

The background is a watercolor painting. On the left, a bright yellow sun with many pointed rays is partially obscured by a large, dark, swirling mass of blue and black paint that resembles smoke or a storm cloud. The top left corner is a solid red color. The bottom left corner has some green and yellow washes.

The Christian Community *Perspectives*

*... wars and the
rumour of wars...*

Advent • Christmas • Epiphany 2007-8

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Perspectives

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In a thought provoking book, *Creative Love in Tough Times* (SPCK, 2007), Andrew Clitherow wrestles with the question of how the God of love can have created a world in which there is so much pain and suffering, the world of 'wars and rumours of wars.' His solution, which draws on Origen and Irenaeus has much in common with what we find in the rituals of The Christian Community. I hope to write a review of this important book soon. One interesting aspect of his vision is the idea that the whole evolutionary drive with its brutal struggle for survival and the defence of territory is the product of a cosmic Fall that preceded the creation of our universe. The Holy Spirit is ceaselessly at work trying to counter or transcend these lower drives with the allure of love. Nothing is excluded from this cosmic struggle, not even the religions of humanity:

Religion often provides a group within a nation—or a nation itself—with the cultural justification to lay claim to certain territorial resources and to defend them against all others as a God-given right. ... Jesus, however, taught that the kingdom of God was vastly different from the territorial kingdom of Israel. ... He spoke of a kingdom that lay within people's hearts (Luke 17.21). Its boundaries are formed or broken by the quality of authentic love we show or fail to show in our lives. His politics were to do with peace rather than worldly power. He believed not in the survival of the fittest but in the processes of creative love where the marginalized, the weak, the lost and the unloved are cherished and valued as highly as everyone else. He showed that it is more creative to share—rather than to fight over—the resources of the world. I am defined not by what I possess but by who I am. And who I am largely depends on what I am prepared to give away. (pp. 155–6)

It becomes ever clearer that solutions to the problems that beset us are not solely—or even mainly—to be found by tackling them head-on. More than ever, we need new thoughts that allow us to understand what afflicts us and our world. In this issue, four authors take very different starting points in an attempt to find such thoughts.

TOM RAVETZ

The word, courage and love

Peter Roth (1967)

At the beginning of the Apocalypse (Rev. 1: 12–16) Christ is described as standing before seven candlesticks clothed in a white garment with a golden girdle, His eyes as a flame of fire and a sharp, two-edged sword issuing from His mouth. We tend to connect this picture instinctively with judgement and punishment, but in fact His sword is the sword of the Word because this image of Christ is the continuation, the transformation of the beginning of St. John's Gospel, 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God.' (John 1:1)

With the Fall of Humanity came a split in the unity of word and sword: the sword became a weapon and the word diminished to the level of human language which is now little more than a means of communication. But something else began to glow amid all the misery, imperfection and guilt of earthly life, and that was human love. Through the power of Christ this love will become articulate, and human love and human word will grow nearer to each other. Love and the divine Word are one; they are like substance and form. Christ, who descended into human destiny, melts the sword into courage within the human heart and fills our words with creative power. More and more, human beings will wield the courageous, creating Word.

Christmas marks the beginning of the Light shining in the darkness. From 24th December throughout the Twelve Holy Nights until 6th January, we celebrate the festival of the human soul—the human soul that shines into the earthly and cosmic spaces, full of strength and comfort, for it knows it is lying on the breast of Christ.

Peter Roth OBE was a priest in Botton Village, a Camphill village in North Yorkshire, from 1955 to 1992. This article is taken from Worlds in the Mirror, a collection of his writings published by Camphill Books and available from Botton Bookshop, Danby Whitby N Yorks YO21 2NJ. We will include articles from this collection in the coming year, and there will be a full review in the next issue of Perspectives

Understanding Violence in the Name of Religion

Michael Tapp

The phenomenon of violence based on religious or spiritual convictions is not new, but in recent decades it has undergone a significant escalation. Many people reject religion outright because of what they see as its advocacy of violence. Can killing be a part of any genuine religion? How is it possible that forms of violence have been perpetrated by genuine believers over a wide spectrum of religious bodies?

A recent study by an American academic into violence motivated by religious ideals in our time (Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*) provides valuable insights into the attitudes and beliefs of those who participate in acts of terrorism. He sought out and talked to many people in prominent movements engaged in such acts around the world to produce a plausible picture which reveals significant common characteristics in the motivation of the many different groups. He restricts himself specifically to those with a predominantly religious background. This excludes, for instance, those which have a basically ethnic background, though there will still be aspects which they have in common.

The situations or movements which are considered are the extreme groups in the conflicts in Israel, Northern Ireland and the Punjab, the Japanese Auk Chinook movement and a number of American sects/movements, including the anti-abortionists. All of these call on religious principles in one form or another to provide moral justification for their violent actions.

Cosmic War

There would appear to be two main sets of causes which bring such movements into being. One is religious and the other is social. Underlying both is the character of our time, with its unprecedented change, the very real fears of the destabilization of society which such change may bring: the insecurity of a dissolving order. To the religious mind we are living in apocalyptic times, the essence of which is a confrontation in the heavenly

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places between the forces of good and evil. This is the content of the moral high ground which these movements take, seeing themselves as participants in this cosmic war on the side of the good. As servants of God they face the servants of the devil. It is a situation of no compromise, for how can one compromise the will of God? It is not difficult to find chapter and verse, for example in the Old Testament, to back up this stance. As Juer-gensmeyer points out:

These images of divine warfare are persistent features of religious activism. They provide the context and the themes that are played out in the grand scenarios that lie behind contemporary acts of performance violence. What makes religious violence particularly savage and relentless is that its perpetrators have placed such religious images of divine struggle cosmic war—in the service of worldly political battles. For this reason, acts of religious violence serve not only as tactics in a political strategy but also as evocations of a much larger spiritual confrontation. [146]

Thus, in the Arab-Israeli conflict both sides can claim to be on the side of the good, asserting that coexistence is impossible. War is the better choice, however long it has to last: once we see a cosmic dimension behind and beyond historical events, our notion of what is worthwhile is released from the need to see measurable effects in the here and now.

Each movement has its own particular aim, seeing 'God's will' applied to a particular situation. The Israelis refer to the divine gift of the promised land some four thousand years ago which is still valid and overrides anything that might have happened in the meantime. They were unjustly dispossessed. Later inhabitants, today's Palestinians, have also been dispossessed after centuries of occupation. Both sides see themselves as victims of history, each with an impeccable title to the country. As in Northern Ireland, the original religious element has been interwoven with political issues where the two are in any case regarded as inseparable in the fabric of society. Indeed, an important characteristic, which follows from the cosmic war scenario, is that religion and politics should not and cannot be separated. The fact that our modern western societies have removed religion from the political sphere is regarded by all these groups as a basic problem in our world situation.

Such groups are always minority movements. What they can achieve is very little. Indeed, they do not strive to achieve strategic objects, for although it may be difficult to defeat them or get rid of them, they actually do not have the power to impose their will on the enemy. Instead, they

concentrate on making symbolic, albeit violent, statements. These they see as part of a grander struggle which is religious rather than political. Juergensmeyer calls this 'performance violence'. Its object is to undermine the prevailing status quo and to destabilize. The symbolic nature of such acts is emphasized by choosing particular places and times for their execution. The Ulster parades, commemorating important events of the past, are an obvious example. The bombing of the World Trade Center in New York and of the government building in Philadelphia were symbolic acts against what is considered to be American tyranny in its economic and political policies. They were also carefully timed to have special significance, even if this was apparent only to the perpetrators. Horrific as they were ('there are no innocent people in this war'—that is, anyone can be targeted), they nevertheless had no effect in achieving concrete aims.

An important aspect of the religious dimension is the reaction to the increasingly liberal and secular development of society in the western world and its impact on the rest of the world. The reaction has been spearheaded by the Islamist movements and has also occasioned rare agreement between conservative rabbis in Israel and conservative mullahs in Iran. The main common enemy of 'the good' in this conflict is the United States and its perceived decadent culture which it exports around the world, whether wanted or not. Some of its most virulent opponents are to be found in the United States itself in various sectarian groups, such as Christian Identity and the anti-abortion groups, but more obviously in the more extreme Islamic teachers such as Osama bin Laden, who calls America 'the biggest terrorist in the world', or Sheik Omar Abdul Rahman (convicted for conspiring in the World Trade Center bombing in 1993) who predicts that a revengeful God will sweep America from the face of the earth. Such people see the United States not only as the servant of satanic forces, but also as the supporter of Islam's enemies. Its economic power and push for globalization are also seen as major threats. It is not difficult to see why this 'satanization', as Juergensmeyer calls it, of one's enemies takes place within the cosmic war scenario. Other victims of this process include the Jews, the Freemasons, the Roman Catholic Church and, with Ian Paisley, the Pope.

