

The Christian Community

Perspectives

March—May 2021

The Body
— of the Earth
— of the human being

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*All art in this issue including cover pictures
is by Ursula Mathers.*

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One of the most beautiful images in the New Testament comes in one of the Easter gospel readings: ‘I am the true vine, you are the branches.’ St Paul develops this image further in his letters, where he speaks of our being grafted onto the tree of Christ. A further development comes in the First Letter to the Corinthians where St Paul speaks of our being members of one body.

In this year where many of us have not been able to take communion as often as we would have liked, the question of our being part of the body of Christ has become all the more real. Perhaps we have noticed how even in normal times, there are many people who are unable to attend the service, who nevertheless feel deeply connected to it. The intensity of our participation from afar in the first few weeks of lockdown was a response to the sudden, shocking measures that were taken as we closed churches and asked members to accompany us from afar.

Many members described how the memory of attending the Act of Consecration of Man sustained them through the times when they could not come to church. Similarly, the memory of receiving the communion in bodily form can make the experience of participating in the congrega-

tional communion through the priest all the more intense. Some of the priests have started to leave a pause after this priestly communion so that we can experience our ingrafting, our being re-membered once again.

We each have a body of living forces—the ‘forces that form me’ of the Communion prayers—that is a counterpart to the physical body. This life-body sustains us; here, our memories and our habits dwell. This insight makes the image of the true vine and the one body more than beautiful metaphors. When we take communion, when we become members, we are grafted onto a living body that endures, even when we are separated from each other physically. This living body contains the memories of Christ’s life on Earth, just as it connects us to his being here with us here and now.

TOM RAVETZ

Easter

Ioanna Panagiotopoulos

*I will wait for the rising of a star
whose spear of light
shall transfix me—
of a far-off world whose
silence
my very truth
must answer.*

JUDITH WRIGHT

Like earthly stars, the wildflowers lie
over the green.

How could they mirror in their miniature way the exalted star forms,
were they not the earthly children of that great Mother of Night?

When we look not with our earthly eye, but out of our inner eye, we
can see that every living thing on Earth grows beneath the influence
of what lies above us, the starry sky that spreads like a mantle over
our destiny's course; the revolving
harmony of the starry world is
the silent witness of all
that we are.

The wildflowers know it, and live and grow in the
image of the stars, and yet, we human beings are
fated to first lose entirely the knowledge gifted by
the shining mantle of the divine world. We have
been destined to walk another path: the path of
spiritual loneliness.

On this path, we are thrown out of the comfort of
divine order. On this path, we can experience both

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Community in
Canberra.*

beauty and terror; despair and bliss; control or surrender; but we can also aim to forge our way through the exile of earthly life, despite the conditions that fate brings about. For on the lonely path, we are destined not only to grow through our free resolve in the image of the divine world, we are destined to *know* it, and to be *known* by this world.

The divine longs for us as we long for it; it follows where we lead, just as we follow as we search for it.

Will we find
one another?

Like a beam of light from the star that surrenders its exalted place in heaven to light up the Earth below, the star of our soul, the Christ, shines a light into our inner life. He makes us visible again to the divine world above.

JOHN 14:17



Experiential Colour

Artist statement by Ursula Mathers

The paintings presented here arise from an exploration into the experience of colour and form. I have recently completed a Master's in Art and Design from Gray's School of Art in Aberdeen where I focussed on these fundamentals in two-dimensional art. My process began by considering colour and researching its elemental qualities in the light of anthroposophy as well as contemporary painting. The organic development from colour to form was then inevitable, like the first stanza of a song which develops from a single note, adds another, forming an interval between the two and weaving its way into a melody. Presently form comes in and out of my painting, the interval between colour and form fluctuating from one to the other, and when there's harmony the melody resounds. It is this search for a harmonious interval between visual notes that interests me, when the elements of space, form, colour, light, line and texture gravitate towards an equilibrium. There is a constant interplay of colour, and even as I worked with colour I could not disengage from form. I have explored new ways of experiencing colour with and without recognisable form so that the involvement is visceral instead of intellectual. 'Abstraction is specifically about dissolving identifiable representational motifs so that the viewer can no longer cling to these,' said Kandinsky. So, by minimising representational form the expressive qualities of paint and colour arise and are felt on a different level of understanding. The question then relates solely to colour dimensions, differences, textures and the materiality that comes out of the painting itself. With indistinct colour forms there is a quality of movement that lives within a painting and becomes an internal atmosphere of colour projected externally.

www.ursulamathers.com

Ursula's paintings are currently on exhibit in Aberdeen at The Christian Community as well as Camphill Newton Dee.

Christ's light in our daylight

How does it get there?

Engelbert Fischer

All too often we fail to notice it. In ordinary daylight so much is revealed that we do not know where to direct our gaze. Do we then constantly overlook this light?

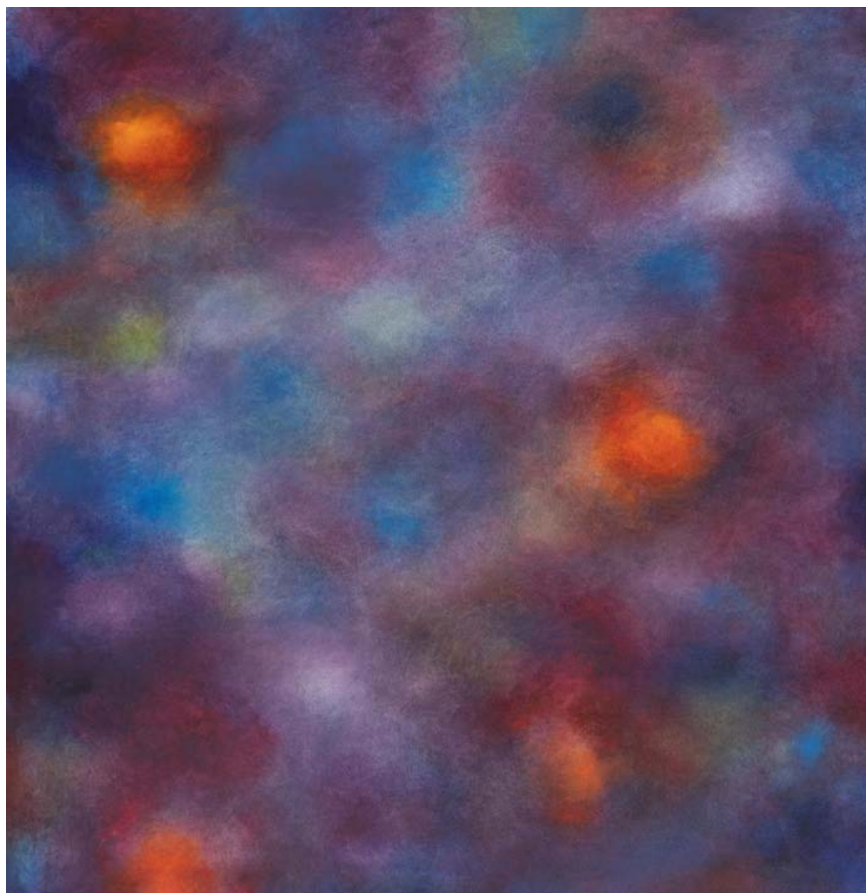
Christ's light has been in the world since the very first Easter: since Christ accomplished his sacrifice for the world. But we should think of this sacrifice as being much greater than just the deed on Golgotha. The all-embracing content of this sacrifice is that—as a divine being—he was ready *at all* to involve himself with the earthly world and with fallible humankind; that he placed himself within it with all the consequences that that entailed. Since that time he continues to carry out this sacrifice. And when we draw near to him 'in soul' in the Service, then we actually pray that he may include us in his stream of offering: 'that you offer us with you' (not vice versa, but *us* with *you*!). That means: may our (admittedly small) act of offering merge with his, as a stream flows into a river. His relationship to the world is not beguiled by its beauty or its strange fascination, does not resignedly let things run their own course, is not fascinated by the dark arts of the adversary, but consciously keeps alive his 'sending' by God. It is into this relationship with the world that we are endeavouring to enter. That forms the basis for the shining of his light into our daylight. Because a relationship of this kind to the world—one that keeps in mind its own origin while at the same time fully placing itself into life and into its destiny—such a relationship changes one's gaze. It perceives when real humanity lights up in our fellow human beings: in their behaviour, their language and their deeds—and in their eyes; even if only for moments.

*Engelbert Fischer
was a priest in
Germany. He died
in 2018.*

This kind of perceiving and recognising of each other is an important matter. We know, of course, for ourselves how it affects us when we are perceived

and noticed by someone else—or when we are not. If there is nobody to take note of me, in the last resort it induces sickness or is even death-bringing. Over against that, to be perceived is enlivening and enables someone to bring forth what they can contribute.

Such a perceiving and recognising is also important for Christ and his light. It is what determines whether or not they are constantly overlooked and disregarded, or whether he and his light can live and grow in our daylight. We can resolve ‘to seek it.’ Our small deed of offering, which we wish to unite with his great stream of offering, becomes important and significant. The Christ-light also seeks to enter into our daylight through us.



Apart from me you can do nothing

JOHN 15:5

Bastiaan Baan

‘Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards,’ (Kierkegaard). That is how it usually goes—at least, the way we think it should go.

Trial and error is inevitable in our life. Only in the course of time do we begin to learn from our mistakes. Perhaps we see things more objectively when we grow old, provided we have in the meantime developed some self-knowledge.

Nothing in life can be compared with the highest viewpoint we are shown at the moment of dying. We see ourselves in the review of our life with the eyes of Christ. ‘His look brought about that I saw myself through His eyes,’ someone wrote who had come back from a near-death experience. What seemed important during life on Earth may, when viewed from the viewpoint of eternity, lose its significance. In reverse, what seemed unimportant as judged by our daily life, may become significant in the eyes of Christ.

Only in the definitive review at the end of our life will we recognise: He is the vine, we are the branches. Apart from Him I can do nothing.

