

Ways of Christ



Jesus Christ, our spiritual life and the world:

Jesus Christ's Ways, his contributions to human consciousness and to the changes of mankind and the earth: an independent Info-Page, with new viewpoints from many fields of investigation and experience, - with practical hints for personal development.

<http://www.ways-of-christ.net>

This is an ebook version of the main text with most of the extra pages, for download & print, without images.

Ways of Jesus Christ in human consciousness and in the changes of the world.

Contents

It is recommended to read the text in its biblical sequence

Ways of Christ 1

Part 1: the chapters concerning the steps in the Gospels: 3

INTRODUCTION into the purpose and use of this text. 3

Methodical tips ***: Christian meditation. 5

These pages and the various schools of theology in church history. 6

"In the Beginning was the word (Greek: logos) ...and the word became flesh" (John 1). 10

Jesus of Nazareth, his birth. 11

Is there anything significant in the years of Jesus' youth? 12

A side-note about the quarrel about "two Jesus – boys". 13

The baptism in the Jordan by John the baptist. 13

The silence in the desert. 15

The temptations, and calling the disciples. 17

The wedding at Cana. 19

(Christian Viewpoints for sexuali ty, sympathy, empathy and love). 21

The "holy zeal" (and viewpoints concerning emotions). 22

The Sermon on the Mount (*Matthew 5 - 7,29*; and viewpoints of the mind). 24

Christ's Transfiguration on Mount Tabor (*Matthew 17*). 27

The question of the "miracles". 28

Raising Lazarus from the dead. 30

"The Sheep". 31

Christ "Washing the Feet"; and Mary of Bethany anointing Jesus. 32

The Last Supper, the triumphal entry, the arrest and the whipping. 34

The crowning with thorns and the last speeches. 35

Crucifixion and burial. 37

The question of the empty grave, the "descent into hell" and the "ascent into paradise". 41

The Resurrection. 43

The "Ascension" of Christ. 48

The Whitsun event (Pentecost). 50

A picture of Jesus. 54

The 2nd part - The steps in the Revelation: 55

The Revelation of John. 55

How to deal with prophecies. 56

Concerning the contents of John's revelation: The seven churches. 57

Inspiration and the Churches. 66

Why do I need a church or community? 69

The seven seals. 69

The seven trumpets. 70

The "seven thunders" and the two prophets. 70

The woman and the dragon. 70

The "beast with seven heads" out of the sea. 71

The "beast with two horns" out of the earth. 71

The "seven bowls of God's wrath", the end of "Babylon" and the Second Coming of Christ. 72

The (real) "1000 Years of Peace". 76

The New Heaven, the New Earth and the "New Jerusalem". 77

Final chapter of both parts of the main text: The Christian spirit. 78

A christian attitude: In the world, but not of the world; see John 17. 79

Part 3: Topics, questions of life: 81

A Prayer for Peace, Life and Earth. 81

Basics of ethical values. 82

An additional correction of the modern "Everything about Jesus disclosure stories". 84

(Natural) Science and the Belief in God.	86
Consciousness, brain and the free will of man.	88
Jesus Christ, human nourishment and protection of animals.	89
Jesus Christ and Healing - even today.	91
Blessings.	93
Lamentation as a possible part of Christian practice.	94
A Christian way - digestion of the daily life.	95
General Christian viewpoints for economical and social questions.	96
Jesus and peace	97
Jesus and Refugees, Migration and Cultures	98
General Christian viewpoints for society and politics *.	99
Christianity and Philosophy: A Comment on Habermas' speech "Faith and Knowledge" (2001*). - With an annotation concerning other philosophical schools -	99
General Christian viewpoints for ecological questions *.	101
The unborn human life *.	102

Part 4 The Old Testament and contributions to the dialogue with other religions. 103

The Old Testament, the Jewish Religion and Jesus Christ with excerpts from the main text and additions.	104
Information: Jesus Christ and Islam.	107
Information: Zoroastrianism (Parsee Religion) and Jesus Christ.	109
Information: Jesus Christ and the Buddhism.	112
Information: Jesus Christ and Hinduism.	115
Information: Jesus Christ, Taoism & Confucianism.	117
The relation between Christianity and Shintoism (Kami no michi)	119
- With general viewpoints concerning natural religions.	119
Notes on Ancient Egyptian Religion	121
Remarks Concerning Early European Religions	123
Assessment of the Greek Religion	123
Remarks Concerning the Early Roman Religion	124
Old Germanic Religion	125
Celtic Religion	127
Early Slavic Religions	128
Early Baltic Religions	129
Early Basque Religion	129
Early Finnish Religion	129
Religion ¹⁾ as a "reconnection" of man with God - on paths with Jesus Christ.	130
Help: A self-examination for the work with the main text of "Ways of Christ" - in the inner and outer life:	133
Imprint: copyright, conception, email.	134

Part 1: the chapters concerning the steps in the Gospels:

INTRODUCTION into the purpose and use of this text.

For 2000 years, - including previous prophecies several thousand years more – people have vouched for their manifold and direct experiences with Jesus Christ again and again. In spite of their varying characters and various religious, philosophical and scientific contexts, they show some mutual perceptions, independently from each other. They also speak about the possibility for others to prepare themselves for similar experiences. New abilities for people and the world can also be seen through Jesus Christ, far exceeding mere cultural and historical bounds. Here these steps of growth are explored in a new way. Along the steps which Jesus himself went through, their significance for different fields of life shows itself.

In the 12th century the Abbot Joachim di Fiore prophesied an "Era of the Holy Spirit", in which such individual relationships to God, independent of institutions, would become common property. Today, several endeavours are spreading worldwide that not only search for Christ taking shape in the individual, but also see the individual as a cell more and more consciously in the "body of Christ".

In this context the awaited "Second Coming" and our "apocalyptic" time cannot be understood as a simple reincarnation with its circumstances, but as a much more comprehensive scenario.

Nevertheless one can suspect some similarities in the development 2000 years ago and this present time scenario - which must not lead to a catastrophe.

This work tries to answer the question of the new specific possibilities of development in the various areas of life, since Jesus lived 2000 years ago. This contribution is composed as an impulse.

Especially these days,

- when the phenomenon Jesus Christ is claimed by many different [theologies](#) (see *below*) and dogmas, by linguistic, historically-critical, archaeological and palaeographical, religious-sociological and psychological, scientific, political ways of looking at it,
- when, as in the time of early christianity, a manifold spiritual scene rose in society beside an old materialistic mainstream – that created both bridges and frontiers between them and christianity,
- when the most confusing situations occur, e.g. several reputedly incarnated "Jesus Christs"; and when problematic and negative incidents occur in the name of Christ,

it can be interesting, to investigate, what the real contribution of Christ might be:

This project starts with some of our own inner experiences and other mystic sources, etc. **The viewpoints used are interdisciplinary ones, from many areas of knowledge and experience - not only theological ones.** From this spiritual point of view, no attempt is made to distract people from social and political consciousness with some kind of pseudo-inwardness. Of course the dogmas of the mechanistic scientific thought of the 19th century cannot be accepted as limitations of view; neither can the eastern considerations, that there is nothing, which has not already been described in the ancient Indian vedic scriptures and that Jesus is nothing but a - probably third class – teacher of them, cannot be accepted as a limitation of thought. These realizations are not derived from the books compared in the text or in a list of other books for more theologically interested persons; reading "Ways of Christ" does not require knowing these books or having previous theological knowledge. **Nothing is meant as a dogma or as an opinion of any religious organisation in the world. Nothing is directed against any church, religious or spiritual group, or against the Apostles' Creed. People who relate themselves to another religious or ideological background, but who are positively interested in new insights of a Christian approach, neither trivial nor superficial, can find this here too. It also points out the relationship between a Christian Path and other inclinations. Just as John's Gospel portrays the specific Christian way in a language understandable for the seekers of wisdom of that time, this work makes Christianity similarly accessible from various sides. The style of this document also lets the mind of the reader be free. Research & exploration are different to missionary work. Nevertheless, also Christians who prefer a simple belief to profound considerations may learn from this text, e.g. how to communicate with the people of other beliefs without constant misunderstandings.**

The text should speak for itself.

"I still have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of the truth comes, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:12-13).
Ways of Christ draws inspiration from this spirit.

[Back to the index.](#)

Methodical tips ***: Christian meditation.

One form is meditating on the Gospels.

Our texts were partly written with the help of meditative reflection on bible texts. Consequently, apart from the information they contain, they are also written as suitable starting points for meditating on chapters of the gospels.

The next 37 chapters follow the various steps in the Gospels and the Revelation. One can read single chapters or, better still, the chapters in this sequence for more insight. Bible Study, i.e. reading and working through the texts and their meanings, is only one method. During the study of the Gospels the chapters of the main text of "ways-of-christ.net" and, last but not least, God can contribute to a deeper understanding. Anyone who is more closely interested in a holistic approach - including the neglected parts of our soul - can read and meditate on the chapter, e.g. of the Gospel of John and then study the chapter of the main text of "ways-of-christ.net".

This web page is a continuous text. Its chapters can also be accessed via the table of contents. In order to study it, it will be helpful to print* the text: the main text around 130 pages, dependent on the settings of the browser and the printer.

(John and his disciples mainly dealt with the deeper spiritual significance of what happened.)

For the purpose of meditation there are several possibilities. First of all, there are the basic requirements necessary for any kind of meditation. The attention should be free from distracting moods or problems, by becoming conscious of them or by speaking to someone about them etc.; to ensure sufficient mental openness. You should not be tired, hungry, or under the acute effects of alcohol, tobacco, etc. There should also be no telephone etc. which could disturb you during the meditation. You should feel well at the chosen place, which should not be close to an electronic appliance causing "electronic stress". Experienced people can even concentrate at a market place, but these kinds of tips are usually appropriate. Sometimes the Gospel Meditation was practiced by speaking the text of the bible slowly with closed eyes (e.g. the Rosicrucians**). The text was learned by heart, so the attention was not on the words, but on the content. There was also a variation with eurhythmic gestures. You can also read the text and then let this have its effect with closed eyes. This means without active thought, because the actual meditative consideration begins after the thoughts have ceased. If thoughts continue to appear, they should simply be "looked at", instead of actively continuing them. This is also applicable when thoughts appear which have apparently or really no relation to the meditation (if the thoughts are concerning plans, write them down in order to effectively postpone them, so you are open for meditating. Important occurrences during the meditation should be noted down afterwards, in order to follow your own development better. The meditative consideration can lead to "deeper" states of meditation and contemplation, but not necessarily.

It can also be helpful to have a notepad nearby when awakening, for noting down keywords. This helps to remember dreams and to follow their development. If dream symbols are painted during the day, this helps you to be open for the levels of reality mirrored in the dreams. It then becomes clear that not all dreams are simply digestion of experiences of the day, but that there is something happening, which is as important as the day itself.

These are not occult rituals, but simply give the psyche enough time to become open for the contents or for God, instead of the contents only being available to the intellect - that is not bad, but not sufficient by itself for understanding spiritual things. Gradually, this can touch and transform all "layers" of our being, including the will and even the body. Only then when, e.g. new insights, or related symbolic images during the meditation or in dreams appear, or some other development in life, have the comprehensible contents "arrived" inwardly, at least by way of a hint. It may be necessary to live with a chapter e.g. for a week or even for a month. Then you can continue, especially if you feel that You want to. It is not necessary to completely translate the chapter into your daily life before going on. The "steps" are no longer completely separated from each other. God allows someone to have an experience when he (God) wants it. Meditation can only prepare us for an inner "great moment", but it cannot force it to happen. Nevertheless, no theology etc. can by itself replace such additional inner practice - which can lead to really doing as Christ did, instead of mere theory.

But apart from meditation there are as many methods as there are people, all leading to the same goal.

Further ways of meditating in the Christian context.

Churches still rarely offer specifically Christian ways of meditating as named above. They are more likely to offer simple forms of meditation in their seminars. People want to have spiritual experiences. That's a legitimate interest. But the churches have lost much of their spiritual - and therefore also meditative - traditions and so they seek to renew them. They began with taking Buddhist forms of meditation like "Zen" - a simple exercise in silence, without the Buddhist or Hindu context and with a Christian or neutral introduction. They also meditate on Christian images, or read a brief excerpt of the bible or of a Christian mystic and then meditate on it. An old practice still living among the Greek Orthodox monks of Mount Athos is mentioned in the chapter "The silence in the desert" of our main text: they repeat the "kyrie eleison" (Lord have mercy) in the rhythm of breath. Songs and hymns can also have a meditative character. It would be possible too, to include the manifold [pictures](#) and symbols in old churches (buildings). The simplest way would sometimes be the most effective way for the churches, i.e. frequent periods of silence; before prayers, during a prayer, after the prayer - waiting for feeling some kind of "answer" - and during pastoral counselling. Beyond such methods of preparation for God, everything in life can have a meditative character - although this is difficult in our hectic times. In any case, it would be absurd and would show ignorance to call all types of meditation "non-Christian" (caused by the impression of the meditations of non-Christian groups, which are more widely known than the Christian ones.)

Even those, who - seeking inner experiences - took the useless and dangerous path of drugs, could instead of this find a fulfilling experience in meditation.

* By clicking for the chapters of our main text concerning the Gospels - from its index - You find a version with paintings.

There is [an almost complete ebook version for download and print](#). Studying the printed text in a concentrated way helps to avoid those problems that independent researchers attribute to an overdose of internet and "multi-tasking" (i.e. the simultaneous performing of a multiple of tasks).

** For instance in the Christian Rosicrucian School "*Universitas Esoterica*" in Berlin (*Wolfgang Wegener*), which existed until 1984.

*** A (deeper) understanding of these pages requires noting its consistent conception - *see the [Introduction](#)* -; and of additional methods used (see above, methodical tips). Others look at such an attitude - during study of texts - as a general guideline for serious work, in philosophy too ("principle of charity", *Donald Davidson, "On the Very Idea of having a Conceptual Scheme", in "Proceedings and Adresses of the American Philosophical Association", Vol.47, 1973-1974, S. 19.*

[Back to the index.](#)

These pages and the various schools of theology in church history.

1. Any attempt to rediscover the partly lost spiritual depths of Christianity must, of course, **start with the teachings, life and significance of Jesus Christ himself and the early Christians** - including their "apocalyptic" traits, instead of only picking out that which suits a given theology. It is also important to take the variety of the early Christians seriously, just as the evangelists ***** did, in order to show the more comprehensive role of Christ.*)

2. The **Old Church** of the following centuries was characterized by the authority of the extensive tracts of the "**Fathers of the Church**". With the help of the Greek language and their learnedness they were able to make early Christian traditions much clearer for Europeans. They still knew a lot about older writings which are missing today. During this era there were also a lot of controversies concerning what corresponded to true Christianity and what did not. Many of these findings, which

were ignored later, are worthy of new appraisal - especially in comparison with their origins. Furthermore, there were also Christians who didn't primarily seek their salvation through a Church, but through the individual access to God in prayer or meditation - e.g. in Egypt, cf. the finds of *Naq Hammadi*. In the "mystical theology" of today's Orthodox Churches some of it is well preserved.

3. Medieval **scholasticism** and canonical work led to a theological systemization through deductive thoughts and conclusions - which one could call a philosophy of religion. The authority of the "Fathers of the Church" was still accepted, but only as far as they were in accordance with these thoughts. Although scholasticism produced a lot of useful food for thought at that time, the often one-sided absolutism and therefore exclusive intellectual logic was alarming and should be distinguished from the actual religious dimension. So beliefs were preserved in the form of doctrines or dogmas, but this also tempted people to follow inquisitorial practices. The creativity of today's spiritual seekers and mystics shows us that sometimes the same intellectual method could lead to other conclusions too and that real spiritual growth requires a consciousness, which is more flexible, more comprehensive, and less hardened. The strict scholastic method is still an important starting point for today's systematic theology, especially in Catholicism. But there is also a certain openness for other or ecumenical approaches (.e.g. *Yves Congar*). Indeed, the purpose cannot be a one-sided criticism of one of the theological schools. At an early stage of the work on the main text of "Ways of Christ", possible structures were considered. Only one possibility remained and that was to use the sequence of the "Steps of Jesus" taken from the Gospels themselves! There is also an archetypal sequence of stages of possible human development and areas of consciousness in relation to the surrounding world. But this is a new, interdisciplinary approach.

4. Once enough church tradition had been added to the origins, the efforts of the **Reformation** followed, in order to clearly take the biblical origins as the basis again. But they were limited in this endeavour because they themselves were children of their times and knew little about the spiritual and mystical movements in the early history of Christianity. They also abandoned some basically valuable traditions, - such as the Adoration of Mary. Only individuals like the German Protestant theologian J. V. Andreae published deeper experiences, which might be called "Christian esoteric" ones; disguised as a dream or novel for reasons of safety. Even Protestant Churches were not always as tolerant as one might think. So it is not easy to recognize the Christian nature of these experiences.

The Counter-Reformation, religious wars, etc. did the rest. But the various theological approaches were still similar in many points. Where one can find even within Protestant Churches separate denominations like the Lutheran and the Reformed ones, this separation is only valid for theological discussions and no longer supported by the members themselves (at least in Germany**).

5. **The Age of new philosophy, Enlightenment, rationalism and (natural) science** which followed did not result in a theology of spiritual experience complementary to the old intellectual systematic theology either. On the contrary, an increasing number of **historical-critical (historiocritical) theologians** began to orient themselves to the new intellectual and one-sided materialistic science of that time. Theology started to become a comparative study of literature and linguistic research - which was not necessarily a mistake, but one-sided.

There is no reason not to consider the type of literature, but then as fittingly as possible instead of schematically, such as our page on the so-called Gospel of Philip. It is also repeatedly necessary to compare the statements of the scriptures with the circumstances of those times – and it is important not to immediately belittle what was written at the time when seen from the modern-day *zeitgeist*. The connection with the emerging congregation can also shed light on the meaning, but this does not have to lead to limiting the view to external, purely human events, in which God no longer directly appears, although he was the most important for mankind. The fact that a message was definitely given to certain people does not at all mean there was no universal meaning. It is important for us today to look for the significance of the tradition; however the full content will only become clear to us if we take the plausibility of what was promised seriously, even for the people of today, or at least attempt to do so.

In contrast to the development of critical theology, contemporary exponents of the old systematic theology saw themselves again as a kind of centre of actual theology, around which the newer

fields of research might group themselves. Their ability, however, to fulfil this integrative role was questionable. Surely it would be legitimate to relate the manifold scientific discoveries to theological teachings - as long as it does not lead to new scientific dogmas. But consequently one would expect this to take place today too. In most cases this did not happen. This would mean considering the emerging new world view and paradigm, stemming from the new scientific schools of quantum physics, quantum biology, new geophysics, astrophysics and especially new borderline sciences like parapsychology - which don't back up the old materialism. It is useless to adapt today's theology to a scientific world view of the 19th century! ***)

In contrast to the tendencies of rationalism, new revivalist movements have also come into existence since the 19th century, leading to many new Protestant Free Churches. They did not, however, find it necessary to examine scientific development to see whether it matches up with their current beliefs. They promote biblical beliefs. In most cases they would not call this "theology" at all, but it is indeed a certain kind of theological interpretation (exegesis) of the Bible.

6. So in the 20th century many efforts were made to add facets of theology which had not previously been given enough consideration, but still without the mystical and spiritual dimension - at least recognized as necessary by *Karl Rahner*. Such trials in the Catholic and Protestant worlds were good for parts of society, because they addressed the real problems of the people: e.g. *Karl Barth; the political theology and the theology of liberation in the Third World and the theology of creation *****), *feminist theology*. Some schools, such as the "*Entmythologisierungstheologie*" (*theology of demythologization*) of *Bultmann* did more harm than good, almost reducing the belief to a rationalistic world view - although they state correctly that Faith does not need scientific objectivication. *Drewermann* then tried an exegesis of the Gospels with depth psychology. This might be a bridge for leaving the world of a materialistic world view without a soul, but depth psychology is not yet the real spiritual dimension of the Bible and so it is of no use to play these areas off against each other.

Until now, problems between fundamentalism and relativism have dominated the discussion.

Apart from that, the so called "[Jesus disclosure stories](#)" outside of theological circles over the last few years have been detrimental to the present discussion.

7. Till now, there has not been anything resembling a "post-modern" theology of the 21st century. **Renewing the spiritual possibilities of Christianity - keeping the old depth of faith and social watchfulness as well** requires a more comprehensive change in consciousness*****. Spiritual precision and differentiated ways of looking at society and the world are called for here, instead of only administrating and perpetuating the old fields of theological research and scientific study of religion: a way to "full" Christianity without the fragmentation of today. This is where "Ways of Christ" comes in.

*) They consciously accepted not only that "source Q", which researchers found within it. (It only contained sayings of Jesus before the Passion, with ethics beyond many social conventions, often connected, e.g. with the Sermon on the Mount. The similar and so also authentic sayings of the "Gospel of Thomas" shows that - depending on the preachers and the audience - further sayings of Jesus were in circulation. At first, only a few disciples were able to go along with the last steps in the life of Jesus - starting with raising Lazarus from the dead - and so represent it authentically. Nevertheless it was revealed to the seekers.

**) At the present time, e.g. in Germany, there are attempts to clear up this situation. Furthermore, concerning the different Churches see also our page "[The 7 Churches \(of the Revelation\) and today's Churches](#)"

***) See also our extra page "[Science and the belief in God](#)". See *Hans Küng, Christianity. Essence, History, Future, Special edition 2007* for a study of the development of Christianity. His aim is an integrated research that accepts the contents of the scriptures as a contextual source, in spite of archaeology and critical theological research. We don't accept all the consequences set out therein and resulting from historical-critical research. For instance, some events surrounding Jesus appear largely to be nothing more than subjective experiences. However, Küng is open to an open kind of reality of such experiences, which is yet to be explored. By the way, his interesting method of exploring steps in the development of Christianity in general (paradigms) is unable to sufficiently recognise the significance of schools of thought such as the Mystics, which, generally speaking, were never crucial until now. They have unearthed methods which are very important for grasping the full potential of Christianity. Additionally, often one cannot understand human beings with an inner spiritual "mission" or mystics through a mere historical-critical analysis, because they

have an independent inner spiritual biography apart from their visible biography. It is more helpful to take their teachings seriously rather than picking them to pieces.

