



THE MARK

December 2013
Volume 25
Number 12

A Publication of The Church of Conscious Harmony ♦ A Contemplative Christian Community



O Holy Night

by Tim Cook

As I prepared to write this article for Christmas, I had a clear vision of what I wanted to say. As I tried to put words around one of the most extraordinary miracles ever to occur in the history of the human race, another miracle occurred. The realization that I had already written this message almost ten years ago...

“...Long lay the world in sin and error pining...”

The human condition that we see so compellingly portrayed in contemporary life is no different than it was at the dawn of civilization. The poor have always been with us, and so have the rich. There have always been environmental crises; they have just been local rather than global. The wars, injustices, oppressions and persecutions that are chronicled in recent history are simply a continuation of the way humans have dealt with their differences from the beginning. Though the presence of conflict remains the same, the costumes, the technology, the speed and the crowding are different. We are running out of the room and resources required to go on living as we have been living for the thousands of years of recorded

history. It is time for the human species to either step up a notch in the evolution of our consciousness, or to join the dinosaurs.

All species on the earth evolve, just as they were created by God to evolve. All species but the human variety evolve only physically. Humans, though, are different. We were created to evolve psychologically and spiritually through the application of our God-given free will. We are the only creatures that have a choice about what we will attend to with our lives and now it has become imperative that some of us make the choice to live together in a not so new but radically different way.

“...till he appeared...”

The incarnation of Christ in the person of the infant Jesus signaled a new possibility for the human race; in Bethlehem on the first Christmas, God became man so that man could become God. Until recently, though, his appearance was difficult to understand. Theological assertions, historical explorations and “common sense” explanations left everyone but the relatively few mystics, contemplatives and saints

– who knew by direct experience – stuck in the simplistic, intellectual categories of belief, disbelief or simply wondering.

Our contemporary knowledge of quantum physics, though, has opened the door for all of us to understand and intuit the personal possibilities of the reality that all of existence is One and that every single particle of creation is Light and is directly connected to and affected by everything else. At the quantum level all is inextricably One and all matter is Light including you and me. Even science has now come to realize that Life, in reality, is just as we were told thousands of years ago “And God said, Let there be light” (Genesis 1:3) and “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One.” (Deuteronomy 6:4) All creation is Light and proceeds from The One and remains eternally One in Him.

Take a look at my favorite version of the Christmas story from that quantum, eternal-oneness point of view and maybe you’ll understand the personal relevance of the Incarnation in a new and empowering way.

The Word was first, the Word present to God, God present to

the Word. The Word was God, in readiness for God from day one.

Everything was created through him; nothing—not one thing!—came into being without him. What came into existence was Life, and the Life was Light to live by. The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness; the darkness couldn't put it out.

... The Life-Light was the real thing; Every person entering Life he brings into Light. He was in the world, the world was there through him, and yet the world didn't even notice. He came to his own people, but they didn't want him. But whoever did want him, who believed he was who he claimed and would do what he said, He made to be their true selves, their child-of-God selves. These are the God-begotten, not blood-begotten, not flesh-begotten, not sex-begotten.

The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish.

... We all live off His generous bounty, gift after gift after gift. We got the basics from Moses, and then this exuberant giving and

receiving, This endless knowing and understanding—all this came through Jesus, the Messiah. No one has ever seen God, not so much as a glimpse. This one-of-a-kind God-Expression, who exists at the very heart of the Father, has made him plain as day.


John 1:1-18, *The Message*

“and the soul felt its worth.”

What that means to you and me and our world is astonishingly simple, yet powerful and profound. We are so loved by our Creator that He has made a way for us to join in conscious union with Him and with all of creation in single-minded awareness that all is One and that we are created of love itself. Christ manifested conscious light to a world darkened by the lie that humans are separate from God, and from each other, and He split history in half when He was born as the child in Bethlehem. So too He is willing and able to manifest His risen presence within us; and, if we invite Him, the darkness of unconscious sleep can never extinguish it. And so too He will split our personal history in half: before we knew Him and after we

know Him, as different as night and day.

