

The background is a vibrant, abstract collage. It features a large, stylized bird in the center, rendered in white with black outlines and large black circular eyes. The bird is surrounded by various colorful shapes: yellow and orange leaves, a green field with yellow flowers, a purple sky, and a black shape with yellow flowers on the left. The overall style is reminiscent of mid-20th-century modern art.

The Christian Community *Perspectives*

*community
science
nuclear power*

September • October • November 2008

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The crises of our time are above all crises of consciousness. When we read a sentence like this, there may be a little voice inside us that says—well, that's all very well, and what you might expect to find in a church magazine—but the real problems are hard, inevitable facts: global warming, economic inequality, conflict between world religions. In this we only show how hard it is to step outside the paradigm—the accepted framework of how things are, which fades so far into the background of our awareness that we do not notice it. In fact each one of the problems listed above issues in the end from human thinking. This means that our thinking has an influence on events and issues that seem far away from our control.

We are grateful for the many letters and emails we get with positive feedback about *Perspectives*. We are glad that many of our readers seem happy with the magazine. We would like to ask you to help us to spread the word, as our finances are not quite on an even keel. If we could find 50 new subscribers, our finances would be stable. Please tell people who you think might be interested in *Perspectives*. There is also the possibility of giving a gift subscription of 4 issues for the price of 3, to a new subscriber. If you simply wished to give us a gift to support our work, we could reclaim tax if you are a UK tax-payer. Please write to Kevin Street, the subscriptions manager, for more information.

TOM RAVETZ

Michael's question

Hartmut Borries

'In the beginning was the Word...'

When the world came into being, all that *is* came forth from the living Word. The Word is the beginning of life and development.

Most people have experienced the impact of a single word. One 'yes' or 'no', one word of understanding or of love changes the course of a day, a year, or even an entire life. A new beginning and a new life can be brought about by the right word at the right time.

The Christian Community began when a few people spoke the right words at the right time: 'How can the religious life of today be renewed?'

Finding the right question is important. It provides direction and impetus for the seeking of answers. Human life may take a completely different course because of a single question. Newton's question was not how the apple came to be on the tree, but how it fell down. That simple question led to discovery of the laws of gravity. But if he'd asked the other question, he might have been led to equally far-reaching discoveries about growth and life.

Michaelmas confronts us with the question embodied in the name Michael: who is like God? Yet the powerful nature of this question prevents there being any simple answer. Once there was someone who had a straightforward answer. Even before the question had been asked, the serpent told Eve: 'You will be like God.' In our time, Luciferic spiritual beings tell us the same thing. Lucifer is active in inflating egoism and stimulating selfishness, arrogance and lack of consideration for others. As long as Lucifer continues tempting us to be 'like God', we develop in exactly the opposite direction. We become more and more separate from the divine. While we remain only 'like' someone we are still separate from them and alone.

Nearly two thousand years ago Paul gave a completely different answer to Michael's question. He experienced that 'it is no longer I who lives, but Christ who lives in me.' The course of his entire life had altered as the result of finding and living his answer. By finding God within himself, Paul overcame the separation into which we are born. No one is 'like God' but God himself. In the

Christ Jesus, God became a human being. Since then Christ dwells in us when we seek him through our questioning. We are no longer two, but one—I in God and God in 'I'.

Reprinted with permission from *Christ in You – A Journey in Community* by Hartmut Borries with Elisabeth Alington, Published by The Christian Community Melbourne 2007. For information about this book, contact jmfnestor@gmail.com.

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Community counsel from the 'Letters to the Seven Churches in Asia' Ephesus (Rev. II, 1-7)

Jens Peter Linde

Aiding Evolution

The letters to the 'Seven Churches in Asia' are addressed to the '*Angels*' of the communities. These are the 'Higher Beings', the spiritual dimensions of these communities, and yet they are also part and parcel of their earthly manifestations and therefore *not* perfect.

In a certain way they are similar to our personal 'Guardian Angels' who accompany our individual development on earth with the consciousness of our true intentions. They are of a higher nature and yet they bear the burden of our personality. These beings want to help, but also are required to leave us free. As we deviate from our true paths they may not intervene unless we ask, and thus their potency may not always appear perfect. This is so with community angels too, as one can see in the letters from the Apocalypse.

But we are free to reach out to the angels and ask for help, individually in prayer, or indeed as a member of a community with the help of the Sacramental Consultation, and this will help the spirit beings in their capacity to help us. This will also enhance *their* growing and evolving, and again, in return, it will further our strengthening and refinement. I see in this mutual fostering the key to a sustainable future of community life; indeed of human life. The Seven Letters can help us in that.

Temple, Market, Theatre

The city of Ephesus itself lay at the meeting-point of sea and land, of west and east, of heaven and earth. The harbour, theatres and temples were expressions of the sharing of wares, the meeting of cultures, communion with gods.

Then the great temple burned, malaria became rampant and the harbour silted up. To be precise: the temple burned—but was built again. The old city became prone to floods and epidemics—and was relocated at higher ground.

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The harbour silted up—but for many years dredging could still maintain access to a new harbour. For a while, the memory of the ‘Glory’ that was Ephesus kept people going in togetherness, rebuilding and restoring.

Glory is a translation of the Greek ‘doxa’, meaning the ‘revelation of a super-sensible radiance’. It is that which makes us love a person or a community, an impulse or project. Ephesus had such a ‘doxa’ and therefore St. Paul felt that he could work and preach there. He felt a spiritual openness, a harbour for the ship of his preaching prepared by the ancient mysteries. But then there was a riot prompted by Ephesus’ silversmiths: economic consideration usurped the sphere of spiritual liberty. St. Paul had to leave. And the theatre which had been the place of the riot eventually degenerated into a venue for base entertainment and gladiatorial gore.

Once more the community in Ephesus rallied when St. John and St. Mary came to live there and over years they were given welcome and open-minded support. St. John after all was preaching the ‘Logos Incarnate’, the ‘Word become Flesh’, a concept which had been at the heart of the Ephesian mysteries. However, this was also the time when the temple services degenerated and in its wake the economic viability of the city declined.

Remember, Reform, Redeem

The Ephesians tried to do what St. John advises in the letter to the Angel of the Church in Ephesus even before he wrote it. The problem is clear: again and again they abandoned their ‘First Love’ (Rev. II, 4), the source of their ‘doxa’: they forgot to be the unselfish harbour, temple, theatre; to mediate ‘in between’ land and sea, heaven and earth, actors and audience. St. John’s advice is (Rev. II, 5; Revised Standard Version):

*Remember therefore whence you have fallen,
and repent,
and do the first works.*

or in my rendering:

*So, do re-member the ideal design from which you have deviated,
and re-form the vessel according to changed challenges,
and re-deem the intentions of your origin.*

To re-member ourselves as members of a community can be quite daunting, if we have gone to sleep in respect of its needs. And more so if we think of ‘whence we have fallen’: Every concrete reality on earth has a spiritual impulse as its origin, an ‘ideal design’ which, however, has to find a way to

adapt itself in its realization in the 'real' world. Nevertheless, as members of a community we do well to remember again and again the enthusiasm of its beginning, to see how we can let its sun shine in our hearts.

The second task, to 'repent', to 're-form the vessel' is the Greek word 'metanoeo'. 'Meta' points to a true connectedness which may transcend outer manifestation, and 'noeo' is the verbal form of 'nous', the consciousness of the spiritual essence of things. If we want to move from here to beyond, to connect with our true essence, to our angel who is keen to support us, we need to 'change our hearts and minds' like the people who came to be baptized by St. John. The usual translation, 'to repent', is only a part of this movement. If we want to reach out again to the 'ideal design' which had become corrupted in its fall, we will have to re-form, to refashion a newly adequate vessel for the 'nous' to be able to manifest in our world, and it cannot be the same as the old one because that is generally 'out of date'.

The third task which follows is to 'do the first works'. I do not believe it can mean to go back and 'do as we used to do'. In world evolution, to conserve means to go backwards. But we can endeavour to fulfil and 'redeem the intentions of the origin'. 'Poio', like the English word 'to poise', has a certain directness and intentionality to its 'doing', while 'ta prota erga', 'the first works' go back to the very beginning when through the Word 'all things were made'. But at the same time—the 'Very Beginning' is now... The 'Now' is on us to fulfil, to continue Creation in filling it fuller and fuller. We can redeem the 'Now' from the doldrums of the past if we learn again to steer the course of the original intentions, by stripping them of obsolete ballast and trimming the sails anew.

The Ephesians succeeded several times in rising again from degeneration by remembering; reforming and redeeming, and such can be a challenge to us when we find that our boat is in 'shallow waters'. Indeed, any crisis of an organism can instigate the organs, its members, to rally and to renew.

More likely than not, danger arises because we become infatuated by our private loves and forget the love of the being of our community. Between our own and the community's evolution, however, there is a deep bond, and thus we may strengthen *our* first love by loving the community. If we can become aware of the glory, the 'doxa' of the organism, consciousness of it can buoy up the ship like a glorious wind in the sails of our souls.

The promise in the letter to the Angel of the church in Ephesus is: 'To him who overcomes will I give to eat from the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.' The fall, of course, proceeded from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil at the heart of the Garden of Eden,

but by overcoming gravity through the practice of creating community, sharing and purifying our constitutional life forces, a gradual ascent can occur—even as we can move from *falling* in love begin to *grow* in love. Our first love can become our true love.

