

The background of the cover is an abstract painting. The left side is dominated by broad, horizontal brushstrokes in various shades of red, from deep crimson to lighter, dusty rose. The right side is primarily a dark, muted green, also with visible brushwork, creating a textured, layered effect. The two colors meet in a vertical line down the center, with some darker, more complex brushstrokes visible at the intersection.

The Christian Community

Perspectives

March—May 2019

The Meaning of the Earth

Contents

The cosmic blue pearl	3
<i>Ioanna Panagiotopoulos</i>	
'Show your wound!'	5
Violence: one of the wounds of Christ as he reappears today?	
<i>Andreas Loos</i>	
The meaning of the earth – the meaning of suffering	10
<i>Deborah Ravetz</i>	
Mark 16 and the meaning of the earth	15
<i>Florian Burfeind</i>	
Finding meaning in our life on earth	18
<i>Lucila Machado</i>	
The meaning of the earth	22
<i>Angela Harper</i>	
The resurrection body: spiritual-physical Thoughts from a scientific perspective	26
<i>Michael Bracewell</i>	
Obituaries	32
A hundred years of The Christian Community II	38
Is Easter a cosmic festival?	42
<i>Ernst Terpstra</i>	
Reviews	48

Cover picture:

Alpine snow, Howard Hodgkin

Deadlines:

June–August 2019 issue: April 8, 2019
September–November 2019 issue: July 8, 2019

Perspectives is published quarterly by The Christian Community, a registered UK charity. It appears at the beginning of December, March, June & September.

Editor:

Tom Ravetz
11 Upper Close, Forest Row, RH18 5DS
Editorial assistant: Donna Simmons

Editorial Team:

Peter Howe, Deborah Ravetz
Kevin Street

Subscriptions & Advertisements:

Gabriele Kuhn, Tel: +44(1383)821204
subs@perspectives-magazine.co.uk

All correspondence: Perspectives,
21 Napier Road, Edinburgh, EH10 5AZ
editor@perspectives-magazine.co.uk

Lay-Up: Christoph Hänni

Subscriptions:

UK £15

Europe £18

Rest of World: £22

(not USA, Canada, NZ & Australia)

Please send cheque, payable to
Perspectives, to Subscription
Manager (address above), or send
for more information.

Subscribe with PayPal on our website:
<https://tinyurl.com/y9qqc9ru>

USA: US\$26

c/o The Christian Community,
906 Divisadero Street
San Francisco, CA 94115
(Cheques payable to: **The Christian
Community San Francisco**)

Canada: CAN\$30

c/o Dean Rachel,
5279 Oak Place
Delta BC V4K 1L8, Canada
email dnjrachel@yahoo.ca
(Cheques to: **Dean Rachel**)

Australia: Enquire for price at:
Matthew Bond
C/- 319 Auburn Road
Hawthorn East, Victoria 3123

New Zealand: Enquire for price at:
Elizabeth Heybrook, 293 Winterslow
Rd. Staveley RD1, Ashburton 7771
Phone: 03-3030780

Advertisements:

Send ads five weeks prior to
publication to the Editor at the
above address.

Quarter page £45,

Half page £75, Full page £140

ISSN: 0967 5485

Perspectives

Volume 89 No. 2
March–May 2019

Christ has risen unto you as the meaning of the earth!

For many people, the question of divine providence is a stumbling stone in thinking about religion. If God has had every detail of what will take place in mind since Creation, he must have planned all the evil and unearned suffering that human beings have experienced. Can we reconcile that with the picture of a loving God? Is there some overarching meaning that would justify all the suffering in the world?

Particularly since the Shoah, the criminal attempt to exterminate the Jewish population of Europe undertaken by the Nazi regime in Germany, theologians have struggled to articulate a vision of God that does not push away the terrible crimes committed there. Many people have given up the idea of there being any meaning for just this reason.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer described this situation in terms that are still shocking, over 70 years after he wrote them down. For him, the loss of the old

image of God who rewards the good and punishes the wicked, signified humanity's coming of age. In this new world, which he called 'godless,' the fantasy of the *deus ex machina*—the God of the machine who was wheeled on at the end of the Greek drama to put everything right—is of no comfort to human beings. In such a world, Bonhoeffer said, 'only the powerless God can help'. He gave the outlines of a theology of the cross—a view of the world from beyond the Crucifixion which turns many of our assumptions on their heads. With the idea of Christ's powerlessness comes the idea of his loss of control. Even for the angelic world, the outcome of the Crucifixion was unclear.

The meaning of the earth that is revealed on Easter Sunday is not the denial of the 'godless world' just as the resurrection is not the denial of death. It is meaning wrested from meaninglessness. Being witnesses to that in our own lives and in the lives of others is our calling as Christians.

TOM RAVETZ

The cosmic blue pearl

Ioanna Panagiotopoulos

Pearls do not lie on the seashore. If thou desirest one, thou must dive for it.

CHINESE PROVERB

To ancient consciousness, pearls were the tears of God.

And yet, these same pearls are also known to be the joyful tears of Venus, who guards the gate in the heavens to the sphere of the sun.

In the depths, clinging to rocks, the pearl oyster dwells. Through upheaval in the moving currents, unable to be seen by the naked eye, tiny flecks of foreign substance break through the opening of the outer shell and are caught in the inner folds of the shell's mantle. The pearl oyster responds to the threat by secreting an iridescent layer, called nacre. Again and again, with each intrusion, the layers enfold around, and the mysterious, shining, iridescent pearl emerges over time. We are told by science that the iridescence is due to this: the thickness of a single layer of nacre is close to the wavelength of visible light. The pearl oyster overcomes a threatening, hindering force by secreting something akin to the quality of light; the gift of the most rare and beauty-filled jewel of the sea emerges!

Everywhere we look, nature is a wisdom-filled revelation of divine sacrifice. The creative life-blood of the spirit pours unceasingly into creation. There is pain in sacrifice, as the reality of the pearl oyster reveals to us; pain that overcomes itself in the act of creation; of creating something entirely new and rare.

Our earth, seen from afar, appears like a jewel in the cosmic sea, a cosmic blue pearl, as Abhay Kumar calls it in his *Earth Anthem*. And yet it is here, in this place that shines so radiantly out of cosmic space, that we have to endure the greatest pain. It is here that we experience consciously the intrusion of a force that wishes to dismember consciousness itself. In the mythological memory of our human incarnation, our fall out of the cosmic ocean and our gradual plunge into earthly existence give rise to feelings of exile and isolation from the source out of which all life flows. And yet this home we

*Ioanna
Panagiotopoulos
is a priest of
The Christian
Community in
Canberra.*

call earth, the cosmic blue pearl, is the very place where we can cultivate our rare pearl, the jewel of humanity's soul. The encounter of hardship that insinuates itself into the mantle of our biographical shell awakens capacities in us that would not be crystallised if we did not endure the pain it causes us. Here, in earthly life, the cosmic source of life dies in us.

In Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Ferdinand mourns the loss of his father, the king. Awash on the shore after the tempest, Ariel sings:

*Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.*

Ariel's song points to the profound mystery of our sufferings on earth—the transformation of death into life, but not just the life that was, but new life: something rich and strange. Out of the bones of the father's corpse, life-filled coral comes to bloom. The earth-bound, lifeless eyes are changed into the shining, iridescent pearls that communicate a wisdom wrested from experience and sacrifice.

Our earth, the cosmic blue pearl, is the place where Christ chooses to dive into the depths of the earthly ocean, to spread gently the cosmic light in the darkness, to become the spirit within us, sifting the depths of earthly existence for the human wrought pearls of wisdom. Through our iridescence, his being can shine through the layers to the depths. Through his warmth, our wisdom, our longing for the fate of the dying earth is burned into a new substance: the fire of love.

Only this substance is powerful enough to seed the new earth: the substance of love. A strange alchemy lets this entirely new substance emerge in the mantle of our inner being, layer upon layer. Only on the earth can it appear: through our experience of earth, by which both we, and the spirit of the earth go further into the future.

Our earth shines with radiant meaning in the universe beneath the eternally watchful gaze of the circling Father God, who is given the substance for a new life through our shining, the shining of our wisdom-filled deeds of love.

Is it any wonder then, that Venus looks to the rising sun, weeping pearls of joy?

'Show your wound!'

**Violence: one of the wounds of Christ
as he reappears today?**

Andreas Loos

Piedad Bonnett, a Colombian poet, wrote a poem entitled 'The Scars'. Her son, a young painter, took his life at the age of 28. In the poem she does not try to bring him back to life, but tries to understand who he really was:

There is no scar, however brutal it may seem, that does not include beauty. There is a special story in it, some pain. But also, its end. The scars are, therefore, the seams of memory, an imperfect finish that heals us while it damages us. It is the expression that time invents so that we never forget the wounds.

In Cali, we as a congregation are confronted more and more with one of the wounds of Colombia: violence. To a certain extent, this has been fuelled by the 60 years of conflict with the guerrillas in Colombia. But it is a problem that has been around for much longer.

Even though the peace process in Colombia has now begun, there is still a very long way to go. Violence, one of mankind's self-inflicted wounds, can be experienced again and again through the various wars. But in Cali, with a population of three million, we experience violence amongst young people who kill each other with a shocking indifference, in part due to gang warfare. There is no respect for life. Of course, drug trafficking also plays an important role. Is this going to be the future for other cities and countries, unless we manage to find ways to come together? Violence as a wound is one of the signs of our time, which also affects us as a Christian Community, or will affect us more in the future, even if things are still quite peaceful, for example in the UK. Does the spiritual world allow such an increase in the suffering of mankind, caused of course by ourselves, so that we can achieve a next step in our development? We can ask ourselves whether this is one of the wounds of the returning Christ.

Every year, 10,000 patients are admitted to Cali University Hospital due to injuries, burns and trauma. 2,000 of them because of gunshots,

stab wounds and violent conflicts: that is six incidents per day. 70% of the people treated in hospital return again as a result of further violent conflicts. Confrontations between youth gangs are the major factor in these figures. 200 of those 2,000 patients die in hospital.

Violence is not yet among the top ten causes of death worldwide, but it is in South America. For example, cardiovascular diseases are the main cause of death in Germany. In Colombia one of the three main causes of death is the use of violence: murder! Is this one of the places of suffering where ‘Christ feels deserted’? (See below.) What does humanity want from us as a Christian Community? Cali is perhaps an extreme example, but where are those hot spots we are ready to go to, to take care of the wounds of society? Priests could work on projects too, like the ‘Emergency Teachers’ from Karlsruhe, who go to crisis areas to take care of people with traumas. This is not only a job for psychologists, doctors and social workers. At the hospital in Cali we started a project on one of the most unpopular wards—the Male Surgery Ward—to accompany some patients there.

Here are some examples of our experiences:

Serbio Julio, a terminally ill old man, said he didn’t really know what the soul was. The challenge was to give him a simple answer in a few sentences. What we said to him was that the soul is like a big mountain that radiates peace, trust, and is a bridge to eternity. If a seriously ill person in hospital declares that he does not know what the soul is, then we are challenged as human beings to try and help him.

Yeison, a 17-year-old, tells us after a knife attack that he wants to take revenge. Through our conversation, he comes to the realization that it would be better to leave it to God to decide what the consequences for the perpetrator will be. Something moves—light streams into the wound.

Jhon Maicol, 22 years old, cannot speak at the moment because of a gunshot wound in the neck area. He wrote briefly on a piece of paper: ‘I have sinned a great deal. What should I do?’ An attempt to give an answer was that we always have the possibility to compensate for our sins, even if the traces of our mistakes are written down in the book of life. He then wrote down: ‘I want to help the poor people on the streets.’ I took his mobile phone number and told him that once

*Andreas Loos
is a priest of
The Christian
Community in
Cali, Colombia.*

he was well again, we would invite him to accompany us on our visits to the homeless on the streets. Then we prayed the Lord's Prayer together.

Michel Eduardo, a 20-year-old with gunshot wounds to his intestines, had been in hospital for seven months and slowly managed to open up after four months. He told us that he has a girlfriend who is a drug addict and that he is the only one who can support her. But she hadn't contacted him for weeks and as he continues to fight for his life in the hospital he can't help her. Then he started to cry ... and I sat there, comforting him and not knowing what to say, or suggest.

Ricardo, a 17-year-old, who is suffering from an aggressive cancer of the bowel, which causes him great pain and which cannot be treated anymore, was drawing a picture of Christ on the cross and wrote: 'To-day will be a wonderful day, because God is with us'. Isn't that incredible? This young man had an unshakeable trust in God. While he sits in his sickbed, his face in pain and fighting for his life, he is knotting 'dream catchers' which his parents sell in the hospital in order to be able to buy the most basic goods for their son.

Maicol Andres, 20 years old, himself a youth gang leader, had injured a young man, his nephew, with six stab wounds, so seriously that he later died in hospital. The reason for the attack was a typical gang-related incident in the crime areas of Cali. When the otherwise very cool Maicol told me about his attack, he had tears in his eyes and said to me: 'I didn't want to do it... Forgive me.' I forgave him and left it open what God would say. We hugged and we cried together.

These experiences have brought us closer to an understanding of the words in the Act of Consecration of Man: 'and the might of man's adversary thou takest from me'. What does humanity want from us as a Christian Community? Where do we take care of the wounds of society?

