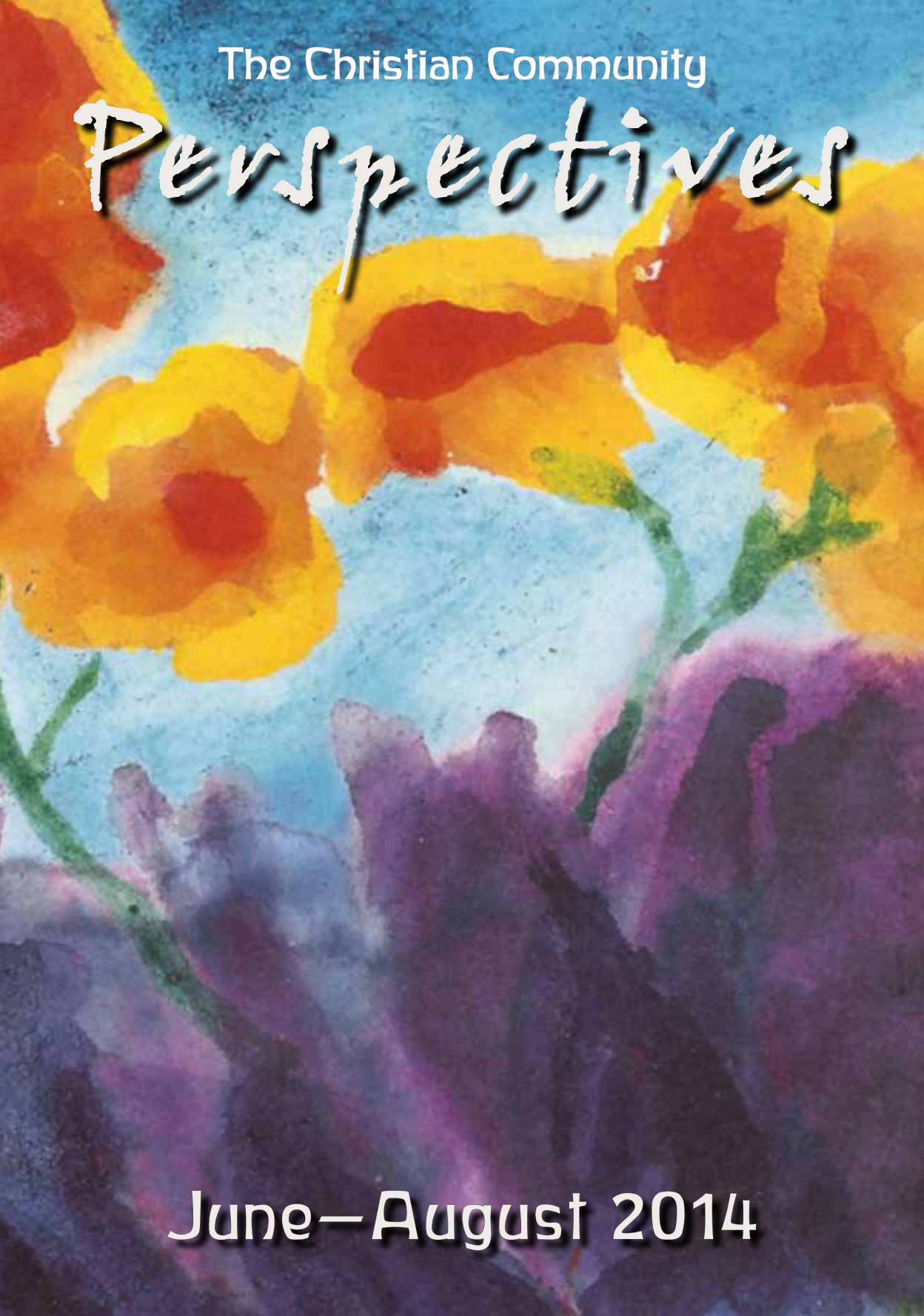
The Christian Community

# Perspectives



June–August 2014

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# Perspectives

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Eighty-five years ago, the Act of Consecration of Man was celebrated for the first time in the English language through Alfred Heidenreich. From Britain, it spread to the other English-speaking countries. How many lives have been touched and transformed through the sacraments celebrated in English on four continents? When we look ahead, we might wonder where we will be after the next 85 years. Many of the institutions inspired by the work of Rudolf Steiner are in decline; it is from them that many of our members have come over the decades. As well as giving cause for concern, this situation is a challenge and an opportunity. Nobody told the pioneering members in the 1930s that attending The Christian Community was the right thing to do. Many of them will have heard from someone who told them about their own experiences. This is how the Christian church has always spread, starting at the first Whitsun. Then, the conviction of the Apostles was so great that those listening felt that they understood their message, even if they couldn't speak their language. To a certain extent, we are all foreigners to each other. We need help to interpret what our conversation partners mean by the words they use; we need to work hard to find words that will reach them. If we all felt interested in each other's inner world of experiences with all its sorrows and trials, we might become Apostles to each other. We would find the language to speak about our experiences of healing and transformation through the sacraments, and others would be able to hear. Then we could feel sure that our community would continue to grow for the next 85 years.

We are delighted that Donna Simmons is joining our editorial team. Donna, who lives in Edinburgh where her husband, Paul Newton, recently joined the team of priests, has extensive experience of writing and editing as well as many contacts in the USA. We are looking forward to her ideas and initiatives. Tom Ravetz

## *Prodigal Son*

*The prodigal son is coming home.*
*He does not even have a loaf of bread.*
*His small fortune has been lost to games of chance.*
*His purchased lovers have lost interest in him.*
*He is homeless, like a refugee.*
*The belly that he once filled with wine is empty.*
*No one speaks his native tongue.*

*He is not religious—he never was.*
*Even now, he is only concerned about himself,*
*But he is aware of his loneliness.*
*He is almost like a fugitive.*
*No one cares to know his name.*
*The foreigners are indifferent to him.*

*He knows his life has been displaced,*
*He feels shame and trepidation.*
*The harvest has been poor and the famine will continue.*
*There is no one he can appeal to here.*
*He is alone.*

*He knows that he made bad choices,*
*But the consequences are worse than he ever imagined.*
*He thinks of his mother, who died so long ago.*
*He knows that she would be disappointed in him.*
*He argued with his father.*
*What contempt he felt for him then!*
*How hard it was for the man to surrender a part of his wealth.*
*"I would be happy with any part of it now", he thought,*
*"He can not deny that I am his son.*
*Even if I deserve nothing, he can not refuse me.*
*I will ask to be his servant."*

*It is a long journey back.*
*Farmers let him take some feed from the sows.*
*He is a sight to be pitied.*
*People avoid him or send him away,*
*Yet he is resigned in a way that few can understand.*
*When he finally hears men speaking his own language,*
*He rejoices—he is no longer a trespasser.*
*He can hardly wait.*
*The prodigal son is going home.*

**Michael Ferrell**

# Awakening to the Present

## The ongoing relevance of 'metanoeite!'

**Christward Kröner**

'Metanoeite!—Change your hearts and minds!' This is the call of John the Baptist, sounding down the centuries and millennia. But—surely that was already achieved a long time ago? Do we have to keep on hearing it? Back then John prepared the way for the incarnation and the earthly life of Christ. He drew the attention of human beings to the one who was to come. By preaching and baptising he shook the people up, made them see how caught up they were in the established norms. But surely all this only related to just that world-historical moment? Why should we hear this summons today?

The fact that in The Christian Community a special St John's Tide festival is celebrated within the Christian year can be regarded as a sign that John the Baptist's call has lost none of its relevance.

A century has passed since the poet Christian Morgenstern expressed a radical and uncomfortable truth when he said that we are not standing at the demise of Christianity but at its beginning.* In that statement there is not a trace of sitting back after 2000 years of history, or of pride in past accomplishments, along the lines of 'Haven't we done well to achieve so much!' (allusion to Wagner, a character in Goethe's *Faust*. *Translator's comment*).

Actually, nowadays we might clad John the Baptist's meaning in even more radical language. We could say: we are not at the end of Christianity; we are standing before its beginning; and this despite the long history, despite the martyrs and believers who committed themselves to Christianity, sacrificing their lives for it—not only to its teachings but as an expression of their living relationship to a Being—and who thought and acted out of the power and the spirit of the Gospel. For what, in view of the question of whether Christianity exists today and will continue to do so, is the significance of all that has happened and been inscribed into the various worlds of spirit as imperishable substance?

