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THE MARK

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AS CHRIST

BY PETER HAAS

It's a joy for me to begin my first minister article with you by pondering and affirming the possibilities of our 2018 Community Aim: *Evolving as Christ*.

While *as* is a small word – a preposition, no less – this little word helps reveal the massive mystery and profound possibility at the heart of Christianity.

I'll never forget the first time I heard Bernadette Roberts explain her transformational interpretation of the Eucharist, which profoundly shaped her spiritual life, and helped her interpret and articulate her spiritual journey into the no-self state. Specifically, I remember Bernadette's vocal emphasis when she said this phrase, "Receive **what** you are and become **what** you receive."

As I later came to learn, this was Bernadette's adaptation of a phrase from a sermon by St. Augustine (AD 354–430 CE) that pairs the Eucharist with those who receive it, who are *also* the body of Christ:

"What is seen is the physical representation; what is understood is the spiritual fruit. Therefore, if you want to understand the

body of Christ, listen to the Apostle [Paul] speaking to the faithful: *You are the body of Christ, and its members* [1 Cor. 12:27] ...When you hear 'The body of Christ', you answer, 'Amen'. Be a member of the body of Christ, so that your 'Amen' may be true! What then is the bread? ...*There is one bread; we, the many, are one body* [1 Cor. 10:17]...One bread – what is this one bread? It is one body formed of many. Remember that bread is not made from a single grain, but from many. When you were purified, you were ground. When you were baptized, you became dough. When you received the fire of the Holy Spirit, you were baked. "**Become what you see, and receive what you are.**" (Augustine, Sermon 272, *On the day of Pentecost*).

Bernadette is also very clear that you and I don't become a Christ. From her vantage, there are not billions of Christs; there is *one* Christ and many "members" or participants.

Remember, Christ is *what* we are being transformed into. Specifically, Christ is the union of the Logos' divine nature and human nature – a union concretely revealed by Jesus and available to us. Jesus showed us the Way to evolve as Christ through the process of purgation, illumination and union; or as Bernadette puts it, the complete Path of life, suffering, death, resurrection and ascension.

As this transformation process unfolds, we may begin to realize that, where there was once *just* my self, now there is something different – there is *also* Christ – more of the divine union with me, and less of my I-ness. Less anger, more love. Less laziness, more wisdom. Less fear, more faith.

It turns out that once we are in the unitive state (which many are, even if they may not realize it), it becomes increasingly evident that we are now evolving not just *as* a self, but also *as* Christ. It's like the dough realizes it's no longer just dough – it's also becoming bread.

The practical uptake is that we are not just evolving *as* our self, for our self – whoever that might

be. We are also, as individuals and as a community, evolving as Christ. Here's how St Paul articulated this experience: *It is no longer I, but Christ in me* (Galatians 3:19-20). Christ is what connects us regardless of what seems to separate us. What-ness precedes and helps us perceive Who-ness differently, perhaps through the eyes of humble-love. It is therefore theologically, experientially and quantumly true to say that we are evolving as Christ together, at the same time.

By "at the same time", I mean the *Now*. Time is a curious dynamic. The 13th century German mystic, Meister Eckhart wrote, "Time is what keeps the Light from reaching us. There is no greater obstacle to God than time." And, "God is creating the entire world, full and entire, in *this present Now*."

A NEW BEGINNING

As we begin this evolutionary year of transition and transformation together, in the *Now* evolving as Christ, I invite you to take a big breath from the belly, and then:


Be present to the Presence –
Rest in the silence. Remember God.
Feel the Aim, set your Aim–

*What does this Aim mean for you?
How will you embody this Aim in 2018?*

Remember the future – *How do you wish to feel at the completion of this year?*

Act as if – *Live by faith, not by sight, and it's not about results; it's about the relationship.*

Evolving as Christ isn't just high-minded theology, it's a practical remedy to our human condition, with all its relational frictions, sorrows and difficulties. This *Now* moment is a good time to release griefs, shames and expectations, and reconnect with the possibilities of evolution that have less to do with your individual power, position, potential or personality, and *everything* to do with participating in the Eucharistic Process and Presence.