Consecrating the Connection

In the Act of Consecration of Man we are given a ‘tool’ with which we can work on these constitutional life forces. We can practice *remembering* in the Gospel reading, the sermon and the creed. Thereafter we can share in the process of *reforming*: actively during the Offertory, and meditatively in the divine act of the Transubstantiation. The *fulfilling* can come about if we step forward to take communion, for ourselves or for the *redeeming* of earth existence.

The priest knows that he cannot do it alone. He needs the backing of the priests’ community, spiritually and practically, as much as he needs such backing from the congregation. The first words at the altar are, ‘Let *us* worthily fulfil...’ For the Act of Consecration of Man at least two people are needed, the priest and a server; even better is three, with at least one person making up the congregation. When it says in the Gospels that Christ is among them ‘when two or three are together’ in ‘His Name,’ it points to the significance of community. It also can make us aware that Christ will be present, *wherever* community is formed in ‘His Name.’

There are initiatives in our times where groups of people more or less consciously offer themselves as vessels for the ‘Creative Word’ that the future may become manifest to ‘re-enliven the dying earth existence.’ Players in public life become mindful that they can only be successful if they can behold what shall be, if they can access the requirements of future developments through ‘brainstorming’ with the right group of people, through ‘think tanks’ or team building events.

Be it management executives who work with ‘Theory U’¹, be it people in a ‘Search Conference’², or meetings in the form of the ‘World Café’³, everywhere there is a waking up to the experience that the ‘Good’ wants to come about and that we can serve this ‘Good’ if we can be selfless enough to join—as individuals—in communal events or processes. Most likely the name of Christ is not mentioned, but if we call Christ by another name, ‘Being of Love’ or ‘Spirit of Evolution,’ we can see that here too there are people ‘together in His name’ who ‘labour’ in ‘patience’ (Rev. II, 3) to become co-creators in the ‘Act of Consecration of the Future’; not a ‘Re-naissance’, but perhaps a ‘Pro-naissance’!

A person who realizes that he or she is truly nourished by the sacraments becomes a shining light in the world. I believe many of us were once upon a time inspired by such a 'glowing' example to come to The Christian Community for the first time. As St. Paul, St. John and St. Mary must have been inspiring to the people of Ephesus through their remembrance of the Christ Jesus, so we may be touched by the 'Re-appearing One' and become able—by 'doing and smiling'—to confess to the *living* Christ in daily *life*. Then we can overcome the downward spiral of material existence and begin to be nourished by 'God's tree of life at the heart of Paradise' (Rev. II, 7). Then time will lead not to degeneration, but to the sweetness of age.

I have a vision. If we all looked around us and spotted one such initiative where people are trying in togetherness to do the 'Good', if we related to them, perhaps worked with them, we should find—becoming conscious of the strength of the sacraments flowing in us—how our confidence grows to such an extent that we would all begin to shine, and without trying to convert people, we would be able to renew and invigorate our community life—not for our sake, but in the service of Christ.

I believe souls are waiting to find us; we just have to prove that we are *truly* serving the 'Being of Love'. Could we bring our discoveries and experiences together in a future community meeting and share our joy that we can be inspired to be inspiring? Would it not be a worthy endeavour to help the Angel of our community also to radiate with joy? *Remembering* the founding aims of The Christian Community, *reforming* its movement in the world today, *redeeming* the potential which was laid into our hearts—yes, we can do it!

Further Reading:

1. www.theoryu.com
2. *Futures that Work*,
Hawthorn Press
3. www.theworldcafe.com

There Is No Death

JOHN LUCKEY MCCREEERY, 1835

*There is no death! The stars go down
To rise upon some other shore,
And bright in heaven's jeweled crown
They shine forevermore.*

*There is no death! The dust we tread
Shall change beneath the summer showers
To golden grain, or mellow fruit,
Or rainbow tinted flowers.*

*There is no death! An angel form
Walks o'er the earth with silent tread;
He bears our best love ones away,
And then we call them 'dead.'*

*Born unto that undying life,
They leave us but to come again;
With joy we welcome them—the same
Except in sin and pain.*

*And ever near us, though unseen,
The dear immortal spirits tread;
For all the boundless universe
Is life—there are no dead!*

Nuclear power— a problem of consciousness

Hans-Bernd Neumann

The discovery of the ‘logic behind the logic’

The philosopher Ken Wilber describes how human consciousness evolves by ‘leaps’ or in stages rather than in a continuous stream. A somewhat oversimplified view of this model of evolution is that there are three ‘tiers’.

Before human beings develop rational thinking, imbued with reason, they live in a ‘pre-rational’ state of consciousness. The world appears to them to be enchanted. They assume that behind all phenomena and events in the world of the senses there are mythical, magical causes, nature spirits or divinities. The child goes through this state until the third year of life; mankind as a whole was in it in the epoch before antiquity.

With rational, reasoning logic, human beings begin to understand the laws of nature without reference to any myth or magic. ‘Pan is dead!’—long live reason! Since antiquity, mankind as a whole has been developing this logical reasoning, refining it ever more, right up to the present day. The application of technology is a consequence of this way of thinking.

With the dawn of the 20th Century, mankind takes a new step in the evolution of consciousness. Wilber calls this new condition ‘trans-rational’. A few personalities had already taken this step before that time, but the whole of mankind as a culture-creating community went through this evolutionary stage between the years 1900 and 1930. In their individual biographies human beings develop this kind of consciousness from about the 20th year of life.

Within rational, informed mankind, the law of ‘either/or’, of ‘true or false’ or of ‘subject/object’ has applied—until now. At the beginning of the 20th Century, it became clear in the spheres of art, science and religion—that is to say, in all realms of culture—that there are fundamental contradictions which cannot be solved by the thinking of ‘true or false’. It was realized that the observer is an essential part of the system he or she is observing. The world does not separate into an ‘either-

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or' but remains 'both the one—and the other'. The way we interrogate Nature determines how she responds: whether more towards one polarity or towards the other.

It is particularly in the field of physics that this new age of human consciousness has been confirmed. Ever since Newton and Huygens the question of whether light consists of particles or of waves has been debated: an 'either—or' problem. When Niels Bohr introduced the concept of 'complementarity' into physics and his pupil Werner Heisenberg discovered the 'uncertainty principle', the problem of the duality of particles and waves was solved on a higher level. According to how the researcher sets up his experiment, Nature either responds as wave or with characteristics typical of particles. For reasoning based entirely on logic, the problem remains unsolved. It is only the 'logic behind the logic'—'trans-logic'—that can recognize and understand the solution. A crucial feature of trans-logical consciousness is the recognition that the observer is part of the experiment. Quantum physics can only be understood—and applied—when the influence of the observing human being is taken into account.

If we want to understand and deal with the modern world, we now have the task of achieving for ourselves this step which mankind as a whole took at the beginning of the 20th Century. And this also touches upon the problem of the application of atomic power.

Radioactivity and our consciousness

Discussions about the use of nuclear energy generally turn on questions of what is technically possible. But such technical discussions are based entirely upon rational logic. This logic is inadequate for the application of a force of nature which far transcends what rational logic can encompass. Only the 'logic behind the logic' can understand the problems which arise with the exploitation of nuclear energy.

The effect of radioactivity on living organisms is called radio-toxicity. This concept is borrowed from the chemistry of the 19th Century. It implies two notions: 1. That the toxic effects of a poisonous substance can be undone by an antidote; 2. That poison only becomes toxic above a certain dosage. Both of these statements are untrue in relation to the effects of radioactivity. First: against the effect of radioactivity there is no remedy other than avoidance. Second: there is no threshold which marks the point at which radioactivity begins to have lethal effects. Every irradiation of an organism can have lethal consequences; the probability of this occurring simply increases with the radiation dose.

Occasionally, to soothe anxieties, comparisons are made between radioactive (or, more precisely, ionising) radiation and cosmic and natural radiation. It must be pointed out, however, that it is well known by radio-biologists that such comparisons are of no help, since every kind of additional radiation increases the likelihood of cancer or genetic alteration. UV-B is a soft form of X-ray which can trigger skin cancer; and more than 65%, incidentally, of so-called 'natural radioactivity' of about 150 millirems (15 microsieverts) has been produced by human beings. Radioactivity in the atmosphere trebled between 1945 and 1964, owing to atmospheric nuclear tests, so when we speak of natural radiation we must be aware that this actually is only one third of the radiation dose coming from the earth and the cosmos.

Higher biological organisms have so-called repair-mechanisms at the cellular level. These protective biological systems can cope with a degree of bodily damage caused by ionising rays. We can assume that this capacity of organisms for repairing damage has developed through exposure to the 'true' natural dose of 5 microsieverts in the course of the evolution of life in the past 100,000,000 years.

My contention is that this system has already been struggling well beyond its capacity for the last 70 years. Every upper limit set down as a supposedly permissible exposure to radiation is purely arbitrary. To take an example: pilots who frequently fly at a height of 10,000 m are exposed to increased radiation (from cosmic rays). However, the permissible level of exposure for a pilot is simply set so high that he is 'allowed' to fly at this height for an entire year, and he may perhaps even submit to two or three chest X-rays without having to give up his job. That is logical and pragmatic—but totally unscientific!