'Help me when I don't deserve it, because it's when I need it most.' (Robert Louis Stevenson, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*) This young man, Maicol, showed us his wounds when he told us about the stabbing. He had experienced how evil works. But he also experienced the longing to become a true human being when he started to cry and ask for forgiveness.

Rudolf Steiner says: 'In the future, man will be able to see clearly what he has to accomplish in his life to strengthen the forces of good

on earth in the sense of the Manichaeian principle, the transformation of evil into good. Thus, he will become a collaborator of the [etheric] Christ in the process of transforming karma.'

Does anything of this future shine through in such experiences? Where can we begin to transform evil into good, in the sense of the Manichaeian principle? There is a strong will in many Colombians to oppose the annihilation where future light wants to shine.

In this, the biggest hospital in Cali, we are working in an interdisciplinary way with art therapists, social workers, psychologists, musicians, doctors, priests, emergency educators, and also with the young patients themselves in order to find a way out of the vicious circle of violence.

People from the community are also involved in this program. I am working with the Catholic Hospital Chaplain of the Camillian Order too, which specializes in hospital chaplaincy. The following thoughts can be found in the book of the Capuchin priest Camillus de Lellis:

*I cannot give you solutions to the problems of your life,
I also have no answer for the doubts or fears,
But I can listen to you and share it with you.
I cannot avoid your suffering if any pain breaks your heart,
But I can cry with you and help you collect the pieces to put them
back together again.
I can't change your past, not even your future;
But if you need me, I'll be by your side.*

It is all about allowing human closeness to happen, growing in our helplessness, not knowing what to do or advise, enduring the emptiness and not running away, simply trying to be human.

Revenge, anger, forgiveness but also faith, the meaning of life, pain, fear and not least death, are existential issues that ask for guidance and support. People in hospitals are often in crisis. They are at a crossroads and yet they are open to the spirit. These are places where we could be more present. There are hospitals for disadvantaged communities all over the world and it doesn't matter whether we come from the Catholic/Protestant Church or from The Christian Community. People are looking for someone to assist them in times of need, a true human being. We, from The Christian Community, could offer different thoughts on sin, forgiveness or death.

We pray and we celebrate the sacraments. That is our foundation. What then? Is it enough to only study at home, to give lectures, to offer religious lessons in Steiner schools and remain in our own world?

Do we really respond adequately to the needs of our time and its people? We have such wealth to offer but we run the risk of keeping it within our circles.

But how can we put it into action, enter into conversations with people, e.g. with the many foreigners who have come to Germany?

Gwendolyn Fischer, a colleague of mine, once said: 'I need to be present where I am helpless; not leave these places to their own devices. How can we be there in places where Christ seems to be alone?' This is the task of the twenty first century.

For the last six years this thought has accompanied me: when we go and talk to the homeless who squat under the bridge and who recycle our litter; when, together with members of the congregation or with the confirmands, we visit old, abandoned people who are marked by life and live in an old people's home run by Ana Beiba in order to tell them stories; when every year we take children from one of the most violent areas of the city to a children's camp with a team of really young helpers from the congregation; and when we try to reach out to young people in the hospital in order to walk with them to find a way out of a life of violence. These are the situations where we as human beings, as brothers and sisters, are challenged and where we are called to make our presence felt.

And yet, we are still learning to 'be powerless' in the face of cold-blooded, violent crimes in Cali, not knowing what to say or do. But we offer patients that we can accompany them, even if we are often helpless ourselves and searching for images that can bring some healing. Joseph Beuys said that 'the mysteries take place in the railway station.' Where does life really take place? In our Christian Communities? Our congregations could be places where actions begin. Christ visited the people on the fringes of society.

This is the rock on which the best fail, that they stop loving when they begin to know. Blessed is he who has gained knowledge and preserved love—who loves the world, in spite of itself.

ERNST BARON VON FEUCHTERSLEBEN

The meaning of the earth – the meaning of suffering

Deborah Ravetz

to be nobody-but-yourself—in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else—means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight.

e. e. cummings

The painter Vincent van Gogh said:

Christ alone has affirmed, as principal certainty ... the nothingness of death ... He lived serenely, as a greater artist than all other artists ... Working in living flesh. That is to say ... he made neither statues nor pictures nor books; he loudly proclaimed that he made living men immortals.

To make living human beings immortals means to enable them fully to manifest their unique potential. Miraculously, this work of Christ is a two-way process—it depends on our collaboration. When Christ tells his disciples that they are no longer servants but friends, he is asking them to be his fellow co-workers in their and our becoming. What does this co-working look like in practice?

Many years ago I heard that happiness cannot be planned. It is something that comes to us as a kind of grace. It is accompanied by certain characteristics. Time may slow down and become blissful, or longer times may seem to pass in a minute. In such special moments

Deborah Ravetz is a member of The Christian Community in Forest Row and part of the editorial team of Perspectives.

we are blessed by a perfect meeting, a day that just flows without effort, or a feeling of joy and confidence that one just didn't expect. If we approach festivals such as Christmas and birthdays or special times like holidays with the expectation of happiness, we can be left feeling that we have somehow failed, because we cannot arrange for the grace of happiness.

There is another kind of happiness which is not grace but which is connected with our work and our

efforts to become human. The American Declaration of Independence speaks of our inalienable right to happiness. What is meant by this is the joy that comes from perfect alignment between oneself and one's gifts and the needs of the world. We feel the joy of having manifested our potential and offering it for a need greater than oneself.

Some years ago I met someone who had dedicated her life to being happy. This meant that she tried to block out everything that could make her anxious or sad. Any difficulty in her own life or the lives of others was seen as failure, something she wished to avoid at all costs. Strangely this decision meant that she lived in a constant state of anxiety. Like everyone, my friend had worries about children, health issues, unexpected calamities and accidents and the constant struggle to get on with people at home and in her workplace. Sufferings of every kind afflicted her and could not be avoided.

My friend's attempt to achieve happiness by avoiding the reality of life and its uncertainties was not only futile: it had far reaching consequences. Because she was always controlling what we could and couldn't speak about, it became very difficult to spend time with her. She became increasingly lonely. When we own our vulnerabilities, we discover that we have them in common with others. When we are ashamed of our struggles, we can't reach out to others and offer them the gift of knowing us or our interest in knowing them. In pursuing her impossible stability my friend lost the intimacy of being human with other human beings.

Our lives pass in a flash. Avoiding our challenges means that when we reach the later part of our lives we are unprepared to meet the challenges of ageing, something that is 'not for the faint-hearted.' I now find myself surrounded by older people who are meeting these challenges with grace and courage. When I get to know them I discover this creativity has come about simply because they have seen their challenges as opportunities and not mere misfortunes.

Finding our true identity and our task demands a huge amount of work and commitment. Learning to live with our questions and to keep searching demands real endurance. Nevertheless, it is worth it because to find our identity and our part in the drama of life is a deeply fulfilling experience. As ageing reduces our physical competence, an

inner competence arises which makes it possible still to experience the sweetness of life and community.

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

JOHN 15:15

We cannot take part in our becoming without understanding what is meant in Christ's words about friendship. To be a friend is not a status that will remain once bestowed. It needs constantly to be worked for. Christ invites us to share a common goal as his friends. This involves the ability to learn from each other, to be able to face being wrong no matter how painful that is; it means giving up the need to be singled out as special. What matters is the goal, not our own need for recognition. All of this is only possible if we work on ourselves and our lives. Embracing our struggles and making meaning of them is what is asked of us on this journey. It is hard to practise living in this way. We fail and fail again. All that is asked is that we do not give up.

In the Easter prayers, we hear that Christ has arisen as the meaning of the earth. We could paraphrase this by saying: Christ has arisen as the meaning of our struggles and suffering. Each of us is free to decide whether we wish to respond to life in this way or not.

Practicing art is a living embodiment of this process. Regardless of our talent or of any outcome, the artistic process can help us to learn this way of living. Many artists describe their work as a relationship. We make the marks and the painting tells us where to go. We write the words and then see what is needed for them to become as powerful as possible. We need to act and respond. Often an artist has to be prepared to let go of lovely but glib surfaces or beautiful words because the work becomes more itself if they are culled and edited or lost and re-found. In order to find our painting or our writing, in order to find our artistic voice, it is also essential to let go of a need for fame and recognition. Thinking about acclaim, thinking about what will be popular or successful means losing the possibility of drilling down to the new reality waiting to be born. It has often been said that the difference between an amateur and a true artist is that true artists always turn up. They don't only appear when they feel like it. No matter how barren or listless, how

lacking in inspiration they may feel, they do their work. No matter how often they are rejected, they get up and have another go.

Van Gogh, whose words introduced this article, is a wonderful example of this. Reading his biography, it is hard to comprehend how he endured what happened to him in his personal life and on his creative journey. He was seen by his family as a failure and he was rejected by the church he tried to serve when he became a priest. When he decided to become an artist he had no idea how to draw. He had the humility to make countless bad drawings before he finally mastered his craft. Only after this did he allow himself to use colour. Still he met incomprehension when his choice of the poor and marginalised as the subject of his first great works led to his rejection by the Academy. When he finally moved to Arles and began painting the pictures for which we now love him, his companionship with his much needed friend Gauguin ended in terrible ignominy. He did not sell a single painting in his lifetime. The only person with whom he could talk about the things that really mattered to him was his brother Theo. He died unknown and unsung. Now his radiant images, his wonderful letters and his example of endurance are a world-renowned legacy.

I have been told that an artist only needs one comprehending gaze to bear a lifetime of rejection. It seems that if there is one person who sees you it is possible to walk the lonely path of finding yourself. It was the loving and encouraging gaze of his brother and friend that helped Van Gogh to endure and bring to birth his remarkable vision. Perhaps this fact can help us understand our relationship to Christ.

Christ is an artist offering us immortality; we are his co-workers. Perhaps we do not need to look for him in visions but in the true relationship of friend to friend. These things are easy to talk about. They are very difficult to practise. Becoming oneself and manifesting one's potential is a long game. Learning to be a real friend is a delicate task. We need to discern when to speak and when to leave be; when to wrestle and when to give up with those we love. To the superficial gaze, a friendship may struggle and flounder and seem to have long periods of barrenness because of the sensitive nature of our engagement. Suddenly, after years, people may come together again, when the one finally understands what the other had tried to share and which led to

estrangement. We may look at the life of an artist like Van Gogh and think that because he had no worldly success his life was a failure. We may look at the limited circle of his intimates and feel that his social life too was an expression of failure. I think however there is another picture. Like the disciples looking at each other across the table in the upper room, two people working on themselves are able to see, through real friendship, that above their head is a holy flame of significance reflected in the loving and accepting gaze of the other. In this dynamic lies an incredible possibility: that I may find myself and you may find yourself in the ever accessible communion of two friends seriously searching for what it means to be human. Christ has taken up residence in the human heart and he becomes visible and powerful when we take ourselves and those around us seriously enough to engage with the art of becoming human.

Learning about Russian Music Howard Hodgkin



Mark 16 and the meaning of the earth

Florian Burfeind

In a time when half the population in the UK say they are not religious and of those who say that they are, over 60% never or rarely attend religious services, the world seems to be asking what use religion really is for the individual and for society. After all, the world has continued, even with declining church membership. As a person under the age of 35 who grew up outside of the church I hear this question of ‘why religion?’ and more specifically, ‘why Christianity?’ reverberate through many conversations I have with friends and family, albeit mostly implicitly. In my work as a psychotherapist, conversations that touch on a religious dimension in the client’s life become explorations of destiny and meaning making. How can we experience the spiritual world at work in our lives, and can we sense the presence of a third person here in this room, in this conversation? In looking at our own religious biography, we can awaken to the questions that have accompanied and guided us in our lives and explore the relationship of our life experiences to the central event in Christianity, the resurrection.

The Easter reading in The Christian Community, the part of the Gospel that is read during the service on Easter Sunday, is Mark 16. Mark’s is the shortest gospel; it often feels as if he just wants to get on with it! His account of the resurrection does not contain many details; in fact, it does not dwell on the event itself for very long but quickly moves on to the effect it had on those who were connected to Jesus of Nazareth. The women who went to the tomb to anoint him expected to find the body of Jesus there; they were worried about the weight of the stone that sealed the entrance to the tomb. Their expectations were shattered when they found the stone rolled away. Their worry about being able to enter the tomb instantly made way to a greater worry of where the body of their beloved teacher might be. They were disappointed not to be standing in front of a sealed tomb, bearing their oil in vain; instead their hope to enter

the tomb was fulfilled, but they found someone different there. A figure clad in white garments told them Jesus had risen. Feeling overwhelmed by this paradoxical situation, they fled the scene.

In our own lives the new often enters in the form of a crisis, a turning point, where the trajectory of our life is unexpectedly crossed by an event that cuts through this horizontal trajectory with a vertical, I-awakening experience. When this comes as trauma, the awakening aspect may not appear right away but the event instead threatens to shatter the integrity of our personhood; much work is to be done then to move from this experience of the tomb to that of the resurrection. The message of the young man in the tomb that the Christ is 'going before you to Galilee,' (v7) the most fertile area of the Holy Land, can be a source of hope in the darkness of the tomb.