****) (A German book: "Ökologische Theologie" (ecological theology), Kreuz-Verlag).

*****) Also the "new, eternal Gospel" by the Holy Spirit (Revelation 14,6) requires more consciousness than the mere intellect is capable of supplying.

*****) Additional: Jesus, the disciples and theology.

There are "theologies" within the New Testament. But the writers must have combined it consciously. They felt for the fact, that Jesus has had many "sides". One needs several theological viewpoints to understand him.

He taught the **social** awareness of liberal or liberation theology too – and he taught the strict (**individual**) **ethical** guidelines of rather conservative theologians (but not formal and not based on the power of the state.)

He also had the **spiritual** attitude of Christian mystics or esoteric Christians (compare the mystical theology of the eastern Orthodox Church) - and, nevertheless, he wanted the Disciples to manage their life **in the physical world** (which is the main topic of most current theologians and missions, especially the Protestant ones).

Jesus showed a "**supernatural**" **relation to God**, (from baptism up to the Cross & Resurrection, noticed for instance in the meditative review of John the Disciple and his Disciples.); that can not be explained by the intellectual consciousness of theologians like Bultmann – nevertheless Jesus had to go through **human stages of life**, which are understood by natural sciences.

Some incidents can be understood by **deep psychology** of our time, some are **spiritual** beyond psychology. Many viewpoints are almost lost, since big parts of the original Early Christianity were persecuted as "heretic", (becoming mixed with real misuses of Religion.) They all were one-sided, but not more one-sided than any existing church.

This one-sidedness is not automatically negative. The constructive parts of all that attempts would be o.k.- if they would not think, that they are the only ones who are right, and that the other ones would be completely wrong.

The Gospels and theologies.

The Gospels – and for instance that part of the Gospel of Mark, named "Q"– represent different viewpoints. So they are written for groups of people with different background. **Mark** was important (for instance) for the analytical mind of the Romans and for translations into the roman languages. But Prof. Morton Smith named a "secret part" of that Gospel, stemming from Peter, used for a few experienced people only, containing the Lazarus story and so on. The austrian mystic Lorber says, Mark was - as a boy - an appreciated messenger between the Disciples. So he would have known exactly, what was going on. He shows approaches of a theologian, with the central question "who is Jesus?".

The original **Matthew**, which is lost or not yet discovered, must have been directed to the Jews; also the present Gospel of Matthew is finally directed to everybody who needs extended descriptions full of life about the deeds of Jesus.

Luke similarly, but with deep feelings.

The Gospel of **St. John** for instance was written for spiritual Christians (with Greek Mystery origin), working out the specific Christian concept in their language.

John most clearly looks at the life of Jesus from the Cross and Resurrection; Matthew starts from the life.

Both viewpoints are correct, but the cross and resurrection have most consequences for the time after.

The "Gospel of Philip" (apocryphic) is no Gospel, but an Early Christian "contribution to a discussion" with several movements, having its viewpoint between them. (It is no gnostic paper, as some may assume.). The "Gospel of Tom" (apocryphic) is no Gospel, but a collection of sayings of Jesus - at least most of it authentic - , including some wordings dedicated to spiritually interested people...

Different peoples could work out different aspects better.

Methods.

Similarly the different methods of research are all useful, if applied together (interdisciplinarily). However, if one tries to built up theology on one science only (like **linguistic research** or "**Formgeschichte**" or **archeological research**), the result becomes partially false. Additional meditative methods are necessary.

Furthermore, more or less independent from Christian theology there is a general religious science, and philosophy, which both sometimes stand in competition to theology in as much as they address religious questions, which are difficult to access if researchers do not have their own religious reference to them. If someone combines that with a real search for God, however, it can be a fruitful supplement. In the course of time, these subjects could turn out to be far more compatible if religiousness were to be recognised as a basic characteristic of the human condition.(see"Religion...")

Annotation: the question of the triune nature of God.

Catholic and Protestant Churches teach the Trinity of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit. The real question is, if someone has real experience, which he paraphrases with that words; of if he teaches simply intellectual doctrines of three divine persons. "Ways of Christ" describes within the main texts the nature of God, of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit with their relations, which can become part of one's experience, instead of quarreling about theoretical conceptions like Trinity.

[See also the list of additional theological literature.](#)

[Back to the index.](#)

"In the Beginning was the word (Greek: logos) ...and the word became flesh" (John 1).

This wording was not used initially for the displacement of Jesus* as a human example; but it indicates his deeper connection to God and to the way of creation. The nature of this connection then may still be seen in various ways. But to explain it away from the start as incomprehensible and not authentic, is simply inadmissible. This kind of formulation can be found in *St. John's Gospel (John 1, John 5, John 6:69, John 7 ...)*, in the letters to the Colossians and the Ephesians, in *Matthew 16:16* etc.; and "lived" also still in old church teachers, in mystics like *Jakob Boehme*, in *Rudolf Steiner (Helsingfors 1912)*, and comes back to life in the "esoteric teachings" of the Christian wise man "Daskalos", as well as in the books of the American theologian *Matthew Fox: "The coming of the Cosmic Christ. The healing of mother earth and the birth of a global Renaissance"*, and *"The great blessing"*; also in meetings of the *"Evangelische Akademie at Bad Boll"* concerning the question of the Cosmic Christ; and at other places.

In the Catholic church and parts of the protestant church an attempt was made to preserve the faded proximity to this level of tradition using pure doctrines. Other parts of protestant churches that recognized the social work of Jesus more strongly, thought they had to drop this as a "divine exorbitance" of Jesus. In teachings of Hindu origin the term "Avatar(s)" of different stagesis compared with that, meaning people who are not on earth for their own progress but voluntarily, to contribute to the progress of a nation or mankind; as a drop "of divine perfection". However, the differences between this type of consecutive "Avatars" in such opinions often become a blur; while the Jewish and Christian opinion stresses the "God of history", the aspect of the development and the special role of the Messiah in this connection.

Here it is noted that the Koran accepts Jesus Christ as a prophet sent by God, and as the "Word" of God, "created like Adam" (mentioned in several places). This is more than some modern Christian theologians accept, who see only the social reformer Jesus! Only Jesus as God's Son - Christians at the time of Mohammed imagined this very physically - in the context of the later doctrine of the trinity was not accepted by the Koran. At that time, there were hardly any Christians left who were capable of explaining this authentically to someone of another faith.

At this point it should be emphasized, that this level of the mystery of Christ does not mainly originate from speculative thinking, but from visionary experiences, e.g. clearly visible in the work of *Jakob Boehme*; who also shows a rare ability, to assimilate his experiences conceptually. All experiences of a spiritual kind need indeed (self-) critical digestion; but an appraisal of its results without considering the existence of such a level of perception is no proper method, leading nowhere.

Neither can people with a recognisably mystical or spiritual mission really be understood if they are historically and critically only seen from their external socialisation, instead of including their independent inner spiritual development.

*) The existence of Jesus is relatively well documented in history. Historians from the 1st Century A.D. such as Josephus and Tacitus confirm his actual emergence. In the biblical gospels too, the times and places of numerous events are mentioned. For example, several rulers and officials (e.g. *Luke 3:1, 2, 23*), can be identified by the year in which Jesus began his ministry. These same people were again to be found in

historical documentation. Hence the biblical reports do not have the character of mere mythological stories. The "Apocrypha", e.g. additional Christian gospels, including texts from the early centuries after Christ, which are not part of the bible, often place less emphasis on exact reporting, but more on certain interpretations of isolated events by the various authors.

[Bible text of the beginning of John 1](#)

[back \(with these buttons You may return to "contents" at the beginning of this webpage\).](#)

Jesus of Nazareth, his birth.

In the sequence within the gospels we come now to more human events. Traditionally, the birth of Jesus is connected with Christmas - although this may not be noticeable in many of the Christmas activities. (*Luke 1, 26-56; Matthew 1-2*). Faced with the central importance of the later 3 teaching years - one may ask why some present-day theologians have laid such emphasis on denying the virgin birth* of Jesus. While the earth-shunning early "gnosticism" found it necessary to believe that Jesus only had an "apparent body", other streams of thought are of the opinion that Jesus had to go through the various steps of physical life of a human being, in order to express a certain model path. If a real search for truth were really the motivation for this discussion, more flexibility might be helpful. At a time in which connection with the transformation of sexuality and love new aspects emerge, e.g. extracted from eastern practices and reminding us of old temple customs, it (should) not be farfetched to accept a core of truth in the tradition. Buddhists – also ascribing extraordinary birth circumstances to Buddha – would have no difficulties either with the assumption of the virgin birth, or with a virginity in a mainly psychological sense, as described by *R. Steiner* for instance. The Koran speaks about Jesus as a being "created" by God "like Adam" in the virgin Mary, similar to the bible, reporting about the angel coming to Mary.

It could turn out that this characteristic of Jesus, which does not match any of the fixed ideas we have about him, is already being hinted at. However we are more likely to recognize specific qualities rather in the further course of his life. We will also encounter the importance of the possibility of being "born again" with Christ during this life **.

Right from the beginning, the life and the ministry of Jesus were interwoven with the course of world history. That already becomes apparent in the census, which was decreed by the Roman emperor, which caused Jesus' parents to travel to the prophetically significant town of Bethlehem where Jesus was born. That fact was taken into account in theological literature when it came to the debate on the worldwide significance of Jesus.

*) The Aramaic language did not have a distinct word for "virgin". It used the term "young woman". But at that time, young women were generally virgins before marriage. There are diverging accounts about Jesus' siblings. They might have been younger than Jesus; others might have been brought by Joseph into the marriage.

****) Extra text concerning Christian rebirth**

This is no parable; but one of the "difficult" passages of the bible, with exact and very important meaning for those who had the experiences and knowledge to possibly grasp it. Jesus did not tell something to a person, which he/she would not have any chance to feel for and use. During the *chapters of our main text, for instance "The silence in the desert", and "The transfiguration", a.s.o.* there are some approaches to this New Birth.

Even for people, who don't seek this experience intensively, at an earlier, restful age Christmas was connected with this experience. The festive mood during the Advent time of the Church year prepared for the inward reminiscence of the "Birth of Christ"; as the conscious fasting time prepared for Easter Sunday. So in some years one could experience something - even though not fully understanding it -, that needs today intensive meditation or long periods of prayer.

Christmas is a feast of love too, reminding of Jesus as a gift to mankind. However this does not change the deeper meaning; one can follow all steps in the life of Jesus. Love accompanies all steps too. Cf. also the chapter "And the word became flesh" in the main text. There is an additional page about the relation of this spiritual rebirth to teachings [about "karma" and "reincarnation"](#) known from other religions.

Born-again Christians in the context of free churches, etc.

- are urged to continue building their faith daily, thus continually perfecting themselves.
- It is now befitting for them to take command of all areas in their life, which will require most of them to make many changes.
- As *Revelation 21:5* says of a coming period, "*Behold, I make all things new*", it is likewise time for Christians to renew their thoughts about everything even today.

Question:

If I have not yet experienced it, can I wish for an inner renewal from God as the source of everything?

[back.](#)

Is there anything significant in the years of Jesus' youth ?

Nothing in the life of Jesus is without significance, but this part of his life has been given a slightly disproportionate amount of importance, especially by some modern spiritual writers. The Bible itself only reports the song of the sage Simeon and the amazement of the scribes with the twelve-year-old Jesus (*Luke 2, 29-51*). The most authentic of the non-biblical "childhood gospels" existing in fragments and retellings, the "*St. Jakobus' Gospel*", contains symbolic events and meetings., but nothing to support the modern thesis that Jesus learned everything from the Essenes or from the partially related community of Qumran; or in Egyptian or Greek temples; or in India, etc. Some of these hints might be helpful in activating the creative fantasy, but also led to jumping to conclusions or creating new dogmas. This would show an outline of a Jesus that encountered not just the one or the other, but all essential spiritual teachings of his time intensely; and who unfolded in each case, what he had to unfold, guided inwardly; - which was not necessarily identical with the way others thought it had to be. That is a basic experience that is comprehensible in smaller measures in the lives of several people, sometimes beginning in early childhood. This experience goes beyond all psychological ideas of "mould" and behaviour. For marked individuals and mystics it is almost typical, see, e.g. the life of the well known Indian Yogi Ramakrishna with his many teachers, who were soon no longer able to teach him anything. As some illustration for this kind of development concerning Jesus, see Levi's so-called "The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ". But this book may be looked on as a slightly fantastic portrayal and is not needed as a basis for this chapter.

R. Steiner describes a scene in "*The Fifth Gospel*", just before the baptism in the Jordan, in which Jesus made it distressingly plain that in the new age, the working methods of esoteric orders such as the Essenes, sealing themselves off from the outside world, can be counter-productive. Their religious zeal - with a lot of physical and ethical / intellectual cleansing rules – protected them from negative influences, but their environment was affected all the more. Especially in the further course of **Jesus' life we also find a biblically based impulse of "to be in this world, but not of this world", thereby including the world in his own development. So some of Jesus' teachings would have been regarded as secret in prechristian times and are now directed to all open people in the world., which is no contradiction to the teachings basically taught to the better prepared disciples.**

This is indeed apparent when compared with the old mystery traditions based on strict secrecy, as a new historical element. Interestingly enough, there was a similar tendency in new branches of Mahayana Buddhism, in which compassion for all beings is stressed strongly, in spite of spiritual goals beyond this world. (The old Hinayana branch of Buddhism stresses the goals beyond this world.) But only now in modern times has the possibility for everyone to access spiritual depths

become obvious. Nobody can say they have never heard of it. Since the contemporary railway station kiosk esoteric books are still very superficial, one can assume that this tendency is not yet fully translated into action. It is clear, that, e.g. the secretive practices of the Vatican library are of a pre-Christian nature as far as this point is concerned.

[back.](#)

A side-note about the quarrel about "two Jesus – boys".

Here R. Steiner's interpretation of the different lists of forefathers in *Matthew* and *Luke* as "two boys named Jesus" may also be mentioned. Since there is no denying that the divine nature of Christ manifested only in one human being, it is amusing to note that the human intellect got anthroposophists and theologians alike involved in a major matter of dispute namely: "1 or 2". The real question was rather, how Christ's incarnation and the context of his life were accompanied by powers of wise men of various cultures (like Adam, Krishna, Buddha, Zarathustra). Since spiritual subjects of investigation can be even more complex than the earthly mind can imagine, concrete statements in literature are often less exact than such general viewpoints are.

[back.](#)

The baptism in the Jordan by John the baptist.

Baptism in its original form was neither a symbolic act nor was it a declaration of membership to a religious community. The submersion by an experienced person, in this case John the Baptist, was often something close to drowning and therefore quite a frightening experience. It resembled in this respect antiquated forms of "Initiations" and/or. "Initiation tests". But in this case the possible psychological experiences were not the main reason or a means of overcoming the fear of death. Baptism signified the call to "repent" (better translated: "to change one's ways"); namely to the will of the creator, whose "Heavenly Kingdom" had been announced (*cf. Matthew 3, John 1*).

When Jesus asked John to baptize him, John did not feel worthy to help him. He agreed, but had no control over the event and could only observe a far greater change in Jesus than he was accustomed to bringing about. He had already anticipated the possibility of a higher kind of baptism through the fire of the spirit, through One that comes after him. He then saw the "Spirit of God" descending on Jesus. Christian esoterics saw here the actual "birth of Christ in Jesus". However, this does not require the idea of Jesus and Christ as two separate beings that had not had anything to do with each other before.

Baptism In general and especially the "baptism in spirit" - the term is used in various ways, e.g. in free churches – can be looked upon as a lead-in to a "New Birth" of man. (*John 3*) The term "rebirth", more customary in Christian literature, is avoided here because of possible confusion with "re-incarnation". This does not mean that the question of re-incarnation does not appear in the Bible: *Matthew 11,14* may be interpreted along these lines.

Instead of wishing to resolve theoretical, theological quarrels about the nature of baptism, the interest could be directed towards what this "New Birth" could really mean for people. We can start, feel, and investigate our entire lives again from a new viewpoint, from a deeper hidden (higher) layer of being, one which is turned toward God. God can take shape in the human being, allowing men and women to become more clearly recognizable as "God's images", or, as mystics express, "Christ's spark" in the heart - full of love - becomes filled with life and begins to grow. The person who deals with that meditatively can also observe this in the image of a child that really unfolds, or

that of a child with the mother as an image of the soul. Unlike a fleeting mental picture, created at will during some exercise, it reflects the person's stage of spiritual development, which cannot become produced at will by the ego. This inner child will become adult later and is even later continuously present in consciousness.

For the less imaginative, the same phenomenon may express itself more through inner feelings or mental impressions, or simply through transformations in life. Works of art such as the Sistine Madonna might also have arisen from visions and therefore helpful, in finding access to inner realities.

In the book "The ways to spiritual rebirth" published by Lorber (german) three stages of rebirth are distinguished in another manner.

A similar way of supporting this development is the meditation on St. John's gospel, a practice almost forgotten today. After a chapter or so, something of the inner content may begin to twinkle in meditative images or in dreams and it may even be felt too and can be taken up in daily life. Then one goes on with the next chapter of the gospel. The chapters of this website may help to do this work. The meditation itself can include learning and speaking the text aloud, or looking at and meditating on the context without speaking. See "methodical tips" in the Introduction.

A further essential feature of a path in the sense of Jesus can become apparent here: the development and its measure is present within each individual. One can develop everything within oneself in exchange with life, without the urgent necessity of an institution to endow them with grace. That does not exclude advising each other in a brotherly way. The way is given for the "imitation of Christ".

The "inner" kind of experience itself is not considered to be a substitute for praying to the "external" God: "Remain in me and I in you" (John's Gospel 15)

There was no great necessity to continue with the water baptism after Jesus had begun his teaching activities, or even after the "spiritual baptism" of the Whitsun experience. Jesus already saw it as an external sign of a new development phase that had already matured inwardly. While the baptist movement still taught: "Repent and let yourself be baptized!", after the fusion with this movement the disciples of Jesus taught: "Believe", that means to open oneself for the power of the conviction, "and let yourself be baptized". This part was a concession to the supporters of the baptist; but they started with a positive attitude. They both baptized adults who were able to decide consciously. That does not necessarily exclude the fact that there might also be some kind of blessing for newly born children as their right since 2000 years; but presumably it would have been more expedient to distinguish this from the actual baptism and also from the question of the affiliation to a specific church. This would have resolved many of the quarrels regarding this matter.

Inevitably dependent on the interpretation of the announced Messiah as a king that was prevalent in old Israel, people also understood baptism as an entry into the new kingdom. It did not help to explain that it would be neither a physical kingdom, nor an external church organization, but the community of all those who accept God as their father and themselves in their souls as sons and daughters newly born from this father. This belief, combined with the brotherly attitude of "brothers" and "sisters" among each other and with the human and divine son Jesus as the elder brother formed the core of the teachings that were offered to people to comprehend. In old Israel, the idea of God as a father already existed, as well as the old idea of God as something inaccessible. However, in this case he was considered to be more the father of Abraham and the nation descended from him. God was only the father of the individual through the nation. At the most, a few individuals may have experienced God as a direct father of the individual. This teaching was first brought by Jesus to the public at large; of an individual who feels guided by God in the soul and who could at any time seek communication with God. This was a person who could already feel the eternal part of their own being by this connection with the eternal God. That is already there, and is anchored more clearly in the further course of the way of Jesus.

Note: It is possible, that the following description of Jesus' experiences in the desert - along with relevant experiences with God not handed down in the Bible - actually took place before the baptism in the Jordan, or that there were several such phases of seclusion which were later recorded as one.

Liberal theologians have portrayed the baptism of Jesus as a vocational experience. Seen from a traditional theological point of view, however, the calendrical and prophetic embedding in world history was also an issue (e.g. Luke 3:1-4 including the reference to Isaiah 40:3-5;): the prophecy deals with a redemptive act of God.

Extra text concerning baptism in present time.

"Then Jesus came to them and said: All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go, and make disciples of all nations, baptising** them in the name of the Father, and of the Son (Jesus Christ), and of*** the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:18-19)*

*)As the resurrected one.

***)By John the baptist more connected with repenting the sins, by Jesus and his disciples more connected with the openness for the coming "Kingdom of God".

***)an other possible translation: "...in the Holy Spirit" or "in a Holy Spirit", as predicted already by John the baptist, that he, who is coming after him -Jesus- baptizes with the spirit instead of water.

Today in most cases it is baptized with drops of water or by ducking someone into water.

The Churches accept among themselves usually at least the baptism of someone, that means, that he/she is Christian. Free churches stress in most cases, that baptism either is done consciously as an adult one, or that there is a renewed baptism as an adult one; additionally they promote the deeper experience of becoming baptized by the spirit. (In early Christianity they indeed baptized first adults. But this does not exclude to bless also children, or pray for them. This would then have another character, compared with baptism. The original baptism was no declaration of membership in a special denomination, as it is practised today especially by the big Churches.

The Churches accept usually, that in case of need, when no reverend or priest is there, each Christian is allowed to baptize: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen".

Question:

If I haven't already, can I give my life into God's hands ?

[back.](#)

The silence in the desert.

At the beginning of his work as Christ * he is alone. The baptism and the 40 days in the desert e.g. *Mark 1, 12-13*) with the temptations appertain to that. Subsequent to that the appointment of his disciples took place.

Both externally and internally, the desert represents a seclusion that allows one to become increasingly conscious and to attune oneself to the universal God more strongly. This preparation for everything that follows is indispensable for every serious religious path, which means the renewed connection with the divine origin - even if this is not the whole way. On his own level of experience Jesus also passed a stage exceeding setting aside time for daily contemplation.

The churches, even those that often speak of "inwardness" – sometimes misused as an apparent contradiction to the demonstrations for peace in the outer world - do hardly anything to show the people a practicable way to this inner peace. We did not find the element of silence, of quietly watching oneself, of waiting for what "answers" may come after a prayer to be sufficiently considered in the services of more than 30 different churches. A song, the sermon, prayers, a song - almost without a pause, possibly even collecting money at the same time as some distraction, -

this is almost a copy of the hectic pace of modern society, in which people distract themselves from their unexplored inner self, either unconsciously or consciously. Only very recently, faced with the search of many people for almost any kind of experience, there have been some small advances, e.g. that some weekend contemplation seminars take place for especially interested people in the church, or that interested people are informed of bible circles or possibilities at home, etc. But even there, direct instruction is often missing. Some might recognize that a greater proximity to God requires solitude and others that their social values like self-criticism, tolerance and the ability to find peace also presuppose the effective temporary shutdown of external activity. Of course it would be hardly satisfactory for this to take place occasionally in a divine service, but it could be stimulating to recognize it as a frequently suppressed need.