How do we join Him in the regeneration of mankind and participate in the transformation of the world? It depends on the choices we make about where we direct our attention, that special use of the will that distinguishes us from other creatures. If we want Him, we must notice Him, become aware of Him, value Him and attend to Him. He is Spirit, He is life, He is conscious light and He is present within us now and always. We can meet Him in the silence in regular surrender through Centering Prayer and realize that He wants to be born in us, to have Christmas in us. As we open to the wondrous reality that He is, He uses our hearts to do His loving, our hands to do His work, our faces to smile at His world and our mouths to speak words of kindness and healing. We know, by experience, that he is One.

The word, holy, means whole. We are not whole until and unless we unite with the One Who Is. May this be the holy Christmas that ends our personal darkness. May each one of us accept our worth. 

A Community of Practice

by Barbara Cook

As we are opening to Advent in preparation for the Christmas celebration, we are also coming to the end of our year dedicated to Gratitude. Tim and I have just returned from a three month sabbatical and now I'm sitting here happily reflecting on this year, our community, and the coming season. Needless to say, I feel renewed, filled with insights, and deeply grateful from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet.

First, I would like to say that we are both in awe of the generosity and support of a community like ours, that would lovingly let us go and make the extra efforts required to support and sustain this community of prayer while we took time apart. This certainly speaks to the maturity of this church family. We are grateful to be a part of a community that is truly devoted to transformation in Christ.

As we let go into the Divine Mystery for three months, Tim and I both missed the powerful presence of collective intention that is The Church of Conscious Harmony. We knew that we were now a community of two. And we knew that we were in God and God was in us and that our morning and evening prayer would

keep us connected. But that grace-filled body that was our church home was invisible to us then. We knew we would have to work to stay conscious.

Amazingly, everywhere we went, whenever we would feel gratitude, we were immediately reminded of our community and we would take a moment for praise and thanks to our Father. We were also aware of and could feel the prayers of all our community for us and we always felt lifted and carried on those prayers of love and blessing.

We stayed at monasteries and convents for most of the sabbatical. It was wonderful to have places devoted to prayer, to pray our prayers in the mornings and evenings. It was also amazing to see as few as four people as residents of a whole monastery. Most places had many more openings than actual participants. One monastery was staffed by a group of volunteers from a French lay community called Chemin Neuf, which had partnered with the understaffed monastery and were helping to keep it active and alive. Chemin Neuf is an interdenominational community of singles, marrieds, vowed, and children founded after Vatican II as an experimental vocation of monks



The Church of Conscious Harmony
A Contemplative Christian Community

7406 Newhall Lane
Austin, Texas 78746
512.347.9673
512.347.9675 fax
www.consciousharmony.org

MINISTERS

Tim and Barbara Cook

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michael Begeman
Pamela Begeman
Mary Anne Best
Eric DeJemett
Donald Genung
Wally Huck
Lauri Raymond

MUSIC

Susan Boulden, Director
musicdir@consciousharmony.org
Sue Young

YOUTH EDUCATION SERVICES

Deborah Hale, Children's Director
childmin@consciousharmony.org
Jacque Botto, Assistant to the Children's Director
Don Hale, Youth Director
youthdir@consciousharmony.org
David Jenkins, Assistant to the Youth Director

OFFICE

Mon-Fri 8:30 am-4:30 pm
Donald Genung, Business Mgr
bizmgr@consciousharmony.org
Lisa Genung, Office Mgr
officemgr@consciousharmony.org

BOOKSTORE

Sun 9-10 am & 11:30 am-12:30 pm
Mon-Fri 8:30 am-3:30 pm
Virginia Maxwell, Manager
bookmgr@consciousharmony.org

NEWSLETTER

Sandra Ely, Editor
garzaely@swbell.net
Carol Hagar, Design
lifeisart@austin.rr.com

in the world. That was a bright spot in the religious world, to witness a dedicated prayerful lay community. Not to imply that the nuns we met weren't alive in spirit; they were filled and overflowing with Benedictine hospitality, but they were so few and getting on in years.

