirit was increased and intensified as the end of the century approached. Finally, on New Year's Eve, 1900, Parham laid his hands on a young woman named Agnes Ozman, who asked that he pray that the gift of tongues be given to her. Only minutes later she began speaking in an unrecognizable language that the others thought might be Chinese. Soon, others—including Parham—were given this 'gift' and plans began to be laid for missionaries to travel to distant countries to evangelize in their new 'God given' tongues. Parham was convinced that this event was like a second Pentecost and a sign of Christ's imminent return and began preaching in Kansas and the surrounding States with renewed fervor, performing dramatic healings and leading others to the experience of 'Spirit Baptism' and speaking in tongues. It was not hard for him to draw great crowds with this sensational news, appealing to the hopes for a genuine experience of the spirit that lived in the hearts of so many.

It was in Texas in 1905, that William Seymour came across Charles Parham, who was carrying his message of Spirit Baptism with him to Los Angeles. Since then, Pentecostalism has grown tremendously. Various outstanding personalities have arisen in North America—including Aimee Semple Mcpherson, Oral Roberts and William Branham, and more recently, John Wimber and the Vineyard movement—bringing with them a new excitement and revival. Perhaps more impressive are

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the more anonymous Pentecostal missionaries who carried this form of worship to places all over the globe. In 1907 two people connected to the Azusa Street mission were in India leading a revival; in 1910, two Swedish immigrants captivated by the Pentecostal experience in Indiana, followed a prophecy to Brazil, which eventually led to the founding of the Assemblies of God which currently have nearly 25 Million members. <sup>12</sup> Another as-

tonishing development began in the late 1950s. Members of traditional denominations, such as Presbyterians, Anglicans and Catholics were inspired and drawn to the Pentecostal experience of the supernatural. But rather than leaving their denominations they increased their activity and sought only to bring new life to their congregations. With this, what is known as the Charismatic movement was born, something which has affected the worship services of all the major denominations (where one can see music, the raising of hands, and tearful confessionals on a much more regular basis) and brought an even wider acceptance of the phenomenon of speaking in tongues.

Writing in celebration of these developments over the last century, Jack Hayfield proclaims that what we have witnessed is a

century long rainfall...a storm of divine proportions prophesied by God's Spirit, pointing to His own intention of climaxing history with a global outpouring of spiritual awakening, restoration and redemptive blessing... I believe the immediate decade before us is destined to become, at once, the most sociologically traumatic and the most spiritually dynamic ever known. <sup>13</sup>

What does this all mean? How are we to understand these phenomena and are they truly connected to the work of the Holy Spirit and Christ's coming?

In order to answer these questions we must turn our attention to the nature and work of the Holy Spirit and take a closer look at the history of the Pentecostal movements which we shall do in the next article.

- 1 Gilley quoting 'Christian History, 'The rise of Pentacostalism, issue no. 58)
- 2 Certainly the events connected to the 'Welsh Revival' of 1904 must be understood as an even earlier spark, but perhaps not as dramatic and sensational as Azusa.
- 3 Jack Hayford and S. David Moore, The Charismatic Century, P. 73
- 4 A Hebrew word referring to God's dwelling in or descending on the Tabernacle (see Exodus 25:8)
- 5 Taken from http://www.azusastreet. org/AzusaStreetBartleman.htm
- 6 From page 4 of the first edition of 'The Apostolic Faith', the newsletter of the Azusa Street revival, published by the

- Apostolic Faith Moevement, 312 Azusa Street, Los Angeles, September, 1906.
- 7 Simple perceptions like the fact that Moses certainly could not have written all five of the first books in the Old Testament because his own death is described.
- 8 See for example David Friedrich Strauss, Der alte und der neue Glaube (The Old and the New Faith); 1872; English translation by M Blind.
- 9 The first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 10 quoted in Ian Frederick Finseth's M.A. Thesis in English, University of Virginia, August 1995
- 11 p. 21, Hayfield and Moore.
- 12 p. 107, ibid.
- 13 P. xvi, Hayfield and Moore

## Why we oxen and asses really belong at the side of the crib

#### Ulrich Meier

I was going to take up my time-honoured place at the now famous crib in Bethlehem, when, to my great horror, some impertinent fellow blocked my way. Neither protest nor yammering was of any help, not even my reference to the centuriesold tradition: he would not let me in. He replied to my questions with some incomprehensible muttering and added that he didn't know the exact reasons for the order, only that I was not mentioned in Holy Scripture. This perfidious lie angered me so much that I was about to dance on his back with my rear hooves when the fellow pointed to a freshly painted sign at the door of the stable. Next to a rather unfavourable depiction of myself I could just make out—with some effort—a very poorly drawn likeness of my old friend the ox. Beneath them in bold lettering: 'We wait outside!'

I met the ox soon after I turned round to set off home. 'Have they chucked you out too?' he asked, winking at me.

'No' I replied gloomily. 'They didn't even allow me to stick my nose into the stable. The world doesn't make sense to me any more.'

'What are you going to do now?' he asked with a glint in his eye that meant that my friend was about to answer the question himself.