It is not absolutely necessary to live our life forward and only understand it at the end. We do not need to wait until we are retired or dying. Every day gives us the opportunity to understand it in reverse. Go up the hill at the end of the day. Ask Christ to come with you. Ask yourself: Where was I today? Ask Christ: Where wert Thou today?

Thou and I, the vine and the branch—are we still connected with each other?

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Netherlands.*

Going to the Father

Transforming the body

Luke Barr

Human beings in our age have become interested again (for the first time since the Hellenic age) in the body, perhaps to the point of obsession: whether it be in fitness or sun studios, dietary plans, sport, advertising and modelling. There is an image of how a body should look. Even though preceding ages had their own aesthetic criteria for the body beautiful, never before has the illusion of the perfect body been so comprehensively prevalent.

Sarx and *soma* both mean ‘body’ in ancient Greek—but whereas *soma* is commonly taken to refer to the English equivalent, ‘body’, the word *sarx* is often translated as ‘flesh’. We can use the word ‘body’ to refer to a body of work or an organisation. It has an invisible quality—something that can be seen in the mind’s eye. ‘Flesh’, in comparison, is quite earthly: it might put us in mind of the butcher’s block. However, there is a beautiful aspect of it revealed in George Herbert’s poem, ‘Love’, where Love enjoins the poet to ‘taste my meat’.

The Book of Genesis first refers to the *sarx* body when humanity is divided into the sexes (Gen. 2:23). The human being has already been made aware of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil and given the directive to *not* eat from it. The act of eating, performed in the ritual of the Communion, will be a central part of the eventual redemption of the human being and, vitally, of their body. This is the *soma* body. The term *soma* appears to correspond to a more idealised vision of the bodily nature of mankind. It breathes the air of the gods. The entire drama of the cosmos and the mission of Christ have to do with the destiny of this ‘*soma* body’.

The writers of the first three gospels focus mainly on the *soma* body. In John, the opposite obtains. Why would John, whose gospel scales greater heights than the other three, focus more on the apparently more earthly ‘*sarx* body’? Why in John does Jesus always speak of his own body in terms of *sarx*?

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To shed light on this, we need to ask: what is the physical body, as opposed to the material? Soma corresponds to what we would call the ideal form of the physical body. Sarx, so often translated as 'flesh', signifies the material body. The soma body becomes visible to us through the material appearance of the sarx body. An experience of sarx is lying awake at 3 a.m., beset by worries—'sarx thoughts', produced by our sense impressions, and deeply imbued with habitual feelings. They are subjective, claustrophobic and confining. Soma thoughts are, one might say, body-free, or sense-free in content. These are thoughts which are expansive, as pure as geometry, and which reveal the divine proportions of the heavenly soma body.

When I eat absent-mindedly, I feed the sarx body. When I cook and prepare the food with love and consciousness, and speak a grace, a word of thanks before the meal, when I taste it and consider the miracle of all that has gone into creating this substance, then it acquires permanence, becoming a 'soma meal.' It aspires to the archetypal meal, the Eucharist.

It is sarx which suffers illness and accident. It is soma to which our life forces look, in order to recover the human form.

Sarx bears the imprint of our evolving individuality upon it, and for this reason, everyone is unique. Soma bears upon it the stamp of the creator spirits, summed up in the creative Word or Logos. In soma, we are all alike.

The increasing experience of the sarx body overwhelmed us in the last century. We have not been free of it since. Sarx makes us feel that we are mere flesh and bones, an absurd disturbance in the universe, a meaningless nonentity. Jean-Paul Sartre wrote his novel *Nausea* to convey this existential realisation of the visceral nature of the sarx body. He experiences it with disgust:

I dreamed vaguely of killing myself to wipe out at least one of these superfluous lives. But even my death would have been In the way. In the way, my corpse, my blood on these stones, between these plants, at the back of this smiling garden. And the decomposed flesh would have been In the way in the earth which would receive my bones, at last, cleaned, stripped, peeled, proper and clean as teeth, it would have been In the way: I was In the way for eternity.

Sartre's novel was published in 1938, at a critical juncture in world history, not only in external political events, but in the inner transformation of the world, when the *Parousia*, the reappearance of Christ was beginning to be experienced. Existential nausea with regard to the sarx body is a symptom of a presentiment for a quite different type of body, of whose presence the human being is becoming gradually aware.

How do we find our way to a concept of this body? How do we know, as Thomas asked (John 14:5), 'the way to the Father'?

William Blake indicates a way in his poem, 'A Divine Image.' The 'divine image' is one of the human being. In it, he writes,

*To Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
All pray in their distress;
And to these virtues of delight
Return their thankfulness.*

*For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is God, our father dear,
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is Man, his child and care.*

*For Mercy has a human heart,
Pity a human face,
And Love, the human form divine,
And Peace, the human dress.*

In the poem, these qualities of the divine appear to be the *substance* of the soma body. It reveals itself most perfectly in the heart, face and form. It overcomes the racial and heredity features ('and all must love the human form in heathen, Turk, or Jew') and the prejudices that accompany them, and sees through to the divine essence of the human being, the soma body.

Paul says of the death and resurrection of Christ:

It is sown a physical body (soma physikon), it is raised a spiritual body (soma pneumatikon).¹

CORINTHIANS 15:44

The long evolution of mankind (the 'I am') means the transformation of the soma physikon (with which we were endowed at creation) to that of soma pneumatikon (the aim of our journey). We may think of the first line of our own Creed that refers to the bearer of this *spiritual-physical* existence. The soma is a part of this Ground of Existence which is spiritual-physical. The journey of our evolution will be aided by cultivating the gifts of the soma, as described in Blake's 'Divine Image': Mercy, pity, peace and love. The soma physikon was endowed with these gifts at creation. It is up to us to use and develop them.

Blake acknowledged in his counter-poem, 'The Human Abstract' that the human soul has also the power to pervert these gifts—but his confidence was that the 'divine image' would triumph. He did not intend that these qualities should be understood in a sentimental way. They are the real substance of the soma. Living with them authentically, not misappropriating them, practising virtue as a conscious discipline, is a path to finding one's way to the soma, to the resurrection body.

We can activate these qualities through genuine religious activity: through prayer and meditation. These are freely chosen activities that can reach into the depths of the life-body. The Act of Consecration is a heightened combination of these. There we begin the gradual approach to our soma body, in the realm of the Father. Communion is food and drink for this invisible soma body. It helps release us from the binding, compelling body of sarx, wresting us 'from the death of matter'.

'Take, eat, this is my body'

The first three gospels share an understanding of the importance of soma. In their narratives of the Last Supper, Jesus refers to his soma body:

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat: this is my soma.'

MATT. 26:26 / MARK 14:22

And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them saying, 'This is my soma which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' LUKE 22:19

In John, however, we see quite a different aspect of the path that leads to the Mysteries of the Father. The Last Supper takes place in Ch. 13.

With all the beauty of the description of the washing of the feet and the sublime Farewell Discourses, nowhere does Jesus speak of his soma body, as he does in the other gospels, nor does he break and bless the bread. Instead, the Eucharistic moment is revealed to us much earlier, in Ch. 6. This world-changing moment takes place in the feeding of the five thousand. This is the fourth of the seven signs in John's gospel—the central one, which we could see as their heart. And there, Jesus does not speak of his soma, but of his sarx.

I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will live throughout the ages. And the bread which I give for the life of the world is my flesh/sarx. He who eats my flesh/sarx and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.

JOHN 6:51, 56

Here we have the earthy, almost crude picture of the Eucharist: an unequivocal pronouncement that this is blood and body. And John chooses not to give the idealised picture of the soma being the body which redeems, but rather sarx. As we have seen, whenever Jesus speaks of his body in John, he always calls it the sarx. Only when death has taken the body of Jesus, does John briefly refer to it as a soma (John 19–20). There is one other exception:

Then the Jewish authorities said, '...it has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the temple of his soma.

JOHN 2:20–21

John makes it clear that the path to the soma, and the Father, is not purely mystical way, turning away from the world. Rather, the way must go through the world. It must write its way indelibly into the earth, just as Jesus writes the drama of the eighth chapter quietly into the earth with his finger. To attain to the temple of the soma, one must embrace, love and transform sarx. It must become the *materia prima* with which we work, just as it was for the Logos. That is where He started: 'And the Word became flesh (sarx) and dwelt among us' (John 1:14). The Logos identifies fully with the fallen sarx condition of the human being, that which had been our state from the beginnings of Adam-humanity in Genesis. But the One who was the *very beginning*, the Logos, came to the Nazarene in the pure soma form: At the Baptism, 'the Holy Spirit descended in *somatikos* form like a dove upon him...' (Luke 3:22).

This is what the human being can become when it has transformed the sarx, and attains to soma: free like the dove; or sacrificial like the lamb; or nourishment to be shared, like the bread.

Sleep and death

What happens to us in illness; why do we have accidents?

It seems to me that since Golgotha, the nature of illness and accidents has changed. Whereas once they were signs of human beings' mortality, they now have become opportunities—slowly to take steps to recover the 'human form divine'.

In our everyday lives, when we are active, we have very little opportunity to reflect on what we do, how we do it, and why we are doing it. When we are active, we affect the soma body. The things we say, the deeds we do, the thoughts we have—these all work their way into our life-body, into our karma, into the soma body that we are attempting to transform into Paul's 'soma pneumatikon.' Before every incarnation, we build up our 'soma physikon' with the help of our angel (who accompanies us in our karmic life) and with the spiritual hierarchies. We build it up to be the vehicle for our coming incarnation. Once on Earth, we have the work of transforming that soma physikon into soma pneumatikon. Christ gives us the orientation for this work, but ultimately we do it in freedom.

From time to time, we require the opportunity to reflect on our freedom and how we are working on this 'soma pneumatikon.' Since Golgotha, illness and accidents have given us this possibility for reflection. When we are ill, we are taken out of the society of people and isolated within ourselves, *within our body*. An enforced period of rest is afforded us. But it is not simply rest so that one can swiftly return to functionality. This is what the disciples misunderstood when they questioned Jesus about Lazarus. They thought that Lazarus was 'resting' (*kekoimetai*). But he was not resting, but was 'with sleep' (the god Hypnos) and death (Thanatos). In illness and accident, we are brought by our karmic angel before the gods Hypnos and Thanatos, the guardians of that body which is the creation of the gods, the soma. When we suffer an illness or accident, we are invited by our angel and the gods to 'go to the Father'.