One of my impressions on returning to CCH is that we do have an alive and active community of prayer. It feels like we do represent a possibility for Christ in the world. I could immediately feel the power of the force of our combined intention. When I went to my first seven o'clock Centering Prayer on Monday morning, something familiar clicked in and there was more force and intention for the one thing that I desire, the love of God in Christ Jesus. The collective wish of all of those here who practice Centering Prayer, who go on retreats, who apply the Work of Inner Christianity forms a pool of Spirit that supports the

transformative possibility for each of us. I got to see just how much I need the power of that body, to help call me onward, ever-deeper into God.

I am so grateful to Father Thomas Keating, for Centering Prayer and for this community of practice. Together, we've discovered the Advent practice of willingly going into the intense preparation for the always deepening birth of Christ in each of us. Advent has become as much a part of Christmas as the celebration of the feast of Christmas itself. I also look forward to spending the Advent retreat with some of you and silently waiting with this deep rich community of Spirit for Christ to come again, a little deeper in our hearts.

It is good to go away and good to come back to see and appreciate what we have been given, and I am grateful. ☺

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

34th Guideline

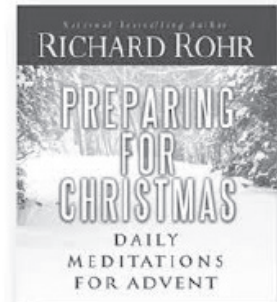


Chastity enhances and expands the power to love.
It perceives the sacredness of everything that is.
As a consequence, one respects the dignity of other persons and cannot use them merely for one's own fulfillment.

CCH Bookstore

Advent Community Reading
begins Sunday, December 1

Preparing For Christmas
With Richard Rohr:
Daily Meditations for Advent



Advent is a time to focus our expectation and anticipation on "the adult Christ, the Cosmic Christ," who challenges us to empty ourselves, to lose ourselves, to surrender.

Preparing for Christmas offers daily meditations, prayers, Scripture readings, and a question for reflection for each day of Advent.

The bookstore is your source for special gifts given with intention:

Gift books for journaling and discovery,
Contemplative
Fourth Way
Daily Readers
Metaphysics and Psychology
Children's and Family
Early Church Mystics
Eastern Traditions
Incense and Holders
Wall Art
Music

Bookstore and Library Hours
Monday-Friday 8:30 am-3:30 pm
Sunday 9-10 am & 11:30 am-12:30 pm



I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you ... Philippians 1:3

Annual Aim: Practice in Community

by Pamela Begeman

In our time, with its special needs,
we require a spirituality
of intense involvement and radical
engagement with the world.

It is in the real world that people live
their busy lives,
and it is in the real world that
the wisdom of the monks
must be made accessible.

... When I use the term *monk in the world*

I am referring both to my own situation
as a monastic type living
in the heart of society
and to *you*, who are or aspire to be
a contemplative resident
in the same busy world.

... Declaring oneself a monk,
or mystic, in the world
is a way to make the journey easier.

By committing to a way of life
... we formalize our commitment
to treating our actions
in the world as important.

... A monk, then, is a person
who has dedicated
his or her life to seeking God.

Wayne Teasdale, *A Monk in the World*

*My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior
for He has looked with favor on His lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
The Almighty had done great things for me, and holy is His Name.*

Luke 1:46-49

“To be a Christian means to
have the being of a Christian, that
is, to live in accordance with Christ’s
precepts.”¹

‘Practice in community’ is an apt
theme to end our 25th anniversary
year. If CCH is anything, it is a
community of practice, a community
of people dedicated to living a
contemplative rule of life in order
to experience God as Reality – here
and now, within and without, in all
circumstances and relationships.

