

The Christian Community

Perspectives



December 2015

February 2016

Contents

A new year's resolution	3
<i>Aaron Mirkin</i>	
The metamorphosis of the cross	5
<i>Gertraud Goodwin</i>	
Why offer? and to whom?	7
<i>Louise Madsen</i>	
Kenosis — offering & fulfilment	12
<i>Jens-Peter Linde</i>	
Letting go	17
<i>Pearl Goodwin</i>	
The restoration of music	19
<i>Selina Horn</i>	
Veil painting — a personal journey from Advent towards Christmas	22
<i>Dorothy Senior</i>	
Obituary Ita Bay	24
Reviews	25

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Gertraud Goodwin
Two views of the sculpture *Epiphany*

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Perspectives

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The spiritual battle of our time concerns what it means to be truly human. The old answers of the churches and ancient traditions have been dismissed. One prevailing image sees the human being as consumer and economic unit. However, it is remarkable how our culture can recognise human beings whose sacrifices and achievements seem to lift them into another sphere. People such as Nelson Mandela or Aung San Suu Kyi, the newly elected leader of Myanmar gain world-wide recognition as exemplars of humanity because of their selfless dedication to a cause greater than themselves.

Human beings need to give themselves to something beyond themselves; they need to make sacrifices. One of saddest things in life is to have no one to give to; to have the feeling that nothing one does will make a difference. Along with the need for food and shelter, giving oneself to a purpose beyond oneself is a fundamental human need, not reserved for exceptional people, saints and heroes. Understanding offering and making it real in our lives and religious practice is at the core of our life as Christian Community.

TOM RAVETZ



Advent
Gertraud Goodwin

A new year's resolution

Aaron Mirkin

The world is in need all right; but not for lack of good ideas. There are plenty of those. What is lacking today is the ability to translate them into practice. No one can do this alone. For this others are needed. It is a social question, for the greatest ideas are useless without others to help us incarnate them into reality. It is what lives between people today that matters most; really listening to each other; really wanting to serve each other. This is the social conversation that is so desperately needed today. This is not just a sharing of information, but a real sharing of soul substance; soul strength.

If there are demons anywhere in the world today trying to thwart the good, then it is here, in the social life. Never before has such vigilance and soul work been required from us to prevent the forces of division and discord from gaining the upper-hand. This is perhaps our greatest task today, for as the established order crumbles, it is not the outer things that will provide our security; far more will it be the soul bonds we are able to forge with our brothers and sisters where we live and work—in our everyday encounters. Bonds born of selfless love and genuine interest that weave together to form a chalice—a community chalice—receptive for the Communion of spirit strength and inspiration that would flow into our practical life on Earth; a Spirit leaven that raises not only ourselves, but also the lives of those around us.

This is not just theory. This is real. This is how the ideals of the modern spiritual life are made practical and grounded: through our practice of Social Conversation.

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Christmas
Gertraud Goodwin

The metamorphosis of the cross

A contemplation of the Christian festivals

Gertraud Goodwin

Like no other subject, the mood of the Christian festivals lends itself to an exploration of the changing relationships between light and darkness. The seasons and their changing light evolve around us more in a horizontal gesture. Into this and with the sun's shining down to us, a more conscious and vertical gesture can occur by connecting ourselves to Christ's life. In this earthly-cosmic cross man stands, and is part of both processes. His own soul-spiritual relationship to the reality of the Christ-Being expresses itself through the various turning points of the festivals.

The togetherness of nature and the cosmos, their complete belonging to each other, can become a gateway to perceive the festivals as belonging absolutely to man as an expression of the recognition of his origin – an origin both earthly and cosmic.

This recognition happens in me, when I perceive that I am a cross myself and that this cross changes its angle, perspective, mood and relationship all the time. It attains particular soul-spiritual 'solstices' at particular turning points in the year. It is as if at these times, the heavens are a bit more open. What happens outside or inside myself can pass me by completely, or it can touch me tangentially. It can also enter either by force or being openly received. Then I allow a change to take place within myself. I can also say that I allow or even invite myself to be crossed.

For our time, a crossing received can become an inner activity, if we allow things we experience to cross us inside, to touch and consciously change us. If we are standing truly at the centre of our own cross, in the heart, then we allow the aspect of the Christ into our every perception. This helps us to see not only part of reality, but further, its spiritual and moral dimension.

Advent

The Seed Cross or The Cross of Hope

The overture to the Christian festivals, Advent, is the first in this sequence of drawings, and thus offers to be a gesture of a simple first beginning: out of a heartfelt longing for the light, the gesture concentrates and strives vertically upward in search for the light in innocent tenderness. The crossing here is a humble willingness to offer and to open itself to receive the light. The



Epiphany, Gertraud Goodwin

light to be contained in trust in this prepared heart space when it becomes a true inner space. Light and darkness are within each other caring for and nurturing each other.

This crossing is a complete interpenetration of the physical and spiritual, the darkness holding the light, the light illuminating the darkness.

It is also the three Kings' day. Like a jewel, the body of Christ was fashioned from the highest and most noble ingredients. Walking towards Him, we have to put on our kingly garments, be crowned with our best intentions.

We are grateful to Gertraud for allowing us to use her images in the coming year, and we will print her contemplations of the festivals to accompany those images.

THE EDITORS

darkness concentrates itself to strengthen this resolve. In rising upwards to meet the light, a first tender crossing takes place.

Christmas

The Heart Cross

Out of the resolve and concentration during Advent, an inner strength manifests itself to become a vessel for the light. In a steady, warm stream the light pours down to be received and held in an open gesture. The crossing lies in meeting the responsibility to carry the light, to be a light bearer.

Epiphany

A further intensification takes place for the

Why Offer? and to whom?

Louise Madsen

Young children, when they begin to take an interest in what is around them, like to share their things with others. If they are given a toy they like to give it back, and with eager expectation they wait to have it returned again: receiving and giving develops into a very satisfying game for the child who is still fully at one with its surroundings; who has not yet begun to feel itself as being separate. Everything is still part and parcel of 'me'. Later on an awareness of 'you' and 'me' as separate entities makes itself felt and the child will cling on to what is 'mine' and not 'yours' and it no longer wants to share. This first sign of egoism, of coming to oneself, is a natural and necessary development, yet one does not want to see it grow into a habit of 'me, me, me'. Overcoming it does not come naturally; rather it is something that needs to be learnt.

For adults, giving away our belongings can be an interesting experience: it is no hardship to part with things which are no longer of interest, which we no longer value; in fact, it can feel really good to have disposed of them. How very different it is with objects we hold dear; that are full of meaning for us; their loss is most upsetting and disturbing. To lose what is precious in monetary value is one thing; to lose what has emotional value is quite another and can be far more distressing. Our first wish is to find it again. If this proves to be impossible then we want a replacement or, if our possessions were stolen, we will seek compensation. To find some inner equanimity and peace of mind in the face of such events calls on a wholly different set of faculties in our soul: the facility to let go inwardly, and to freely say 'it once belonged to me, but now it really and truly does not; it is no longer part of my life.'