Indeed, illness or accident has a particular purpose. This is revealed in the mystery words of Jesus at the beginning of John 11, in the Lazarus episode.

Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom you love is sick.

When Jesus heard that, he said, ‘This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.’

JOHN 11:3–4

Sickness will no longer be a route of destruction of the soma physikon, leading directly to an unforgiving Thanatos. Rather, it is to allow us to approach, in our isolation, the ‘glory of God,’ the soma body. When we do this, we may discover that a new possibility has been given to us and our holy soma. This possibility lies in how we reflect on our illness, how we think about it, what we do when faced with this karmic intervention in our lives. How we are able to achieve this determines how far we allow the Christ-in-us to work. This is to ‘glorify the Son of God’.

It goes without saying, that if our medical culture were to live with such guiding thoughts, we would have a quite different world!

To bear an illness or accident in the sarx body is to be given an opportunity to ‘go to the Father.’ ‘Doing nothing’ as a result of the suffering, strips us of our acquired everyday persona. What is left? A journey ‘to the Father’; a journey to the ‘I.’ This I is commensurate with the soma body. It can manifest optimally in the soma, not in the sarx. When we experience our true I, however briefly, we are in that moment, creating the spiritual soma body in ourselves.

Each time that we die, we reacquaint ourselves with the soma body. It is vital that we are as conscious of this in death as possible. Practising dying, for example through the experience of sacraments, prepares us for the Mystery of the Soma, the Mystery of the Father, the Mystery of the I.

Rather than seek an immediate repair that allows us to continue to function as our everyday selves, we are plucked out of the stream of our lives. In this way, we are permitted to approach the mystery of the eternal soma body. We have to offer ourselves up entirely to this process. And then, in experiencing this, we attain a presentiment of

what it is to 'bear the new confession' *in the body*. This confession is to acknowledge that we are to work on the soma body: to help in the alchemical transformative work from physical (physikon) to spiritual (pneumatikon).

We may sometimes wonder what difference the deed of Golgotha has made, that we can experience.

The deed can never be measured by our current usual standards. But we may over time, develop a subtle feeling for the effects of Golgotha. Perhaps one such difference is this: We have always been able to dip in and out of our soul life. Today, we have even more time on our hands to do so. But to penetrate into the life-body, or into the physical body, is hardly conceivable. To enter into the soul body in a productive fashion, we need only discipline ourselves in finding peace, as for example in prayer and meditation. Peace is, for Blake, the 'human dress' that we can put on and take off at will. It is the third of the gifts that we receive from the altar in the Communion. And it is one that we can cultivate ourselves. The other gifts of the body and blood are different. We need to receive these as a gift. They are for our life-body and physical body, bodies that we cannot *yet* so consciously affect.

Peace comes from our own efforts; it fashions the vessel into which those two infinitely more precious gifts can enter our lives: the blood and the body.

Where Lazarus had been on the journey 'to the Father', visiting the life-body that Hypnos guards and the physical body that Thanatos guards, we are now given these as a gift at the altar in the form of blood and body. I believe that we can feel how our life-body is affected for the better by the Act of Consecration. This may also call forth a presentiment of the effect that the ritual has on our physical body.

Our practice of peace, together with the bread and wine, helps to strengthen us and to prepare us for our own evolutionary journey 'to the Father', where we, through prodigious effort over aeons of time, change the original soma physikon to the soma pneumatikon. To be present at the Act of Consecration is to take steps on the journey 'to the Father'. It is the conscious path to the soma body, the one that Thomas requested (John 14:5).

Is the Earth a living body? If so, whose is it?

Peter Skaller

I. The human body

St Paul's ancient description of the human body emphasised the necessity for different organs and how they form a whole.¹ Today we know that the body's parts are not only complementary in purpose and function, they are also interdependent. The eyes work differently depending on the ear's acuity and vice versa. The working of the heart changes with how the legs are used and vice versa. And the nervous and circulatory systems interconnect and are in turn affected by all the body's parts and processes.

Besides physical organs, a living body must also have a metaphysical life—or etheric body—that enables it to grow of itself and function in rhythmicity. And for a living body to have conscious experience, 'soul' must also be present.² The physical and non-physical members also interact. As examples, physical pain affects the soul and vice versa, and anxiety impacts the ability of the life-body to heal wounds. All members of the body are integrated into a unity.

The idea of the body as an entity unto itself has to be modified to account for its continual exchange of minerals, air, water and warmth with the surrounding world. Our metaphysical bodies also are affected by, and affect, other beings. Therefore, our body is within, and interacts with, the surrounding world, which as will be shown, is another body.

For the parts of a body to function as a coordinated unit directed towards purposeful activity there must be an overarching design, or blueprint, and an implementing builder-coordinator. (It is beyond the scope of this article to talk about the 'template' for this design as described by R. Steiner.³) R. Buckminster Fuller called

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the builder-coordinator 'the Phantom Captain' which has 'neither weight nor sensorial tangibility' and without whom the material body would function 'imbecilic' and would crumble.⁴

With the phantom captain's departure, the mechanism becomes inoperative and very quickly disintegrates into basic chemical elements.

The Captain's departure also brings about the release of the life-body and soul, but now into the world of spirit.⁵ A seeker of existential truth eventually comes to ask who fashioned the blueprint, and how it is integrated into the larger world around us.

II. The Earth as a body

Ecologists today understand the Earth, or biosphere, to be a 'system' comprised of mutually interacting and interdependent domains. Ludwig von Bertalanffy, who developed Systems Theory in the 1940s, said:

*We are seeking another basic outlook: the world as an organization. This would profoundly change categories of our thinking and influence our practical attitudes. We must envision the biosphere as a whole with mutually reinforcing or mutually destructive inter-dependencies.*⁶

*The mechanistic world view, taking the play of physical particles as ultimate reality, found its expression in a civilization which glorifies physical technology that has led essentially to the catastrophes of our times. ...the model of the world as a great organization can help to reinforce the sense of reverence for the living which we have almost lost in the last...decades of human history.*⁷

As with all systems, the components of the human body or the biosphere can be evaluated at various levels of subsystems. The human body could be studied at the molecular, cellular and organ levels; the biosphere at the levels of mineralogy, geology, meteorology, botany, zoology, anthropology, or even at the more elemental level of the light, warmth, air, water and mineral realms. At whatever level one looks, the biosphere functions as a body whose parts are so integrated that a change in one part reverberates throughout and changes the entire system.

As was shown for the human body, the biosphere is also in continual exchange with the world around it. The sun, moon and other solar system entities, such as asteroids and meteors, all affect the Earth. We can go further out to the stars whose most obvious influence concerns how human star-based navigation altered the entire earthly world. We could also consider the ancient wisdom of astrology.

Except for gravity, today's science may not yet have determined how the Earth in turn affects these cosmic entities, but as we increasingly send people, electromagnetic waves and materials into space, and as astrophysics advances, further connections will undoubtedly show themselves.^{8, 9} Already there is human garbage and techno-generated electromagnetic fields (EMFs) orbiting the Earth. We also should not omit probable far-reaching metaphysical effects of human thinking and feeling as working throughout the cosmos.

Using modes of perception that modern humanity has mostly lost, aboriginal people have since ancient times held that ultimately the Earth is part of a system that comprises the entire universe. With today's scientific logic we too can conceive the universe as comprised of a hierarchical arrangement of bodies within bodies within bodies within the One Body, like a matryoshka doll. The phantom captain of this great body some call God, and some of its blueprint principles, divined by seers, are suggested in Genesis 1, throughout the modern works of Rudolf Steiner, and by some of today's visionary scientists.

Is the Earth alive? The biosphere breathes rhythmically through the daily and seasonal exhaling and inhaling of oxygen and carbon dioxide by the Earth's more than three trillion trees, other land vegetation, and by oceanic algae and phytoplankton, while the movement of wind and water functions like a circulatory system.¹¹ And its wounds can heal through its own activity, for example through the naturally occurring revegetation of strip mines.¹² So, the Earth exhibits characteristics of life similar to those of the human body. And since it functions as an integrated system, there must also be a blueprint/design with a phantom captain as well.

Is the Earth ensouled? That is more difficult to ascertain with normal consciousness. In considering this question, one can ask: How would I know there is a human being standing before me were I only to per-

ceive a physical body? The self of the other is supersensibly perceived with our 'ego-sense' which becomes the basis for freely willed moral activity, or love.¹³ The Earth as a 'someone' can be experienced during intimate experiences in a forest, a thunderstorm or hurricane, a rainbow, while watching salmon scale a waterfall, feeling the sun,¹⁴ or even while eating a meal.

III. Care of the Earth

Beginning with any land-use practice, such as farming, waste disposal, fuel burning, mining, drilling, fishing, or building housing, we can follow in detail the interconnected paths of effects and feedbacks. For example, ecologists understand how damming a river affects the oceans, clouds, landforms, air, plants, animals and human beings both near and far. We know how substances introduced at one place, such as through agriculture or manufacturing, impact the biota both locally and in distant regions. But understanding interactions does not necessarily allow for certainty in rendering management decisions. There are many reasons for this:

1. In the material world decisions involve 'trade-offs' based on conflicting needs and values.
2. The intellect is likely limited in its ability to account for all possible interacting factors. Recent interest in Artificial Intelligence (AI) is based on the notion that computers will outperform people in analysing complex systems and rendering decisions.
3. The discoveries of Werner Heisenberg¹⁵ showed that the universe does not behave as a totally deterministic pool table where Newtonian mechanics rigidly holds sway. He also showed that the mere act of observing a phenomenon alters what is being observed—which plagues ecologists hoping to study 'natural' ecosystems. Edward Lorenz¹⁶ wondered if a butterfly flapping its wings in Brazil could set off a tornado in Texas (the Butterfly Effect). His experiments showed how seemingly trivial events can undermine confidence in forecasting weather and ultimately the future of any system. Hence, many think that AI ultimately cannot do what its proponents hope for.¹⁷ (It is worth noting in passing that these recent ideas support 'freedom' as a valid concept in our universe.)