Social Marginalization

The other major issue behind these movements is the social background of those who are attracted to them. A large number of people who find their way into them belong to the socially marginalized. In Palestine the unem-

ployment rate for young men starting out in life is around 50%. Without a job and money such men have no eligibility in the marriage market. This is not only frustrating, it is also deeply humiliating. In this situation such people are cruelly exposed to extremist, religious agendas. As Juergensmeyer comments:

Most important is the intimacy with which this humiliation is experienced and the degree to which it is regarded as a threat to one's personal honour and respectability. These can create the conditions for a desperate need for empowerment, which, when no other options are open, are symbolically and violently expressed. (195)

What emerges from this study is that taking the moral high ground, as these movements do on behalf of 'the good', a self-bestowed impregnable position is taken up as a divine mandate. Juergensmeyer again:

Religious concepts of cosmic war, however, are ultimately beyond historical control, even though they are identified with this-worldly struggles. ... The satanic enemy cannot be transformed; it can only be destroyed! In this, as we have seen, time does not have to be of the essence. (217)

Juergensmeyer reports the anti-abortionist Mike Bray as saying that he hoped that the bombing of the abortion clinics would make people reflect 'not on what they think, but on what God thinks'.

Mainstream religions of course do not accept such views, so serious tensions arise in which the terrorist groups seek to assert themselves.

In many cases of religious terrorism, therefore, the function of violence has been not only to empower individuals and their ideological causes, but also to vault marginal religious movements into positions of power vis-a-vis their moderate, mainstream rivals. (220)

Loss of Identity

In investigating these movements Juergensmeyer found that their leading proponents often had a deep, traditional spirituality. In the case of Mahmud Abouhalima, for instance, his experience of living in Germany in the accepted superficial way left him inwardly empty and led him on his return to Islamic society to a renewed sense of obligation to make Islamic society truly Islamic and not the modern liberal version. He wanted the original, disciplined life of faith. Such an attitude is to be found throughout these movements, whatever the particular religious background. It is a common response to the contemporary world.

To be abandoned by religion in such a world would mean the loss of their own individual identities. In fashioning a 'traditional religion' of their own, they exposed their concerns not so much with their religious, ethnic or national communities as with their own personal imperilled selves. (223)

Responding to Violence

At the conclusion of his book, Juergensmeyer outlines five scenarios for dealing with terrorists:

1. Destroy the violence. This only confirms the nature of the cosmic war and upholds the terrorists in their legitimacy. However, terrorists can destroy themselves, if they come to see their mission as unrealizable (the Branch Davidians) or as an apocalyptic event setting off the final cataclysm (as perhaps the Aum Shinrikyo may have had in mind in the Tokyo subway nerve gas attack, which actually led to them being rounded up and prosecuted).
2. Threaten reprisals. This has had little effect. But, again, terrorists can be affected by their own actions, either afterwards, or be inhibited beforehand by reflecting the horror to be inflicted.
3. Violence itself wins. There is virtually no evidence of this, at best it may strengthen a bargaining position. Sometimes it is even counter-productive (the Omagh bombing carried out by a splinter group but condemned by the IRA).
4. Separate religion from politics. This is not compatible with cosmic war. But some moderate Islamic teachers have supported such a separation.

They see rather a prophetic role for religion in the public arena. This is a form of social activism that eschews political power in favour of moral suasion, and it has transformed the idea of struggle into a contestation of ideas rather than of opposing political sides. (230)

This of course involves a fundamental shift in attitudes. But is anyone going to win without such a shift, especially as the alternative: meeting like with like with retaliatory force, does not achieve a victory over the terrorists, but actually increases their credibility and belief in the cosmic war?

5. Healing politics with religion.

Attempts at moderate solutions have required the opponents in the conflict to summon at least a minimal level of mutual trust and respect. This respect has been enhanced and the possibilities of a compromise

solution strengthened when religious activists have perceived the governmental authorities as having a moral integrity in keeping with, or accommodating of, religious values. This, then, is the fifth solution. when secular authorities embrace moral values, including those associated with religion. (238)

This, as Juergensmeyer admits, is a contentious statement in our western society—many would deny our values have much to do with religion, but, as he says,

It is, after all, for the sake of the tranquil and universal ideal of sacred transformation that one struggles in the battles of a cosmic war. In a curious way, then, the goal of all this religious violence is peace. (242)

And the other curious fact that

...the cure for religious violence may ultimately lie in a renewed appreciation for religion itself. (213)

Thus Juergensmeyer brings his study to its conclusion.

The Real Battle

In looking back we may ask: What is the nature of the cosmic war as conceived in this context? Can we not assume that there is a truth behind the fact of cosmic war? Certainly the New Testament leaves us in no doubt that there is war in the heavenly places. But is the cosmic war of these movements a true reflection of the spiritual reality? Is what they conceive not rather a battle between two shadows? The one, pictured as the good, is surely the shadow of the past, while the other, pictured as the evil, is surely the shadow of the future. Is this then a bogus war? Rudolf Steiner long ago pointed out that if the reality of the comic situation is conceived as a duality, God against the devil, good against evil, we create a serious distortion. For the reality is a trinity: Christ holding the balance between Lucifer and Ahriman. With a duality we start to identify Lucifer with God and Ahriman with the devil. Lucifer would trap us in the past, whereas Ahriman would rush us headlong unprepared into the future. The Luciferic ‘God’ tempts us to an eternal, heavenly paradise, modelled on our notion of bliss on earth, as the reward for a moral life, in effect then denying any purposeful individual development beyond our mortal span of three score years and ten. The Ahrimanic



Untitled, Ken Kiff



Untitled, Ken Kiff

'God' tempts us to a short lived illusory paradise here on earth which would cut short our spiritual progress and in so doing put our ultimate spiritual goals out of reach. The one leaves us stranded up above, the other here below.

Human beings are unique in the universe in belonging both to the earth and to the heavens. Their evolution can only be grasped and fulfilled in this double context. From the heavens, only Christ has entered into this context and taken on human destiny, for the sole purpose

of guiding humanity towards bringing heaven and earth together as the purpose of its evolution on earth. In having achieved this goal by becoming human, Christ created the bridge for humanity also to do advance towards becoming spirit, in the fullness of time. He stands therefore uniquely between heaven and earth, embracing both in unity of being. This means that he also stands between Lucifer and Ahriman who would tempt the human being in their own directions. Positively, we can say that being placed between Lucifer and Ahriman is the necessary challenge that we need to pursue our goal. Without them we would not evolve. But equally important negatively, is the fact that if their means lead us to their ends we do not each our goal. The goal lies not with them but with Christ.

To combat the shadow, but also disastrously real, cosmic war, we have to unmask the illusions and acknowledge what the real cosmic war is about: the battle for the human spirit. Through Juergensmeyer's study we can come to see that the symptoms he describes are not confined to these particular conflicts, but are present in our society in manifold ways. But just as he concludes that there are qualities of soul, of a moral and spiritual kind, which can appeal to such qualities in even warring parties, so one can hope that other less obvious, but nevertheless equally real, issues can be similarly tackled.

This article was written in 2000, and it refers to the first edition of Juergensmeyer's book, which was published in that year. The points it makes seem equally relevant now, although if time had permitted a revision, reference to the climax of Islamist terror since September 2001 would have been made.

Responding to Terror

Deborah Ravetz

In 2006 Marc Rothemund's film *Sophie Scholl* was nominated best foreign film in the Academy Awards. The film came about partly because the original transcripts of Sophie's interrogation had just come to light in East Germany. Sophie Scholl was a young woman connected with the White Rose, a student resistance movement in Germany. She became involved in the organization through the inspiration of her older brother whom she wished to help, despite his wish to protect her from the danger involved. The aim of the White Rose was to rouse thinking people to take part in passive resistance against the Nazi Dictatorship. The film focuses on her last six days from the moment of preparing and distributing leaflets for the White Rose to her trial and execution on 22 February 1943. The film is made in a very austere and stark way with an energetic and yet solemn soundtrack which evokes a kind march towards fate. The film maker himself says the film was not meant as a history lesson, but that he wanted to explore the theme of how we respond when confronted with injustice. His question was, 'how far we are prepared to go with our personal commitment?' He is as interested in the everyday experiences of confronting bullying as he is with the individual's response to terrifying power as experienced in dictatorships or political injustice in its many forms. The story of the White Rose is an ideal vehicle for exploring these themes. The film doesn't say much about the actual ideas of the White Rose. It concentrates instead on the impressive presence of mind displayed by Sophie during her interrogation and in facing her trial and death.