The mystic Jakob Lorber wrote of Christ's advice to the people on the "*short way to rebirth*", - that can be named "New Birth", to avoid misunderstandings, as described in the chapter about Jesus' Birth. - "*Vom Inneren Wort – Stimme der Stille*" (*The inner word, voice of silence*) from the Lorber publisher (Germany). This inspired practice is this: "If somebody wants to be born again of Christ, first he must recognize his sins", - that means everything separating him from God, which is something completely different to being talked into having sins by churches. "Then one must regret internally and externally with deep feeling and intend seriously to change one's ways". Furthermore he must intend, "to break with the world fully" - meaning the entanglements of the ego, not the active life in the world - and "to hand over oneself completely to Me" (to Christ), "and in his love have a great longing for Me, and must withdraw in this great longing daily from the world and its business; and at least seven quarter hours behind shut doors and windows neither pray nor read anything, but spend this time in absolute peace, only occupying himself with Me in his innermost core." After an inviting address to Christ "Retreat into peace and grow in longing and love of Me! Even if you practice this for only a short time, so I say, you will soon see lightning and hear thunder, however, then do not be frightened and do not become anxious! Because first I come to everyone as judge in tempest, lightning and thunder, and then in gentle holy waves as a father! Look, that is the shortest and most effective way to pure rebirth, the only way in which eternal life is to be gained. Every other way takes longer and is less safe, since there are many dangerous ways, ... he who is not armo(u)red and well-armed will hardly reach the destination". It is possible to pray for purification and enlightenment by his spirit.

Cf. Teresa of Ávila "Interior Castle".

Cf. our excerpts from a guide by the Christian mystic Jakob Böhme too (only in German).

Yogis for instance, know that people think they, "do not have any time". In such cases they use to cut the meditation time down from several hours to half an hour, and finally to 11 minutes – that means until nobody can continue to say he hasn't got the time. Even a short time of silence, when other thoughts, feelings and sensations are not suppressed, but only watched, without getting caught up in them, has its effect, particularly when combined with some attunement to God. However, it does not have the full effect of a longer period of silence. In the eastern church - for instance on Mount Athos in Greece - the "Kyrie (Greek: Lord; while breathing in) - eleison (Greek: have mercy, while breathing out)" is used as a concentration aid. Later in one's (his/her) development it is felt in the throat without spoken words. Another step is, while holding one's breath, to feel it in one's heart centre... See, for instance *Kreichauf: "Als Pilger auf dem Berg Athos"* (*As pilgrim on Mount Athos; possibly only in German*).

It is also a great challenge to be silent all the time, even beyond the meditation cycles, while eating etc., during a hard approx. Six-day Zen-Sesshin - a Zen sitting meditation, which is meanwhile also being offered in some Christian monasteries. After usually around three days a lot of inexperienced people can no longer resist it. Around the fourth day - comparable with the effect of the fast - they utter a sigh of relief and understand the benefit that words can only inadequately describe.

Silence creates openness. A relationship to God also protects this openness. After a meditation it is useful to accustom the mind again to the circumstances to come, meaning to be less open.

However, it is also important to carry something into the world from the silence, to learn, to maintain a certain consciousness and clarity. That means, first of all for each individual, in intuitively felt intervals and/or after complicated experiences, or just as soon as it is possible after that to take a moment to collect one's thoughts. The contents of what happened before can be taken into this concentrated silence of the mind instead of simply escaping from it. But this does not mean one should continue thinking, but simply to watch what has happened, including what happened in the mind and how it feels now; (and to note down things, which don't become cleared so quickly, and which must be investigated later more carefully.) One also lets the various parts of the body relax one after the other, - maintaining the consciousness as a whole being, and not getting caught up in special feelings. If the mental relaxation has been done properly, the body will relax automatically.

For meetings, job, congresses and other things the same point of view means not stringing one topic on to another in a tiring way, but to take short breaks, - which should not only be used for conversations and so forth, but for observing and digesting, what has happened. After that it is easier to concentrate consciously on a new topic. Finally one can learn, to remain in the present all the way through a meeting. Similarly it is useful, to consciously perceive the contents of a meal while eating . Many similarities between "nutrition" and psychical and mental input can be found.

The process, that can be called "letting previous events calm down", that allows strength to grow for the present and future is not an empty "floating" above the problems (which is also an ability the mind has). It creates a new starting point, from which it becomes fruitful to do deeper work on the psyche. In external matters too, time is not lost through that practice, but actually saved because everything is easier and better than before. Many spiritually thinking people hardly notice what escapes them without this inner rest.

Even this most simple of spiritual experiences, the silence, already contains secrets of greatest spiritual heights. This height presupposes, however, a way to it. Christ stresses that man's simplicity should be laid open first. His path then leads to increasingly larger and more complicated horizons. In this complexity then the basic simplicity again becomes apparent.

For instance, freshly elaborated or received inner progress can anchor itself more deeply in the concentrated silence, in the sense of an ability that can not become "eaten by moths", see *Matthew 4*. An ability of this nature can integrate itself into the mosaic of other previously gained abilities etc. This silence can reach a point where the life of the entirety of everything in us, which has become more similar to the divine archetype, now becomes perceptible. This is a way of experiencing the "Born of God anew" within us. We get an inkling of what this means when, with conscious rest, the head feels freer – perhaps combined with a certain insight - the power of the heart becomes more perceptible and the feet become more relaxed. Then something is "through", whatever small partial aspect of life it may be. On the other hand, without this nothing is "through", essential things remain stuck and not worked out. This can cause problems, not only in dreams – that can only be incorporated there in a limited way - but also health problems, among others.

* **Christ** is a title. In Early Christianity there were different versions. The most wellknown one is "Christos" (Greek), which is the "Messiah" (Hebrew) = "The anointed one". There was also "Chrestos" (Greek) = the good one, the holy one; and - infrequent - "Chrystos" (from Greek "chrysos" = golden /shining).

[back.](#)

The temptations, and calling the disciples.

Jesus had to learn too, and had to turn his human qualities to God more and more. After 40 days fasting in the desert the "Tempter" appeared (e.g. *Matthew 4, 1-11*).

Even in "normal" life negative powers appear, both inwardly and in everyday life. They can also be looked on as something with form, i.e. as real entities. First of all, there are retarded and isolated tendencies in humans themselves - when active without the connecting heart; these isolated thoughts and subsequently isolated will is one meaning of "eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge" (*Genesis*).

On one hand these are hardening qualities that bind us to practical constraints and because these qualities are more deeply anchored in the unconscious, they are the last things to be fully overwhelmed. But it is possible however, to do something about it and to recognize its nature. A conscious ability to renounce and be able to have instead of a "must have", and a creative and ethical dealing with it is training in overcoming these negative forces.

On the other hand, the opposite wishes lead to escaping from physical problems and to indifferent and scornful "taking off" into spiritual areas. We sometimes overlook the fact that this is only the other side of the same "negative" coin, - related to the other side, just like a pendulum swinging in both directions. This second area is already more open today and therefore easier to clear up. One way of changing this is through compassion, a free giving of love. A further quality to be found in connection with both would be combined with greed for power. Changing this illusion requires the courage of unconditional truthfulness, the tolerance based on that and free solidarity in all contact with others.

Generally in all such fields a strong but - in spite of that - altruistic individuality of concerned people that could fill these areas is missing, instead of the tendencies slipping into negative extremes.

In *Matthew 4* Jesus is exposed to these three distracting impulses, here named "Satan" or "Devil". He does not refer simply to the respective opposite, but reaches for something beyond the oscillations of the various negative tendencies. What he does, is based on "the word of God", on "God the Lord", and "worship(p)ing and serving him exclusively". **Christ is beyond the duality of darkness and (apparent) light and overcomes both through his third, superior way**, as many further events also show.

Short annotation: It is often wrongly written that the Zarathustrian (Zoroastrian, Parsee) religion and Christianity and/or "the middle east religions" are dualistic. This is not fully correct with respect to their origins. (*You can find more information on the extra page "Zarathustra"*).

R.Steiner described the two main negative principles as separate entities as they can both be experienced in the world of spiritual visions. As mentioned, although it may be useful to consider both effects, outside of this kind of experience it is not completely justified for anthroposophists to think that Christian ideas of a single negative being do not include both sides. The tendencies are also often so mixed that "anti-divine" tendencies can be treated as a whole. The contrary should not be seen as several Gods, but the God of Christ with all related qualities... There are, however, other spiritual branches of thought that close one eye and regard every spiritual tendency as divine.

Both modern protestant theologians and some other spiritual thinkers close both eyes and explain ideas of negative beings away, reasoning, for instance, that they only occur in a few places in the Bible. They overlook the fact that these are not just considerations, but solid experiences.

Without fears and other negative feelings, negative forces do not have any direct power. "Not to paint the devil onto the wall" (German idiom), not thinking the worst can also work as a protecting mechanism - even against ecclesiastical scaremongering. Today, spiritual perception could show that **supposed "increases" in negative circuits represent hidden potential that has been lying dormant there for a long time**. Really positive abilities on the other hand can still grow, even though they grow towards an archetype that also already exists.

However, such personal "sore points" can also represent a point of response for similar external forces. Traces of this can be found in all societies, e.g. – in the west in situations in which money and egotism are considered to be of the highest value - especially in the old form without any type of social system; in the possible one-sidedness of nationalism and fascism, this is especially true wherever there was arrogance and indifference to the rest of the world; in destructive "religious" activities and in the extremes of Stalinism, specifically in its brutal rule over a faceless society. But this is not a condemnation of everything and everybody in such societies.

Jesus does not teach so much to directly "oppose evil" nor does he maintain the necessity of evil for the sake of a "balance" (as some eastern schools think). He also sees no absolute necessity for negative forces in order to recognize the divine good. Not even some - often necessary - direct psychical processing of negative qualities is necessary for everyone. For some people at least, a way like the "Christian Science" generally recommended by Mary Baker-Eddy can work. That does not prove, however, that negative forces do not exist; but they can be indirectly changed through that. With Christ there is also no eternal damnation. **All destructive forces can be converted in the end**, up to the time of the last chapter of St. John's revelation, promising that darkness will cease to exist (cf. the chapter "The New Earth"....

After those experiences in the desert **Jesus called the disciples** (*John 1, Matthew 4, 18 - 22, Matthew 10*).

* Again in the story of the Temptations, theology traditionally considers the symbolic connection with the history of mankind: the desert with its dangerous animals is seen as the antithesis of the world of Adam's paradise handed down to us and therefore as a condition that needs to be overcome by Jesus as the "new Adam". In the first Temptation, turning stones into bread, the story deals with the question of whether the Material or God should play the leading role. (Later, in stories dealing with the feeding and awakening of a great mass of people, we no longer see it as a temptation.) In the second Temptation, to jump from the roof of the temple, the story deals with overcoming pride concerning the burdens of human life. Jesus went through everything that was imposed upon him (until it was dissolved by the Resurrection). The third Temptation deals with the power of existing worldly kingdoms, or the God-given "kingdom of heaven". (In the further course, however, the worldly relevant, predicted "kingdom of peace" could also bring about the conversion of worldly striving for power by God.)

[back](#).

The wedding at Cana.

Here (*John 2, 1-12*) we encounter, first of all, an example of how misunderstandings are not so much caused by wrong translations, or by the early, papally instructed "corrections" of the gospels, but simply by one-sided emotional and patriarchal interpretations. When Jesus said to Mary "Woman, why do You involve me?" (Luther: "Woman, what do I have to do with You?"), was evaluated later as disparaging. By going into the text and regarding how Jesus then does everything that was wanted by Mary, one can easily recognize, that the sentence has a rather admiring nature, which might be expressed better this way: "Woman, how many things do I have to do with You!" From Greek one can work out the original wording of the simple aramaic language: "Woman, I with you" - so even at the time of Jesus himself the precise meaning was often not recognizable without understanding the context..

From here up to the cross the gospels show a creative connection between the experiences of Jesus and Mary. She supports inspiration (more about that later in the chapter about the Whitsun events) experiences the essential "stations" of his life with him, leading to a psychological transformation.

Even though the term "bride of Christ" for nuns is now often only taken to have a formal meaning, it initially pointed out a real kind of experience.

The "form" of Christ in man merges with the masculine aspect of the soul (animus), as previously mentioned in the chapter about the baptism in the Jordan. This masculine aspect can enter into an "inner wedding" with the "feminine" parts of our psyche, in this case under divine circumstances. **This can have an alchemistically changing effect even on the vitality and the body. The image of Mary can touch the feminine aspect of the soul (anima**) in the same manner.****

A way for men via Mary and/or M. of Bethany and [M. of Magdala](#) now suggests itself. However it is possible for either sex to take both the path of Jesus or that of Mary, because from the soul to the hormones neither man nor woman is bound completely by the reaction patterns of their own sex, or has to remain bound to them. Some people, however, find the first way easier and others the second. But in the end, the inner entirety will become evident. In the Catholic Church the earlier practice of the adoration of the heart of Jesus and of the pure heart of Mary has almost been forgotten today. This inner development does not ask, for instance, whether one is a Catholic or not - and while possibly lacking in formal knowledge of Mary, but also not prejudiced, as is the case with many people through contact with the external worship of Mary.

Only those who take such a transforming path can succeed in developing "alone" without suppression. But this does not need to be a lonely path. From a position of greater inner freedom a relationship to the opposite sex would be possible or even more perfect.

In this context, that which we have received from father and mother needs to become integrated into one's (his/her) personality. Elements of depth psychology can indeed have a relationship to religious experience. *Eugen Drewermann's* books are another way of looking at this. When looked at more closely, basic religious experiences might become apparent on a separate level, from which they affect psychological processes. Today there are tendencies to see **religious search as "holistic vital impulse within all human beings**, seeking the higher purpose of life, and searching for unlimited experience." See e.g. *Hubertus Mynarek: "Möglichkeit oder Grenze der Freiheit"*, (German 1977). One needs to differentiate, however, between an unshaped, general spiritual impulse and a religious impulse more directly re-ligious (Latin: re-connecting), connecting oneself with the divine origin, the "Father", - which practising Christians find possible through Christ.

God, as the world's greatest secret, is less likely to be penetrated by a single science, one kind of experience or a single phenomenon, - revealing at best single aspects; but by trying to accept several approaches and to view everything as a whole. This has only happened to a very small degree till now. If Christians used the alchemistic process in their way and therefore also used the left and right brain hemispheres together (today tried by many people), the "battles" between the theologians would end soon. The result would be "creative loving realization (recognition)". In spite of that it would still be possible to look especially at single aspects, but this would be recognized as such and not claimed exclusively. People would become more aware that they supplement each other.

He who is able to follow the universal principle of Jesus' "Love Your neighbour as Yourself", is also able to achieve the same and more by that alone. He who strives for this simultaneous love of oneself and of his "neighbour", will note, however, that exactly this has to be learned first. The inner "becoming more complete" can facilitate his love.

(The question of the "miracles" of Jesus, starting with the wedding at Cana, is investigated later in a special chapter. Concerning the divine aspect of "Mary-Sophia" see later the chapter "The Whitsun event".)

Traditional theology saw this event as replacing the Greek Dionysus cult, or as a symbolic tie with the meeting of Israel with God ("on the third day..." 2nd Moses 19:16) as well as in anticipation of the Passion of Christ, in which the wine takes on a deeper significance.

***) The concepts of "anima and animus" are not a question of faith. For instance, it is the experience of many people, whether they are Christians or not, that men and women have both 'male' and 'female' aspects to their psyche, stemming at least in part from the father and mother who brought them up; and which they can learn to integrate into their personality. The terms anima / animus, used by depth psychologists, may not correspond exactly to this reality; however, it is their approach to understand it.

Question:

Can God help me improve my relationship toward people of the opposite sex?

[back.](#)

(Christian Viewpoints for sexuali ty, sympathy, empathy and love).

It is a good idea, immediately after the chapter about the "Wedding at Cana" (*John 2, 1-12*) to deal directly with the contemporary problems in the field of love. (*You can find a more detailed extra page on the homepage/ "Questions, Answers..."*.)

Christ addresses people's hearts and the chance they have of becoming whole, of becoming complete, which is the prerequisite for real freedom. **He does not support the further falling apart of that in man which is already crumbling; no ecstatic experiencing of everything, but rather a new integration in the "wisdom of the heart".**

Christ represents the responsibility of people for each other. However, he does not believe in "inherent necessities", of external forms or of overrating them, or even the abuse of the terms responsibility, faith and honesty for the veiling of envy, jealousy and "taking possession of s.o." For him it is all a question of the spirit which people act in. In marriage too, not everything is automatically alright, which is considered as unfavo(u)rable outside.

To love God and your neighbour as yourself also means to love yourself. This rule of Christ, superseding the prohibitive logic of the Old Testament, is a universal attitude that goes through all these three areas and combines them all (*see Mark 12:33; John 13:34; Gal. 5:14; James 2:8*). In this context charity is then something more than just instinctive care for relatives and so forth; however, although it does not exclude them - in a free way. Due to this role of man as a loving helper, wherever appropriate, self-love is not of an egoistic kind, but goodness of the heart, actually directed towards loving oneself as an instrument for serving others and/or God, including the body.

The highest love is unconditional love. Cf. even loving "enemies" *Matthew 5:43-48* - which does not exclude wisdom

For contemporary Europeans etc. something of a transformation of sexuality can be experienced, especially then when two people meet first intellectually and psychologically during mutual enterprises, but then learn to deal with emanations of antipathy and sympathy. These things, not mainly, but among others, should be taken into consideration when seeking contacts which also make sense for the outside world. The unity on the physical level comes later and is not automatically a part of every friendship or meeting. And getting to know someone must not mean leaving the existing partner. But a loving mood goes with it. The power of the heart can noticeably pull the sexual energy upwards, and one does not always have to work it off explosively, as so often happens today through cultural conditioning.

Sexual love -"Eros" - is a special case of universal love -"Agape". So this is not necessarily a contradiction. The new Encyclica "Deus caritas est" of Pope Benedict XVI accepts this too.

Many spiritual traditions teach a transformation of sexuality instead of suppression or continuous living it up, - which is more than *Freud's* "sublimation". There were also similar approaches in the Christian world which are missing today and need to be elaborated on again; the heritage of the minnesingers and troubadours portrayed this type of knowledge.

Since sexuality can cause subconscious involvement between people, most religions see it as a balancing act linked to a partnership in which both are able to handle the consequences. Those who want to avoid sexual activities before marriage, can do so successfully, if both people are clear about what they want and don't want and support each other accordingly.

Jesus accepted this old approach, right up to the negative characterization of a covetous look for instance, at someone else's partner. But this does not necessarily exclude an enthusiastic meeting between two people who just met from happening more frequently than one may think. This is not always understood, even by the two people concerned: "When two or three meet in my name (i.e. "in connection with my spirit"), I am among them" (or, translated correctly too: "in them"). This does not require an official ecclesiastical gathering, no special preparation, but can come about everywhere where the "spirit of Christ" connects two people for any reason. To take this up, even if they are man and woman and if they like each other too (sympathy), to maintain in this case the clear consciousness that is the origin may be difficult, but it is necessary for the world. It need not be a question of partnership or of sex, but those concerned have to find out honestly what this is about if they want to master this situation. Sometimes the one moment "was it" already, if one was open for it.

The life of Jesus on earth already showed how amazingly unconventional he was. It may turn out that conventions are only necessary as long as "he is not among them".

A prerequisite for appropriate meetings between people, which one can improve oneself naturally, is a study of our own individuality including the "aura" and/or "charisma". Even as a couple, people still remain individuals and an absolute dissolution of the two people in the couple is not that which Christ wanted.

*) Mankind is a complex network, which may become clearer in the next chapters.

[back](#).

The "holy zeal" (and viewpoints concerning emotions).

In *John 2*, after the wedding at Cana the "clearing of the temple" is described. Jesus zealously drove the traders and money changers out of the temple with violence. Here he wanted to set a clear sign against the hypocrisy of the world, designating the temple as a place of worship and not as a place of mere haggling. In this situation he knew he could not expect anything of urban or clerical officials and so he used his own hands as the only one who still felt responsible "in his father's house". This was a non-violent act of social resistance. "To obey God rather than people" is **Jesus' unobsequious attitude in general**. Also where he says: "Give to the emperor, what is the emperor's (and to God, what is God's)", there is no obsequious attitude as so often wrongly interpreted, but rather the aim is to spare the disciples pointless friction with social powers irrelevant for them. Religion and politics have their own laws. To serve their fellow men and to want "the best for the city" is not servility either.**

In this context the question of how to deal with emotions could arise, because not everyone's emotions are on such a high level - filled with love - as Jesus'. He lived continuously in "positive trembling before God" and compassion for people and his zeal were based on conscious good intention. In normal human beings nearly all emotions are initially mixed at least with unconscious stimulation - response mechanisms that vary biographically and vary in strength, but are quite

similar in their basic pattern. Looking at this oneself, without being satisfied with the interpretation of others and to continue to find these mechanisms in our own reactions, to look at them and finally master them and/or to deliver them to God is a long learning process.

Although we are dealing here with the psyche, the usual psychological analysing and/or therapy procedures are not very appropriate for seekers of God and of truth. Psychology can even stop us from developing spiritually if we have one-sided interpretation models in the back of our minds that seek to reduce psychological problems to those of sexuality and childhood moulding; furthermore, "causes" of weakness can become "justifications" for remaining how one is instead of stressing the human ability to develop, as mentioned by Erich Fromm.

Where psychology stimulates looking into psychological processes and when the psyche / soul is seen as more than just a chemical-electrical brain function - which rarely occurs -, their study could also be a helpful bridge. This science would develop better if knowledge and/or contentions of alternative psychological schools were accepted as material for their own research. It does not usually help much to work on whole complexes of problems at one go. It would be more effective to first search for components of this complex; and to then distinguish whether it is a "beam in one's own eye" or a "splinter in the eye of someone else, who is responsible for it. Jesus and some Christian schools stress the "beam in one's own eye", because to look at one's own problematic deeds is more difficult, has to be learned and because one should start by correcting one's own mistakes; so hearing someone's confession has - besides the spiritual aspect - a therapeutical effect too. Psychological schools sometimes prefer the other point of view (viewpoint) as that of a victim. One may notice, that one finally looked at both. For instance eastern spiritual teachings would stress the connection between both sides in life as the source of "karma", fate.