The overwhelming emptiness of the grave then gives way to the experience of the fullness of the resurrection. The risen Christ first appeared to Mary Magdalene, who had done much work to rid herself of all aspects of soul that stand in the way of a true connection with the divine. Yet this meeting with the Christ again threw her back on her own resources and led to an experience of loneliness, when none of the others who had known Jesus believed her. The second appearance of the Christ was to two individuals who were walking from Jerusalem into the surrounding countryside. We know from the Gospel of Luke that Christ appeared to them as they were talking to each other and trying to understand the events that had happened. How could the one who they knew to be the Messiah die, and in such a cruel way, and how could his body be gone? How could they make sense of the message of the women that the Christ had risen, and in particular the account of Mary of Magdala who claimed she had met the resurrected Christ? The answer to this conundrum came not as a logical explanation, but in the form of an experience, the presence of the risen Christ. Only after this experience did the travelers understand what the scriptures they were so familiar with had spoken of. The pain of the loss of their teacher opened the way for a healing process in which the experience of the Christ was integral and their making meaning was essential.

After appearing first to one, then to two followers, Christ then appeared to the eleven. This ever-widening circle speaks to the importance of community in the process of healing. We do not heal on our own, in

isolation, we heal and grow in community. We do not heal just for ourselves, but we heal and grow and learn for each other and for the world. The appearance to the eleven comes with a commission, namely to ‘go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation’ (v15). In communion with Christ we enter into a right relationship to our capacities of thinking, feeling and willing. The harmonization of our inner capacities helps us to work out of selflessness and love, and to wake up to the humanity of the other. We can even experience this right relationship to extend to the physical world around us and to the spirit that longs to reveal itself in all that lives.

When, after hearing the good news and offering up ourselves as we gather in front of the altar, we partake in the central act of Christianity, the transubstantiation and communion, we receive a great gift. We connect with the forces of the resurrection that come streaming from the altar and are asked to bring these forces into the rest of our lives—to live out of the reality of the resurrection.

In our time, with religion on the decline in public life, living out of the reality of the resurrection becomes an exercise of our will. The Archbishop of Canterbury describes religious communities as opportunities for practising commitment in a world where we are mostly addressed as consumers. Coming together as a community at a set time in the week is for most people no longer an unquestioned act, supported by the wider culture; rather, it is an individual commitment that we have to work hard to uphold. In a culture that primarily provides us with mechanistic explanations of life that only take the physical part of our existence into account, it can be a real deed to bring consciousness to the experience we may have of the transubstantiation. It means trusting that our faculties of feeling and living thinking can be touched by something that comes not from the world of matter. It means trusting that we can create within ourselves, as the late poet Mary Oliver wrote, ‘a doorway into thanks, and a silence in which another voice may speak.’

References:

British Social Attitudes 28

Justin Welby, ‘Religious Communities—A Work in Progress’ in: *Church Times*, 7 September 2018

*Florian Burfeind
is a
psychotherapist
and a member
of The Christian
Community in
Vancouver.*

Finding meaning in our life on earth

Lucila Machado

Today our world is fragmented. Since the beginning of the twentieth century the concept of ‘truth’ and ‘authority’ has been challenged and deconstructed over time to the point where we no longer have a standpoint on which to base our decisions and solve our dilemmas. Our experience and education, the moral and emotional codes of conduct that we have inherited, no longer support and guide us and are often inadequate to help us to cope with the events and crises that meet us with such force today.

The way medicine, psychotherapy and counselling treat people in distress reflects that fragmentation—there is a myriad of modalities of therapy, often contradictory, each claiming to be better equipped to help than others.

We have lost the certainties and support of the past but we have acquired in our rapidly changing postmodern world an increasing sense of individual freedom and self-determination. This comes as a positive evolutionary step and yet it brings a tendency to individualism and self-centredness which can undermine our sense of community and make us feel isolated and alone. To be born on earth in this evolutionary epoch demands that we enter life’s trials in full consciousness and presence and that we understand change and transformation. It demands of us a willingness to be awake.

Today, we need not seek outer guidance in spiritual initiation. Life itself presents us with trials and these may lead us to spiritual experiences. This is not easy as many people are disconnected from the spiritual world and have no understanding or willingness to see life’s trials as gateways, points of reference or opportunities. Others, who find themselves at the thresholds of supersensible experience without preparation, experience psychosis and serious mental health problems.

As we search for meaning and connection in a fragmented world, I believe that we might be moving on from the postmodernist habit of

deconstruction to a more hybrid, cross-fertilised territory of pluralism and collaboration between models, schools of thought and tendencies. In this creative and fertile ground I find that biography work and biographical counselling are suited not only to addressing the distress we encounter, but also to entering into a relationship with our creative core and destiny in full consciousness.

Biography work searches for meaning through studying the rhythms and patterns of one's life path. As we try to make meaning of our earthly experiences we might find our true self, integrate undigested experiences and access the 'thread' that throughout our lives connects us to our destiny. Once we are conscious of this 'thread' we might find ground to connect us to purpose and meaning. When we work with our biographies, the predominant experience that we may feel is that we can see, and that we are seen. To be truly seen is a blessing from which we may gain strength to listen to our deepest calling, the courage to search for what our hearts long for and ultimately the capacity to take responsibility for our life and destiny. The experience of being seen demands interest from those who see us. This is needed in our times to counteract the tendency to individualism and egotism.

In biography work we seek to cultivate an attention to patterns and rhythms and also to become aware of the archetype of growth and of development within the life phases, as these underlie transformation. Sam (not his real name) went to a weekend workshop in biography work where he worked with a circular biographical chart. This chart starts in the present with a life question that is important today and finds three biographical points which relate to this question. These four biographical points span from the present back to a childhood moment; they form the pattern of a cross, marking a crux moment. Observing the mirroring and connections among these four points led Sam to new realisations with regard to his life question.

In addition to the chart Sam worked with a water colour painting of his 'life's landscape'. He was instructed to look at his life with a certain emotional detachment as if he were watching someone else's life, and to paint it as a landscape. These two biographical exercises gave Sam insight into a question which he had been pondering for a while and in relation to which he felt very lost. The water colour painting helped

him to see a 'thread' going from his childhood to the present, a thread that he connected to his creative core. Having observed and understood patterns and connections in his biography, he now felt he could go forward and make some decisions about what direction to follow.

Biographical counselling came into being as a spiritually relevant response to the distress of the modern world. Aware that it is life itself which nowadays presents us with all sorts of trials, biographical counselling aims to strengthen our 'I' and to enable it to stay with the distressing experiences that these trials might bring, and consciously to learn to integrate and make meaning of these experiences. What is essential here is the therapeutic relationship, the deep interest and selfless listening that works to strengthen the 'I' in the other. As biographical counsellors we work with our clients' past stories to wake up a feeling for the present and enable them to access the future.

Many people come to counselling searching for meaning. They want to understand the strong experiences life presents to them and they want to learn how to cope with them. This was the case of Clara (not her real name) who could not cope anymore with overwhelming feelings of acute anxiety and panic. She experienced a sense of being trapped and isolated despite the fact that she had a good job and a supportive family. As we worked together she told me of another time in her life when she experienced such acute anxiety; this had given her a sense of emotional fragility. She felt unable to access her inner world without feeling estranged from her everyday life, her family, friends and work. In order to have harmony in her family life she felt that she had to disconnect from her inner world. Her feelings of loneliness and anxiety became too much to bear until she found herself unable to walk her dog in the woods anymore and finally became anxious about leaving the house at all. At this point she came to see me, because she felt that she could no longer function.

*Lucilla
Marchado is
a biographical
counsellor
living in
Edinburgh.*

Our work together at first was about learning to ground and strengthen her life forces. Once she felt calmer and more confident we worked together to strengthen her sense of self and integrate this into her everyday life. We started by learning how to bring a breathing quality to her daily rhythm and how to go

back to very basic concepts like nourishment, rhythm, sleep and movement to nourish her lower senses and strengthen her life forces. She learned exercises to ground herself. What followed was a sense of safety and calm which enabled her to connect to her own experiences and to start considering them important and valid. She decided to dedicate an hour in her mornings to connect to her body and her inward life and to listen to both.



Painting by Ninetta Sombart

Over time, the daily work of being attentive to her feelings and connecting to herself made the anxiety abate and she was more able to express her feelings and needs to her family. Over the year we worked together, Clara was gradually able to become more creative and open. She became very interested in nature around her and her daily walks with her dog became special times where she communed with nature and became an expert on her local trees and plants. Her honesty and truth to herself and the attention she paid to the patterns of her past helped her to learn to be grounded in the present and transformed the way she related to her husband and family, leading her to befriend her anxiety as a companion who showed her the path to a richer way of life.

Biography work and biographical counselling, searches for that which is healthy and whole in the human being: our creative core, which can support us and inform us. It is essential as we develop increasing spiritual awareness and gain strong life experiences that we are able to find a sure ground in ourselves. Standing on this ground, we can meet whatever life brings to us with a strength and certainty which cannot be diminished or eroded.

The meaning of the earth

Angela Harper

Could we see Earth as a training ground, a dimension of eternity that enables personal growth by inviting us to a multitude of experiences? We could be described as living in a series of spiritual homes (each filled with life events, and happening at different or the same times) as we travel through life from one house to another. We will find that these houses contain messages and questions, and offer spiritual tools which we may co-create, and receive from, the heavenly dimensions.

The first house we occupy is our birth and childhood. For some this house will look solid and embracing, for others it may appear damaged or demolished. Here are our early experiences, and situations, which could influence the rest of our lives. Do any troubling or happy events mean that we are already undertaking some vocation? Have we, perhaps, signed up for a career via a divine job advert?

We are looking for exceptional people to undertake the helping of others. For this role you will need experience that shows you know how to come alongside those who are, for example ill, depressed, homeless and abandoned. ... Everybody is called to this in some way; please let us know if you want to apply. Heaven is taking your enquiries now!

In our early lives, we may see rays of light from another dimension that we automatically sense is God, whilst, alongside, some dark clouds

Angela Harper studied Theology at Spurgeon's College in London and worked as a chaplain. After experiencing healing from a life-long health condition, she wrote Finding a Way Ahead! in which she explores the hypothesis that faith and self-awareness interact to offer spiritual and practical tools for the healing process.

of deception loom which need to be unpacked and understood. The rest of our lives may be based upon our beginnings.

The second dwelling feels like a small box, and the roof is a lid. We are living here when we feel psychologically trapped. We want to move on, to be freer and to honour the lives we need to live, but our minds are constrained with the same circular thoughts from

the past. This house forces us to ask questions: What has really happened? Are we who people say we are? Have we adopted an identity that doesn't fit? Have we lost ownership of our own lives in trying to meet the expectations of others? In seeking to listen within ourselves we find a psychological freedom away from others' expectations or wants or needs of us. If we listen to our 'inner sat nav' we can reclaim our identities as the people we really are. When we finally break free and feel confident of ourselves and our decisions, we will find the lid opens to a new life and a new joy.

Dear Jesus, help me to listen to the feelings within me so that I can live both freely and safely. Help me to listen to both warning feelings, and safe feelings, so that I know which situations and people are right for my life, so that I don't invite distress.

The third house is constructed as a puzzle. This is a house of illness and we wonder why it has happened. We might need to find a diagnosis and this could be hard to gain, and take much persistence to find. We desperately want to know what's wrong so we can learn how to manage it, yet knowing what is wrong is scary. We wonder why God allows so much suffering in ourselves and others, but all we can do is to pray and learn how to manage our health.

Often there is a life-cycle of an illness, sometimes it can be overcome, by living and managing the health problem with medication, and trying to do the best you can ... Have you asked your illness why it is there? You may be surprised at the reply; when we listen we may understand.

While we live in this house we ask it questions. Is the illness teaching us something? What have we learnt through it? As we think, we attempt to solve the puzzle, but every time we do this, both our perceptions and the puzzle change. Despite this, we realise we have gained new abilities in coping with an illness.

Sometimes we will encounter spiritual homelessness inside us when we are bereft. This is a habitation that does not offer any shelter, and we are left wandering, looking for a home somewhere. We yearn to find a safe place within us as a home, but can't, because here lie hurt, loss, emptiness, and wrestling with abandonment through losing loved ones. This is the habitation of lost hopes. When we pray, everything seems so dark and distant. Is God still there?

Today though, a clear picture from you emerged in my mind, and you thanked me for going through all those unbearable circumstances because they helped shape my being and my vocation. You then promised that you will put an end to them, and you held out a box for me to put those traumas in, which you then assured me you will seal and put away deep within you, where those memories cannot harm me again. I will then, keep putting all that has distressed me in your box, until I feel emptied and relieved of them. Those memories may remain so I can learn from them, but you will no longer allow their sting to hurt me.

The last house is of a mysterious and unknown architecture created in a different time from another dimension. Inside this house, the walls glint; they look like many facets of cut glass. We find that we are standing in a jewel. This house offers transformation and safety, where we learn to release un-forgiveness, and anything that has destroyed, by expelling what has hurt and refusing re-entry.

It's sometimes really hard to forgive anyone who has purposely hurt you—but most of us offend people without knowing. (How horrified we would be if we realised we had unknowingly hurt someone).

We might still be suffering from what we have encountered in our lives but we start to feel comforted here. As we look out of this house, we see a prospect beyond ourselves, which invites us to experience a new dimension.

