

REPORTS FROM REGIONS

EVENTS – FINANCES – FUTURE PLANS

NO. 66 ADVENT 2014

Australia and New Zealand

Darryl Coonan has been working in New Zealand since August. In November The Christian Community Charitable Trust in New Zealand was founded. The first fundraising venture was a great success. After 25 years of working in the country the Christian Community now has its own social work organization.

The attendance by the Lenker Anand Mandaiker at the Australia-New Zealand synod in Auckland, New Zealand and the Australia Council meeting in Melbourne in November was both strengthening and appreciated.

The community in Canberra has taken the first steps towards purchasing the building they have been using for 15 years. The lived activity of the community has meant it has managed to raise the full purchase price, which included a generous and anonymous donation. The community is now embarking on a fundraising drive to cover the cost of refurbishment estimated at \$150,000.

Lisa Devine and Cheryl Nekvapil who are the two currently working permanent priests in Australia continue to carry the primary responsibility for the widespread congregations. Martin Samson and Veronika Plantener have been on leave – though veronica has started with some very part-time work in October. Our priests have been generously supported this year by visiting priests from a number of places: Carola Gerhardt, Stephan Ness and Barbara Peter-Schult from Germany; Bastiaan Baan from the U.S.A.; Michael Kientzler and Karin Medbøe from the U.K., and Paul Corman from Peru. This has been an enormous effort from the international priest circle and we are blessed by their efforts which have been an answer to a plea made by the Australia Council to the Circle of Seven after our May 2014 meeting.

Ronan O'Connor

Austria and South-Eastern Europe

no message

Bavaria

Nothing new to report.

Dorothea Humérez

Central Germany

Nothing new to report.

Albrecht Schwenk

Czech Republic

no message

France and francophone Belgium

This summer again we ran some building camps in Paris, first with helpers from foreign countries, some of them we knew already, then with new people, younger ones now, who enriched us with their youthful enthusiasm. After enlarging the vestry and redesigning the area of the altar last year, we shortened the background area of the chapel and provided it with a new massive wooden door; the complete inner wall-covering was renewed up to the bare walls, as well as a toilet for handicapped people was built in. The works proved to be more complicated than planned, thus the Circle of Seven had to be satisfied with a floor in the chapel still covered by a polythene sheet and walls without the planned varnish. The opening festival will take place on 22nd February 2015. A third time of renovating, again with building camps, have we planned for the next summer – the exact dates haven't been fixed yet. Then we'll treat the outside of the building and the whole area of entering the building. For information relating to these plans please turn to Johannes Sloendregt, phone: +41-61 701 80 83, bildart@gmail.com.

And here the report of a member from the congregation in Chatou, which gives you an insight into the life of this community, situated about 15 km [9,3 m] to the west of Paris: As we have only a small number of priests in France, we have to share brotherly. So we are visited once in the month by a priest – Jean Marie Falcone – in our beautiful chapel in Chatou. Then there are “religious teachings” in Saturday afternoon for groups of around 15 children, in the evening an “etude – exercise” for the adults on a topic chosen earlier – quite often the gospel of the next Sunday. On Sunday the Act of Consecration of Man and the Sunday service for the children are celebrated, afterwards again an “etude” for the grown-ups and later a common meal. Often also a baptism takes place. Some time ago people asked for more religious lessons for their children, so two women from the congregation are prepared to teach the children once a month on Sunday morning – a highly enjoyable fact. During this time parents as well as other members of the congregation gather for a joint meeting where they read the gospel, the creed and other texts, and sing and pray together. The seasonal feasts are celebrated regularly, whereby our garden and the spaces around the church are most advantageous. At Michaelmas the children had to prove their courage and strength of will, before they were knighted as servants of Michael. A short time ago we had the “Advent garden” and in January we expect a “Play of the Three Magi”, performed by our children.

Claudia Achour (member in Paris) and Christa Pons (member in Chatou)

Great Britain-Ireland

The annual meeting of The Christian Community in Great Britain took place in Edinburgh from 17th-19th October, with the theme Transubstantiation. The meeting was a great success. Once again we could feel what can happen when we come together from our different communities and make a space for the archangelic being who is at work in all that we do in our Region. The Irish congregations hold their annual meeting in Epiphany.