4. As Buckminster Fuller¹⁸ and others¹⁹ argued, living systems are synergistically more than the sum of their parts:

Synergy is the only word in our language that means behavior of whole systems unpredicted by the separately observed behaviors of any of the system's separate parts or any subassembly of the system's parts. There is nothing in the chemistry of a toenail that predicts the existence of a human being.

Or:

There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it's going to be a butterfly.

5. Fuller goes another step, his thinking having been influenced by Heisenberg and likely by his great aunt who was a prominent theologian.²⁰

...the finite physical universe [does] not include the metaphysical weightless experiences of universe. All the unweighables, such as any and all our thoughts and all the abstract mathematics, are weightless. The metaphysical aspects of universe have been thought by the physical scientists to defy...analysis. I have found, however...that [the] total universe including both its physical and metaphysical behaviors and aspects are scientifically definable.

6. Ultimately, a moral overlay is required in order to choose a course of action in a world of trade-offs and uncertainties. But moral ideas based upon uncertain materialistic principles become so relative and circular as to be essentially irresolvable. Obviously, AI cannot help here.²¹ It is significant that the Ten Commandments,²² the accepted moral fundamentals for so many throughout the world, were given as generalised declarative, not relative, statements.

Modernised humanity seems to be seriously deficient in the will to act morally regarding care of people and the Earth. Conflicts in resolving trade-offs are overwhelmingly resolved towards acquiring personal power and material advantage, rather than on love. Robin Kimmerer²³ examines ecological principles from the First Nations' viewpoint that holds that actions towards the Earth should proceed not from what we want, but from gratitude for what She has given us. In turn, this approach would open paths towards action towards the Earth born out of love. Gratitude, or thankfulness, is also the meaning of eucharist,

the name of the central sacrament in Christianity. Here too gratitude becomes the gate that can open up the possibility of love.

IV. Is there a phantom captain of the Earth?

This question is the same as pondering if there is a phantom captain working in one's body or throughout the universe. Of course there is, even if His/Her/Its ways often seem logically contradictory and troublesome! The elements of matter simply cannot arrange themselves into organised material systems, much less into living, ensouled systems, without a blueprint/design and its thinker/conceiver with the will to manifest it. Religion differences within human culture arise in the naming of this captain and the description of its attributes, not whether the captain exists. Most of the world's religions acknowledge some sort of hierarchy of angelic sub-captains who enact the captain's will within specific subsystems of creation.

In the Christian mystical tradition, the being who carries the world design conceived by the Godhead is called the Word, or the Christ,²⁴ who creates and lives throughout all the systems in creation including the biosphere. The functioning of the biosphere is under the captaincy of the sun, from whom the Christ's invisible organising intelligence is carried in the sun's light and warmth, along with streaming life-forces that set Earth's life into rhythmical activity. But the story doesn't end there. Christian visionaries also stress that ever since the Christ walked, died on, and was buried in the Earth, He makes available a new surge of life—for an Earth in the throes of illness caused by the loveless actions of human beings—and directly to human beings who, in seeking to open an inner space for Him, may also experience healing, eventually manifesting love towards one another and the Earth. 24 John 1: 1–18

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Whitsun

Peter van Breda

Whitsun is that festival when the disciples who had passed through three years of highly charged and challenging apostleship are all at once filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. What they had endured and suffered and what they had not understood began to take on a new breath of reality. Following this experience, they go down to the market place and share with the crowds this new revelation:

Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was crucified. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. ... God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.

ACTS 2

People from all nations hear Peter speaking and are touched deeply by his Spirit-filled words. Some think the disciples are drunk, others that they speak in tongues. How can we comprehend a little more deeply what it was that the diverse crowd experienced in the words of the disciples, that each felt spoken to and that each heard as if it were in their own language?

The further we go back in the development of language, the more we will experience that the character of speech was driven forward by words of a spiritual nature. The most ancient words were words of action,

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verbs; the noun as a designated expression of a thing, was far less present. We can trace this far back in history. Take a profound word like Spirit and turn to the ancient Greek language: the word is *pneuma*. The further we go back we discover that *pneuma* meant exclusively Spirit but later took on a double meaning, to mean air, the air we breathe. We see in this unfolding of language a movement from the

world of the invisible spirit to the world of earthly appearances. Later on, after rounds of time we observe how the more verbal character in language begins to take on a more noun expression. An example can show this change from active verb to a passive noun quality. The verb descends as it were and becomes more of an earthly expression. The word for grave in German is *Grab*. In early times this word *Grab* was exclusively a verb—one was pointing to an activity, to dig. But what was one digging: a grave—the verb became an incarnated fact.

Owen Barfield once described the process of the incarnation of the Logos in the following way:

Even if I knew nothing whatsoever about the incarnation of Christ I could show you linguistically that at a crucial moment in history and of language 2,000 years ago the Word which previously hovered so to speak immaterially above the earth incarnated. There was a contraction of the immaterial qualities of the cosmos into a human centre.

This Logos-Word become flesh, became part of our own meaning. In the beginning was the Word and the Word which was God came down to Earth and became visible and alive in us and in the being of Jesus Christ. He spoke to his followers of the ‘Father in me and I in you’; ‘the kingdom of God is within you.’

In the last two millennia this spirit word that incarnated at the turning point of time entered ever more intensively into the being of man but also into the minutest sheaths of the Earth. We have though failed in so many cases to notice that the word in us and the words we use every day are present through the incarnation of the Logos. Our growing sense of self and the self of the other which since the Renaissance has become in our consciousness increasingly apparent is a gift of the Christ. Through the Logos entering into everything here on the Earth, radical transformations have come about. In this article I wish to highlight some of the progressions of the Word becoming flesh.

We all have a vocabulary of words with which we can express our emotions and our thoughts. An observant counsellor once remarked: every person has a story to tell, but very often they are unable or struggle to tell it through the lack of words. We have in English a huge treasury of words but of the nearly 200,000 words in current use, the majority of English-speaking people use no more than 5,000 words in everyday life.

In T. S. Eliot's poem, Prufrock draws together everything he had ever felt and thought; after rolling it into a ball, he pushes it across the table to his lover and laments with a cry: 'That is not what I meant at all; That is not it, at all.' How often do we find ourselves saying something similar?

As we get older another experience with language may become painfully present. We forget names and the words to describe our inner life and even day-to-day events—the oldies will know what I mean. Maybe to help us with this loss of a word treasury we might try to accept another aspect of language, which is silence. We can all practise this as a part of our speech. The old adage still seems true: 'silence is golden.' In these challenging times of the lockdowns we are all in one way or another thrown back into silent isolation. There is a temptation to fill these silences with outer noises, televisions rattle on later into the night; those interested in online news can't find enough verbiage to consume and so on. Practising silence which is accompanied by being on our own or with others is not as simple as some counsellors might suggest. In silence we may sense at first a deafening emptiness. We feel adrift, out at sea, without a rudder nor a compass to find our way home. We need to be equipped with a treasury of words that transcend the day-to-day gossip and trivia. These could be the words of the Bible, of prayers, meditations and religious writings and rituals, but also of literature and poetry: everything which uplifts us and guides us into the sphere and harmony of the Logos-Word.

In times of crisis of any kind we usually become aware of our need for each other, our need to meet and to commune with each other through conversation and deeds. Summoning up the inner courage we turn to our fellow human beings, uncertain how they will receive us or understand our aloneness, our drifting without an anchor out to sea. The epidemic of loneliness and anxiety in our time masks a deep-seated desire for belonging. In previous centuries and even decades, western humanity was settled and secure within family and existential heritages. This has changed radically. As human beings we are not born to fall into isolation and loneliness but our age of selfhood has separated us from each other. Somebody once put it that 'our need for belonging is indeed the warp-thread of our humanity.' Belonging should not be confused with giving up our identity or being trapped in some kind of constrictive societal reality. True belonging of free individuals who recognise the

self of the other is one of the pillars of our identity. A modern poet once made a very telling statement: 'You only are free when you realise you belong in no place—you belong in every place.' This is what Christ said to his disciples when telling them that they were to leave their homes: 'The Son of Man has no place to lay down his head.' On one level this sounds rather ascetic and something in us responds, is this really what life is all about—living without the built-in social support structures of family or a community co-existence? It does not follow that if you are living happily in a family unit you are to leave your home at the earliest opportunity; it is an inner, constructive aloneness that Christ is suggesting. A freely resolved solitude where I expand my inner being beyond my own need.

We can turn the question round and look at it from another perspective. What if we said to ourselves, I am going to be so free, so emancipated that I will first of all not allow myself to say to another, 'I don't have time to see you' but to correct this by responding, 'I will make time.' What I am stating is that I have life available which I am prepared to share with you in your need.

Following on this is our search for meaning especially in hard times. We need each other; we need a language of empathy and understanding and a practised sense of recognition of the essential nature of the other person. Maybe never before has friendship been a more appropriate form to help us to find our way forward on this rocky existential road. C. S. Lewis wrote:

Friendship is unnecessary, like philosophy, like art, like the universe itself... It has no survival value; rather it is one of those things which give value to survival.

The Four Loves

In fact, friendship brings a new radiance and new purpose to everything that has meaning. Sadly, we can notice that friendship threatens to become yet another commodity and can often become extraordinarily egotistical and indulgent. What do we mean by friendship? Sadly, very few people really have friends on whom they can rely for help with their struggles and also to share their joys.