'I have no idea. But you seem to be taking me somewhere.'

'We are going to our friend the painter. Maybe he can explain why we both appear in almost all his Christmas paintings but today are not allowed in the stable in Bethlehem.'

So we made our way north until, in the early morning, we arrived at the tiny house of the painter. He bade us welcome and led us straight into his workshop, which we knew well from previous visits. After all, he needs our presence now and then, in order to immortalize us on his masterpieces.

The painter frowned after we told him how we were barred from the stable and about the ugly sign on the door. 'This is a serious matter. It seems it turned out exactly as the old priest had foretold, after all.'

His gazed into the distance and sank into brooding from which he was reawakened only after a long while and after a questioning gaze to myself by the ox. 'Release us from the agony of our suspense and tell us what happened and what the priest foretold!'

'Come on, please!' I added.

The painter began to talk in his usual, long-winded way.

'The Holy Scripture is written on paper with letters and page numbers, between the covers of a book, but you can also find it in the hearts of all creatures on earth.'

'We know that well,' I interrupted him.

'Of course you do, but do you know the difference? In the heart the Holy Scripture is undivided, as on one single painting that reaches round the whole earth. I would dearly love to paint such a picture, but that's not possible on the earth'.

He gazed once again into the distance. 'The book of paper is always divided into thousands of pages and letters.'

'What has this got to do with us?' the ox interrupted.

'If they don't let you into the stable at Bethlehem any longer, then surely they know only the scripture on paper and have forgotten the scripture in their hearts. They look only at single pieces of the scripture and have lost its wholeness from their view.'

'Please explain.' I said.

'For instance, at Christmas, people only read the short paragraph about the Child of the World that was born to Mary in the stable. And because they don't' understand what they read they research it, and they lose themselves between the smallest letters. Since they don't see the words as a whole, they miss a number of things: you both, by way of illustration. At that point in the scripture you are indeed not mentioned at all. The man at the stable door is even right in his own way.'

Again I was overcome by panic and a large tear was in the eyes of the ox. I hardly could continue the conversation because the words of the painter caused me so much anguish.

'But in truth,' I hesitated to suggest, 'we both belong to the crib, don't we?'

'But of course,' the painter laughed heartily, 'how can you doubt it? The prophet Isaiah said "The ox knows his master and the ass the crib of the master." And how could you, my dear ass, be ready to carry the Messiah on your back into his Jerusalem as the Lord of Peace, without knowing him from the beginning and without singing "Hosanna" at the crib?'

The happiness that we felt at the painter's comforting words didn't last long though.

'If the human beings don't understand the scripture any longer with their hearts, then this is not only a misfortune for brother ass and myself, the ox continued. 'How will they find their way to the Lord, if they allow such signs and regulations to stand in the way to the crib?'

'Well, the words are still in there, even inside the roughest human hearts,' the painter said, in good spirits once more. 'They only have to clean out their hearts once in a while and listen to the more tender notes that easily get drowned in the noise of our times.'

'Could we help this in any way?' we both said as with one mouth.

'But of course,' the painter uttered through his teeth, as his whole face formed into a large grin. 'You too have a place in their hearts. You can help them do a spring clean, and lift up your voices in the most beautiful sounds. Maybe you will be able to get them on to the right path to get to know again the stable and the crib of the Lord'

'So we don't need to return to Bethlehem any more!' cried the ox, who is well known for his love of comfort.

'Of course not!' I got in between before the painter could reply. 'How many stables do you think we have to clean up, all plastered over with those awful signs. Let's get to work! After all, we should be at the crib, not hanging around in t a painter's studio!'

Ulrich Meier is a priest of The Christian Community in Hamburg

## Interview with Gisela Wielki, director of the Chicago Seminary

**Tom Ravetz:** What was the reason for founding a seminary in Chicago?

Gisela Wielki: In the late nineties the Leadership of The Christian Community resolved to bring about the establishment of a seminary in the English-speaking world. The priests' circle in North America was approached to take up this challenge and we accepted. It was felt that it would be good if the training centre could be outside Europe, to widen the circle for priest training as much as possible. It was the decision of the Leadership that the seminary should be established in what is called the heartland of North America, in Chicago.

**Tom:** The Seminary in Chicago has been going for four years now, with the first year having been a year of preparation. Does it feel as if it has found its place and task?

*Gisela:* Yes, as we enter our fifth year, the seminary feels very much as if it is here to stay. This has been greatly aided by the



The students of the priest seminary of Chicago

first Ordination this past spring in Chicago, celebrated in English by Vicke von Behr, the Erzoberlenker. Patrick Kennedy began his training before there was a seminary on this continent. But the fact that his Ordination took place here was like a baptism for the seminary. People in North America have now experienced that the training has a beginning and an end. It also gave all our congregations the opportunity to send representatives to witness the event, and we had nearly 200 guests, some of whom came from abroad. To experience an Ordination can be a real eye opener for our members and friends, congregants. It can bring about an intuitive knowing, an understanding of what this journey of priest training is all about and what it asks of the individual ordained and the congregations he or she will serve in the future.