As has been announced in previous reports, the church in north London was put on the market earlier this year. It was eventually sold for £ 2.5 million. The trustees of The Christian Community in Great Britain and The Christian Community in London Ltd mandated a group to decide jointly how this capital should best be used to further the development of our Community in Great Britain and Ireland.

The Christian Community in London is retaining £ 600,000 for essential renovations to the building and for additional chalet accommodation in the garden. This will enable it to better serve as a conference/meeting centre for The Christian Community as well as increasing income at other times to support its work. We hope that with time it will be possible to employ a professional manager for the bed and breakfast. It is also intended that any profit that is made by the bed and breakfast at Temple Lodge will be shared with The Christian Community in Great Britain.

Additionally London agreed to make a gift of £ 100,000 for international work with 60% going to the Foundation The Christian Community (International) and 40% to the new Christian Community chapel being built in Colmar, France. The latter is a gesture to help internationally where it is

urgently needed, just as we received help in funding the chapel in Canterbury from Holland and Switzerland. The balance of £ 1,720,000 is being made as a gift to The Christian Community in Great Britain. This amount is earmarked as follows: £ 1,000,000 towards the new church in Stroud; £ 460,000 to replenish our reserves and £ 260,000 for future needs (development grants, new priests' housing). The Stroud congregation is about to submit its plans for detailed planning permission for building its new church, and the appeal for this project has been launched. The appeal will be sent around the regions soon; meanwhile more information is available via the website at <http://www.stroud.thechristiancommunity.co.uk/>.

Three priests from the region are supporting the work in Australia: Michael Kientzler is in Sydney for the winter months, and Michaela and Nicholas Wijnberg have agreed to help out in Melbourne for the first half of 2015.

The English-language journal of The Christian Community, *Perspectives*, has had some changes to its editorial team in the last year, with the addition of Donna Simmons as one of the two Editors along with Tom Ravetz, and Gabriele Kuhn (Edinburgh) taking on the management of the subscriptions. We are currently revamping the website, which will soon have an archive of issues from the last 10 years, as well as a searchable index. The magazine appears quarterly and has a selection of articles on theological and wider themes. A free trial copy is available from Perspectives Subscriptions, 21 Napier Road, Edinburgh, EH10 5AZ, UK, subs@perspectives-magazine.co.uk. For more information on prices, please consult <http://www.perspectives.thechristiancommunity.co.uk/>.

Tom Ravetz

Italy

no message

Japan

no message

Netherlands and Flanders

In our last "Information" we reported that we are striving to enhance the talks in all our congregations about the discrepancy between the financial contributions on the one hand and the expenses for the support of our priests on the other hand. Thereby we choose as our starting point the fact that it is not only the question to raise the contributions, but also to strengthen the Christian Community. The next step will be that a group of members of the Synod and the Board of Executives begins working. The task of this group is to describe possibilities of strengthening the Christian Community in our Region. We want to involve a sufficient number of priests in this endeavour, necessary for this work to be well done, to find out how they may be installed in our congregations, furthermore: which special tasks and initiatives in our congregations themselves they'll be able to take on. As far as possible the personal, financial and administrative effects shall be described. This team will possibly finish its work in March 2015 and give a report to the Synod and Board of Executives.

The annual day for members and interested people took place in Arnheim on 11th October. Its topic was: "How do you build on your congregation?" This topic was stressed by several lecturers and was discussed in study groups – an animating day with good talks. About 60 members were present.

In September a new book by Siegwart Knijpenga was published: "Driewaardig leven, religieuze ervaring in het hier en nu" (Trivalent life, religious experience in here and now). The religiously minded person may experience the Divine Father in the Nature. In processes between human beings he may experience the Divine Son. In his ideas he may experience the Holy Spirit. Who accepts these three values lives threefold. The author describes these religious basic terms with concrete examples.