I wanted to find out more and so I turned to a book written by Sophie's sister Inge Scholl. It was originally published in 1947 and was written for German school children as an attempt to help them to understand the recent past. This book describes the aims and intentions of the White Rose and reproduces the leaflets they distributed. It also includes a short piece by the woman who shared a cell with Sophie before her execution, and it lists the names and fates of everyone else connected with the White Rose. Inge begins the book by describing the inner journey the young people took to reach the point where they were prepared to risk their lives trying to raise consciousness about the real nature of Nazi ideology. At

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first the older Scholl children believed in the ideals of the Hitler Youth. They enjoyed belonging to a group, walking in the country and singing around the camp fire. They felt united with something deep, which was worth living for. Gradually they began to have questions. Hans Scholl describes the moment when, as the standard bearer in a rally, he began to realize that the individual is being undermined. He realized that what was expected was conformity and the loss of who he was. A teacher they knew was made to stand up and be spat on. He then disappeared. When the children asked why, their mother told them that he had gone to a concentration camp because he wouldn't join the Party. Hans Scholl then discovered that only particular songs were allowed when they were singing, and whole areas of music were excluded. Furthermore, no one could explain why the Jews were treated so badly. Joy turned to disappointment and depression.

This depression was the beginning of their journey. They had to admit to themselves that they had become outsiders. Only someone who has never done that can underestimate what it means to stop agreeing with the status quo and to begin the long walk from the old ground into the nothingness that opens up before we can reach the future and deeper truth. In some cases this can just mean losing friends or colleagues; in the case of the White Rose, it meant much, much more.

One of the most important experiences a young person can have is to believe in something meaningful wholeheartedly. Some people harden themselves when they are disappointed and decide never to trust idealism again. Some refuse to believe the evidence of their eyes and heart and remain dutiful and faithful, refusing to believe what they had thought creative is in fact destructive. Some people are so hurt and broken they are never able to function normally again. The Scholl children and their friends are examples of another response. To begin with, they were disillusioned. Then they began to read and think and talk, sharing with each other what they had found out. They found other examples of what was happening from history and other cultures and they studied how people had acted. They made the connection between their resistance and the future despite the frailty of their actual physical strength. They were inspired by the Expressionist painters, modern Theology and political activism. When they finally decided to act it was with a concrete goal. They believed that their letters would create an invisible sense of solidarity between isolated individuals all over Germany. They also believed to be silent was to be complicit and their conscience would not allow that.

When Sophie, her brother Hans and their friend Christoph Probst were executed by guillotine they were respectively 21, 24 and 23 years old. Christoph was the father of three children. They were all at University in Munich and Hans Scholl had served on the Eastern Front.

Watching the film one is impressed by the power of the Nazi State. The court in which the members of the White Rose were tried, and the behaviour of the judge freezes the blood. There is nothing romantic about the story in which six days after their capture three young people in the prime of their lives will die so fearsomely at the hand of something that had nothing on its side but might. They held their ground in the face of contempt and hatred. Two years after their death the Nazi State was in ruins and all those deeds against the innocent can be held up to the light.

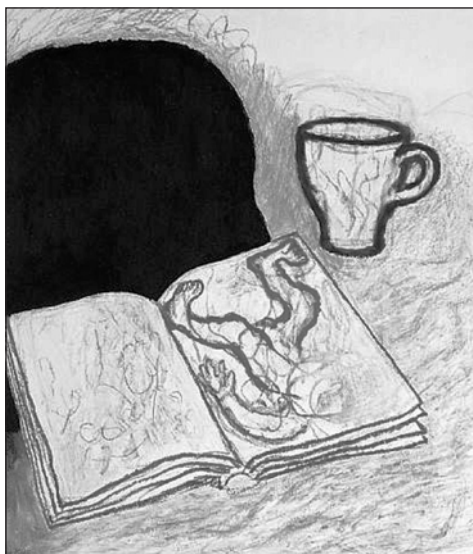
There is a film in which Hitler's secretary is interviewed in her old age. She describes good times and bad times, always describing herself as stupid and unaware of the nature of the Nazi State, despite her daily proximity to Hitler. Towards the end of her interview, however, she tells how she came across the memorial for Sophie Scholl in Munich. Reading the dedication was a kind of epiphany for her. She realized that she met Hitler at the same age as Sophie was executed. From that moment, she said, she was unable to excuse herself because she had been young. Instead she accepted responsibility for her ignorance. Time had moved and the White Rose—one-time enemy of the state—had become an shining example of what is possible in the face of evil. The film and the book about the White Rose are far more than mere history lessons: they are explorations of what is possible if one is committed to inner values that are more important than one's own security. When they were disillusioned the young people of the White Rose explored all the other acts of courage they could find through history and used them to temper their idealism. They died despised criminals. By being prepared to do that they joined the very family they had turned to in their despair: the family of those who have stood up and been counted.

The White Rose, Inge Scholl

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Sophie Scholl, cat no. DAP7725 DVD

Open Book and Empty Cup, Ken Kiff



Fanaticism and Tolerance

*Thoughts on the suicide bombers
and the effects their deeds may have on their destiny*

Hans-Werner Schroeder

Religious and ideological fanaticism has its roots in the belief that one is in possession of the only truth. The believer feels the right and obligation to defend the truth, to force it upon the non-believer if persuasion fails.

A typical expression of such a view are the words of Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi,

...Islam lays claim to the whole of creation in order that all mankind can benefit from the philosophy and the practical wisdom that God was pleased to bestow on Islam, and with which He put Islam over and above all other religions.

The Christian past is not free of this kind of fanaticism. Church history offers plenty of examples, from Augustine's call to force unbelievers to convert, to forced baptisms in Saxony under Charlemagne and the methods of Christian missionaries, always 'for the good' of those concerned.

Only more recently, since the Enlightenment, does western consciousness demand more and more tolerance; everyone shall work out his own salvation.

Are there spiritual reasons for this tolerance? Or is it merely a sign of spiritual weakness, of a lukewarm indecisiveness, a reluctance to bear the consequences of a recognized truth? Or is it even indifference towards the higher values of life, an indifference that seems to be rather widespread among our western civilisation?

Our religious 'location'—a question of destiny

We may ask: Was it purely by chance that I was born into a Christian *milieu*? (the question applies equally to a Moslem, Buddhist, Hindu, Marxist or atheist) This seems unlikely. My destiny has led me to the place and conditions that I require to develop further.

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It may well have a purpose to live through an incarnation as an atheist, to discover the meaning of experiencing a life without a spiritual perspective. Perhaps this may lead in the next incarnation to an intensive search for the spirit.

This thought suggests that incarnations in the various religions are meaningful, and may even be decisive for what happens after. This lays a foundation for religious tolerance.

One could add to this that for the spiritual world the value of a baptized Christian who does not care about his Christian faith and leads a superficial life will be much less than that of a Muslim or Buddhist who struggles to follow the spiritual path and thereby advances his or her inner development. And it will also hold good for an anthroposophist or member of The Christian Community who sits back to rest instead of working with the tools at his disposal.

We can and must continue from where our destiny, our angel, has placed us, and we will certainly find our way. In Goethe's *Faust* we hear therefore from the mouth of the angels:

*The one who ceaselessly strives in eternity
Him we can redeem.*

In the Acts of the Apostles we learn that the Christians were called 'those who are on the way', long before the name 'Christians' was coined for the followers of the new religion. The 'way' referred to was the inner path or 'way'. The Act of Consecration of Man calls those who are connected with Christ those who 'walk with Him'. Such an inner attitude will help us to be truly tolerant and to have reverence for the destiny and religion of our fellow human being.

This tolerance does not signify weakness or indecision. Our awareness of our own gain from meeting anthroposophy or The Christian Community will make us want to make others benefit too. We will have to seek out the right moments that allow us to share, without imposing ourselves and without becoming a nuisance.

There will always be the question, how can I help another person to find his or her own path in destiny? This path may be the one I am trying to go myself.

I am still deeply grateful that a friend took me along to the Act of Consecration of Man very many years ago. I did not experience anything in particular, but he asked me a second time to go along, again to no effect, and succeeded even a third time, and only on the third occasion I realized that this was highly relevant to me. The perseverance of my friend led me to my path.

It would have been detrimental if he had given up because of tolerance. However, he must have felt that his insistence did not cause me discomfort, otherwise I wouldn't have gone with him a third time.

Has Islamist violence been caused by western imperialism and decadence?