In a community of practice, we
support one another in ‘acting as if’
God is our Reality until we actually
begin to have this as our experience.
Experience may not be the right
word – it may be more like a ‘seeing
darkly’ as St. Paul says, or like a
knowing beyond knowing.

Recently, after watching some
excerpts from a congressional
hearing, I wondered when we
stopped being human together
on such a large scale. The sharp
exchanges and righteous posturing
were more painful than usual. As
the teachings of this community
have taught me to do, I took these
seemingly external experiences
and became responsible for them.
Where have I been less than kind and
compassionate this week? Where
have I been less than human in my
interactions and relationships? The
painfulness increased even more, but
so did the possibility of change, of
transformation. If I want the world
to change, I have to prove it can
happen within me first. If I want the
world to know the love and Reality

of God, I need to know and live it. That is our practice.

Further on in *In Search of the Miraculous*, Gurdjieff was asked how to become a Christian.

“Such as we are we cannot be Christians. In order to be Christians we must be able ‘to do.’ We cannot do; with us everything ‘happens.’ Christ says: ‘Love your enemies,’ but how can we love our enemies when we cannot even love our friends? Sometimes ‘it loves’ and sometimes ‘it does not love.’ Such as we are we cannot even really desire to be Christians because, again, sometimes ‘it desires’ and sometimes ‘it does not desire.’ And one and the same thing cannot be desired for long, because suddenly, instead of desiring to be a Christian, a man remembers a very good but very expensive carpet that he has seen in a shop. And instead of wishing to be a Christian he begins to think how he can manage to buy this carpet, forgetting all about Christianity. Or if somebody else does not believe what a wonderful Christian he is, he will be ready to eat him alive or to roast him on hot coals. In order to be a good Christian one must be. To be means to be master of oneself. If a man is not his own master he has nothing and can have nothing. And he cannot be a Christian. He is simply a machine, an automaton. ... To be a Christian means to be responsible. Responsibility comes later when

a man even partially ceases to be a machine, and begins in fact, and not only in words, to desire to be a Christian.”

In a conversation with her father as a teenager, Bernadette Roberts came to a similar realization:

“... The Church does not say you have to understand the mystery of God or the Truths of faith in order to be Christian. What it is saying is that if there is any hope of ever understanding these truths, then you have to practice your faith. Without practice you cannot expect to understand because understanding can only come through practice. If you wait until all the understanding is in before you practice, then you will never understand, never practice, and will have wasted your life waiting and searching for what never comes. So all the Church is saying, all it is asking of you, is that you **practice, practice, practice!!**

“... Now I saw that to be a Christian was the ultimate goal, the end of a life of practice, and in no way its beginning. Thus it would be sufficient to spend my life in the process of becoming a Christian, a process of striving to see and understand Christ, that eventually I might believe that which was, for now, only a mystery. Thus becoming a Christian would be the practice and being a Christian, the ultimate goal.”² Mr. Gurdjieff taught that wish is the most powerful force in the universe.

And so we practice each day wishing to be Christians and supporting each other in that journey of discovery and evolution.

But at CCH we aim to go even further. It might also be said that our practice is learning – and living – what it means to be fully human. We subscribe to the teachings that the incarnation of God in human form is the most important event in history, as it was God revealing our true identity – who and what we are. Divine nature and human nature are forever united in us and it is our purpose in life to reveal and manifest this. We practice *theosis*, this divinization, this transformation in Christ, the complete manifestation of God in us, in a human life. Each day we wish and strive to incarnate the living Christ – to connect the Divine Indwelling with our human nature, thus becoming fully human and experiencing God as a Reality in ordinary life. We practice *incarnatio continua*.