Put bluntly: it signifies nothing—except that it offers us the possibility of linking on and building upon the foundation already laid by others, and for which we obviously cannot be

*Christward Kröner is a priest of The Christian Community in Berlin and an Oberlenker.*

grateful enough. The past, however, does not disclose whether any links will be established or any building will be done—it does not guarantee anything. So John the Baptist's words about the axe laid to the root of the tree, and of the power of God, who is able to raise up new sons to Abraham from stones, have in no way lost their relevance. Back then, the call was: 'Do not presume and rely upon Abraham's being your ancestor'; today it has to be: 'Do not presume and rely upon what has been and what has come into being, upon the 'achievements' of bygone generations or upon what was accomplished yesterday.' In terms of the individual life this means: Do not presume and rely upon being a Christian because you were once baptized—for whether the baptism means anything in your present and future life will be decided today and in the future.

It is paradoxical but true: the truth and impact of this past event do not only show up in the present; rather, they are brought forth by my present conduct. The reality is that the present can play a role in relation to the past, not only to the future. As an illustration: the day of Mozart's birth was the beginning of a life of about 35 years. If Mozart had died at the age of three, this birthday would have remained the same—yet not a single soul nowadays would know anything about this day. That which comes later influences the significance of what went before. Today can alter yesterday. It is in this sense that the saying applies: 'being' a Christian means 'becoming' a Christian.

'Being' (which includes the past) is supported and carried by 'becoming'—not the other way about, as one might think. If the quality of 'becoming' ceases, the quality of 'being' is lost: a baptism needs to be continuously renewed and made real. When John the Baptist urges 'metanoeite!', and proclaims that the Kingdom of Heaven has drawn near, then the precondition for my also 'becoming' a Christian (i.e. 'being' a Christian) today is that this call must actually come alive in my soul. Daily, I am confronted by the beginning of my task of becoming a Christian. As a creature bound up with the physical world, I must bring my own spiritual identity to my awareness anew every day—by 'producing' it, 'activating' it. Prayer, meditation, a spiritually receptive view of nature and of encounters with other people—the ways may vary; what matters is that I pursue them, that I awaken to the 'now' as the precious moment in which, through freedom and in freedom, I can enter anew into the process of becoming a Christian and becoming a human being, and learn to act more and more out of this wellspring. Then I may perhaps also on occasion be aware of the Kingdom of Heaven as it approaches and is already near at hand.

Nowadays, our being human is no longer guaranteed on the basis of the past, or derivable from the conditions around us. To an ever-increasing extent it depends upon our individual and communal effort to work actively and consciously upon becoming human. Here, too, 'becoming' brings forth 'being'. In future we will only remain human if we consciously wish and determine to become human. The ominous aberrations that cause us to lose our humanity—by drawing upon our animal nature or by treating the human being as a machine—are coming ever more to the fore.

So the change of heart and mind, the re-orientation of the inner eye, the new way of thinking and feeling, is never 'done with'. Just as the breaths I took yesterday cannot guarantee my life today, so my spiritual and Christian existence needs to be enlivened and generated anew every moment.

In the St John's Tide prayer of the Act of Consecration of Man we ask that John's Word of Flame may burn in our hearts: with urgent insistence it points to the source within us of continuing transformation and renewal.

Translated from *Die Christengemeinschaft*, June 2013, by Jon Madsen

* The English writer G. K. Chesterton once said: Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and not tried. (*Translator's comment*).

The Black Madonna of Chartres

# The Heart of the Epistles Part I

**Cynthia Hindes**

Our own heart is a mysterious place. We can picture it as a crossing point between the inner and the outer worlds, above and below, before and behind, all of which are potentially infinitely large. As an inner space our heart could be any size; it could be a darkened room into which we hardly ever enter; or it could be an interior space as vast as the universe itself. This interior space is measured by what we treasure, for 'where your treasure is, there your heart is also'.[1] What we treasure of the world, of people and things and creatures, of God, is treasured in the interior space of the heart. The heart space expands the more we take treasure into it.

Our hearts, like other spaces, also have qualities: Hearts can be full or empty. We can be tender-hearted, kind-hearted, faint of heart. We can have hearts that burn, hearts that are broken, hearts that open. Hearts also have purposes and intentions. And they have their seasons. The epistles are letters to us from God that interact with our hearts' seasons. They are also messages sent from us to the God in us and in the world. In this and further articles we will look at these seasons of the heart by following the heart as a motif in each of the festival epistles and prayers.

The word Epistle simply means letter. At the beginning of early Christian gatherings, letters from the apostle Paul were read. As gatherings evolved into what we know as the mass, the practice was continued, and so at the beginning of the mass, a selection from one of Paul's letters is read before the gospel reading. At the beginning of The Christian Community's Act of Consecration of Man, instead of reading the letters of Paul, we hear 'letters' to us from the angelic world and from the world of our own deepest heart. The message they convey is repeated again at the end. Then, after all that we have offered, after all that has happened in the course of the service, after all that we have received, how different that letter can sound!

Each festival season has its own epistle. In addition, each festival has a seasonal inserted prayer. This prayer usually comes after the creed, except at the solstices, when it sounds after the offering. Together the epistle and the seasonal inserted prayer give us a message about our hearts' interaction with the spiritual world as it changes over the course of the year. They each speak to the inmost core of our being. They mirror and express what is evolving in our heart.

In The Christian Community nine festival seasons are celebrated in the course of the year, three triads of three. Each festival has its own epistle. In addition Passiontide has two, and the Christmas season has three, so there are twelve epistles. Further, there is a thirteenth, a Trinity epistle, for four times of the year between festivals. This Trinity epistle appears between Epiphany and Passiontide, between Pentecost and St John's Tide, between St John's Tide and Michaelmas, and between Michaelmas and Advent.[2]

**The Cycle of the Year**

The summer and winter solstices are the longest day or night. They are the noon and midnight, the peak and the depth of the year.

The festivals of the Christian year are founded, not on a four-season cycle of nature, but on the year as a day-cycle. This day cycle underlies the fact that no matter what the date, that date is the date for the whole earth; any month, any division of time, applies to the whole earth, no matter what the light level or the weather. A year is comparable to one cycle of day and night: the light is born at a solstice; it has its morning at the following equinox, its noon at the opposite solstice; its evening at the next equinox. And then the light begins to gestate again. Although four seasons of nature are most classically expressed in the temperate zones, they are not the source of our Christian festivals. Rather they are a garment in which Christ, the Spirit of the Earth, clothes Himself. The seasons of nature, North and South, are a flowing, ever-changing billowing garment for the One who, since His Ascension, indwells the whole earth as His body.

Taken together, the complementary polarities of north and south form a whole. They are an expression of the polarities of all possible soul moods, which are nonetheless integrated into wholeness by the One who occupies them all at the same time, in an eternal now. This is a reality which our linear minds have trouble grasping, except for flashing moments of insight: how eternity contains time; how time, though sequential, is the garment of the eternal. Time is God's way of keeping everything from happening at once.[3] And yet at the same time, because Christ is an eternal being, everything that Christ did, He continues to do eternally; every interior and exterior place he occupied, he still occupies, from the highest heaven to the centre of the earth. The course of the liturgical year spreads this out in a tableau, so that we can contemplate each 'piece' separately. But in reality they are not separate; the Christ events continue to happen, always and forever. They are always happening and always evolving, everywhere. The challenge for those of us in the hemispheres is to imagine our way into how

the opposite season of nature is yet another expression, another colour, another layer of garment that the Christ wears on any given day, or in any given festival of His year.

The cycle of the gospel readings that Rudolf Steiner suggested for the course of the liturgical year are an indication of one way in which these polarities form a whole, although they are spread out over space and throughout the cycle of the year. From Advent through Pentecost the gospel readings follow the course of Christ Jesus's life on earth. Then at the June solstice, at St John's Tide, the readings seem to begin the cycle again. Yet now we hear not about Christ's birth but His Baptism. The gospel readings around the Baptism in June remind us how the man Jesus responded to the approach of Christ by opening himself to receive Christ, the Spirit of the Father's love. Throughout the long ten weeks in August and September there follow readings of His healings and teachings. We are stimulated by Peter's recognition of Christ in Jesus; by being sent out into the world with the message of the good news from the realm of the angels. The ten weeks of the Trinity interval culminate in the raising of the widow of Nain's son at the end of September. We empathize with the raising of someone who has prematurely died, with its hints of the themes of Passiontide and Easter.