The Islamist fundamentalist terrorism reached a crescendo on 11th Sept. 2001 in New York, and it has continued at a high pitch ever since. We must not lose sight of the roots of this development in the behaviour of the European colonial powers and the USA since the First World War.

Muslim self-esteem suffered a heavy setback when the Ottoman Empire was defeated and split up among the leading European powers. The national pride and honour of the Arabs and other Islamic nations were deeply hurt. We in the West can hardly imagine just how deep this hurt was. This mood is expressed by the following words which have echoed in the hearts of countless Islamic souls.

We do not want to be guided in our wisdom by people who do not have any wisdom, who only rule by power, guns and money and who only know how to lose friends with whom they easily could have remained friends. (Mohammed Assad in conversation with the later king of Trans Jordan in his book *My Way to Mekka*)

The policies of western governments up to the Iraq war seemed, almost inevitably, to wound the self respect of many Muslims; to intensify their emotions and radicalize generations. Sayyed Qutub, a leading mind of the radical 'Muslim brotherhood' wrote in 1964 in his book *Milestones*, which became the textbook for a number of extremist groups:

Even in the western world there is recognition that its civilisation can no longer offer healthy guidance for mankind. It is apparent that the west does not possess anything that can satisfy its conscience and justify its existence. ...Mankind needs new leadership.

The new leadership needs to preserve the fruits of European creativity and show mankind hitherto unknown ideals and values that teach how to live in harmony with human nature in a positive, constructive and practical way.

Islam is the only system that teaches these values and way of life.

*If we look at the foundations of the modern way of life we recognize clearly that the whole world is sunk in Djahiliya, the heathen ignorance of divine leadership. All the wonderful material comforts and genial technical inventions cannot diminish the Djahiliya.**

From here it is not far to the quote at the beginning of this article, that demands world rulership of Islam. It is by Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi (1903–1979, India and Pakistan) who became the father of a radical Islamic renewal and has remained most influential to this day.

In the famous infamous 2nd sura of the Koran, verses 190–193 (Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. Lo! Allah loveth not aggressors), the interpretation of ‘those who fight against you’ is taken very broadly. Maududi sees the encroachment of western civilisation and values as a ‘fight’, a campaign by the West, against which it is legitimate to fight back with violence. ‘Islam is now seen not only as the only salvation, but also as the only legitimate religious power’ (Sandkühler). Maududi writes:

The Islamic djihad does not permit any state to organize itself in any way that is evil in the eyes of Islam ... Islam is in truth a revolutionary ideology and programme that wants to change the social structures of the whole world according to its own principles and ideals. ... Islam lays claim to the whole of creation in order that all mankind can benefit from the philosophy and the practical wisdom that God was pleased to bestow on Islam, and with which He put Islam over and above all other religions. (quoted in Sandkühler)

Certainly, these are radical voices that are heard next to very different, tolerant ones, that refer to relevant verses of the Koran: ‘No compulsion in religion’ (sura 2) ‘If someone kills a man that has never killed himself nor has committed any crime, it is as if he has murdered the whole of mankind.’ (sura 5) It is quite clear that acts of violence cannot be justified by the Koran, if this is reasonably interpreted, as is often stressed by Muslim believers.

However, the radical voices are becoming more numerous, driven by the damaged self-esteem and the resulting powerful emotions. They form the basis of Islamist terrorism. Sandkühler sums up:

The processes we described typically show the factors that work together in these complex conflicts:

The awareness that mankind is impoverished by technically-driven, mechanical development;

The perception that the western powers are the cause of this spiritual poverty, and also of the economic disadvantage of the Islamic countries;

The effort to find renewal in fundamental religious forces.

Imagination of paradise

According to reports the suicide bombers of 11th September 2001 believed that their deeds, done in the service of Allah, which cost them their lives, would transport them directly into paradise. The 4th sura (verse 74) says:

*Whoever fights in the cause of GOD, then gets killed, or attains victory,
we will surely grant him a great recompense.*

Accordingly such a fighter can expect preferred treatment in the hereafter. There is mention of 'heavenly virgins' who receive him and see to his happiness. (There is now discussion about the possibility that the 'virgins' may have sprung from a mistranslation, and should rather have been 'white grapes'.) I believe such ideas contributed to motivate the young soldiers, some of them still children, who have been sent from Iran into the devastating war with Iraq.

When those concerned cross the threshold a very different experience will shock them. Not only will they not find themselves in paradise, but during Kamaloka, the phase in our afterlife, in which we have to meet the consequences of all our deeds, they will be made aware step by step of their responsibility for the destinies they have torn from life.

Christ experience

If we believe the many reports of near-death experiences from recent times, it seems that everyone who crosses the threshold in our time meets Christ in the spirit. Therefore we can imagine that this will happen to the suicide bombers as well.

The encounter with the 'light-being' at the threshold of death is an experience of infinite love, directed to oneself very personally, and entirely free of reproach, despite the fact that one feels at the same time wholly recognized in one's being, with all one's deeds, good and bad. And within this boundless love one recognizes oneself how to compensate for one's earthly deeds and weaknesses. Nobody needs to tell us from the outside.

We may think of the meeting of Christ with the adulteress (John 8) where he acts exactly as is reported in many near-death experiences.

This will not make the destinies of the suicide bombers less hard. They will have to bear the consequences of their deeds; they will be bound up with those human beings they have murdered, and it will not be an easy relationship.

However, they will also carry within themselves something of their Christ experience. I wonder if some of them will not, in a future incarnation, do all they can to heal the conditions out of which they were driven to commit these atrocities, and will become allies for a more human future.

Bruno Sandkühler, *Begegnung mit dem Islam*,
Freies Geistesleben ISBN-13: 9783772520389

War

Michael Jones

When I was young I saw pictures from Hiroshima and felt a terrible fear take hold of my heart. I was afraid that I might suffer like those caught in the blast of these powerful bombs, some of whose remains were only a shadow on a wall. The image of the mushroom cloud haunted my mind. Looking down through a slot into sinister green light I had seen my own bones inside my feet through an x-ray machine in a local shoe shop, and could imagine such a power multiplied thousands of times into rays of death. History lessons told me that war was the driving force of human development. Later I began to wonder: could the whole of civilisation take on another direction and war be no more? Was what we called the light of civilization really darkness that demanded war to sustain its existence? Did I eat war in my daily bread, in everything I used, and did I contribute to war in so far as I was part of society?

A few years later I joined my local CND. We had fellowship in a common goal but we soon divided over methods and the question of affiliation to political parties. Some of us felt that the only way forward was to become Marxists, and that applied Marxism would bring about change. Some were convinced that non-violent action could rightly be used to bring about change, which included Gandhi-inspired sit-ins of which one of the most famous was led by Bertrand Russell in 1961 in Trafalgar Square. Others, like myself, believed that only appropriate acts of violence against the system would achieve anything. Eventually the politics became too much for me and, unable to find anyone who wanted to join me in starting a revolution, I started to wonder if anything would shake the walls of the city. I just hoped that some sense of self-preservation might prevail in the end. This was after all, as far as I could see, what all ideals boiled down to. The appeal to sacrifice made to recruit soldiers for the Great War had burst like a bubble once the reality of war and its aftermath were encountered. I started to try to find the origins of the Second World War, not in economic or social or political causes, but in the thoughts of Hegel, and the likes of Houston Stewart Chamberlain. I believed that philosophers, not poets, were the 'unacknowledged legislators of society'.

The sense that there was something seriously wrong with humanity which revealed itself in war and an acceptance of con-

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vention and authority fuelled the cultural revolution of the sixties. Innumerable religious and social projects were initiated during this period and for a while it felt as if change were really possible. People were united by a conviction that change could only come about from within the human 'I', whatever outer forms needed to come about in the world. Of course this was not going to be easy, but in spite of many setbacks, a fire was lit and continues to burn in youth today who have learnt to think for themselves and not to accept what they have been told unless they have tested it for themselves.

War is shocking; in part because what under normal circumstances would be called murder and forbidden under the law is permitted and encouraged in it. Unlike most murders, which are spontaneous acts breaking out from powerful impulses of violence, war is essentially carried out in a planned, methodical way when circumstances permit. Importantly it is not an individual initiative, but the soldier is part of a team within a hierarchical structure, a chain of command that reaches up in clearly defined stages to a war chief. Obedience to one's superiors is a necessity, and disobedience is severely punished. Killing other soldiers or civilians is not an aim in itself, but serves the greater purpose of winning the war, or maintaining peace by the use of controlled violence.