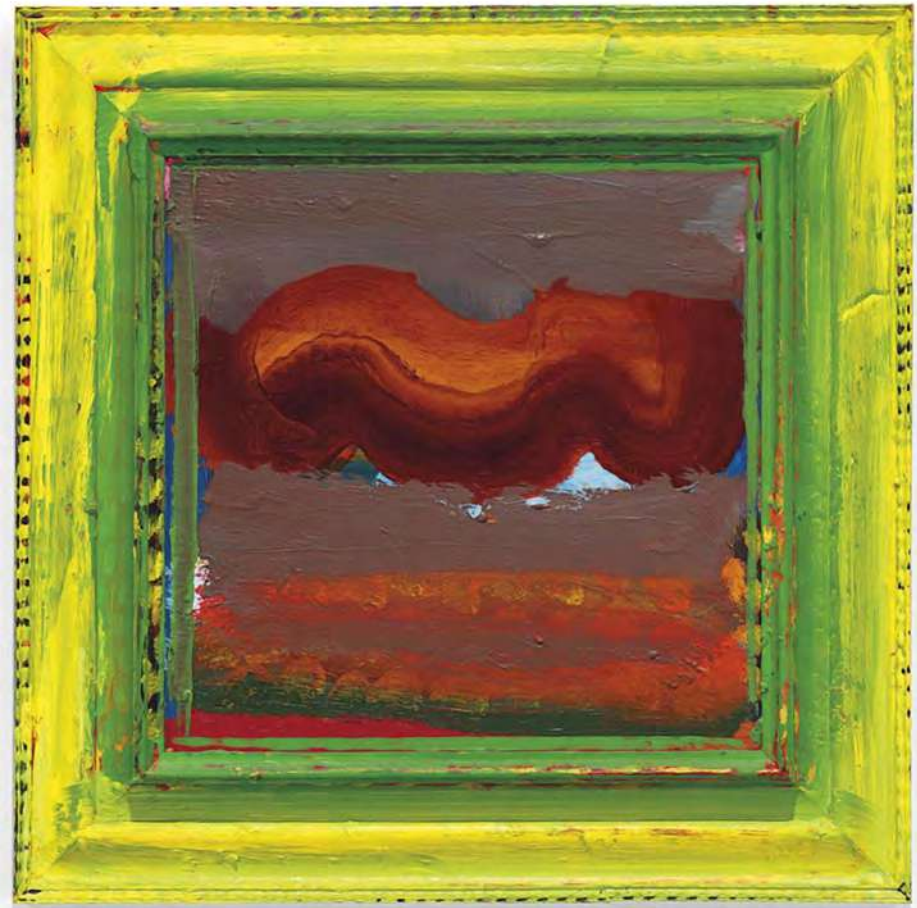
Imagine arriving at a new destination. We have packed the luggage we want; we feel shiny and clean inside, and when we get there, we embrace the new view. The sun may be shining outside the window, and there may be a wonderful view of a beach with the waves sparkling in the sun. You may not like sitting in the sun, but it's there to warm you, and the view somehow reaches inside to relax you. So it is, when we move on, overcome, and start afresh. We may not actually go on holiday, but when we start to live anew our view of our own circumstances starts to get better. The same surroundings, but a new outlook!

This invitation helps us to realise that in letting go, we can repair.

God has many other mansions for us to experience on the earth and in other dimensions. In questioning the purpose of every house, we gain invitations to grow beyond ourselves and become new creations. We learn what to let go of, and what to keep, while our core essence of

self remains. Without our experiences encountered on the earth how could we ever know ourselves? The knowledge and skills that we gain form the foundations of our eternal selves.

Alpine snow Howard Hodgkin



The resurrection body: spiritual-physical

Thoughts from a scientific perspective

Michael Bracewell

The Resurrection Appearances

In the period during and after the first Easter Day, Christ Jesus made many appearances both to individuals and to the company of the apostles as a whole.¹ These appearances have a striking similarity to certain phenomena discovered by science in the twentieth century, which concern the effects of quantum physics as developed theoretically and experienced experimentally in the minute world of atoms and molecules. It is as though these phenomena could now manifest in some way on the larger scale of everyday life. But how could this come about? Can we attempt to answer this question?

The gospel accounts show that the appearances follow a development process of increasing substantiality or densification. At the first appearance to Mary Magdalene in the garden she is told not to touch him. She seems to perceive the shape as somehow indistinct and she does not even recognise him until he speaks, thinking him to be the gardener.² Later that evening, however, the disciples are able to recognise him distinctly enough to see the marks of the crucifixion wounds.³ One week later Thomas is invited actually to touch him as an apparently solid body.⁴

*Michael Bracewell
is a retired soil
research scientist
and member of
The Christian
Community in
Aberdeen.*

On the latter two occasions the disciples have barred themselves in the upper room for fear of attack by the authorities³. Seemingly, however, he can pass through the locked doors, a distinct parallel with quantum phenomena which can 'leak' or 'tunnel' through barriers.⁵ And yet the physicality of his body has the wound marks, and he is said to ask for food and to eat some fish.⁶ Whilst possess-

ing something of the nature of the quantum world, this resurrection body can seemingly take on material substance; it becomes not just a physical but a material entity.

During the first Easter Day he seems able to appear to several people in different locations at about the same time, again similar to the quantum property of delocalisation where an entity can manifest a simultaneous presence in space and time. There are appearances to Mary Magdalene², the women,⁷ Peter,⁸ two disciples at Emmaus,⁹ which is many miles from Jerusalem,¹⁰ and to the eleven in the upper room.¹¹ Later John speaks of a third appearance to the disciples by the lakeside when he invites them to a meal of bread and fish.¹² This is stated to be by the Lake of Tiberias, i.e. Galilee, some fifty miles from Jerusalem, but this could have been at some later time.

The nature of the resurrection body of Christ has always been a mystery. It does not behave like a normal body but is yet in some way an entity which we can call physical, which can take on materiality. These phenomena strikingly resemble those of quantum physics, which usually only manifest in the size realm of atoms and molecules. This confinement to the minute scale is because one of the fundamental constants of nature known as Planck's Constant (usual symbol ' \hbar ') is very small.¹³ Physicist George Gamow described in imagination a world in which \hbar would be large enough for quantum effects to dominate at the everyday level and wrote an amusing tale based upon it.¹⁴ Rather than tinker in this way with the value of \hbar , we might imagine other ways in which quantum behaviour could manifest at our level. But first we must briefly summarise the effects of quantum physics.

Quantum Behaviour

During the twentieth century our ideas on the nature of physical substance underwent an extremely radical change. It would be truer to say, however, that the old background of ideas had to be completely discarded in the face of physical evidence, whereas their new replacements, trying to explain what was now coming to light, were lacking or at best unconvincing. This is unfortunately still the case. It is not that quantum physics, which was responsible for these changes, has not been eminently successful; on the contrary it has been described

as perhaps the most successful scientific theory ever produced and has made predictions which have been fulfilled with truly astounding accuracy. Moreover it has produced many of the practical developments which we now take for granted. Just a few examples are: our phones, TV, computers, lasers, fibre optics, the GPS system, medical MRI scanners, LEDs in light bulbs and much more. It also stands behind many natural processes such as protein synthesis and structure and the photosynthesis in green plants by which they absorb sunlight and produce sugars.

This success of quantum physics rests largely on predictions made from the basis of its mathematical language, even though these are frequently counter-intuitive to our everyday way of thinking and experiencing the world. The problem lies with the interpretation of this mathematical basis which, when applied, is found to hold demonstrably well at the atomic and molecular scale. There it is found that a particle can behave like a wave, can be in more than one place at a time, can 'leak' or 'tunnel' through ostensibly impenetrable barriers and can be in communication with a twin 'entangled' particle over vast distances. All of these effects have been confirmed incontrovertibly by often highly ingenious experiments. Matter, as understood in the nineteenth century, simply could not behave like this, nor does it seem to do so in our familiar everyday world.

So what are the essentials of the quantum picture of matter? It turns out that there are two aspects which are essentially interconnected by a third. The first aspect indicates that with every particle, indeed every physical entity, there is an associated wave-like nature in form and behaviour. Wave form and motion of this kind in nature are familiar to us through phenomena such as the ripples and swells on water and in sound and light waves. This wave aspect has a quantified descriptor called a wave function, usually given the symbol of the Greek letter psi (ψ). It obeys the mathematics of a generalised wave in space and time, though confined within the limits set in each particular case by the constraints of physical nature¹⁹. The second aspect is the mineral/material. It is experienced experimentally as the behaviour of discrete particulate matter, whereas the wave nature manifests experimentally as wave-associated phenomena. The nature of the experiment deter-

mines which of these two different behaviours prevails. This dual wave/particle nature has proved a continuing enigma in physics.¹⁵

The connection between the wave nature and the mineral/material is through a third aspect which, for convenience, let us call ‘proto-substantial’, a development, or even ‘densification’ of the wave nature, from which it is derived.¹⁶ Though this can be clearly defined mathematically it is difficult to interpret meaningfully even though it is pivotal to all the great advances of twentieth century physics and chemistry. The most frequently quoted interpretation of this enigma is the original attempt, called the Copenhagen Interpretation after the school of Niels Bohr.¹⁷ In this the derived proto-substantial function, with its cloud-like spatial form, predicts the statistical probability of finding a particle at that point in space. The statistical nature of this approach was really an admission of ignorance about the actual connection, but meantime one could work with it effectively and produce results of such astonishing predictive accuracy and usefulness. So physicists generally had to be content with a highly effective procedure which they did not need to understand (known by the epithet ‘Shut up and just calculate’). Other interpretations such as that of David Bohm consider that there is a level of ‘hidden variables’ beneath the quantum world, as yet unknown, which could form the necessary connections¹⁸ For this and further interpretations see *The Ghost in the Atom*.¹⁵

Without the strict mathematics it is difficult to visualise or be conscious of the interconnections and mutual dependencies of the above three aspects. The mineral/material level imposes restrictions on the wave nature and affects the form which the latter is allowed to take.¹⁹ An example of this is the form of the atom and its resulting chemistry. On the other hand the wave nature can act like a guide for the material particles, as in the various versions of the well-known double-slit experiment.^{15,18} Matter is not what we thought it was; it has this evanescent, radiant, wavelike dimension.

The Nature of Substance

In a mineral mass of the order of kilograms, the material nature dominates and such an object will obey the conventional Newtonian laws of mechanics. If we could construct a wave function for the whole object

it would be, as it were, in thrall to the material nature. If we suppose, however, that the wave nature could in some way be enhanced, for example if the object is a living body where the life process could play into this wave nature, such a body would then be able to metabolise substance like a plant or even move at will as an animal.

Now imagine that the wave nature, corresponding to a total wave function of the body, becomes enhanced much more powerfully still, and is able to control the lower aspects totally. It has, as it were, become independent and powerful. Through its cloud of proto-substance it can now order the material nature by quantum processes and bring about passage through barriers, delocalised appearances and connections at a distance. What is suggested here is that the life processes of the resurrection brought about by Christ could produce this necessary enhancement. This is only a first, tentative idea and others may suggest alternative ways in which quantum effects might manifest. The idea suggested itself to me following some recent considerations of the several words used for the body by the ancient Greeks and adopted in the New Testament.

Soma and Sarx

These considerations indicate that physical substance has a primary wave aspect which is distinct from its material aspect, and that the two are related through a third which we named the 'proto-substance', derived from the primary wave. Through two recent lecture talks and an extended essay it came to my attention that the Greek language has two words for the human body, *soma* and *sarx*.²¹ Whereas the *soma* represents a kind of idealised spiritual or archetypal body with which all are endowed, the *sarx*, usually translated as 'the flesh', has a more derogatory connotation and is more steeped in contact with the material nature. It is a sort of 'fallen' human body infected by matter.

It is striking, therefore, to think of the *soma* element as the idealised wave nature, represented by the wave function. The connecting function, called above the 'proto-substance' (derived from the wave function), would then correspond to the *sarx* element as it is the part involved with the mineral matter. Interestingly there is a third Greek body word, *kreas*, which could even represent the mineral nature itself.

In the resurrection body it is clear therefore that Christ can order the sarx body through the developed and enhanced soma body, and thereby the mineral nature itself. In this connection Saint Paul in a famous passage speaks of the development of the soma, so that the *soma physikon* with which all are born, becomes a *soma pneumatikon*; that is, a physical soma develops into a spiritual soma.²² This would correspond with the enhancement mentioned above, working in the resurrection body of the Christ, and representing the goal of our human spiritual journey.

The quantum nature of this connection with the physical body overcomes the dualistic nature of the physical against the spiritual. It leads to an integrated picture from the heavenly heights down ultimately even to the atom itself, a picture we can only call spiritual-physical. There are other ramifications besides the incarnation and resurrection, such as the nature of prayer and of the eucharist but these need further thought and development. The theological implications are indicated in the above essay to which I am deeply indebted²¹.