There is a linguistic point about friendship which takes us back to our opening sentences about the evolution and journey of the Word through the ages. In the fifteenth century, a monumental change in

human consciousness took place. We became conscious of ourselves, aware of our fellowman at a distance; as we can observe in art, we moved from a two-dimensional experience of space to a three-dimensional one; we could see and experience beyond ourselves. It was only in the centuries of the Renaissance that friendships began to flourish; individuals recognised each other and sensed that like myself the other one was an individual with an 'I' like me. These friendships arose and became for many a celebration of the other through the language. Inspired conversation raised language to the level of communication and in many instances a true companionship with each another. Conversation became golden as Goethe tells us in his Fairy Tale. Through friendships, many worthwhile and important things were born. Human beings learnt how to express themselves; people drew together in freedom and lifelong friendships appeared. We became companions to each other; we learnt to appreciate that it is in our uniqueness as individuals that we can learn the things of most value.

The fall of language was never the aim of the Christ who bears the Logos nature, but human beings have dragged it down into the abyss and swamps of life. So much so we have the greatest difficulty in understanding each other anymore. The tendency to stride through life, claiming one's own special truth at the expense of the greater good has brought about much strife. The half-truth, the deceit, the slander, the hate, the lack of wisdom, all this and more are symptoms of an illness that is most often brought about by our misuse of language. The word has become a materialistic vehicle which, if not transformed, will draw us ever deeper into a hope-less earthly world.

The apostles' capacity to speak words that could be understood, whatever outer language their listeners knew, is the only possible way forward. This miracle happens whenever we speak words which heal, encourage and empower us. Those who need to hear it, will hear it and comprehend.

Evolved, mature friendships are those where we can stand shoulder to shoulder with our friend together to serve higher goals and aims. This creates hope and a healing future. The language of the Logos offers us the potential to lift the spoken word to the heavens and to usher it down again into deeds.

Speak in tongues and know that a friend in need is a friend indeed!

The Earth

Michael Kientzler

If we imagine a being like ‘the little prince’ of Saint Exupéry coming to the Earth from another planet and visiting all the diverse climate zones and landscapes with an open mind, what would he perceive?

First of all, coming close to the Earth from outer space there are certain dominant colours, blue and white and brown; hardly any green because the green is hidden under the white of the clouds. Green and clouds apparently belong together.

Let him first visit the Canadian Arctic—an area with small shrubs and tiny wooden plants, all very delicate. He has the impression that stepping on them would injure them and it would take them years to recover. Blossoms are relatively large compared to the tiny stems.

A little further south the ground is covered with very small rose bushes, trees narrow in form, bushes which are larger. Many lakes with water lilies. Beavers and moose, caribou and wolves. He discovers that beavers have created the innumerable lakes and ponds. Thousands of caribou are migrating north in summer, followed by packs of wolves. Our visitor has an imaginative mind as he beholds this prospect of the roses, the water lilies eaten but also fertilised by moose. Through their huge antlers they are connected with what comes from above, while wolves control their population and keep them healthy.

As he moves further south the trees become bigger and there are forests in the mountains and on the West Coast. They are dark and silent, the only sound the call of ravens. It is a screaming silence. He feels watched by the huge trees, cedars and firs. Bears roam the forests.

Again further south he comes to cathedrals of coastal redwood trees: very tall beings standing in little clusters like a family. If one tree leans a little to the right another will lean to the left. If a huge branch comes out of one tree, as big as a tree itself, the ‘sister’ tree will have a similar branch on the opposite side.

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They hold and support each other to withstand the hurricanes coming in from the Pacific Ocean.

Then he meets the largest living beings on Earth, the giant redwoods on the slopes of the Sierra Nevada, ancient beings over 300 feet tall with diameters of about twenty feet. It is the land of the trees.

As he can fly, he circumnavigates the Earth, landing in Australia in the Blue Mountains not far from Sydney. There is a gorge with a bog on top holding water even during the dry months, slowly releasing it into the steep valley. Water supports innumerable plants and animals, birds and big lizards, making a rich haven for many species; and he is full of wonder and awe at the wisdom revealed in making this niche of rich life possible.

He travels into the central desert of Australia, to Uluru, the sacred red rock. It is 40°C. Many plants grow in this desert. And then it rains. Waterfalls pour from the rock. There is an ancient sacred cave where women prepared food in the past and suddenly the rock starts to sing. He finds that just in front of the cave a little pond has formed and small water-holding frogs have come out of their hiding in the dry soil, creating the sound which seems to come out of the cave. The rain brings life into the desert and the brief life cycles of plants and animals come to fulfilment.

There are a multitude of birds on this continent. Many of them seem intelligent and somewhat mischievous, but there are no ruminants to give life-forces back to the soil. The bush and forests are marked by fires. Out of the blackened trunks of trees new green is sprouting. He is full of wonder about the closeness of death and new life on this continent of fire.

His curiosity and inquisitiveness take him to the Northern Hemisphere, to England. It is early May and he lands in the beechwoods of Sussex—a beautiful spring day with blue sky. The light falls through the fresh light green leaves of the beeches, and the ground underneath the trees is blue with flowers—as above, so below. A delicate fragrance fills the air together with the song of blackbirds and the call of the cuckoo. Fox pups play around their den, a badger passes by. How different it is from the Australian desert or the gorge in the Blue Mountains, this new fresh life of spring.

Not far away from the woods are meadows with white daisies, reminding him of the world where he comes from, buttercups, a cherry tree with

white blossoms and forget-me-nots underneath. The cherry tree is humming and singing with thousands of bees collecting nectar and pollen. Lanes with ancient hedges. It is a humanised landscape, changed by man 5000 years ago. A kind of garden really, transformed but not exploited and destroyed. Even the elemental beings are more friendly and inclined to human beings than in North America where they are apprehensive and sometimes opposed to human beings. For good reason, because through clearcut logging, trees are felled that were old when Columbus came and the beings connected with them become, as it were, homeless.

And again he travels to the rainforests of the upper Amazon. It is dark and moist on the ground. At one point a ray of light penetrates the canopy and big colourful butterflies cover the ground. Mysterious calls of animals can be heard. Each tree is like a meadow in Europe but with many more plant, insect and animal species. An overwhelming, unfathomable abundance of life forms and beings reveals itself. Growth and death in the rainforest enable more species to live than in the rest of the world. But there isn't much soil. When the trees are logged the soil only lasts a few years and the forest can never recover. There is a delicate balance here which seems to relate to the delicacy and vulnerability of life in the Arctic although the outer appearance is just the opposite.

The next area he visits is Africa. Deserts and rainforests, huge savannahs with hundreds of thousands of ruminants and their predators. Elephants roam the bush in family groups feeding peacefully with a multitude of antelope species, zebras and giraffes. The soil is often as red as Mars, which he knows well. The landscapes haven't been transformed much by human influence. And he compares it to Europe where every bit of soil seems to have been touched, turned around and changed.

There is lush rainforest and ancient desert, the Namib, where a plant consisting of two leaves, the 'tree tumbo,' sometimes grows for a thousand years. This is an ancient continent where he experiences the motherly character of the Earth the most.

He now wants to experience a young part of the Earth and he comes to New Zealand where magma is bubbling just under the surface, fern trees grow and everything is young compared to Africa.

To get to all these places he has to cross the oceans, the largest part of the Earth's surface, and which create the blue planet. They are very differ-

ent in character from the land, the ever moving dynamic flow, sometimes calm sometimes in turmoil with huge waves created by storms and gales, destructive hurricanes, with mighty elemental beings who seem to hate humanity as it is today.

Currents connect continents: warm streams like the gulf stream flow from the gulf of Mexico as far as the Norwegian Arctic where the Lofoten Islands have a mild climate relative to that in North America where, on the latitude of Oslo, there are polar bears.

And he notices that cold currents have an opposite effect on the land in the Southern Hemisphere: in South Africa and in Peru creating some of the driest deserts, and in British Columbia rainforest where the ancient trees reach right down to the ocean.

Tropical seas with coral reefs and colourful fish, sea anemones and octopus, whales and dolphins playing and jumping out of the water in pure delight at their ability to master the water; sea birds staying in the air over the oceans for months.

Fresh streams in the mountains, wells and springs each with a different taste. Lakes so pure that drinking water can still be taken out of them.

All these impressions leave him in wonder and awe. What a place in the universe! Nothing can compare with it. This incredible variety of living beings. And it all wants to be perceived by human beings.

But he also sees the ground covered by concrete, huge areas dug up, water contaminated, even poisoned, fertile ground turned into desert. Oceans overfished. The very air he breathes polluted by human beings who destroy everything they are connected with.

This being, like the 'little prince', has changed and grown up and learned about human history, and mankind's relationship with the Earth. He also learned about the central event of human evolution and history: the mystery of Golgotha and its effect on the Earth.

He sees how Mother Earth is defiled and desecrated by human beings. Although some of this has been taking place almost from the beginnings of mankind, with people killing one another and human blood running into the Earth, other dealings with the Earth were different in the past. Harmonious transformation of nature happened when the grains were bred, fruit trees created and animals domesticated. Wild animals were transformed through selective breeding into livestock and guardian dogs

which instinctively protect young and weak animals, as well as children. The aggressive auroch was domesticated into the cow—the ultimate sacrificial animal which gives fertility to the Earth and everything of her body to the human being.

We owe our whole physical existence to the Earth and our seeming physical separation from it is just a somewhat childish illusion. Every moment we need the air, water and food to sustain us; even in space travel, substances from the Earth have to be taken. We are as connected with the Earth, as physical beings, as our fingers are with the body. Through this insight our behaviour may change, as it already does among many people.

But the ultimate cause and reason for the destruction is our Ego which is somewhat ‘overexposed’, having developed beyond a certain point where a new step is necessary. This step is the gesture of John the Baptist towards the Christ: ‘I must decrease; He must increase.’ The Ego has to say the same to the higher Self.

The living being of the Earth has consciousness and a soul and is in the process of receiving a new spirit.

Since the moment in time when Jesus Christ says, ‘Now my hour has come’ and he transubstantiates bread (solid earthly substance) into his body, and wine (fluid earthly substance) into his blood, and says ‘who eats my bread steps on me with his feet (lifts up his heel against me),’ he becomes the Spirit of the Earth. This is an ongoing and increasing process through the ages. A process which needs to be accompanied by human consciousness and awareness.