There are many other equally misleading concepts in the sphere of nuclear energy. For instance, when an object is tainted by a substance, we speak of 'contamination'. This concept is also used in the context of radioactivity, but—like the concept 'radio toxicity'—is misleading. If a poisonous substance is lying on a table, then the table is contaminated by the poison. If the poison is removed from the table, the table has been 'decontaminated'. For radioactive substances, however, this simple rule does not apply. If a radioactive substance is lying on a table, then over time the table itself becomes radioactive. If the radioactive substance is removed, one can no longer speak of decontamination, since the table itself is now radioactive.

This has significant consequences as regards the storage of radioactive substances, especially such powerfully neutron-radiating materials as 'burnt-out'—(another misleading concept borrowed from chemistry)—uranium fuel rods from nuclear power stations. The container in which such a powerfully radiating object is stored itself becomes radioactive over time. Therefore, only an 'interim-container' is achievable. For this fundamental reason, it will never be possible to construct a container which screens off radioactivity totally and for all time.

As regards the management of radioactivity, the 'weasel word' of the 20th Century has been 'final storage'. This conjures up the notion that it is feasible to make a radioactive substance disappear and become inaccessible to human beings for ever. But this is impossible. We cannot know for sure what the storage places will look like in twenty, fifty, let alone one hundred thousand years. And furthermore, an even more serious problem is this: people today may know where these storage-places are, but how will it be possible to prevent someone, at some point in the future of the human race, from digging at these locations and so letting loose a catastrophe upon mankind? In the handling of radioactivity we must get used to thinking in time scales that go way beyond the length of a human life-span.

Clearly, then, the phenomenon of radioactivity cannot be uncoupled from human beings. Wherever radioactivity appears nowadays, we must consider very carefully what kind of consciousness is accompanying this radioactivity.

Thinking in new time-scales

We speak of secondary consequences of radiation exposure when people develop cancer or leukaemia after their exposure. Furthermore, we speak of secondary consequences when genetic changes occur. Accumulated genetic changes only appear in the third or fifth generation after irradiation—we know this from experiments with mammals that reproduce more quickly than humans. For us, this means: we, at the present time, are living in a period in which accumulated genetic damage can be expected to appear within those families whose great-grandparents were exposed to radiation at Hiroshima, Nagasaki or Nevada. The massive genetic damage caused through Chernobyl will only become apparent at about the end of this century. Are we already preparing sufficiently for these problems?

Our rational mind only thinks in time-spans of one generation at the most. Trans-rational consciousness is aware that events in the world are not isolated from one another, in neither space nor in time. Everything is connected with everything else. That is why trans-rational consciousness tries to take great time-spans into account, knowing also the effort involved.

Security concepts and human beings

The security systems for nuclear installations are nowadays very complex and ingenious. However, all these designs exclude an essential factor, viz. the human being. Indeed, the aim is precisely to eliminate the human factor, this being considered unreliable and unpredictable. But this approach does not do justice to the nuclear-physical process. Nuclear energy is a completely new and independent force of nature, which, if indeed it is to be mastered or contained at all, requires a quite particular kind of consciousness. The nuclear-physical process stands in a relationship to the person, the human being, who steers it or accompanies it. Any security design of a nuclear installation which deliberately excludes the human factor, and which thereby reduces a trans-logical system to a purely logical problem, is not appropriate to the system and is therefore inadequate. Sellafield, Harrisburg and Chernobyl are clear indicators. In all three instances, it was human failure that led to a catastrophe. On the other hand, at the Forsmark reactor in Sweden, a major nuclear disaster was averted on June 25th, 2006, by the action—contrary to regulations—of a technician.

Problems arise in connection with the application of new technologies that are based upon modern quantum mechanics and chaos theory when they are being operated by people who have developed only rational, logical thinking. Anyone who really understands the problems is reticent about making such judgements as ‘this is simply not possible’ or ‘this could never happen here’ when assessing the risks: for the ‘trans-logician’ in his argumentation also points out the moral dimension of modern technology and its relationship to human beings. He is aware that the human being is an intrinsic factor in the system, not merely an observer on the sidelines. The question whether mankind at some point will be in a position to utilize nuclear technology responsibly, must be left open. At present, we are far removed from being able to claim truthfully that we can use nuclear energy safely. So long as the questions around atomic energy continue to be reduced to purely technical problems, we should not be making further use of it.

Their Labs are not our world!

Jerome Ravetz

These are notes for a philosophical reconstruction of natural science, making it fit for helping to create a world worth living in.

'Science' is now a highly charged and deeply ambivalent symbol. We all know that science has enabled the production of the wealth that has enabled an increasing proportion of the world's masses to move out of material poverty. But we are increasingly aware of the costs, in a life-style that is quite simply unsustainable. The strains begin to show, in worldwide shortages and speculation in essential materials like oil and foodstuffs. And particular areas of science are revealed to be 'toxic'; they poison the system on which they operate. In every case, the toxicity is the result of a failure to appreciate that the real world is quite different from the artificial, controlled world of the lab. Much of our 'progress' has resulted from ignoring that difference; but now we will continue that ignorance at our peril.

Our high-technology agriculture can be said to be 'toxic'. It destroys the soil, and robs plants and animals of their goodness; all being done in the name of cheap food, but actually to increase the profits of the monopoly suppliers. It is all rather general, until a particular episode of toxicity occurs. Just now there are the afflicted honeybees, the miners' canaries of our high-tech agriculture. Bees have been turned into slave-labourers in their science-based industry. They are subjected to overwork, inadequate rest and rehabilitation, malnutrition and poisons. Just like humans under such conditions, they have become breeding grounds for virulent pathogens. The epidemic of 'colony collapse disorder' now threatens all the crops that need bees for pollination, and hence cause deep disruption of the world's food supply; but governments are obstinately complacent.

Nowadays even mathematics can go toxic. This may be hard to imagine, but it has happened recently in the scandal of the manipulation of the fraudulent American sub-prime mortgages. This was enabled by Information Technology, whereby the individual assets could be combined and then sliced & diced into ever more arcane forms. In the absence of a real market, prices for these weird things depended on the quality-grades given by the rating agencies. These agencies

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naturally became subject to market forces, and their grade-inflation fed a trillion-dollar mutual confidence-trick. The whole procedure depended on the mathematical/computer 'models' that simulated the behaviour of the fictitious markets. These depended on the assumption that things would always behave nicely—indeed that markets would always go up. The result was that when the game was finally exposed we were just hours away from the collapse of the whole system of credit in the U.S.A. This could have led to the closure of banks on a large scale, and shortages of the cash and credit necessary for keeping businesses running. It's impossible to say how big or widespread the meltdown could have been. But toxic mathematics is so deeply embedded in the financial system, that it could have been very serious indeed.

What lessons can be drawn from such examples of toxicity in the name of science? They indicate that, like so many of our other inherited secular movements for liberation, science now shows senescence—the decline that comes with advancing age—and self-destructive tendencies. Of course great work is still being done by many dedicated scientists. But looking for trends, we see that Big Agri-Food and Big Pharma have joined Big Nuclear and Big Tobacco in the public's list of corporate enterprises depending on toxic science. Considering the emerging technologies centred on nanotechnology, we ask whether we are dealing with a 'sorcerer's apprentice' syndrome, unable to turn off the torrent of innovation, regardless of its dangers.

A clue to the philosophical deficiencies of contemporary science lies in the idea of 'non-violence'. This has animated the most significant social movements of our times, and it may well be the key to the survival of civilisation. Where have we ever heard this word used in connection with science? There are just a couple of people on the fringe: Joseph Rotblat, who gave up his scientific career to found the Pugwash movement, and Vandana Shiva, the Indian eco-activist.

('Pugwash' is the name of the home town in Canada of a benefactor, Cyrus Eaton, who sponsored regular meetings between Western and Soviet top scientists through the Cold War, thereby preventing the misunderstandings that could have triggered nuclear war. Vandana Shiva is a trained scientist who has devoted her life to the related causes of non-violent social progress and eco-activism. In neither case does their endeavour count as 'science').

We must ask, can there be any real connection between science and non-violence? There is plenty of connection between science and violence.

Science has been used in war from time immemorial, and 'Hiroshima' and 'Agent Orange' are reminders of its role in recent times. Some will even argue that the 'scientific' approach to the natural and social worlds is inherently violent, as it spurns the uniqueness and spiritual qualities of the things it manipulates. But if science, alone among our great social forces, has nothing to do with non-violence, what does that tell us about its role in the contemporary world? Is it merely a tool, capable of use indifferently for good or evil? In that case, what has happened to its earlier promise of progress and liberation?

Where can reconstruction begin? We can start with recovery from a delusion that is now four centuries old, that was very powerful in its time but is now dangerous and destructive. This is, that every problem involving science has just one true answer, expressed in numerical form. We need to realise that some real problems have, as yet, no answer; some have many possible answers; and the most important problems may have so much uncertainty that any numbers can be misleading. The scientists themselves may be most in need of re-education, as they have been so conditioned by many years of dogmatic training as to be incapable of imagining any alternative to their simplistic world-view. For an example, many well-meaning scientists promoted 'bio-fuels'—what could be more 'green' than growing our fuel rather than taking it out of the earth? It did not occur to them that to grow fuel-crops means growing fewer food-crops, and so they were surprised when their solution to one problem only made other problems worse!