Letting go is one thing, offering is another; one is a gesture of leaving behind, of leaving something alone, the other expresses the wish to give, to reach out; offering moves in the opposite direction to that of liberating oneself. Yet, without the one the other is not possible. Offering is not a subject much aired or discussed these days. It isn't an activity that readily finds a place in a culture dominated by 'having' rather than 'being'. Yet, on closer inspection, we see that it is very much part of our lives, at least at certain levels. Goods and wares are constantly 'on offer'; 'offers' are thrust under our noses, swathed in all the most tempting and seductive wrappings that

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can be mustered to seduce us into accepting them. The more 'offers' we buy, the better for the good of the economy! But what kind of offerings are these? We may be getting a 'good deal', but the seller has simply managed to offload more of his goods to his financial advantage.

A gesture of offering which is very different, expressed in a quieter, altruistic way, is that of giving practical help and/or support where one sees it is needed. This can translate into an inner activity of offering prayers and of sending one's thoughts to those about whom one is concerned. By offering our services, whether practically or spiritually, we move beyond the boundaries of personal concerns; we may feel how we inwardly stretch beyond ourselves, we 'put ourselves out', we go 'the extra mile'. The offering that we make may be a close personal matter; it may be the one way we find we can respond to the seemingly endless and overwhelming number of natural and human catastrophes taking place all over the world.

The crux of offering is whether what is being offered, inwardly or outwardly, will be found acceptable. Will it be received, and if so, in what way? If it is received, the offer becomes a gift. In the face of illness, an accident or death, condolences, sympathy, love and warm wishes are thankfully received and the recipient is grateful to know that they are being thought of and carried in the hearts of others. In the case of practical help it can go either way: it may be deeply appreciated, but if it is not what's needed, matters can go badly wrong.

In the very beginning of creation, the two sons of Adam and Eve, Cain, a tiller of the ground, and Abel, a keeper of sheep, each brought an offering to the Lord; Cain offered the fruit of the ground, Abel, the firstlings of his flock. The Lord accepted the offering of Abel, but he rejected Cain's. On the face of it both appear to be very respectable offerings: each giving of the best of his life's work, yet only one was looked on favourably. It seems that the good intentions behind the one were not enough for it to be accepted. By working the soil, Cain had altered and put his stamp on what was God-given. His offering was a part of his production; it was no longer purely of God's world. It had the mark of (fallen) man on it. Abel tended and looked after sheep, without changing them in any way. He looked after what was given into his care by God and offered from the very best of the flock. He offered out of what still belonged to God. (Only much later did Jacob breed sheep in order to change them.) Was Abel's offering, because of its nature, timely, whereas that of Cain was not? Are the fruits of one kind of human activity more acceptable to the divine world than another? When Cain was angry, the Lord told him that if he does well he, too, will surely be accepted, but that if he does not then sin is 'lying before his door' and waiting to ensnare him and his task will be to master it. Perhaps Cain's kind

of offering was destined to become acceptable later, if he, and other human beings of his nature, master themselves in the meantime.

In olden times, offerings, which in practice were sacrifices brought to the divine, had to be of the very best: the firstlings of the flock without any kind of blemish or mark on them whatsoever. Only that which was most dear and precious was good enough to be accepted by the divine world. In this way humanity was educated: in the practice of thus overcoming their natural instinct through offering, their human qualities were strengthened evermore. Not to think first of themselves and their own wellbeing, but to bring to mind and renew their connection to the divine beings on whom their existence depended: this is what was being asked of them. When he was asked, 'what shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and what shall we wear?' Christ replied, 'Your Father in the heavens knows all your needs. Above all strive for the divine kingdom and its harmonious order. Then all these other things will be yours as well' (Matt.6:31-33). We can choose to restrict ourselves to satisfying our immediate needs: 'All these things are the desires and concerns of the 'heathen peoples', or we can strive towards the heavenly kingdom, knowing that human existence does not stand still and will develop in one direction or another, depending on the actions and deeds of us human beings.

Can we find a meaning in offering in our work? Is it possible to regard one's mundane activities as having an element of service, of offering, about them? Cleaning the streets, driving a bus or train, putting together components in a factory; can such work gain meaning by being regarded as being done for the sake of others? However humdrum, this work makes it possible for others to get on with their lives. If, in this way, such activities can be lifted out of their deadening effects, they and their operator gain a different standing in the world: no longer are there just dead jobs to be done, they are now placed in the service of others and the worker is doing something for his fellow men.

Our ability to offer, or better, to offer up, is a means of finding out where we stand in relation to what we are going to do in life. For the sake of a career move are we prepared to uproot the family, to send the children to a new school? How free are we to meet future possibilities, how much are we bound to our past and present circumstances? Such decisions, made by leading individuals, have shaped the course of events and of history.

Abraham was asked to sacrifice Isaac, his only son. He was put to this ultimate test to see whether he was fit to become the leader of a new people; was he so committed and reliable that the divine world could put its trust in him? In the temptation of Jesus Christ directly after his baptism, in another strange twist, we find this method given another turn. There, the divine world goes so

far as to make use of the Adversary to offer to Jesus all the greatest things of this world, just in the moment when he is at his very weakest and most vulnerable. And the outcome hangs in the balance; will he be able to muster the strength to withstand the onslaught of all those forces that attempt to work against his mission on earth?

At the founding of The Christian Community two befriended individuals, both leading personalities in the Lutheran Church, were regarded by Rudolf Steiner as being two of the principal members of the priesthood who would give this new movement a certain standing and authenticity in the eyes of the world. In 1922 Friedrich Rittelmeyer gave up his secure and well recognised position in the church to venture into great insecurity (together with his large family,) and the great unknown; for his friend, Christian Geyer, the step was too large and so Rittelmeyer became, so to speak, the odd man out from the establishment, and this reflected back onto how this movement for religious renewal was viewed by others.

Offering, as we have seen, is an act of will: our own will and a divine will at work in us that enables us to see and act beyond the needs and concerns of our own person. It is a faculty that can be developed, and is of such a nature that it has been taken up into the 'family' of sacraments as practised in The Christian Community. In the Sacramental Consultation it is the activity called upon in us which is fundamental to all that follows from it. Out of offering we can learn to receive, which is another activity which we have to learn, if we are to do it fully. Do we want to receive what is given, and how do we receive it? Thy will be done. Really? Are we prepared to accept it when it shows itself?

All of this found its expression in what Rudolf Steiner called the fundamental social law, which can be seen as the sociological consequence of a true understanding of offering:

The overall health of a group of people working together is the greater the less the single members of that group retain the proceeds of their work for themselves, that is, the more they give over their products to their fellow workers, and the more their needs are met not out of their own activity, but out of that of others.

Such an ideal or, better said, such a working premise seems to be unthinkable unless the capacity to offer is well implanted in the souls attempting to put it into practice. What preconditions such a practice may require; what attitude of mind such a statement presupposes have possibly not been so well explored. Christ's injunctions in the Sermon on the Mount provide invaluable material for how to approach such ideals: the underlying message seems to be that if one wants to achieve any outer developmental step one first has to

look into one's attitude of soul, and if necessary, change it, which is to say, work on it. Unless we lay fitting inner foundations our outer actions will lack authenticity and be of no avail.

The Sacramental Consultation takes place before a picture of Christ. In turning to him we offer our thoughts to the divine. He offered his life and united himself with the earth for the sake of the future of mankind. With him in our hearts we can offer up our thinking and allow the divine will to find its place in our will.

There is an old saying: 'What you think today you will become tomorrow'. So we could say, 'what you offer today will bring about what you will receive tomorrow'.