The love for the Earth that many, especially younger people already feel needs to take the next step of becoming increasingly aware of the Christ-Earth relationship. This is a high goal and task but there are steps that can be made in that direction: to create a garden with love, or to work the land with biodynamic preparations, to observe the changes in nature through the seasons, and much more.

The German poet and thinker, Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg), was a prophet and messenger of this awareness:

*In plant and stone and sea and light
his childlike countenance shimmers bright.*

Lazarus—our guide on the path of death and life

Douglas Thackray

If ever there was a piece of heaven that had fallen to the Earth it would surely be the Prologue to the Gospel of St John, that reveals the Word as the origin of the fount of life and love.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

Only someone who had been drawn upwards like an eagle, could look into the light of the sun and bring this treasure down to Earth. It was as we know, the author of St John's gospel, the one called 'the disciple whom Jesus loved', John Lazarus. In following the events of Lazarus' sickness, his death and his raising from the dead as described in the gospel we may encounter many difficulties. However, as we strive forward, the light that emanates from the text tells us that within it lies hidden the deepest meaning. The relevance of these truths needs to be found anew in every age; never more than today, when the corona virus pandemic has forced us to rethink our values and change our ways in so many directions. It could be that Lazarus and his experiences can help us to do this.

The events which are about to unfold in this story took place during the time of the Feast of Dedication of the Temple. We find Jesus talking to the people by Solomon's Colonnade. In his discourse he reveals himself to the crowd as the Son of God. The Pharisees who stood nearby

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were angered by this blasphemy and sought to stone him, but he slips away. He goes to the mouth of the Jordan to 'the place where John had been baptising in the early days' and where Christ had been baptised too, at Aenon (John 3:23). It may even have been that they were commemorating this anniversary. In that place, a messenger from Bethany alerts Christ that 'the disciple whom Jesus loved' was ill. Despite this

news, they stayed on for another two days. The disciples, knowing of Christ's love for Lazarus may well have found this very strange. The explanation that Jesus gives them was to say that the sickness was not unto death but that Lazarus was asleep. The disciples understood this to mean that he was not sick at all, whereupon Jesus explains—much to their consternation—that Lazarus was in fact dead. However, they should not be concerned as this had happened so that the 'glory of God [might] be revealed.' It is difficult to understand what was going on other than to believe that what was happening belonged to the realm of the mysteries. We might surmise that Christ did not return to Bethany immediately because he was fully aware of the circumstances of John Lazarus' sickness and was accompanying the events surrounding it in the spirit from where he was. Whether John Lazarus was a disciple of the ancient mystery schools and was undergoing an initiation as performed in former times, or whether his condition was caused by some other circumstance, it was certainly such that it had led him to the threshold of death and beyond. As of all the disciples only John Lazarus was able to witness Christ's death on the Cross and fully understand the mystery of Golgotha, a situation had arisen which would require Christ's intervention to raise Lazarus from the dead and bring him back, so that his mission could be fulfilled and God's glory revealed.

In trying to form an imaginative picture of Lazarus' mysterious illness and his journey into the world beyond, we may be helped by going back to Aenon, that place at the mouth of the Jordan where John the Baptist had been baptising and from where after his untimely death at the hands of Herod, he had become the guardian spirit of the disciples as a group. He will play a key role in what now follows as he will accompany and guide Lazarus on his journey into the spiritual world where he will encounter heavenly beings filled with light but also dark forces which will threaten him as he returns to the Earth.

Our imagination begins with the picture of Lazarus' spirit soaring up, his consciousness transformed into a pure experience of soul, devoid of reasoning, which left his senses sharpened, his feelings uncluttered and his will enhanced, as if he were in a dream. As he approaches the threshold to the spiritual world, he feels the penetrating gaze of the guardian spirit, the same one that stands at the gate of paradise, bar-

ring the way to those who are not worthy or sufficiently prepared to undertake the journey, and who otherwise would fall into the abyss of the underworld which separates the two worlds. As his intentions are pure, Lazarus crosses over easily and arriving on the other side, he is met by a being that he recognises as John the Baptist, who will be his guide for the next stage of his journey. On looking around he becomes aware that he is surrounded by his life tableau, which penetrates his soul with living vivid images. As he feels Christ's loving gaze upon him, he is so overcome with emotion, that he is overwhelmed by a burning desire to return to Earth straight away in order to be with his master. However, as he turns around looking for his guide, he notices the latter's caring gesture beckoning him to follow as even greater things are to be revealed to him.

Following John, he is surrounded by shimmering rays of light which stream down on him from above. Looking up, he discerns the face of Christ as the source of the light. With outstretched arms, Christ is embracing the whole universe in a gesture of pure love and surrender. Overcome by a feeling of his own unworthiness, Lazarus turns away. Beneath his feet in the fathomless darkness below he discerns thousands of little lights and amongst them lit up on a hill three crosses gently glowing. As if he were awakening from a dream, he becomes aware that what he is beholding is the Earth. He hears a voice speaking in his heart: 'All things will be made anew, this is Golgotha, your place is beneath the cross on which your master will hang. There, you will witness his deed of love and also his resurrection which will make the world whole again. Many more things will be revealed to you but now you must return to Earth and fulfil your mission.'

Returning to the events on Earth, we find that Christ has now arrived at Bethany, where he meets Lazarus' sister Martha. She informs him that Lazarus has died and that his body has entered into a state of decomposition after four days. She tells him had he come back earlier Lazarus would not have died but she also states her conviction that whatever he asks of the Father will be granted him, thus demonstrating her unshakable faith in the Lord. This allows Christ to reveal himself to her with the words: 'I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in me though he dies will live, he who lives and believes in me

will never die. Do you believe in this?’ She replies, ‘I believe that you are the Son of God, the one who is to come,’ showing that her spirit is sufficiently enlightened that she can receive the mystery of Christ’s divine self into her soul.

In the sphere of the spirit Lazarus is now willing to descend into that deep darkness below him so that he may return to the Earth. As he gives himself over to this resolve he loses his foothold and begins to fall. Monstrous creatures appear out of the harrowing abyss and pull at the lifeline which connects him to the region above. As long as the connection holds, he knows that he is safe. The line is severed and he begins to fall at ever increasing speed into the abyss almost losing his consciousness. ‘Christ help me’, he cries aloud in utter despair. At that moment he descends more gently downwards until some figures appear out of the surrounding darkness which he slowly recognises as those assembled at his tomb in Bethany. ‘Lazarus come forth’, he hears the Lord’s command, and to their disbelief he steps forth from the grave into which they had laid his body still bound with strips of linen and his face covered in cloth. ‘Loose him and let him go’, Christ commands the bystanders. Lazarus the beloved disciple stands erect in the sun, almost overcome, yet ready to fulfill the mission for which he has now been adequately prepared.

His journey had taken him to the brink of the abyss; yet at the same time it had opened his mind and heart to the extent that he was able to grasp the importance of Christ’s deed of salvation for mankind and the importance of witnessing Christ’s death on Golgotha.

There is no better source to understand this mystery of the raising of Lazarus than Rudolf Steiner’s book, *Christianity as a Mystical Fact* (See the chapter: The miracle of the raising of Lazarus.)

‘I am the resurrection and the life’ ... Jesus actually says that he is the resurrection that has happened to Lazarus, and that he is the life that Lazarus is living. ... He is the Word made flesh. He is the eternal that existed in the beginning. If he really is the resurrection, then the Eternal, Primordial has risen again in Lazarus. We have therefore to do with the resurrection of the eternal ‘Word’ and it is this Word that has been raised in Lazarus. It is a case of illness, not one leading to death, but to

the glory, i.e. the manifestation of God. If the eternal Word has been awakened in Lazarus, the whole event conduces to manifest God in Lazarus. For by means of the event Lazarus has become a different man.

In these times of the public health crisis, we are living with death and resurrection as a common theme. We hear of those people in intensive care who have been in a coma and then returned; others were not so fortunate and continued their journey into the spiritual world. Some of those who recovered from their experience of the threshold have said that they had acquired new values and perspectives of the meaning of life.

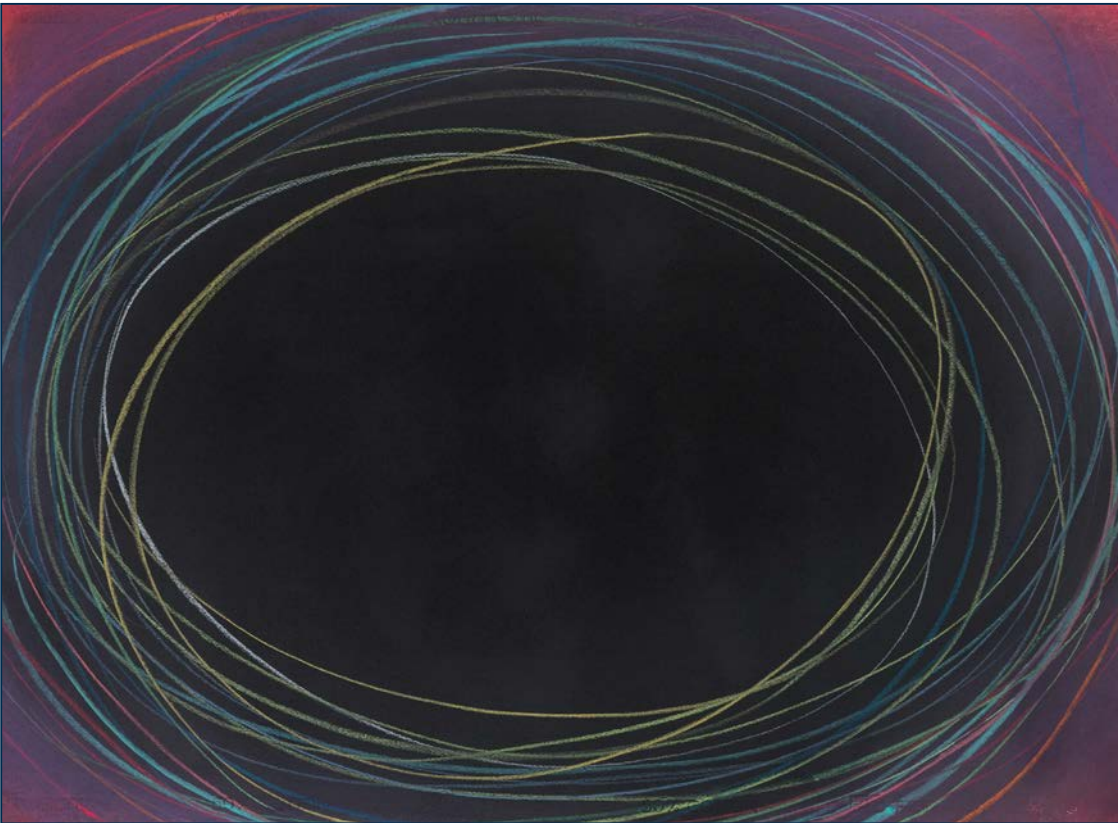
Of course, this is not only a personal matter but a worldwide phenomenon which is affecting millions. The public message is that things are about to get better, despite the mutations of the virus spreading. The answer given us by the authorities is to increase the defences and put more sandbags on top of the restraining dykes in the hope that providence will finally relent. The feeling beyond this is the unspoken fear that ‘the centre cannot hold’ for much longer.