Our inherited philosophy of science, of simple solutions for simple problems, is still held quite sincerely by many. But it has now become a vehicle for the most pernicious influences. In order to define problems that can be solved, this sort of science abstracts from the multi-causality, uncertainties, complexities and value-commitments of our real world. It studies only the simple, stable and controllable reality of the lab or computer simulation. This is just the sort of artificiality that suits the purposes of institutions seeking profit, power or privilege. For in that situation no voice is heard except that of the expert, for whom the whole world is just a textbook exercise. Problems of 'unintended consequences' on societies, people and nature are dismissed as 'unscientific' and therefore unreal, not worth considering. All impediments to the exercise of profit, power and privilege through science are thereby removed.

A most important political act of our time is to establish the distinction between our complex world of strivings for sustainability and justice, and

the simple labs of their corporate science. One approach is through 'Post-Normal Science', which typically starts when 'facts are uncertain, values in dispute, stakes high and decisions urgent'. Such problems cannot be solved by mathematical demonstration; they require an 'extended peer community' for their resolution. In that process, scientists learn that theirs is not the only valid perspective on a problem of policy or practice. Their reductionist philosophy of the textbook or classroom may be seriously misleading, out in the real world.

When scientists are freed from the intellectual hobbles of reductionism, they can rejoin the human race. Learning that numbers do not guarantee 'objectivity', they can appreciate that like all other social activities, science needs integrity lest it slide into corruption. We have seen how unscrupulous governments and corporations can manipulate and deform all the judgments that guide the research process. We can learn that on contentious policy issues where there is no conclusive evidence, 'negotiation in good faith' can be an effective approach to good results. And in such negotiations, all sorts of knowledges, based on all sorts of experiences, can be truly complementary when dialogues are animated by the spirit of non-violence. The idea of 'science' can be extended beyond the doings of men in white coats, to include all disciplined social endeavours for improving our understanding and wellbeing in the world. Science can make a great contribution to this renaissance of knowledge; just imagine what it will be like when there is a computer in every classroom in the world, connected to the Internet. The empowerment of the world's masses, when they can freely partake of our great cultural heritage and also share their visions and plans among themselves across communities, could be like nothing that civilisation has seen before. We could imagine an 'extended peer community' that encompasses much of the human race.

There is a good historical foundation for this ethical component of science, since the greatest scientists have always been 'natural philosophers', dedicated to the noblest goals. Many have commented on the affinity between that endeavour and the religious life. The recent historical breach between 'science' and 'religion' is now being healed in other ways. Science never did prove that the world is a big box called Space floating down a river called Time, full of billiard-balls called Matter. Contemporary physics shows that whatever reality might be like, it certainly can't be like that. The supposed implausibility of the therapies of Complementary and Alternative Medicine is just a temporary and local cultural artefact. The human imagination may well be on the brink of a great expansion.

With this perspective on the different realities within science, and on how scientific styles interact with politics and profit, we can appreciate some important lessons from history. It was the influential chemist Justus von Liebig who advocated replacing natural humus with the artificial fertilisers that eventually caused the murder of the world's soils; and it was the visionary Rudolf Steiner whose understanding led to the theory and practice of their rescue. Who was the more genuine 'scientist' in this case?

The door is already opening. Britain's most distinguished scientist, (Lord) Martin Rees, has already warned that we have only an even chance of surviving the next century¹. Both in the UK and the EU, there is an official commitment to ensuring the safety of new technologies. And in a recent great international debate, it was established that the messy, creative world of real farming cannot be usefully managed as if it were a factory². Now even the worst polluters employ 'greenwash', confirming that sustainability holds the moral high ground.

We can sum up the argument by paraphrasing the early Marx. He said that previously philosophers had tried to interpret the world; the task, however, is to change it. We might say that previously scientists had tried to change the world in the simplified image of their labs; the task however is to frame a science that is emancipated from the corporate labs, and that serves our real world, with self-awareness, commitment and love.

There is no question of throwing away our scientific knowledge in the search for an imaginary simpler, purer life. Rather, we can embark on another 'renaissance', with a renewed synthesis of ancient wisdom and modern knowledge, and thereby achieve a new science that enriches all our lives.

References:

¹Martin (Lord) Rees, *Our Final Hour: A Scientist's Warning: How Terror, Error, and Environmental Disaster Threaten Humankind's Future In This Century--On Earth and Beyond* (UK title: *Our Final Century: Will the Human Race Survive the Twenty-first Century?*), 2003, Basic Books

²Andy Coghlan, *And the poor shall inherit the earth / If farming can save the world*, a report being finalized at a meeting in South Africa will show us how. *New Scientist* 5 April 2008, p.8.

The Old Astronomer

SARAH WILLIAMS 1841

*Though my soul may set in darkness, it will rise in perfect light,
I have loved the stars too fondly to be fearful of the night.*

Consecrating dying

Cynthia Hindes

Our life on earth is bracketed by two great events. These two events make up the two poles between which our life unfolds. They are of course birth and death. They are guided by two great archangels. The archangel Gabriel presides over the events of conception, embryonic life and birth. We are sent down to earth out of a community of spiritual beings. We and those born in our year gather together under Gabriel's wing to await the final steps before we are born. One can often observe the keen interest that young children display for other children of their own age, even strangers. It is as though they are seeing and recognizing each other again here on earth.

The archangel Michael stands at the other portal, the portal of death. Death sometimes seems a more individualized event. We can die even without the company of others. In art Michael is often portrayed holding the balance scales, for the weighing of souls. His earnestness speaks of the elements of which we must rid ourselves in order enter again into the community of spirits.

The process of being born, of incarnating, and the process of dying, or excarnating, show some interesting parallels. At the moment of conception, unseen to earthly eyes, the way in which earthly matter operates is eliminated. In the fertilized ovum, a creative chaos ensues. Since earthly activity has been suspended, only cosmic forces from the life realm of the stars are allowed to operate. The individuality of the child-to-be glides down on starbeams. Then the whole cosmos participates in the development of the human embryo. We are formed through cosmic speech. Gradually, in the womb, the developing human being, at first just a spirit, begins to 'incorporate'; to enter into a relationship with physical matter. Body size and weight increase, although the body still floats buoyantly 'weightless' in the amniotic fluid. At birth, the earthly force of gravity begins to make its full claim on the human being. The first year of the child's life is chiefly

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a struggle to upright the body, to overcome the effects of gravity on a body that continues to grow and gain weight at a phenomenal rate.

And alongside this process, a place of inwardness of soul is being prepared within the body. Inner soul processes are expressed at first as cries of pain or gurgles of laughter.

This process of creating an inward soul space reaches a new level when the child begins to speak. For the working of cosmic forces do not end when the child is born. The possibility of speaking and being heard and understood is in fact a remnant of the working of that cosmic speech of the stars which infused the embryo. Speech is embryonic activity that continues after birth. Speech unites us in human communion. We have speech because something from the communal realm of the stars still works in us.



The Charnel House, Pablo Picasso, 1945

Thus there are four general steps in the process of incarnation. First, there is a kind of 'ex-communion' out of the spirit world; we are sent down from the world of the stars, 'sent down from community of spirit to that of earth', as it says in the Baptism. Secondly we enter into a relationship with matter; our self ceases to live solely in the spiritual world and begins to live also in the physical. Then at birth the human being is claimed fully by earthly forces of gravity coming from the centre of the earth, and must adapt to conditions on the earth. And lastly, there is the continuation after birth of embryonic activity in the possibility of being heard and of speaking.

At the other end of life, approaching death, these same processes are recognizable; but they move in the opposite direction. As we age, we begin to ex-carnate; our speech can take on a certain objectivity. It develops the capacity to express not just emotion, but objective truth. Something of this is expressed when the Old Testament patriarchs on their deathbed spoke their prophetic 'blessing' of their children.¹ What they spoke was the truth that would reveal itself in the future. This perhaps underlies our respect for the seriousness of deathbed wishes and promises. It underlies the emergence of interest in recent times of the so-called 'ethical will',² in which the legacy, not of one's material goods, but of one's life experience and hopes for the future are bequeathed. Christ's Farewell Address (John, Chapters 15–17), is a beautiful example of a such a legacy, one which continues to work into the future.

As we age, we work to ascend and to adapt again to the cosmic forces, the world of the stars and of God. We begin to take what we have received and

achieved through adapting to the earthly and offer it back to the spiritual world. Elders often offer their help, their advice, their memories. Sometimes they seem to be offering their thoughts aloud to unseen presences. Through the 'levity' in this gesture of offering upwards, we counteract the gravitational forces that pull us toward the center of the earth.

Furthermore, as we age, we begin to reverse our relationship to matter, to de-materialize. With the help of cosmic forces, our self begins to move outwards again; to disentangle itself from matter, something observable in the frailty of the very old.

Finally at death we achieve a complete union again with what is above. We are reunited with the company of our loved ones before us, and the company of God and his angels. Perhaps the reversal in this excarnation process is a part of what Christ meant when he said that we must become like little children again in order to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Although we have described these two processes, incarnation and excarnation, birth and death, as separate poles, we have already hinted that in fact they are actually both continuously working together throughout our lives. As we said, embryonic forces of the stars continue to work in life as our capacity for speech. Furthermore these same embryonic forces, which manifest as speech during the day, are even more active at night. They are the forces that repair and refresh the body during sleep.