**Tom:** Can you describe some of the challenges and also blessings you encountered in the founding of the seminary?

Gisela: The task of establishing the seminary in Chicago greatly challenged The Christian Community in North America to raise the funds to establish the institution physically. Made possible by the generosity and sacrifices of many, it came as a blessing for the growing together of The Christian Community on this vast continent. Centrally located, the seminary is becoming a living organ that unites all our congregations here. It challenges the circle of priests here to work together in a

new dimension. For members and friends it is becoming a focal point, offering hope, encouragement and resources. It connects us to the world-wide movement in ways that were not possible before.

**Tom:** Is it an American seminary, or an international one?

Gisela: Chicago is an English-speaking seminary in America. From the very beginning the seminary had an international flavour. Our first three students, who made the launch possible in the fall of 2003, stood in for three continents. North America, Europe and Australia. Last year, of the group of eleven students, five were American-born; the others came from different countries. Now, in our fourth year we have the situation that in the group of nine students, four are German, the others are Dutch, Belgian, African-British, Japanese and American. One American decided to begin his training in Stuttgart. Because America has a seminary now does not mean that Americans have to study in Chicago. Conversely, students from Germany are now beginning to discover that Chicago provides a new opportunity of studying in another language and in another culture. This is a development which will enrich our Christian Community.

**Tom:** Are there plans for expansion? You were given the green light to offer the full training.

**Gisela:** Well, we do have second year students, even third year students. Only they are not presently in Chicago, but have transferred after one year to either Stuttgart or Hamburg or are in a practical. In each of our three seminaries students may discontinue at the end of any semester. So the number of students going into a sec-

ond year can become rather small. This then becomes a financial burden for the seminary, making it difficult to gather the needed faculty. It can also make it more appealing for the remaining students to join the larger student bodies in our other two seminaries, even if that means to transfer to another language. We have found that native English speakers like the idea of spending some time in one of the seminaries in Germany and experiencing The Christian Community in that part of the world where it was founded. Once students enter more deeply into the life and work of The Christian Community and its history, and into Anthroposophy, they start to feel that to have some proficiency in German is desirable. We support this. At the same time we very much wish to grow large enough to have a full training. It is important for the students to experience the path, the journey through students who are already further along. How to reach the 'critical mass' to establish a second and eventually a third year, moving beyond our current situation, which has the nature of a flow form, is our great challenge, and we are working on different concepts.

**Tom:** Who is on the faculty?

**Gisela:** Our faculty comes from near and far. Many, but not all, are from the priests' circle in North America and abroad.

**Tom:** How is it working out financially?

**Gisela:** Students pay tuition. These fees cannot provide all the support we need. We make an appeal to all North American friends and members for donations twice a year with our seminary newsletter. Fortunately, we have a couple of major donors who have pledged their support for the first few years. Hopefully they

will renew their support, or others will step forward. The generosity of our major donors has so far helped us to stay in the black. We of course always hope that potential donors in other countries will in time take note of our needs, so that the financial burden does not continue to fall only on North America.

**Tom:** How is the training different from what is offered in the two German seminaries?

**Gisela:** Chicago has three priests and all three are seminary directors. I am a full time director. Richard Dancey is the resident priest for the congregation and seminary director in addition, so is Oliver Steinrueck, who is also the Co-ordinator (Lenker) for North America. That is in itself a unique director constellation.

From the beginning we understood our task to be the establishing of an Englishspeaking centre for priest training. The central task of all three seminaries is the same: to prepare individual human beings for the task of priesthood. Of course the training is different, simply through its being held in North America and in English. Anyone able to think and speak fluently in another language knows that different aspects of one's personality shine out, depending on the language in which one is expressing oneself. English is the language with the strongest world flavour.

There are other differences, some of which are simply a function of what is possible under the present circumstances. Being still a young institution, and far from any accomplished institution to be compared with, we have the leisure to grow slowly, to be attentive to what and how this seminary wants to grow. We experiment, without the pressure of having to justify our existence. We can allow ourselves to learn by going where we have to go.

Every semester we open some of our courses. It allows members and friends



The Cloud Gate in Chicage

to participate for a week in the life of the seminary, gaining for themselves the inner renewal and enrichment that they are seeking. They return to their congregations as ambassadors, something which we very much appreciate. It adds a dimension to the full time students' experience, which is both enriching and challenging. Our students live together and therefore become aware of certain social challenges, as is the case in the Stuttgart seminary. Our building is five minutes from the church and the congregation chapel is our chapel. The student body is both independent and a part of the congregation. The congregation much appreciates the presence of the students. We meet with the congregation regularly to assure that the relationship is mutually carried and to make sure no unintended trespasses occur.

**Tom:** Are there particular challenges The Christian Community faces in North America that influence how the training is taking shape?

**Gisela:** Being located at the periphery of The Christian Community makes it harder to grow into the full training centre we are in principle, but not yet in reality.