- 1 This period is given as forty days up to the time he finally left their sight at the phenomenon of the Ascension, Acts 1:3.
- 2 John 20:11–18, also Mark 16:9–11
- 3 John 20:19–23
- 4 John 20:26–29
- 5 The Greek verb used is *kleio*, related to *kleis*, a key
- 6 Luke 24:39–43
- 7 Matt 28:9
- 8 Luke 24:34
- 9 Luke 24:13–35, also Mark 16:12–13
- 10 Various 11 to 30 km according to different authorities
- 11 Mark 16:14, Luke 24:36–43, John 20:19–23
- 12 John 21:1–14
- 13 Planck's Constant $h = 6.63 \times 10^{-34}$ joule-seconds
- 14 George Gamow, 'Mr. Tompkins Explores the Atom', later republished with the other Mr. Tompkins stories in *Mr. Tompkins in Paperback*, Cambridge Univ. Press 2012
- 15 These fundamental quantum experiments, such as the photoelectric effect and the double-slit experiments, are well described in many popular accounts. A useful one is *The Ghost in the Atom: A Discussion of the Mysteries of Quantum Physics* ed. P.C.W. Davies and J.R. Brown, Cambridge Univ. Press 1993
- 16 It is the square of the wave function ψ^2 . In cases where ψ has a mathematically imaginary part it is $\psi\psi^*$ where ψ^* is the conjugate complex of ψ .
- 17 N. Bohr, 'The Quantum Postulate and the Recent Development of Atomic Theory', *Nature*, 121, (1928) 580–590 and doi: 10.1038/121580a0
- 18 D. Bohm worked with the idea of a universal 'implicate' order, which unfolds to produce the 'explicate' order of material entities which we experience—even space and time themselves. His chief book (1980) is *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, now reprinted 2002 by Routledge Classics.
- 19 Mathematical boundary conditions
- 20 Cf. Genesis 1:2
- 21 Revd. Luke Barr, 'Going to the Father' (unpublished). The essay has profound theological indications which cannot, however, be gone into here.
- 22 1 Cor. 15:44

Thammo von Freeden

September 3, 1934–November 18, 2018



*To wonder at beauty,
Stand guard over truth,
Look up to the noble,
Resolve on the good;
This leads us truly
To purpose in living,
To right in our doing...*

Many will recognise this verse. It encapsulates what one hopes will fill the souls of our children. It is part of a verse which Thammo would have been familiar with from his time in Waldorf school and it speaks of the ideals which lived strongly in him throughout his life.

Thammo Folkert Ernst von Freeden was born on September 3, 1934 in Bremen.

He grew up as the second of three brothers (an older brother who had died, so he was the third of four brothers). There is also a younger sister—born when he was nine years old.

His father was a teacher and he and his brothers had a happy, idyllic childhood. He was a choleric child with frequent temper tantrums. It seems that from an early age he was drawn to farming and it was taken for granted by him and the family that that was what he would do with his life.

His mother had a strong connection to The Christian Community and the festival celebrations there were an important part of his childhood memories.

He started school when he was seven but did not enjoy it and often wished that it would be destroyed in one of the air-raids. It was a shattering experience for him when one morning he arrived at the school and it was just a heap of rubble. Since that time, he wrote in his notes, he became more careful of his wishes.

The war which had started in 1939, when he was six years old, was not much talked about in front of the children. But the reality of the war was brought home to him when the family home was destroyed by an incendiary bomb. This was in 1942—

he was eight years old and for him this spelt the end of his childhood.

In the first few weeks after this happened the brothers were split up staying with various friends and relatives. It goes without saying that this must have been a traumatic time for all of them.

There followed a difficult and chaotic period; the family were sometimes split up for months at a time; his little sister was born; his mother was for a time quite seriously ill. Like most of the children of Europe they had an unsettled life until 1946 when his father returned from prisoner of war camp and the family were able to move back to Bremen.

There Thammo attended the Ottersberg Waldorf school until he finished his schooling in 1952.

After completing a three year training in biodynamic agriculture Thammo moved to Aberdeen in Scotland (1955). There he took part in the Curative Education Seminar. From that time his life and work was to be in various Camphill centres: Newton Dee for the first three years where he met and married Margarete—then the Hatch, the Grange, Botton, Newton Dee again, Oaklands Park. The family moved wherever they were needed.

During these years the family expanded: Nicholas, who came with Margarete, was joined by Arend, the twins Andreas and Brigitte. (Andreas tragically died in an accident when he was four years old in Botton). Martin was born in 1967. Jessica was also a special part of the family. Family life in a Camphill household could be quite chaotic, lively, very busy, and unpredictable which cannot have been easy

for Thammo who was very organised and proper.

In 1979 Thammo and family moved to Oaklands Park. These were critical years in Thammo Margarete's lives—during their time here Margarete's Parkinson's Disease was diagnosed.

After twenty-five years as a farmer—in 1980—Thammo began his training for the priesthood. He was ordained in 1982. He was sent to Grange Oaklands (his priestly duties also included regular visits to Coleg Elidyr which ended in 1996). During this time the community built a chapel in Oaklands Park.

The last few years in Oaklands Park were not easy ones for Thammo—there were difficulties in his relationship with the community, Margarete's health deteriorated, and she needed more care. Thammo was overburdened and he became ill and had to cut back on some of his priestly work.

In 2001 Thammo and Margarete were warmly invited by Camphill Houses Stourbridge to come and be part of their community. After 19 years working as a priest, Thammo retired. It was not an easy step for him, but it was a necessary one and something of a relief as his priestly responsibilities and caring for Margarete had proved a great strain. Although retired during his time in Stourbridge, he was still able to support the priests there.

In 2004 when Margarete's condition deteriorated further she moved to Thomas Weihs house in Botton, which was able to give her the care she needed. Thammo followed shortly afterwards.

During his time in Botton, Thammo offered as much support as he could to Thomas Weihs House, helping

with the care that Margarete needed. He also helped the house community he lived in and the then resident priest in Botton. His help and support were greatly appreciated.

On November 7, 2006 Margarete died. They had been married 49 years.

After Margarete's death Thammo retired to Newton Dee.

In the nine years that he was there, Thammo was a much appreciated member of the community. He spent a lot of his time quietly helping and supporting the community in many ways that they had never expected. In his quiet, peaceful, self-effacing manner, he supported villagers and co-workers alike, visiting them and having helpful conversations. He was a quiet support to many people—he often did not realise how helpful he was to those that he engaged with.

Thammo continued in these last years to be very aware of the environment and did all he could to help maintain the gardens, estate and invisible corners of Newton Dee. He never had a 'job' in Newton Dee as he was officially retired as far as they were concerned—but he was always busy, mostly helping others in some way.

Although no longer working officially as a priest, he was always busy in his pastoral role, regularly visiting old and new friends in the nursing home at Simeon Care for the Elderly, which is close to Newton Dee.

He was greatly appreciated in Newton Dee, both in its formative years as an adult community but also in the last nine years that he spent there. In his last years he was able to show that retired co-workers are not a burden on the community but

a great asset that can help the community into the future.

In summer 2017 Thammo accepted Arend and Nicola's invitation to come and live with them and moved down south to their home in Highworth, near Swindon. Here, as his health deteriorated, he was lovingly cared for by them, supported towards the end by Martin as well. He died, as he wished, at home quite peacefully on Sunday November 18. In the last weeks he sorted out his books and papers and made his funeral wishes known.

Thammo—in his younger days—was well known as the choleric farmer, a perfectionist with a short temper. He had high expectations of himself and of others—which of course can be difficult for those one lives and works with. Absolutely dedicated to his work and to the ideals of Camphill, he could be quite rigid in his thinking.

Those of us who knew Thammo in his later years experienced a more gentle side of him. He still had his own ideals and principles and often struggled with the fact that others thought differently—this could be painful for him.

In the last years Thammo had changed; he mellowed. Life itself had helped bring about this change in him: years spent faithfully and lovingly caring for Margarete; realising that things can't be how you expect them or want them to be anymore. But Thammo said of himself that he had been very choleric. It was something he was very aware of and had also consciously worked on.

The lion had become a lamb.

REV. CARMEL IVESON, STROUD

Ninetta Sombart

May 2, 1925–January 24, 2019



Ninetta Sombart made a great contribution to the renewal of Christian art: she started art on a new path that made the deep mysteries of the turning point of time, of Christ's death and resurrection visible. This is exemplified in her picture of the ascension. For weeks and months she searched for a way of painting the words from the Creed of The Christian Community: 'Since that time he is the Lord of the heavenly forces on earth'. This event has always been experienced as the departure of the risen one from the earth; Sombart now painted his coming, his presence and connection with the earth. No one had painted the ascension like this before.

This also applies to her portrayals of the passion of Christ, of the risen one and of many events from the Bible. More than works of art,

they portray archetypes that address people in their innermost being, bringing them into contact with the spiritual stream that leads to the central event of world history, the mystery of Golgotha.

Ever and again one could marvel at the objective relationship she had to her pictures. 'I did not paint them, they were painted through me.' This is why she never signed them. And you could marvel too at how she simply painted over beautiful pictures—'the beauty was the problem, it has to be true above all else.' She was an exemplary servant of the proclamation of Christ out of the riches of anthroposophy and out of the consciousness of the greatest event of our time that begins in the twentieth century, the return of Christ in the etheric realm.

Ninetta Sombart was born on May 2, 1925 in Berlin. Her father, Werner Sombart, a privy councillor, was also a professor of economics and sociology. He had four daughters by his first wife, who had already grown up when she died in 1920. He married Corinna Leon two years later. She came from Romania, where her father, who was also a professor, had founded a scientific university.

When Ninetta was born, he was already 62 years old. She grew up with her brother Nikolaus, who was two years older, in an upper middle-class, culturally and intellectually rich household. The icons in her mother's room, in front of which a candle always burned, the visits with her to the Russian Orthodox Church

with the wonderful songs in the language which was strange to her and the stories of the gospels are the basic religious moods that inspired her pictures, supplemented by the lessons in preparation for confirmation in the Protestant Church.

Her talent as a draughtsman was evident in the lyceum; all her notebooks were colouring books. From the age of 12, Sergiu Celibidache, a musician, philosopher and mathematician who was 13 years older than she, became her role model. When he told her: 'Lying makes you invisible to the spiritual world, your angel fades and you stand there without him', this became her inspiration. The idea of reincarnation was also a regular topic of conversation between them.

After graduating from high school, she began studying architecture. Her father died in 1941; her brother was called up for military service; her mother was evacuated to Bad Kösen, where Ninetta later followed to work in a home for disturbed boys. In the last months of the war, when the Red Army came to Thuringia, she drew portraits of American soldiers to earn money. This brought her a job as a poster painter and the acquaintance of Wilhelm Bruckner, with whom she went to America in 1947 after their marriage. As the motto for their marriage she suggested to the priest of The Christian Community in Wiesbaden: 'By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken ... in pain you will bring forth children.' This was now part of their lives, in the land of limitless possibilities. The circumstances were anything but easy, but it was the time in which their four children were born.

Looking for a way to earn a living, she saw an advertisement offering \$5 for a painted picture—just enough not to have to wash the babies' nappies herself for a week. She sent a picture of the view from her kitchen window. Shortly thereafter she was asked to paint three more of the same view, but in different seasons. That brought her \$15 and the question of whether her paintings could be reproduced. All over America her pictures were to be seen printed as posters in vast numbers. That was the end of diaper washing. She continued to paint successfully in the style of magical realism and surrealism, selling many paintings, recognized, supported and sponsored by Salvador Dali. However, she was coming to the limits of her inner and outer powers when some friends helped her to come to Basel in 1962. In particular, Edgar Salin, the rector of Basel University, who had been acquainted with her father and had met her as a child, admired some posters painted by her which he saw in Heidelberg. He was instrumental in her first steps. She spent many weeks in the Ita Wegman Clinic. With her gradual recovery and with new horizons opening up, her three sons, who had been staying with their father or his relatives in the USA, joined her one after the other. Ninetta's daughter stayed with an aunt and her husband, who had no children of their own.

Through the mediation of her friend, Sonja von Grunelius, she found a job in industry at the global company, Buess. She was made head of the advertising department—a pioneering step at that time, when management positions were dominated by men. When she said that she couldn't type, her superior said

that a woman like her would not be expected to do that, as it was secretary's work. In the 24 years of her activity she gained the unrestricted trust and esteem of her colleagues, so that she could also make her own hours and leave the mornings free for painting.

When she retired from her job in 1987, she had a large exhibition in Arlesheim, which marked the beginning of her new life as a freelance painter. Through her practical skills and technical knowledge, she succeeded in developing a new glazing technique, first with oil and later with acrylic paints, on which she bestowed a previously unseen luminosity and transparency. Especially through the printing of postcards and calendars by Raphael-Verlag, her pictures found worldwide distribution and admiration. She was always particularly pleased when she heard how much the children loved her pictures in their religion lessons.