Concerning the elimination of after-effects caused by difficult daily routines, a means brought to light again by R. Steiner could help, i.e. a daily retrospective, starting with the evening and looking back towards the morning. This makes it easier to be in the present again. This practice also facilitates a similar process after death, as reported from many "near-death-experiences".

It is also possible to produce a "mirror of the psyche", a list of our own negative qualities to be improved on and with qualities to strive for. One goes through this often, controlling one's own development - a well-tried practice used by mystics.

Psychological progress can have the effect of improving conversation between people too. People are less prejudiced and less likely to jump to conclusions when they themselves have become more transparent and been able to let go of burdens. When Jesus stresses the non-judgmental attitude and the importance of "what comes out of the mouth", he is not talking about an unfulfillable moral claim, but a request to begin learning. This may require to stop quarreling, take a break - see the chapter "*The silence in the desert*" - and then having a frank talk with each other. This is a phase of new birth too.

In this context there are European spiritual paths which include nerve or consciousness centers known in Yoga as "chakras" (Anthroposophy, Universal Life - not to be confused with the Universal Life Church -, and others). One cannot automatically describe these ideas as being non-Christian, as some churches would have us believe, but were already known to the Christian theosophists in medieval times ([J. G. Gichtel*](#)), and can now be recognized as really existing in each of us - just as the acupuncture points, especially well known in China, are not automatically "taoist", because these points and lines can be measured electrically and viewed histologically in human flesh.

**) The "zeal" in this sense differs from "Zeal without understanding" (*Romans 10:1-3*).

Question:
Can God help me deal with my emotions more consciously?

[In a broader context see also the extra page "...ethics".](#)

[back.](#)

The Sermon on the Mount (*Matthew 5 - 7,29*; and viewpoints of the mind).

A lot has been written about the reversal of the values of (both old and contemporary) society brought about by the Sermon on the Mount. Some appreciate it in connection with social activities. Others try to invalidate an application to world affairs by the term "ethics of fundamental attitudes" - and favo(u)r the so-called "ethics of responsibility" with old-testamentary threats of punishment, of military and other types. Some simply attempt to live according to this sermon. Beyond Christianity the Sermon on the Mount is also appreciated (e.g. by Gandhi).

Seen from the viewpoint of the investigation of consciousness, it is clear that the Sermon on the Mount is directed in particular towards people who understand that consciousness can be more than intellectual analysis and grasp that life does not end with themselves. The "spiritual poor", who know that they know nothing (or not much) and who are willing to think in relative terms, to see that God knows more than they do and that he can teach them a lot in all things, they are blessed, the "kingdom of heaven is theirs". This attitude can prove to be a continuous and powerful step forward in one's development, more than any other attitude generally considered as "clever".

"Those who suffer" do not just have to bear their own fate alone - and therefore their part of the state of the whole instead of passing over everything carelessly. Some also help to bear the burden of persons in their context and finally the fate of nations and mankind. Instead of statesmen, these are often social movements these days. And who gives them the necessary compassion? Who prays for them, instead of always just for the powerful, famous and economically great?

The "meek" are most clearly those who are voluntarily meek (and not simply those who are afraid). They "shall inherit the earth" and only under their loving control can the earth be preserved and develop.

"Those who hunger and thirst for justice": - not envy, but the fair search for justice for themselves and for others opens people for what is "above" them. Sooner or later an answer will come, although not always as they had imagined. "The merciful" carry their brothers and sisters and fellow creatures up with them voluntarily and in the same way they are carried by God too.

"Those who have a pure heart" and who have noticed and put aside their intellectual eyeglasses and prejudices, "will see God". This is the more comprehensive meaning of the words "Do not judge". So the "head" becomes more open for the "heart" too.

"The -peaceful", also "the Peacemakers", in the sense of the peace prayer of Francis of Assisi, also let others recognize that another force must be at work here, than those forces that otherwise determine life. So those "will be called sons (and daughters) of God."

"Those who are persecuted because of righteousness", "theirs is the kingdom of heaven", and those who are defamed and persecuted by others because of Jesus are blessed too. This was often their feeling too, while their external being was suffering. This does not mean that suffering is a goal in itself.

Those addressed are also supposed to take up their roles as "The salt of the earth" and as "The light of the earth". Especially in this chapter he refers to the "laws" and the prophets of the Old Testament. He talks about that which had been right before his time and makes it fruitful in a new

way for a new time, in which the laws themselves can no longer be in the foreground, but their source. A time in which every human being can re-create the inner principles of life anew.

He who "strives for the Kingdom of God, will get everything else". Also here it may be noticed, **that indeed the level of intellectual thinking is not supposed to be destroyed, but opened, to be able to accept that which originates from a higher, spiritual logic. However, the speech is not meant to cause us to shun earthly "constraints" for the benefit of feasting in higher spiritual states of consciousness. Higher insights are supposed to be confronted with earthly consciousness and life until the world is converted.** Clarity remains, or can only develop in relationship to man's understanding of certain questions ranging from ignorance to speculation, presumption, theory and belief, finally ending in knowledge. That is an important basis for growth. That is different to that striving for bliss which can be found in some old spiritual schools of thought.

This higher level of thought portrayed in the Sermon on the Mount (see also next chapter) is especially addressed to people who want to do more than simply use it to reorganize their individual spiritual lives. The path is mainly addressing individual life, in which someone can search for a partner or for "closest ones", as described in the chapters "The baptism" and "The silence in the desert". The expansion of consciousness includes the level of masculine-feminine relations and feelers are stretched out in the direction of additional psychological interaction between several people. That was pointed out in the chapters "The wedding at Cana" and "...Love" and "The holy zeal". Here the Sermon on the Mount appeals to this psychical and ethical level which again opens the way for the more comprehensive spiritual goals, capable of forming a community from relations of people. This consciousness leads to a phase of new birth too. This corresponds, in a primitive way, to the relationship of sounds to intervals, of intervals to triads and of triads to the scale, which seems to be the real pattern for everything - the whole.

In theology the connection to Old Testament revelations has been appraised: e.g. *Psalms 1 and Jer. 17:7f.* According to *4th Moses 12:3* in connection with *Mt. 11:20*, Jesus was seen as the new Moses. The prophesy in *Zechariah 9:9f.* "...his kingdom stretched from sea to sea" speaks of the worldwide significance of the promulgated kingdom of God. There was no overlooking the fact that in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus repeatedly transformed laws from the Old Testament into something new: "...but I say unto you...", i.e. he did not speak as a rabbi interpreting scripture, but from the awareness of a divine mission. Exactly this prophetic and messianic characteristic was disputed by those who only believed in the Old Testament.

Extra text: the text of the Beatitude* and further teachings of Jesus, with annotations.

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2: And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

3: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

5: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

6: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

7: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

8: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

9: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

10: "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11: "Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

12: Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you.

13: "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men.

14: "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. 15: Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16: Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

(Here in *Matthew 5:1-16* Jesus speaks to those who are willing to leave the usual, egotist thoughts - and their entanglement in the contraries between people - *5:8*.)

...22 But I tell you, that everyone who is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca! (empty head)' shall be in danger of the council; and whoever shall say, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of the fire of the Gehenna (hell)".

23 If therefore you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has anything against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are with him in the way; lest perhaps the prosecutor deliver you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the officer, and you be cast into prison. 26 Most assuredly I tell you, you shall by no means get out of there, until you have paid the last penny.

27 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery;' 28 but I tell you that everyone who gazes at a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. ...

In 22-28 Jesus stressed, that now besides the deeds, the words, feelings and thoughts are important too. (But in 28 the topic is the -possibly married- woman and "to lust" after her - and not any kind of interest in a woman or man.)

34 But I tell you, don't swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God. ...

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I tell you, don't resist him who is evil; but whoever strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. ... 41 Whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. 42 Give to him who asks you, and don't turn away him who desires to borrow from you.

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Don't even the tax collectors do the same? 47 If you only greet your friends, what more do you do than others? ... 48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect

(The recommendation to leave the circle of violence and counter-violence does not mean, that the evil is o.k. It is a way to be stronger than the evil, from the viewpoint of the spirit.)

6:4 ...so that your merciful deeds may be in secret, then your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. ... 6 But you, when you pray, enter into your inner chamber, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. 7 In praying, don't use vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their much speaking. 8 Therefore don't be like them, for your Father knows what things you need, before you ask him. (The [Lord's prayer](#) follows).

...14 "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you don't forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses....

17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face; 18 so that you are not seen by men to be fasting, but by your Father who is in secret, and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.

19 "Don't lay up treasures for yourselves on the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consume, and where thieves don't break through and steal; 21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ... 24 You can't serve both God and Mammon. ...

26 See the birds of the sky, that they don't sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns. Your heavenly Father feeds them... 31 Therefore don't be anxious, saying, 'What will we eat?', 'What will we drink?' or, 'With what will we be clothed?' 32 ... for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first God's Kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore don't be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Each day's own evil is sufficient.

(Jesus stressed the priority of the soul and of being in present time).

7:1 "Don't judge, so that you won't be judged.... 5...First remove the beam out of your own eye, and then you can see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye.

6 "Don't give that which is holy to the dogs, neither throw your pearls before the pigs, lest perhaps they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

7 "Ask, and it will be given you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened for you. 8 For everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds. To him who knocks it will be opened. ... 12 Therefore whatever you desire for men to do to you, you shall also do to them; for this is the law and the prophets.

7:1-2 advices to put aside one's prejudices. This is a prerequisite for finding the truth of the spirit.

7:13 "Enter in by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter in by it.

15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. 16 By their fruits you will know them... 17...every good tree produces good fruit; but the corrupt tree produces evil fruit. ... 21 Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

24 "Everyone therefore who hears these words of mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man, who built his house on a rock. 25 The rain came down, the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat on that house; and it didn't fall, for it was founded on the rock. 26 Everyone who hears these words of mine, and doesn't do them will be like a foolish man, who built his house on the sand. 27 The rain came down, the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat on that house; and it fell--and great was its fall."

Other teachings of Jesus: The appeal to everyone

Mark 1:14-15 (Matthew 4:17-22; Luke 5:1-11; John 1:35-51) Now after John was taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Good News of the Kingdom of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand! Repent, and believe in the Good News."

* (Matthew 5:22 - 7:27 and 13 from the free "World English Bible" of ebible.org)

The Lord's Prayer (see Matthew 6, 7-15).

*Our father in heaven.
Hallowed be Your Name.
Your kingdom come.*

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

*Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.*

(for Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever. Amen)

*) More exactly one might translate like this: "And lead us, that we don't fall into temptation". God is not the temptator. But he is the highest one above all, above the good and the evil; therefore one can invoke God for nonadmission of temptations; or for the right guidance, when someone is already experiencing a temptation. Some more places in the New Testament concerning prayer: Matthew 18,19-20 - praying with two or three "with Christ among (or within) them". John 4,23-24 - praying "in the spirit and in the truth" . John 15,16 - praying "in my name to the father", that means in conscious connection with Christ. John 17 - the prayer of Christ himself for his disciples. In the main text of "Ways of Christ" you find explanations concerning prayer in the chapters: "The baptism...", "The silence in the desert", "The Sermon on the Mount", "The question of the miracles", "The first Whitsun event", "John's Revelation"....

To pray is effective - if what is wanted, is ethical; but it is up to God's higher wisdom, what is fulfilled in the world, and how it is fulfilled.

[back.](#)

Christ's Transfiguration on Mount Tabor (Matthew 17).

Many of Jesus' deeds are the symbolic external signs of the inner "transfiguration", starting from the conversation with Nicodemus (*John 3*), continuing with the *Sermon on the Mount*, right up to the cure of a person born blind and the feeding of the 5000 on the mountain. This transfiguration is partially related to the eastern term great enlightenment. The human spirit is enlightened. However, that refers here to a closer connection with God and his spirit. God is understood here not only as the absolute principle, but as a being too, being real for Jesus and those who follow on his way.

Just "positive thinking" - if not egoistic, not megalomaniacal and without technical manipulations - could indeed change thoughts into a state more close to what comes from God. It might open us

for God this way. However, the literature of this school of thought has not discussed this carefully enough. and that can often lead to self-deception.

Anyway, this is not yet "Transfiguration". Transfiguration does not simply add positive affirmations to the confused variety of mental "programs" all people own, so that in total a surplus of positive ones arises - which is a possible exercise. But Transfiguration unravels everything by an ability to look at the spiritual origins, made free of distortions of the mind and of misleading emphasis. A higher divine order in everything becomes visible. Regarding this kind of maturity, it is a higher level of the psychological cleaning process mentioned in the chapter "*The holy zeal*". From a more basic level of insight everything becomes clear. Direct recognition or insight is not thinking; it just comes, with or without thinking. It cannot be forced and makes us free. The world of thought does not need to be suppressed any longer in order to achieve higher wisdom, as some other schools of thought have attempted.

Our thinking is freed from instinct-like reaction patterns and the controllable analytical and synthetic thinking becomes more easily a tool of higher reason. Then one understands too, which behaviour may be suitable in which circumstances.

One can assume that Christ himself did not have to eliminate all that dullness, which separated the normal human being from this level of consciousness. Nevertheless he must have also experienced an increasing level of clarity. Later, in the so-called high-priestly prayer, he asked for that clarity which he had had with God before creation.

Some theologians see the Transfiguration and the professing of Christ by Peter in the light of the simultaneous Jewish day of atonement or the subsequent Feast of Tabernacles. (The day of atonement was the only time in the year when the priest uttered the name of God in the inner sanctum of the temple.) Others saw a connection with Moses climbing Mount Sinai (*2nd Moses 24:16*).

Question:

Can God help me restructure my thoughts in accordance with reason?

[In the Internet version Web there is a quote from the bible.](#)

[back.](#)

The question of the "miracles".

Jesus did not act in order to satisfy anyone's thirst for sensation. Neither did he act to force people to believe through external events. His entire path was guided by an inner clarity that told him what he had to do in each case - and not "because of this or that circumstance, in order to achieve this or that effect". Cures were often "signs" that stood for something larger and more fundamental. During the healing of the person born blind at the Sabbath Jesus answered, that the reasons are not sins, "but that the works of God be seen". (*John 5, 6-9; John 6; John 9, 3 ...*).

At the same time, a disruption of obsolete ways of thinking and a pondering over the deeper importance of such actions were definitely desired side effects. Jesus recognized the fact that there are people who need to be able to monitor, count, measure and weigh as in the case of Thomas, who represents "the scientific type" among the disciples. When he got the opportunity to test whether in fact Jesus Christ was standing in front of him, Jesus said: "Be not unbelieving, but faithful" (*John 20, 19-29*). Jesus wanted Thomas to apply his new experience by pondering so honestly and deeply that the root of his doubt disappeared and something dawned on him. The fact that Jesus still had to say this afterwards, does not mean, that Thomas was a sceptic, now "slain" by the external reality and "forced to believe", even by fear of punishment. It rather means that even after that, Thomas kept his ability, to reach new convictions autonomously . This kind of

dealing with facts and thoughts is not condemned here, as some interpreters misunderstood because of lacking knowledge of human consciousness. In spite of that, Thomas still had to learn that there are other ways of convincing oneself apart from considering the physical facts.

Jesus knew what was right for Thomas. He did not want to force anybody. That would have been too much like a court and there is no intention to provoke him into refusing something that he was not mature enough to decide on.

It is worth reading the "St. Thomas' Gospel" too. it is an apocryphal collection of precise quotes of Jesus, no matter if it was written by Thomas himself or not. This text was also accepted by spiritual Christians in Egypt and elsewhere, but not by some teachers of the early Church.

Correspondingly the "miracles " of Jesus were not the main point of his activity either. Often he only did it in order to help, after being asked, without crowds gathered, and he "threatened" people not to tell anything.

When today, however, theologians and others from the school of Bultmann's "theology of demythologizing" still try to explain away these miracles as symbolic descriptions, it is clear that they are simply adapting their ideas to the mechanistic view of the world and human nature usual in the 19th century and that they did not even take later scientific activities into consideration. Later trends in quantum physics, in biology and biophysics, innatural healing and parapsychological investigations, in astrophysics and so forth have long since reached a stage of development that remove the "inconceivability" of biblical events. This does not have to represent a search for a "proof of the existence of God": other levels of perception would be responsible apart from the scientific ones.

One thing that remains correct on this theological school is that it does not consider a scientific verifiability as a necessary condition for having faith.

The time of one-sidedness, of the old French "philosophy of enlightenment" is over. Also scientists are now able to have faith without becoming schizophrenic. In a time where the people do not hesitate to believe the facts known from parapsychology, such as individual abilities to bend spoons from a distance - in spite of some charlatans enough facts remain. It would be absurd to deny such abilities in the case of Jesus Christ. Jesus worked for other reasons and not simply for the fun of bending spoons, Today however, many different experiences suggest that Jesus was actually able to penetrate all natural forces - and that it is just important in the present time to contemplate this phenomenon; for our contemporary view of human nature, for a holistic, integrated, or Christian healing and so on. Such a spiritual viewpoint of Jesus is not contrary to the perception of Jesus as the "Son of Man", who wanted to give a visible example for the individuals and their social relations or the community. Often, it was only this apparent contradiction that led to the refusal to accept the "miracles ", because those concerned then think they have to ward off wrong tendencies that lead away from a human and social Christianity. In reality, it would take both of those things to show an approximate picture of the real (constructive) "radicalism" of Jesus and his connection to the will and therefore also the power of the creator.

Looking at the healing activities of Jesus we can also study another specific aspect of his teachings. He not only refers, as some healers of the present, to "cosmic energy", that they feel running through themselves, but he also refers to the belief in becoming healthy through him, ultimately by God through the visible person of Jesus. **The energy is not an abstract force here; at the same time it is an effect of Christ's being.** For example, in the eastern Yoga, energy is often considered as something isolated. Today healing can also be accomplished in the initial sense by prayer and with regard to that innermost part of the human being, connected with Christ, who wants people to be healed and become more complete, - who then can do even "greater things than he" (*John 14,12-13*).

But the spiritual healing itself and the psychological and spiritual advance combined with that still depend on God's grace, which no one can force, no matter how much we try to prepare for it.

Concerning the "gifts of the Holy Spirit" see also 1. *Corinthians* 12, 7-11; *Acts* 2, 17-20; and the chapter "*The Whitsun event*" in this book.

[back.](#)

Raising Lazarus from the dead.

From the beginning of his teachings to this step Christ redefined all those levels of the human being with which the ancient mystic schools had been struggling for thousands of years. This enabled the "super-conscious" inner self to manifest itself in the life of the body, the psyche and the mind of every human being who follows the way. On the other hand, the ability to clear, to integrate, and to expand increasingly deeper and older parts of the subconscious becomes increasingly apparent.

The ancient Egyptian mysteries knew a path from the mind and psyche down to consciously taking up the physical will to live. With the "raising of Lazarus from the dead" - *John 10.39 - 11* - another "deepening" appears. First of all, some details are obviously similar to that Egyptian knowledge. This concerned an old practice where the human being spent three days in a state known in modern parapsychology as an "Out-Of-Body-Experience", just like in a dream of flight, but consciously. The body lay there, apparently dead. On re-awakening, the initiated person had the inner certainty, that he would exist as a psychological-mental being after physical death. The "Hierophantos" (initiating priest) had to make sure that the person re-awoke in the physical body after 3 days at the latest before it began to decay. However, that is exactly what we are told in the story of Lazarus - after four days it "already stank". **So the awakening power now had to go deeper, influencing the material substance itself too**, in order to get him back again. In biblical events there is a tendency to show, that the loving spirit of Christianity can be especially recognized in the physical world and in external action. This tendency is something which is only being taken up again in our time, after the mysticism of former centuries in most cases only penetrated the intellectual-psychological parts.

The teachings of all religions about life after death are more likely to stem from such experiences of feeling oneself outside the material body, than from philosophical speculations, which were not appropriate to the state of consciousness of the people of prehistory, early history and antiquity. For a more adequate explanation see *Jean Gebser "Ursprung und Gegenwart" ("origin and present time" - exact English title not checked)*. He distinguishes an archaic, a magical and a mythical stage of consciousness prior to the one of the theoretical intellect and a later integrated consciousness. Whether the breaks between these stages, were inevitable, is another question. They can, however, be understood today. R. Steiner also stresses the incomparability of older stages of consciousness with modern consciousness. Only reminiscences of that can be found in the various stages of individuals growing up today.

By the way, the comparison with antiquated initiation rites - which are no longer possible in the old manner - does not mean the raising of Lazarus from the dead was a ritual action arranged externally between all participants as in Egypt. **Jesus often freed his actions from cultic rules of the chronological - e.g. sabbath, the spatial - e.g. temple, or the situation-related kind. From this position of independence he sometimes voluntarily used such circumstances positively nevertheless, e.g. Pessah (Easter), temple... . So he can be an example of how to deal e.g. with certain trends, like the assumption of astrological aspects, "power places", and rites.** (See also books of Marko Pogacnik: "*Healing of the Heart of the Earth*", "*Christ Power and Earth Goddess*" etc. about geomantic work, Findhorn Press, U.K.Scotland)

Because of the raising of Lazarus (*John 11*) Jesus and the people around him also became more visible as a whole for the world outside. Here one can see an expanded consciousness of Jesus, which also includes the circle of disciples, and so inseminates society. A similar expansion of consciousness can also result today, when people's group activities radiate outwardly, emulating Jesus.

Now the account of the passion follows. The high priest of the Jews speaks about a relationship between what is supposed to happen to Jesus and the fate of the nation (*John 11*). In his prophetic view he observes correctly that Christ would die for all of them, but he wrongly interprets that Jesus would harm the nation by remaining alive. This requires a level of consciousness beyond thoughts, capable of grasping processes and their contexts simultaneously. This ability must be acquired. One is not usually born with it and schools do not teach it. It is not identical with instinctively emerging mental pictures. Deep causes can be uncovered, dissolved, and created. Negative or other thoughts are no longer stored up semiconsciously. They can no longer accumulate problem structures, which influence both deeper and physical processes. Even retrospectively, this problem can be solved slowly if people follow these laws. The way to a free, creative future is then open.

Extra text: Gospel passage(s).