Robin, Dorothy Senior (see page 22)

Kenosis – offering & fulfilment

Jens-Peter Linde

The Jewish laws and rituals were meant to be strictly adhered to in the Israel of two thousand years ago. This was seen to be necessary to provide the right conditions for the Messiah to come. And yet, in the story of the ‘Wedding of Cana’, the ancient stone jars which were meant to be full of water for the purification of a guest’s dusty feet were empty at such an important occasion. Thus Jesus could ask the servants to fill them up with water which then was turned into ‘good wine’.

The emptiness of the stone jars is mirrored by the calamity that the store of wine ran dry. On both counts the outer organisation was not fulfilling the apparent requirements of the occasion. I say apparent—was it perhaps a spiritual requirement that the situation presented itself as it did?

We all know people who have gone through major turning points of crisis in their lives. Perhaps the death of a beloved one, mental breakdown, illness, addiction or accident, triggered a crisis. Their old ‘system’ broke down and then a new direction could be grasped courageously. Would we call such turning points accidental? Or can we perhaps see a guiding light in them? Are we observing what the old Greek philosophers called ‘kenosis’?

‘Kenosis’ is the ‘emptying of one’s natural self in favour of the indwelling of a higher self’. But that is not meant to be a giving up—rather it wants to be a *giving-in*, a free sacrifice of something beloved and comfortable in order to embrace the challenge of radical development. We can turn an external disruption into an internal achievement: from being victims we can emancipate our souls and thus become victorious.

‘To sacrifice’ is translated ‘to make holy’, and indeed it makes all the difference whether something is just taken away, or if we give it freely for a

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higher purpose or meaning. In the cultures of antiquity, when sacrifices were made, it was important to offer the very best that one had to the gods. They offered what was most precious to them: not just an old cow, but the most vital bull of the herd!

Examples of kenosis

Agamemnon was willing to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia. But she was a human being, an ‘I’, and his sacrificing of her on

the altar of the goddess would have been a crime. However, seeing the plight of the warriors who could not move because of lack of wind (which was understood to stem from the anger of Artemis) Iphigenia emancipated herself by offering to give up her life voluntarily through the power of her very 'I'.

This offering of her own being was a radical overcoming of fate—her free taking hold of necessity saved her; she was spirited away by divine power and became a high priestess of the mysteries of the goddess on the shores of the Black Sea. Later, she performed a second sacrifice, again out of free will. She gave up her position in the temple, returned to the 'deceitful' Greeks and into the belly of the dragon as it were, in order to soften and transmute their barbaric ways, thus strengthening their culture, and adding what could later blossom as Greek consciousness.

Perhaps this process of kenosis, this offering up for the purpose of fulfilment, is best exemplified by the willingness of Jesus of Nazareth to be baptized in the Jordan. Like other older initiations in the ancient mysteries, the Johannine baptism of an adult who was submerged in the Jordan, carried the danger of fatality or derangement, but also the potential of renewal. For if one experienced in the near-death review of life, how limited one's past had been, one had a really powerful motive to 'change one's ways'.

Jesus too 'died' to his old being in this way, and therefore a higher being, the Messianic Spirit of God, could enter into the body of the man, Jesus of Nazareth. This divine being, the Christ Jesus, was also willing to give up his life that a higher dimension could be revealed through him. When the Son of God prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane that 'this cup' might be taken from him, it does not prove that after all he was just a poor man who didn't want to die: it shows to us that he, who was literally sweating blood, did not want to die *prematurely*. Rather, he wanted to survive the night to be able to die on the cross, so that his resurrection after three days could be witnessed publicly and change human consciousness and with it the world's constitution. As it was, his prayer allowed the angel of the Lord to come and sustain him through the night and through nine hours of the next day so he could fulfil his mission.

Lazarus, on the other hand, seems to have died in a traditional initiation. Yet he was revived by Christ on the fourth day precisely because the man Jesus too had 'died' and allowed the Divine Christ to enter his being during the baptism in the Jordan as just described. Thus this divine being could give life in a body back to the soul who had craved kenosis by the wrong means, by submission to the old mysteries, which required a three day death-like coma. But these methods were no longer timely, and by the fourth day proved fatal.

Yet, through Jesus Christ's calling him from the grave, Lazarus' experience resulted in a new mystery: the first Christian Initiation—and it became public experience. What used to be secret was now to become revelation.

St. Paul too experienced a life changing moment near Damascus after which he could famously say, 'Not I, but Christ in me!' Imagine this power streaming through him in the years to come as revealed in his work! It extended into his physical strength as well as into his soul and spirit constitution. Paul could deal with setbacks without becoming depressed and he could let the Spirit speak through him so powerfully that he could build the foundations of the Christian community as we know it from history.

Is it possible that we become so conscious of our spiritual evolution that we too could be in accord with *everything* that happens to us seemingly out of the blue? Can we welcome illness as well as health, tasks as well as leisure, loss as well as grace? Can we learn to follow our freely chosen destiny in an emancipated way, as Iphigenia did in pre-Christian times, or as St. Paul did in the first years after the Mystery of Golgotha? Could we learn to reveal Christ's mystery in our daily lives?

If this change brought about by Christ's death and resurrection were just a matter of faith, human memory in face of 'real' challenges would not carry very far in our forgetful times, when the capacity to believe is edged out by the sting of doubt and the insistence on proof. Can the third and fourth step of the Christian mystery, his Ascension into the life sphere of the earth in the image of the clouds, and the outpouring of his divine Spirit in the Whitsun flame become a real experience to us so that a theoretical concept could go through kenosis and be fulfilled in sacramental practice?

A Movement for religious renewal

The Christian Community—Movement for Religious Renewal is composed of individuals of whom it is said in the first words of the communion service intend worthily to fulfil this Act of Consecration of Man. This points to the fact that we are a *movement*, a stream of renewal which is open to and inclusive of any reality that has experienced 'the Fall', the original split between what is, as the all-embracing divine reality, and what wants to *become*, as evolving creative potential. Religious renewal is a process of knitting together of what is and what is becoming without fixing it in dogma or fantasy.

But, just as all good ideas need to be put into practice to become real, so religious renewal needs our conscious engagement in sacramental life. The Christian Community is challenged to fulfil this task: it can bear the religious impulse in the present conditions of earth existence and human conscious-

ness but only if it allows itself the meekness of kenosis; if it can be open to fulfilment by the true Spirit of our Time.

How is our Movement for Religious Renewal prepared to do that and how can we participate? Inasmuch as we are a community, we have been graced with a definite form for celebration of the sacramental rituals. They, however, want to be worthily *fulfilled*, given content through our conscious participation. This is spelled out in the beginning of the Act of Consecration of Man. In order worthily to fulfil this sacrament, we can behold what was revealed by Christ in the past; we can experience reverence for his activity in the present; and we can in our activities be *mindful* that his offering continues to work into the future. We can also see it the other way around by being mindful of Christ's deeds of the past; by feeling reverence in respect of what streams from him in the present; and by beholding how revelation enters into our lives from his future. Perhaps we can worthily fulfil the Act of Consecration of Man, when time becomes space...

The four parts of this service are well summarised in the four letters of the word AMEN: With the 'A' (Latin pronunciation) we open ourselves to the offering Word of the divine. With the 'M' we offer our body-, soul- and spirit-substances together with the material ones of bread, wine, water and incense. In the 'E' we can become aware of the change that happens when our constitution becomes a vessel for a divine bestowal of grace, and with the 'N' we can glean what has ripened and harvest it as divinity in us: as fulfilment of the process of kenosis.