The death forces too are continually at work in us from the moment of our first breath. Food is destroyed so that we may live. Each of our body's cells is programmed to die at a specific time to make room for new fresh cells; if they did not, we could not continue to live. Consciousness itself rests on a death process, a process of damping down of life processes and de-materialization in the brain. We are continually being born and dying.

In the Act of Consecration of Man, these two polar processes of being born and dying are also interwoven in a remarkable fashion. It is interesting to look at the Act of Consecration, especially from the side of the excarnation process.

The Act of Consecration of Man consists of four parts. The first part encompasses the Epistle (or seasonal prayer), and the Gospel Reading and the Creed. The seasonal epistles have a particular character. They speak of the festival season and of our soul's relationship to it. In the epistle for Passiontide, it is as though our very souls themselves are being read and described. The Trinity epistle speaks of the beautifully interwoven relationship between the divine world and the human soul. The Gospel readings are for the most part Christ's words, the words of Him who is Truth. And

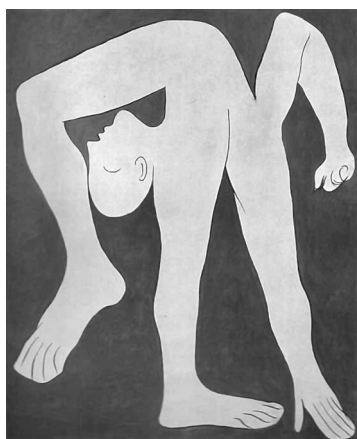
the Creed describes the great arc of earthly evolution in twelve mighty, objective spiritual statements. Thus the Act of Consecration of Man starts with the first step of the excarnation process, with speech, steeped in the objectivity of truth. Our inwardness of soul, usually expressed in speaking, is given over to listening to God's objective words.

The second part, the Offering, expresses the second step in the excarnation process. Bread, and wine (juice) are offered; into them we speak in offering the energies of the best of ourselves: the soul's pure thoughts, the heart's love and the will's devotion to Christ. Bread and wine, and our souls and spirits, are elevated, and thus the descending aspect of incarnation is reversed; the earthly forces, the forces of gravity are counteracted. The smoke of incense bears our words and intentions upwards, in levity. In this part of the service we work in an ascending mode, pictured in the symbolic realism of the rising smoke of the incense. The second step of excarnation is enacted: offering upward.

The rising of the smoke of incense is the transition into the third part of the Act of Consecration of Man, the Transubstantiation or Transformation. In this process, bread and wine, and souls, are spiritualized, partially extricated from the material, through the help of divine powers. With help from Christ, a de-materialization takes place, both in the bread and wine we have offered, and in the best of our selves, which we have offered with them. Bread and wine become numinous; spirit light shines from them. The self has begun to reverse its relationship to matter and to move outward toward the starry periphery through the help of cosmic powers. The third step along the path of excarnation is expressed: de-materialization, spiritualization.

In the Communion we are fully reunited with the divine world from which we came. Furthermore, we do all of this, not alone, but in community with others, as a picture of the divine community from which we have come. Thus we reach the fourth phase of excarnation, union with what is above. And when the service has ended, we have received the strength to return once again to our lives.

The Act of Consecration of Man is an enactment of the process of excarnation. It counters the incarnational forces in us, which are the forces of descent and of materialization. These descending forces of incarnation, the Gabrielic forces, are good and appropriate in infancy and childhood; but they can bind us 'in chains of earthly slavery' if they become one-sided or work on too strongly in adulthood. In adulthood we need to establish a proper balance between the two processes. We adults need to establish a



Acrobat, Pablo Picasso, 1930

relationship with Michael, the guardian of the portal of death and of excarnation, who is at the same time the guardian over the 'hallowed offering.' This is why the Act of Consecration of Man is a service primarily for adults.³

The Act of Consecration of Man teaches us how to die properly. It teaches us how to excarnate: in the words of the service we learn how to hear and speak objectively. In the Offering we learn how to offer the best of ourselves. In the Transformation we learn how to engage in a process of de-materialization; and with the Communion we re-order ourselves again into communion with the spiritual world, the home from

which we come.

And indeed this will be the work we continue to do even after our death. For in the spiritual world our activity is patterned in the same way. In heaven, a continuous offering service is always underway. Souls have the opportunity to listen to the word of God. They can join in the offering song of the angels, in which spiritual substance is offered to those ranks of angels above, to God and to Christ, in order to strengthen and support their work in heaven and on earth. In these activities, souls and spirits help to create the healing, living light that shines in the heavens, that shines onto the earth from the realm of the spirit. This is a living light of love, a light that draws all upward. Upwards we work in heaven, in an outpouring of love, until gradually we will descend again in love, to find ourselves once more under Gabriel's wing, awaiting our new life.

Footnotes

¹Genesis 49.

²Ethical wills are a way to share your values, blessings, life's lessons, hopes and dreams for the future, love, and forgiveness with your family, friends and community. Visit www.ethicalwill.com for information and examples.

³In The Christian Community, children have their own Sunday Service, which is primarily an incarnational service. It is essentially the first part of the Act of Consecration of Man, the Gospel part, the sounding of God's word. Children only offer their intention to seek Christ on earth. The spirit is called down to be with them in blessing. Their 'communion' is the assurance that God's spirit will be with them in their seeking. In The Christian Community, young people receive their first communion at the Act of Consecration of Man that accompanies their Confirmation at fourteen, when the death processes have begun to blossom in them with puberty.

Christianity and Judaism

Part 2: Tension and Conflict as a Task

Paul Corman

The relationship between Jews and Christians comes to a crescendo in those historical moments which are decisive for the whole of mankind. This had started during the three years of Christ's Incarnation, before the emergence of Christianity as a religion. The first Christians were all born Jews, connected to their people through the blood. It was necessary to sever the blood ties that initially were a condition for belonging to Christ. This was achieved by a Jew who did not experience Christ in the flesh. Paul experienced Christ in the spirit on the road to Damascus in such a way that he became a true Hebrew, breaking through boundaries, crossing from Judaism to Christianity as we understand it today. Paul initiated a transformation in mankind similar in scale to the one ushered in by Abraham.

Paul, the first modern Christian, was at the same time Jew, Hebrew and Israelite. He was a confessor, a border crosser and a warrior for God in his struggles to articulate Christian theology. His task was not to proclaim the national Messiah of the Jews, but the Messiah for the whole of humanity. He founded many communities and it was he who opened the way to Christ for the Gentiles. He brought Christianity to Europe.

Before his death he wrote from prison to the Romans.

How I wish that I could take the curse upon myself which arises because my brothers and relations by physical

descent, the people of Israel, do not find the way to Christ. To them as a race the secret of sonship and the divine revelation was given, as well as the giving of the law, the rituals of worship and the promises. They were the people of the Fathers, and from them proceeded the physical body for the Christ, he who is the highest of all divine Beings, whose praise we offer through all cycles of time. Amen.

Romans 9: 3

and

And so I ask, 'Has God rejected His people?' That is out of the question. I am, after all, an Israelite myself, of the seed of Abraham and a member of the tribe of Benjamin ... Does that then mean that they have stumbled so as to fall? By no means. What made them fall led the heathen peoples to the path of salvation. And now they can be spurred on by them.

Romans 11:1 and 11

It was not the case that the word of God had proved to be wrong, only that we must not simply take those who are bodily descendants of Israel for the true Israel.

Paul was executed in Rome towards the end of the 60s. Shortly thereafter the siege of Palestine began, then Jerusalem fell to the Romans and by the end of the 70s was razed to the ground and the temple was destroyed. Soon af-

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ter, the Jews were scattered all over the Roman Empire. The Jewish nation was spread among all the nations, as if in a homeopathic dilution.

During the first two centuries AD, both the Jews and the Christians were busy with their own problems. The Christians were persecuted sporadically by the Romans, and the Jews were trying to rebuild their communities, without being able to worship in Jerusalem. There was no time for quarrelling; the Jews and Christians lived their own lives.

However, conflicts gradually emerged around three main areas:

- *The Christians saw the Jews as the murderers of Christ;*
- *They believed that the Jews could no longer consider themselves the chosen people, as the Christians had taken their place;*
- *The laws of the Torah were increasingly disregarded by the Gentile converts and later by Jewish Christians as well.*

These reasons for conflict gained in strength as the Christian church grew as an institution. From 312 the church was established in the Roman Empire as a political power through the emperor Constantine. The Jews' original task of forming the physical body of Christ was taken up and continued in a new way by the Church.

An important further stage was the emergence of Islam in the 7th century. Its rapid spread led to a flowering of Jewish culture, mainly in Spain. Islam continued the spirit of Abraham's strict monotheism. However, the bloodstream of Ishmael lacked a relationship to sacrifice. It

refined the methods of knowing the world using number, proportion and weight, and this knowledge became more materialistic. The Christians of that time had hardly any part in this. Science would not be developed in the Christian West for a long time to come.

It would have been impossible for the Christians and Muslims to meet and fructify each other, had the Jews not formed a cultural bridge with their language, culture and commerce. For example in the year 999 Silvester II became Pope. Through the Jews in Spain he was in contact with Islamic mathematicians, philosophers and scientists. His pontificate lasted only four years, during which he introduced Arabic numerals into Europe and conceived the idea of a crusade, without any warlike intention, but to enable the care of the Christian holy sites in Palestine.