May Almighty God – Source, Logos, and Spirit – bless and flourish our lives and Aims beyond what we could ask or imagine, for the glory of God, for the healing of the world, for the wholeness of our families, for the fruitfulness of The Church of Conscious Harmony, and for our deepening joy together. Amen. 

LET'S MEET

During the first six months of 2018, one of my "pastoral" aims is to meet with as many of the members and participants of the CCH community as possible.

In doing so, I hope to:

- Learn more about your life and spiritual journey.
- Listen to any concerns and ideas you might have about our time of transition at CCH.
- Share a bit about myself, my wishes and vision for CCH.

To help in this important aim, please contact the church office to schedule your visit.

Or, email me directly at: minister@consciousharmony.org.

Ideally, I'd like to meet with you at the church, but if need be,

I can meet at a mutually convenient location over coffee or lunch.

For CCH families with children and/or youth,

I'd love to meet with you all together.

~Peter Haas



**THE CHURCH of
CONSCIOUS HARMONY**

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EVOLVING AS CHRIST

AN INVITATION

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN IN COMMUNITY

... to participate in intention and will to God
... to renew your commitment to transformation into Christ,
... to move ever deeper together as a community
of intention, practice and devotion.

All glory to God.

The human family is at the threshold ... of moving
to a higher knowledge, understanding and relationship with God. ...

Evolution has now opened us to stages of divine union
and unconditional love ... with the spiritual perception
of God's presence in all our senses, thinking,
and especially in our relationship to other people. ...

That means living the spiritual life is the most important thing
there is to do in the next stage in evolution.

Living a spiritual life does not only lead to
our salvation, healing, wholeness and redemption.

It involves the manifestation of the contemplative dimension of life ...
to realize the New Creation that Jesus spoke about ...
the further possibility of serving God
through humanitarian service or of dedication of one's life
to God in a community of servant leadership.

... The discoveries of recent science have shown that the human
species has a oneness that transcends all differences and that,
in some way, we really are everybody else as well as ourselves.

Thomas Keating, *God is Love: The Heart of All Creation*

We are members of one another. Ephesians 4:25



**A SPECIAL INVITATION ...
TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TENTH MAN SCHOOL**

My Father is at work until now, so I am at work. John 5:17

The sole aim of the Tenth Man School is to be a transforming agent of the Spirit, assisting the process and reality of *theosis* for one another, that each may “*know myself as Christ, as my Father knows me,*” fully human, fully divine, always guided by the Spirit and rooted in Eternal Love.

Membership in the School is a declaration of intentional relationship to the Divine Mystery that is God and to all creation. It is a formal expression of a personal hunger and commitment to be transformed into Christ and to live a committed life in service of this aim.

A formal member of The Church of Conscious Harmony may choose to deepen his or her commitment to transformation into Christ by becoming a member of the School. The term of this commitment is for 2018.

A School member commits to a Rule of Life and *actively participates* in an intentional community that includes three lines of Work.

The School’s Rule of Life is:

1. Twice daily Centering Prayer practice
2. Daily reading of Scripture
3. Daily reading of the Work of Inner Christianity
4. Daily conscious movement (e.g., tai chi, yoga, walking)
5. Small group participation, as available
6. Commitment to attend Centering Prayer retreats annually
7. Seva group or YES program participation
8. Tithing
9. Regular attendance at Sunday Services

The intention to participate in the Tenth Man School is to be submitted by January 28 (contact the office for an acceptance card). Orientation and induction will be held February 2, 2018.

We are the recipients of a multi-faceted living Tradition, the strands of which have been woven together into a new rope for us to jump for. ~Tim Cook

In the Name of the Transcendent Father, and of the Omnipresent Son, and in the Name of the Immanent Holy Spirit, the Divine Indwelling.
Amen.