There follows the Michaelmas call to the Son's wedding. We may recognize that our choice of response to the invitation to the celebration of divine marriage at Michaelmas is a future octave of Pentecost. In November, the transition of Christ's work into the future is depicted in the readings from the Revelation to John, as the spiral leads once again up to another Advent.

The first half of the liturgical year celebrates and helps us to relive the past—what Christ did in his Incarnation, historically and macrocosmically. The second half of the cycle is a variation on the theme of the first, but in a different key. It concerns the human response to Christ's Incarnation, Death and Resurrection, and Ascension. The second half of the year's day reminds us that what He did only gains meaning if we take it up into ourselves, and let it live microcosmically in us. The second sequence, from St John's Tide to Advent, allows Christ's revelation to think itself in us. It reminds us that He comes ever again, in an ongoing, oncoming future for which we need to prepare.

The first half of the year is the call; the second half is the response. The second half is the interior cycle of the heart within the larger macrocosmic cycle of the heart of Christ. In the second half of the year He dies again, or is born again in us. Now we have the (second) opportunity to make our

relationship with Him immediate, intimate and personal, for the sake of all the world.

**St John's Tide**

St John's Tide begins on 24th June, the birthday of John the Baptist, just after the solstice. The festival season extends into the following four Sundays and the weeks belonging to them, near the end of July. John is the 'angel of annunciation' for all of humankind before Jesus's baptism. John was the midwife of the incarnation of Christ into Jesus at the Baptism.

The altar and vestments at St John's Tide are white and yellow. The yellow and white of St John's Tide lets us feel how everything comes to light and is assessed in the greater light. The mood of the heart is one of wonder before the light, a mood of hopeful realism. But the upright infinity symbol on the reverse side of the chasuble mysteriously resolves into eight separate diamond shapes. Seven completes a cycle; the eighth begins a new one. The diamond is made of two conjoined triangles, the fire triangle pointing upward, the water triangle pointing downward. The diamond is transparent earthly substance that refracts the light. In the diamond symbol, the heavenly and the earthly are united.

The epistle begins in a mood of praise; this praise consolidates into a mood of gratitude expressed toward the Father, for all that He has done and continues to do. It is spoken in the voice of the collective 'we'. After this beginning in the mood of thanks, the prayer dissolves into the wonder of a grand cosmic vision. The opening heart-gesture of gratitude allows us a glimpse into a light-drenched, living world of flow, which concentrates itself into the Sun-like being of Christ. We see once again in a broad macrocosmic vision how this Sun-Being descends to earth; how he plants Himself on earth and in humankind as a seed for healing. We hear how, within the presence of the Father, John announces the flaming word, calling for a transformation of our way of thinking, a change of heart, and of how we act. This desire for change comes out of the awareness of our guilt and our need for healing. We ask that this flame-word of a change of heart and mind burn in our own hearts, as we address the One who gave birth to healing life within and out of the realm of death. We acknowledge John's revelatory deed in our perception of spiritual light; and we express our desire to receive the Creator's light of love.

In the inserted prayer, we ask the being of John the Baptist to perceive our Act of Consecration, our communal offering of substances of earth and of self. John is the representative of all

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of fallen humanity. Nevertheless he is surrounded by the Father's spirit of love. We ask him to accompany us as we begin our offering of earthly substances and soul substance, within Christ's ongoing deed of self-offering, for the next phase of the journey along our path into the second half of the year. St John's Tide is both a midpoint and the turning point of the year. At the same time, it is the second in the last triad of Christian festivals—Whitsun, St John's Tide, Michaelmas. It is both the middle, and a new beginning.

1 Matthew 6:21, Luke 12:34

2 Liturgical texts are meant to be heard in the context of the living service to the divine in which they are embedded, not read on paper. It is the author's hope that these contemplations of the theme of the heart's seasons in the epistles will help accompany and prepare the listener to hear and live more deeply into the words and mood of the Christian festivals. The author owes much of the content of this article to the work of Hans Werner Schroeder, *Die Episteln der Menschenweihehandlung*.

3 Attributed variously to Anonymous and to Woody Allen.

The Black Madonna of Montserrat

# On being a Christian

**Milan M. Horák**

The designation 'Christian' derives from 'Christ'. It is the anglicized form of the Latin 'christianus', that is to say: 'adherent of Christ', 'Christ-person'. This designation did not originate with the Christians themselves—originally, they called themselves simply 'the Saints'—rather, it came from those who opposed them and mocked them. In a similar way, six hundred years later, the Muslims were called 'Mohammedans'. However, whereas the Muslims emphatically rejected this designation after Mohammed, the Christians took on the originally contemptuous and mocking nickname. The reason for this is that the word 'Christian' expresses the fundamental fact of Christianity—the affiliation to Christ, the recognition and profession of Him.

It is more or less generally understood that Christians profess Christ. But the notions of what that professing entails are very nebulous and not infrequently distorted. The very name 'Christ' is already subject to much misunderstanding. Often it is understood merely as an ordinary personal name, an appellation to distinguish 'our' Jesus from others bearing the same name. But 'Christ' is, above all, a title. In English we no longer sense its concrete significance, but if we go back through the stream of time into the history of this word we arrive, via the Latin 'Christus', at the Greek 'Christos', which is derived from the verb 'chriein'—to anoint. So 'Christ' means 'anointed'. However, to reach the meaning with which we are concerned here, we must go a step further. The word that the Greeks translated as 'christos' is the Hebrew 'mashiach', which carried the same meaning but was also influenced by the cultural context of the people of Israel.

In ancient Israel, those who, through ritual anointing, were commissioned to perform a particular task (the priests and the kings) were given the designation 'mashiach'. The anointing raised them out of their previous personal life and made them into representatives of a higher, objective order to which the other, non-anointed Israelites must defer. The priest's task was to sound out God's will, to serve in the Temple and to instruct the people in God's law. The king, in his turn, was to ensure that God's law was properly cared for and adhered to; he was to judge and decide, he was to lead the people into the field against enemies. One might say, in

short, that the priest was an authority as regards the relationship between Man and God, whereas the king's particular sphere was the relationship between Man and the world.

A Christian who professes Christ affirms Him as his or her priest and king, the authority in both spiritual and worldly things. Hence the Christian Creed ceases to be a matter of purely formal conviction; it becomes a life-basis that sets the Christian free from the sphere of every kind of earthly might. The One Whom the Christian calls 'Christ' is, for that person, a greater authority than kings or priests. If a demand or obligation contradictory to Christ is laid upon him or her by a ruler, an official, a teacher, a judge, a guardian or assessor of the earthly laws, then Christ takes precedence.

The Christian is independent of outer authority: his or her thoughts and deeds cannot be enforced by outer pressure. However, this is not arbitrary—the Christian does not simply think and do whatever happens to occur to him or whatever he just feels like doing, but rather what he senses and feels to be right thoughts and deeds in the spirit of Christ. For the Christian, Christ is the authority; yet he is no external authority who could be pointed out outwardly and whose views and will might be discovered or deduced somewhere or other. Christ lived in our world as the man Jesus; he was killed for the sake of freedom and truth, but death did not overpower him; others bore witness to him, and their witness was written down and passed on. Yet these are all personal reports, coloured by the personality of the narrator and without force when it comes to general logical proof. They only become meaningful in the moment when a contemporary Christian permeates them with the heart and mind and freely takes up from them what he or she can stand up for.

Christ is the measure of life for a Christian. But this measure cannot be described from outside; rather, one must find it oneself. It is for every Christian to find and experience Christ and thereupon to decide what his or her creed and moral conviction shall be. Yet Christ cannot be found in either the letters of the sacred books, nor in the compilation of dogmas, nor in the traditional tales. But every individual can meet him every day, for did not Christ Himself before his death name three realms in which we will forever meet and experience him—in our personal striving, in the human community and in the encounter with a person placed before us by destiny?

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'You are in me, and I in you', says Jesus Christ to his followers, according to the Gospel of St John (14:20). We find

Christ within ourselves, above all; he is our truth within us—the truth we can stand up for. And he is the absolute truth, the truth that could also exist without us, because it is not bound up with our personal notions and wishes, since it transcends our earthly pettiness. We do indeed feel that kind of truth within ourselves, yet at the same time we feel that it surrounds us. It is within us, and we are within it.