Nearly 90 years later, in 1095, pope Urban II called the first crusade. Almost simultaneously, in 1096, as an apparent side-effect of the crusade, Christians in the Rhine valley began to massacre Jews. This violence spread through the whole of Europe and as far as Palestine.

In 1492, all the Jews were expelled from Spain with six months' notice. At exactly the same time, Christopher Columbus sailed westward and discovered not India (as he hoped) but America. This was the beginning of a new age. There are many other examples of such intersections of Jewish and Christian history, often with a tragic, sacrificial character.

* * *

We have looked at the history of the Jewish people from Abraham to Jesus, at the

Jews, Hebrews and Israelites, the Abrahamic foundations and their transformation in Paul before Damascus, and at three points of intersection with world history where the sacrifice of the Jews connected them strongly with the Christians and the whole of humanity. Finally, let us look at our own time, described by anthroposophy as the age of Michael. According to Rudolf Steiner it began in 1879, and it will last until about 2200.

Michael was first the folk spirit of the Jews, then of the Germanic peoples. As the servant of Christ, he is leading mankind to a new world consciousness, to a Michaelic world nation of world citizens.

In 1879, the historian Heinrich von Treitschke coined the expression *Antisemitism* in the *Preussische Jahrbücher*. The hatred of Jews reached a new level. It was no longer the hatred against a religion whose followers were held to have murdered Christ, but against a race that was thought to be a contaminant responsible for all ills; a fight for the blood. Curiously, the Jewish and the German peoples swapped places in the course of time, as did the Christians and the Germans. To illustrate this exchange I quote Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*:

Human culture and civilisation are inseparably interlinked with the Aryan race in this part of the world. ... There is only one divine human right, which is as well the most holy responsibility: to safeguard the purity of the blood.

How can we understand the re-emergence of this racial principle—one which had its place in Old Testament times, but which in the context of the

Twentieth Century brought untold evil and suffering?

Between 1750 and 1870 Europe breathed a sigh of relief: emancipation, an urge for freedom and a new self-awareness brought a flowering of the spirit, particularly in Germany. The Jews in Germany felt themselves to be primarily Germans who worshipped at the synagogue instead of in church. Jewish religious practice was reformed—it became as it were Protestant, right down to the liturgy used in the synagogue. Most German Christians considered the German Jews to be fully German. The Jews had become assimilated in almost every regard. And then, as if from nowhere, antisemitism appeared, and not on the basis of religion, but on the basis of blood and race.

The root of the word 'antisemitism' is the Hebrew 'shem'. Shem, a son of Noah, was the progenitor of the Semites. But 'shem' also means 'name'. A pious Jew who tries to avoid speaking the word 'God' says instead 'ha shem'. The 'name' is a replacement expression for 'God'. On a deeper

Lord, We are More Wretched

RAINER MARIA RILKE

*Lord, we are more wretched than the animals
who do their deaths once and for all,
for we are never finished with our not dying.*

*Dying is strange and hard
if it is not our death, but a death
that takes us by storm, when we've ripened none
within us.*

*We stand in your garden year after year.
We are trees for yielding a sweet death.
But fearful, we wither before the harvest.*

level, antisemitism is against 'ha shem' the divine name that all human beings carry inside themselves.

The Jews' reaction also seemed to come from nowhere: they retreated into themselves. They understood themselves again primarily as Jews. Zionism emerged. The idea of a Jewish homeland originated from Heinrich von Treitschke, from whom Theodor Herzl adopted it. We can see both anti-Semitism and Zionism as reactions against the 'I', against what should have developed in the Jews and the Germans alike in this Michaelic time. The consequence of this interplay was an intensified union of destiny, which led to the immense sacrifice that took place in the past century. In any sacrifice, spiritual forces are freed and made available.

Before the First World War, Rudolf Steiner already spoke about what he called the most important event in our time.

The first signs of these new soul forces will become apparent relatively soon. And they will become more evident about in the middle of the thirties of this century, between 1930 and 1940. The years 1933, 1935 and 1937 will be especially important. New capacities will become manifest in the human being. In this time great changes will come over mankind and prophecies from the Bible will be fulfilled. The

Rind and Leaf

RAINER MARIA RILKE

For we are only the rind and the leaf.

The great death, that each of us carries inside, is the fruit.

Everything enfolds it.

*world will change for the souls incarnated in human bodies on the earth, and for those dwelling in the spiritual world. No matter where the souls may be, they will start to develop new abilities. Everything is going to change.*¹

Rudolf Steiner is referring here to what anthroposophy calls 'Christ's reappearance in the etheric realm,' not in a physical body —this was a unique event, never to be repeated—but in the realm of the ether forces, the life forces, that are around us and that enliven us. This is a continuation of Paul's experience at Damascus. In the same way as a physical body had to be prepared at the turning point of time in order to manifest the Christ being in the realm of earth, so in our time sense organs need to be formed to enable us to perceive the etheric Christ. Whether Christ is noticed, recognized and accepted in our time depends on the activity of human beings, not on their blood and genetic makeup. Anthroposophy and the Act of Consecration of Man have been given to us to help us to grow into this perception.

We are still at the beginning of this development which will not be simple. Materialism corrupts our perception. Look at our culture and civilisation. Are they truly Christian? Are medicine, education, agriculture, science, even religion imbued with Christianity? Far from it. We seem to live in a culture that is dominated by numbers, weights and measure. This culture sprang from Abraham's transformation, but did not follow the path of sacrifice of Isaac through Jacob to Christ, but went a one-sided path through Ishmael. The Jewish stream through Abraham was constituted in such a way that number and measure were to be the servants of

a science that seeks God in the natural world to help us to recognize the divine in the world. The order and number of the stars should have worked through this stream into the world. However, our culture has banished the divine from our world through number and measure.

Who are the Jews today? Who are the Christians today?

Is it Christians who create a culture devoid of spirit? Are they Christians who know where to find the Christ, but decide to ignore him? Does our culture offer Christ a home, or does it create a new passion for Him by ignoring him? And where are those who want to become Christians today, who are formed by our culture, but want to become disciples of Christ? They do exist. They are equally sons of Abraham and of Paul. They are the true Hebrews, Israelites, Jews of today, God's fighters who recognize Him, his confessors full of praise. Only they can bring Christ's healing power down to earth.

Buber is not the only one who stands in the ruined Jewish graveyard, looking up to the perfection of the Christian Cathedral. Who are the Jews of today? Who are the Christians of today? It is those who recognize their connection to Christ through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and also through Paul.

Rudolf Steiner describes it thus:
In the same way as Paul found his conviction that the Christ lives outside Damascus, there will be people who will become convinced that the Christ truly lives through their experience of the etheric world. ...And the preparers of Christ's coming in the flesh will become recognizable to those who have had the new Christ



Three Women at the Spring, Pablo Picasso, 1921

experience. Human beings will again recognize those who lived on the earth as Moses, Abraham and the Prophets. And they will know that in the same way that Abraham prepared the way for the Christ he has also taken on the responsibility to continue his mission to help the Christ impulse. Thus human beings will unite with the patriarchs who prepared the way of Christ, if they are not asleep to the most important event of the immediate future.¹

For such people, the covenant is not renounced. The connection between Jews and Christians is intensifying in the present day once more. The sharp pains of a new birth are there. And now the tension between Jews and Christians is no longer played out only on the stage of world history; it has moved into our hearts.

¹ *The Event of the Appearance of Christ in the Etheric World!* January 25, 1910; Karlsruhe; GA 118

Pastoral Points

Letter to a woman who is experiencing difficulties in her marriage

Julian Sleigh

Dear Angela,

I was sad to hear of the difficulties you are having in your relationship with Jack. Be of good cheer: such times can be ones of clearing misunderstandings and finding new depths of soul in yourself and in your marriage. But to reach this stage various steps are needed, as with all processes and healings. The first step is, of course, to diagnose the 'malaise.' Why are things difficult? Almost always a relationship suffers if there is a problem of communication.

This is worth looking at together: have we been sharing our thoughts and experiences in recent times, or have we been more and more keeping our experiences to ourselves? Have we lost interest in our sharing? Who has: have I? Have you? When did this begin to happen? Did something block our communicating? When last did we go for a walk together? Or see a film or a play or hear a concert or a lecture? When last did we share what we felt?

A person—(all of us)—all too easily experiences loneliness, and often then we create another relationship that holds out the hope that 'I will find myself again.' This is the second area to examine: how do I feel about myself—and you? Are you

suffering from a drop in *self-esteem*? For this can cause a difficulty in relating. One can

ask oneself: is there an *internal voice* in me (or in you) that is saying: 'You see, you are not doing very well! You are not managing your life, your work, your class, your marriage!' This critical parent voice can be very strong, demanding and destructive.

The third area to consider—and to talk about with each other—is one's health—the way one feels. A depression can arise from a physical cause often based on the liver or else an allergy or else just sheer tiredness. How are we sleeping?