We would not see it as an ideal for Americans to be trained in North America and work in America without having seen or experienced The Christian Community in other parts of the world. We will always encourage American students to go abroad for some time to widen their horizons and to allow them, if the training should lead to Ordination, to feel part of a larger circle. How this is done may turn out differently for different students. This could be through internships or some time of study at one of the other seminar-

ies. Being geographically at the periphery of The Christian Community, it is important to also feel some connection to the centre. Of course this is also true and necessary the other way around and it challenges us to widen our consciousness. But I can see the seminary in Chicago playing an increasingly important part in this.

**Tom:** How has the task of training priests changed over the 80 years of the existence of The Christian Community?

Gisela: When I studied at the seminary in the late 60's we were still taught by some of the founders. Like the early apostles they were the eye-witnesses. They had experienced Rudolf Steiner and his role in the founding of The Christian Community. We were strongly influenced by this encounter, and by the earnestness with which these founding priests had taken up their task. In our own growing up as priests we could fall back on these encounters, and we could still draw on seeing ourselves as the eye-witnesses of the eye-witnesses. Students trained today have to do without this support. Of course they also have to have a grasp of the history of The Christian Community and the esoteric nature of its founding. But what they really need now as the source that will sustain them, keeping them faithful to the call, to their resolve, throughout their priestly work-this has to be something much more immediate. It has to spring from the immediate awareness of an ever present relationship with the living Christ and the angel of The Christian Community.

In the Act of Consecration of Man we encounter the theme of walking with Christ. This walking with Christ implies that we will be changed by the one we walk with.

In the Ordination, the one to be ordained is reminded of Christ's walking with him, wherever he goes, and that he is to always be aware of this. Training at a seminary can provide some guidance toward this goal and that is not only by way of esoteric schooling but also by the way we look at the natural world, our fellow human beings, and our recognition that heaven is not only above us, but also 'under our feet'. With this in mind we learn to walk differently. The students can learn this, along with all the study material they are exposed to at any of the seminaries, all of which can provide a key, but the unlocking has to be done by the student himself. In that sense we cannot train priests, we can only point out the way.

In the early days students often had a very short training. In part, I am sure, this had to do with the wealth of grace bestowed upon The Christian Community and its founders at the time of the founding. But as we have moved further away from this time and are now required to find that substance on our own, through our own effort and striving, more time is needed. Also the world has changed. We go our ways ever more as individuals. How does this affect community building, a central task for the priest? Our education is often such that mountains have to be moved, before we become again susceptible to the not so visible, such as the reality of transubstantiation. How can modern technology aid us, such as the Internet, without distracting us from the task of weaving the inner net? How can we as individuals put our roots into Anthroposophy and grow into a tree in which a great variety of birds can build their nests? How do we discover the universally human, by becoming ever more individual? All this and much more has to be taken into account in today's priest training. It is a challenge to study and live with others who are on the same road, pursuing the same destination, and yet a destination one can ultimately only arrive at alone. To live alone in community, may sound like a paradox and it is, but that is only in keeping with what we all have to learn today.

**Tom:** Some members look forward to the time when the dominance of German language and thought-forms will be complemented by priests trained in other languages. How do the directors of the Chicago seminary see this?

**Gisela:** We have at the moment about 180 German priests and 150 more of other nationalities. The strong German influence for example at our international synods is hardly avoidable, though all parties may wish it to be otherwise. It would be very different had we 150 priests from English-speaking countries. But something will change with more and more German priests having had some of their training in a country and language other than Germany and German. We see already a beginning with the growing number of Germans coming to study in Chicago. I believe that in time it will free the German priests' circle of what may come across as dominating and as all too German. The time will come and must come, when we will have priests who not have studied in Germany, although some knowledge of German will remain a requirement as a research tool.

One can only wish for the day when The Christian Community will have seminaries in many countries.

#### Man & the Stars

#### December 2006—February 2007

#### **Hazel Straker**

Advent 2006 sees quite a gathering of planets in the region of Scales, Scorpion and Archer, all fairly near the Sun. On December 5 the Sun lights up the Full Moon in the Bull at 00.25, not far from Aldebaran, the Bull's eye. The Sun has just passed Antares, the heart of the Scorpion. On the 18th he overtakes Pluto before moving into Archer where he is passed by the New Moon at 14.01 on the 20th. Two days later at 00.22 he moves through his solstice point giving the shortest day in the northern hemisphere and the longest for those in southern regions. Mercury enters the area of the Scorpion on December 7 and is visible in the eastern morning sky before sunrise until the 10th when he draws too near the Sun to be seen as he enters Archer. Venus passed behind the Sun at the end of October and becomes visible again as evening star in the western sky shortly after sunset at Christmas as she enters the Archer region. The day old Moon overtakes her on the 21st. Mars and Jupiter meet in the morning sky on the 11th having just been overtaken by Mercury but are all too near the Sun to be seen by the unaided eye. They are passed by the waning Moon on the 18th and 19th but only Jupiter is just visible in the eastern morning sky. Opposite this group of planets is Saturn who has just moved into the region of the Lion and is visible most of the night marked out by the last quarter Moon on the 12th. Saturn moves retrograde on the 6th. 2007 is ushered in with a Full Moon in the Twins on January 2 at 13.57. Venus continues to brighten in the