Questions about war have always occupied humanity. Epic narratives such as the Ramayana, the Iliad, the Epic of King Gesar, and the Mahabharatha, are mainly concerned with war and its consequences. In the Bhagavad Gita the Pandava prince Arjuna is torn between not wanting to kill his relatives in battle and his sense of duty to the cause. Krishna appears to him while he is filled with doubt and persuades him that his primary duty is to fight. Those Arjuna is destined to kill are already dead from the perspective of the future in which Krishna lives. Death on the battle field is only a shedding of blood, but the soul is immortal and of more significance than the body. Krishna persuades him that the balance of the cosmos depends on Arjuna playing his part in the world through action, and that he cannot stand as an individual against the tide of destiny ruled by the Gods. We should bear in mind that the reluctance of some soldiers to fight in battle is not something entirely new, but encouragement and persuasion have always played an important part in overcoming doubts. Rousing speeches, propaganda, religious fervour, ideologies, memories of past injustices, have all been used to persuade people to fight each other.

A compelling book by Barbara Ehrenreich *Blood Rites—Origins and History of the Passions of War*, argues against the idea that war is simply

an expression of a deep-seated violent streak in human nature. She points out that the history of war and the practice of sacrifice are closely related to each other. In any sacrifice we are invited to identify with both the victim and the one making the sacrifice, and in a war the loser often conquers the victors in another way. An occupied country often has a powerful influence on its occupiers who are changed through living there and learning new things. In the practice of sacrifice the one making the sacrifice often apologizes in some way to the victim whose characteristics are to be absorbed with the meal. Animals that are to be eaten must first be sacrificed to the Gods who receive their portion. Barbara Ehrenreich quotes an old Babylonian rite in which the priest holds up the sacrificed head of a bull and says: 'This deed was done by the Gods; I did not do it.' We might imagine Arjuna, now aware through the vision of the divine form of Krishna as ordering the world, saying the same thing, but holding in his hand not an animal, but a human head.

The sacrifice of animals, which was so important in ancient religions, and which still played such a significant part in the Temple worship in Jerusalem at the time of Christ, tells us not only about humanity but about the needs of the gods. They require more than words; they want the real sacrifice of blood. This is contained and regulated in the animal sacrifice in the temple, but human sacrifice is also required, and practiced. Human sacrifice is indeed asked of humanity today in wars whose history works on into the future. Although we may be unable to reconcile our idea of God in modern times with a God who demands human sacrifice as some kind of balancing of human affairs, or as a form of necessary development, we experience war as something into which individuals and whole nations are swept up by forces that are beyond them. We can try to blame war on politicians and leaders, or on the individual universal soldier, but wars seem to have a life of their own, a kind of destructive vortex of forces into which human beings are pulled by destiny.

One of Barbara Ehrenreich's most startling ideas concerns primitive hunting and feeding as the origin of the paradox of war. She challenges the idea of man as the bloodthirsty carnivore driven to kill by hunger, who according to the view of palaeontologist Raymond Dart is distinguished from his anthropoidal relatives by this 'Mark of Cain.' Ehrenreich points out that this evolutionary equivalent of original sin—a kind of genetic predisposition to violence—fails to come to grips with the equally prevalent need to ritualize violence, to make it sacred in some form or another. She turns the idea of primitive culture on its head and suggests that it was human beings

who were first being hunted by animals, and that this 'original trauma' was the source of the ritualizing of violence that we find throughout our culture. The transition from being the hunted to becoming the hunters meant also to receive the 'Mark of the Beast', and take on the power and skill of their predators whom they also admired and revered. Social forms developed in order to best work together for hunting, feeding and protection, and the gods were connected to the powers of different animals whose virtues or attributes were cultivated. We are familiar with the way in which a warrior would respect the fighting prowess of his or her enemy, and for example take away a head or scalp to converse with after a victory and plead with it to give up its power for personal or community use. Greek mythology offers numerous examples where human sacrifice is offered up to a predator beast to save the larger community. Could animal and human sacrifice have its origin in a deep-seated need to relive and affirm both the power of the human over the animal, and the specialized superiority of the animal over the more generalized human? The animals are our teachers in many things, as remnants of older peoples still know and respect. They taught us how to survive and hunt, and how to form communities where the whole is more important than each single part.

Both animals and human beings were ritually sacrificed to the gods, because the gods demanded this. These were meals that were shared with the gods, who like a higher octave of the animals also conferred something of their powers on the human beings. A right balance had to be sustained between nature, humanity, and spiritual beings. Those who were sacrificed did not simply die, but were consumed and raised up on to another level of being.

The culture of war seems to have been influenced by the conflict with predatory animals—a kind of self defence—and the subsequent hunting for food and protection. The first weapons were almost certainly developed from those used against animal life, as were the tactics of war—the wedge and the frontal attack. Animals are killed not only for food but to demonstrate and gain power. The heroes of Greece, for example, are all killers of wild animals, as are the earliest warriors we know of, Gilgamesh and Enkidu in Sumerian mythology. The heroes bring honour to their tribe; those who are defeated are disgraced. We still see the same today as the memory of those who spilt their blood in battle are honoured by their country. Even the medals and stripes of honour probably have their origin in the animal teeth and bones worn by early hunters and the marks made by hunters on their skin which mimic the animals' stripes and spots.

Any one theory of war, even one so elegantly argued as Barbara Ehrenreich's, is bound to be incomplete and one sided when faced with the realities of war and its many varieties. Ehrenreich is against war, and believes that war must be fought against with the same dedication as it is fought for, if we are to have victory over it. Clearly war, as a self-replicating entity, has developed into a monster that now threatens the future of the earth even if those who are drawn into war still have a vocation and destiny with it.

The Christian Community does not demand that its members be pacifists or against war, and it certainly does not turn away soldiers whose profession it respects, along with the conscience of the individual. The resurrection did not put an end to wars, which are seen as signs of the return of Christ in the realm of the clouds in Luke 21. Like fire or disease, war can destroy what has been built up and throw it down, until nothing remains except the spirit.

In Genesis, after the expulsion from Eden, in the story of Cain and Abel, the first killing of one human being by another takes place. This came about because the animal sacrifice made by Abel is accepted by God, whereas the offering of the fruits of the earth made by Cain is rejected. Through being pushed back upon himself Cain develops strong forces which are able to grapple with the material world in a creative way, yet he and his kin become outcasts who act outside the confines of the Law. Cain still has his admirers today, but in the New Testament it is Abel, the first victim, who is identified with Christ. Cain is given a mark by God after killing Abel which serves also to protect him from vengeance. At the end of the Bible, in the Revelation of John, a beast is described who is the enemy of Christ, and his followers are given the mark of the Beast. Once again we appear to be in the realm of war, but this is not the first war but the last. Those who carry the mark of the Beast cannot enter into the New Jerusalem, but those who have conquered and serve the Lamb are able to. From Jerusalem flows a river of life which carries healing back into the world that needs it. Many interpretations of these imaginations are possible but in the context of my sense that war is inextricably bound up with our economy and social life, we might see the New Jerusalem as already present as a reality of hope, which lets flow forces into the present which can help heal the Beast. For this to take place we have to listen to and understand more what lives in the human soul and learn to change inwardly in the way we react to what we think of as evil and would like to be rid of.



Triptych, Ken Kiff

War in time

The central question in human relationships is not how one can avoid committing acts of violence, but rather how one can cope with violence.