39: Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be a bad odour, for he has been dead four days." 40: Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" 41: So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. 42: I knew that thou hear me always, but I have said this for the benefit of the people standing by, that they may believe that thou sent me." 43: When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." 44: The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Clemens of Alexandria, an early Father of the Church, still owned the expanded "secret" Gospel of Mark.

According to his words this was "a more spiritual Gospel for the use of those, who stood in the way of perfection", serving their "progress in recognition". Here notes from Mark and Peter were integrated, like the raising of Lazarus from the dead, which were not given in the Gospels for common use. Only the disciple John and his disciples integrated such incidents openly in a Gospel. Clemens names Christ a "Mystagoge" or "Hierophant", that means as he, who leads and initiates into the mysteries -the secrets of faith - the new Christian "mysteries" different from the old mystery cults. (Cf. Prof. Morton Smith, "*The Secret Gospel...*". *Ways of Christ* does not support all (of) his contents.)

Question:

Can I perceive God as the one who helps to bridge the gulf between life and death, as well as between consciousness and sleep?

[back.](#)

"The Sheep".

Some time before the foot washing, those connected with Christ were compared with "Sheep" (*John 10, 11-18*); just as Christ himself was elsewhere called the "Lamb of God". The existing openness of the disciples, or that which they had regained, is stressed here - especially pertaining to that which comes from Christ - similar to the relationship between Christ and God. Although mature, a person can now feel like a blank page, or like a child. Real progress leads to modesty - even if pride has to be overcome again and again. The insight grows, that all people have a significant, but in the end a small role in relation to God. This can be called humility in a free and spiritual meaning, however, and not as disproportionate self-deprecation or servile behaviour toward earthly authorities. This is something which was often misunderstood.

It is no accident that Christ says in the same chapter "I am the door". Whoever opens his being / his heart for Christ becomes open like a door that leads to God, which is a requirement for everything what follows.

Jesus also contrasts "sheep" with "goats" (for instance Matthew 25:32-33).

[back](#).

Christ "Washing the Feet"; and Mary of Bethany anointing Jesus.

The rest of the Gospel reports show more and more symbolic events, whereas more detailed concurrent lessons are missing. At this point, if not earlier, we can forget the commercially trimmed "[Everything about Jesus - disclosure-stories](#)", at the end of which we still don't know anything. Although some outward knowledge can be helpful at this point, only meditative contemplation can lead to any decisive insight anyway. The results, however, can be of some stimulation to others in their own efforts to gain insight and no priest or historian can save us this search.

The foot washing (*John 13, 1-20*) is paraphrased in the Bible text as a purification. Since the meaning of such "esoteric" passages was later hardly understood, one did not wish to change it, and so at least they were left uncensored. The person concerned is "completely pure", so this does not mean the feet only, but the symbolic significance for the entire person. In many cultures this type of thinking in analogies was common. The same functions can be found in the human organism, that is the Micro- or mesocosmos (meso = middle) and in the surrounding nature, which belongs to the macrocosm. The feet are pointed towards the ground and their movement follows the will. Whichever way a person "goes", it requires a decision of the (free) will. A purification of this will - here by God - and its contradictory somersaults - here by Christ - is shown in the content of the foot washing. Jesus also values good deeds much more highly than Christian lip service (*Matthew 25, 31-43...*).

However, this action, like all the events that followed, did more than represent a mere repetition of the impulses already given in the years preceding, for the purification of the various spiritual parts of a human being. Everything was governed by the fact that Jesus knew that his time had come and that his disciples should become mature enough to spread the "certain something" independently to wider sections of the population. No longer just their own personal qualities - in this case their good will - under the increasing supervision of their inner selves is the goal, as it had been up to now. **This higher, non-egoistic "I" - now united with the "person", can now increasingly become one with that "Christ, who took shape in us" like a "self of selves".** Life is no longer mere "personal destiny".

This experience could initially be described like this: the inner comprehension of this action can result in such purity, that everything can now be controlled more directly from the innermost source itself through the various layers of our being. However it is initially an act of will. Feeling and recognition will gradually become perfected, so that the human being is then able to explain more directly the "why" of his impulses. Within us, God also follows a sequence analogous to the steps of learning a child follows on its level. That does not mean that this new stage of evolution should develop without thought. The development of ethical feeling and clear recognition has already been strongly activated. All that is still lacking is a further perfection of this feeling and thinking in the spirit of Christ, as the will now receives it.

Another way of experiencing these hardly describable stages might be related to becoming conscious of our own consciousness, or the view of the (guardian) "Angels" or the Higher Self, when looking at human life. The (angelic) Higher Self - as it is today often named outside the churches - can now show itself united with Christ and is also going through a transformation. Experiences with angels are quite usual in parts of new spiritual movements today; while Christians often doubt their existence in spite of the Bible, to say nothing of the question, what is our "own guardian angel" of the vernacular about - and how this connection could look like. But the Christ represents the shaped, personal human being, and the keeping of the achievements of the life, also when opening oneself for the impersonal worlds of energies of the "angels". A human

being, who has such experiences, is not yet complete. Christ gave the disciples first insights of that already in the event of *John 1*. Some spiritually oriented ones think, the experience of the own angel(s) would be the most important one, and after that they could withdraw from the earthly affairs; in reality the exploration of this areas would be based on much stability already achieved, if it should not end in illusions. The more comprehensive penetration of the life on earth by the spirit may just start. As a clue here is mentioned, that for instance R. Steiner as a researcher in spirit still ascribes the human beings long ages of evolution on earth; and some other schools too. In addition: practices like the hypnotic -spiritualist "necromancy" are something else than this archetypical basic experience of angels. But in the meantime there are many efforts of people, which must be taken serious, to be in contact with angels in their daily life.

The connection between the washing of the feet and *John 12*, where **Mary of Bethany anoints Jesus symbolically and dries his feet with her hair** was hardly noticed. Does she simply do this as a person, or does she actually represent feminine aspects of God, as it could be ascribed to Mary, the mother of Jesus or to Mary Magdalene – who is probably not identical with Mary of Bethany? Why does this precede the "washing of the feet"? For these - albeit contradictory - approaches of feminist theology of experience there are certainly some undiscovered or only partially discovered treasures. The "last anointing" e.g. of the Catholic Church can be looked at as a reminiscence of that incident.

Furthermore, it is remarkable that the washing of the feet was not unique to Jesus, but that the disciples too were encouraged to wash each others' feet (just as the last supper was - for the time being - given to the early community, in the sense of a universal priesthood). This will to live in God, refined by the washing of the feet, **is expanded over and above one's own being onto those around him**, firstly to the person whose feet are being washed and then onto others and all the disciples, with whom he is sharing responsibility.

Washing the feet can also be understood as a service to others. With this foot washing alone they "take part in him" (in Jesus), as Jesus calls it. This underlines the comprehensive significance of this step. This can be compared with young people saying, he/she "goes with me" (German, meaning "is my girl/boy friend") which is, at least at that moment, most important for them. However, the "washing of the feet" is no longer a matter of "having a relationship" but of "being in a living relation". The washing of the feet is only comprehensible as "a step forward". Details of how to practice this externally are less important. But in the sense of the alchemist's practice of using external actions for making inner attitudes and processes in man more imaginable, this action is reasonable - if the related inner attitude is existent. Even a conceivably correct attitude of an active priest would not be enough; the consciousness of the one concerned is the most important. This is also true for *the last supper* (see also *the next chapter*) - the schools of theologians do not agree about the various aspects of it. They may even be right in their viewpoints; however, this very viewpoint of the conscious transformation of the person concerned is not appreciated properly, neither by the Catholic nor by the Protestant Church.

Although in the case of simpler teachings 5000 people were still able to grasp the meaning and later 500 or 70 that could still participate in the more difficult steps; in the washing of the feet only the eleven disciples took part. Those who had learned a lot from Jesus and were well enough prepared so that they could understand. Perhaps Judas was not yet able to. Jesus did not give all his lessons for everyone straight away, but step-by-step. However, in the meantime several individuals may effectively start their meditative practice with the events leading up to the crucifixion. The Christian Rosicrucians attempted this. Washing the feet, whipping, crowning with thorns, crucifixion and laying in the grave, resurrection, ascension they called the Christian Initiations. Translated into the depth of understanding of a later age, the dream pictures of the seven days of the "alchemist wedding" also resulted from that. (*"Chymische Hochzeit des Christian Rosenkreutz"*, 1616 written by the Lutheran theologian J. V. Andreae, disguised as some kind of satire or fairytale.)

In most cases such a step is certainly not completed when experienced for the first time in life, either in meditation or as a dream. Human existence with all its abilities can extend in many

directions. Other steps may follow and overlap with preceding steps, but new qualities will only be "rounded off" after the preceding steps have been rounded off that serve as a basis for it.

The anointing at Bethany is followed in *John 12* by the triumphal Entry of Jesus at Jerusalem as the Messiah. After the Washing of the Feet, *John 13-17*, the prediction of the betrayal by Judas Iscariot is handed down; then come the Last Speeches and the prayer of Jesus for himself and the disciples.

In the Washing of the Feet, theologians have often seen a symbolic act that points to the upcoming crucifixion of Jesus; or an example of serving with the purifying love of God. However, it was also heralded as a deed with direct impact.

Extra text: quote from the Bible.

4 So he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel round his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped round him. 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" 7 Jesus replied, "You do not realise now what I am doing, but later you will understand. 8 "No", said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." 9 "Then, Lord", Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" 10 Jesus answered, "Someone who has had a bath, needs only to wash his feet; his whole body (/being) is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." 11 For he knew who was going to betray him, that was why he said not every one was clean.
(...) 14 Now, that I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet".

Today one hardly finds "foot washing" as an external ritual; for instance Adventists may practise it before the Lord's Supper. But the external process is less important than the inner attitude, which is seldom understood fully.

Question:

Do I want to ask* God – if I haven't already – for my good will toward others to become second nature to me - even if it's strenuous ?

* Later: instead of asking (praying) – having faith, i.e. being convinced. Even later: Experiencing God's effects (grace).

[back.](#)

The Last Supper, the triumphal entry, the arrest and the whipping.

Jesus had a triumphal entry into Jerusalem, hono(u)red as the promised Messiah (*John 12, 12-19*) The hardened priestly castes knew how to press the "psychological buttons" of the people, to partially turn their mood into a negative one. Individuals who are aware of their own negative moods and indifference and try to convert these influences are capable of being more stable and closer to God. They are no longer so easy to manipulate by mass-suggestion and external negative forces. The reality of mass-suggestion was also found in some of the mass movements of 20th century.

During **the arrest** (*Joh. 18*) the soldiers were knocked over at first. Christ showed that he was not under their control. Nevertheless he let everything happen to him willingly after that.

The "**whipping**" (*Joh. 19, 1*) strikes the back of Jesus. The "middle" of the human being, his feeling and his power to overcome emotional suffering are qualities that can emerge during meditative comprehension - it's not passive, despairing suffering. Nevertheless all Christian mystics report of Jesus' pain they voluntarily or compulsorily experienced in their soul. So Christ did not flee from this pain anxiously, although he surely could have done - like Indian masters who

practise "Pratjahara", which means "to withdraw the senses". Rather one can feel an expansion of the consciousness towards the suffering of others.

It was not the whole truth, to make, as mentioned, the whipping the symbol of a specific "step of initiation", a stage of development of contemporary people on the way to greater completeness. It seems that Jesus already initiated this step at **the Last Supper following the anointing at Bethany**. (*Matthew 26, 26-29*) This Last Supper is the better symbol for what Jesus gives to suffering mankind. The bread represents the substance (and the soul) of Jesus Christ, the "Word of God". The wine represents the divine spirit of Christ, which gives life to this Word of God for altruistic work. The Catholic Church stressed the change of the substance of the bread and wine to the pure flesh and blood of Jesus, while the Protestant Churches stressed the remembrance of Jesus. On one hand both are right. Scientists found out that even the simple "holy water" of the Catholic Church shows that the angle of the water molecules had changed. However, the most important viewpoint would be the change within the person taking part, by attuning to what really radiates from the transformed and transforming "flesh and blood" of Jesus Christ. So it would be good to do this practice in the churches with great concentration. Some even tried to do this directly in spirit only - without the visible help of bread and wine – and still felt the effect, which is a lot more difficult to achieve. For those who want to practice a blessed meal without claiming it to be a "Holy Sacrament" of the church, it can be called "Agape" - supper of love. The whipping can be understood as a caricatured answer from ignorant powers to that which had in fact already happened and does not have to play a central role in the Meditation. This can also be said of the following crowning with thorns. The old Christian esoteric teachings with their sometimes one-sided accentuation on suffering relate similarly to these newer insights, just as some teachings of John the Baptist relate to the newer teachings of Jesus and his disciples. Each person is free to choose which one of these ways he wants to go.

Theologians also discussed whether the Last Supper represented their own form of the Jewish Passover feast, or whether Jesus replaced the old feast by heralding himself as the actual "Lamb of God". The new covenant of God with the people (the New Testament) through Jesus (*Luke 22:20*) was seen as being connected to *2nd Moses 24:8; Jer. 31:31-33; Isaiah 53:12*. The bread was seen more as the person of Jesus and the blood as the complete healing devotion. Others have doubted the originality of that which has been handed down (so-called words of institution), which is not very likely when one considers that they belong to some of the earliest of scriptures.

Extra window: quote concerning the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion, Eucharist).

Matthew 26,26-29: While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, saying: "Take and eat; this is my body". Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying: "Drink from it, all of You. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my fathers kingdom".

Question:

If I haven't already, do I want to ask* God for the ability to cooperate lovingly with others - even if it requires me to change my mind ?

[back](#).

The crowning with thorns and the last speeches.

Since whipping was a minimum punishment customarily used by the Romans, an interpretation in the symbolism of pre-Christian mystery cults is not so obvious. The crowning with thorns, however (*Joh. 19, 2-3*), a later symbol from these mysteries, was not a component of the normal Roman law. It can, of course, be seen as irony - thorns instead of gold. Nevertheless the question remains as to how the soldiers made exact use of mysteries, even though they may not have done this consciously at the time. Many Roman soldiers were adherents of mysteries. Even if they had seen

the outward similarity of what they were doing, they still would not have been able to reduce Christ to the kind of experience they knew.

While the golden crown would have been a symbol of outward domination - not necessarily meant in a negative way - for Christ the crown of thorns was a symbol of a kind of mastery that did not count in the world. The thorns pricked into his head. This does not only concern pain, but the strength to overcome all mental despair, which Christ did not show any sign of. These signs can only be seen at the moment before he finally decided that he did not want "this cup" (of sorrows) to pass him by. With the whipping and crowning with thorns we find something suggested that is a continuation of the way, which started with the foot washing; the feeling and the insight - braving all obstacles - appear sanctified too.

The previously mentioned continuous tendency to surpass himself, seen in the foot washing, whipping and crowning with thorns, also has a relation to new movements, like the peace movement, ecological movement and spiritual movements that want "to heal the earth".

Just as it was in the case of the "whipping", the crowning with thorns was a reaction, a poor copy of that which had already taken place. This very point, which from the positive point of view expressed this spiritual opening, enabled him to mentally surpass himself. This is contained in the **farewell speeches*** of Jesus - e.g. *John 13,31 - 17: "... that the love with which You have loved me may be in them, and I in them"*; and in the meetings with Pilate, e.g. *John 19,5**. (*"See, The human being", which can be experienced in meditation like Pilate's feeling for Jesus Christ as the model of redeemed human beings). Not only the foot washing and the supper as such, also the words of Jesus were "deeds" at the same time.

In the light of these realizations, it might be worth considering these positive basics in a more decisive way when we speak about "Christian initiations or stages of development".

***) However, in the history of religions there existed a figure of derision or a king of mockery, who was made to bear the brunt of public anger. In the Old Testament there was the scapegoat, who was meant to atone for the sins of the people (*3rd Moses 16:15*). In both cases it was meant as a kind of symbolic ritual. For that reason, traditional theology has made an effort to illustrate that only Jesus was capable of making a really effective sacrifice for mankind. Some critical theologians were of the opinion that due to this harking back to old sacrificial cultures they could question the basic idea of a victim. That may have been frivolous but, as illustrated above, the events contain far more than the aspect of sacrificing oneself. His goal is also important.

***Extra text: quote from the Bible.**

...12: "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13: When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14: He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15: All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."... (from John 16)

1:..., he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify thee, 2: since You have given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom You have given him. 3: And this is eternal life, that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You sent. 4: I glorified You on earth, having accomplished the work which You gave me to do; 5: and now, Father, glorify* me in your own presence with the glory* which I had with You before the world was made. 6: "I have manifested Your name to those whom You gave me out of the world; Yours they were, and You gave them to me, and they have kept thy word. 7: Now they know that everything that You have given me is from You; 8: for I have given them the words which gave me, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from You; and they have believed that You did send me. 9: I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom You have given me, for they are yours; 10: all mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. 11: And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which You have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. 12: While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me; I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. 13: But now I am coming to you; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 14: I have given them your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the

world, even as I am not of the world. 15: I do not pray that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one. 16: They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17: Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18: As you did send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19: And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth. 20: "I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, 21: that they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22: The glory which you have given me, I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one; 23: I in them and You in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. 24: Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which You have given me in your love for me before the foundation of the world. 25: O righteous Father, the world has not known You, but I have known You; and these know that You have sent me. 26: I made known to them your name, and I will make it known, that the love with which You have loved me may be in them, and I in them.

The "glory", ancient Greek "doxa", does not always have the usual human meaning; it also means the light of heavenly beings, a state Jesus was aware of.

Question:

Do I want to ask* God – if I haven't already – to help me deal wisely with groups I belong to - even if it requires working hard on my old thoughts ?

[back.](#)

Crucifixion and burial.

The various views of the crucifixion and death of Jesus vary even more than those of other stations in his career, firstly because of the significance attributed to it by churches and secondly because of the interpreters wanting to classify everything according to their respective ideology. (e.g. *John 19, 12-37*)

Although Gnostic(ist)** beliefs on the fringe of early Christianity were indeed willing to deal with Christ, because of their ancient Greek background they were not able to believe that such a great enlightened being could have been born of a woman and then died. Therefore they thought he must have made himself visible through an "apparent body" like an angel or as the spirits of some eastern spiritual masters did for a short time, if we are to believe their disciples. This apparent body would not have been mortal, but simply dissolved again. In their teachings the physical world and matter were judged to be eternally evil and for that reason nothing could be further from their thoughts than to assume that he went through the usual stages of earthly life or penetrated these stages with his light. **)The term "Gnostic(ist)" is used here differently to the "Apostolic Gnosis", which was even validated by the sect critic F. W. Haack . However, there were many common points in such teachings; for example the Gnostic "Gospel of the truth" acknowledged, that Jesus was nailed to the cross.

People of the first centuries with more material or negative attitudes also spread legends, e.g. that Jesus was an illegitimate son of a roman soldier, which would have been extremely bad, judging by the moral ideas of the times. There are also speculations that Jesus never died and that he was nursed back to health. Some people still try, for example, to relate the grave of an old man in Kashmir with the name Jesus to the biblical Jesus. Also another, "not yet discovered European sepulchre of Jesus" emerges in modern literature. Here we should note that "Jesus" (or also Yehoshua, Jeschua, Jesat) was not a unique name. For instance, in apocryphal books, (writings not included in the biblical "canon") some other Jesuses appear, e.g. Jesus Sirach, Jesus ben Pandira; apart from the fact that even the actual Jesus seemed to be interpreted by R. Steiner as two different boys named Jesus, who were connected with each other (see the chapter about this.)

Partially connected with such theses, contradictory investigation results concerning the "shroud of Jesus" at Turin appeared. Once the cloth was supposed to have contained pollen from the time

and country of Jesus; others say it originated "in the Middle Ages". Some say that only sudden high-energy radiation and sudden dissolving of the body would have been able to cause the print; others say trails of blood indicate that Jesus was still alive as he was taken down from the Cross. An assessment of the latest state of investigation again suggests that the cloth is genuine and that the image was caused in an unusual way. This may help people (see the earlier remarks on the path of the disciple Thomas in the chapter "The miracles"), to reach an understanding of what happened to Christ. According to the mystic *Lorber*, (only) the "body skirt of Trier" is said to be falsified; with the obvious intention of encouraging people to search for the belief inwardly and not to be dependent on discoveries and theories about relics.

Such investigations, however, can prompt us to make our own meditative investigations. This suggests that here is something, which does not fit into any known scheme of life and death. (See also *Groenbold "Jesus in Indien - das Ende einer Legende" - German - and the photocopied writing of Margarete Eckel, Austria, "Am Kreuz gestorben".*)

As already stated, reports of the mystics are often helpful in finding out something about the nature of former events and their significance for the current development of people. The more experience one has, the more one understands. The perceptions of Christian mystics and stigmatists - bearers of the stigmas of Christ - are similar, although they did not have contact to each other. In such reports there are also similar additional details about the experience of Jesus not given in the bible, from *Francis of Assisi* to *Padre (Father) Pio* and *Therese of Konnersreuth*. They all agree that the crucifixion and death of Christ is really and deeply imprinted into this world and that an unexpected or also conscious connection with this event causes them to experience inconceivable suffering, but also an inconceivable power that does not pull down, but "pulls up" everything. The existential nature of the crucifixion, concerning the whole being totally, is certainly closer to the life of such extraordinary persons than to those with a purely intellectual approach. On the topic of life and death it is a question of more than just single levels of being which are mutually involved, including the "causal" level of producing principles and fate. Even people with less mystical connection with God can use the events meditatively as a bridge to reality, as imperfect as that may be. Jesus told the criminal crucified with him, he would soon be with him "in paradise". This suggests that a rapid comprehension of his way is also possible.

The conscious penetration of the deepest processes of human existence, those related to depression, suffering and degeneration, can show itself as a real current possibility - to a greater or lesser degree. Although this possibility is not bound by the season or the geographic places where the ancient events took place, Easter seems to make it easier to experience. **It is as if a new "octave" has been imprinted on the old traditional and seasonal rhythm of decay and renewal.**

The case of Lazarus already shows that Jesus no longer supports the old agreement, that physical matter offers insurmountable barriers to the spirit. Nothing except God is eternally valid from his point of view, no matter how slow moving or negative; everything is finally transformable.

The lower or the more unconscious the subject is, the more difficult it is to influence.