From a spiritual point of view, the pandemic has made us catch up with the darker side of the reality of life. As death is all around us in the daily reports, in the subconscious there is a tacit acceptance of our finitude, which again brings the threshold continually into view. Beneath our sophisticated veneer, there lurks the primitive man within who senses instinctively that when we pass over into the realm of spirit, we will be confronted with the consequences of our deeds in the world and towards others. Perhaps this is the true source of the fear that so many are experiencing at this time.

If we wanted to locate our time in the story of Lazarus, which moment are we in? Perhaps the moment when Martha says: ‘Lord, by this time he stinketh,’ which elicits the response: ‘I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in me though he dies will live and he who lives and believes in me will never die.’

If we can acknowledge that we have arrived at this point, where we ask whether there is anything other than the body that will stink after four days, we can hear Christ’s message about death, which he will prove through dying and resurrecting: the essential nature of the human being is spiritual and cannot be destroyed by physical death.

As the Creed says, the resurrected one will raise the spirit of humanity, even those in the underworld that have lost their divine nature. His response to the body that 'stinketh' is to say that the essential Lazarus is asleep, because he had brought Christ to life within him through his deed of dying and awaiting his resurrection, trusting all the while that he would never die. What we learn here belongs to the heart of Christianity: those who have taken Christ into their lives will receive the life that endures into the cycles of time; the resurrection will be part of their 'I am' when they enter the world of spirit. What Rudolf Steiner has said of Lazarus will be true for all Christians: 'If Christ the Word is really the resurrection then the Eternal Primordial is risen again in Lazarus'.



Judy Holman née Randall

20 May 1965–27 December 2020

Just like the swallows who travel north and south annually Judy's life spanned the hemispheres. She crossed the equator eleven times in all. Born in Durban, South Africa, she carried something of the sunny, straightforward African soul in her as well as nurturing a love for English literature and history and an almost spiritual love for European classical as well as African music. She was a gentle person, kind and upright with no guile. Her soft and quiet exterior often hid her clear and firm will, with many a person remembering her delightful laugh. Judy had a keen interest in nature, especially bird-watching, and enjoyed swimming, walking and nurturing the cultural life.

Judy spent her first nine years in Durban, enfolded in a warm family of a musical mother who was a teacher, a father who loved the outdoor life and was active in the scouting movement, and two younger brothers whom she enjoyed organising in manifold play activities. Her parents ran the Durban Boys' Choir and, in the occasional absence of a baby-sitter, Judy sometimes attended the evening rehearsals as honorary boy! In 1974 Mr Randall became convinced the family should move to the UK and so began a new life chapter, in colder climes.



Throughout her childhood in many places in England Judy kept alive a burning passion for the land of her birth and in 1983 after leaving school returned to Natal for a year. Her hopes of studying at university there were dashed

due to her father being very unwell and she returned home to Sussex. Instead she enrolled at Exeter University to study theology, where she met her future husband. Judy had always had a sense for the spiritual, which was partly enlivened at the Methodist church her family attended. It was partly through conversations with Peter on a wide range of spiritual subjects, and her discovery thereby of Anthroposophy (which aligned very much with her father's spirituality) that brought her into the sphere of the Steiner schools and Camphill, as well as The Christian Community.

A year or so after their marriage in 1989 Judy and Peter flew to South Africa. It was a chance for Judy to introduce her husband to the land of her dreams, and this was first realised in the 18 months they spent at Camphill Hermanus. Peter's decision to explore the priesthood led them to Stuttgart in 1992 where their first child was born. By 1995 the growing family found themselves in Freiburg with a daughter on the way.

Judy was very adept at languages and had picked up a good German, but ultimately her wish was to bring up the children in the English-speaking world. This dream could be realised when Peter was sent to Camphill Village near Cape Town in 1997. The offspring presently doubled in number with the arrival of twins and Judy was very happy rearing her family among the Nguni cows and spring daisies of this beautiful farm. She sought every opportunity of connecting to the wider society and was an active member of the initiative group that led to the founding of a small Waldorf school. Judy was especially excited at the rainbow configuration of this school with its good racial balance, and soon began teaching music, as well as later taking on a class. Throughout her life she was quite good at inspiring others to action and sometimes adventure!

The move to the Durban area after ten years was the completing of a life circle for Judy, and in many ways she was at her happiest and most fulfilled here. She soon became a class teacher, carrying the class through the primary school, and thereafter became the music teacher for classes one to seven. Her passion was not only to instil in the children (her own as well) an interest in language, history, stories (being herself an expressive story-teller and letter-writer) and local history, but in particular a love for music, teaching the piano, recorder and singing. Many a festival was brought melliflously to life through beautiful singing, and Judy played the piano for the Act of Consecration over many years.

It was of great sorrow to her when she was no longer able to teach, due

to the onset of dementia when she was in her early 50s. In fact she never really grasped that this was happening, how her life was changing, and fairly quickly she relapsed into a lifestyle centred around her immediate needs and her limited life at home. The fog and confusion of dementia spared her the heartache that her family felt, but it did take her ever further away from them.

The last journey north across the equator in 2018 brought Judy and Peter to Edinburgh with their youngest son (the rest of the children beginning to take steps into the world elsewhere). Although initially missing South Africa Judy said she was happy to be in Edinburgh and grew to love her walks along the canal and helping her main carer, Waltraud, with art work and preparing meals. She played her beloved piano up until about a year ago. The needs became greater and Judy moved into a care home in August. Two days after connecting with her family on Christmas Day and seeming to take what was to be a final close look at them on the tablet screen, Judy passed away quite unexpectedly.

A full rainbow spread out over the church just before her funeral, forming a gateway into the next world. As one of the members had remarked: At Christmas the doors of Heaven are wide open and Judy has walked through them! In another image, shared by our South African lenker, Reingard Knausenberger, we could picture Judy's beautiful voice soaring like a lark, her soul winging, uplifted from one choir to the other in the offering song of the Angels, Archangels and all hierarchies.

REV PETER HOLMAN

Book reviews

Stories, Poems and Meditations

Karl König

Floris Books, £14.99

Paulamaria

Blaxland-de Lange

In this dark time, it was with great pleasure that I received the request to review the publication of Karl König's *Stories, Poems and Meditations*.

The last verse of a poem for the children of Lake Farm on the cover reads:

*We love the Earth below
And the Heaven above
We adore the brilliant Stars
Who shine
And the Mother Earth
Who carries us.*

From the outpouring of an anguished soul to make sense of his experience to many a stroke of descriptive power this book is a worthy compendium alongside all the other work and achievements of this remarkable man, who—born September 1902 and passing on again in March 1966—truly was a child of his time, and who carried the sad destiny of two world wars deeply in his heart.

To be a poet or a doctor was an important question for him. We can be glad that he chose the latter, for one can be a poet while being a healer, indeed poetic insight enhances ever how one looks on the world and the other.

Even at his most scientific he cannot but express himself with poetic power and social feeling.

In the introduction Alfons Limbrunner writes:

And now there is also—like the icing on the cake perhaps—artistic and literary work that was published only in small parts, in rudimentary form and mainly for his closest friends in earlier decades...

A diary entry by the 18-year-old Karl König testifies to this:

Science must be full of artistry and spirit, otherwise it will become godless and stale without truth and without grasping the world contexts. That is the great thing. Understanding the whole context, the great mystery. Everything is one.

Richard Steel chooses a poem written by Karl König when he was 17, in which he writes:

Give me the meaning.

The meaning of life I want to have.

And further on:

I want... I want...

Oh, let me want! ...

No no, we are only allowed to serve.

And barricade my heart from others

And thus severed with my emptiness

Joylessly stutter to the heavens.

It is astonishing that at around the same age he makes his decision:

Now I will simply stay an artist by nature.... And out of this came my first intention to become a doctor. Perhaps I will still write poems, but they will only be for myself.

The book gives an idea of Karl König's youth, his family, his teach-

ers, especially the poet and teacher Johann Pilz and his friend Alfred Bergel and his family and his journey from Judaism to Christianity. As he wrote poems throughout his life, the book has a biographic quality right from early days in Vienna to his last months at Lake Constance.

In his Editor's Note Richard Steel writes beautifully out of his perusal of the many many diaries and manuscripts and his deep appreciation for his subject's life, striving, achievements and humanity.

Many of the poems and verses were written in German, some of them already translated, some of them capably translated by the editor.

The following section of 'Meditations' covers the widest range of sense, feeling and thought, some of which bring tears to the eyes, some bringing beauty and clarity of thought and observation: the Goetheanum windows, Goethe, from Old to New Testament, of love and sacrifice, of the call of the angels, of Christ and of Lucifer, of Mary and of peace, of the world and of spirit.

The part named 'Poems' starts with König's late teens, written in 1919, full of melancholy and already Christian, the first verse beginning:

In my breast there sits a woe

Which haunts me day and night ...