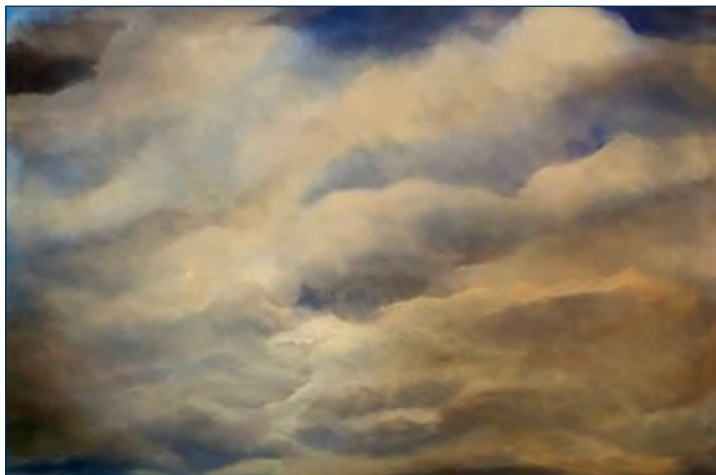
In her house with its studio, countless guests from near and far came

and went. Deep, intensive conversations, often late into the night, were a regular occurrence. Wherever she appeared, she was the centre of attention with her conviviality and humour. However, she often felt very lonely, even amidst a loyal crowd of friends and relatives.

She was closely connected with anthroposophical life. She was part of various study groups at the Goetheanum. For decades, the Bible Evening was very important to her, as was her attendance of the Act of Consecration of Man. She was well-versed in Rudolf Steiner's lectures, in books on religion and art and in countless fairy tales from all over the world.

Ninetta painted altar pictures for many churches of The Christian Community, which serve the celebration of the sacraments in all corners of the earth. Like many of her paintings, the sacraments bear witness to the presence of the risen one and to Ninetta's deepest concern: preparing people for his healing work through her painting.

REV. ROLF HERZOG, BASEL



Painting by Ninetta Sombart

A hundred years of The Christian Community II

What can we build for the future out of our shared past with the anthroposophical movement?

Ulrich Meier in conversation with the author Prof. Peter Selg and Rev. Vicke von Behr, Erzerberlenker of The Christian Community

Ulrich Meier | Considering the common history of the anthroposophical movement and The Christian Community, which we looked at in the first part of this conversation, the question of the future arises: What can we do today, and what can we hope for for the next generation concerning the relationship between The Christian Community and anthroposophy? How do you experience the present situation in the context of your work?

Vicke von Behr | I believe that the importance of Christianity and of Christian churches in relation to our social life has changed completely in the past hundred years. Consider the experience Emil Bock had when he came to the Gendarmenmarkt in Berlin in the summer of 1916 and saw the crowd of people pouring into the church where Rittelmeyer was preaching. Rudolf Steiner had to take into account the role that denominational Christianity occupied at that time within public opinion, which could be strongly influenced by representatives of the larger churches. Now, almost one hundred years later, the circumstances are no longer comparable. It may well be that in a few years or decades we find ourselves in a similar situation to what we have in the US, where political correctness forbids the name of Christ

from being spoken in the classroom, even in Waldorf Schools.

In contrast, until a few decades ago, we avoided using anthroposophical terms in the proclamations of The Christian Community. Now we are free to use these terms because we are in a position to present people with a concrete idea about the task of a future Christianity. Today the attacks come from a completely different side than from the church.

Ulrich Meier | For me, the variety of phenomena is a forceful signature of the times. My experience is that there is a firmer objectivity today, which outweighs the weakening of tradition and education about Christianity. Today I can easily say on the street that I am a Christian priest and it is not offensive. This was different thirty years ago.

Vicke von Behr | Yet thirty years ago, the profession of priest, together with doctor and teacher, was still amongst the top three professions in terms of respect in our central European culture. Today, neither doctor, teacher, nor priest holds this position; all three are listed further down the rankings. I believe the priest doesn't appear among the first one hundred.

Peter Selg | It is a complex situation. In a way, things are more relaxed because major national Christian churches no longer raise the accusa-

tion of heresy against us. However, there are still forces effective against both the anthroposophical movement and our 'movement for religious renewal', which I see as part of the anthroposophical movement. I am also active at universities, where if you make it clear that you consider Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy to be a true spiritual science, a real science of the mind, you will no longer be taken seriously in an academic context. Militancy has changed its form, without having developed into a peaceful tolerance or even an acceptance of ideas. This should be out of the question, at least in academia. Nevertheless there is a certain tempering, and when we speak of The Christian Community, I believe that in the multicultural world in which we have arrived, there is also tremendous opportunity for communication with the representatives of other religions, at least when we talk about the image of the human being and about ethics, and at that point introduce our own spiritual perspectives and intentions. For me, it has a lot to do with questions of language and of finding common human values.

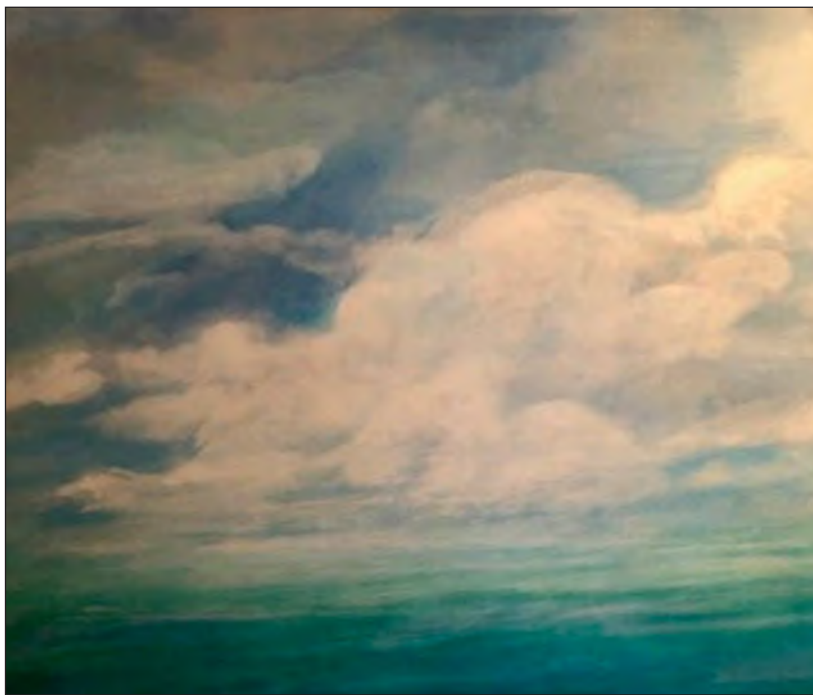
In my opinion, it is important that The Christian Community learns to see itself in broader contexts and considers its contribution as a specific one, but not as the culminating one into which everything flows. I think there is plenty of room for it—'In my Father's house there are many mansions.' (John 14:2)

Today we can describe a lot more about our spiritual sources in an objective way, instead of keeping them private and esoteric. It is also urgently necessary to do so, because the substance of many of our endeav-

ours is growing increasingly thin. This applies to all anthroposophical daughter movements, including Waldorf Schools, therapeutic homes, etc. If one can address and live anthroposophy in a new way, then in many endeavours something new can arise, despite reservations. Perhaps it's more a question of having the strength and capacity to reach people—I mean our capacity. This is often the real problem—not just the old prejudices.

These are my experiences, also internationally, which, despite the catastrophic situation in the world, make me rather optimistic, spiritually optimistic. We must experience the dire straits the world is in, take them seriously, and connect to those who also work for the 'continuance of man's being,' albeit often in a different way than we do.

Vicke von Behr | I also think we have gone through a development in the decades since the foundation. The question is, whether it is sufficient. There is a nice memory, relating to the foundation of the esoteric youth circle. The latter came into a kind of dissent with the young priests, when it was said that the youth circle served Michael, while The Christian Community served another spiritual entity. Fortunately, Rudolf Steiner was asked about this and we received an illuminating answer that is helpful even to this day, namely, that the anthroposophical movement and the movement for Christian renewal each have their own spiritual beings that are united in Michael. For me, this is an image that shows that we belong together, but that we should unfold our powers from different sides, letting those forces from the



Painting by Ninetta Sombart

spiritual world which further develop humanity flow into civilization today. I experience how wonderfully these two currents of Michael complement each other: on the one hand we can experience, in the rituals which were entrusted to us, the way in which the divine world wants to interact directly with us (Rudolf Steiner even called it a cooperation); on the other hand, through anthroposophy we have the possibility of perception which allows us to understand and grasp this cooperation more deeply and intensively. This is one of our common tasks for the future. In this respect, I am always hoping that the angels will continue to gaze down upon us with a certain patience.

Peter Selg | There is also the question of the future of the Anthro-

sophical Society. I believe it is clear that the local branches and the Society itself, as they have evolved over the decades, are no longer sustainable. There are many people who think that the Anthroposophical Society is no longer necessary because anthroposophy itself has entered daily life. However, I still have a kind of vision and hope that an altogether new kind of Anthroposophical Society will arise: a real union of people for whom anthroposophy is essential and who see the task of pursuing, along with The Christian Community, the aims of civilization given by the archangel Michael.

To return to the three Erzoberlenkers who were spoken of at the beginning of this interview—Friedrich Rittelmeyer, Emil Bock and Rudolf

Frieling—what always greatly impressed me was their commitment to the Anthroposophical Society.

It would be good if those responsible in both movements could meet and ask: How can the Society arise anew as a heart-organ, with the School of Spiritual Science as its innermost chamber, so that it can reach the next stage of development? Also, what can The Christian Community contribute, in addition to the reality that it fosters through its services. What can all of us, together, contribute so that the Anthroposophical Society and its School of Spiritual Science, whose destiny is also ours, may re-form or arise in a new way?

Ulrich Meier | I think this question is a crucial point for the future: How can mutual support and encouragement develop further?

I would now like to move on to a practical consideration—the question of how the readers of this journal can contribute to the book project mentioned in Part One of this interview.

Peter Selg | For Emil Bock, a complete biography by Gundhild Kacer-Bock and a part of Bock's correspondence have been published. With Friedrich Rittelmeyer, we have the somewhat peculiar situation that apart from the beautiful depictions of him that exist, we are without a comprehensive biography. There is also a lovely book about Rudolf Frieling which the author, Andreas Weymann, does not regard as a complete biography.

For the sketches that I want to write, there is firstly an earnest request to the archives of The Christian Community, and to those who hold the estates of these three individuals, to

look at what is there. Original documents are essential, especially correspondence, for example with their colleagues, and also their own records, as I intend to introduce them as Erzoberlenkers, without intruding on their privacy. How did they manage the administrative organization of the priesthood in The Christian Community, both within itself and also in relation to the anthroposophical movement and the Society? Are there still documents from this period in family estates or recollections to be shared? For example, something original can still be discovered in what someone's grandfather has heard or written. My main question is how they related to the essence of anthroposophy, Rudolf Steiner, the Anthroposophical Society and the School of Spiritual Science. Their personal biographies are largely well known; I am not concerned with details of family life or personal biographical facts. But if readers or others consider that a document or memory can contribute to characterizing their style of working inwardly, then sending it to The Christian Community Archive would be very helpful—and I would rejoice in that.

Ulrich Meier | It would be a great pleasure for the editors to support you in this work. For I believe that just now as we are approaching the threshold to our second century, it could make a significant contribution to the way we can embrace the future if we can revisit the historical developments in the right way.

Thank you both for today's meeting!

This conversation took place on March 15, 2018, and was hosted by the Sophia Church of The Christian Community in Frankfurt am Main.

Is Easter a cosmic festival?

Ernst Terpstra

In recent months, both within and outside the circle of priests, questions have been asked about the date of Easter 2019. Some are convinced that Easter should be celebrated one month earlier than April 21, the date that appears in the calendars. And many now have the question: who actually decides when Easter is, and do we simply participate as The Christian Community? This question is the reason for this contribution.

At Easter the Christian church celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It is the only Christian festival that has always been determined by the movements of the sun and moon: it is generally celebrated on the Sunday after the first full moon after the beginning of spring (in the northern hemisphere). The date of Easter has been calculated for centuries using a simplified representation of the movements of the sun and moon. The calculated data normally correspond to the astronomical reality, but sometimes there are deviations.

History of Easter

According to the gospel writers, Jesus was crucified on the day of preparation of the Jewish feast of Pesach, which falls on the 14th day of the month Nisan, i.e. the day of the full moon (the feast

itself lasted a week, from the 15th to the 22nd Nisan). In the year 33 this was the first full moon after the beginning of spring; the day of preparation fell on April 3, in our calculation of time. The resurrection of Jesus Christ thus took place on Sunday, the 16th Nisan (April 5), the first Sunday after the first full moon in spring.

In the first centuries most Christians celebrated Easter at the same time as Pesach. In the third century, however, more and more objections were raised, mainly for two reasons:

- 1) *The beginning of Pesach does not fall on a fixed weekday, so that Easter was not always on a Sunday.*
- 2) *In the Jewish lunar calendar, the 14th Nisan sometimes falls before the beginning of spring.*

From a fragment handed down by Bishop Eusebius (263–339) it can be seen that the Christians in Alexandria celebrated Easter on the first Sunday after the first full moon in spring before the year 300. In addition, they always celebrated the beginning of spring on the day corresponding to March 21 in our calendar.

Attempts to come to unity

During the Great Council of Nicaea (in 325), under the leadership of Emperor Constantine, there was an attempt to arrive at a Christian calculation of the date of Easter that would apply to the whole church, using the Alexandrine rule. The discussions of the 250 or so bishops, amongst whom were men of great

*Ernst Terpstra
is a priest of
The Christian
Community in
Amsterdam and
the linker for the
Netherlands.*

learning and piety, were based on spiritual, cosmological and theological knowledge. However, they could not agree. Thus in the year 387, for example, Easter was celebrated in Rome on March 21, in Alexandria on 25 April and on April 18 in other churches.