During the crucifixion and at the events immediately before, apart from the power to overcome suffering, a universal consciousness is also indicated; for example in the words at the cross, that culminate in the sentence "It is accomplished!" The universally helping "**sacrificing love**", which can be felt there is also not expressed sufficiently by that old, almost juridical formula of the "ransoming of mankind by the sacrifice of Jesus". This is an approach to help the intellect understanding the significance. However, initially the Christians may have suited this style to the mind of ancient Jews and other ancient peoples, who thought, that sacrificing animals etc. would put God in a favo(u)rable mood. See below too.

In the same way those other theologies, which for example laid the emphasis on Jesus' keeping his basic principles up to death, don't give a sufficient explanation either - neither for their material

concomitants like bearing the stigma of Christ and not eating. See e.g. *Thurston "The physical concomitants of mysticism" (title retranslated; it should exist in English)*, and Höcht *"Von Franziskus zu Pater Pio and Therese Neumann" (German) and the following chapter*.

Rupert Sheldrake, a biologist known for his integrated approach, e.g. in new spiritual movements, developed the theory of a "morphogenetic field". When monkeys developed a new skill on an island, monkeys of the same kind were able to develop the same skill on other remote islands soon afterwards, without any physical contact. Beyond randomness, an influence by a field of force had to be there, connecting animals of the same species with each other. Rupert Sheldrake, once asked whether he could imagine that, for example, the development of Jesus up to the crucifixion and resurrection might have radiated a similar field of force onto the whole mankind, he said after thinking about it with astonishment: "Yes; however not the morphogenetic field, but a spiritual field of force would have to be assumed for that."

Even this is not a "proof of the existence of God", but some new scientific lines already supply better possible approaches to this hardly understandable context than the theologies that either observe the old teachings dogmatically, or explain away things that are hard to understand.

The crucifixion was also reminiscent of , - although it had no identity with - old initiation rites. The cross or the tree from which the person was hanged can also be found in the north, e.g. in the myths of Odin, who hanged nine days on the tree and had higher experiences during that time. The motif of the grave as an initiation place was widespread in the megalithic age, in the Celtic age too and was particularly distinct in the pyramid culture of Egypt. The pyramids, if in fact they actually were burial places - which has not proved because a mere inscription says little - they were used anyway in a cultic way, just like Celtic grave mounds. Since in the meantime it would require ignoring many facts in order to deny that, we don't need to go further into that at this point. R. Steiner notes that both spiritual paths, the cross (or tree) and the grave flow together anew in the path of Christ.

Today, inwardly re-experiencing the crucifixion or the "midnight of the soul", the "mystical death", the transition through a "desertedness", without anything a person could cling to - something that all known Christian mystics have felt in one way or another - - also has a certain similarity to the peak experience of Yoga, Nirvikalpa Samadhi or the experience of the emptiness of "Nirvana". However, Christian mysticism supplied the experience that in or behind this emptiness "something" exists, i.e. Christ or God. Aurobindo showed that it is possible to exceed "Nirvana" into what is behind - also in an Indian way. On the Christian path, however, something of the abundance of God behind everything may remain from the first moment onwards because Christ, having passed through the earth built a bridge.

When somebody like Aurobindo is confronted with powers seeming to have connections to the development of Christ, but this background is not there, it gives the impression of a difficult balancing act. It is not impossible by any means, however; some may remember the case of the Hindu boy *Sadhu Sundar Singh*, who did not know anything about Christianity, but who, after intensively asking inwardly for God, suddenly had an experience of the living Christ, later written down in books. Also during Hindu Tantric practices people, who would have expected to see Indian Gods, suddenly had a vision of Christ. "The spirit moves wherever it wants".

It may hardly be relevant for a theology bound to Christianity as a religious community, but all the more interesting for other cultural areas: the hint of R. Steiner of seeing Christ as a sun-like being known to some higher sages before his coming down to earth. See the chapter *"In the beginning was the word..." in this text and the extra - page "The Old Testament and pre-Christian Religions"*. During one station of his coming down to earth, according to other sources too, arose e.g. the experience of "Yehovah"/YHWH. This experience probably became obscured later, as elsewhere too, which does not mean that each old testament event can be evaluated from viewpoints of our contemporary society. God knows better than we do what he does and why.

Later, 2000 years ago we see the physical incarnation of Christ on earth, as a yardstick, at a turning point of the world's evolution, **taking this and mankind on himself, including them again in his life**. The old cults were partially degenerated, just as Christianity later also became superficial, although an investigation in this direction would also be interesting. Christ would show himself to be something which does not match the role sometimes intended for him as a power guarantor of a special religious community - a being that just represents renewed humanity, the "new Adam" of Golgotha.

In the context of the crucifixion, theology speaks about forgiveness of sins (*cf. John 1:29*). What can really be had however, is, that this "redemption" as an "embryonic" possibility needs the **conscious decision and** emulation of Christ ("imitation of Christ"), in order to become really expressed in one's life. This is real work. One can really experience that life becomes more of an organic whole if one has the attitude of being guided through life by God as conveyed by Christ. If one instead has an attitude of mechanically effective laws of destiny or of the balance of "Karma", then life will indeed happen according to these principles. **Christ also speaks of repayment "down to the last penny", but he does not say that this has still to be in terms of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth". The new task of the person is in the foreground** - whatever is fruitful for him and his environment will be chosen from his abilities and done. Coping with the past is no longer an end in itself and it is no longer a motive for development. Help "from above" in the interaction of people's various possibilities can be observed today.

Studying R. Steiner here may give the impression that Christ is only dealing with the fate of mankind and that each individual has to work out his own fate himself. But many Christians have experienced that Christ also helps people individually while they are working on their own fate. He can lead to its transformation with regard for the rest of mankind too, instead of to the complete realisation of everything inherent. The **power of forgiving** between people is also a real experience that is one of the specific Christian characteristics. **The eternal vicious circle, for example, of violence and counter-violence is "lifted off its hinges" by that. This is not only a teaching for the release from earthly entanglements or for the non-identification with them - in this respect there are some similarities to the teachings of Buddha. A deeper meditation on that makes it clear that it is also a real power that allows the entanglements to dissolve from within and in spite of that not to withdraw, although it would now be possible, but to have the strength to remain in the widest sense "in the world" at the same time - as a "worker in the vineyard"**.

Even on this ambitious level the individual obviously does not "liquefy" like a drop in the ocean. It is not enough to describe that one leaves behind thousands of suddenly dissolved particles of previous parts of the person, including psychical and mental ones. That would be like a description of the consequences of the "crucifixion" in the theosophical field and what is similarly described by Castaneda from the shamanistic field without the term "crucifixion", which are real experiences too. **A cell within the whole that maintains its responsibility for everything connected with it is still a better description of a human being that "took up his cross" and whose previous efforts now become involved in mastering the existential core of life.**

In spite of all the attempts to exhaust the event and the symbolism of the crucifixion for spiritual purposes in the present time, we should not overlook the fact that several things are combined here:

- that Jesus had to pass through all the stages of human existence, from birth to death, changing everything with a new attitude;
- that the crucifixion, which - independent of other old meanings of the cross - is also simply recognisable as a former secular kind of penalty and which was also caused in this case unambiguously by fraudulent, illegal and materialistic methods of his opponents. It was as it was and it could not have happened any differently and so no cross fetishism can be based on that. It was a last, rearing reaction of the frozen, unconscious powers of that time, which turned negative.

In turn it was a caricature of the really transforming consciousness of Jesus. The beneficial effect of the events did not depend on this violent action against Jesus, and is connected with the resurrection too. It's the work of God.

- The cross as a symbol includes the former context, even when it later became a general symbol for the most sacrificing love, in which sense it can still be used reasonably today - as contrary to indifference, hate and so forth.

- A more neutral picture for the inner processes going on in Jesus beyond the context conditioned by that time, would be his last words on the cross: "Into Your Hands I give my spirit"; as well as the grave, that does not represent a completely separate "step", unlike older esoteric depictions, but is connected to the crucifixion. The sense of the death of Jesus is not in death itself, but in overcoming the "death programs" within human beings.

This writing deals so fully with the "last events in the life of Jesus", because they have not been as mentally imbued than the more easy-to-understand events prior to them. For this reason, the more confusing theories arose about that, - which need more efforts to disentangle them. This can help to proceed to a more direct experience. This should not be misunderstood, as if the death by crucifixion would have been the most important event in Jesus' life, as certain theological schools have defined it.

Similar to the first disciples of Jesus after the Crucifixion and Resurrection, traditional theologians realised that several Old Testament texts, right down to the fine details, could be read as allusions to the later Passion of Jesus and its saving turnabout (*Luke 24:27; Psalms 22; Psalms 40:7ff.; Psalms 69:22; Isaiah 52:13-14 and 53; Zechariah 12:10 and 13:1; Wisdom 2:10-20, etc.*) Again in the traditional writings on Jesus' years of ministry, there were several allusions to the later Crucifixion and Resurrection – which are partly somewhat difficult to recognise and particularly for that reason cannot be explained away as late additions. Moreover, the pre-Christian Greek philosopher Plato sensed that his ideal image of a completely just person in this world would end in a crucifixion (*in Politeia II*). It is noticeable that these occurrences must have also made quite a deep impression on the Romans (e.g. *Mark 15:38*). Despite the perceptibly major significance of this sacrifice in the greater biblical scheme of things, some critical theologians were not particularly impressed by it. Right from the early days of Christianity, various groups took the very steps that people of their groups had experienced, or those which they were able to comprehend, which led to varying religious focuses.

Question:

Do I want to ask* God to help me seek to overcome the old concepts of aging, illness and death?

[back.](#)

The question of the empty grave, the "descent into hell" and the "ascent into paradise".

We could now deal with some further questions connected with the crucifixion. Firstly, there is the question of the empty grave (*John 19, 38 - John 20, 10*). We already mentioned that it was not simply a question of healing a living person with herbs . Nicodemus also applied substances known to be useful for embalming the dead. A simple corpse robbery with a funeral elsewhere can be ruled out from a not purely materialistic viewpoint. This will become obvious through the discoveries connected to the "resurrection" that are to be described in the next chapter. Further details can be deduced from working on rare formulations of questions:

One can, for example, look into the general question of what happens to human beings at and after death and whether it varies. This has often been done on the basis of religious manifestations and traditions and also due to philosophical speculations, further with the aid of, for example,

parapsychological investigations, humanistic and transpersonal psychology as well as clinical and individual experiences (e.g. *Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, ...*)

Nearly all religions ultimately state that man not only "lives on in his descendants and through cultural after-effects" but that he continues to exist as a conscious individual. Even the worship of ancestors by (so-called) "primitive peoples" does not only mean the ancestors "living on" in the descendants; but they are convinced of the real mental or psychical existence of the ancestors in present time and even of their possible real presence in the cult life, or in the normal life of the descendants too. Even where ideas arose that humans could enter or incarnate in other life forms like animals or even stones or something else, the rule of the continued existence as a spiritual being was accepted. The newer "high religions" also stress continued existence. They see these even more unambiguously on higher levels of existence than the physical one. Some speak of possible contact between these levels of existence, but also of its problems. For the conscious ascent into higher spheres, precise ceremonies were developed, see for example *"The Tibetan book of the dead"* which, for example, C. G. Jung dealt with too. Concerning questions like reincarnation, very different experiences and ideas were reported.

Today there are some theologians, who don't believe in life after death, or in "Eternal Life" through the experience of Jesus. They had adapted their thoughts to the long since outdated science of the 19th century. One might get spiritual experience by asking oneself frequently "what is behind?".

In the field of the medicine there are not only cases of anaesthetized or apparently dead people who came back and reported on their experiences in other fields of consciousness. There are also scientific investigations e.g. about a decrease in weight of approx. 21 grams that always occurs at the moment of death. In Anthroposophy and Theosophy one would speak of the detachment of the "I" or the "mental body" and of the "astral or emotional body", along with the "ethereal or life-energy body", and the "phantom body" from the physical body. After that a further withdrawal into the emotional, and after that into the "I" alone and the causal world - this is not yet the "heaven" - follows - always with the higher Self above.

This might also lead to the question of how the dying person deals with the stored abilities, experiences, and substances in his various "layers"; and how are differences dealt with. Literature on this subject exists too, e.g. by Father *Roesermüller (Germany)*, which points out that "essentials" from all elements of the being are "taken with one"; and that burial is better than cremation, because of this process. Even an unexpectedly observed sudden substance dissolution in a grave was reported. There are also reports about "corpses not decaying" observed by churches, from several centuries right up to the present time. Today, e.g. Bernadette Soubirius at Lourdes. There are many reports about "empty graves" too. In such cases it was frequently stated that these people had lived "very close to God".

Apparently, no one thought about a relationship between this and the empty grave of Jesus.; This thought, astonishingly enough, first seems to have appeared in the later esoteric magazines. There are several other peculiar events which are more difficult to check, but to generally put them down as frauds would be much too sweeping a statement. However, we know that physical matter still contains considerable secrets. Investigations from the field of chemistry and physics shake the picture of the putative, relatively constant atoms in the body even more. This can only be mentioned here in passing, since it covers a chapter in itself.

The apocryphal writings of early Christianity are also worth mentioning (not considered to be "heretical" by the churches, but also not considered to be a hundred percent correct and therefore not included in the canon of the Bible). A part of the so-called Gospel of Nicodemus describes "Jesus' descent down to hell" after his death and his influence on the beings there, who go through a - presumably emotional - cleaning. His meeting with the people of the Old Testament is also described - in some kind of "paradise", here meant as some kind of mental/ spiritual realm above. On the one hand such ideas seemed reasonable, but they can very presumably be genuine visions, which may be partly direct, partly symbolic.

As an image, the grave phase as a stage on the path of Christ shows on the one hand a last transformation of the corpse of Jesus, which was already "spiritually refined" during life; and parallel events of the higher being released from the physical body consciousness. The new beginning of a holistic (integrated) "**New Adam**" is touched on here. It is also full of symbolism because according to corresponding traditions "Adam and Eve" are supposed to have been buried below that area of "Golgotha" ("place of Skulls").

The importance of reports about Mary Magdalene being the first to discover the empty grave are not yet exhausted., Apparently, she recognized Christ in some kind of an intermediate stage* - "do not touch me " -. In the mental context, here she seems to symbolize the role of Eve. - *"Do not touch me, because I have not yet gone up to the father." This is different from the later appearance as a "resurrected being", where he e.g. explicitly permits Thomas to touch him. The dead body seemed to be animated by spirit in a new manner. However, the stories handed down do not lend credence to the speculations about Jesus "only having been injured and subsequently cured to health". His appearance had completely changed and the reactions of Mary Magdalene do not indicate that these changes were obviously caused by wounds or scabs. The two herbal substances used by Nicodemus, were also suitable (effective) in this combination for the embalming of the dead. What came about here does not fit into the scheme of death and life in the classical sense. Neither does it match with any of the borderline experiences between life and death which had been known about before. This also has a certain importance for the future, see our chapters concerning "*The Revelation*".

[back.](#)

The Resurrection.

The empty grave and the Resurrection of Christ are an incredible challenge for the consciousness of many people. Their background - they experienced, that people must die -; the understandable tendency to suppress inexplicable things; one-sided materialistic ways of thinking about life - antiquated but still taught in the schools -, are some of the predominant causes for that. (E.g. *John 20, 11- Joh. 21*).

Nevertheless there are voices among historical-critical interpreters who say that the Resurrection reports are the best testified ones in early Christianity, even better substantiated than all other reports about the life of Jesus. Here they mean reports concerning the appearances of Jesus at different places in a new figure with several new qualities, not always recognized immediately, but perceptible for everyone with physical eyes. This would imply consequences.

One consequence would be, to look at the portrayal of Jesus in the bible, requiring real transformation of the corpse of Jesus - spiritualized in life - and/or of the after-death "body" of Jesus (so-called "ghosts" are usually invisible). The development of states of consciousness that had fallen apart in the sequence of human evolution could lose their separation: "separation " is the literal meaning of the word "sin". This separation was also a separation of man from God, the origin. So the "lower part", i.e. the body, can be included again into the other parts of the being of Christ. See previous chapter: "and the grave was empty".

"'In 3 days I will re-build this temple'. He spoke, however, of the temple of his body". --After the rising of his being into other worlds of consciousness or into his innermost core - in this respect similar to others - (see *last chapter*), a new creation of the levels of being including a physical body could follow, without areas of unconscious; because Jesus no longer had separating qualities and everything within him obeyed his core.

Also in the anthroposophic view of Rudolf Steiner, the "resurrected body" of Christ, the "new Adam" - *1 Cor 15:45-47* - is seen as a re-creation and is available for all people since then, as a

way for personal development - the so-called physical "phantom body", spiritual, but with potential effects on the physical body. It relates to the experience of the "Inner Christ" of mystics, who connects himself with the development of the human being. Even in Theosophical circles (A. Bailey, there for instance named "Revelation" or "5th initiation"), Jesus' resurrection is seen as a real re-creation. Although the Theosophical viewpoint may be inaccurate in some details, Christian theologians should still ask themselves why they did not develop such ideas - or even better approaches? The hesitation of some theologians to take the resurrection seriously does not even fulfil the basic criterion of good general knowledge.

Here is noted that the "resurrected body" as really belonging to the being cannot be fully equated with the "apparent body" (Mayavirupa) of esoteric literature, which some masters are said to produce like some kind of clothing for making themselves visible. However, this also shows their mastery of spirit over matter.

The modern teachings, sometimes unclearly formulated, about "bodies of light" also show some similarities. This concerns the resonance of the higher bodies in the physical body. This is also a bridge for entering the realities beyond physical consciousness without leaving the physical body, by a method called "Merkabah" in Hebrew. Its fundamentals can be found in *Prof. J. J. Hurtak "The Keys of Enoch" and "The synoptic gospels", Academy for Future Science, P.O.Box FE, Los Gatos, CA 95030, USA*. Now a manifold movement for "lightwork" has developed, which is not limited to any organisation. These lightworkers want to help the earth in this difficult period of time. But there is a temptation to think that some new exercises would fulfil all hopes for the so-called "ascension" alone. Actually nothing works without a holistic development, including growth in character. See the next chapter too.

That ideas about re-incarnation, that is re-personification of the soul in a new body, as found in all kinds of religions in one form or the other, would be a lower, more imperfect "octave" of the new resurrection event, and not identical with it. Teachings of a pre-existence of the soul prior to fertilisation and also the teachings of the re-personification were also widely held in early Christianity and, according to Ruffinus, even generally held. However, it is interesting to note that later no special emphasis was laid on this concept. That is not only due to the circumstance that people were supposed to be concentrating on life on earth - as R. Steiner writes; and not only a possible aim of power-hungry Popes to make people more dependent by the limits of one life - as other spiritual authors presume. More meaningful phenomena can also be found to underline that. The most important thing is for people to anchor the concept of resurrection in themselves. (See also e.g. *1.Cor.15:53; Philippians 3:21*). Even if this seems to be pie in the sky, re-incarnation would start to look like a process that had been overtaken by Christ. The resurrected Christ did not have to be born again in order to reappear to the people; he appeared voluntarily, with love, in his resurrection body. . Many - although not all - Christian groups criticize ideas of reincarnation. It can be acknowledged that the idea of inflexible "psycho-mechanical" laws of fate, death and re-incarnation, at least if seen as an end in itself, do not correspond to the example of the life of Jesus. That does not mean, however, that re-incarnation could never have existed or that it could not exist today. Many former and contemporary so-called "reincarnation experiences" cannot be explained away - even though not all of these experiences are necessarily based on real reincarnation, but often on certain other factors. But indeed in the Christian field the reported experiences seem to be special cases, for instance the case of John the Baptist. Instead of taking over the function of Elia - as mostly interpreted - Jesus said simply "It is he". That would be, however, the role of a being sent again for a special task, in order to help the people and not a mandatory circuit of a prisoner in the wheel of rebirth. Furthermore, in the field of Christian mysticism, even where reincarnation is accepted as a fact (for instance *Lorber*), the greater importance of new ways of learning after death in other dimensions is often stressed. Today people can learn enormously in one life. **Reincarnation for normal purification and development, possibly with new tasks to match the situation, does not necessarily need to have the old, automatic nature.** Those old ideas may have been a cause for seeing the teachings about reincarnation suspiciously as non-Christian. Apart from that, the ideas of other religions about reincarnation did not consider the role of God and Christ. The nature of all people in body, mind and spirit is basically the same and therefore comparisons can help everyone to learn from each other - without egalitarianism.

The effect of mechanical conceptions of fate and reincarnation was already written about in the chapter "*The Crucifixion*".

Today one often finds that strong personalities are quite dissimilar to their physical parents, even as young adults. Sometimes they appear as if their form had been more strongly impressed by another, or an earlier culture than is normally the case. This could be connected with **the greater importance of the psychological-intellectual being compared with the connection with ancestors and inheritance**. R. Steiner thinks of a connection of this phenomenon with the work of Christ.

In spite of this phenomenon there is no reason to ascribe to Jesus a one-sided accentuation of the psychological-mental parts only. In the long-term work of Christ there is **rather an impulse, to refine all parts including the body and to bring these fields into unison again . (Spirit,) the person and the body are supposed to match** (which has certainly not been achieved everywhere today). Especially the way to resurrection is no mere spiritual work "free of the body", but the "body" becomes spiritual **and** spirit becomes physical - the begin is beyond all one-sided intellectual arbitrary. Cf. for instance *Luke 24:36-43*.

An ideology that would seek to diminish the variety of nations and so forth into a mankind made homogenous, is as foreign to this impulse as the ideology of one master race discriminating all others. There are various parts and there is the whole - which may seem to be a matter of course - but today nothing is a matter of course, everything must be worked out consciously.

The motto of Christ is "Behold! I make all things new". Even though he is ultimately addressing the core of the individuality, where man is "neither Jew nor Greek..." but a human being; even so, we are not meant to have any bare homogeneous human super-consciousness, but the thought God thinks or realizes through the individual human being. From a position of individuality, we can then start to form new communities, which are not the old close ties to family, profession etc. Among the new relationships made in spirit, there can also be, however, "old" ones, freed from old unconscious compulsions, changed into free decisions.

In connection with the remarks on worldwide effects through fields of force, for instance in the chapter about the crucifixion, we should consider here that **after Christ had already been through all (of) these steps, these are in total and simultaneously "there"**. Even though the steps of Christ and its sequence remain, "experiencing the crucifixion" is something different, after the resurrection impulse already shines through. It is not a matter of course that even with most profound comprehension the material death would have to occur, before the "force of resurrection" can take effect. Mystic experiences support this. The resurrection force can be experienced as a current attractive power behind all, even the simplest steps. In some other way R. Steiner stated that the happenings of Easter still work as a unit today; appending further discoveries, such as "etherization of the blood".