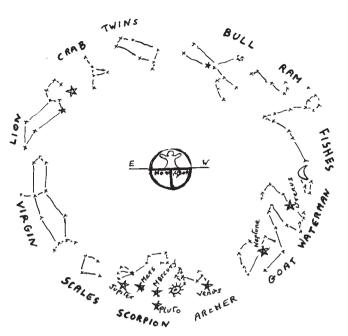
western evening sky as she pulls ahead of the Sun, entering Goat on the 3rd and Waterman on the 24th. Mercury passes beyond the Sun on the 7th, moving then through the Goat to become visible in the western evening sky shortly after sunset at the end of the month in Waterman, setting before Venus. As the Sun enters Goat the New Moon passes him on the 19th at 00.01, then very close to Venus the following day. Mars and Jupiter become gradually brighter as the Sun moves ahead of them. Mars slowly moves ahead of Jupiter and both are passed by the waning Moon on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. The end of the Holy Nights is marked by another very close passing of Saturn by the Moon on the 6th. These three passings of Saturn by the moon, the third on February 2, Candlemas, can be seen from some places as an occultation. Saturn is up all night and at his brightest, becoming opposite to the Sun and Neptune on February 10 whilst Neptune is far out beyond the Sun. The February Full Moon at 05.45 on the 2nd outshines Saturn as we mentioned above. Mid February the Sun passes into Waterman where the New Moon overtakes him at 16.14 on the 17<sup>th</sup>. The Moon passes Mercury the next day which is invisible to the naked eye as he retrograded on the 14th and passes between Sun and Earth on the 23rd. The Moon and Mars meet in

the morning twilight on the 15<sup>th</sup>. On February 12 the waning crescent Moon can be seen with Jupiter

Hazel Straker lives and works in Camphill Coleg Elidyr, Wales. in the morning eastern sky a few hours before sunrise. The two day old Moon passes Venus on the 19<sup>th</sup> in the western evening sky after sunset.

Saturn seems conspicuously on his own during these months and over the turn of the year. The last years he has moved through the region of the Twins and Crab and has just entered the area of the Lion. We have mentioned before that this was the part of the sky which he traversed during the Three Years of Christ's Ministry on Earth and how after these years

he moved into the Lion at the time of the first Whitsun. The Lion has always been associated with the attribute of courage in various mythologies and considered the region where Beings dwell who can help us form our heart as we prepare for our life on Earth while still in our mother's womb. The world now seems gravely in need of the forces of the heart and also of courage to set out on new ways forward. Many small courageous acts come from the hearts of individuals but they seem in danger of being eclipsed by negative ones. Could we envisage the Saturn Beings challenging us to encourage and develop these small beginnings as a special task of the New Year 2007, to break through our 'occultations' of intellectual traditions from the past and find new, positive and courageous ways forward? The Apostle Paul showed us one way in his epistle to the Ephesians: 'Put on the whole armour



Midnight Greenwich December 24-25, 2007

of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all, to stand, (VI:11–13)

I wish all you readers a lion-hearted New Year.

All times given are GMT.

Hazel Straker's regular column on the stars will be discontinued with this final article. We would like to thank Hazel for her many years of faithful and creative production which started in the 'Threshing Floor'.

THE EDITORS

#### **Reviews**

#### The Three Years— The Life of Christ between Baptism and Ascension Emil Bock

Paperback, Floris Books, January 2006 Reviewed by Tom Ravetz

It is a great joy to reread Emil Bock's classic work, *The Three Years*, now in a new revised edition. *The Three Years* is one of the great classics of theology in The Christian Community. Bock describes his approach in the Foreword. Instead of a continuous historical narrative—a 'life of Jesus', as had been attempted by the theologians of the 19<sup>th</sup> century—he gives 'individual reflections' on aspects of the life of Christ. This approach leaves readers free to make connections and to continue researching for themselves.

The chapter on Apollonius of Tyana and Jesus is a characteristically bold and imaginative sweep that points up the remarkable, now almost forgotten figure of Apollonius-a magician and wonder-worker who attained great political influence in the first century—as a contrast to the figure of Jesus Christ. Bock makes it clear that the forces used by Apollonius were from the past—they were the old forces of magic and the ancient mysteries, which circumvent the human ego. The wide-ranging influence of Apollonius is shown in a double light: he was able to influence world events—Bock attributes to him the line of wise Caesars that followed Domitian, and gave the church of the second century a crucial breathingspace. However, Bock contrasts this influence with the enduring, world-transforming deed of Christ, the compass of whose life was so much more limited outwardly than that of Apollonius.

The significance of the life of Jesus did not consist in any external change or reformation of the world, but the world received a seed of new life. (p 36)

Two other aspects can be mentioned on hand of this chapter. The one is the context in which Bock came to these thoughts—in the Foreword he makes this very clear:

No word in this book is written without an awareness that ... a modern understanding of Christ must be set against the demonic feverishness and satanic superficiality of a civilization which has turned to chaos and is writhing in its death-throes. (p 12)

The reflections on the futility of a human saviour, whose force comes from an atavistic power, have a clear bearing on the history of Germany in the 1930s.