Kenosis and the sacramental Consultation

Let us draw to a conclusion by looking at the Sacramental Consultation. This sacrament can be taken up when we feel that destiny is calling on us, but we may not quite understand in what way. What if I had won in the lottery, what should I do with this gift? Or if I were diagnosed with a severe illness, what could I learn from it? Perhaps my father has a new girlfriend—how can I relate to this relationship with love and understanding? If I have done something negative, how might I rebalance the situation in a spiritually adequate way?

The first two lines of the Sacramental Consultation give the essence of kenosis in rather an archetypal formulation by asking one to learn two things. First, I need to learn *to offer* up the contents of my thinking consciousness to the realm of the Divine—that is to empty my self from pre-conceived notions as the first step of kenosis. Second, I am to learn to receive from the Divine what wants to become a new grace-filled impulse for my activities. I can learn to assume what is coming to me as my own freely willed destiny.

Earlier I mentioned the Spirit of our Time. This is the Michaelic Spirit which has cast the adversary powers from heaven to the earth. Here the dragon always tries to do evil—yet he can be frustrated, if we turn temptation into spirit growth and convert calamity into emancipation. We cannot pierce the dragon's scales from the outside, but entering into its innards when we get swallowed isn't fatal if we understand kenosis as the ability to transmute and convert in tune with divine purpose and strength. Let us dare to lose fear in life and embrace love!



Christmas Rose, Dorothy Senior (see page 22)

Letting go

Pearl Goodwin

The expression, 'letting go', is a much used expression which we have probably all said to someone or had it said to us. It can be used in a very trivial context: 'Oh, let it go...' or it can refer to the deepest motifs of the human soul. To begin with it helps to think of the soul in a particular way.

We do not usually think of the soul in spatial terms, as occupying physical space with its three dimensions. Rather, the soul is the non-spatial basis for our experience, working as process in time rather than space. But just in the case of this 'letting go' it is worthwhile to use a spatial analogy. We experience the sense world as spatial, showing itself in three dimensions. This makes it exclusive, thus an object e.g. a table or chair, occupies its place in space exclusively, in the sense that where it is nothing else can be. That is the characteristic of the material world, and it gives us the certainty of that world and allows us to know it.

Paradoxically, we can think of the soul in the same way. The soul can be filled with many 'things', often difficult things, unresolved biographical things, and when this is so, then perhaps there is no room for other deeper layers to be experienced. The deeper layers through which we might find meaning are always there, because they are not chairs and tables and can exist in us even if they are not able to reach our conscious experience, because there is too much in the way and a letting go is necessary. It can be like clearing out a cupboard. Modern language usage recognizes this—we have 'stuff' or 'baggage' that is obscuring the soul from its deeper content. In this sense, letting go is an important aspect of transformation. It can be a transformative step on the path towards oneself, and towards the one who identified himself with this self, and who is the rightful owner of this space in us, for if he is there then we are our truest selves.

An essential thing about letting go is that it is almost impossible to tell someone else how exactly to do this, and you cannot do it for another person, even if one would desperately like to. There can be help from other people, essential books that can be studied, encouragement and advice from others, and of course, events and crises that bring about the need for change in any individual's situation. But you cannot

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do it for another person—letting go is not transferable, like knowledge or craftsmanship that can be learned.

This is something of great significance. For wherever there is a situation in which one has to actually do something oneself, one begins to touch the truly spiritual, one could even say, the esoteric. Studying it, reading about it, talking with others, are all necessary steps on the way, but the truly spiritual path begins with the inner personal deed, which one could even call the lonely deed.

In the Act of Consecration of Man it is the Offertory that is the letting go that has been encouraged and given strength through the words and deeds of Christ in the gospel reading. There one meets the archetype of letting go that is answered by the grace of transubstantiation. All letting go even in the smallest, most humble form, is answered by an experience of grace, a certain feeling of inner freedom and lightness.

The greatest letting go of all is the Mystery of Golgotha itself. The great difference between what can happen to us as individuals, and that central event, is that it was not the soul and spirit of Jesus Christ that had to be cleared and healed. It was the burden that he carried for the whole of mankind that the adversaries had placed on the human heart. In other words, the letting go in the Mystery of Golgotha is of a cosmic objective dimension—it has no subjective part. But in the Sacrament both subjective and objective sides are addressed, because we need both. The Offertory can be seen as more the subjective side, freely available to individuals carrying whatever life has brought. Later, the objective side allows us to offer thinking that is pure, heart forces that are loving, and a willing that is already devoted. That is, letting go means giving everything away so that one becomes ‘nothing’, a space for the Christ to enter.

Within the context of history what Jesus Christ did was unheard of. Nobody willingly became ‘nothing’. No Roman or Greek would give away their perhaps hard earned status. Better to fall on one’s sword than be defeated or diminished or humiliated. Jesus Christ had no public status—history barely knows about him in the way it knows kings and caesars.

This is the challenge to all of us : to live our lives in the world, bearing our place in that world with other human beings lightly, but bearing also at the centre the ability to be ‘nothing’ and so to find our relationship with him.

A Contribution from the Fifth Gospel conference 5–7th September 2014

The restoration of music

Selina Horn

For hundreds of years the pilgrim who walked the road to Santiago de Compostela was a singing pilgrim, equipped not only with a hat, walking stick, backpack and rosary, but also with songs and small instruments. In earlier times singing was experienced as something heavenly. It was an experience which drove bad spirits away and drew the help of angels. The whole pilgrim route is infused with this ancient singing which lives on in the atmosphere*. Here is one of the secrets of music and especially singing: music makes a bridge to the spiritual world.

Unfortunately our modern culture forgets the higher purposes of music and thus misuses it in many ways. Examples exist in every area of contemporary life, from television advertising to the roaring chants from the football stadium.

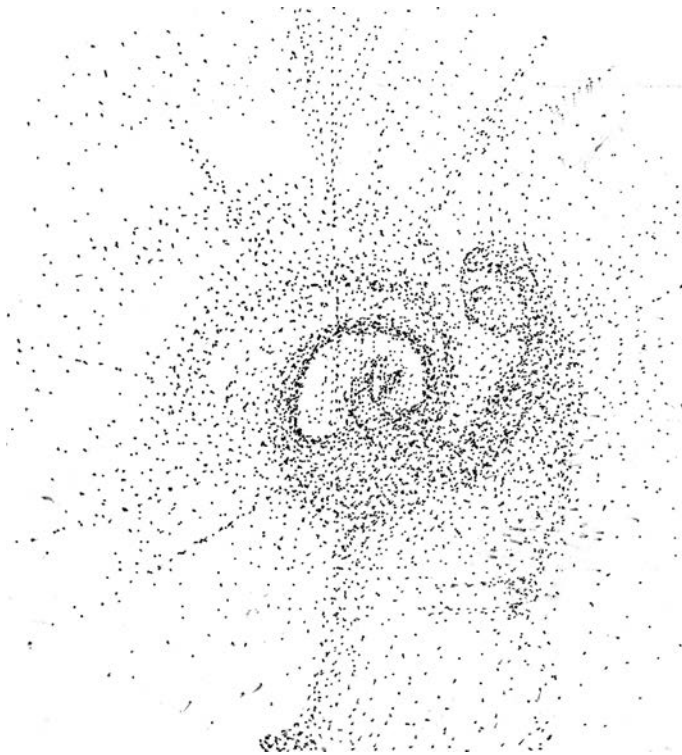
The question for our times is how we can begin a kind of 'musical restoration.' As a first step we could contemplate the mysteries of music. It has been discovered that honeybees hum the tone 'A' in their hives and amongst the flowers. The first cry of every new born baby is perfect pitch 'A'. Why is it that the orchestra all tune their instruments to 'A'? These discoveries can awaken an interest into what the 'being' of music could be.