Today abilities develop(p)ed on the way of the "emulation of Christ" during the centuries - are relevant too.

In this context it is interesting that new ideas exist which do not agree with the general assumption of the natural, compulsory mortality of the body anymore, like Christ:

The Indian philosopher and Yogi *Aurobindo* worked in a similar direction after his transition through the Nirvana experience and attempted "to bring down supra-mental powers into life on earth." His spiritual partner, "*Mother*" *Mira Alfassa* could penetrate unknown layers of the physical body in this way, e.g. of the cells containing memory, which are related to the old programs of death. She experienced this as "working on the one body of mankind".

In a different way, *Rudolf Steiner* spoke of newly forming higher elements of being or bodies in these fields above the mind, which would later allow to work out the older emotional, the ethereal and the material parts of the human being willingly one after another down to the fine details., . He names these new parts: "spiritual self, life spirit, spiritual human" (own translation from German without checking the translation in the

English books.) The impression could arise that this prediction is only going to be realized after long periods of time. A comparison with the current development / evolution shows however, that this can already be relevant in parts today.

A motto of the Christian *Rosicrucians* was "Born in God, died in Christ, resurrected (Latin: *reviviscimus*) in the Holy Spirit.

The USA-based "I AM" movement (*Saint Germain Foundation*) presents a way, which is said to lead to the change of the physical body into a higher substance too. This way uses personal "decrees" to clean feelings and to hand tasks over to the higher "I Am-Presence" of the human being - the "image of God".

In esoteric Buddhism these higher "bodies" were also suggested at least as a possibility for a Buddha: "Dharmakaya, Sambhogyakaya, Nirmanakaya". Indeed the aims, means or results in these different schools are not quite the same, but it becomes clear that different people address the same fields of activities independently of each other; so one can ascribe a high degree of reality to it.

Here a further experience from our century is appended: *Carl Welkisch, "Im Geistfeuer Gottes" (= in the fire of the Spirit of God)*. As a physically unusually sensitive mystic he felt, confirmed by visions, called to perform a task to do with the fact that bodily matter can now also be changed by God and that he was a tool for this purpose. Since it more often occurs however, that people with extraordinary "tasks given from above" may think they are the only ones - while God's allocation of tasks tends to be complicated - it is often easy to dismiss them as "lunatics". Those who are familiar with this kind of mystic experience can recognize that these experiences as such are genuine. The same thing goes for Welkisch.

"Immortality" is especially preached by certain new spiritual-therapeutic groups, mainly in the USA. They attempt "to cure the ideas of mortality ". They also try to contribute breathing techniques like Rebirthing - for the processing of the birth trauma - healthy nutrition etc. in order to promote a real prolongation of life, a life radiating positivity. Even if Christ often emerges only on the fringe in these circles, Christians like the Mormon *Annalee Skarin* are also known there, who wrote about their own insights concerning de- and re-materialisation of the body - based on her connection with God.

Others, in the field of medicine, investigate hormonal means to reach a certain rejuvenation. This development contains reasonable motives. Not all these approaches can be suspected as some kind of megalomania.

Newer scientific research, for instance by Dr. Peter Gariaev (Pjotr Garajajev), shows that cells, and even the genetic substance DNA, also store light particles and communicate by waves, and so learn through several influences. Several spiritual and healing groups are now searching for methods to activate the untapped potential of DNA: this concerns an initially energetic "twelve strand DNA" that facilitates the connection of the physical body with the other parts of the human being. (It is in no way related to the well-known technical genetic engineering.)

However, it seems that if one – with the various parts of a human being – becomes attuned to God as the source of everything, this also enables DNA to develop with the physical body over the course of time. It is possible to attune oneself to such a holistic goal, in prayer – connected with God beyond the conditions of life; and at the same time gratefully sense that one is in accord with God, or wait for insights about what else needs to be done; and to be aware of any initial indications that something has been set into motion.

However, we should remember that Christ would have wished us to consider the whole human being (person), and not just a cult regarding the life of the physical body as an isolated and highest value. He would also not recommend an isolated practice to liven up the cells, but a united sanctification of the body - including its organs, cells etc. and the spiritual life of man. It is also a question of the freedom to live and not of a compulsion to live. This is only mentioned as a possible source of trouble during this difficult "balancing act" and not to imply that these groups always go to extremes.

The resurrection force experienced with Christ, who started it visibly and in an integrated way, seems to represent the actual "enzyme" of a **harmonious** development in this direction. A lot of things he gave us as a "seed" still have to be completed. That is why it makes sense to consciously refer to him about that.

Meanwhile "resurrection" is not only a spiritual experience. It can permanently renew everything in life, for which a little known new-revelation group, *the "Lichtzentrum Bethanien" (centre of light Bethany) at Sigriswil, Switzerland has coined the phrase "resurrection life" in their journal "Lichtbote" (Messenger of the light)*. **After the "narrow gate" of the cross, abundance will come. Jesus stressed that his way can only become clear through deeds.** Only progress on the personal path, i.e. "emulating Christ" can begin to make this more advanced step understandable. As we have seen, this way is not uniform, increasing steadily up to a peak, but rather becomes apparent in those concerned **as the divinely guided structuring of an extensive building in which each new stone is built upon the preceding one. The stones are abilities in the being of man** which survive his externally constructed buildings. Just as prehistoric man was created to be perfect, according to various sacred writings, so can he/she again become "complete like the Father in Heaven" after the transition through the drama of the imperfect world, Christ promised the people. That is not only valid for the simplest steps on the way, but even for the resurrection. He did not set any boundaries and did not declare today's limited comprehension to be the standard. He himself sets new standards, see *the "I am...wordings" in the gospels*: "I am the bread of life", "I am the light of the world..."; "I am the door"; "I am the good herdsman" and also "I am the resurrection and the life", he who has faith "will live eternally, even if he should die now". This means do not wait for the general dispensation of the "Last Judgement", as certain Christian groups maintain. "I am the way, the truth and the life"; "I am the right vine, and my father is the wine grower, ...you are the grapes..."; "I am a king, I am born and have come into the world, that I shall testify the truth". Christ is the actual "I Am" in man, which should be well distinguished from the everyday ego.

In the Jewish belief there was a resurrection or a raising from the dead, but only at the end of time. In traditional Christian theology, however, the Resurrection is seen as a new opportunity through belief in Christ, but without having worked it out beyond the Last Supper. Within modern, critical theological considerations, it can already be seen as progress - compared with a more materialistic form of theology, which wanted to simply explain away anything that was difficult to envisage -, that the Resurrection is again being picked up as a "metaphor"= in a figurative, allegorical sense. (*Hans Kessler, anthology "Resurrection of the Dead"*). Some may need an approach of this kind to that which is difficult to imagine, but not necessarily those who are able to directly believe in the Resurrection as both an internal and an external reality. In some respects, this belief of simple Christians corresponds more to today's level of research and knowledge in many fields, as it is taken up in today's studies. For those who see everything as simply "metaphorical", according to our studies, they are only likely to gain the benefit of spiritual edification – and the healing effect, which can have an impact right into the physical body, even today, can be at least delayed or lessened.

Extra window: Bible quote from John 13

19 On the evening of the first day of the week*, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, I am sending you". 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." 24 Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe." 26 Eight days later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing." 28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."

*Easter sunday, after death and grave, and after appearing near Mary of Magdala.

Question:

Do I want to investigate with God how the power of the Resurrection can become fruitful today?

[back.](#)

The "Ascension" of Christ.

Annotation: In English, modern spiritual movements and lightworkers use the word "ascension" for another process, which is related to the power of *Resurrection*, as described in the previous chapter.

Just as Jesus Christ began with 40 days seclusion in the desert prior to his teaching activity, he also concluded his visible activity on earth with the 40 days after Easter, in which he appeared to people at various remote places.

After a last meal and conversation "he led them out towards Bethany, raised his hands and blessed them. And it came about, as he blessed them, he departed from them and went up to heaven" (*Luke 24, Mark 16*). "...He was lifted up more and more and a cloud took him away, in front of their eyes. Two men stood with them in white clothing, who said: "... This Jesus, who has been taken up into heaven will come, as you saw him going up to heaven" (*Acts 1*). The apostles obviously distinguished very clearly between those 40 days in which Christ was suddenly among them and always disappeared again and the time after that, in which they also felt assembled in his spirit, but without his personal presence.

Christ had already announced that he would be going to the father. Only after the ascension he was said to "sit to the right of the father", therefore with God on a level beyond the humanly attainable "hereafter". A state appears in outlines, **where Christ is universally with God. God is: "I am the I Am"**. He is omnipotent and nevertheless he gives man free rein; he is the living origin of all powers and beings and nevertheless alone; he is outside space and also omnipresent; he is eternal and also a reality concealed in every moment. This does not mean that Christ dissolved himself into nothingness, but rather that he is now everywhere. That bridge between man and God could still be experienced in life by attuning oneself to Christ - "Pray to the father in my name" (*John 15,16*). That is a reality of its own kind, independent of the respective ideas concerning the events 2000 years ago.

The disciples now became aware of their importance as apostles on earth for Christ. **Christ now appeared more strongly within them and through them.** It would be incorrect to evaluate this state from an external point of view as if nothing else had happened except that the teacher had disappeared, leaving them to carry on the project alone. If the autonomous role of the ascension is also included here, one could describe it as a universalisation of the work of Christ. A comparison of this would be a hologram, in which each splinter of the picture contains the whole image. Remark: This comparison does not intend to take up that kind of holographic philosophy, according to which man would be like God in any case, with the consequence, that no effort would be necessary to become like him. That would be similar to the kind of redemption idea that forgets that redemption is like a bud that needs to be taken by individual decision and by emulation (going the same path) - as Christ decided consciously for us. A human being is an image of God (*Genesis 1:27*), however, the personal parts of man, develop(p)ed around it have to become purified. This emulation concerns finally the core of all great steps of Christ (*cf. Joh. 14:12*). It is possible to "ascend" into higher and higher parts of man, and from there - with finer and finer forces - to adapt deeper and deeper parts down to the physical substance.

In addition to human relationships one also receives the relationships of Christ. Basically, the **impulse started by Jesus during his life as a possibility was sealed at the ascension for the use of his disciples and ultimately for everyone.** , The possibility of Christ taking shape in man was pointed out in the *chapter about the baptism in the Jordan*. This means that that which Christ brought or had worked for now has an extended nature compared to the work of human beings. It is anchored in God, not only in a "morphogenetic field" – see "The crucifixion". Another approximation of this would be "God attracts everything towards him".

Today, St. Paul is often known for some of his traditional "rough edges". Although this may be sometimes overemphasized by one-sided interpretations, his visionary experiences are authentic. In his own way, he was able to recognize, like St. John in his Gospel etc. that the role of Christ goes far beyond a role for Judaism and that Judaism was actually chosen as a starting point for the Universal Christ, for his contribution to all people. Understandably, this was a reason for one of the first quarrels among the disciples.

Ecclesiastical statements tend to equate the church with the "Body of Christ", even if the rest of mankind was actually meant in a broad sense. Anthroposophical statements see mankind unambiguously as a body of Christ. Theosophical schools of thought, which do not have an exclusively Christian basis, also see the role of Christ for mankind, even if only that of "The World Teacher".

Modern Christian new revelation networks, especially the "*Universal life*" - *not to be confused with the Universal Life Church* - also see a role of Christ today for the non-human living beings; coming to the conclusion that the future fate of the earth will not be placed in man's hands. However, people who did not cause the problems on earth, but are a part of the "solution", will surely have their role, as mentioned in the *Sermon on the Mount*.

In fact, whenever anybody has done anything "in Christ", it has also been done for Christ and therefore for the world.

Those who really connect themselves with Christ and the direction of his work - which cannot be arbitrarily modified - would simply not be able to accept many of the theories that were quite usual in churches for many centuries. According to experienced mystics, **Christ is not open** ('cannot be broached'), **neither consciously nor unconsciously, for anything that goes against his teaching.**

So, it can be left up to the churches themselves to explain in their own terminology where they took the strength to make war, to persecute and hate - and furthermore, most of it was done in the service of secular powers. . According to experiences generally known in spiritual movements, light may also stir up dark things that exist. To make oneself the tool of darkness however - as it often happened in the past - instead of working on these shadows within oneself and others, makes a mockery of Christian ethical claims.

But still, later reports, e.g. *the final document of the European oecumenical board „Peace in justice for the whole of creation" in 1989, shows that attempts are being made to come to terms with past mistakes. The text is available at the Hanover EKD, and elsewhere.*

The "Ascension" can also become really significant within the "imitation of Christ". Rosicrucians, for instance, experienced a descent of the cloud from the sky to them in pictures and dreams. A unique or even repeated experience of this kind does not mean, however, that this person has fully realized such a step in life. Initially, it simply means that this quality has begun to take effect within the person concerned.

To feel the meaning of "Ascension", requires a lot of spiritual development and is therefore not to be confused with a technical transportation by "UFOs" (unidentified flying objects). In the case of stories handed down describing various kinds of "taking away" of biblical prophets, this is not very probable considering the other spiritual possibilities (see the chapter "The resurrection"). However, this viewpoint is not being used here to deny the probable existence of these "UFOs" which, according to the profusion of international sightings, may be the appearance of partially extraterrestrial astronauts and that some legends may be referring to similar phenomena of both positive and negative kinds from the past. They may also have a role in the future. But the attempts of "Ancient astronaut research" circles to identify every spiritual rock drawing with rings and so forth with spaceships is completely excessive and originates from a fantasy limited by our technical and materialistic civilisation. Even though mankind needs divine aid of manifold kind, it will have to carry out the saving breakthrough itself in the end. Through advances in the existence, action and consciousness the people on earth will be able to survive, find their task and fulfil it. **No external achievement, and no own technical achievement can replace growth into further stages of consciousness.** That attempt, which led to the Challenger shuttle and their warning accident for instance, is

like a distracting and poor copy of what is really necessary.

Note: from the Catholic church, for example, the theologian Monsignor *Corrado Balducci* (Vatican) has often voiced a corresponding view. Otherwise, the officials of the various churches often assumed merely a psychic or sociological phenomenon. Nevertheless, in May 2008 the official Vatican newspaper "Osservatore Romano" reported: "The universe consists of billions of galaxies, each of which is made up of hundreds of billions of stars. How can one exclude the possibility that life has also developed somewhere else? We cannot limit the creative freedom of God. If, like Francis of Assisi, we see the creatures of the Earth as our brothers and sisters, why shouldn't we then also speak of an extra-terrestrial brother? It is possible that other intelligent creatures still live in complete harmony with their creator. "

This does not mean to ignore the fact, however, that technical developments are **also** necessary, for instance to replace technologies hostile to life such as nuclear energy, other kinds of electromagnetic radiation, "genetic engineering" and other technologies. However, even this can only come about on the basis of a higher consciousness. That growth mentioned in a more comprehensive consciousness in the sense of Christ would, however, have to be organic growth and not another technical manipulation. No spiritual "technique" can force "salvation". Practices of various kinds are only good for preparations, and need to be put aside again after having served their purpose. Only that which has become one's own really counts in the end. It is quite impossible to "consume" God passively with today's "brain-machines".

Primarily, Christ has been handed down in his special role on earth, but manifestations in other levels of existence and other places in the cosmos are also possible: *"The Urantia Book"/ USA..., a book which may seem to be a little phantastic, is mentioned only, because it may stimulate imaginations.* but his special task on this very dense physical earth is not being questioned; and the books *"Analekta" 1 and 2* (*"Analekta" only in German, some copies can still be obtained from Mag. Alois Thurner, Staudach 103, A-8230 Hartberg, Austria.*)

Theologians have related the Ascension of Jesus in a "cloud" to sections of the Old Testament (*2nd Moses 13:21 and 40:34*). They handled the subsequent joy of the disciples as a clearly experienced new type of presence of Christ, some of them as something extremely real and others as something subjective.

Extra text: Bible quote from Luke 24

50 When he* had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. 51 While he blessed them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.

*The resurrected Jesus.

Also Mark 16,15-20.: He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptised, will be saved; but whoever does not believe, will be judged (other translation: condemned). And this signs will accompany those who believe: in my Name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands, and when they drink poison, it will not hurt them; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well" (Annotation: So an exploration is necessary, what is lacking in today's churches; only a few phenomena like this are happening still in most churches.) 'And after the Lord had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them, and confirmed his word by the signs he let happen.'

Also Acts 1.

Question:

Is a current or future significance of the ascension to heaven a question that affects my life with God?

[back.](#)

The Whitsun event (Pentecost).

Before the crucifixion Jesus had announced that he will go to the Father, and therefore the Holy spirit/ the "Comforter"/ the "Spirit of the truth" will be sent by the Father (*John 14,15,16*).

About ten days after the ascension, the early Christian community assembled at Jerusalem for prayer. "Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house... They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues ..." (*Acts 2*). Nobody describes a normal feeling of being fulfilled after prayer in such words. It sounds more similar to the practices of the Pentecost Churches and the Quakers. That first Whitsun event follows here as an externally perceptible sign of what has been described in the chapter about the ascension, the distribution of the power of Christ to the disciples and those around them. With this **"sending down" the Spirit of truth** we see again something of a mutual effect of God and Christ. In this respect the first Whitsun event can also be seen **as a first sign of the beginning of a "Second Coming of Christ"** or at least of an approach. Even from this viewpoint we can expect that the prophesied "Second Coming of Christ" does not only mean a second personification as a human being.

Annotation: The "Comforter" or "Counsellor" or the "Spirit of truth" (*John 15:26*) must not - strictly speaking - be equated with the "Holy Spirit"; see below: "Sophia".

- **"The Spirit of truth"** appears like a piece of Christ himself, which reminds of the community of him and his words and now enables the disciples to continue his work on earth. Since then it is basically no longer respectable to deal with religious and philosophical questions as a mere historical and literary adoption or mental derivation. A lot has been written about that viewpoints. Other factors are also at work, within people too and the main object of this text is to help people to "feel for" these factors.

The heritage of the creator, of the father in man, provided he is "born of God" (*John 1*) is offered in the life of Jesus, given for everyone to make it one's own consciously; and now since the Whitsun event the heritage of Christ himself is anchored in those who remained on earth.

- **The Holy Spirit** as a "feminine, maternal" spiritually intelligent divine quality and energy was found in different levels of existence and manifestations already before Jesus' life on earth, - outside of man and in his inspiring effect on the people as well. There are even relations to the "manna" (*Exodus, Deuteronomy, Numbers, Psalms, Nehemiah, Joshua, John, the Letter to the Hebrews, Revelation.*)

But it is not completely wrong to equate the terms "Spirit of the truth" and "Holy Spirit", as is often the case, with respect to practical experiences. It may happen more and more frequently that divine powers work together and finally as a unit like man, who was initially "created in the image of God", can have the experience of the differentiation of consciousness and then again the integration of his being.

Through that, the life shared between mankind and the earth will really be able to appear in a way which is still hardly noticeable today. This will be looked at in the coming chapters in connection with the revelation of John - without thinking that this future could be in any way adaptable to the contemporary imagination.

The "Holy Spirit" is not simply spirit or breath of life or vitality. It can be quite useful to pursue this seemingly gradual occurrence on the path of Christ. It is named in connection with the conception of Mary, therefore at least as participating in an individual event.

It can also be found in that reference where Christ, being personally present in his resurrected body, "blows" on the disciples, saying "Take the Holy Spirit" (*John 20, 22*) - which therefore performs through him here. A purification of their ability to perceive or, in the deeper meaning, of their conscience can be seen as a prerequisite for the responsibility that is transmitted to them or

that is made conscious to them: "to forgive sins or not (to do anything)". This conscience, according to *J. Lorber* defined by Christ as an effect of the Holy Spirit, is not that mixture of biographically moulded fears, often wrongly confused with conscience, behind which however a piece of genuine conscience may sometimes be concealed. Conscience in the purest sense is also a conscious inner guidance of the individual.

In the first Whitsun event the Holy Spirit seems to be impersonal, even "cosmic". However, in diverse ways, depending on the various situations of the people penetrated by it, or according to the varying conditions of those addressed by it, and of the world, it is able to hit sore points in the mind - and to clean those points, if one looks at it in the light of spirit. To recognize essential differences and truths increasingly better, are other features of a consciousness that seems to be activated by the Holy Spirit. Where the cleaning up of confusion is not so much important, the same power shows itself more as creatively forming, community forming, perfecting - leading to God.

The 19th century, with its various revival movements in churches and its new revelation movements, as also in the 20th century also shows us new waves of the Holy Spirit and its resulting effects when looked at more closely. Anyway it suggests that Christian impulses and the Holy Spirit turned more and more to the larger matters of *the book of Revelations*.

In these sections of the Acts of the Apostles (*Acts*) Mary and the other female disciples are "united in praying and beseeching God" with the male disciples. The role of the women - whether talking or "silent" as said by Paul - ought to be indispensable for various reasons. They were, for example, emotionally more receptive to fine influences and were certainly capable of passing it on, verbally or non-verbally, to the people around. Even today in meetings of every kind, also spiritual ones, one can see the difference when both men and women participate. Without masculine display behaviour many events can progress in a more inspiring and enthusiastic way, as long as the inward participation in the event is sufficient. In Anthroposophical and Rosicrucian areas Mary, the mother of Jesus, is even seen as the actual source through which the Holy Spirit was able to come down onto the disciples.

Here we also encounter the secret of the „**Sophia**“, the "Wisdom" of the Old Testament, a feminine expression of divine power. In the eastern Orthodox Church Mary was often identified with Sophia. The "Sophiologist" and visionary *Solowjoff* experienced her as a being of our time - this is also ascribed to Christ (*e.g. Steiner's lectures about an "ethereal Second Coming" about (around) 1909*, or other teachings.) As it was with Jesus and Mary on a small scale, so the "Cosmic Christ" and "Sophia" as a heavenly mother can be experienced apparently on the large scale by mystics, etc. *See also Hildegunde Wöller "Ein Traum von Christus" (German, "A Dream of Christ" - not known, if available in English)*. The context may be described also this way: the "maternal" aspect of God helps the creation growing towards the creator; as the creator approaches his creatures.