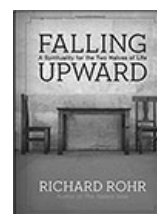


CCH BOOKSTORE

Suggested Titles for January



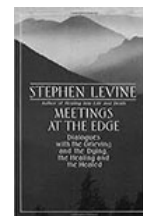
*The Inner Experience
Notes on Contemplation*
by Thomas Merton
(Community Reading, see page 10)



*Falling Upward
A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*
by Richard Rohr



The Fourth Way
by P. D. Ouspensky



*Meetings at the Edge
Dialogs with the Grieving and the Dying,
the Healing and the Healed*
by Stephen Levine

Bookstore and Library Hours
Open Monday-Friday 9 am-4 pm
Sunday 9:30-10 am & 11:30 am-noon



In Your light, we see light. Psalm 36:10

ANNUAL AIM: EVOLVING AS CHRIST

NEW BEGINNINGS BY KRISTINE ELIZABETH GRACE

The best of these beginnings
is a sudden emptying
the [self] in which
images vanish,
concepts and words are silent,
and freedom and clarity ...
open out in you
until your whole being
embraces the wonder,
the depth, the obviousness
and yet the emptiness
and unfathomable
incomprehensibility of God. ...

Let us throw off
the pieces of the world
like clothing
and turn naked into wisdom.
For this is what all hearts
pray for when they cry:
"Thy will be done."

Thomas Merton,
New Seeds of Contemplation

We are responsible for the future ... which
means nurturing the values
that gather us in, bond us together,
create a global consciousness
and a cosmic heart.

Ilia Delio, *The Omega Center blog*,
August 17, 2017

I didn't always hate church. I was seven years old when my mom (a Presbyterian) and dad (the grandson of the founder of Bethany Biblical Seminary) told my brothers and me the story of Jesus and God. I thought, "Ohhhhh...this is the noisy silence I always feel inside." I was excited to have this finally explained and loved the Bible my parents gave me because it had all the words of Jesus printed in red. I spent Sundays in a pew at church

quietly turning the thin pages of my Bible, hunting for all the red words and whispering them to myself to drown out the pastor spouting nonsense about women not fit to serve in church and how we were all horrible sinners.

My twelfth birthday was a dream come true. My parents surprised me with the gift of a feisty chestnut-colored horse named Noah. This was also the year the nightmare of sexual abuse stormed

into my life to stay for sixteen years. It seemed God was the merciless one preached in my church and I got far away from home and church as fast I could. I survived by spending every waking moment possible with horses to become the most masterful rider I could be. I grew into a competitive, mean woman hell-bent on overcoming the hateful world.

When I finally walked away from the last abuser, I was forced to leave behind my beloved horses to save my own life. Shortly after my thirtieth birthday, I married and hoped that I had finally found my true love and would live happily ever after. But neither of us was prepared for this crucible. The history of ignored, past abuse raged in my body as chronic pain and exhaustion. I approached my healing just as I had every other challenge in my life: if I just pushed hard enough I would be the winner.

This fresh disaster initiated a search for Truth but would not include the God I knew that allowed abuse and illness to happen to His child. I set off on my mission impossible: a colossal self-improvement project that involved learning yoga, meditation, shamanic practices and energy healing. But I always ran up against the God I had known before the

nightmare began, which sent me running for wherever He wasn't. Fifteen years of this awarded me an existence in suicidal depression.

Not ready to let my idea of Truth die but exhausted from the chase, I sought the place I had found peace all the years I was surviving abuse, with horses. I created a small horse business as a teacher; but now this illness-addled body refused to perform as the world champion of the past. My Church became sitting on the ground in a herd of horses. Memories surfaced of fleeing evil in my youth on the backs of horses galloping at full speed, past times when I was filled with unbearable rage and shamefully whipped my horse friends, to times when all I could do was collapse my body around them, weeping into the only companion that could take the pain I carried.

The more I allowed memories to bubble up with the horses in these pasture meditations, the more my thoughts disappeared until, "I am Good," mysteriously whispered out of the silence. I didn't know if these words were coming from me, the horses, or perhaps God. At this point, it didn't matter. I was holding onto this tiny seed for dear life. The words of Jesus from my childhood Bible whispered in my mind while the horses reflected God's power,

forgiveness, and generosity in a way I had never known. It would be three more years of practicing with horses before I was led to a prayer class in an Episcopal church where I found out what the horses and I shared is actually called Centering Prayer.