Ellis Booi

Northern Germany

In our Region almost traditionally our conference for co-workers and their families takes place in the house of the Rothfoss-foundation at the Mözen Lake near Bad Segeberg. “As in heaven so on earth”, “Grace dances” were the last two captions of the meetings of young and old, which happened at Ascension Day and the first of May and where around 100 people came together, 35 of them children. The next meeting, on Ascension Day 2015, will be given the caption “He comes in the cloud”, the posters are already being printed. Gathering in a circle evening and morning with stories for young and old, singing together, several study groups, talking as well as moving, canoeing on the Mözen Lake, short concerts, visits to exhibitions in the nearby Segeberg and, of course, walks, pursuits fitting to the in addition to the respective age of children and youths, will be offered.

The daily celebrating of the Act of Consecration of Man, the Sunday Service for Children and the Close of the Day are the crucial starting point for our gathering. People from several congregations, members of the Regional council and priests colleagues begin already in autumn to prepare this meeting. Even rooms in the guesthouses in the vicinity have to be reserved to accommodate all participants. With the support of the Region and the Sozialwerk (German association for non-religious tasks) of The Christian Community are we able to keep the prices low, so that really everyone who wants to partake is able to afford it for the whole family.

21 priests and priestesses from Sweden, Norway, Finland, Estonia, Poland, Russia and Northern Germany met in Davide on Gotland in August 2014. Rudolf Steiner speaks about the mysteries of the area of the Baltic Sea and their meaning for the future development of Central Europe and the connection between the old mysteries and Christianity (Gisela Thriemer had spoken about it). This meeting had emerged after a work meeting in Rostock in 2013, where we already dealt with the phenomenon of the Baltic Sea in Mecklenburg. During those three days, which we spent on Gotland in August 2014, the colleagues tried to describe the fundamental nature of their countries and their congregations. Out of it arose the common will to prepare two meetings one after another because there is only room for about 50 to 60 people in Davide on Gotland.

– SPACE OF LIGHT BALTIC SEA – Encounters on Gotland

Between 20th and 23rd August and from 27th to 30th August 2015 both meetings will take place.

For the year 2015 the congregations from Sweden and Northern Germany (Lübeck, Rostock und Hamburg-Volksdorf) have declared their willingness to prepare the meeting. It will be held in the Swedish and the German language. We’ll have to wait and see what will happen in future. In any case, we plan to maintain this wonderful place Davide carefully so that in years to come people from our Region may gather there, time and again, to reveal the mystery of the space of the Baltic Sea furthermore. At Michaelmas 2015 we will report how it was.

Gerhard Ertlmaier

Northern Countries

no message

Southern Africa

no message

North-America

no message

Romania

One year, a year of probation, has passed, when Monica Culda in both congregations Bucharest and Cluj celebrated once in a month the Act of Consecration of Man and ran a seminary. Mr Sondermann, Mrs Robert and Mrs Hasselmann contributed with their visits to inspiring experiences in the services.

A journey to the abbeys in the Bukovina with 26 participants from Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Romania made it possible that they all were deeply impressed by the culture-enhancing power and beauty of these monasteries.

Now, during summertime 2014, many people from all Regions gathered in Beliș. At first 26 youths from North-Rhine Westphalia arrived, who, together with eight Romanian youths, supported the preparations for the family-holidays. The “interpersonal chemistry” between the young group

members was excellent and enabled a joyful start of the following family-holidays. They proved to be a “magnet” for numerous young families and different adults. The topic of the meeting “The Sacrament of Marriage” found its accomplishment in a most wonderful wedding. Even nature contributed to the feast so impressively with a mighty thunderstorm above our heads that this event made a lasting impact on our memories.

All requirements for the foundation of the Christian Community in Romania are met by the congregation. That became clear for the Circle of Seven in a talk with the college of priests responsible therefore. Now it is “only” necessary to find the right timing for two priests when to start work there. Mrs Hasselmann declared her willingness to learn the Romanian language for this purpose. A group of 12 to 14 Romanians devote themselves to questions of creative configuration and work. Full of hope and faith do we start into the next year, confident that the chance of the foundation becomes more and more realistic.

Armgard Hasselmann

The activities in the Romanian Christian Community have considerably increased through the intense work to get more visibility and to strengthen the relationship with other institutions. In her two visits in our country rev. Marie Pierrette Robert had lectures on Resurrection at Easter time, and on Michaelmas, at our two chapels in Bucharest and Cluj, and in Rudolf Steiner House, in Bucharest, and she is going to be in Romania in December, too.