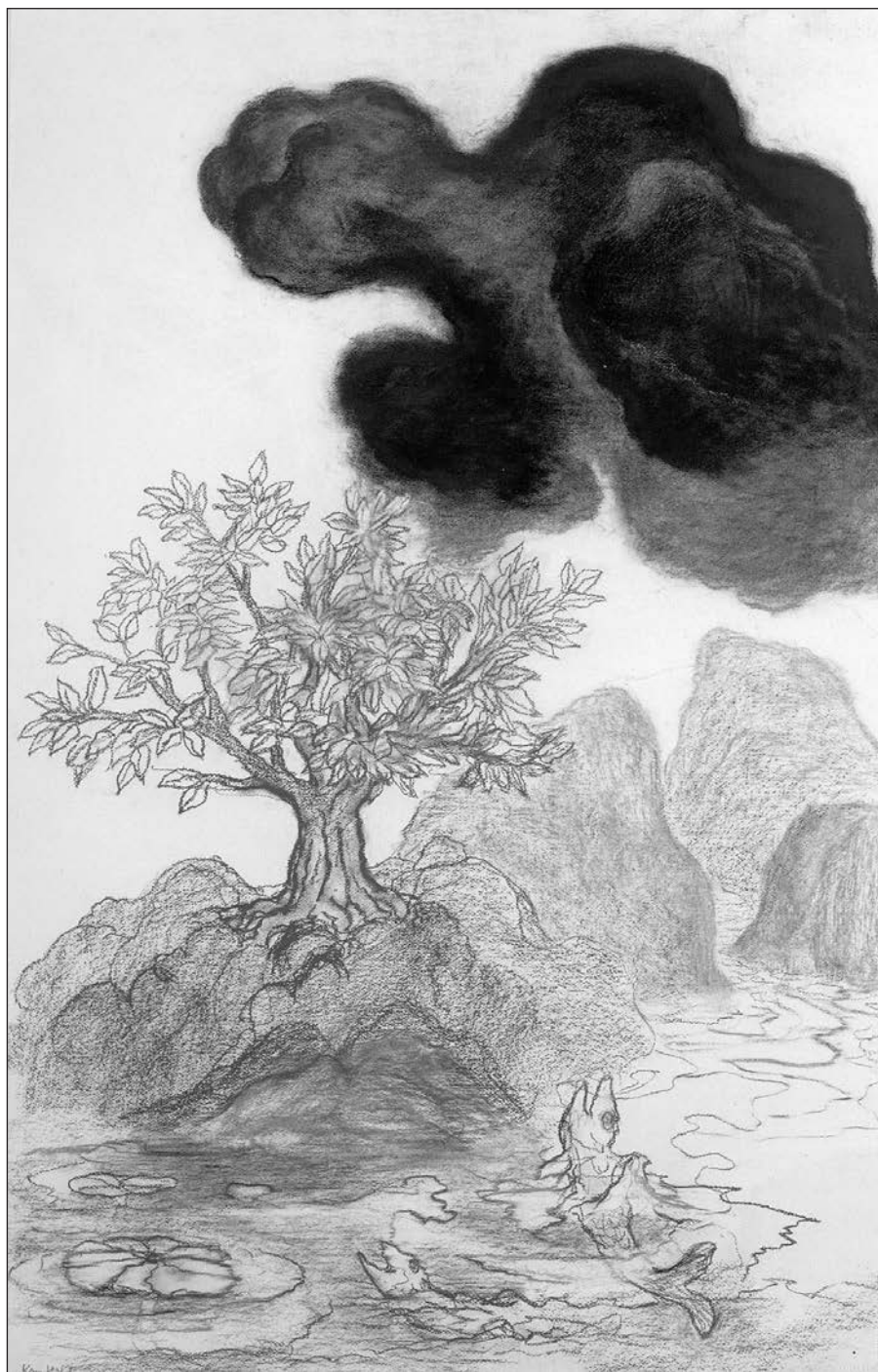
People who feel an affinity for this task of mine, descend to earth under the protection of my wings. They dedicate themselves to becoming fully human by means of personally taking responsibility. They develop courage to allow evil a place in their being and to wage war with it there. Through the narrow gate of loneliness they conduct their search for universal knowledge.

The only way that one can transcend the war between people is to transfer that war to the heart of each individual. The struggle with evil then becomes an internal conflict. This is a process which is now taking place. The theatre of that war is getting closer to the individual.

In this way there comes into existence what I symbolize with my weighing scales and my sword: the human being that can no longer be divided into good and evil types, a passionate and ambitious being, imperfect, but endowed with a strong will to do good. This human being may cause damage, but is at the same time deeply moved by the damage he causes.

A storm rages inside him but within that storm there is a hush, just as calm exists in the eye of the whirlwind.

MANFRED VAN DOORN



Fish, Tree and Dark Cloud, Ken Kiff, pastel on paper 1995

The Power of Resurrection in Human Destiny I

The Renewed Sacraments within the Development of Christianity

Michael Debus

Since 1922/23 the seven sacraments have been celebrated in renewed form. They are central to the work of The Christian Community which was founded as 'movement for religious renewal'. Within the development of the Church, religious renewal has been a constantly recurring subject, so that The Christian Community at first sight appears to be simply a continuation of a line of earlier reform movements. Especially towards the end of the Middle Ages, when the outer and inner structure of the Church corresponded ever less to the changed human consciousness, the call for a 'reform of the Church in head and members'¹ grew ever louder and a process of 'cleansing' within the Church was anticipated ever more keenly. Then came the time of the reform councils which, for four centuries, occupied themselves fairly ineffectually with similar questions.² The necessary breakthrough could not be achieved. Thus, instead of a reform of the Church, eventually the Reformation erupted, initiated by the priest-monk Martin Luther (1483–1546). Originally, Luther intended nothing other than a reform of the existing Church, so wherever the Reformation broke through, the same church buildings continued to be used as a matter of course, and—initially, at any rate—ordained 'catholic' priests continued to serve at the same altars as before, taking the liberty, however, (insofar as they were under the protection of the lo-

cal prince) at last to make a start with the longed-for reforms. In doing so, they had broken away from the authority of the Pope, whom Luther passionately rejected as being the 'Antichrist' residing in Rome. Thereby a dynamic had been unleashed which ultimately had consequences far beyond those originally intended, leading to the founding of another, a 'second' Church. In the Middle Ages the idea of 'churches' in the plural was inconceivable, for there simply was just the one Church for all Christians. After the Reformation the unthinkable was reality.

There had of course been the great Church schism in the 11th Century, when the Orthodox Eastern Church separated from the Western Roman-Catholic Church. But this separation—despite the painful emotions caused—was not (and is not) seen in the West as giving rise to two Churches. The priests of the Orthodox Church are recognized as standing in the same apostolic succession as the priests of the Western Church, and their celebration of the sacraments is also 'valid' in Roman-Catholic eyes. It is, therefore, a separation within the one Church, which is why it is possible for Roman Catholics to be in Communion with the orthodox Christians³. It is only with the Reformation that a new Church comes into being, in which fundamental facts of the Catholic Church have been abandoned⁴. But since, in the Catholic view—and this is

entirely in accordance with a continuing mediaeval consciousness—there cannot be a second Church, the Protestants are bound to be regarded as being outside the one and only Church, and it is not possible to be in Communion with them.

Because the Reformers based themselves utterly and completely upon the Bible, the 'Word of God', the sermon as proclamation and teaching within the divine Service took far greater significance. This was quite in accord with the new state of human consciousness at the threshold of the modern age with its need to form its own judgement, in religious matters as in all others. This is appropriate in our times, too. However, thereby Protestantism lost the Mass, and ritual elements have largely disappeared from its Services.^{5 (11)} At the same time, the conception of the sacraments as it had been developed in the (Catholic) Church up to that point, was abandoned.

Against this background we can ask how The Christian Community views itself within the stream of the development of Christianity. From the outset, the renewal of religious life that it has made its objective was not conceived of as a renewal within the Church ('reform'), even though many of the principal founders of The Christian Community were Protestant theologians; Rittelmeyer even held a leading position in the Protestant Church. Influenced to some degree by Schelling,⁶ the founders envisaged something like a 'third Church'. This third Church was thought of as a future-orientated synthesis of Catholicism and Protestantism, as the Johannine Church which was to follow on from Petrine and Pauline Christianity.⁷ It was probably in Johannes Werner Klein

that his ideal first blossomed.⁸ And yet this image cannot convey a true understanding of The Christian Community. Quite definitely, it has no wish to be a third Church, at any rate not in the sense of the historic churches. In fact, for a long time the word church had a decidedly negative ring for many priests of The Christian Community. For them, The Christian Community was not a Church but a movement (for religious renewal). This was so, even though the Creed of The Christian Community mentions the Church as a decisive factor (11th Sentence):

Communities whose members feel the Christ within themselves may feel united in a Church to which all belong who are aware of the health-bringing power of the Christ

This can throw light on what is here meant by 'Church', for although this new kind of Church certainly is something from the 'total church' of the Middle Ages, it, too, has no plural. It is the one Church to which all true Christians belong. But there can indeed be different communities 'whose members feel the Christ within themselves'. The Christian Community, then, is well aware that there are other communities—not 'churches'—who confess to Christianity; but there is really no reason for The Christian Community to evaluate such communities with regard to how Christian they are, because it is through the individual human beings—insofar as they 'feel the Christ within themselves'—that a community becomes Christian. For this reason The Christian Community passes no judgment regarding the validity, invalidity, or the 'Christian nature' of the baptism of another faith-community.