A further step in the restoration of music is developing our ability to meet music anew through a deepened listening. We don't need to be musicians in order to do this. By 'harkening' to the music and attempting to meet the tones with interest and wonder we can achieve much. We can follow the journey each tone makes towards the next tone. We then enter into the spirituality of music, into what lives between the tones. We can also try to experience a future ability that Rudolf Steiner mentioned- to hear a melody in a single tone. Hearing church bells is an opportunity to put this into practice!

Music in Ritual

Music naturally has its home in ritual and religious practice because these are threshold moments where our two worlds meet. During Easter I was in Weimar (in Germany) and stayed at The Christian Community church. An older member had died a few days after Easter Sunday and I was able to play the lyre for the ritual of the final blessing. I chose to add an Easter music motif, one that is usually played during The Act of Consecration of Man, onto the final

*Selina Horn
is a priest
trainee at The
Christian
Community
in Forest Row.*



blessing music. The next day I played the same Easter motif on the lyre during the service and I was surprised at how suddenly different the music was. Each tone seemed warmer, fuller and 'wider'. I had the impression that perhaps the deceased had become like a huge ear and a huge heart, filling the expanse of the church, as if he was living into the tones themselves. It was as if a tonal bridge had been created through the help of this soul who had left his physical body and was now living in the music in a new way.

I chose the task of composing music for birth and death as my research project during my second year at seminary. In the beginning, I wanted to describe musically the way through the planetary spheres. I quickly realised that this was a rather large task to set oneself! Things changed in Weimar. I heard a sermon which helped me find a different intention for the composition work. The sermon described how after crossing over the threshold of death, Christ is actually, the way upon which we walk. This relates to the 'I am' words spoken by Christ in the Gospel of John: 'I am the way, the truth and the Light'. The departed soul meets Christ on this path and he leads them on. This can relate to the words of Christ, 'I am the good Shepherd'. From this sermon I realised that there is so much potential in the musical experience. Music can lead to an encounter with Christ. Here is the task we need to ask of music today. Rudolf Steiner emphasised this especially in lectures he held in England in 1924.

Another question I had during my exploration of this theme was the purpose of music in the difficult event of a child's funeral. I was allowed to hear the text of the sacrament and was deeply touched by the comforting words addressed to the family and friends in mourning. In this sacrament *every word is consolation*. The words of the ritual have nothing sentimental in them but are like a river of *holy consolation* flowing from the depths of God. The task of the music in this ritual is to help open up the soul to receive this consolation. Therefore

each tone should be consolation and help reveal the proximity of Christ's healing within grief.

Music as Social Practice

What happens when we sing together? Choir singing is a musical activity which at the same time reflects social ability. The dissonances must be overcome between the tones and melodies but also between people themselves. This all requires practice. Without a sense of togetherness, a song cannot arise from a group. The community impulse goes so deeply into singing that one has to even change the individual rhythm of breathing in order to all begin at the same time. We sing with a united breath. In the Apocalypse of Saint John there is a description of future mankind. What are they doing? They are singing in praise!

In our modern culture we can experience painfully that the bridge music creates seems to have been demolished. It is up to us to build it again. We can do this in the way we listen to and meet the music which accompanies The Christian Community sacraments. We can perhaps ask ourselves beforehand what intentions we have for the music that we will hear and with whom we wish to share it. We could offer up our musical experiences to the unborn or those who have died. We could sing in such a way that perhaps the angels come close. Song could become an offering and a message of praise from earth to the heavens. One of Rudolf Steiner's musical indications for the Act of the Consecration of Man was that the singing is to be full of praise and gratitude (*lobgesang* in German). We could sing together on Sundays in a way where our focus is not so orientated to the printed musical notes and trying to sing each tone correctly. Our consciousness could instead be turned towards our musical offering of praise which streams from the heart and accompanies the rising incense during the last stage of the Offertory. This calls perhaps for more singing practice or simpler songs which one can then sing by heart! (How wonderful it is that the English have this expression. We could put it into practice!)

When Christians are gathered together and sing, Christ can be there in the midst of them, singing with them. At the same time he is receiving the song and offering it up to the Father. He is thus actually very closely related to the Being of music. Music serves the Christ by helping to unify the spiritual and the earthly in order that we come closer to spirit. The future of music is in our hands. We could give music back its archetypal task, so that it may continue to be a servant and vessel for the Christ.

*These opening thoughts come from a lecture given by Virginia Sease in 1997 'The Esotericism of Music and the Songs of the Camino Pilgrims'. It is reprinted in her book written with Manfred Schmidt Brabant entitled *Paths of the Christian Mysteries* and it well worth reading.

Veil Painting – a personal journey from Advent towards Christmas

Dorothy Senior

During the early 1990's, having not done any painting for very many years, I felt an urgent need to paint. At the time I wondered what the urgency was, and it was to take a few years for me to discover that there is inner strength to be gained through artistic endeavours, especially those which are introduced through the curriculum of a Steiner school, from which I benefited and which stood me in good stead for the challenges that were to be met in the course of time. Not only does a Steiner education prepare us for what challenges we may face as our destiny develops, but also, participating in the Sacraments of The Christian Community can bring sensitivity to coming events and circumstances in our lives. One can thereby develop a kind of premonition of something coming towards one, though what that is may take some time to become clear. And so it was that I experienced what I can only call a preparation and premonition over the course of several months of something coming towards me before a life threatening road accident involving Colin—my husband—in January 1994. The following months of a slow but good recovery for Colin, as well as support for me, came through the love and prayer of our family and friends around the world.

I began my painting with some wet on wet quick explorations of colour and I was quite overcome by the experience of this, and surprised at the result, wondering where this picture had come from. In the late 1990's I began to work with the veil technique I had not attempted since my schooldays.

For those unfamiliar with this technique it involves soaking the paper before stretching it onto a board and securing it. Once dry, the painting can commence. It is good to have in mind a theme for the painting. Very pale watercolour is mixed and applied with a wide, flat brush to paint a wash onto the paper. Each layer of paint must be allowed to dry completely before applying further washes. Patience is needed! As the painting develops and one begins to see the picture emerging through the veils, the depth of the colour washes can be deepened and a finer flat brush can be used to define some details.

Dorothy Senior is a member of The Christian Community in Edinburgh.

Participation in the Visual Arts course at Emerson College in 2003 included sculpture with clay every morning. Having been guided into the themes for this there was absolute silence as the

group of us worked our own ways into the given task. This way of working with a theme in silence and contemplation revealed to me how time spent in this way can not only be productive but can also be energising and fulfilling. So when I began to explore veil painting as an activity on my own at home during Advent 2005 it felt very similar. In December 2005 'Advent'—an exercise in blue—followed by 'Birth' during Christmas that year. A beautiful Christmas Rose in a pot inspired my Advent painting in 2006. A 'Poinsettia' in glorious colour brought on the urge to paint in December 2007. In 2008 I again felt the need to paint during Advent and my 'Nativity' painting emerged. It was this painting which suggested use for Christmas cards for the following year. For the next five years I used the morning light in the weeks of Advent to sit quietly and paint. (Good daylight during Advent is short and is best during the mornings. Painting in electric light is neither suitable nor ideal.)