By 2015, I could no longer deny that struggling to power through my horse coaching business in deteriorating health was literally killing me. In humiliation, I closed my business and filed for disability. The worst of this was I was too sick to sit with the horses. Even this hopelessness was a blessing. The doctor assessing me for my disability case directed me to a type of therapy for trauma survivors where I discovered a felt-sense of connection to my inner being. By mid-2016, my daily Centering Prayer time combined with this Somatic Experiencing therapy sparked a wish in me for a trauma-informed church where I could further heal and be grown into a teacher to share these healings.

Just when I thought life was coming together – seven months ago my husband left, filed for divorce and I was without a stable place to live. I was still reeling in panic when we met with the pastor at the church we had attended together. When the pastor asked me what I was going

to do, something other than shock spoke for me. “I am going to walk through this with fierce grace into lavish love.” I proclaimed. “What does that mean?” the pastor replied. “I have no idea, but that is what I’m doing.”

Only three weeks later, after a night of weeping and angrily demanding for God’s help, I called my husband and begged for a ride to a church I had been driving past for a year. He dropped me off at the entrance to The Church of Conscious Harmony. I would never be the same. As I listened to the pastors Barbara and Tim Cook for the first time, cosmic alchemy struck the flicker of joy, long forgotten in my soul, and shattered it into every fiber of my body. I met what is at the root of Love. Arriving at CCH on the event horizon of Tim and Barbara’s retirement left no time for me to resist. This was a different kind of train than I had envisioned throwing myself in front of before I arrived here. This is self obliteration on the soul train of unconditional Love and Joy.


“This is my body... This is my blood...” said in the sacrament of the Eucharist, claims my body from this world, completing all the work of overcoming that I failed at. I experience Christ as my body, as my breath, as the very air I breathe. Through prayer practices,

I feel God loving not only me, but also the abusers and all victims through this body mind. This reclaimed body completely understands and welcomes the unforgivable, as it is miraculously, painlessly extinguished. The Movements class reunites me with the joy, presence, power, and responsibility I thought was forever lost when illness forced me away from horses. Nothing is lost. In the midst of it all I say “Yes” to the pain and exhaustion to feel the millennia of Love never before received, breaking me in the most compassionate way, giving me a forever home in Center. This is the way I was created to live; as nothing but cosmic heart pumping Truth into the earth of all, a living celebration of Grace.

This new Kristine moves with the senses of the Trinity in wondrous love with strangers in coffee shops, with the husband divorcing me, with the trickster personality I mistook for the whole of me, with the entire fertile morass of this earth. Receiving and giving become one so that I can’t describe it as anything doing anything. When this body can no longer stand the throes of joy or songs of ecstatic anguish, it comes to peaceful rest – held behind the edge of the entire mass of the cosmos and before formless

Shekinah. Questions become answers that run through my open hands until there is nothing but faith glowing from every cell of this mundane profound body.

Now I pray, “Where do you want me Lord?” “Right where you are, in your life now transmuting the illusions of poverty, victim, homelessness, healer, teacher, writer, divorcee, an alone, barren woman; so that these also shine Truth, proving there is nothing that is not mine.” I am the vessel of emptiness letting God birth every moment into God image.

I bow down each day in gratitude for the viriditas of this church where I blossom into the embodiment of Christ in the humbleness of my humanity. I am grateful to everyone who came before who built the healing and teaching community I wished for. This is a treasure with miraculous compound interest. I lean in deep with reverent responsibility to love and grow this Church with you. I step into growing up anew, facing a future swept clean of anything known other than the burning desire to be student and servant of God’s unfading presence. I finally settle into Home within where every breath comes from The Beginning. Indeed, I walk with fierce Grace into lavish Love. 

