

Newsletter

No. 73—Christmas 2023

LENKER'S LETTER

The church year reaches its climax with readings from the Book of Revelation that point to the fulfilment of creation with the image of the New Jerusalem, the world in which darkness and conflict have been overcome and the peoples of the earth unite in bringing their treasures into the city. Then, a few days later, we hear the reading for Advent with the 'Little Apocalypse' in Luke 21. Stark images of the turbulence that precedes the coming of the Son of Man replace the peaceful fulfilment of the marriage of the Lamb and his bride, the Holy City.

Ever since Jesus proclaimed the coming of a new kingdom, people have struggled to understand what these prophecies mean. At the time of the early church, there were those who believed that the end times had already come, or that they were just around the corner. Time and again, Christian groups have decided that the end is near, only to be disappointed when it didn't come. Others have interpreted the prophecies of the Book of Revelation as referring to the distant future, or perhaps to what awaits us in a distant afterlife, in heaven. We ourselves are familiar with this tension between what is to come and the reality in which we live: Every time we set a new goal, such as a New Year's resolution, we draw the future towards us. For a while we may feel energised by having made our resolve. It may be that we have a true inkling of the future self that we are destined to become. However, after the initial enthusiasm, we find that our resolve is

challenged when it comes up against the power of our habits and the stresses of everyday life. Then we can feel discouraged, as if change will never come.

There is a phrase in the Book of Revelation that helps us to understand the tension between our future and our present. This is: 'It is already here ... and yet to come'. The moment in which change is inaugurated is real, even if the full unfolding of that change lies in the distant future. And in the gap between 'is already' and 'is yet to come' there is a space that involves us. The changes we wish to see in our own development require that we patiently cultivate our souls and work towards the future we have intuited.

Similarly, whenever human beings have tried to draw the fulfilment of history into the present hastily, it has always ended in bloodshed and catastrophe. But to despair of human progress is no answer either. Rather, we are called to realise the future here and now. The apocalyptic prophecies are not predictions of what will take place, with or without us, but indications of what is possible. They give us a yardstick to assess how the forward-moving development of our world is moving on, especially in times like now when there seem to be so many reasons to doubt it. Our task is to seek the future that is 'already there', revealed in the creative acts of humanity that overcome the forces that assail us. In seeking it, in praying for its fulfilment, we become part of its realisation. *Tom Ravetz*

NEWS FROM THE DEVON CONGREGATION

Last year in mid September fell the very significant 100th anniversary of the founding of our Movement. We honoured this event with two major presentations by the priest, Sabine

Haus, and a member of the congregation. Pictures of those momentous days and years emerged as well as glimpses of where we are today and where our journeys could lead to.

During last autumn our own attention in the community focussed on the state of our

roof. Reports had shown that it needed a complete renewal, not just some patching. A big discussion took place whether it was time to move to different premises, possibly in the Exeter area. It emerged, however, that by far the majority of members and friends were enthusiastic about staying in our home which has served us so well for about thirty years. There was a determination to find ways of achieving this which included solving the problem of the roof. Our approach for help from Central Funds received sympathetic answers and when Tom Ravetz visited us at the end of January 2023, it had become clear that out of funds raised through legacies, the leadership was willing to offer us a grant of £70,000 towards the urgent repairs. This was very warmly welcomed by our community and this helped to fire our own fund-raising efforts which were already underway. By Easter we had raised some £15,000 which meant we now covered the builder's estimated total costs. Work began at the end of March and continued into July, although this

also included some high up painting and repair work which was only possible while the building was completely clad in scaffolding.

Due to week day noise, our other activities were very much reduced, but calm returned on the Sundays. Regular services, meetings, talks (on counter space and on Christ in the etheric world), concerts continued and the congregation remained very positive about its future. Plans for using our upstairs rooms for Airbnb emerged for some of the summer time once building work was completed. A group of helpers was formed to organise bookings, cleaning and changing bed linen.

During all these months our priest made regular visits to several of the members who were frail and no longer mobile. These were much appreciated as well as news of their lives shared with the congregation.

Our survival and progress as the Devon Community has a spirit of real blessing about it which goes beyond our individual efforts. We remain very grateful for all the help we have received.

Christopher Cooper

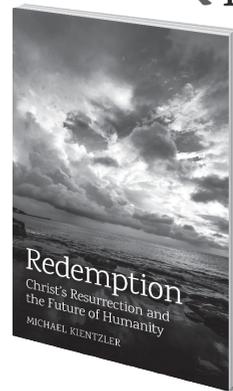
Redemption

Reconnecting with the divine

For human beings to continue to develop, we need to reconnect to the divine world. The incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ is what makes this reconnection possible.

This profound book collects lectures from Christian Community priest Michael Kientzler that explore the nature of resurrection, and how it ultimately leads to human redemption or salvation. This is a thoughtful, insightful book for those interested in spiritual and inner development.

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