In Advent 2014, life became quite busy as I became involved in planning and organising social activities for the residents in our retirement development in Edinburgh and I found no time at all to paint! It was then that I realised what I was missing in my preparation towards Christmas, and how important this process had become to me.

This year I have every intention of ensuring that the Advent mornings will be spent in quiet, meditative space with veil painting in preparation for Christmas. Deciding on the theme for my paintings takes some contemplation before beginning the painting. Perhaps it involves meditating on the Gospel records of the birth of Jesus, but my chosen theme may also come to mind through recent karmic events which link to a particular element of the Christmas story.

The commercialism that surrounds the lead up to Christmas can be completely detrimental to an inner and quiet preparation through Advent towards the birth of the Christ Child at Christmas. The hustle and bustle of frantic purchasing, and the loud music in retail outlets is not conducive to a quiet preparation through Advent towards Christmas.

In recent years as Colin and I have moved away from buying Christmas presents for family and friends, the activity of veil painting during Advent provides time and space to think about and appreciate those people who have touched and/or continue to touch our lives. A wealth of love comes about and is acknowledged in this process.

In the months that follow, the finished painting is copied and reduced in size to create our Christmas cards for the following festive season. As these are then written and posted or delivered, a wealth of thought and love goes out to those who have each in their way touched our lives. This then becomes and embraces Christmas.

Ita Bay

* 1 June 1935 Amsterdam

Ordination: 25 November 1973 by Rudolf Koehler in Edinburgh

† 6 July 2015 Überlingen

Ita was born on the rural outskirts of the big city of Amsterdam and started her schooling in a village school. When her parents learnt about the Waldorf School they put up with long journeys by bus, ferry and tram to make it possible for Ita to attend. In Class 9, Ita played Jeanne d' Arc in the class play and experienced what kneeling in prayer feels for the first time. Her upbringing had not been religious.

At the age of 16, she volunteered at the Camphill community of Newton Dee in Aberdeen, Scotland, where she met Taco Bay on the building site of the new chapel. A few years later they married. Taco was twenty-two and Ita was twenty years old. They took on a house with fourteen difficult boys as the youngest house parents in the community.

They both played the lyre for the Act of Consecration of Man, and one day Taco was asked whether he had considered becoming a priest of The Christian Community. In 1959 they arrived with two young children in Stuttgart and a very difficult time began for Ita. Taco had very little time for the family. Sheer economic survival meant a lot of hard work and all this in a strange and rather unsympathetic culture. Despite eventually being mother to five children, Ita did not let go of her wish to join the priesthood herself. After a number of years as the wife of a priest, she underwent a short training in Shalesbrook, Forest Row and was or-



dained in Edinburgh in 1973. She served the congregation there until Taco was called to be Lenker in the Netherlands in 1977. They lived in Zeist, and moved in the 80s to Stuttgart where the leadership of The Christian Community was based at the time. Ita was congregational priest there and was able to respond to many needs. She was gifted in many ways and

had a great connection to the young, the old and the dying. She had learnt book binding, created altar paintings and rod puppets and was very skilled at handwork and home economics—as was her husband—and she never hesitated to take on a task and get her hands dirty.

Ita could serve without losing her sense of herself. She was objective and unsentimental, an empathic listener and someone who prayed and carried many people inwardly and with practical help. The reality of Christ, the sacraments of The Christian Community and the insights of Anthroposophy had become her flesh and blood; her daily life embodied them, not as something to be carefully considered and possibly worked with, but as the utterly obvious and clear things to do.

When Taco's illness forced him to retire they moved to the Lehenhof

Ilse Wellershoff-Schuur is a priest of The Christian Community in Überlingen, Germany.

at the Lake of Constance from where they could see the beloved Swiss Alps. Taco and Ita were both world citizens and remained so in retirement, continuing to serve The Christian Community as their strength allowed. They still spent one year in New Zealand helping out and travelled to the Holy Land—a long-cherished heart's desire—where their course on the renewal of Christianity was greatly appreciated.

A few years ago Ita and Taco moved to their daughter Emily Nakani in Heili-

genberg, where Ita remained after Taco's death with foster daughter Wendy Hemstead, who had accompanied the family for over fifty years. Ita supported the priests in Überlingen and the Lake of Constance whenever possible, almost up to her own passing. She died unexpectedly shortly after her 80th birthday that was celebrated in style in the circle of her family, her five children and twenty grand- and great grandchildren. It seemed too soon, but her life's tasks were complete. ILSE WELLERSHOFF-SCHUUR

Reviews

Hermann Beckh and the Spirit-Word: Orientalist, Christian Priest, Independent Scholar

collected and translated for the first time, and with an Introduction by Alan Stott. Leominster: Anastasi Ltd, paperback, 204 pp.

Christopher Cooper

This slim book is conceived as an introductory volume to the upcoming English edition of the *Collected Works* of Professor Hermann Beckh (1875-1937), one of the founder priests of The Christian Community, and the first to cross the threshold. It might easily be seen as a miscellany. However, a more appropriate term would be 'a collection of sparkling gems'. There is a useful introduction, 'Hermann Beckh in the Twenty-First Century' by the translator, Alan Stott. The main text consists of Beckh on 'Steiner and the East', a contribution to a commemorative volume marking Rudolf Steiner's sixtieth birthday, with the author's lecture at the University of

leagues reveals something of the shining, luminous quality of this very great individuality. Also included is a sketch of his life by his biographer Gundhild Kačer-Bock, and a sadly incomplete list of works.

When Rudolf Steiner began to speak openly of spiritual matters he needed a large group of souls who, grasping his mighty impulse, could support and nurture his work after his death (1925). Beckh was one such leading figure. He encountered Steiner in Berlin in 1912, and became part of his first Esoteric School and never wavered in his loyalty to him.

There can have been few around Steiner who had such an amazing range of gifts. Beckh had an almost unbelievable ability to master fresh material and develop original thoughts in areas where he had to work quite alone. Already at five years old a powerful body-free experience in the Bavarian mountains convinced him that human beings live in a supersensible world before their birth on the earth. At sixteen he heard Wagner's *Parsifal* in Bayreuth (1891) which made a profound impression on him, opening up realms of musical experience which he was to deepen during the coming 45 years. Steiner himself said of these musical researches: 'Beckh ventures into provinces which I have not had an opportunity of investigating myself. And there is a great deal in what Beckh

Christopher Cooper is a member of the congregation in Buckfastleigh, Devon, England.

Berlin (1921)—still topical today—explaining why he was leaving to work for anthroposophy. After more by Beckh, including a fairytale for the very young, the long appendix by Beckh's col-

says about them.' There must have been few people about whom Steiner would have made such a remark.

After his brilliant school finals, Beckh earned a scholarship to study in Munich. He became a judge at the tender age of 25 (1899), but was soon to feel the discrepancy between the world of jurisprudence and the world of humanity. He had to pass sentence on a couple living in poverty with their young child; they had stolen some firewood. Beckh paid the fine himself, wanting to help rather than convict. Hanging up his gown, Beckh went off to study Sanskrit; by the age of 33 he was appointed Professor in Berlin. But far from being a dry, bookish scholar remote from ordinary realities, he led a rich meditative life as a personal pupil of Rudolf Steiner. Beckh's soul lived in great dimensions. The study of Oriental cultures from India, through Persia into Egypt and finally the world of the Hebrews enabled him to witness the immense preparation over thousands of years for the Incarnation of the Word in the Holy Land. Beckh's prodigious memory helped him master not only six modern languages but Tibetan, Sanskrit, Pali, Avestan, Syriac, Greek and Hebrew; he compiled the first Tibetan-German dictionary and translated various sacred texts..