Rev. Armgard Hasselmann gave lectures in Bucharest and Timisoara kindergartens, and rev. Michael Debus held lectures on Mystery Dramas at the Eurhythmy Association, and on Solar and Moon karma at R. Steiner House, in Bucharest, and about The Modern Communities at the chapel in Bucharest. Rev. Monica Culda had many contributions on different sacraments in the Christian Community, in our chapels, and about modern religious education in Waldorf kindergartens and schools in Bucharest and Cluj. We thank them for their dedication and help guiding us on our way to the foundation of the Community in Romania.

Virginia Petrovici

South-America (without Spain and Portugal)

From 20th to 25th October we held our third meeting of treasurers from South America in Lima. Representatives from Cali/Columbia, Lima/Peru, Santiago/Chile, Neuquén and Buenos Aires/Argentina and Botucatú/Brasilia were present. Only from Sao Paulo nobody was able to attend; in total we were 14 people, four of them priests.

We are striving especially to build up trust, and I think that we are on a good way. Each congregation in our continent is a world of its own.

Maarten de Gans

South-West Germany

Since the last “Information” we have to report two occurrences; on the one hand: In the congregation Öschelbronn/Johanneshaus the expected change of the priest has taken place; at Michaelmas after a really convincing period of vocational adjustment Mrs Weinhard was introduced in Copenhagen; in Öschelbronn her send-off happened already at the 14th September, and at the same time the introduction of the new priest Mrs Kati Kolk. For some time she will look after the congregation. In November fortunately the chance arose for her to find a suitable flat in the immediate neighbourhood to the Johannes-Haus.

On the other hand: our regional meeting at Michaelmas took place in Constance on the occasion of the 600-years jubilee of the Vatican council “The Ego between Deception, Self-deceit and Truth – Jan Hus and His Importance for Our Time“. All events took place in the city centre: in the Cultural Centre, the Choir School, the Old Catholic Church ... Therefore, we moved all the time open to the public. The number of participants reached 200 people, a number we had planned as limit – but

after all they were largely “our” people. Nevertheless, it was a successful event thanks to the splendid preparation by the Constance people, and the exemplary catering and the well performed presentations, especially the introducing and in the end repeated play by Mrs Janatova from Prague for two people, the fictitious dialogue between Jan Hus and Emperor Sigismund in their after-death period. Exceedingly awe-inspiring were the three Acts of Consecration of Man in the Rococo-style building of the Christus-Kirche, together with the music in the enlarged sound system. The “cash check” then showed a total turnover of about € 22,000 a small financial plus! Thus we are aware to have initiated an appropriate impulse with our conference at the beginning of a five years period of commemoration.

Hellmut Voigt

Switzerland

no message

West-Germany

no message

Wuerttemberg

no message

Gewänderkammer (Vestment Workshop) and Substanzenversand (Delivery of Substances)

Since more than ten years the refund amounts for the vestments have been unchanged. Now we attempted a new cost estimation because the sewers and seamstresses from outside had asked recently to step up the piecework system. The amounts include the costs of material and production as well as the share in the overhead costs of 40%. After consultation with the co-ordinators the following new refund amounts will be valid from 1st January 2015:

Priest's cassock, with trying on	€ 512,50
Priest's cassock, without trying on	€ 463,50
Albe, with trying on	€ 502,50
Albe, without trying on	€ 465,75
Short albe, with trying on	€ 331,75
Short albe, without trying on	€ 295,00
Laundering once	€ 12,25
Stole, girdle	€ 273,50 €
Chasuble	€ 1.001,00
Chasuble: Passion-tide	€ 1.031,00
Chasuble: Ascension	€ 1.100,00
Mantle (silk): trinitary, Ascension, Passion-tide	€ 937,75
Mantle (silk): other	€ 921,75
Server's collar: Easter, Whitsun, Christmas.	€ 134,75
Server's collar: Ascension	€ 150,75
Mantle (wool): trinitary, Ascension, Passion-tide	€ 721,00
Mantle (wool): other	€ 704,00
2 Server's vestments: medium size	€ 490,00
1 Server's collar	€ 75,25
2 Server's short vestments: medium size	€ 306,00
Cup cloth: 40x40 cm, double, colour of festival time	€ 29,00
- as above: white	€ 23,50

During the past weeks Weleda has again examined their cost estimation for incense coal and incense. After most favourable consideration and relinquishing any surcharge the selling price for incense coal, inclusive value-added tax, will be much lower at € 4.55 per box (10 pieces) instead of € 10.95. However, because of considerably risen costs of production, the selling price for incense, value-added tax included, will be increased from € 5.09 to € 14.01 pro jar. The substances are delivered with a surcharge of 40% of the overhead costs.