The only criterion which we could use for evaluating communities who profess Christ might be whether the ways of finding a relationship to Christ practised within such a community are appropriate for this age. Here there are two guiding stars: first a concrete (not abstract-theoretical) relationship to the supersensible world, and then freedom of conscience and thinking in the religious sphere. The Christian Community only exists because there are human beings who are seeking ways to Christ which are appropriate for our times. What this means has been set out by Hans-Werner Schroeder in his description of the founding of The Christian Community.⁹

Now, when we are here speaking of the ‘renewed sacraments,’ it does not mean that the sacraments as they already existed have undergone ‘reform’ through The Christian Community. In that sense one can say that The Christian Community does not link up with the existing Churches. Rather—to say it simply and straightforwardly—it stems from ‘the revelation of Christ’ in our time. The revelation of Christ did not come to an end with His appearing 2000 years ago, as was stated once again in 1965 at the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). On the contrary, it continues within the flow of time. In early Christianity it took a different form than in the time of the Reformation, and it reached a different stage again in the 20th century. This ongoing revelation, which is now called the ‘Second Coming’ of Christ, is the source of the true renewal of Christianity out of which the one Christian Church can found itself anew. It is, too, the source of ritual forms that suit our age and of the succession of

a priesthood working on earth. From this source stem the sevenfold sacraments in a renewed form. In order that The Christian Community could come into being, mighty spiritual help was needed, namely a human being who had fully conscious access to this source, perhaps comparable with Moses, who received the ritual forms from Yahweh on Mount Sinai. In this way, Rudolf Steiner was to play a decisive role as ‘midwife’ at the birth of The Christian Community.

In their essential elements, the rituals of The Christian Community were not invented by human beings (a conclave of theologians, for instance); rather, they stem from the revelation of Christ, conveyed by a human being. As regards their Christian form and content, for The Christian Community, they are therefore equal in status with the New Testament—which also, from an earlier time, stems from the revelation of Christ. The Christian Community is not dependent upon any other source of revelation. This observation seems important, because—especially in church circles—the assumption (or even the assertion) is frequently made that, in addition to the New Testament, The Christian Community sees anthroposophy as a second and possibly more important source of revelation. That is not so. In fact it could not be so, for anthroposophy is a science of the spirit. It is entirely based upon human understanding, and presupposes that human knowledge and insight can be expanded beyond the world of the senses. Anthroposophy, then, is not ‘given’ like a revelation but must be attained by inner work and mental effort.

Its position is clear: it is not a ‘revelation attributable to God of a previously ‘hid-

den' religious reality that Man experiences as existentially important for his life, which is beyond the means available to human understanding and for which human reason alone can find no evident basis'. (Definition of revelation—Brockhaus). For this reason, Rudolf Steiner rejects every attempt to treat anthroposophy as an authoritative teaching: Nothing is to be 'accepted on authority'¹⁰. Therefore, anyone who finds certain anthroposophical statements incomprehensible and not accessible for himself personally can leave them to one side. This applies as a matter of course to the priests of The Christian Community as well. Yet the opposite must also be said: for many people the handed-down tenets of Christianity (e.g. Trinity, Baptism, Eucharist, Resurrection) only become fully comprehensible through anthroposophy—though obviously, as with all understanding, not in any limiting or final sense. The same is true as regards the contents of the New Testament. In that respect, anthroposophy plays a decisive role for many, probably for most, of the priests of The Christian Community in enabling them to carry out their vocation conscientiously and truthfully. However, it is an aid to understanding, not a source of revelation.

As regards the words of the rituals, however, the case is entirely different. These words were given as revelation with a particular, characteristic inner authority, valid for the person who unites with them. Whether and to what extent he or she also understands them is a question of personal inner maturity and of living with them. It is a process of growth that never comes to an end. That is why the freedom of teaching which is the entitlement of

every priest of The Christian Community has its limit at the rituals. Should priests question words of the rituals, even if they did not understand them, they would be undermining the very thing they have undertaken to uphold. The certainty, therefore, that he or she does not intend to question the rituals now or in the future is among the important inner steps of preparation that every candidate for the priesthood has to make.

So what does not apply to anthroposophy, is true of the rituals of The Christian Community: they are a second source of revelation for The Christian Community. This also gives rise to a particular relationship between liturgy and theology, in contrast to that which holds good in the Catholic Church. There, theology has primacy over liturgy: only what is certain for faith can be evidenced by the liturgy. The Bull of Pope Pius XII 'Munificentissimus Deus' (1950)—in which the bodily ascension of Mary was made dogma—states:

Now since the liturgy of the Church does not create the Catholic faith but rather presupposes it, and the various ritual acts stem from this faith as the fruits stem from the tree...

That is to say: the liturgy arises from theological insight. Liturgies can be devised by a committee of theologians. For instance, at the Second Vatican Council, great changes were made in the sphere of liturgy, reaching as far as the creation of a completely new ritual for infant baptism which superseded the custom of using the adult ritual for children, as had been the practice for 1900 years. This would be unthinkable in The Christian Community, where the liturgy is not subject to innovation or change. Moreover, just as

The Christian Community did not grow out of anthroposophy, neither are its rituals simply anthroposophical texts, nor did they arise from the personal philosophy of a human being. However, with Rudolf Steiner as mediator, they were 'presented through anthroposophy' from the revelation of Christ¹¹. Living with the words of the ritual texts can *give rise* to fundamental theological insights, the opposite movement to that seen in the Catholic Church above.¹²

Through the foregoing we have established our method in seeking to understand the renewed sacraments. The ritual texts will be our starting-point. Anthroposophy will be a decisive aid in our understanding. It will be important too to look at our sacramental theology in the context of church history. Our Community belongs to the 'church stream' and its sacramental theology must take its place in what has been thought and written in this stream. In particular, this applies to Catholic theology up to the Council of Trent (1545–1563).

1. These words were used for the first time at the Council of Vienne in 1311/12
2. Five Councils held at the Lateran (1123, 1139, 1179, 1215, 1512–17), the Council at Constance (1414–18) and the Council of Basel/Ferrara/Florence from 1431.
3. According to Catholic Church Law, the possibility exists of restricted Communion with the Orthodox and Oriental Churches as regards the sacraments of Eucharist, Confession and Anointing.
4. The fundamental difference is that there is no longer a consecrated, ordained priesthood. The Protestant clergy are no longer within the Apostolic Succession. Of the seven sacraments of the medieval Church, Luther retains only Baptism and the Lord's Supper, since only for these does he find sufficient foundation in the Bible. In his teaching about the Eucharist, he

rejects the concept of the material transformation (transubstantiation) of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.

5. In some quarters of Protestantism liturgical efforts are being made again in the 20th Century. See e.g. Walter Birnbaum: *Das Kultusproblem und die liturgischen Bewegungen des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Tübingen 1970; Wilhelm Stählin: *Berneuchen antwortet*. 1939. (Neither is available in English).
6. See Robert Goebel: *Schelling: Kündiger einer neuen Epoche des Christentums*. Stuttgart o.J. (1975), p. 118 ff. (Not available in English).
7. Eberhard Kurras: *Christus-Erfahrungen. Petrus—Paulus—Johannes*. Stuttgart 1975. (Not available in English).
8. As early as 1919 he wrote in a letter: 'The ideal I have before me is the launching of a great, spirit-borne, Christian Church for the general population. You are aware of my veneration of the Catholic ritual as the guardian of true, great mysteries...but as a human being I am faced with the fact that the Catholic Church has failed, just like every other...it rules by means of authority interwoven with the power of the mysteries.....we demand the achievements of Protestantism for all human beings: freedom of spirit and freedom of conscience....the new Church can only be built on an anthroposophical basis...' (Rudolf Gädeke: *Die Gründer der Christengemeinschaft*. Dornach 1992, p. 89. (Not available in English)
9. Hans-Werner Schroeder: *Die Christengemeinschaft. Entstehung—Entwicklung—Zielsetzung*. Stuttgart 2001. (Not available in English).
10. R.Steiner. Lecture of 18.10. 1915. GA 254
11. GA 260a, Dornach 1987, p. 397
12. Here may be mentioned that there are also other conceptions within Catholic theology, which confer upon the liturgy the power—as 'factum ecclesiae' (Pius IX)—to found dogmas. They draw upon a word of the Pope Coelestin I. (432): 'Legem credendi statuat lex orandi' (let the law of prayer determine the law of faith). In 1854, Pope Pius IX used this principle to justify his introduction of the dogma of the immaculate conception of Mary; however, the principle is not otherwise generally accepted by Catholic theology.

This is the first of a series of excerpts from *Auferstehungskräfte im Schicksal—die Sakramente der Christengemeinschaft* by Michael Debus, translated by Jon Madsen.

Bread for the Way—The Lord's Prayer

Report on the 4th Conference of the Americas 20th– 29th July 2007

Sibylle Thackray

The Congress of the Americas is held once every four years in a different part of North or South America. It brings together members and friends of The Christian Community for the study of a particular theme with the intention of forging links between their communities which are often small and isolated, being widely spread over this vast continent. This year the conference took place in Botucatu in Brazil and its central theme was the Lord's Prayer with lectures in the morning, given by priests as well as lay members; workshops in the afternoon and the daily celebration of the Act of Consecration. Three languages had to be catered for: English, Spanish and Portuguese. The personal contact between people is still somewhat hampered by the language barrier which was only overcome when everybody had at least a smattering of English. The following describes some of the impressions of the mood and content of this special event.