One of the beauties of this book is the many short but memorable glimpses of his remarkable life by ten fellow founder-priests of The Christian Community. These personal memories have a life of their own, opening many windows into the soul and life-work of this outstanding individuality.

Beckh's first book as Professor of Oriental studies offered quite new perspectives into the life and teaching of Buddha. Beckh shows it proceeded from the reality of a meditative life rather than presenting a system of metaphysical truths. Beckh, however, did not join the stream of those who, despairing over the decline of the West, spiritually emigrated to the East. Unlike Annie Besant, who converted to Hinduism, and another theosophist, Leadbeater, who became a Buddhist, Beckh looked in the opposite direction, as the title of his 1925 book shows, *From Buddha To Christ*.

Beckh was not spared shattering events. When he was prompted by Rittelmeyer to explain to the Berlin University why he was leaving to work for anthroposophy, Beckh's lecture was boycotted by his colleagues. Not one attended. The audience consisted of a few students, a few anthroposophists and some casual listeners. To speak publicly for Rudolf Steiner at that time meant to be morally struck off the register of the intellectual society of Germany.

Reduced in circumstances, with a dependent mother and sister, Beckh responded to invitations to lecture on the renewal of culture, especially through his linguistic studies. Then, almost by chance, he heard of the plans to start a Movement for Religious Renewal. He there and then decided to join the new movement. In hindsight, the others regarded the founding as 'unthinkable without the Professor'.

Beckh was also present at the Christmas Foundation meeting of the Anthroposophical Society in 1923, and again at Rudolf Steiner's 'Last Address' of Michaelmas Eve, 1924. These events were, he says, the climax of his life; they show how close Beckh was to the life of his revered teacher.

Beckh worked for fifteen years researching and teaching at the seminary of The Christian Community until his death from the extremely painful cancer of the kidneys in 1937. His rich contributions, mainly to the monthly *Die Christengemeinschaft*, *Die Drei* and the weekly *Das Goetheanum*, are all translated into English, soon to be published well in time for the centenary of the Movement for Religious Renewal (2022).

Despite this busy work and the meetings, Beckh's was a lonely life. 'He seemed like a messenger from a different world order.' 'I learnt to love about him his real spiritual overabundance.' 'He repeatedly undertook, even at an advanced age, to climb mountains alone. His nearness to heaven of the high peaks drew him aloft.' 'He was a child of the heights.' 'He carried in his soul love for the word, love for the stars, and love for music.' 'He was like one of the ancient Rishis of India suddenly transported into a completely uncongenial civil-

sation.'—These are just a few of the cameos capturing the essence of Beckh's being, written by those remarkable founder-priests and colleagues.

The book contains other gems from Beckh's occasional writings: a charming fairy-story 'The Little Squirrel, the Moonlight Princess and the Little Rose', extracts of letters written while serving in World War I, a reprint of a sermon of 1932 aptly called 'Thirsting', along with the insights into pre-Christian cultures.

The translator and his team are doing heroic work in bringing almost the complete opus of Hermann Beckh into English. This labour of love and dedication is introducing many people in the English-speaking world to a spiritual giant, one of the most original and significant of Rudolf Steiner's interpreters. This modest book opens up a spiritual wealth with no sell-by date; it will prove to be an inspiration to all who read it.

***Festivals in the Southern Hemisphere
Insights into Cosmic and Seasonal Aspects of the Whole Earth***

Martin Samson

Floris Books, 2015

Review by Tom Ravetz

The Act of Consecration of Man introduces us to a world in which Christ is present in the processes of nature as well as in the human soul. It is possible to imagine that this quiet revolution in human experience of the sacramental life paved the way for a theological revolution of our time, namely the recovery of cosmic Christianity. In the fourth century, the Church decreed that God resided in a transcendent realm, beyond any possibility of human experience. Creation had happened *ex nihilo*, out of nothing, in an instant. The world was the place where God was not; only through the Church could human beings come into relationship with the Spirit. In the 380s, under Theodosius, sometimes called 'The Great', Christianity became the state re-

ligion of Rome and a programme of systematic cultural cleansing began, through which the temples and sacred groves, witnesses to an old experience of the spiritual world in nature, were destroyed. The daemon, the personal genius or angel, became the demon. This spelled the end of the original, cosmic Christianity.

It is supremely the epistles, the seasonal prayers that are read at the beginning and the end of the Act of Consecration, that lead us into the experience of nature as the place of divine revelation. In Advent we experience the bow of colour and the sun-chariot in the sky; at Christmas, we may experience a renewal of the light in the darkness of midnight; at Easter, we feel the earth's breath animated by Christ's breath; and our hearts expand with the paean of praise to the streaming, ripening life of the earth at St John's Tide to name only a few moments. In this way, we can follow the course of Christ through the course of the year.

How does this work in the southern hemisphere? Does the fact that, in some moments at least, this Christ-year seems to harmonise with the course of the seasons in the northern hemisphere mean that a truly cosmic Christian practice would celebrate the Christian festivals in harmony with the seasons of the southern hemisphere? A debate has raged about these matters over recent years, with passionate advocates on either side. Both sides have sought in the work of Rudolf Steiner pointers to what could be the right practice to adopt. Steiner's insights into the work of spiritual beings in the processes of nature and the course of the year can give us concrete hypotheses for our own researches. It is perhaps no coincidence that some of his most important lectures on the work of the archangels in the festivals of the year were held at the time that he gained access to the sphere from which the renewed liturgy of the movement for religious renewal flowed.

Martin Samson has written a work-book for those seeking to come to their own insights on this question, drawing on their own inner experiences, experiences in the renewed liturgy,

and first and foremost, in the work of Rudolf Steiner. He quotes extensively from Steiner's lectures with the intention of gathering together the material with which we would need to work to come to our own insights. In places he shows how unclear translations have led to confusion and distortion of Steiner's meaning. Martin makes no secret of his provisional conclusions, but these are clearly his own; they often brought as questions for further investigation, rather than judgments backed with the force of logic or the weight of many statements by Steiner.

Martin's book gave me many valuable insights and gave rise to very stimulating questions. He sets out the material clearly so that we can base our judgements on an overview of the factors involved. One overall impression grew stronger as I read the book. This relates to a description of mainstream Christian theology since the fourth century as abstract theism. If the reality of God is so remote from the world that we cannot describe it, then it is an abstraction. There is a certain emotional power in forcing the mind to think of God as that which is utterly other, infinitely greater, unchanging and without emotion. However, we cannot work with a God that we see in this way as a co-creator. Reading Martin's thoughts on the relationship between the Christ-year and the natural year, I realised that there is a danger of a kind of abstract cosmic theism. This simply states that Christ is at work in the processes of nature without bringing any detail that would make it real for us. Again, living with such a thought has a certain power, perhaps in this case the power of pathos. However, it cannot become the basis of a firmly-founded world view. Another impression grew out of this insight. The discussion of the right time to celebrate the festivals can become rather abstract. Martin indicates how imagining the earth as a whole leads us to find a task precisely in the different experiences of a festival in the northern and southern hemispheres when it is celebrated in simultaneously. What nature is unable to do, namely unite the summer and winter experience over the whole earth, we can. Then our experience complements and completes what

nature can do. Martin challenges us with this question:

If we create festivals merely out of what the earth is of herself—the natural laws that allow the summer and winter forces in the north and south to flow away from each other are we building a future earth? (p. 53)

In this thought, which Martin develops extensively, we can experience a way of fulfilling the task that is placed before us every time we receive communion, namely that we receive it in order that we may unite with the further development of the earth. This challenges those of us who celebrate the festivals in the northern hemisphere to become aware of their other aspect, which can become manifest more clearly in the southern hemisphere. Martin points out that this challenge is in some ways greater for those in the north:

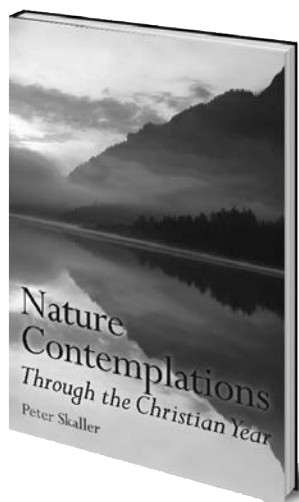
I think it is far more difficult to experience this in the northern regions of the earth as there the experience of natural season and spiritual festival fit together and tend to be so universal that it is difficult to experience the unconscious southern parts of the earth's will. In the south it is easier to become aware of the difference between us and the north as our experience of the natural seasons and the spiritual cycle of festivals is a feeling of discrepancy between the season and the state of the will. I think it is good to slow down and ponder whether that which is 'awake' in winter in the north (the thinking) is the same as that which is awake when it is winter in the south (the will). The same seasons in the north and the south are in fact quite different in the different regions. (p. 73)

The book ends with a call to its readers to conduct their own research into this important matter. I very much hope that it will find many readers in both hemispheres who take up this challenge. Particularly for those in the congregations of The Christian Community, the material contained in the chapter on the liturgy could fruitfully be expanded so that our active participation in creating the festivals would become ever more cosmic. This could be a wonderful new feature for Perspectives!

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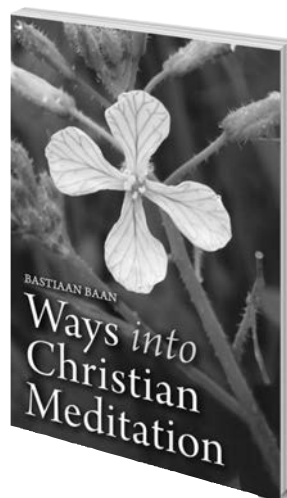
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Gospel Readings 2015–2016

Advent

Sunday, November 29.....Luke 21:25–36
Sunday, December 6.....Luke 21:25–36
Sunday, December 13.....Luke 21:25–36
Sunday, December 20.....Luke 21:25–36

Christmas

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

Epiphany

Wednesday, January 6.....Matthew 2:1–12
Sunday, January 10.....Matthew 2:1–12
Sunday, January 17.....Luke 2:41–52
Sunday, January 24.....John 2:1–11
Sunday, January 31.....Luke 13:10–17

Sunday, February 7.....Luke 18:18–30
Sunday, February 14.....Matthew 4:1–11
Sunday, February 21.....Matthew 17:1–13

Passiontide

Sunday, February 28.....Luke 11:14–36
Sunday, March 6.....John 6:1–15
Sunday, March 13.....John 8:1–12

Holy Week

Sunday, March 20.....Matthew 21:1–11
Thursday, March 24.....Luke 23:13–32
Friday, March 25.....John 19:1–15
Saturday, March 26.....John 19:16–42

Easter

Sunday, March 27.....Mark 16:1–8
Sunday, April 3.....John 20:19–31
Sunday, April 10.....John 10:1–16
Sunday, April 17.....John 15:1–27
Sunday, April 24.....John 16:1–33
Sunday, May 1.....John 14:1–31

Ascension

Thursday, May 5.....John 16:24–33
Sunday, May 8.....John 16:24–33

Whitsun

Sunday, May 15.....John 14:23–31
Wednesday, May 18.....Romans 8:1–17
Sunday, May 22.....John 3:1–21
Sunday, May 29.....John 4:1–24
Sunday, June 5.....Luke 16:19–31
Sunday, June 12.....1 John 4:7–21
Sunday, June 19.....Romans 8:18–27

St Johns Tide

Friday, June 24.....Mark 1
Sunday, June 26.....Mark 1
Sunday, July 3.....Matthew 3:1–12
Sunday, July 10.....John 1:19–28
Sunday, July 17.....Matthew 11:1–15

Sunday, July 24.....Mark 8:27–37
Sunday, July 31.....Matthew 7:1–14
Sunday, August 7.....Luke 15:11–32
Sunday, August 14.....Luke 9:1–17
Sunday, August 21.....Luke 18:35–43
Sunday, August 28.....Mark 7:31–37
Sunday, September 4.....Luke 10:1–20
Sunday, September 11.....Luke 17:5–24
Sunday, September 18.....Matthew 6:19–34
Sunday, September 25.....Luke 7:11–17

Michaelmas

Thursday, September 29...Matthew 22:1–14
Sunday, October 2.....Matthew 22:1–14
Sunday, October 9.....Ephesians 6
Sunday, October 16.....Revelation 12:1–12
Sunday, October 23.....Rev. 19:11–16

Sunday, October 30.....Revelation 1:10–20
Sunday, November 6.....Revelation 14:1–20
Sunday, November 13.....Revelation 15:1–8
Sunday, November 20...Revelation 21:1–27

There is a basic annual pattern for these readings within which there can be local variations.

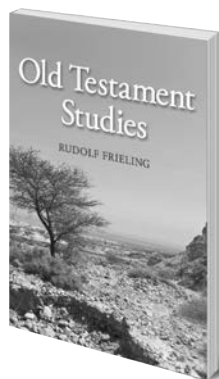
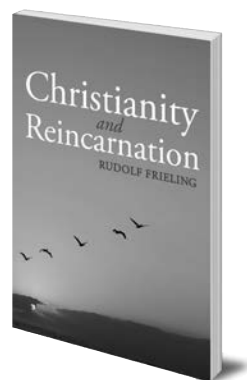
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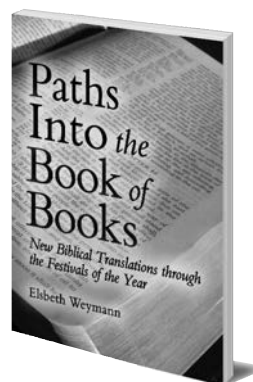
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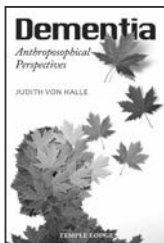
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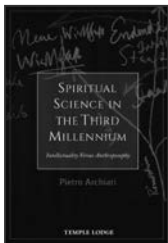
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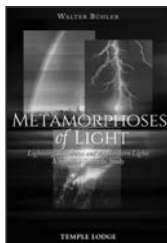
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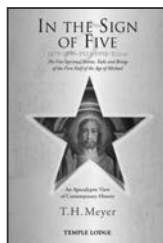
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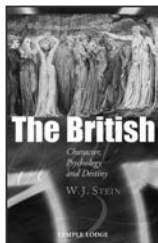
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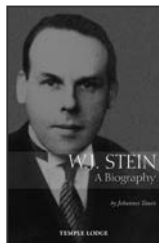
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