In the year 525 the Roman monk Dionysius Exiguus prepared tables and a calculation scheme according to the Alexandrine rule. He adapted the calculation so that the earliest possible Easter day was March 22 and the last possible was April 25. The Pope decided that Easter should be celebrated according to this method; the calculations were left to the Bishop of Alexandria. It was not until the ninth century, however, that the data calculated by Dionysius were generally accepted.

Calendar reform and improved calculations

In the Middle Ages it was found that the data calculated in this way deviated considerably from the celestial phenomena. For example, the astronomical spring of the sixteenth century began on March 11, and the ecclesiastical full moon sometimes deviated three days from the true full moon. At that time the Julian calendar was still used, introduced by Julius Caesar in 46 BC, which had a leap day every four years. Finally in 1582 Pope Gregory XIII decided on a calendar reform: in October ten days were omitted, so that the beginning of spring fell again on March 21. By a small adjustment of the leap year regulation, this was to remain the case for the foreseeable future. The church full moon calculation was likewise improved, so

that it corresponded on average to the astronomical full moon.

It took more than two centuries in the west for this new calendar to be adopted almost everywhere; the result was that there was no common Easter date during this entire period. Most Eastern Orthodox churches still use the older, Julian calendar today, so Easter dates in the west and east often do not coincide.

In 1800, the German mathematician C.F. Gauss constructed a formula with which the Easter day for each year can be calculated without first creating tables.

A movable or a fixed date for Easter?

It is clear from the above descriptions that determining the Easter date on the basis of the Alexandrine rule was not an easy matter. It is therefore understandable that there were always voices saying that the feast should be celebrated annually at a fixed time. In 1539 Martin Luther advocated this; two centuries later, the Swiss mathematician Johannes Bernoulli followed him in this. In 1928 the British Parliament voted by a majority that the Sunday after the second Saturday in April should be the fixed Easter date; however, this decision was never put into effect. More recently, initiatives have been taken by both the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches to arrive at a fixed date for all churches. So far, these efforts have been without success, especially because the Eastern Orthodox churches do not want to participate.

The sun defeats the moon

In a lecture in 1912, Rudolf Steiner speaks about the fact that the first

Easter in mankind gave birth to the I-consciousness and that therefore the dating of the years and centuries should run from Easter to Easter. Additionally, he states that the date of Easter should be read from the sky and not fixed on a fixed date due to materialistic or commercial motives¹.

Some years earlier Steiner had talked about the fact that Christian initiation, which was made possible by the mystery of Golgotha, could only take place after the spiritual sun had first appeared in spring and the old moon principle had receded. According to Steiner, the time had come for humanity to participate in the all-encompassing spiritual power of the sun, the power of Christ, which would defeat the forces of the moon².

By following the Alexandrine rule for the Easter date, this victory of the sun over the moon becomes visible twice in the sky just before Easter:

- *Around March 21, the orbits of the sun and moon in the sky are the same. From this moment on, the height of the sun's orbit increases, while that of the full moon decreases.*
- *During the first full moon in spring, the sun and moon face each other in the sky; following this, the moon decreases and moves in the direction of the sun.*

Considering the above, at least one big objection to the idea of a fixed Easter date becomes clear: it could happen that on Good Friday or Easter Sunday a solar eclipse takes place, an event in which the moon 'defeats' the sun.

Ecclesiastical and astronomical Easter dates

The church calculations for the Easter date are based on average positions of the sun and moon and the beginning of spring on March 21 at midnight. Today, however, the true moon can deviate from the average moon by up to 0.7 days and the astronomical beginning of spring varies between March 19 in the morning and March 21 in the evening.

Whether the moon is full can be observed directly in the clear sky; the moon remains 100% full for more than 24 hours. The time at which the sun and moon are exactly opposite to each other cannot be observed, but must be calculated.

Also the astronomical beginning of spring (equinox or spring equinox) cannot be read from the sky and must also be calculated. It is the moment when the sun—in the constellation of Pisces—crosses the celestial equator from south to north. This celestial equator is the projection of the terrestrial equator onto the celestial dome. Around this moment the sun rises exactly in the east and sets in the west; day and night are then of equal length. This time shifts in a cycle of four years (because of the leap days) and at a slower pace because of changes in the solar orbit.

Differences between the ecclesiastically calculated and astronomically determined Easter date (so-called 'Easter paradoxes') can occur in those years when the times of the beginning of spring and the full moon are close together. The latter was the case in the last century in 1905, 1924, 1943 and 1962. Because the time of the full moon in all these

years fell a few hours before the beginning of spring, the first full moon in spring was four weeks later and the Easter date calculated for the month of April was correct.

The Easter paradoxes of 2019 and 2038

In 2019, the situation is as follows. The moon will be full on Wednesday March 20 at 12:53 (CET³) and will remain full until 16:38 on Thursday March 21. The astronomical beginning of spring will be on March 20 at 22:58. There are now two possible conclusions:

1. *The moon is already full 10 hours before the beginning of spring, so that the first full moon in spring falls four weeks later and the astronomical Easter date is April 21. This is also the date calculated by the church.*
2. *The time at which sun and moon are exactly opposite each other—approximately in the middle of the full moon period—is on March 21 at 02.45. This is almost four hours after the beginning of spring, so the following Sunday, March 24, is the astronomical Easter date.*

Since for our perception the moon is already full long before the beginning of spring, in my opinion one cannot really speak of an Easter paradox in 2019.

However, there will be a clear clash between the church and astronomi-

cal dates in 2038. Spring then begins on Saturday March 20 at 13:25, and the moon will be full from March 20, 13:33 to March 21, 16:43. The midpoint of the full moon will be on March 21 at 03.08 hrs. In this case only one conclusion is possible: on the first Sunday after this full moon, on March 28, there will be cosmic Easter. However, the calculated church date in all the tables is April 25. So in 2038 we are dealing with a real Easter paradox.

Impulse for the future

The calculation rule for the Easter date was originally derived from astronomical perception, but it has gradually parted company from this perception. This fits in with the tendency within Christianity to detach itself from the cosmos and the natural world, which was considered pagan.

Awakened by the question of many people about the correct Easter date for 2019, we could decide as a movement for religious renewal always to celebrate Easter in the future in line with the cosmos and let go of the abstract rule of calculation. We now have 19 years to prepare this internally and to try to interest and inspire the rest of Christendom.

1 Berlin, 23 April 1912 (in GA 133)

2 Berlin, 15 April 1908 (GA 265)

3 CET: Central European Time; applies to all the above dates.

*Do you know someone who might be interested in Perspectives?
We would be glad to send a free trial copy to a new subscriber.
Please write to the Subscription Manager at the address
inside the front cover.*

***Thinking outside
the Brain Box
Why Humans Are Not
Biological Computers***

Arie Bos

Translated by Philip Mees

234 pp, £20, Floris Books

Review by Jon Madsen

Are we human beings deceiving ourselves when we think that we have an independent self, individual consciousness, and a free will? There is certainly a widely held view, advanced by many neuroscientists, that this is all illusory. Take, for instance, the opinion of Francis Crick, discoverer of the double helix: 'You, your joys and your sorrows, your memories and ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behaviour of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules...'

At first sight, the astonishing advances made in the field of fMRI (functional MRI) scanning of the brain appear to confirm this 'determinist' approach. After all, if a particular part of the brain suffers damage in some way, the consequence is a reduction or even total loss of the associated function of the organism—it would seem to follow that the brain is responsible for that function. In addition, the so-called 'plasticity' of the brain seems to account for the ability of the brain seemingly to repair itself.

In his illuminating book, Arie Bos questions this logic—on the basis of thorough, experimental evidence, first of all tackling the notion of the

brain 're-wiring' itself after an injury. He tells the story of a university professor who suffered a stroke so massive that he became totally incapacitated and was discharged from hospital unable to move or speak. With the untiring, but extremely 'tough' help of his son, he eventually learnt not only to walk and speak—he even returned to work, married again (he was a widower), and lived on for a good many years; remarkable as that was, the truly astonishing thing is that when a post-mortem was later performed on him, 97% of the neural connections in his brain were found to have been permanently destroyed by the stroke, so that his recovery must have been made possible by a re-organisation of the remaining brain tissue. This anecdote suggests that it was not the brain 're-wiring itself'—after all, the patient had left hospital just as handicapped as he went in—but rather the patient himself who (with the help and care of his son) re-structured his own brain.

It is also one of several examples of how much depends on the interpretation of given facts—and this applies just as much to so-called 'hard' science as it does to the spheres of soul and spirit.

A view of life that takes into account a spiritual, 'supernatural' aspect of life is popularly regarded as irrational and illusory, because lacking in 'hard facts'. Here it is the great merit of 'Thinking outside the Brain Box': it presents a large amount of solid experimental data (well over 300 references are given)—and does

so in a vivid, even entertaining, way with anecdotes, on-line videos to be viewed if wished and some droll remarks at the expense of self-contradicting 'experts'. The book is translated from Dutch, and the translator is to be congratulated on the way in which he has met the challenge—allowing for the occasional oddities: calculating something 'by head' is usually called 'mental arithmetic', and some sentences have to be read more than once to discover whether the intended word is 'when' or 'if'. However, this is carping: the overall value of the book is not diminished by these minor blemishes. One does not need any special scientific knowledge to appreciate it, and it can encourage the reader to think this whole matter through again and again, avoiding simply being drawn into the ways of popular materialist thinking.

It has become clear that the two halves of our brain support two different kinds of experience—the left half mainly concerned with what we may call the what aspect of things, the right half with the how, the quality. It is not that these parts of the brain produce these experiences, but, rather: the way we use them makes the difference. In fact, it turns out that the degree of attention we give to something directs the way the brain responds to the input it receives. An amusing video clip referred to in the book gives evidence of this.

So, up to a point, we are able to choose at any given moment which aspect we shall consider—whilst always trying to be aware that there are these two aspects.

By and large, modern civilisation pays attention only to the what as-

pect; special measures are usually required if we want to include the how: such as, for example, concentrating on a thought, a sound or a picture. This helps to 'silence' the ongoing chatter of the what side of our brain.

And this is important, because it has been shown (again, Arie Bos provides the scientific references) that people's view of life has an impact on their ethics. People who were presented with Francis Crick's statement quoted above were less inclined to behave in altruistic or compassionate ways. We might, of course, think that we do not have far to seek to find evidence of this in the world today, but since the link between materialism and ethical behaviour is often not acknowledged in popular thinking, it is good to rehearse and meditate on a regular basis upon the fundamental thoughts set forth in this book.

Even if one is a 'believer', personally convinced of the reality of the spirit, one does not always find it easy to hold one's own and swim against the current of materialism, relentlessly presented as 'established scientific fact'. This book offers a wealth of material to help one do that.

Although 'Thinking outside the Brain Box' does not deal specifically with religion, it can serve a useful purpose here, too; for any genuinely modern religious attitude simply has to be based on a scientifically sound view of the world and of human nature that includes the 'supernatural' aspect. The more rationally and confidently certain we can be of that aspect, the more assured and rich will be our religious life. After all, as Arie Bos points out, life itself is supernatural!

***The Twelve Holy Nights:
Meditations on The Dream
Song of Olaf Åsteson***

Frans Lutters

paperback, 198 x 130 mm
64 pages, £7.99, Floris Books

Review by

Simon Blaxland-de Lange

This little book, translated from the original Dutch edition published in 2013, can be warmly recommended, both for those unfamiliar with the Dream Song and also for those who know it well.

Not least for those who are in the latter category, Lutters enables one to bring the essential theme of the Dream Song—the interplay between the world of the living and the spirit-land that lies beyond the gate of death—into a direct personal experience of that period of the Twelve Holy Nights, when, according to Rudolf Steiner, the world of the spirit can be apprehended more intimately than at any other time of the year. It is, of course, at this time of the Twelve Holy Nights between Christmas Eve and Epiphany that Olaf Åsteson had his dream, or—as Lutters puts it—his ‘initiation into the great secrets of existence’ (p. 14); and it is therefore not for nothing that the Dream Song is generally sung during this time of the year (as regularly happens, for example, in The Christian Community Church in Forest Row). What Lutters helps us to do is to internalise our experience of Olaf’s dream, which can—because of the song’s great antiquity and the medieval or pre-medieval quality of its images—sometimes seem somewhat remote. He achieves this objective

by recommending a twofold daily exercise to be carried out during the Holy Nights. This exercise, the central purpose of which is to help us to remember our dreams, begins in the evening of Christmas Eve, when we are enjoined to decide on a particular theme of our choice (Lutters gives several possible examples) which can be developed in a twelvefold sequence over the ensuing evenings, culminating on January 5. It is, he says, important that our choice of theme and the outline of the twelvefold sequence are inscribed in a notebook prior to the first of the Twelve Holy Nights. This same notebook will then be the receiving vessel for any dream, thought or experience that greets us when we wake up on each of the twelve mornings until January 6. The whole process is described simply, constructively and entertainingly, such that most readers will be encouraged to at least make the attempt to do what the author suggests.