The other aspect is that Bock's grand sweep sometimes leaves no space for a differentiated view of historical fact. This is not meant as a criticism, but as a note of caution for those who might think that by reading him one is in possession of the whole truth something one cannot expect of any author. In his discussion of the criticism of Christianity by its pagan attackers, he implies that it was only the pagans who attached such importance to the miracle stories of Jesus, and therefore used Apollonius to 'trump' him (p. 19). However, until the late middle ages, the miracle stories in the gospels were considered one of the most powerful proofs of the truth of Christianity by Christians themselves. There are stories of sceptics being told of the miracles described in the gospels, and being convinced by this testimony to convert to Christianity.

In the second chapter, Bock brings a masterly discussion of the problem of belief in miracles as it has been felt since the Enlightenment. Christians have felt forced into one of two positions: either holding modern, critical thinking at bay in order to preserve a special place of faith, where God can overturn the immutable laws of nature; or interpreting the miracles as legendary stories that did not really happen. Bock out-

lines a way of understanding miracle as spiritually real and yet involving no reversal of natural law. He quotes Friedrich Rittelmeyer: 'the so-called miracles of Jesus are not a breaking of natural laws, but rather a breaking-through of higher laws of existence.' (p. 39) Bock also offers a key to understanding miracles in his interpretation of the Temptation. In this, Christ rejects the temptation to use his divine powers to overwhelm humanity. Bock's description of the Temptation arising from Christ's experience of the inner landscape of Jesus' soul gives a great key to understanding what otherwise can seem strange and distant legendary scenes.

Bock presents the Baptism of Jesus as 'the one great central miracle', and uses this event as the key to his picture of the Incarnation of Christ. 100 years after Friedrich Schleiermacher, the father of modern theology, rejected the dogmatic formulation of the Incarnation as irrelevant, and relegated discussion of the Trinity to the final chapter of his book, *The Christian Faith*, the founders of The Christian Community saw an urgent need to restore an understanding of Christ's spiritual nature. They saw in Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy the possibility of moving beyond the polarity between dogmatic formulations and human piety.

Anthroposophy gives vital insights into the humanity of Jesus, whom we can see as a kind of summation of all the spiritual striving of humanity until the beginning of the Christian era. In the deeply moving descriptions of The Fifth Gospel, for example, it is made clear how Jesus feels as a human individual what mankind is experiencing as a whole: the utter despair and not knowing what will lead forward into the future. In this mood of soul he goes to the Jordan and receives the Baptism from John. There, something takes place that is expressed in a picture and in words. The picture is the descending dove, image of the Holy Spirit. The words are a quotation from the coronation Psalm of King David: 'you are my beloved son, today I have begotten you.' Rudolf Steiner emphasises in many places that this was the moment when the ego of Jesus withdrew to make place for Christ, the Son of God. This image of the Incarnation shows us that it is a process that works from two sides. Everything that had ripened in the soul of Jesus, and of humanity, becomes the vessel to receive something higher. If one lives with this view for some time, one finds it hard to understand the view of mainstream Christianity, that the Incarnation happened instantaneously in the moment of conception. This is static, and it leaves no place for the human development that could make the Incarnation possible—development such as we hear about following the visit of the twelve-year old Jesus to the Temple.

However, as is the case with every insight, if it is taken in isolation it too becomes onesided. Bock quotes with approval Apollinaris of Laodicea, a theologian of the fourth century who saw Christ replacing the nous, the mind or spirit of the man Jesus. Apollinaris' former pupil, Gregory of Nazianzus, had to point out the weakness in this picture. Christ can save us because he becomes truly human. He is no Zeus, cladding himself in the disguise of an earthly being. But the most crucial and important part of the human being is precisely the *nous*, the mind or guiding principle of the personality. If Jesus Christ did not have a human nous, how can he bring about our salvation? In a pithy phrase in keeping with the tone of the time, Gregory said: 'What he has not assumed he has not saved. The fullness of the humanity becomes a touchstone for soteriology, the doctrine of salvation. No amputated humanity is adequate for salvation. Bock does not go into this problem—he rightly sees that Apollinaris' one-sided emphasis counterbalances the 'simple man of Nazareth' of 19th century theology.

At this point some readers might object that Bock is only presenting the picture that Rudolf Steiner gives. It is indeed the case

that Steiner very often speaks of the Incarnation in simple terms, as we saw above: the ego of Jesus leaves, and is replaced by Christ. However, from the more detailed descriptions that Steiner gives in certain places, it is clear that this is a simplified picture, and that along with the displacement there was a union: the Christ-spirit unites with a human ego, one which offers up its normal development.1 This is connected with the aspect of Rudolf Steiner's teaching which is sometimes presented in a rather sensational way, the so-called 'two Jesus children'. There was a human ego within Jesus that was left when the other ego withdrew at the Baptism; it had sacrificed its possibility of becoming an earthly ego-organisation after the union of the two Jesus-children in the Temple at the age of 12. This being is ready to unite itself with Christ after the Baptism. The great church father Origen knew about the virginal soul that remained in paradise until it was needed to help bring about the Incarnation; he describes the closeness of its union with Christ as being like the iron's union with the glow of the heat of the fire. Even he, however, cannot describe so concretely how this union came about.