Then of course comes the sphere of our sexual relating: *are we relating*? Or has this dropped out of our lives? The fact that a man seeks a relationship with another woman is generally a sign, not that he wants another wife, but that he has lost his connection *to himself*. Men see love and sex as a way of 'feeling OK with myself'; it seldom means 'I want to *give* myself to someone else. Men and women are so different. And an affair with 'another woman' could well be described as an 'affair with myself.' Men have to realise how hurtful, how devastating that is for the wife, who as a woman wants to give all but not be sidelined. Deep down a man is not pleased with himself if he is having an affair. It is a bit like drowning: you want to get onto safe ground again but you get more and more drawn into deep waters, then you feel ashamed and alienated: but not alienated from your

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wife, but alienated from yourself. Deep down you wish the affair was over and finished but, like a drowning person, you panic. Then nothing goes right!

For you as a woman this makes little sense. You don't want your man to crumble, but you cannot avoid being angry. You can resolve to be strong, or you can find yourself weak. But if you examine yourself you will probably find you are *angry*, while he tends to be taken over by *fear*. The power that transforms an-

ger and dissolves fear is of course, *love*. And these upsets are like a wake-up call to *grow in love*. Sounds nice and easy: but both partners need to make the first step: and those first steps are very difficult. They need courage.

I share these thoughts with you not so much to teach or preach, but to *reach*—to reach your heart, to reassure you in regard to yourself, and in regard to Jack, and in the hope that you will both find the reality of your togetherness in a new, firm way.

The Threefold Form of the Sacraments II

Michael Debus

Continued from last issue

The Sacramental Reality (*res et sacramentum*)

The last article finished with the questions:

Imagine a girl is baptized—let us call her Claire. The act of baptism (*sacramentum tantum*) is performed. What is the effect? Is it temporary, passing? Is it permanent and objective? How can one tell? Later on, will a teacher be able to distinguish between the children who are baptized and those who are not? Can one know from Claire's behaviour that she has been baptized? And if not: has the baptism actually had any effect at all?

These questions can give an insight into the Scholastic thought-world. If we begin by postulating that the sacrament is active in an objective way, we will certainly be able to say that some definite effect—of whatever nature—has occurred: Claire has been baptized, she is not the same as

she was before the baptism. But quite another question is whether, in the course of her life, Claire will also prove herself as having been baptized. That might not happen, and then the baptism will not have proved fruitful. Having been baptized is not yet everything, it is not the ultimate aim. The objective of the baptism is also to unfold and radiate out into life. There is, then, a double aspect to the effect of the baptism. First, there is the lasting fact of having been baptized, which brings about a particular hidden change in the human constitution. That is the sacramental reality which Innocent III called *res et sacramentum*: Claire *has* been baptized. The second aspect—the one which does not always take effect, or only partially—and where, clearly, further work is needed after the enactment of the ritual in continuation of the sacramental act, is the true aim, the actual grace of the sacrament: Claire proves herself to have been

baptized. This is called *res tantum* by Innocent III.

To begin with, let us turn to the first effect of the sacrament: *res et sacramentum*. If the sacramental act has been performed ‘correctly’ in every way, we expect it to be effective, even if perhaps the child cries loudly throughout. Nor would we want to have to investigate whether the priest was one hundred percent attentive to everything he was doing, or whether perhaps he was momentarily distracted by some outer circumstance, or whether his thoughts wandered for a moment. We also take it for granted that the ‘value’ of the baptism does not depend upon which priest performs it. In short: we expect the sacrament to work *objectively*. We may perhaps occasionally wonder whether there are limits to this objective effectiveness, but we feel that an answer to this question is likely to be very difficult to find, and that it may even be inappropriate to wish to set ‘objective’ limits here, especially concerning the priest’s inner state.

Thanks to what Augustine worked out in his dispute with the Donatists, the objective effect of the sacrament has become indisputable, a fact of faith. Even the mind-set of the priest cannot hinder the effectiveness of a sacrament (so that for instance a baptism performed by a heretical priest is still valid). Of the three sacramental elements in Scholastic terminology, we are

here dealing with the middle one, the sacramental reality as primary effect—*res et sacramentum*. If this effect is an objective fact,

it will leave traces in the human being; it will create something enduring. Augustine compared this enduring something in the baptism to a ‘seal’ that is imprinted upon the human soul, like the *character domenicus* of the Roman soldiers. Augustine was only considering two sacraments, and, as regards the seal, actually only one, viz. baptism. The challenge for the Scholastics was to find the application of this for all seven sacraments. In the case of two further sacraments, confirmation and the ordination of priests, it was considered that they, too, imprint a seal—it was now called *character indelibilis* (the indestructible, indelible imprint). This is also the reason why baptism, confirmation and ordination cannot be repeated. As regards these three sacraments, then, their effectiveness, their primary and objective effect is the *character indelibilis*. Nothing corresponding to this has been found by Catholic theology for confession, last anointing and marriage. These sacraments can therefore also be repeated. But here, too, there is the primary objective effect (*res et sacramentum*) upon the person receiving them, it appears *in the human being*. In the Mass, however, the sacramental reality is regarded in yet another way: it appears *at the altar*. In the Eucharist, *res et sacramentum*...is the real presence of the body and blood of Christ... that is to say, the body and the blood of Christ are the primary effect of the reality of the sacrament. This expresses the special position of the Mass over against the other six sacraments: in the case of the six sacraments, what is brought about objectively and as fact happens to and *in* the human being, but in the Mass it happens ‘outside’ the human being, at the altar.

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When we were looking at the question of whether sacramental reality is always created when the ritual is conducted 'correctly', we came across the problem of wanting to draw a precise boundary here. Now, in Scholasticism this boundary was drawn sharply. The right fulfilment of a sacrament presupposes, firstly, that *form* and *matter* are in harmony, i.e. that the substances, the actions and the words are the right ones. But in addition, there must be the right *intention* on the part of the priest. If he 'intends to do what the Church does' (*intentio faciendi quod facit ecclesia*), then his *intention* is correct. What is decisive is not what his feelings and his frame of mind are, nor are his insights or knowledge important; the crucial thing is that his will shall conform to the will of the Church. Developing this outline of the content of his intention further, Scholasticism also clarified the degree of consciousness that the intention must have. Three kinds of intention have been specified:

1. *The actual, current intention: The celebrant is always fully aware of his intention. He is entirely attentive to the 'matter in hand.'*
2. *The virtual intention: the celebrant did at one time decide in which direction he would guide his intention, and he has at least not negated it since then. It is, however, possible that in the actual situation of the celebration of a sacrament, this decision is not always consciously present.*
3. *The intention: The celebrant has an inner unconscious inclination which has not yet become decision and intention.*

For the priest, then, the minimum requirement is the *virtual* intention 'to do what the Church does'. For the member of

the congregation, the *habitual* intention is sufficient for the receiving of a sacrament; only an active counter-will could impede the objective working of the sacrament.

In High Scholasticism, an even more refined characterization of the objective effect of the sacrament was developed: when *form* and *matter* are as they should be, and when the priest has the right intention—as a minimum: the *virtual* intention—then the sacrament definitely and absolutely has an objective effect, regardless of the frame of mind and disposition of the persons involved. Nor does the way the child behaves during the baptism play any kind of role, since he/she obviously has the *habitual* intention of receiving the baptism. And if the priest is 'somewhere else' entirely in his thoughts as he is performing the ritual, this will not cause any lessening of the effect, so long as he does not make any mistakes, and so long as he does not inwardly revoke his once declared pledge to 'do what the Church does'. This was called—probably for the first time by Pierre of Poitiers (1130-1205)—an effect *ex opere operato* ('from the operation, not the operator'—literally, 'from the work having been worked'), a concept that has been very contentious for the last 450 years, and which tends to be 'clarified'—and thus 'relativised'—by modern-day Catholic theologians. Thomas Aquinas did not use this formula, but at the Council of Trent (1545–1563) it was established as dogma.

As an example of the extremes to which this concept has led some theologians, here is an extract from a pastoral letter from the Archbishop of Salzburg, written in 1905:

Honour the priests, for they have the power to consecrate...to make present in the form of bread and wine the body of the Lord with His precious blood, with His entire holy humanity and His divinity; to transform bread and wine into the true body and the precious blood of our Lord—what a great, exalted, quite wonderful power! ...The Catholic priest can not only make Him present upon the altar, seal Him within the tabernacle, take Him again and proffer Him to the faithful to their benefit; he can even, on behalf of the living and the dead, offer up the Son of God become Man as a bloodless sacrifice. Herein Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father through whom heaven and earth were created, obeys the Catholic priest...'

As regards the *ex opere operato* formula, we may note that this principle, created by the church, has become a cornerstone of modern materialistic science. For instance, the efficacy of medicines is established by the so-called double-blind test, in which neither doctor nor patient knows the nature of the substance being tested. This is a pure application of the *ex opere operato* principle. Any conscious or unconscious influence by the doctor or the patient upon the effectiveness of the medicine would undermine the purity of the experiment. Only the 'active ingredient' must work, independently of the state (of consciousness) of the participants.

For The Christian Community, the question of the objective effect of the sacraments is also central, and indeed it played a decisive role at its inception. Friedrich Rittelmeyer reported from his time in Berlin how it gave him food for thought when he noticed that the church

was full to overflowing at his services, but that this was not transferable to his colleagues. It made him wonder if it could be right for attendance at divine Service to be so dependent upon the personality of the preacher, and whether a form of Service based on something objective would not be more appropriate.