But we practice not just for ourselves, nor for our community of beloveds. We know in the mystery of oneness in the mystical Body of Christ that our practice matters for the whole of humanity and for the whole of creation. Iliá Delio, in her book, *Christ in Evolution*, affirms, “We are to lead the evolutionary trend in a forward movement into God. [Teilhard de Chardin] urged

continued on page 9

The Hobby Prison Ministry

by Tracy Greiner, Gay Bullard, and Pat Barnett

One of the CCH ministries is with the Hobby unit prison for women in Marlin, Texas. Emotions Anonymous is a twelve-step program patterned after Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. The program has continued in its original form for over eight years. Barbara and several volunteers, from CCH and the Unity Center, take turns going to the prison in pairs to support the weekly program as sponsors, so the women can conduct their meeting and experience time in Centering Prayer.


“I have been involved with the ministry for several years and I have seen women come into the program angry, depressed and feeling hopeless. The ones that stick with it, work the 12 steps, come to the meetings and give themselves to the prayer, are transformed. It is slow, patient work for them in an extremely difficult environment. I have been changed myself through this work. To observe the courage that they display in facing the challenges of prison gives me a different view of my own life. This ministry has become one of the most cherished parts of my life.” ~Gay Bullard

“I answered the call to service. I had asked (the Universe, I guess), “How can I serve? How can I give back?” for quite some time. One

day, Ginger told me about the opportunity to serve on the Hobby prison ministry team. I immediately said, “Yes.” I wasn’t sure what I had to give to these women in prison or how I could help them, but I knew that Spirit had placed this opportunity in front of me as an answer to my requests.

“I’m tempted to say that I get more out of spending time (silence, prayer, and sharing) than the women do, but that’s just my ego talking. Truly, the sharing is genuine and deep. I feel free to bare my own demons, but the real meaning of the group is of and for the Hobby women. Seeing them transform over the months from surly, naughty, apathetic, or macho to vulnerable, honest, caring, and (maybe still) naughty is inspirational. I feel compassion hearing the stories of what they put up with in prison, and move from compassion to awe and wonder when I learn how far they have come.” ~Pat Barnett

“I felt a call to serve the women in the Hobby prison ministry after overhearing someone at CCH talking about it, yet I felt very inadequate because I was not a 12-Stepper nor did I feel competent in leading a Centering Prayer session. I discovered that the role of the volunteer is simply to be with the women, to listen, support and share.

The women at Hobby run the meetings for the most part. My favorite time is participating in the group sharing. The women are honest, direct and sometimes hard to hear. They expect the same level of sharing, honesty and directness from us too. I realized I was opening up to new levels of understanding within myself while sharing with these women and sharing to a deeper level than I had before. What a gift! I’ve also noticed the care and concern they have for the other women, regardless of age. This “trust” is not typical behavior between inmates at Hobby, yet something the women deeply desire. I witness the depth of insight and awareness they (we) receive from Spirit while sharing in this group. I see the Oneness of us all in their most difficult of circumstances, in how they find Christ in fellow inmates, in finding comfort and mercy in their daily activities. Many struggle with the silence of Centering Prayer, some are afraid to close their eyes, some find it hard not to talk or write. Yet they keep showing up and in time, they find peace in the prayer. I am full of gratitude and blessings for participating with these beautiful women of Hobby.” ~Tracy (Knapp) Greiner 

If you feel called to this ministry, please contact Tracy at tlgreiner1@gmail.com or Gay at gaybullard@gmail.com for more information.

continued from page 7

Christians to participate in the process of Christogenesis, to risk, get involved, to aim toward union with others, because the entire creation is waiting to give birth to God's promise – the fullness of love (Rom 8:19-20). We are not only to recognize evolution but make it continue in ourselves ... Christ is the evolver, the centrating energy of the evolutionary movement. But Christ cannot be the energy of evolution unless the incarnation is allowed to continue in us ... In this respect, the direction of evolution depends on our participation in Christ ... salvation means participation in the mystery ... Christ must come alive in us if this universe is to find its fulfillment in God.”