Then the refund amount per box of Weleda-incense coal will be around € 6.00, and for a jar of incense € 19.00. These sums are valid when our existing stock is used up.

If there is something unclear or you have any questions, please turn to the administration of the Foundation (Tel. 0049-30-609 785 91, foundation@christengemeinschaft.org).

Armin Knabe, Berlin

Seminaries/Stuttgart

As an Introduction: to get you in the mood

Here we expected Christmas all the time as St Luke describes it warming your heart: All the time we work as joiners on the manger of our Lord, we make inhospitable places in our souls as comfortable as possible with the little that is available for this purpose, so that He may appear on earth and becomes a human being.

But the other story, too, the “royal Christmas story” is influencing continuously our studies – you’ll suddenly notice that during Advent. Our students – in total there are 42 participants in the Seminary and gaining some work experience – hail from 20 different nations. They bring much wealth, to put it away because the new riches they take on without being able to know whether they will achieve what they are aiming for: to become a priest.

About the Situation

During this trimester things went well: A bright star shine upon our work, the heavens are open, those who have passed before us are still connected with us. That can be felt by everyone who stays with us a while. It could have been quite different. So often as in the last trimester we had not missed a scheduled lecturer for the main course – for so long in so short a time; regularly we found someone who was able to step in, who could fill the gap competently. Deeply touched were we when our colleague in managing the Seminary Françoise Bihin fell ill, paying with her illness the tribute for shuttling to and from once a week between the congregation of Colmar and her tasks in the Seminary in Stuttgart. We had to live with this gap because we could fill the subject lessons with other lecturers, but we were unable to replace Mrs Bihin. We hope to offer her a healthier way of working in the next trimester, so that she will be able to return to her tasks in Stuttgart step by step.

Priest in the Christian Community – an outdated model?

With regard to the understanding of nations the gathering of members of so many nations offers certainly a wonderful situation and possibility – and in fact, we experience that in our living together: It isn’t your origin that counts but our common being human. However, behind this mixture lurks a fact that causes us to ask: Why goes such a small number of German students enroll in our Seminary? During the last trimester of their training in Stuttgart there were only four to six students since 2008. Why are people in that country where the Christian Community has spread stronger than everywhere else not driven to take up the profession of a priest? Why does the experience of the Christian Community in Germany not enhance the will to engage oneself personally in its working and spreading? If you then consider the fact that the most ardent students quite often don’t come from our congregations, but found their way to us because they were searching answers to their innermost questions, the riddle grows even more. What is hindering you that Friedrich Rittelmeyer’s feeling, when he first read the text of the Act of Consecration of Man: “You may not fail now”, doesn’t occur more often when you experience the celebration of the service?

Plans

We have planned the ordination of the four participants in the ordination-course for the 28th February and 1st March 2015 here in Stuttgart. They will celebrate their first Act of Consecration of Man when the “Campus A”, the association of Anthroposophically orientated training-courses in Stuttgart run their joined studies week for the second time – for about 450 students who select their

contents for studying by themselves from the rich offer of themes, and learn to know each other better in a personal encounter.

During the week between 8th and 13th March 2015 our next “Course of Orientation” takes place. From 21st to 23rd June 2015 we plan to invite friends and sponsors into our Seminary for meeting, exchange of thoughts and enjoyment in being together. Even a “Cabaret” shall be performed during these days. Will we be able to greet you too as our guest? You want to know more about us? Gladly we send you our newly published “Seminarbrief – Letter of the Seminary” – even regularly if you want that. Just drop us a line.