And ending:

A longing for happiness,

And joy for great and noble love.

And at Whitsun 1921 ending with:

Everything is shed from my self

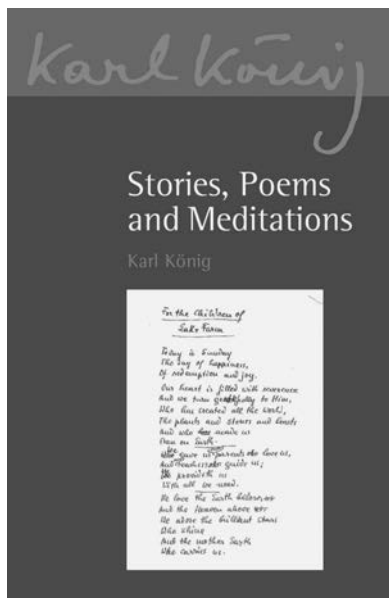
Far away are the rounds of my past
Gloriously awakened,

I look to the sun,

Looking upward I bestride the road,

That leads anew to eternal life

To you, O Lord.



The poet's aching cry 'To Germany' describing poignantly what Rudolf Steiner also said about the German people becoming wanderers in the future, like the wandering Jews, carrying the idealism, love and strength of their folk in their hearts in service of the whole world rather than their own nations; poignant as Dr König was born into both these folk souls, which so despairingly and disastrously met during the century of his life.

Each poem is worth a mention, and is worth reading and living with, bringing forth imaginations, solace and compassion for the heart's suffering reflected in his poetry.

The meditations appear not as if written for edification or instruction, but as the outcome, the result of meditation itself, which gives them the power to strike and move us and bestows on them their

freshness and immediacy and also their universality.

There is much beauty in these meditative verses, and the profound sense for esoteric Christianity and the penetration of Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy sounds through these especially, sometimes in pure intimacy, sometimes loud and clear.

Richard Steel speaks in his chapter 'One Last Poem' at length and nothing needs adding. König's love of music, his experience of listening to Mahler's Second Symphony, his work on his 'Animal Brothers', his struggles with his heart, his work on embryology and the Raphael Madonna show something of what this remarkable man felt and achieved, his sheer humanity and breadth of vision. Despite the darkness surrounding his allotted span, love and light jump off the page alongside and even despite it.

The parables König wrote for eurythmy (Rudolf Steiner suggested that stories for eurythmy should be in verse) are indeed written as poems, and—as they are written for school children—are didactic. Even so the image of the rich man selling all his worldly goods to buy a field with treasure in it (the working of the very sod) and the story of the wise trader (one wonders if Dr König might here be writing of Elijah, who was supposed to have travelled the wide world as a diamond merchant) whose angel gives his destiny 'pearl' to the hierarchies to prepare it for the next incarnation, are a moving testament to his deep insight in the destiny of the child with special needs.

Other stories such as the Monk's Dream written in 1943, sound like true imaginations in the telling.

Also, as child of his time König was steeped in the philosophical thinking that was the Middle European precursor and gift to esoteric Christianity, in the scientific writings of Goethe and the poetic German Soul as expressed in Schiller, Goethe, Novalis and Christian Morgenstern.

Dr König continues to write in a most intimate way of his own inner experiences in 'Also a Christmas Story' the story written in 1946/7 which has come to mean so much to those committed to Camphill, in which during his accustomed walk to find inner peace, he crosses the threshold in the woods, where he meets friends and children whom he knew in life and who now lead him to their 'house' in what he thinks must be 'the land of the dead' and which they call 'the land of Truth and Life into which the paths of all people lead.' He meets the ten women bearing a cross which becomes a cloud to carry souls to their next metamorphosis and the grey women's transformation to the rainbow substance of the ten Goetheanum windows; he sees the image of the Child of Europe on the wall, and witnesses the preparations for the building of the Bond.

*Oh, have faith, my heart!
Oh, have faith.
Nothing shall you lose,
Yours is, yes yours,
Everything you experience,
All your suffering too!*

May all of us hear it, now.

I would warmly like to recommend this book for all readers, not just for those familiar with the subject.

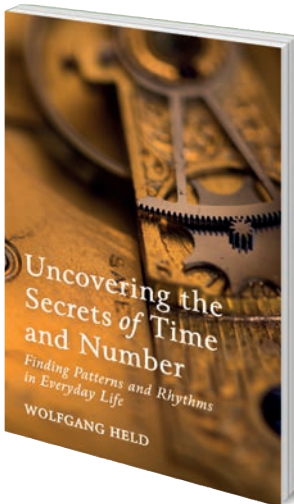
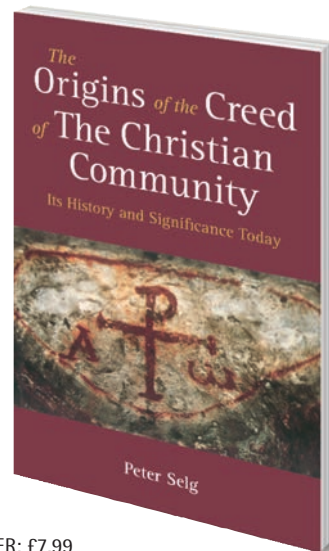
Roots and Rhythms

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Peter Selg offers an insightful and informative overview of how, in the time leading up to the founding of The Christian Community nearly one hundred years ago, Rudolf Steiner formulated both the creed itself and its founding principles.

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Approaching Death A Companion's Guide to the End of Life

Renée Zeylmans

Floris Books £14.99

Review by Kate Spohrer

As someone who has been in the 'death and dying world' for some fifteen plus years, when asked to review this book I had a fleeting thought: 'Oh no, not another book all about how to do death!' However, I found it refreshing, reinforcing and able to introduce me to some new perspectives on approaching death.

This comprehensive guide to matters around death, and consequently life, through anthroposophical eyes, describes itself as 'A Companion's Guide to the End of Life'. It covers a very broad range of aspects under four headings:

Being a Companion to a Dying Person / Care of the Dying / Death is Approaching / After Death

Addressing so many topics in twenty-four short chapters means many tasters without too much depth, but this is not a criticism: the book is an excellent appetiser for the reading list contained at the back, as well as a thorough grounding in the subject in its own right. The reader will most likely want to delve deeper into a few of the aspects introduced in the book.

Eight of the chapters are written by guest writers where Renée Zeylmans calls on specialists in the field to illuminate the reader

from their perspective. Many chapters are enriched with case study notes and some end with a thought-provoking

'contemplation' page, where questions are posed to the reader that may help them help others approaching death and, by default, themselves as they approach death.

The reader will find a multitude of resonant quotations throughout, illustrating the subjects, from Rudolf Steiner through to Jonathan Livingstone Seagull, and including the Bible and the Bhagavad Gita.

The book is written in an unsentimental and measured way from the basis of a wealth of experience and in a way that allows the reader to make their own mind up about the views expressed. There is nothing whimsical or airy-fairy, it is solid and grounded whilst still addressing the spiritual aspects of death and dying. Once familiarised with this book it is definitely one to stay on the shelf for reference.

Renée Zeylmans lost her husband suddenly in 1974, since when she was drawn to help others to develop an understanding of death. This she has done with great success and this book is the crystallisation of many years of sound and compassionate practice.

*Kate Spohrer
is a Partner
at Attwood
Funerals,
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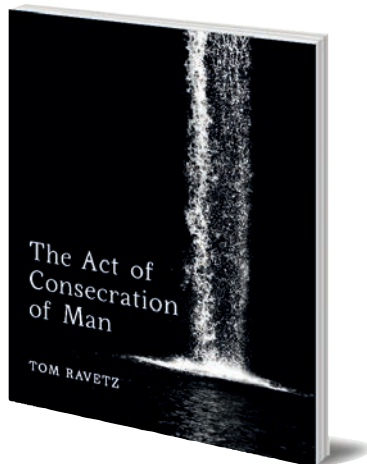
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Buckfastleigh TQ11 0AQ



There are four small guest rooms, three single and one double room. Three of the guest rooms have a wash basin; toilets and shower are separate. There is a kitchen for self-catering needs. Local shops and pubs/restaurants are within a couple of minutes walking distance.

Unfortunately we do not have disabled access and there are steps and stairs inside and outside the building. We ask for your consideration regarding the other guests and our events taking place in the house.

Suggested contribution £25 per person per night, one night £30.

Weekly rates available, also pick-ups and drop off for Two Moors Way.

For further information and bookings:

Rev Sabine Haus

01364 64 42 72

Email: sabine.hauslakeman@gmail.com

Centres of The Christian Community

AUSTRALIA

Adelaide (08) 8339 6466
3 Anzac Ridge Road (P.O.B 216)
Bridgewater, S.A. 5155

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Windhoek

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Hawkes Bay (06) 878 4463
617 Heretaunga Street East,
Hastings

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PO Box 1451 Dassenberg 7350

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39 Timour Hall Road, 7800
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Johannesburg (011) 789 3083

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

Stroud (01453) 762926
73 Cainscross Road,
Stroud, Glos. GL5 4HB

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

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21 Napier Road,
Edinburgh, EH10 5AZ

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Co. Down, BT18 9DX

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212 Old Lancaster Road,
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Fair Oaks, CA 95628

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San Francisco, CA 94115

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

Taconic-Berkshire Region
christiancommunityhillsdale.com
10 Green River Lane,
Hillsdale, NJ 12529

Washington, D.C. Baltimore Area, also Chapel Hill, NC

(301) 935-2727

The Parish House
4221 Metzertott Road
College Park, MD 20740

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The background of the entire page is an abstract artwork. It features two large, concentric, hand-drawn circles. The upper circle is filled with warm, golden-yellow and orange tones, with visible brushstrokes creating a sense of movement. The lower circle is filled with cool, deep blue and purple tones, also with visible brushstrokes. The two circles overlap slightly in the center, creating a dark, indigo-colored area. The overall effect is organic and textured, resembling a painting or a large-scale drawing.

March–May 2021

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