Bread on the Way

Friday, 20th of July 2007 Botucatu Estancia Demetria: Happy to have arrived safely, despite the cold, we are surprised at the size of the church at this outpost of anthroposophical life centred around the first biodynamic farm of Brazil some nine miles outside the town of Botucatu and 150 miles from São Paulo. Inside we see fa-

miliar forms and colours, an openness. One feels the atmosphere of worship. It is the youngest church on the continent and Renato Gomes came to Botucatu with his family seven years ago to become its first incumbent.

Fortified by a hearty soup and freshly-baked chunks of bread we go to the reception desk to register and each one receives a mug to be hung around our necks a bit like mendicant monks. Everything is well organized. In the coming and going we meet up with old friends. Greetings and news are exchanged, and before long it is time to go over to the tent for the reception.

About 140 people from as far North as Canada and the United States, Colombia Ecuador and Peru to the East, Chile and the Argentine to the South, Germany and Switzerland to the West, and Brazil in



The church at Botucatu

the middle, are gathered for the opening of the conference. We, that is a group of eleven participants from Florianópolis in the South of Brazil feel privileged in having brought the new Erzoberlenker from Berlin with us as a special surprise. He brings greetings from the Siebenerkreis and we all hope that he will survive the near antartic conditions in the open tent after sundown which must have taken him by surprise. As an introduction to the conference theme, the eurythmy group from Botucatu transforms the mighty words of the Lord's Prayer into a beautiful performance of colour and movement.

Walking in the power of eternal majesty

Nine main lectures are scheduled around the conference theme, one for each of the sentences of the Lord's Prayer. There is only space here for a few highlights.

Our Father who art in Heaven

In nature the law of the survival of the fittest is counter-balanced by the equally powerful force of mutual help.

Hallowed be thy name

The religious life with patience and practice prepares the ground for the gradual emergence of our moral conscience through which Christ can work for the transformation of life on earth.

Thy kingdom come

When we act in such a way that the spirit can come into matter and be revealed through matter, we contribute to creating a condition which can lead to the real progress of the world.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven

Ute Craemer (founder of Monte Azul, an educational centre where 1000 children,

and 80 young people with special needs are cared for, with a day clinic attended by 3000 patients a month, a centre for drug addicts, a bakery, a carpentry shop, paper recycling, and much more) has advice for those who want to follow in her footsteps: 'always go beyond what you think is necessary and do what goes beyond what you need to do.'

Give us this day our daily bread

Through a spiritual agriculture, man becomes the mediator between the earth and the sun.

And forgive us our trespasses as we give them who trespass against us

Our trespasses work on in the world and cannot be undone just through forgiveness. Nevertheless they can be redeemed by the efforts of human beings which lead to the forming of communities on the basis of a shared ideal in which Christ is present.

And lead us not into temptation

Willy Kenzler, a psychiatrist from São Paulo suggested the following modification to this petition of the Lord's Prayer: 'Spare us those temptations which will act on us like iron filings on a magnet and leave us with those which will make us strong and help us to grow.'

Deliver us from Evil

Susan Locey from Vancouver Canada concluded the cycle with a beautiful presentation by puppets of the roles played by the three main characters, Lucifer, Ahriman and Christ in the cosmic drama about the future of humanity.

Outside the sun is gradually gaining control over a very persistent wet front but the nights are mostly cold and clear with Venus, Saturn, Mars and Jupiter and the whole host of stars keeping a silent

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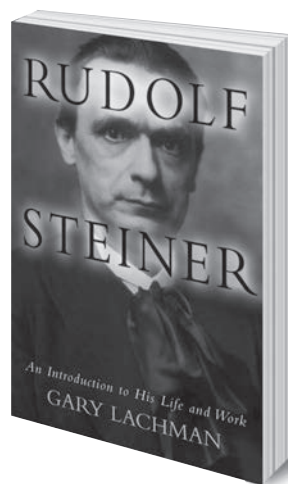
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Gary Lachman has written for the *Times Literary Supplement*, the *Independent on Sunday* and *Fortean Times*. He is the author of *A Secret History of Consciousness* and *In Search of P. D. Ouspensky*. He lives in London.



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The participants of the conference

watch. With each passing day we get to know each other a little more, and as we

grow together in community, our personal clouds also start to lift, and new life flows into our souls as we receive the bread that has been prepared for us on the way. There is communal singing, and the afternoons are filled with workshops of many different kinds, including artistic activities and bread making. In the evenings we gather to enjoy each other's presentations of songs, plays and dances from different countries, and the conference ends with a magnificent concert given by the Botucatu choir with the words from Lord's Prayer set to music by composers of different periods.

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Gospel Readings 2007–2008

Advent

Sunday, December 2 Luke 21: 25–36
Sunday, December 9 Luke 21: 25–36
Sunday, December 16 Luke 21: 25–36
Sunday, December 23 Luke 21: 25–36

Christmas

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

Epiphany

Sunday, January 6 Matthew 2: 1–12
Sunday, January 13 Luke 2: 41–52
Sunday, January 20 John 2: 1–11
Sunday, January 27 Mark 2: 1–13

Sunday, February 3 Luke 18: 18–34
Sunday, February 10 Matthew 4: 1–11
Sunday, February 17 Matthew 17: 1–13

Passiontide

Sunday, February 24 Luke 11: 29–36
Sunday, March 2 John 6: 1–15
Sunday, March 9 John 8: 1–12

Holy Week

Sunday, March 16 Matthew 21: 1–11
Thursday, March 20 Luke 23: 13–32
Friday, March 21 John 19: 1–15
Saturday, March 22 John 19: 16–42

Easter

Sunday, March 23 Mark 16: 1–8
Sunday, March 30 John 20: 19–31
Sunday, April 6 John 10: 1–16
Sunday, April 13 John 15: 1–27
Sunday, April 20 John 16: 1–33
Sunday, April 27 John 14: 1–31

Ascension

Thursday, May 1 John 16: 24–33
Sunday, May 4 John 16: 24–33

Whitsuntide

Sunday, May 11 John 14: 23–31

Wed., May 14 1 Corinth. 13: 1–13
Sunday, May 18 John 3: 1–21
Sunday, May 25 John 4: 1–15
Sunday, June 1 John 4: 16–35

St. Johnstide

Tuesday, June 24 Mark 1: 1–11
Sunday, June 29 Mark 1: 1–11
Sunday, July 6 John 1: 19–34
Sunday, July 13 Matt 11: 1–15
Sunday, July 20 John 3: 22–36

Sunday, July 27 Mark 8: 27–38
Sunday, August 3 Matthew 7: 1–14
Sunday, August 10 Luke 15: 11–32
Sunday, August 17 Luke 9: 1–17
Sunday, August 24 Luke 18: 35–43
Sunday, August 31 Mark 7: 31–37
Sunday, September 7 Luke 10: 1–20
Sunday, September 14 Luke 17: 5–24
Sunday, Sept. 21 Matthew 6: 19–34
Sunday, September 28 Luke 7: 11–17

Michaelmas

Monday, Sept. 29 Matthew 22: 1–14
Sunday, October 5 Matthew 22: 1–14
Sunday, October 12 Revelation 12: 1–12
Sunday, October 19 Revelation 1: 1–20
Sunday, October 26 Revelation 3: 1–6

Sunday, Nov. 2 Revelation 7: 9 to 8: 4
Sunday, Nov. 9 Revelation 14: 1–20
Sunday, Nov. 16 Revelation 19: 11–16
Sunday, Nov. 23 Revelation 21: 1–7

Advent

Sunday, November 30 Luke 21: 25–36

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

THE ESSENTIAL STEINER

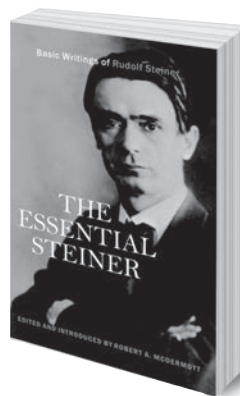
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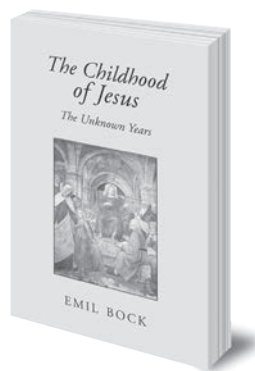
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