Georg Dreißig

Seminaries/Hamburg

The landing of new students follows a rhythm of tides whose change is unexplicable for us. In this case, for this semester the number of seminarists is so low that we only hope for a flood of enrolments in the next year. Both advanced classes contain five students each, but in the first course only three students took up their studies after some unexpected cancellations. May be that people already learned of our plans for the start in 2016 of our “Studies in Job”, thus interested in these new ways of studying. We used this special situation to fulfil an old plan: From now on there’ll be a leaflet wherein we make the congregations aware of the possibility of the full-time studies with us.

As in the past years we sent out a booklet which gives an insight into a topic at the seminary that goes far beyond the usual topics of our courses. Last summer, Peter Bruckmann delivered a lecture about legal questions which is now available in print “Are we slaves of the law or creators of freedom? Conditions of Christian justice – Sind wir Sklaven des Gesetzes oder Schöpfer der Freiheit? Bedingungen eines christlichen Rechtslebens“. During winter term we’ll go on dealing with questions of how to develop the social life furthermore – especially in connection with questions of the essence of the Hierarchies. Armin Knabe, Vicke von Behr and Tom Ravetz ran courses on these topics.

Preparing for the pilot group of the “training course in job” we are working on a curriculum, where we describe our concept extensively with special regard to our teaching and learning methods. For March and April 2015 we are planning a circuit through the German Regions to inform the interested priests about our plans. We would like to exchange thoughts about a desirable regional network between future students as well as a programme for tutors. On 30th April and 1st May 2015 (6 o’clock pm to 6 o’clock pm) we invite people to a short meeting interested in this future training course.

Doris Quirling, Ulrich Meier

Körperschaftsverband (KV)

Nothing new to report.

For the management: Dietmar Schwarz

Verband der Sozialwerke

Leaflets on our holiday-camps, study-travels and further training for the care of the elderly for people working full-time or on an honorary basis are displayed in our congregations. You can also turn directly to the central office of the Association or look up the website under the URL www.cg-sozialwerke.de; there you’ll find all the pieces of information you may need.

Dietmar Schwarz

Haus Freudenberg

All in all we are able to interpret the numbers: The amount of bookings is dwindling, and they are as follows:

2000 to 2009 per average around 5,500 stays overnight p.a.

2010 to 2014 per average around 5,300 stays overnight p.a.

2015 less than 5,000 stays over night.

Especially the numbers of booking by the Christian Community are diminishing. Groups and courses from the Christian Community actually make up half the bookings in Haus Freudenberg. The other half is booked by guest-groups. Six years ago the proportion was 70 to 30 per cent.

This year the manageress of our household, Mrs Tusche had to drop out for two months, due to illness, and we had to cover this gap. In 2015 Mrs Tusche will reduce her work from half a work load to a quarter of that. In 2015 we'll be able to make use of five and a half full-time working places, shared between eight people; in 2008 there were seven full-time working places which were shared by nine people.

Investments and the acquisition of new goods we reduced to strictly necessary ones. Renovating the co-workers' flat where our co-worker for many years, Mrs Beate Ungar, lives, became a necessity. In 1978 she began working for us and Haus Freudenberg, so she has lived and worked in Söcking since 36 years. The small power-station, generating electricity, we modernized in autumn 2013, now it works most satisfyingly. Compared to earlier years we save € 3,000 annually. So this investment will have paid off in seven years' time.

It needs a lot of inner strength to leave open the final outcome and our future, despite the visibly slowing development. We know that we cannot take into account all the factors which play their part in this process, but we won't shut our eyes in front of the visible facts. We must deal with things attentively, yet knowing that only the future will show what will come to pass as well. Have a light-filled Advent, a merry Christmas and a blessed New Year – that's our wish for you.

Jutta and Dietmar Reisch

Haus auf dem Berge

Thanks to well co-ordinated dates and a strong booking by classes of the Waldorf Schools we reached a high number of stays overnight. We also overcame successfully an in depth audit by the revenue office. Despite the turn over tax claim for the years 2010 and 2013 the final outcome will be balanced thanks to the numerous bookings in 2014. We'll keep open the House on the Mountain for our guests and are looking forward to the events at Sylvester.

For the house, it's co-workers and helpers Tobias Knabe

Publishers

no message

Treuhandverwaltung

no message

End

Translated by M.-E. Förster