'Where two or three gather in my name, there am I in their midst', says Jesus Christ according to Matthew's Gospel (18:20). This touches on the second realm in which we find and experience Christ—the human community. However, what is meant here is not an abstract sociological concept but a distinct group of human beings united in common striving. In that kind of community, no one can become a mere statistical number or component of the faceless crowd. On the contrary: each one retains his or her own personality and voluntarily unites personal striving with the striving of others. Thus a truth is born which offsets and cancels out the errors, limitations and bias of the individual persons.

'What you did for one of these least of my brothers, that you did for me'. So speaks Jesus Christ, again according to Matthew (25:40). The third realm in which we meet Christ is in all the encounters we have with individual human beings on our path through the whole of our life. As we search for the truth in ourselves or in human beings who are striving in a similar way, we may overlook or neglect a part of it. The people we (often quite unexpectedly) meet in the course of our destiny—including those who seem to us the least significant—enrich our awareness of the truth and our truth-inspired actions with something that was lacking in us until then. In every human being, even if he or she seems to us to be full of lies and malevolence, there is a small portion of Christ's truth—perhaps the very portion in which we are especially deficient.

Freed from outer authority the Christian seeks the truth. In this search Christ Himself is the helper in that he speaks to the Christian out of the individual's Christian soul, out of the human community in which the Christian strives to live, and out of all the human beings that the Christian encounters. At the end there stands a truth tempered in a threefold fire, the inner pillar of the Christian, the mainstay upon which his or her one's thinking and doing is grounded, and which no tempest, no earthquake, no enemy weapons can overthrow.

Translated from *Die Christengemeinschaft* July/August 2013
by Jon Madsen

# Bethania and beyond

## The mystery of the other Bethany

**Rory Valentine**

Type the word *Bethany* into the box of an internet search engine and it will be people rather than places that come out on top of the list. Bethany is currently a popular girl's name; people like the sound of it enough to give it that ultimate accolade—the name of their child. Although popular culture may not recognise it, the source of the name does in fact lie squarely within the four gospels, where it is mentioned a full twelve times. There is, however, a complication as there are, it seems, two separate *Bethanys* to consider. The fact of these references to two separate places with the same name generally receives little attention but it has and continues to pose questions for theologians, translators and the just plain curious alike. The pointing to a *Bethany beyond Jordan* in the John Gospel could be construed as coincidence or even as a mistake but its authoritative placement does not allow for easy dismissal. The following is an attempt to open up some areas of significance lying behind the two given locations, one close to Jerusalem the other *beyond the Jordan*. Here follows the only passage where this other Bethany is named:

> *John answered them, saying, 'I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. It is he who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose.' These things were done in Bethany*[1] *beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!' … And John bore testimony, saying, 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him…'* (John 1:26–32)

The Gospel of St John has a particular relationship to the name of Bethany. It is mentioned at the outset in the first chapter (quoted above), emerging suddenly in the testimony of John the Baptist (John 1:19) with the effect of bringing the narrative down to earth in no uncertain terms. This is an extraordinary opening narrative which starts with the vast cosmic beginnings of all things and leads to the physical incarnation of *the Word* at a tiny place called Bethany, east of the Jordan, by means of a man named John who has been sent by God to prepare for, aid and bear witness to this event.

*Rory Valentine is a member of The Christian Community in Devon, UK.*

There are two further implied references to this Bethany beyond the Jordan; the next follows on from the Wedding at Cana:

> *After this Jesus and his disciples went into the country of Judea where he spent some time with them baptising. John was also baptising at Aenon near Salim, as there was plenty of water there and people came to him and were baptised. (John had not yet been thrown into prison). Now a dispute arose between John's disciples and a Jew over the question of purification; and they came and told John: 'Rabbi, the man who was with you beyond the Jordan, the man to whom you bore testimony, is here baptising and everybody goes to him!'* (John 2:22–26)

Here Jesus is somehow identified and defined in his relation to John's activity east and west of the river. The process of the waxing of Christ and the waning of John is also shown to be well underway.

There later follows another implied and final mention of Bethany beyond Jordan; chapter 10 closes in this way:

> *Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand. And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first, and there He stayed. Then many came to Him and said: 'John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true.' And many believed in Him there.* (John 10:40–2)

It is perhaps crucially noteworthy that these passages all contain within them references to the *testimony* of John the Baptist regarding the Christ nature of Jesus—and to a location beyond the Jordan. These common factors bind these three separate references together, to make a whole. Through the repeated reference to *testimony* and to a place *beyond the Jordan*, we can have the feeling that something vital is being subtly pointed out to us by the writer whose identity *John* is both given to us by the very title of the gospel and then mysteriously veiled from us by its beguiling closing words which declare the unnamed writer to be *he whom Jesus loved*. (John 21:20–24) This reference can then, in turn and quite logically, lead us back to the very geographic heart of the Gospel of St John, the pivotal chapter 11, where he 'whom Jesus loved' is first introduced:

> *Now there was a man ill, Lazarus of Bethany—the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (The Mary whose brother Lazarus was ill was the Mary who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair.) Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus; so the sisters sent to him saying 'Lord he whom you love is ill.'* (John 11:1–3)

This quote follows directly on the heels of that above it, so here in consecutive verses, the two Bethanys are brought together and the activity—the

course of the gospel—moves from one to the other; Jesus is still abiding in Bethany beyond the Jordan wherefrom he is summoned by the sisters to Bethany by Jerusalem. The name of John the Baptist, having been mentioned some twenty times[2] up to this point is not spoken again in the remaining chapters. The name Lazarus of Bethany, however, is immediately introduced, written fourteen times and is linked at the outset to the seven times repeated phrase *(he) whom Jesus loved.* The word 'Bethany' here serves as a link—a bond—between the name of John and that of Lazarus. We might be excused, on these grounds alone, for wondering whether both of them could somehow be connected with the authorship of the Gospel of St John. It is as though the baton of testimony has been seamlessly passed from John to Lazarus here at the centre of the gospel.

**Bethany and the Risen Christ**

The name of Bethany is also shared by all the gospels in its connection with Holy Week; it is from here that Jesus sets out each day to draw forth, and then meet, what awaits in Jerusalem. It is here that he receives the fragrant anointing from Mary, the sister of Lazarus and it is from Bethany on that same evening, from the house of Simon the Leper, that Judas storms out into the moonlight to prepare the way for the betrayal of his master (Mark 14:3). It is only Luke however, who has the final sequential mention of Bethany at the close of his gospel:

> *The Ascension … 'And I will send down on you what my Father has promised: wait in the city until you are endued with power from on high.' And he led them out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while he was blessing them, that he was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.* (Luke 24:49–50)

It would seem then that the name of Bethany truly *frames* the earthly life of Christ—it stands as a door between worlds. It is at Bethany beyond Jordan where he is baptised and it is to Bethany by Jerusalem that he leads his followers on the event of his Ascension. From the depths of the lowest point on the face of the earth, some 1300 feet below sea level, to the nearby heights of the Jerusalem Hills[3] a metamorphosis has taken place, from physical to resurrection body. Incredibly, this has somehow inevitably followed the passage of the Light—from Sunrise to Sunset—from East to West—with such macrocosmic magnitude that one can barely find any words. The microcosmic name of place, the *geography* that worthily accompanies this journey, is given expression through the word *Bethany*.

**Elijah and John beyond the Jordan**

The east bank of the Jordan is a focus for some of the key events in the life of Elijah, whose spirit, as related in the gospels, returns in the person of the Baptist. The names of both Elijah and John seem to weave and mingle, as they do in the gospels, among the slopes and Wadis east of the Jordan. The Wadi Cerith (most probably today's Wadi al-Yabis) where Elijah was instructed to go by God Himself is located opposite Aenon, near Salem, another of the locations given where John was baptising. Further downriver by the Wadi al Kharrar, close to Elijah's Hill (the traditional site of Elijah's ascension) there is a compelling Jordanian archaeological site[4] of intense early baptismal activity. Further south, Herod's fortress of Machaerus stands high on the eastern slopes of the Dead Sea. It is here that legend has John the Baptist imprisoned and beheaded. All indications would place Bethany beyond Jordan close to the mouth of the river, near to the Dead Sea. However no such place now exists as the river has meandered and altered course over the centuries so any claims to actual location are speculative. Bethany beyond Jordan remains a geographic mystery.