This gives us the picture of a full humanity, but one that makes a sacrifice so that the divine being can incarnate.

Bock's attempt to encompass the mystery of the indwelling Christ comes to expression on page 82, where he is speaking of the parallel between the experience of Jesus and the experience of the indwelling Christ which St. Paul describes as the aim of every Christian: 'I die, ...'

The human ego had passed out of his body altogether. In constant self-surrender, it had made real the mystery expressed later by St Paul, 'Not I but Christ in me'. It had made space for the divine ego...'

There is a contradiction here. If the self-surrender of the ego was 'constant', it must have still been present, ie not have 'passed out of his body altogether.

In the very contradiction—did the ego leave, or did it constantly surrender itself?-we feel Bock groping towards the mystery. And when later, for example on page 104, he says: 'What took place in these three years in the life of Jesus of Nazareth can be reflected in the corresponding years of the life of every person who unite themselves [sic] with Christ' we see the need for a more differentiated view. There is a place where Rudolf Steiner speaks of what would have happened had Christ alone united with human beings: the sickness of sin in the human constitution would have been healed, but the moral deeds that human beings performed would have been robotic: they would have been 'Christdeeds, not human deeds'2 Steiner speaks of the uniqueness of the Incarnation in Jesus, where 'in place of the ego-consciousness the Son-consciousness lived after the Baptism.' It is through the Holy Spirit that human beings will 'in future time elevate their I in full consciousness, and the Christ will still be able to dwell within such human beings.

There is not space in a review such as this to do justice to the riches of this great book. Bock's method, which involves close study of the Gospel text, an awareness of the geographical mysteries of the life of Christ, and an imaginative and undogmatic relationship to the work of Rudolf Steiner, creates a rich tapestry. Every page gives food for thought, expressing new ideas or cladding ideas dimly understood with breadth and depth.

 $^1$  See esp. the lectures on the Gospel of Saint Luke, p. 184  $^2$  *The Mysteries of the Trinity*, Fourth Lecture

#### Myth of the nativity— The virgin birth reexamined Andrew Welburn

Floris Books

#### Reviewed by Pearl Goodwin

The theme of the virgin birth has long fascinated not only theologians and scholars, but also everyone who has an open mind for the Gospel stories of Matthew and Luke. It is a fascination that arises largely out of a fundamental difficulty, particularly in our time, of imagining that Jesus of Nazareth was born outside of the basic biological principles governing conception and birth, without the participation of Joseph. So great is this problem that for many people it stands in the way of their accepting Christianity. And so steeped are we in what seem to be the unshakeable laws of nature, that it is almost impossible to imagine that a human being could be born in any way other than through the laws of nature. Only those people who can live with strong and unquestioning faith accept the possibility of the virgin birth just as it stands in the Gospel, understanding it as a miracle, beyond the laws of nature which have been in existence since God's promise to Noah after the flood.

Putting aside for a moment this whole aspect of natural law, it is clear that the virgin birth has many other layers of meaning, and it is these that Andrew Welburn addresses in his latest book. He approaches the subject with what we have come to expect from him, a wide scholarship infused with spiritual imagination. For him, what makes the birth 'virgin' has less to do with the biological side than with a stream of thought that comes out of the far past. Much of the book is taken up with showing that the Gospel stories are by no means the only such events in history. In his own words 'the concept of the virgin birth was associated with a new age, the new revelation, the reappearing prophet, the world's saviour, a mystical, divine child.' Virgin here means that something new has come to the earth. There is a great richness of material describing instances of this, much of it taken from more hidden, 'occult' literature. To mention but one, the birth of Melchisedek, who appears only very briefly in the book of Genesis, bearing bread and wine to Abraham. He brought a glimpse of heavenly heights before the necessary but

more earthly religious forms of Judaism took shape. The Melchisedek of Genesis is but one of a long line bearing that name, beginning with the son of the brother of Noah, Nir, and his wife Sopanim. The story has echoes of the birth of John the Baptist to parents that are old, and also of the Matthew story, the shock of Niv when Sopanin is found to be with child. Sopanin died out of the pain of rejection—but the child is born out of the dead body and immediately can sit up and speak. There are many such stories, taken from Egyptian, Judaic and also Gnostic sources, to mention but a few.

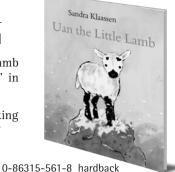
It is clear that this book has been written for a wider readership than those familiar with the work of Rudolf Steiner. Hopefully it will reach many people, for it takes the realm of spirit as serious and real within a scholarly context. So the work of Rudolf Steiner on this theme is mentioned only briefly and in an understated way. Steiner spoke about the fact that in the past, and sometimes even now, conception could take place in sleep, that is unconsciously and therefore purely, or virginally. In that state the heavenly star of the individual can unite with the biological counterpart. Natural law and spiritual law can be brought together and it is important that this should be understood. The birth of Jesus of Nazareth was not a virgin birth in the sense of there being no biological father. Jesus of Nazareth had to be a full human being, a special one certainty, but a truly human being, in order to fulfil Christ's deed of redemption. Perhaps this side needs slightly more emphasis in the book, even though Andrew Welburn comes to the same conclusion from other directions. He shows us that the Gospel story is the culmination of a great tradition stretching far back into prehistory, and that what comes as new spiritual impulse out of the heavens must always have the character of 'virgin'. It is a thought-provoking and challenging book.