Not that we are self-conscious or concerned with any of this on a day-to-day basis. But it does help to know that in moments of difficulty, of struggle and of suffering, that even the smallest effort of letting go of self – with all that this implies – matters to the whole.

May we dedicate our ordinary lives to the glory of God here and now, for the evolution of God in humanity and all creation.

Gloria in Excelsis Deo! 


1 P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, quoting Gurdjieff

2 Bernadette Roberts, “The Eucharist – A Christian Path,” *Essays on the Christian Contemplative Journey*

In a Group

At first sight it seems a hard saying that none can progress alone but only in touch with School*. But when we begin to understand that the Inner Circle, the Hierarchy, is charged, under Christ, with the whole development of mankind, and that there is in fact only *one* Hierarchy and *one* Work, then the idea is not hard but tremendously satisfying. It means that if we also wish to enter the current of man's conscious development, we have to make contact somehow or other with those who are in charge of it. Whether this means physically, spiritually, or both physically and spiritually, is another question. But obviously it must be so.

I know that Ouspensky and Gurdjieff were and are members of that Inner Circle. I also know that if one's fate becomes attached to their fate, one shares their connection. But how can this be done? Chiefly by inner understanding and longing. At the same time if that understanding and longing is strong enough, one naturally wants to know and work with others going by the same path. Sooner or later one has to belong to a group, in order to widen one's understanding and speed up one's development. For whereas alone one can only acquire the understanding of one's own type and background, in a group—if it is a real and harmonious one—one can share in the understanding, experience and duty of many different types. Also, a sincere and unified group can attract help on quite a different scale from a lone individual. This is plain economics—and the celestial variety operates by similar laws to the human.

It means that one must become absorbed into a higher organism, a greater magnetic field. A group should be that. But this does not mean that you have to see the other members of your group every day, or even live within a thousand miles of them. It means you must be innerly and organically connected with them and with the force which directs them. It is true that you may have for a while to work very intimately and physically with them, in order that this inner connection should grow strong. But when it is established, your duties may take you somewhere quite different without its being in any way weakened. For it is weakened only by doubt, denial, fear and vanity—never by physical or temporal conditions. 

Rodney Collin, *The Theory of Conscious Harmony*, pages 134-135. *Words marked with an asterisk are further explained in the book and refer to concepts from the Work of Inner Christianity.

To Become the Light of Christ

The message for us today is that we must become the light
that leads others to Christ by our love for all,
rejecting no one ... To become the light of Christ requires us to stay focused,
as the Magi did, on the Light of Christ. But sadly, it is easy
... to only see the darkness that surrounds us.

At times that darkness is so overwhelming it pushes us
to think that God does not exist.

... In his Gospel story of the Magi, Matthew writes:

'Where is the newborn king of the Jews?'

I think He is hidden, not in the stars only, but in the less
spectacular events of our daily life,
in our mundane struggles to just get through the day,
to earn a living and care for our families.

He is hidden on the margins of society where the poor,
the lonely, the depressed, the abandoned and the victims
of violence in all forms struggle for the daily bread
of kindness and hope.

... If Christ's light shines through us and we become transmitters
of that Light, our little corner of the world will be transformed
and the darkness will be overcome.

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul says that as followers
of Christ we need to be clothed in sincere compassion,
in kindness and humility, in gentleness and patience,
and that we need to bear with and forgive each other.

And over all these 'clothes' we need to put on love
and always be thankful. If in this Holy Season,
we made a sincere effort to follow Paul's advice,
we would slowly change the world that surrounds each of us
as we make the Light of Christ more visible to those
living in darkness.

Excerpted from material by Gerry Straub



December Calendar

Visit consciousharmony.org
for a complete listing of events

Special Events

One-Day Centering Prayer Retreat
Dec 14 8:30 am-4:30 pm
\$15 Bring a potluck dish to share.