**Bethany as name**

What lives in a name? Why do we reserve the name 'Bethany' only for girls? Bethany, with its satisfying three syllables and its soft centre, is the way we now pronounce this word in English but it is not the only way. *Beth* is the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It gives expression to the first letter *Aleph*—the breath of God—and thus can be seen as the mouth through which the Word of God is formed and spoken and so it is fittingly the first letter of the Old Testament. The letter *Beth* is also intimately connected with the number two and all that pertains to the mysteries of this second of the trinity of foundational numbers. *Beth* is often translated directly as *house of*. Thus *Bethany* becomes *house of dates*, though this is disputed and some would say *house of misery* or maybe *house of the poor*, or even *house of the*

*afflicted*, would be a more accurate rendering; a good case can be made for each instance. Scholarly enquiry so often, it seems, can only help us so far and then, like a root, it branches at nodal points in the depths of its seeking, ironically often leaving us free to find the certainty of a more whole reality somewhere behind and above the direction of that enquiry.

To assume that a meaningless coincidence or mistake has been made in the John Gospel regarding the mention of two *Bethanys* is perhaps to miss some connections pointed to above and, no doubt, others besides. The underlying structure of the gospel and the crucial relationship of John with Lazarus are highlighted by it: the movement from Baptism to Ascension, from east to west, and the extraordinary contrasts and features of the region's geography, which seem to bring macro and microcosm together, all come into focus. The word *Bethany* provides a structural framework, acting as a pointer as it weaves through all four gospels awakening, uniting, framing and giving sequence as well as the weight of physical place to events that might otherwise float. Bethany is also a name of the warmth of human friendship and sanctuary—it is here, mysteriously, that *those whom he loves* make their dwelling. It is, we could say, a name of the heart, an outer and inner location that gives home to the wandering Christ.

We are, of course, left with the fundamental mystery of Bethany as *word* and so with the greater mysteries of sound itself. Why so much mystery? It is a question that can hover in the air almost every time we pick out a passage to read, and can be overwhelming! One answer perhaps, is that a mystery *is* a mystery, and as such can only be expressed as mystery. The grappling which is called forth by mystery also has an effect in that any real demystification is experienced as revelatory—with all the enlivening wonder and clarifying light that lives in the phenomenon. In our grappling with mystery in the gospels we can experience its effects and thus maybe something of its purpose; we can have the experience that, in our quest, the book sometimes leaves its dead weight and leaps to life in our hands. The mystery of Bethany beyond Jordan belongs to such.

1 The phrase Bethany beyond the Jordan has been historically obscured by the choice of the translators of the hugely influential King James and Lutheran bibles to substitute the original Greek word **Βηθανία** (Bethany) with Bethabara, on the grounds, it seems, that it was considered to be the most likely existent location by the authoritative 3rd Century traveller and theologian Origen. In this quotation the name Bethany has been restored to its rightful place.
2 John the Baptist is mentioned twenty one times if the title of the gospel is taken into account.
3 A total climb of over 3,500 feet.
4 The Jordanians claim this to be the site of Bethany beyond Jordan.

# The Black Madonna

## Evolution of the Human Spirit

**Stephanie Georgieff**

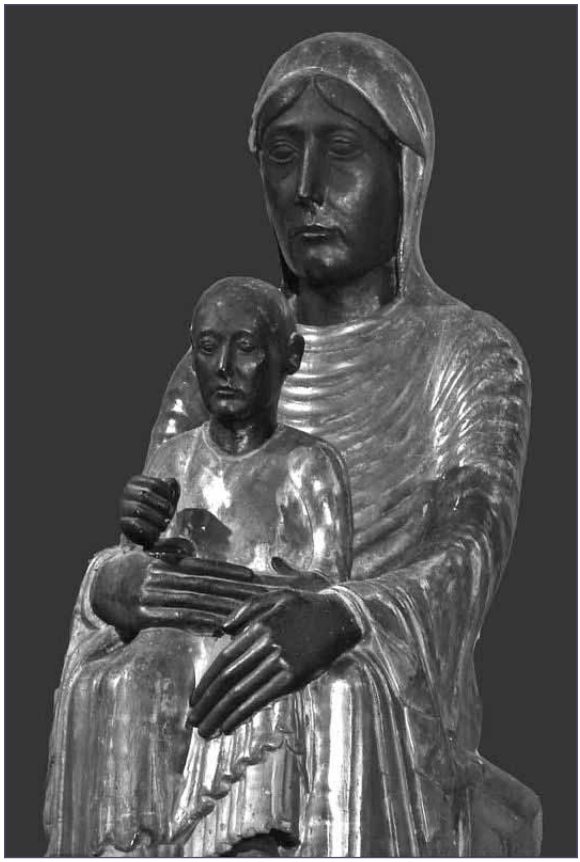
*Art is the creation of organs through which the gods are able to speak to humanity.* *The Spiritual Being of Art* Rudolf Steiner

Several years ago, I was asked to present at a Christian Community conference in North America. I agreed and suggested *The Black Madonna* as the topic. The subject was intriguing to me personally, as it seemed to be a trend in new age, multicultural and metaphysical communities. We are always trying to appeal to a broader audience in The Christian Community, so it was thought that the Black Madonna could be a draw. What followed was a discovery of a sublime expression of the divine and evidence for the evolution of the human spirit beyond my wildest imagination. Taking Steiner's dictum on art to heart, I started to comprehend through my studies of the Black Madonna that the messages planted so many centuries ago through these enigmatic works were done specifically for those of us living in the Age of the Consciousness Soul.

Modern materialistic secular culture likes to dismiss spirituality as having no basis in fact. But when one learns to see behind sense phenomena, particularly through the arts, evidence for divinity is everywhere.

The Black Madonna is an art form which takes shape as icons, statues, mosaics and stained glass windows. The images are mostly purposefully black in color, in stark contrast to other depictions of the madonnas of the same era. A scientific study presented in the early 1950s found that the majority of Black Madonnas in Europe and Russia were not simply dark due to age or cultural design, but were the color black for 'no known reason.' We know that the original Black Madonnas were brought to the European continent in the 4th century by Coptic monks from North Africa and Egypt. The bulk of the works of art that dot the European continent are known to have been brought by the Crusaders and the Knights Templar during the 12th and 13th centuries.

Striking similarities are noticed when one observes the Black Madonnas. Obviously their color is dark or black, they are very somber in appearance, and tend to have extremely large hands. The majority of these works date from the 9th through the 13th centuries, and no artist is attributed to them. The narratives that are associated with the Black Madonnas are impres-



Notre-Dame-de-Marsat

sively similar. They are said to be discovered near wells, washed up on shores, found in caves or buried in the soil. These works of art all have stories of survival and endurance against all odds. The only artist that is attributed at all is St Luke the Evangelist. If true, he must have been quite busy since he is reported to have created many of the works of art in shrines across the continent. The other similarity of note is that the Black Madonnas are placed in chapels and pilgrim sites along all legs of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela.

So many connections: the Templars, the age of the Crusades, the color black, the somber faces, large hands, associations with St Luke, and all placed along the Camino. Is there a message for us in our complex highly materialistic and technological world?

The age when these works of art proliferated was a time when the initiates knew that the living consciousness of the spiritual world in humans was dimming. The great school of Chartres was keenly aware of this impending age, and sought to preserve knowledge of the mysteries of darkness, light and Natura. The Templars were also aware of the changing times, how earthly evolution was transitioning from an age of wisdom into an age of love, conscious love. Amongst their many ideals and practices was the attempt to create a culture that could contain the Christ, to invite humanity into a civilization of love through freedom. The best way they knew how to do this was through beauty and the arts. The age of the Crusades can be interpreted as the preparation for the age of the consciousness soul, and the Knights Templar as preparers for this coming age.

The fact that so many of the Black Madonnas are attributed to St Luke is interesting since many are placed along the pilgrim route of the Camino.

The symbol of St Luke and his Gospel is the bull, which is also correlated with the will. There are stories of Black Madonnas being discovered by bulls, who call out and refuse to move until the statue is discovered under a mound of dirt. A Black Madonna in Spain (who is pictured with a bull,) is visited by parents who's children are about to walk, to aid them on their way. Hands are also the agents and perpetrators of the will. All of the Black Madonnas have huge outstretched hands. We are told by Steiner that the color black is the image of spiritual will which inspires human will.