Despite its brief compass, the book includes not only Lutters’ commentary and the words of the Dream Song itself (in the familiar translation by Eleanor Merry) but also a thoroughly informative introduction by Bernard Lievegoed. It also has some moving and evocative illustrations by Hans-Dieter Appenrodt (I wonder if the originals are in colour?). Unfortunately, there is a serious chronological error on the first page of Lievegoed’s introductory essay (not necessarily Lievegoed’s responsibility) which it is important to rectify: Rudolf Steiner first heard from Ingeborg Møller-Lindholm about the Dream

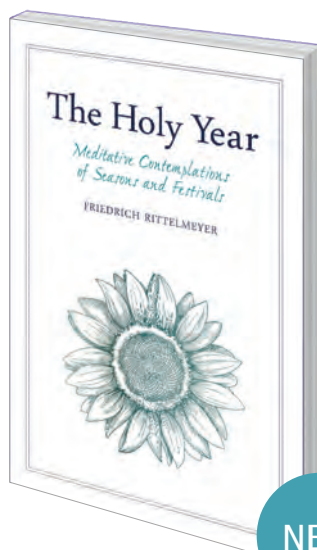
Finding Inspiration

Stimulate meaningful celebrations through the year

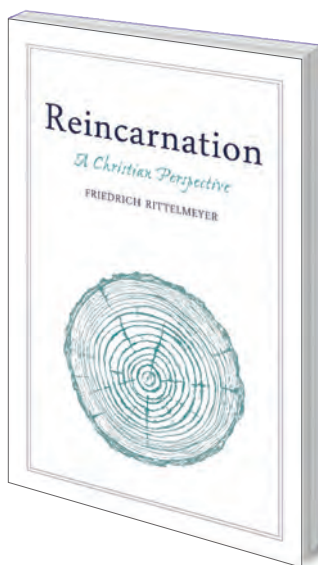
In our hurried, everyday lives, time of day and even seasons can blur together, leaving us distanced from the natural world and from spiritual rhythms.

In this book, Christian Community founder Friedrich Rittelmeyer conducts a visionary and practical exploration of thoughts and meditations which can help us engage with the changing moods of each season and the festivals of the holy year.

The Holy Year | 144 pages | paperback
978-178250-552-5 | RRP: £9.99 | OFFER: £7.99



NEW



'Astonishingly fresh'

– Stewart C. Easton

Reincarnation is a concept usually associated with eastern philosophies rather than Christianity. Yet in this fascinating book Rittelmeyer explores reincarnation from a Christian perspective.

Drawing on the work and inspiration of Rudolf Steiner, he argues for its place in modern Christian thought. His approach is simultaneously joyous, free and essentially Christian.

Reincarnation | 128 pages | paperback
978-178250-474-0 | £9.99 | OFFER: £7.99

Sign up to our mailing list for special offers
and a FREE BOOK with every order.

Visit www.florisbooks.co.uk to claim your 20% discount with offer code: PR0319

Offer valid until 31/05/2019

Song not in 1919 but in June 1910, when he was giving a cycle of lectures in Oslo entitled *The Mission of the Individual Folk Souls in Relation to Teutonic Mythology*. He went on to refer to it in a Christmas lecture on December 26, 1911 in Hanover and then spoke more extensively about it in several addresses between 1912 and 1914. These addresses have recently been published in English as part of volume 158 of Rudolf Steiner's Collected Works, *Our Connection*

with the Elemental World (Rudolf Steiner Press, 2016).

There are a few minor peculiarities in the translation (or maybe the editing), and I could not wholly adjust to the way that the author's commentary is dispersed amidst the text of the Dream Song and the accompanying illustrations. Nevertheless, overall this is an excellent little volume which deserves to be a companion on many individual journeys through the Twelve Holy Nights.

Becoming a subscriber of *Perspectives* or renewing a subscription*

please go to our website

<http://thechristiancommunity.co.uk/perspectives/> and fill in the online form.

Payment can be done through a **Paypal** account or by the most common credit or debit cards.

For the following countries please apply to the addresses listed below:

USA: US\$26
c/o The Christian Community
906 Divisadero Street
San Francisco
CA 94115

Canada: CAN\$30
British Pound Sterling £22
Please go online to
perspectives-magazine.co.uk

Australia:
Enquire for price at:
Matthew Bond
319 Auburn Road,
Hawthorn East, Victoria 3123

New Zealand:
Enquire for price at:
Elizabeth Heybrook
293 Winterslow Rd.
Staveley RD1
Ashburton 7771

New: e-subscription

receive *Perspectives* as a PDF file
£15 p/a; please go to

<https://tinyurl.com/yakwhjgl>

If you are unable to use the webpage,
or have any other query
please contact our subscription manager:

Gabriele Kuhn
Perspectives
21 Napier Road, Edinburgh
EH10 5AZ

Tel: +44(1383)821204

subs@perspectives-magazine.co.uk

* For UK subscribers:
to receive a **cheque** from you remains for us
the cheapest way to process your order.
The price for a year's subscription is £15.00.
Please send to above address with clear
instructions.

Sign up to our mailing list for special offers and a FREE BOOK with every order.

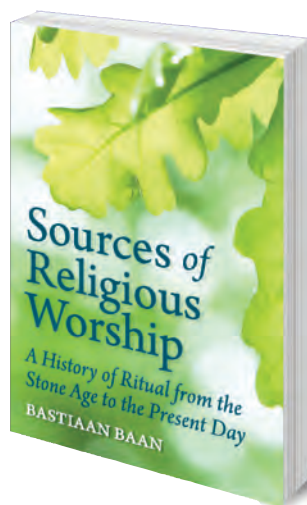
Visit www.florisbooks.co.uk to claim your 20% discount with offer code: PR0319
Offer valid until 31/05/2019

Discover the fascinating history of Christian worship and ritual

Different forms of religious worship and ritual are present throughout the development of human beings, from early stone-age ritual, nature religion and ancestor worship, to faiths from which Christianity and the Eucharist emerge.

In this book, Bastiaan Baan traces the origins and metamorphosis of human religion in historical, theological and humanistic terms, examining its significance for human life on earth and in the spiritual world.

Sources of Religious Worship | 288 pages | paperback
978-178250-513-6 | £14.99 | OFFER: £11.99



Dear Friends,

At Floris Books we constantly strive to publish books you want to read.

So we'd like to take this opportunity to ask for your advice:

- What fascinating books would you love to see translated into English?
- What works or essays should we rediscover?
- Have you written a manuscript that we should read?

We're also interested in hearing about books and authors writing on:

- religion and spirituality
- all aspects of anthroposophy
- biodynamics

Please get in touch by email or post (details below) to share your recommendations with us. We look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

The Floris Books Team

Email: floris@florisbooks.co.uk

Address: 2a Robertson Avenue, Edinburgh, EH11 1PZ





Temple Lodge Club

a quiet oasis in the middle of London

Temple Lodge—a Georgian Listed Building in the middle of Hammersmith—was once the home of the artist Sir Frank Brangwyn. Whilst his studio has been converted into a chapel with a **vegetarian restaurant** on its former mezzanine floor, the house itself is given over to accommodating bed and breakfast visitors. They come from four corners of the world to enjoy the quietness and tranquillity of the house. Many have described it as a really peaceful haven, despite being a stone's throw from the centre of Hammersmith and its busy traffic interchange. The absence of a television in the house and rooms adds to this atmosphere. There is a quiet secluded garden.

Most rooms look out over this large and sheltered garden. Two rooms look out over the front courtyard and garden.

Upon becoming members of the **Temple Lodge Club** (£1.00 annual membership) visitors seeking Bed & Breakfast accommodation may share in all the facilities the house has to offer. Breakfast is served in the ground floor Dining Room looking out over the quiet, secluded garden. A library provides a space for relaxation or quiet reading. All the rooms are well appointed and comfortably furnished, the two double rooms being deluxe rooms.

All prices include breakfast and are per room:

Single room
from £64 per night,
with/without
shower and second
companion bed;
Twin-bedded room
from £88 per night.
Deluxe double room
from £102 per night
(£75 for single
occupancy)

All rooms have hot
and cold water.

For any further information or
to make a booking, contact:

Temple Lodge Club
51 Queen Caroline Street
Hammersmith
London W6 9QL

Tel: 020 8748 8388

e-mail:
info@templelodgeclub.com

www.templelodgeclub.com



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
at £20 to £25 per person per night.**

Further information and reservations:

Sabine Haus: 01364 64 42 72
sabine.hauslakeman@gmail.com

Advertise in Perspectives

Find your customers
among our readers,
and support
our magazine.

Quarter page £45

Half page £75

Full page £140

**Discounts apply
for repeat adverts.**

To place an order or to enquire about other sizes
and adverts in the Newsletter please contact:

Gabriele Kuhn, Tel: +44(1383)821204
subs@perspectives-magazine.co.uk
21 Napier Road, Edinburgh, EH10 5AZ

Centres of The Christian Community

AUSTRALIA

Adelaide (08) 8339 6466
3 Anzac Ridge Road (P.O.B 216)
Bridgewater, S.A. 5155
Canberra (02) 6295 3752
Civic Square P.O. Box 651,
ACT 2608

Melbourne (03) 9029 2769/7812
319 Auburn Road, Hawthorn East,
Victoria 3123

Sydney (02) 9810 6690
PO Box 965, Rozelle, NSW 2039

CANADA

Toronto (905) 709 4544 901
Rutherford Road,
Maple, ON L6A 1S2
Vancouver (604) 415-0600
617 Heretaunga Street East,
Burnaby, BC V5B 1P6

NAMIBIA

Windhoek +264 (61) 225791
Umland Street 3, (Box 11359)
Windhoek

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland (09) 525 2305
10 Rawhiti Road, Onehunga
Hawkes Bay (06) 878 4463
617 Heretaunga Street East,
Hastings

SOUTH AFRICA

Campbell Village (021) 572 5922
PO Box 1451 Dassenberg 7350
Cape Town (021) 762 0793
39 Timour Hall Road, 7800
Plumstead

Johannesburg (011) 789 3083

46 Dover Street,
Randburg 2194
(Box 1065, Ferndale 2160)
KwaZulu Natal (031) 768 1665
148 Kangelani Way, Assagay
Box 1093, Hillcrest 3650

UNITED KINGDOM

Aberdeen
8 Spademill Road,
Aberdeen AB15 4XW
Bottom (01287) 661 312
Danby, Whitby, N. Yorkshire,
YO21 2NJ
Bristol c/o Meyer: (0117) 9502
512
20 St. John's Road, Clifton,
Bristol, BS8 2EX
Buckfastleigh (01364) 644 272
23 Chapel Street, Buckfastleigh,
Devon, TQ11 0AQ

Canterbury (01227) 765068
57, Wincheap or 730882
Canterbury, CT1 3RX
Edinburgh (0131) 229 4514
21 Napier Road,
Edinburgh, EH10 5AZ

Forest Row (01342) 323 205
Hartfield Road, Forest Row,
E. Sussex, RH18 5DZ

Holywood (028) 9042 4254
3 Stewarts Place, Holywood,
Co. Down, BT18 9DX

Ilkeston 07716229409
Malin House, St. Mary Street,
Ilkeston, Derbyshire, DE7 8AF

Kings Langley (01442) 245603
The Priory, Kings Langley,
Herts. WD4 9HH

London (020) 8748 8388
51 Queen Caroline Street, London
W6 9QL

Malton/York (01653) 694 391
The Croft, Highfield Road,
Old Malton,
N. Yorkshire YO17 9DB

Mourne Grange (028) 4176 0110
Newry Road, Kilkeel, Newry,
Co. Down, BT34 4EX

Stourbridge (01384) 377 190
22 Baylie Street,
Stourbridge

W. Midlands DY8 1AZ
Stroud (01453) 762926
73 Cainscross Road,
Stroud, Glos. GL5 4HB

IRELAND

East Clare +353 (061) 640967
Dewsborough
Tuamgraney
Co. Clare

UNITED STATES

Boston (781) 648-1214
366 Washington Street, Brookline,
MA 02445

Chicago (773) 989 9558
2135 West Wilson
Chicago, IL 60625

Denver (303) 758 7553
2180 South Madison Street,
Denver, CO 80210

Detroit (248) 546 3611
1320 Camden at Wanda,
Ferndale, MI 48220

Los Angeles (818) 762 2251
11030 La Maida Street,
North Hollywood, CA 91601

New York (212) 874 5395
309 West 74th Street,
New York, NY 10023

Philadelphia (610) 647 6869
212 Old Lancaster Road,
Devon, PA 19333

Sacramento (916) 362 4330
3506 Eisenhower Drive,
Sacramento, CA 95826

San Francisco (415) 928 1715
906 Divisadero Street
San Francisco, CA 94115

Spring Valley (845) 426 3144
15 Margetts Road
Monsey, NY 10952


Taconic-Berkshire Region
(413) 274-6932

10 Green River Lane,
Hillsdale, NY 12529
Washington, D.C. Baltimore
Area, also Chapel Hill, NC
(301) 935-2727

The Parish House
4221 Metzert Road
College Park, MD 20740

OTHER CENTRES IN:

Germany, Switzerland, Austria,
Czech Republic, Netherlands,
Belgium, France, Denmark,
Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia,
Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Japan



March–May 2019

£ 3.75

ISSN 0967-5485