In our times, a preacher with a sense of responsibility must no longer content himself with the fact that he personally has 'a full church' ... rather, he must ask himself: is there no form of Christian fellowship which draws people in, beyond the personality of one particular individual?

For him personally, as a Lutheran minister, this was an important moment in which to make clear to himself the necessity of ritual forms. How is that objectivity to be understood which Catholic theology calls the 'indelible imprint' (*character indelibilis*) and whose way of working it labels with the *ex opere operato* formula, thus killing off anything in the nature of a *process*? If one is not content with simply saying that this mark 'is imprinted upon the soul', then questions arise, the answers to which can be approached through the anthroposophical image of the human being.

We have already mentioned the intention of the priest in The Christian Community (See previous article in *Perspectives*). Today it will no longer do for the content of the *intention* to come from outside (*to do what the Church does*). That would still be an *intention* under the regency of the Spirits of Form. Now the *intention* has to be personal, but it must be so in the same way that Rudolf Steiner describes his own way of proceeding when writing his book *Philosophy of Freedom*. This book

is of significance for every human being, quite objectively—and yet it was written by the author in such a manner that he can say:

...quite unpredictably, in my individual way, I managed to traverse many an abyss, I worked my way through thickets in my own quite particular manner...

So anyone who, like St. Paul, has the courage to seek for insight ('for the spirit penetrates everything with its insight, also the depths of the Godhead.' I Corinthians 2,10) and who has the intention, binding for himself, of wanting to understand ever more profoundly the mystery of the incarnation of Christ, the secret of the ways in

which a God enters into the life and facts of earth-reality—such a person will also find and accept the forms and make-up of the earthly world which arises from it as its consequence. He will understand the 'incarnatory structure' (Adolf Adam. Würzburg 1975) of the sacraments, which extends right into the social realm. His commitment to himself in respect of this quite 'personal' intention means that no further intentions need be given him from outside. Therefore he will also be able to take full responsibility himself for the content of his own teaching. This is the basis of the work of the priests of The Christian Community.

The space is waiting

Kevin Street

The space is waiting—silent, empty, expectant, for it is Sunday. What will fill it? The arrival of people, the sight of lighted candles, the sound of voice and music, all contributing to a deeply felt experience of sacramental reality, taking place in a space that is almost unique in worship these days, in that it rarely 'doubles up' for other activities during the rest of the week. So many newcomers to one or other of the sacraments comment on the quality and peace of the consecrated space. This place is the focus of an activity that radiates far beyond physical confines and the individuals attending, into all aspects of creation. In turn, something of redeemed nature finds expression in the confines of the four walls.

The vessel has been lovingly created, maintained and is now ready again to be

filled—hopefully within the rhythm of a weekly service. But what happens when that is not possible? The priest is at a synod, visiting another congregation, on holiday—or even ill. Or perhaps it is a visited congregation, celebrating its sacramental life to a different rhythm. Is the door to remain locked? Is the waiting space to be left hanging until the next time the priest is available? The sacraments of The Christian Community are to be celebrated by an ordained priesthood, and so a full service conducted by a lay reader or local preacher, as in other traditions, is not an option.

There is an option, though, and one that will be very familiar to some. Others may not have ex-

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perienced it, and that is the gathering—variously called a Devotional Gathering, or even a Read Through. For congregations with a resident priest, there is perhaps little opportunity to experience such a gathering, and possibly a reluctance to grasp the chance to hold one should the opportunity arise. For visited congregations, the chance to gather in such a way is certainly there, but for many reasons not always taken.

Nothing is perfect. The sacraments are meetings of time and eternity, archetypes embodied in earthly cladding. The taper that blows out, the crooked chasuble, the wrong note played—despite our most earnest endeavours, the human element is thankfully always present—we are not spiritual automatons. Some have expressed a reluctance to play a part in a gathering because of this fear of imperfection—‘Oh no, I couldn’t possibly’

Don’t worry—the spiritual world will not be rocked by our well intentioned activity that might fall short of perfection! However, the converse might be a little more accurate—if we do not seize the opportunity to gather in ‘His name’, we are losing the chance to build community, and to engage in what can only be termed ‘right activity’.

As far as I understand, there is no set formula for a gathering, though certain elements should be present. What follows is the distillation of personal experience in various congregations over the last twenty years, but the glorious reality is that individual groups can bring a new light to this—and should be encouraged to share their experiences.

Let us walk through what might be a typical gathering. The space has been

prepared, the chairs set in a circle round a table on which is placed a candle and some flowers. The friends gather at the appointed time, and one lights the candle. A short piece of music is played, followed by the reading of the gospel for the day; there then follows a short ‘talk’. A reading of the creed and the Lord’s Prayer, and a final piece of music conclude, before the candle is extinguished. The room empties, and outside someone puts on the kettle. Possibly only a quarter of an hour has passed, but so much has been held in that time, so much has had to happen at various levels in the life of the community.

What has been needed? A combination of practical consciousness, of individual preparation and group activity that can only enhance and strengthen the life of that congregation. Who is responsible for the organisation—of ensuring that individuals are willing to contribute? Is it the same person who unlocks, sets out the chairs and ensures that there are matches, a taper—and the right level of heat and light? Should it be the same person every time? Or could this area of responsibility be shared by two or three? What is needed to read the gospel, the creed and the Lord’s Prayer? Is there a version of the Bible that is more suitable than others? Or is this the chance to open ears with a different rendering? And no—none of this need be restricted to members only. The music—what is sensitive and suitable for such a gathering? Is this the chance for someone to play who doesn’t yet feel the confidence to musically accompany The Act Of Consecration? And for all those taking part, time is needed—to prepare, to practice in the quiet of the night before,

and to bring this to those gathered—their gift to the community.

Of all the elements involved, the ‘talk’—address, thoughts, or contribution—can cause the greatest alarm. This is often for the best of motives—who am I to do this? What can I possibly say? We are blessed with priests who have been through a training that empowers them to give a short address, usually without notes, in a way that often speaks so relevantly and individually to all those listening. Yet they do this having first donned the biretta, a symbol that they are speaking out of themselves. The content so often nurtures the congregation as it is aimed more at the heart than the head. The address is not the place to ignite debate and intellectual flights of fancy. These principles can underpin and guide anyone who is asked to contribute. Thoughts might be based around the gospel—perhaps one small aspect of it. It might be possible to explore the reading from the viewpoint of one of the people mentioned in the narrative—or to ‘colour in’ some background detail. Alternatively, the season might provide a richness of subject matter. In many respects, the simpler the better. It obviously takes confidence, and at times, ‘rehearsal’. Notes—or memory? Experience, and what you feel comfortable with, is the only answer. However, everyone is good enough to contribute—a degree in theology might be helpful, but without a willing heart, it is useless. It is best, though, to avoid it becoming an open discussion—for the reasons that underpin the basis of the address, namely—a discussion starts to engage the intellect, and personal opinions start to crowd in and dominate. Of course, there is no

reason why, following a break and a coffee, another group reforms for discussion, but that is another story!

As mentioned above, variations can be many—recently my eyes were further opened by a congregation who first gathered with their children—the candle was lit, and all sang together before the children left for their story and activity, and the adults then continued along the more familiar lines. Singing is always possible, and if no one feels they can contribute a few thoughts, then the gathering can still go ahead.

Each person leaving the Act of Consecration does so a little different from when they arrived. Is it too much to expect this of the gathering? As a regular experience, it can build a real sense of community, of being with the others. As a one off, it can engender feelings around what it is to experience such an initiative without the involvement of a priest—ironically, this is one congregational activity they can never experience! It could well lead to other initiatives and growth points—could gatherings be held at other times? What of the Close of Day? Could there be a congregational led gathering after a meeting? And what of other services—one for children and parents around a festival?

At the end of the morning, those responsible return the chairs to their usual position, put the table back in the community room, check that the heating is turned down, and lock the door. The space has been filled, and human hearts and activity have brought into it warmth, purpose and direction. Lives have been touched, and the week’s activities start to clamour for attention. The space, rightly used, is again waiting...

Reviews

Mipam

Lama Yongden:

SLG Books, Berkely House, Hong Kong 2000, First published in 1938 by John Lane, The Bodley Head, London, ISBN 0-943389-33-X.

Sybille Alexander

This is the first Tibetan novel, originally published in 1938, which demands attention at a time when Tibet is at the forefront of international debate. Mipam is the story of a farmer's son, whose birth promises a sacred life as the reincarnation of a Lama. The conviction of his mother about his destiny is never shaken, though Mipam becomes a trader and moves to China. The book gives a detailed account of life and customs in Tibet, of monasteries and trading posts, of contact with Chinese mer-

chants and of the work done by Christian missionaries.

The leitmotiv is that of love and compassion for every living creature and the unfolding of karma. Even as a young child Mipam dreams of the 'land where all are friends'. His single-minded love for the daughter of a rich merchant, Dolma, dictates Mipam's every action, who finally realises that Dolma had been deeply connected with him through many lives. With her death she liberates Mipam to become the Lama of a famous monastery.

Tibet will play an important role in the future. The call for the restoration of human rights in this small country can no longer be ignored by China. In the West many people are considering a boycott of goods made in China, unless Human Rights are given to Tibet and to the thousands of its refugees abroad.

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