Since the Fall of Man, the spiritual world has been designing paths and companioning humanity on the journey towards conscious freedom and unity with the divine. Humans have been given many tools and signs, but the age of the consciousness soul demands the development of conscious moral will. The great mystery of our age is evil. A casual observance of culture in the past two centuries is breathtaking in the scope of evil being unleashed upon humanity. But is this all for naught, are we exposed just to be destroyed?

When I look at the somber, scarred, burnt but enduring Black Madonnas I see a great message for humanity during our tumultuous times. The Black Madonnas with their large hands, somber faces and the color of cosmic will, placed along one of humanity's greatest roads of initiation by heralds of our age, these unusual works of art speak volumes from the spiritual world if only we can hear them. They speak of a need for humanity to stand up and use our wills to endure and overcome the challenges of our age. They also speak of triumph, and for me of a faith in what we as humans are capable of doing. While we often perpetrate great evil, the spiritual world also has faith in our abilities to evolve. Why would the Gods go to so much trouble for our benefit unless they knew we actually would rise to the occasion?

Our journey towards the divine through the ages has been an arduous one, but we are shown through the Black Madonna that great things are not only expected of us, but can actually happen. These works of art are the invitation we need to enter into a culture of love through beauty. Divinity beckons, and has faith in us, all revealed for those willing to see and hear behind the somber dark madonnas along the way of the stars. We must only look, and then we shall see, we shall hear Divinity lovingly calling to us from behind the works of art placed before us, so long ago.

*Stephanie Georgieff is an author and lecturer sojourning through North America and Eastern Europe. She hosts a podcast* The Black Madonna Speaks*, and has penned* The Black Madonna Journey of the Human Heart *and* The Virgin of Guadalupe and the Spiritual Destinies of the Americas.

## Elizabeth Roberts
### 3rd July 1949–16th March 2014

Elizabeth Roberts died on the early morning of Friday 16th March.

She was born, Elizabeth Webster on the 3rd July 1949 as the eldest, by half an hour, of twins, in Harrogate—her Yorkshire accent was in evidence all through her life. It is from her sister Jo that we learn about her childhood and school years. We hear of a confident and joyful child and teenager, eager for everything that came towards her. She was academically talented,

And, perhaps coming as a surprise, very good at sport, tactically brilliant as she was in many other things—she played the violin, was part of the school's drama group and was socially able and popular. She was head girl at school, and in fact, if discipline was difficult for some of the teachers, they would ask Elizabeth to take over! So one can already see some of the qualities of leadership that were to emerge later in her life as a priest.

'She studied biochemistry at Bristol University and it would transpire that she had something of a destiny with Bristol. There she also met her first husband David Boxer. She taught in the local comprehensive school, where she met a teacher (name not known) who seemed to teach in a remarkable and different way from anything that she had witnessed before. This was the beginning of her awareness of the work of Rudolf Steiner.

Seeing her in the late 1970's striding up Cotham Hill in Bristol, one saw a young woman of considerable presence and will in every step. Indeed this quality of will was one of her leading characteristics throughout her life. She helped to form the Bristol Waldorf School at its very beginnings, and she was already connected to The Christian Community. But she had other questions. How does leadership, of which she knew something, how does it become truly social. This led her to the Social Development Centre near Forest Row, a prominent part of Emerson college in those years. Having explored and worked in that field, there were still unanswered questions, and Elizabeth was one who did not rest until she had answers. Indeed, one could experience a certain restlessness, something one could say was existential, all through her life. Through this search she came to realise that the healing of body and soul comes from above in spiritual endeavour and in the Sacraments.

For she already knew illness. For several years she suffered from a debilitating chronic condition which at first seemed to evade diagnosis but turned out to be ME, myalgic encephalomyelitis, now well known. It creates great weakness, particularly in the muscles, and it was to accompany her through

her whole life. Perhaps this can tentatively be seen as a way, a cruel way, of turning her will from outer capabilities to inner efforts. There was to be no more of anything like sport. She researched the illness, and with her knowledge of biochemistry, came to understand it and work with it. But it was her inner discipline and uprightness that got her through. However in her private life it often brought her great suffering.

Shortly after that Elizabeth went to the Priests' Seminary in Stuttgart, where she had the usual struggles to assimilate content of such depth in a foreign language and the unusual struggles with the illness, which she was able to keep entirely private. During that time, her father died in difficult circumstances, but she held on to her uprightness. She was ordained on 16th October 1983. One saw a young woman who had found her path. She was sent first to Hannover—she said about the two years spent there that she learned a great deal from Renate Kroener. Everything that she learned there was to hold her in good stead when she returned to Britain, to Bristol, this place of destiny for her. People loved her there, her clarity of thought and the seriousness of the soul care that she could give. She was also inspiring to several young people. Through her more than one became priests.

Then from Bristol to Devon which until then had been a visited congregation. A house was bought in Exeter, the first permanent congregation in Devon. And it was here that she met Michael Roberts. They married on September 3rd, a true partnership that allowed the blossoming of the community there and the fruitful working of Michael's skills as a builder in the development of the centre in Buckfastleigh. Bought as an almost wreck of a building, the team headed by Elizabeth and Michael turned it into a multi purpose and exiting centre. This was probably the best time in Elizabeth's work as a priest. The congregation grew, the work with children increased, and the centre became well known in Devon. But Devon is somewhat at the 'end of the line', geographically, and in time Elizabeth found the need to work with other priests. So there was a move to Stroud. This proved to be less straightforward. So, many things that she had hoped for did not materialise. She became very ill, always a possibility with ME, and she thought often of death, believing it to be almost inevitable at that point in her life. However, she did get better and one remembers her joy at being able to participate in the Synod in Forest Row. From Stroud there was a move back to Bristol, where she undertook the difficult move from Cotham Hill, to a smaller, more manageable property in Clifton, always with the help of Michael.

It was here that the illness that was to take her across the threshold must have developed. Because of her inner discipline, it did not show itself for a long time, although inwardly she knew that something was not right, and she struggled and in time decided to retire. The illness showed itself very clearly the day after they moved to Faversham in Kent. And then there was no going back—destiny had really spoken. Given weeks to live, she held on for 6 months. It was heartbreaking to witness such a consciousness slip slowly into sleep and then unconsciousness, but always cared for devotedly and without fail by Michael.

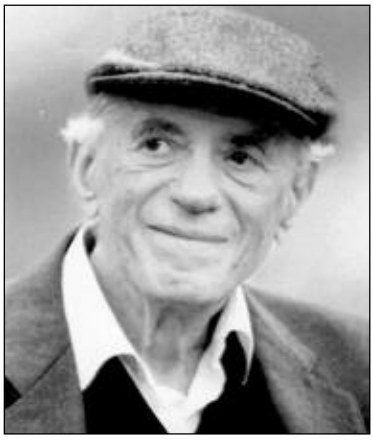
Humour was retained until quite near the end. In the dayroom of the nursing home, a fellow patient was trying to attract the attention of the nurse—Elizabeth turned her head a little, and seemingly out of deep sleep, said: 'You'll be lucky'. It is not irrele-

vant or irreverent to mention this. This kind of humour is an expression of freedom in the face of great adversity. Even at the end the true Elizabeth was there.

There are some important motifs that need to be mentioned. Elizabeth herself wanted it said after her death, particularly at the funeral, that she was sure she had been an alchemist in her last life. When she spoke about substances, it was clear that she understood them from their inner side—they could almost appear before your eyes. And more than that—one could see these forces, once applied to substances, transformed in this life to the way she cared for human beings. There was something alchemical there, understanding the interweavings of the soul within itself, and trying to bring the Christian element into the centre of that. She made a difference to many lives through this unique capacity. This was not always easy for people, faced as an individual with that kind of will and penetration. Particularly her will was often a challenge for people.

Connected with this, and at the very centre, was the motif of transformation. That was what she cared about—the transformation that needed to happen in the human soul, including her own, the transformation of the very stonework to create places where Sacraments could have a home, and the transformation of substance that is at the heart of the Sacrament. What as a child began as strong outer activity, became in her the need to move mountains, in the true inner Christian sense. Pearl Goodwin

## Baruch Luke Urieli
### 23rd October 1923– 11th March 2014



Baruch Luke Urieli was born on 23rd October 1923 in Vienna, Austria. His parents were of Jewish extraction. His father was born in Brno, Czech Republic, and his mother came from Poland but her family moved to Brno when she was a child. After they married they moved from Brno to Vienna.