The Glorious Impossible
Dec 19 7 pm

Candlelight Service
Dec 24 6-7 pm

New Year's Eve Service
Taize Service 8:30-9:30 pm
Centering Prayer/Fellowship 9:30-11 pm
Burning Bowl Ceremony 11-11:45 pm
Centering Prayer 11:45 pm-12:15 am
Bring a light finger food dish to share.

Monthly

Caritas Food Bank
1st Sunday of each month
Bring non-perishable items

Tuesday Enrichment 7:30 pm
Dec 17 Gurdjieff Music

Community Workday
Dec 21 9 am-noon

Weekly

Prayer Circle
Wednesdays 9:15 am

Contemplative Lunch
Wednesdays 12 noon

Mid-Week Communion Service
Wednesdays 6-7 pm

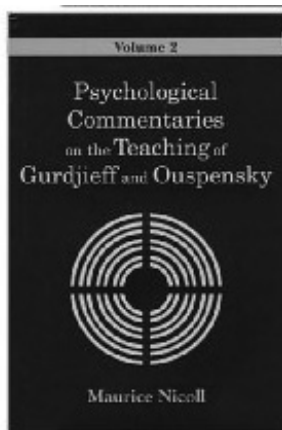
Work of Inner Christianity Class
Thursdays 7:30 pm

Daily

Weekday Centering Prayer Service
M-F 7-7:35 am in Theosis Chapel

Office Closed
Dec 25-Jan 1

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



The Work

of Inner Christianity

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

Three Lines of Work

Let us once more think about the *Three Lines of Work*. We are taught that a person must do the three lines of Work sooner or later, otherwise, nothing can ensue. The first line of Work is work on yourself through self-observation, and applying the ideas of the Work practically to yourself—that is, not identifying with your negative states, and so on. The second line of Work is work with other people in the Work and externally considering them. This line is very important for many of you at present. The second line of Work depends on seeing a person as yourself. “I am them and they are me.” In the second line of Work it is necessary eventually that people you are working with in the Work begin to exist in you and become Work

’s. “Thou shalt do no murder” means on the psychological level, as distinct from the literal level, that you give existence to another in yourself and do not murder that existence by temporary acts of self-will. This gives a field of force and is the beginning of forming a Work-accumulator. In the Work this is possible. In life it is not possible because life divides people through hatreds, scandals, etc. If you have followed the first line of Work sincerely you will begin to see that you are not what you imagine. Then, and then only, can you do the second line of Work rightly. You see that what you criticize in others exists also in yourself. If you try to do the second line of Work in a charitable way without having followed the strict discipline of

the first line of Work, if you have not seen that in yourself exists so much that you criticize in others—you cannot do the second line of Work rightly. You will do it sentimentally, piously—that is, in an entirely false way. You will then be awfully kind to a person whom you really hate, which is a horrible thing. The third line of Work is about my work and what I am aiming at. It has to do with how this Work can be carried on, how each of you can help me to carry on this Work. Some people can do the first line of Work to a certain extent and also touch the third line of Work, but all three lines are equally important. ☸

Maurice Nicoll, *Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky*, page 882. For more information and 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.



The Church of Conscious Harmony
A Contemplative Christian Community
7406 Newhall Lane Austin, Texas 78746

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Austin TX
Permit # 3386



*Behold,
magi from the east arrived
in Jerusalem,
saying,
'where is the newborn king
of the Jews?'*

Matthew 2:1-2

Hidden Among the Stars

Today the Magi find, crying in the manger,
the one they have followed as He shone in the sky.

Today the Magi see clearly, in swaddling clothes,
the one they have long awaited as He lay hidden among the stars.

Today the Magi gaze in deep wonder at what they see:

heaven on earth, earth in heaven, man in God,
God in man, one whom the universe cannot contain
now enclosed in a tiny body.

As they look, they believe and do not question,

as their symbolic gifts bear witness:

incense for God, gold for a king,

myrrh for one who is to die.

Saint Peter Chrysologus, Bishop of Ravenna, Italy, Yr. 450