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#### Gospel Readings 2006–2007

Advent	Ascension
Sunday, December 3Luke 21: 25–36	Thursday, May 17 John 16: 24–33
Sunday, December 10Luke 21: 25–36	Sunday, May 20 John 16: 24–33
Sunday, December 17Luke 21: 25–36	
Sunday, December 24Luke 21: 25–36	Whitsuntide
	Sunday, May 27 John 14: 23–31
Christmas	
Monday, December 25	Wed., May 30 1 Corinth. 13: 1–13
MidnightMatthew 1:1–25	Sunday, June 3 John 3: 1–15
DawnLuke 2:1–20	Sunday, June 10 John 5: 19–29
MorningJohn 21:15–25	Sunday, June 17 John 5: 30–47
Monday, January 1 2007John 1: 1–18	Ct Johnstide
Fuinham.	St. Johnstide
Epiphany	Sunday, June 24
Saturday, January 6Matthew 2: 1–12	Sunday, July 1John 1: 24–34
Sunday, January 7Matthew 2: 1–12	Sunday, July 8Matthew 11:1–15
Sunday, January 14Luke 2:41–52	Sunday, July 15John 3: 22–36
Sunday, January 21John 2:1–11	Com des. Lele 22 Marls 0, 27, 20
Sunday, January 28John 5: 1–18	Sunday, July 22Mark 8: 27–38
Condens Tahanamad Matthews 20, 1, 16	Sunday, July 29Matthew 7:1–14
Sunday, February 4 Matthew 20: 1–16	Sunday, August 5Luke 15:11–32
Sunday, February 11Luke 8: 1–18	Sunday, August 12Luke 9: 1–17
Sunday, February 18Luke 18:18–34	Sunday, August 19Luke 18:35–43
Sunday, February 25Matthew 4: 1–11	Sunday, August 26 Mark 7:31–37
Sunday, March 4 Matthew 17: 1–13	Sunday, September 2Luke 10:1–20
Passiontide	Sunday, September 9Luke 17:5–24 Sunday, Sept. 16 Matthew 6:19–34
Sunday, March 11Luke 11: 29–36	Sunday, September 23 Luke 7:11–17
Sunday, March 18John 6:1–15	Sunday, September 25Luke 7.11–17
Sunday, March 25John 8:1–12	Michaelmas
·	Saturday, Sept. 29Matthew 22: 1–14
Holy Week	Sunday, Sept. 30Matthew 22: 1–14
Sunday, April 1Matthew 21: 1–11	Sunday, October 7 Revelation 12: 1–12
Thursday, April 5Luke 23: 13–32	Sunday, October 14 Revelation 1: 1–20
Friday, April 6John 19: 1–15	Sunday, October 21 Revelation 3: 1–6
Saturday, April 7 John 19:16–42	·
Easter	Sunday, Oct. 28Revelation 7:9 to 8:4
Sunday, April 8 Mark 16: 1–8	Sunday, Nov. 4Revelation 14: 1–20
Sunday, April 15 John 20: 19–31	Sunday, Nov. 11 Revelation 19: 11–16
Sunday, April 13John 10:1–16	Sunday, Nov. 18Revelation 21: 1–7
Sunday, April 22John 15: 1–16	Sunday, Nov. 25Revelation 22. 1– 9
Sunday, May 6John 16: 1–33	Advent
Sunday, May 13John 14: 1–31	Sunday, December 2Luke 21: 25–36
Junuay, may 13Junin 14. 1-31	Junuay, December 2Luke 21: 25–30

There is basic annual pattern for these readings within which there may be some variations

#### KINGS AND PROPHETS

Saul, David, Solomon, Elijah, Jonah, Isaiah and Jeremiah

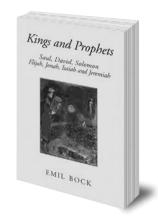
#### **EMIL BOCK**

TRANSLATED BY MARIA ST GOAR

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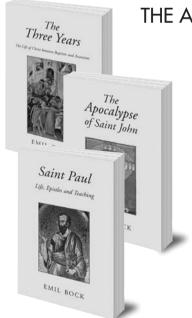
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0-86315-573-1 paperback (ISBN 13: 978-086315-573-4) 368 pages £14.99 Published November 2006

Emil Bock was one of the founders of the Christian Community in 1922, and led the movement from 1938 until his death in 1959.



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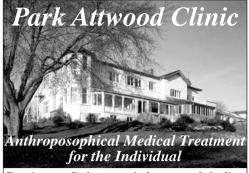
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