Baruch's father was a writer. His mother did cleaning and household work to support the family. He had a brother who was born two years after him, but died soon after his birth of childhood jaundice for which there was no treatment at the time. He also had a younger sister who died of the same disease at the age of 3½ years, when Baruch was nine years old.

Baruch grew up and went to school in Vienna. Shortly after the Germans invaded Austria, the family moved to Brno, Czechoslovakia. (July/Aug. 1938). This was relatively easy to do because they had Czech citizenship.

From school, Baruch joined a Jewish youth group. One of the activities that this group did was gardening and Baruch, being rather pedantic, was slow but very thorough at weeding. His weeding skills caught the attention of the youth group leaders and when it was decided that a group of 50 boys would be evacuated to

Denmark, because the Germans were threatening to invade Czechoslovakia, he was one of the boys to be selected.

They travelled to Jutland (north Denmark) in November 1939. He was fostered by a Danish farming family who lived just outside Kjelstrup, a village near Thisted. He described his initial impression of his foster mother as looking rather sour-faced and forbidding, but she proved to be very sweet and kind. His connection with his Danish foster family was very important to him and he maintained a connection to the family for the rest of his life.

In November 1939 the boys were moved from north Denmark to Odense in south Denmark. (The day after they left the Germans invaded Denmark, creating a militarized zone in the North where he had been living!) The group of boys with their leaders travelled to Sweden on 3rd Dec 1939 and from there to St Petersburg, Russia, and then across Russia to Odessa (then part of the USSR, now in Ukraine). From there the group travelled by boat to Istanbul and then to Haifa, Israel. On the boat trip the boys all chose Israeli names. Baruch's given name at birth was Kurt Beamt. It was only legally changed, by deed poll, in 1972, although he used the name Baruch Urieli from 1939 onwards.

In Israel Baruch was sent to a kibbutz, where he lived for about four years. During this time he met Tamar, discovered Anthroposophy, and decided to become a teacher. Also during this time Baruch received a letter from his parents (in 1942) saying that they were on a train to Auschwitz, Poland, where presumably they were among the many killed. (One in six of all the Jews killed by the Germans during World War II died at Auschwitz.)

Baruch moved to Jerusalem in 1945 and graduated from the teachers college on 9th April 1948. On 11th April Baruch and Tamar were married, because he had been called up to join the army, which he did in May, and wanted to marry before that happened.

In April 1949 he was discharged. He found a position as a teacher. His class was very difficult to teach, being made up of young people with limited ability and very challenging behavior. Tamar took on a nursing position nearby. She had trained as a children's nurse.

During this year Baruch decided that he needed further training to be able to teach the war-damaged children that he was presented with, and this led to the decision to apply to Dr. König at Camphill in Scotland, to do the Camphill Seminar.

Baruch and Tamar arrived in Scotland in September 1951, where they worked and studied until September 1954. Doron, their firstborn son, was born there in 1952.

The family moved to Norway in 1954 to help to start the first Norwegian Camphill Community, Helgesseter. However, they were asked to leave by the Norwegians because the Norwegians, having suffered during the war from the German invasion, decided that they wanted no foreigners in their community.

Baruch and family moved back to England, arriving in Thornbury, near Bristol, on in May 1955, where Baruch became a teacher and Tamar looked after younger children with special needs. They lived there until September 1959. During this time (Oct. 1957) their second son, David, was born.

From Thornbury Baruch, Tamar and the two boys moved to the Sheiling Schools near Ringwood, where Baruch worked as a gardener and then increasingly as an administrator, becoming the company secretary to the Sheiling Schools Ltd, which comprised the Sheilng Schools, Ringwood and the Sheiling Schools, Thornbury. In September

1959 Tamar and the children moved to The Grange, Newnham-on-Severn, Gloucestershire, and Baruch followed about a year later. In the Grange he took on the administration, as well as acting as a housefather.

In September 1973 Baruch went to Forest Row in Sussex, to train as a priest of The Christian Community and was ordained after a year and a half. His training was very short because he was well read, fluent in Hebrew and had taught himself ancient Greek before he arrived at the seminary. He actually taught Hebrew to his colleagues as part of his duties there. He was ordained as a priest of the Christian Community on 25th January, 1975.

After his ordination Baruch and Tamar moved to Edinburgh, Baruch's first posting as a priest. He worked there for a year, initially with Rev. Taco Bay and later with Rev. Michael Jones.

At the end of the year Baruch was sent to Glencraig in Northern Ireland, as the first resident priest of The Christian Community in Ireland. His duties there were initially divided between his work as a priest and as an administrator, because the finances of the community had fallen into disarray following the death of Dr. Engel. It took Baruch three years to fully sort out the administration and hand it on to others, before he could focus solely on his work as a priest. He saw his task as very much the establishing of the presence of The Christian Community in Ireland as a whole, and travelled to many centres within Ireland to celebrate the sacraments, including many baptisms, weddings and funerals. He also had many private conversations, held a study group which included a majority of people from outside of the Glencraig Community, and gave many talks. Baruch became fascinated with the subject of empathy and the after-image, and considered it his life's work to create a real awareness of the nature of empathy and the after image, and to pass this on to other people. To this end he held many workshops and retreats and gave many talks to audiences in Ireland, the UK and Europe.

Baruch and Tamar lived in Glencraig for 22 years before retiring to Camphill Community Kyle, near Kilkenny, in the Republic of Ireland. Baruch continued his work there in a modest way, holding services, giving talks, having many private conversations and writing until retiring fully in his mid-eighties. He wrote books on empathy, marriage, and the Fairytale of Novalis.

Baruch died at home, following a stroke, at 7.42am on Tuesday 11th March 2014. It was a beautiful sunny morning. He was surrounded by his wife, his elder son and wife, and three of his grandchildren.

Baruch's funeral service was celebrated on Friday 14th. Many people attended the funeral, some travelling a considerable distance to be there (Northern Ireland, Scotland, England, The Netherlands).

Following the funeral there was a celebration of his life in Castalia Hall, Ballytobin, near Callan, about two miles away from his home. What came out during this event was his love of humour and the way his presence, wisdom and guidance had impacted on many lives.

The cremation was held on the following day at Dublin Crematorium. Again, family and friends were there. His ashes will be buried in the small graveyard behind his house in Kyle.

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Baruch was a fairly small man, lightly built and very handsome, especially in his youth. He was highly intelligent and insightful, fairly introverted and self-contained, but

liked one-to-one conversations. His handwriting was very small and he generally carried in his pocket a stub of pencil and a ridiculously small notebook, which he filled with tiny notes.

At meetings he would often sit quietly, listening to what was said by everyone and then finally, when everyone had spoken their piece, he would chip in with an answer which summarized and extended what everyone had said, often considerably beyond what had been said previously. He thought slowly and deeply about things and felt it important to bring ideas down to earth, to connect ideas with reality, to get to the essence of the subject.

It was important to him to be authentic!

He was somewhat melancholic and predicted his early demise from a very young age. As each due date for his death arrived he moved the date forward. He gave up predicting his death date when he reached 65 and lived to the age of 90 years.

He really enjoyed humour, increasingly so as he became older. He collected the entire set of books of cartoons by Thelwell and generally enjoyed jokes. As he became older, usually at the end of meals, he would come up with humorous, doggerel verses. The last of these, after his last meal in life, during which time they had been talking at table about the graduation from medical school in July of his granddaughter Lia, was:

*Mama mia, doctor Lia!*

Despite his love of humour he was generally very serious in life but in a light way. He didn't impose his attitude on people. As a father he was fairly withdrawn and I remember that during my teen years I would think of questions to ask him, essentially so that I had some contact with him. He was always very willing to answer questions.

He lived a long life and towards the end said that he had had a very good life, a very fortunate life and had somehow always been protected. He was always a teacher and loved to pass on to others, particularly to young adults, what he had gleaned from life and from his studies.

He worked and lived in Camphill places from 1951 to his death, the only time out being during his training as a priest and the year he spent in Edinburgh. He lived a long and productive life leaving a considerable legacy of knowledge in the form of books and lecture transcripts. Doron Rider

# Reviews

***The Incarnation: Finding Our True Self Through Christ***
**Tom Ravetz**
Floris Books,
ISBN 978-1782500605, £14.99
***reviewed by Tom Hart-Shea***

In the introduction to this book one finds this sentence: 'Although the book describes a path of thinking, it is not intended to convince its readers by the force of logical argument.' It is important to the author that readers freely make their own relationship to what is offered. What is offered is a rich, dense tapestry of spiritual thought and wisdom.