My Father is still working, and I also am working. John 5:17

LIVING THE WORK OF INNER CHRISTIANITY IN DAILY LIFE

EXPLORING OUR TIME-BODY

Work Idea: One of the more challenging, yet fascinating aspects of the Work is the idea of our Time-Body. Our Time-Body is more than just our memory of our past, and more than just our possible future. It's a living, interactive reality, that we can begin to cultivate an awareness of and to, especially through conscious attention to patterns – recurrences – in our life.

Work Source: Maurice Nicoll, in his book *Living Time*, reminds us that, “since...Life is extended in *Time* itself, the effect of the *present* upon the *past* has also to be considered as a possibility. The effects of what we do now, from this standpoint, are to be thought of as spreading in two definitely existing ‘directions’ not apprehended by our sensuous contact with the ‘world’. We call these directions ‘past’ and ‘future’. From this point of view our past life, our present life, and our future life are always in *functional* relationship. There are three elements, or three influences, at work. The past is no dead


thing nor the future a blank. The consequences of acts lying ahead of us and the consequences of acts lying in the past mingle with the consequences of acts lying in the present, and the determining point is *now*. Only, as we shall see, we do not know or possess this *now*, i.e., we have no determining point.” (117-18)

Practical Application: A practical exercise that can help develop awareness of our Time-Body is to begin to leave messages for our past “self” from the present-Now. Perhaps go to a sacred place, and literally speak to your “self” from this present moment back into your past moment. It's as if you are sending a message to your past – speaking to your earlier “self.” In this way, you can begin to subtly un-do your past, or at least shift your relationship to your past and the associated memories woven to it. This can be helpful in navigating past painful events and memories.

Knowing you will be gifting your “self” with guidance from the

future, you can also listen *now* for messages that you *will be* sending to your “self” from the future. This is useful especially if you are facing an important decision, or confusing situation. As we begin this new year, explore listening in the present for impressions and intuitions coming from your future, knowing that you are sending yourself guidance, knowledge and encouragement.

In short, we can cultivate our relationship to our Time-Body in both directions: past and future – in the now. Speak *now* to your past; to the you, *then*. Listen *now* for guidance from your future; from the you that will be, *then*.

Further Resources: Read P.D. Ouspensky, *A New Model of The Universe*, Ch. XI. Watch Ted Nottingham's video, “*Time-Body: Healing the Past*” on YouTube. For more experience with these teachings, you are invited to attend the Work of Inner Christianity class held Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. at The Church of Conscious Harmony. 



FIVE CHOICES:
LIVING A MORE CONSCIOUS LIFE IN THIS NEW YEAR

Join us on Sundays 10:00 am for a
Worship Teaching Series with Peter Haas

- January 14: Discovering Desire
- January 21: Setting Aims
- January 28: Anticipating Resistance
- February 4: Navigating Confusion
- February 11: Ending Completely

GUIDELINES FOR CHRISTIAN LIFE, GROWTH
AND TRANSFORMATION

Fr. Thomas Keating, in his seminal work
Open Mind, Open Heart,
lists 42 principles underlying
the Christian spiritual journey.

Fr. Keating asks that these principles be read according
to the method of Lectio Divina.

One principle will appear in these pages each month.

42ND GUIDELINE



What Jesus proposed to his disciples
as the Way is his own example:
the forgiveness of everything and everyone
and the service of others in their needs.
“Love one another as I have loved you.”

BOOK LOOK

We begin our 2018 Community Reading with Thomas Merton's, *The Inner Experience*. If you've wanted one book to introduce or help articulate contemplative Christianity to a friend, colleague or family member, this is a great book to start with. It's a book for anyone interested in understanding the contemplative dimension within the Christian tradition. Merton never saw it published, as it remained a manuscript until 2003. One of the many treasures to be found in reading *The Inner Experience*, is the way Merton expands his important teaching on the True Self and False Self, an idea that deeply impacted the psychological dimension in Thomas Keating's understanding of the human spiritual journey. Another treasure, is the way Merton deepens his teaching on contemplation, making it clear that contemplation isn't just one aspect of life, one prayer-practice, but contemplation is to be integrated into the whole of one's life.

Please note: This year, there will be no daily page reading schedule provided for each of the six community readings scheduled for 2018. You'll have approximately two months to complete each reading, with community discussion usually occurring on the final Sunday of the month.

**NEW WEEKLY FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES
WITH PETER
BEGIN JANUARY 2018**

**SCRIPTORIUM: EXPLORING THE BIBLE THROUGH
THE LENSES OF THE WORK OF INNER CHRISTIANITY AND
THE WISDOM OF THE CONTEMPLATIVE DIMENSION**

In the spirit of the Emmaus Road “burning heart” encounter, this gathering is an ongoing, weekly formation experience, and is open to everyone. We will ponder the upcoming weekly liturgical and lectionary readings, and from time to time, explore other key selections from the Bible, in the manner of Maurice Nicoll’s *The New Man*.*

Saturdays, noon-12:50 pm
Begins January 13, 2018
Location: CCH

**INFUSION: EXPLORING THE LIFE-GIVING INFLUENCES OF
CHRISTIAN MYSTICS AND CONTEMPLATIVES**

The Infusion gathering is open to anyone seeking a deeper understanding of Christianity’s mystical and contemplative streams. We will explore key themes in the Christian Mystical and Contemplative Traditions (such as: love, spiritual practices, purity of heart, contemplation, spiritual gifts, dealing with temptations, the Beatific Vision, the Unitive state, etc.), and key contemplative mystics and contemplatives (such as: St. Augustine, St. John of the Cross, Thomas Merton, and Bernadette Roberts, etc.).*

Wednesdays, 7:15-8:25 pm
January 10-May 23, 2018
Location: CCH

*No prerequisites or prior study required; just a willingness to listen, share, learn and grow. Participants will be introduced to foundational tools and resources within the tradition for further personal study, all with a view to deepening Knowledge *and* Being. Drop-ins are welcome.

JANUARY CALENDAR

Visit consciousharmony.org
for a complete listing of events

SPECIAL EVENTS

One-Day Centering Prayer Retreat
Jan 13 8:30 am-4:30 pm
\$15 Bring a potluck dish to share

5-Day Centering Prayer Retreat
Jan 19-23
Contact the office to register.

Lessons in Truth
Tuesdays Jan 23-Mar 20 7:30-9 pm
Contact the office to register.

Simple Explanations of Work Ideas
Thursdays Jan 25-Mar 1 7:30-9 pm
Contact the office to register.

MONTHLY

1st Sundays
Bring non-perishables for Caritas

WEEKLY

Sundays
Lectio Divina 8-9 am
Worship Service 10-11:30 am
Youth Program 10-11:30 am
Fellowship 11:30 am

Wednesdays
Contemplative Lunch noon-1 pm
Contemplative Communion Service 6-7 pm
Infusion 7:15-8:25 pm
Yoga 7:30 pm-8:30 pm \$10

Thursdays 7:30-9 pm
Work of Inner Christianity Class

Fridays 7:30-8:45 pm
Devotional Service

Saturdays noon-12:50 pm
Scriptorium (Library)

DAILY

Mondays-Fridays 7-7:35 am
Centering Prayer Service in Theosis Chapel

Recordings of services are available
through the Bookstore and online at
www.consciousharmony.org



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*Rise up in splendor,
Jerusalem!
Your light has come,
the glory of the Lord
shines upon you.
Upon you
the Lord shines,
and over you
appears His glory.*
Isaiah 60:1

EPIPHANY THE UNFOLDING OF THE LIGHT

Epiphany is the crowning feast of Christmas.
We tend to think of Christmas as the greater feast,
but in actual fact, it is only the beginning.
It whets our appetite for the treasures to be revealed in the feasts to come.
The great enlightenment of the Christmas-Epiphany Mystery
is when we perceive that the divine light
manifests not only that the Son of God has become a human being,
but that we are incorporated as living members into His body.
This is the special grace of Epiphany.
In view of His divine dignity and power,
the Son of God gathers into Himself
the entire human family past, present and future.
... Epiphany, then, is the manifestation
of all that is contained in the light of Christmas;
it is the invitation to become divine.

Thomas Keating, *The Mystery of Christ*