Tom Ravetz takes us via a philosophical/theological consideration of the thought that the Christ was both divine and human, to an appreciation of what it might mean to be able to experience and say with St. Paul, 'Not I but Christ in me…'

Engaging with the debates of the Early Church Fathers illuminates the way that the Christ being is often seen by many people today. A key problem for those early Church thinkers was how Jesus Christ could be both God and Man. This is still a living unresolved question for many professing Christians.

Using the insights of Rudolf Steiner, Tom shows how a more subtle and differentiated view of human nature makes it more understandable that a human being—Jesus of Nazareth—could bear the Godhead within him and still be truly human, 'Truly God and truly man', in the words proclaimed by the Council of Chalcedon.

Following Steiner, Tom gives a description of the life and nature of Jesus of Nazareth and the ego being of this man. He then, again using Steiner, characterises the incarnation of the Christ Being within Jesus after the Baptism in the Jordan, and shows how after the death on the cross on Golgotha, this Being now lives within every human being (regardless of their particular culture and beliefs) who is striving to realise their true self.

Interspersed among the chapters are short passages designated 'Contemplations'. Here Tom offers a way of meditating on sacred texts, words and images. This meditative approach complements and enhances the content which has been brought as a discursive unfolding of concepts.

The final chapter of the book is called, 'Bringing Christ to Life Within us'. It ends with a meditation on the words, 'Christ gives me my humanity'.

This book is a powerful distillation of 2000 years of theological thought combined with the insights of Rudolf Steiner.

It is a rich resource for anyone whose destiny leads them to ask deep questions about the Christian Mythos.

## *The Lord's Prayer and Rudolf Steiner—A study of his insights into the archetypal prayer of Christianity*

**Peter Selg**

Floris Books

***reviewed by Michaela Christa Wijnberg***

This small book about the Lord's Prayer is translated by Matthew Barton from the German edition *Das Vater Unser in der Darstellung Rudolf Steiners*.

It begins with a chapter on 'Respect for this Prayer'. Here Peter Selg describes with extraordinary insight the meaning and central position which this prayer for humanity had in Rudolf Steiner's life. This author is well positioned to write on this subject, having written many biographies about people, who lived at the time of Rudolf Steiner, and also having produced a three volume biography about Rudolf Steiner himself. He shows how Christianity and an own inner relationship to the Christ Being was the source of all of Rudolf Steiner's work.

The next two chapters, 'Lord, teach us to pray—Christ and the disciples' and 'Having Courage to Invoke the Name of the Father—The Lord's Prayer in Early Christianity' leads us, with his amazing ability to concentrate on the essential, to the time of Christ and his disciples. Following on from there, the development of this central Christian prayer in the ensuing centuries is addressed with detailed knowledge.

The last chapter 'A Dialogue with the Divine—the inner space of a *thought mantra*' gives insight out of anthroposophy into the spiritual dimension of the future of humanity as it lives in the Lord's Prayer.

This book, which is a gem, has the potential to become a companion for every human being, who is interested in the central

prayer of Christianity and wants to open heart, spirit and mind for it. Deepest thanks towards Anthroposophy and its founder, Rudolf Steiner, and towards such a publication and its author, Peter Selg.

***Festivals of the Year***
***A Workbook for Re-enlivening the Christian Festive Cycle***
**Roger Druitt**
Temple Lodge Press
***reviewed by Deborah Ravetz***

One of the signatures of contemporary mass culture is its lack of depth. Consumerism and materialism mean that the festivals and holy days of the year have been reduced to opportunities for distraction and indulgence, which offer a false consolation for the struggles of life. Life can be very challenging. Instead of helping us to connect with our capacity to grow with our challenges this kind of leisure and indulgence numbs us and disconnects us from our capacity to grow. We are encouraged to eat and drink too much; we are encouraged to relax and to pamper ourselves with luxury holidays and mini breaks. Despite all the hype such behaviour never lives up to its promise. Human beings long for something more meaningful but do not know where to find it. Peace and renewal cannot be bought or sold.

Along with this barren superficiality, something else is beginning to appear. An antidote; a constructive response to those bankrupt values. The artist and writer Suzi Gablick said of the deeper aspects of contemporary culture that its greatest discovery was that human beings cannot be happy unless they are living for something greater. She believed that this discovery would have

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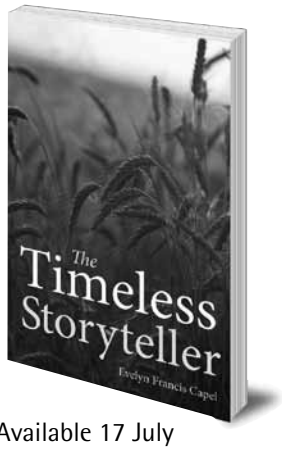
## EVELYN FRANCIS CAPEL

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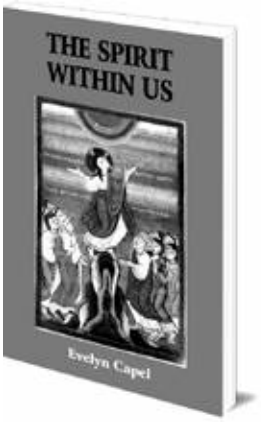


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# THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

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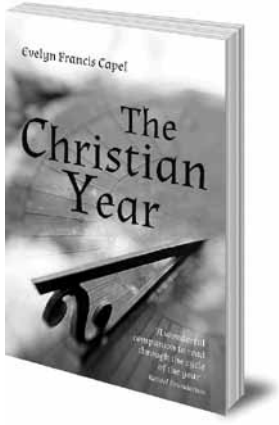


This is a classic book from the unique insight and spiritual wisdom of Evelyn Capel.

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the same impact on our times as the discoveries of the Renaissance had on theirs.

Mass culture leaves us dissatisfied. It tempts us and beguiles us but ultimately we are left hungry for something more. The question is how can we find it.

Roger Druitt is a priest in The Christian Community. He has written a book which gives us indications and insights which speak directly to this need. His book is written out of years of practice and reflection. Working artistically with selfless observation, Roger shares the fruits of his insights in such a way that his indications rise beyond opinion and dogma. His insights touch on the universality of underlying truths. They can be used by any seriously searching person regardless of their faith or denomination. He also explores and clarifies the question of festivals and their relationship to the different hemispheres in such a way as to offer understanding and solutions.

Each chapter has a structure which explores the motif of a festival, the realm of nature and the biblical content. Roger explores the prayers for each festival and shares meditative pictures. He then gives suggestions for creating one's own festival.

We are led through the year in all its manifoldness in such a way that the unique gesture of each festival is revealed. These gestures help us to find out how we can take part in the cycle of the year and so contribute to the renewal of nature and culture.

The Christian Community is a church of Christian renewal. This book is a practical manifestation of this.

I have no doubt that using this book would allow us to experience the reality of the Christian cycle of the year and to rise to our calling to become co-workers in the renewal of life on every level.

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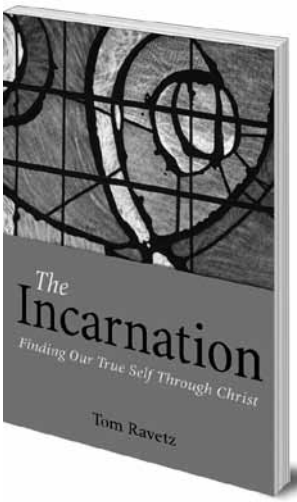


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This book, the first of its kind to explore the theology of The Christian Community in a systematic way, asks spiritual, philosophical and religious questions and offers many insights into religious life and experience.

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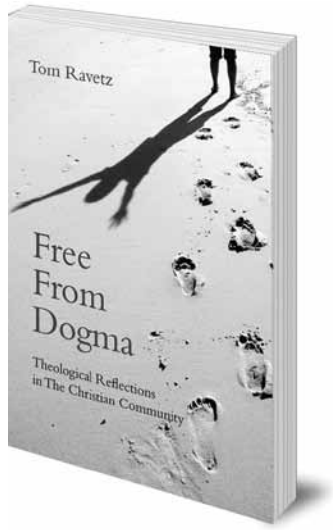


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# Guest Rooms

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

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

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

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

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

Further information and reservations:
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or the church: 01364 644272
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