Feminist theologians have pointed out that the Holy Spirit was called female in the former language. Mary and Sophia might be seen more precisely as a form in which the Holy Spirit takes shape, as in the symbol of the dove.

However, in various feminist movements in west and east "Sophia-like" influences can also be found, see *Dr. Susanne Schaup in the record of the "Evangelische Akademie" (Protestant academy) at Bad Boll, Germany for the meeting "New Age 3: Sophia"*. Similarly also "Christ-like" influences can be found not only in new worldwide Christian model projects like the "Universal life" or in renewal movements in the churches, but also in other, even secular movements. Comment of the New Testament: "The wind (spirit) blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the spirit." (*John 3*).

That which is coming has a masculine-feminine nature, is neither patriarchal nor matriarchal.

While something of the work of Christ is in every individual, as described in preceding chapters, this can be amplified now by the external Christ and the Holy Spirit anew, also by his words - however, not only by these.

The Grail knighthood also presumed that there was something left of the work of Christ on earth 2000 years ago, that people could search and find - the "Grail". This legend reported that some of the blood of Jesus had dropped onto the earth at the cross and been collected in a bowl. Joseph of Arimathea (John 19:38) and his companions were supposed to have saved it and brought it to France or England and always assembled in front of this "miracle-producing Grail" for prayer and inspiration. See, for example, *Robert de Boron "The story of the Holy Grail"*, written down about (around) 1200. Although this legend can be based on an external reality, it is noticeable that the golden Grail bowl with its cup above, its thickening in the middle and its broadening or opening below symbolizes man, who from his middle or his heart opens himself upwards for the Holy Spirit and downwards for the "redemption of the earth."* It is a "redeemed human being", which "the creature waits for" (*Letter to the Romans 8, 18-28*). On the large scale it can also be seen as a symbol of the earth opening to God there. The Catharians and Albigense people, minnesingers and troubadours formed groups in the context of this movement. Some of them had become a little detached from the world. Several million of these "esoteric" Christians were exterminated by the papacy as putative "heretics". Anyway, the deeper significance of the Grail is not exhausted by the other legend that physical descendants of Jesus in royal families are supposed to have been the Grail.

[*Extra window: sketch of the Holy Grail](#)

John 4: "... woman, believe me, the time will come when you will not worship the father either on this mountain or in Jerusalem... The time will come and it is already now, that the true worshippers will worship the father in the spirit and in the truth; because the father wants to have those who worship him this way. God is Spirit and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Churches would only be able to cope with this self-conscious, free attitude of a Christianity interested in recognition, if they had the courage to renew themselves on the basis of free Christian men and women. Since such schools of a spiritual Christianity were decimated so that it is even difficult to reconstruct their teachings, the church removed its own substance of spiritual tradition, which is gradually being recognized as a mistake today. After a lot of sometimes doubtful offers from other cultures attempting to fill this gap, churches are also now searching for this missing Christian spiritual practice.

The famous abbot, *Joachim di Fiore* - about (around) 1100 - spoke of the era of the Father - the era of the religious law of the Old Testament; as well as the time of the son with the help of the church; and prophesied a 3rd "*Era of the Holy Spirit*" - "*Zeitalter des heiligen Geistes*", title of a *German book of the Turm-Verlag (publisher)*, in which the people's individual connection to God increases. From this prophecy too, whose significance we are just starting to recognize, various elements flowed directly and indirectly into all sorts of movements, from Luther via Marx up to Hitler, where it became misunderstood and respectively misused. There is also usually a reasonable archetype from such misunderstandings.

Here is also an annotation about the distinction between the spirituality of the Holy Spirit and spiritualist practices: "Being deeply stirred by the Holy Spirit", in the ideal case a conscious taking of the Holy Spirit, goes via the innermost core of man. Hypnosis or ecstatic trance states and "possession" by "spirits" of deceased ones don't happen here; never mind "calling up spirits". Neither for those concerned nor for others in the gathering does this experience rob strength as in spiritualist sessions. The consciousness is not narrowed, but broadened. Extraordinary perception may be possible, but then consciously and without amnesia.

The effect of the Holy Spirit would be compatible, both with meditative silence - in western churches almost always missing - and with the opposite attempts to achieve the same by more and better communication, as is particularly the case in the west or in America. **If silence and communication were connected - a chance especially for the central European mentality - - the intention of the Spirit could become very clearly recognisable. It often manifests "a third way" beyond eastern and western extremes. However, only if the aspiration is not egoistic, i.e. unethical. Christ can only be understood with modesty, ethics and the purpose which he gave to the world as a history of salvation, stressing God's saving grace.**

The Holy Spirit can not be considered as completely separated from Christ or his requests. Christ ascribed to the Holy Spirit the quality, that it will remind the disciples "of everything I told you". He added: "I still have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of the truth comes, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:12-13).

Whatever is purified towards the truth could unite itself with the Holy Spirit and the entirety of those powers that want to save the earth.

In the teachings of Christ there is man with his subjectivity - but not that unlimited relativism that, according to some modern philosophical ideas, no longer allows objective truth.

Question:

What has God already helped to develop within me, and what is coming to me from God today?

[back.](#)

A picture of Jesus.

For those who would like to have a clearer idea of how Jesus looked, here at the end of the gospels we point out that image which can be regarded as most genuine - although no generally accepted portrait exists:

The so-called only real "Bild unseres Heilandes", available from the Lorber-Verlag (Publisher at 74321 Bietigheim-Bissingen, Germany). According to tradition it was included by command of the Emperor Tiberius from a portrait on an emerald and from the treasury of Constantinople given by the sultan of the Turks to Pope Innocent VIII. for ransoming his brother. That is combined with a description of the figure of Jesus by Publius Lentulus, at that time governor of Judea, for the senate and the roman nation .

"At that time a very virtuous man appeared, named Jesus Christ, who lives still among us, looked at as a prophet of the truth by the pagans, but named Son of God by his disciples. He raises people from the dead, heals all illnesses. A medium-sized man, powerfully built and of venerable appearance; so those, who look at him, must love and fear him as well. His hair is colo(u)red like a ripe hazel nut, almost straight down to the ears, from there down over the shoulders a little curly, with oriental style, as usual with the Nazarenes parted in the middle. His front is open and smooth, his face without blotches and wrinkles, beautiful, of agreeable red. The nose and mouth is formed faultlessly. The beard is not thick, the colo(u)r matching the hair, not very long. His eyes are dark blue, clear and lively. His body is well shaped and erect, his hands and arms are proportioned. His reprimand is terrifying, his exhortation friendly and likeable, his speech moderate, wise and modest, mixed with dignity. Nobody can remember having seen him laughing (at sb.), but many saw him weeping. A man, surpassing the people in his curious beauty".

(In the German printed text the picture was added with permission of the editor from 1992.)

Concerning the imprint of Jesus' corpse on the "holy shroud of Turin" - see our chapter "Crucifixion ...". There is another cloth with the face of Jesus with open eyes, i.e. the "veil of Manoppello", which is being investigated by P. Prof. Dr. Heinrich Pfeiffer and Sister Blandina Paschalis Schlömer ever since 1979.

<http://voltosanto.com> . This image is difficult to explain too. For instance, one cannot paint on mussel silk. The face measurements on the two cloths are congruent. Cf. John 20: 5-7. These pictures both influenced the paintings of the early centuries. The veil, which seems to have been wrapped around the head of Jesus, shows a frontal view of an oval face with the hair. There are also some similarities to the above described picture, which shows the living Jesus from the side.

[back.](#)

The 2nd part - The steps in the Revelation:

The Revelation of John.

An intense meditative examination of John's Gospel shows that it is mainly based on his own meditative reflection of his life with Jesus.

John's Revelation on the other hand, shows that it originates in visions. Here we find no mental extrapolations of external knowledge of life into the future. The form of these visions also shows - provided one has the ability to interpret one's own inner visions and so forth - that they come from higher sources than those in which external expectations take shape in our imagination. In this case, any mixing with the personal mind is not perceivable. The source is also designated clearly - although this fact alone would not be a guarantee in such experiences : "This is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...".

Most modern protestant theologians are not interested in this kind of apocalyptic writing. They would not really be able to decrypt it with their intellectual methods - or at most only fragmentarily, because they cannot derive the "method" of their origin and the associated symbolism from their own experiences. In the Catholic Church there are some ideas about the apocalypse*, but the people hardly read this because it is too far from the self-satisfaction of many people and churches in today's world. Free Churches and sects, on the other hand, refer directly to the apocalypse*, but have an insufficient, intellectual understanding of the prophetic vision, leading them to believe in an external disaster and in most cases see themselves as the chosen ones or at least as the most directly chosen ones (*apocalypse: from Greek = uncovering.)

In the chapter "*The Whitsun event (Pentecost)*" transitions between the individual work of Jesus in his immediate sphere and developments on a large scale have already been pointed out.

If we look at St. John's Revelation in the same integrated way as his Gospel, as proposed in the "Introduction...", unexpected insights become apparent which can not be found in literature.

This revelation shows a sequence related to the sequence in the life of Jesus. But here the development of mankind, earth and cosmos is definitely being spoken of. Even the most inward and mystical work on it simply confirms that it is not simply a collection of images for the development or "initiation" of individual people, as some thought - although it can be of help to individuals, due to the parallels to the gospels. **The actual stage of the revelation itself is rather one of consciousness, which compares the archetypal events surrounding Jesus Christ two thousand years ago with the development of mankind and the earth in the cosmos, interwoven in the same way by archetypal steps. Here too, the universal aspect of Christ is included, in contrast to his work as a Son of Man two thousand years ago.** Seen from this viewpoint, it would in turn be possible to draw some conclusions concerning the events that happened on the smaller scale approx. 2000 years ago.

The revelation is, however, inimitably more complex than the description of the gospels. It is not simply a "projection" of what John saw in the life of Jesus onto world events.

The revelation in its "element" describes events in several dimensions or levels of existence. The chronological sequence is only secondary. This alone shows that many interpretations as historical events can only be regarded as visions and are often quite misleading.

From another, but also permissible aspect, R. Steiner sees that some modern spiritual disciples can anticipate future states of consciousness today. See *R. Steiner in: "Die Apokalypse des Johannes", lecture cycle 1908.*

According to *Otto Hanish*, founder of the Zoroastrian-oriented old "Mazdaznan" life reform movement, Oberdoerffer found parallels to the physiological systems, e.g. the nervous connections in the human being. *Book: "Apokalypse", from the "Deutsche Mazdaznan- B." Gablonzer Str.7, 76185 Karlsruhe, Germany, - if still available; possibly only in German).*

Arthur Schult: "Das Johannesevangelium als Offenbarung des kosmischen Christus" (The St. John's Gospel as a manifestation of the Cosmic Christ) and „Weltenwerden und Johannesapokalypse" (Development of worlds and St. John's Revelation) attempted a chapter-for-chapter esoteric interpretation. Of course these are approaches to knowledge, mainly based on studying symbols, to which many annotations could be made.

A note: it does not help much to mix the Revelation with the **prophecy of the Old Testament**. Although there are some passages with similar images. It is, however, necessary to compare it with the historical events of pre-Christian times, given in the Appendix of many Bible editions. So it becomes clear that those prophets in most cases foresaw pre-Christian incidents like the Babylonian Captivity and the return from there, and the later wars in the country and a victory of the Jews at that time; also the events concerning the Messiah or Christ (*concerning the Messiah compare our page about the Old Testament*). Only a few places additionally indicate matters of our time or of the contents of the Revelation (*for instance Jesaja 24; 25; 27; 66:15; Daniel 7:9-28; Proverbs 2:21-22.*)

In traditional (Christian) theology, *Rev. 5:6* was presented in detail as a fundamental vision: the lamb that was slaughtered and nevertheless stands upright before the throne of God. In an ecclesiastical view of things, the church has been seen as the first place where the new is implemented. Otherwise, theologians treated the Book of Revelation in connection with the eschatological trust in a "kingdom" of God to come, particularly in connection with the corresponding speeches from the time of Jesus' ministry. That which God began with Jesus, but which has yet to be completed, continues to unfold until completion; see *Philippians 1:6*. It occurred that a beginning of a "new heaven and a new earth" (*Rev. 21*) with the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus had been assumed – and then a continual development in this direction was assumed. However, the Book of Revelation speaks of an upheaval of unheard dimensions, no matter how symbolically it may be seen. The apparent contradiction between something actually already existent and a later realisation will only really be resolved when that awareness is meditatively comprehended to some degree, which Jesus shows when he repeatedly says words to the effect of "The time is coming and it is already now..." (*Rev. 4 and 5*): It states that something on a more spiritual level already really existing will come into its own on the visible plane at a later point in time.

[To the "small Apocalypse" in the Gospel of Matthew.](#)

[back.](#)

How to deal with prophecies.

At this point it would be appropriate to add some general thoughts concerning how to deal with prophecies. not only with John's apocalypse, but also with other, mostly short "apocalypses" from the apocryphal literature of the early centuries after Christ, or modern apocalyptic visions of clairvoyants that have a mostly "mixed" nature; in addition to that there are various "predictions". The archetypal "steps" of John's Revelation as such are probably as unavoidable as the various stages of the development of an embryo or a living being, or certain steps in the development of a mystic, etc. It is, however, up to each individual how one goes through these steps. One can learn

a lot very easily and so avoid a lot of pain and discomfort, or one can wait for big catastrophies. If you examine the events of the world, independent of prophets, you will notice the same regularity, no matter whether it is the fate of a single person or whether a larger context is considered.

Details within visions of the future, which are not archetypal and therefore less fundamental, are mental programs. After some preparation, the matter may have reached the point at which certain events in the future would follow, which become more and more delimited in quality, space and time. But if these causal programs in individuals or in groups change in detail through human efforts, then the details of the future also change, if they are no inevitable archetypes. Therefore, visions change from time to time. That is also true in particular for people, whose visions are not from that same comprehensive level as John's. Their visions can become out-dated within a short time. However, the scope of mankind is limited by human laziness.

Clairvoyants can either observe vague impulses - these are then most likely to be correct - or they already see clearer possibilities in symbolic form, or even exact material events. These may be mixed with data from the subconscious, because the details are probably not yet really fixed - apart from simple projections from experiences of the past on the future, or other - frequently occurring, deceiving perceptions or completely wrong interpretations.

Other contradictions in such "perceptions of the future" obviously reflect various and partly contradictory scenarios of the future. In the collective mind of mankind that means "real, not yet clearly decided possibilities" coming mainly from various human fantasies Everyone participates consciously or unconsciously in this ongoing process of deciding about the future. (* See also an extra window at the end of the chapter about the "7 bowls of wrath").

On the one hand the earth is a conscious, free organism and it is not up to us to tell God how to grasp this part of his being. On the other hand, man is also free for his part, to decide himself for increasingly better patterns of resolving problems. Similarly, the cells also seem to have a considerable variability in their behaviour - not dictated centrally by the consciousness of man, but this consciousness can address it with positive thoughts, etc.

Therefore, much more has been caused by transforming thoughts and prayers, love and trust in God, by rescuing actions and grace, than fatalistic attitudes would have us believe.

In most cases clairvoyants and inspired people also could not predict the time of incidents correctly (related to our time).

The perception of some mystics that on the highest levels of existence beyond space and time everything is already there and the earthly perception of the struggle for correct decisions, etc. are both correct, independently of each other. To play both off against each other, evaluating philosophically, does not do justice to the completely different character of these levels and makes the result wrong.

See "[Inspiration and the Churches](#)" too.

[back](#).

Concerning the contents of John's revelation: The seven churches.

In the *1st chapter of the Revelation* John describes the first vision of Christ after the ascension. "I turned round to see", or more clearly in the *4th church* "come up here...", "and at once I was in the spirit" means, that here Christ didn't come down to John, but John was able to "climb" up temporarily consciously to that level which is spoken of. This is important and not symbolic. "I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One. I was dead.... And I hold the keys of death and

Hades. "The Christ united with God speaks to him. So here he also designates **the general topic, which runs through the apocalypse like a thread: The penetration of the various levels of life which are left or "darkened", not by any kind of light, but by the "true light" of John's Gospel 1, by Christ. At the beginning, everything is put into the context of the now repeated prophecy of a Second Coming of Christ "in the clouds".**

Christ shows himself in his capacity as the centre (center) of the seven communities in Asia, – like the sun; "dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet" -his spirit penetrates everything, including his feet representing the will-; "with a golden sash round his chest" -the love of his heart is connected with wisdom-. "His head and hair were white ..." -by that connection with love the head is shining-; "and his eyes were like blazing fire" -his eyes shine on the world-; "his feet were like bronze (/gold) glowing in a furnace" -his steps have a purifying effect outwardly-; "and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters" -in his voice vibrates the spirit too-. "In his right hand he held seven stars" -God attracts all powers and human characters towards him, with his right hand representing the future, they follow him-; "and out of his mouth came a sharp, double-edged sword..." -he brings the real powers of discernment and differentiation.

This vision looks like an analogy to the vision of John the Baptist at the beginning of John's Gospel, with the dove of the "real spirit"; the seven communities are analogous to the appointment of the disciples (e.g. *John's Gospel 1...*).

The "seven communities" (seven churches; *Revelation 2-3*) really existed. They embodied various cultural problems, qualities and possibilities which Christ let the "angels of the communities" write . In this context "angels" seem to refer to earthly leaders of these communities too. The letters are not a matter of purely "supernatural" affairs. Besides this, the communities presumed that there was an angel accompanying their work. But using the term angel - as an impersonal being and power - the term angel can also point out that the Christian communities in the seven towns also represent the kind of qualities they embody, which are expressed elsewhere too.

Therefore there must be some truth in it, when Theosophical, Rosicrucian and Anthroposophical movements all agree that the "7 communities" are cultures - described as one following each other. The contemporary transition of occidental civilisation to a more gentle culture emerging is identified as the change from the 5th/6th or from the 6th/7th communities. Sometimes there are attempts to establish a relation to the ideas of an "Aquarian Era" which would begin, according to various astrological and New-Age trends, between 1961 and 2000 or even 2242, or according to R. Steiner its full effect would not be apparent until 3500. This was connected with the assumption of sub-eras of 300-400 years. In spite of having a real basis in the cosmic cycles, something important has been overlooked here:

The nature of the apocalypse is not based on the "cyclical eternal recurrence of the same twelve zodiacal qualities". The image of a spiral, in which everything develops onto higher and higher levels, would be a better description. However, the very fundamental "quantum leaps" of mankind and world evolution in the apocalypse can not only be seen on the basis of the continuous movement of the earth's axis like a gyroscope and attendant astrological circumstances. If contemporary history is considered, increasingly faster developments have come about. Here one can feel the intervention of something superordinate. If one wants to search for cycles as the origin of apocalyptic changes, an additional, larger cycle would have to be accepted. It could, however, also be those influences which the apocalypse speaks of.

If the investigation of cosmic modifications in the time of early history - not taken seriously enough - are considered, as found in old calendars, archaeological discoveries, written records, legends by *H. J. Andersen* and others, the astrophysical realities and therefore also the eras as seen connected with that, are not as constant as we originally thought. It seems to change or to be put out of function temporarily by drastic influences. In such cases the significance of the classical time cycles would be even more limited than at the time of the first "5 communities" which Theosophists tried to explain as the cultures of India, Persia, Egypt & Chaldea, Greece & Rome... and the occidental culture up to now.

Additional: The "Enlightenment on the Apocalypse" (... by Helene Möller - 1884-1969 -, Publisher: Radona-Verlag, Am Buchstein 14/15, D-61250 Usingen, Germany, available in English too) relates the "7 churches" to various times in church history:

1. 33- 333 A.D.: Struggles to observe the Lord's instructions correctly... .
2. 333- 633 A.D.: Problems and faithfulness of the old Church... .
3. 633- 933 A.D.: Enlightenment through the (Holy) Scriptures... .
4. 933- 1233 A.D.: Danger to the Church through "vanity, love of ostentation, greed, sensuality".
(Annotation: wars and the inquisition came within this period too.)
5. 1233- 1533 A.D.: "Impurity and selfishness" in the Church, followed by "apostasy".
(However, that book looks at the Catholic and Protestant Churches, as "the two witnesses" of Rev. 11 - like two partners matching each other.)
6. 1533- 1833 A.D.: A superficial Christianity... .
(Annotation: the beginning of rationalism and the old mechanistic science were during that time period too.)
7. 1833- 2000 A.D.: Indifference of many people concerning the churches and God.
(Then we are said to be nearing the radical change with the Second Coming of Christ, as written in the rest of John's book of Revelations. This is explained as one cosmic incident, looked at from several sides. Although that (old) scenario prevails, which includes major wars; but in contrast to the idea that "the prayer of the peoples" may change this - and especially that the faithful will connect themselves to God and his inspiration, and so become lifted up to him.)

Compared with the following steps of the Revelation the "7 communities" represent anyway a level (levels) which might still be grasped with the powers of the consciousness of outward life.

Additional: The "7 Churches" of the Revelation, and the Churches of today with excerpts from the Revelation 1-3.

a.) The seven early churches in Asia.

"1,1: This is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants what must soon* take place; and he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, 2: who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. 3: Blessed is he who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written therein; for the time is near. (...) 7 Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be. Amen! (...) 9: I John, your brother, who share with you in Jesus the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10: I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet 11: saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches**", to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea." 12: Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, 13: and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden girdle round his breast; 14: his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire, 15: his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters; 16: in his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth issued a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. 17: When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand upon me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, 18: and the living one; I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and Hades***. 19: Now write what you see, what is and what is to take place hereafter. 20: As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

Table

Early church	Christ speaking as:	his acknowledgement	rebuke	Goal for those who overcome themselves
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in Ephesus	He, "who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands"	hard work, perseverance, cannot tolerate evil men; "disgust Nikolaites as he disgusts****", and discerned false apostles; patience and bearing up for his name's sake; and has not grown weary.	"...you abandoned the love you had at first." ..."repent and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent."	"To him who overcomes I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God."
in Smyrna	"he who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life"	"I know your afflictions and your poverty - yet you are rich - and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan."	"Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. "	"Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. He who conquers shall not be hurt by the second death."
in Pergamum	he "who has the sharp two-edged sword".	"you remain true to my name and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was put to death among you, where Satan dwells."	Some who hold the teaching of Balaam: Balak- cult with eating food sacrificed to idols and practices of sexual immorality; some Nicolaitans. "Repent then. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth."	"To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone which no one knows except him who receives it."
in Thyatira	"the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze"	"I know your deeds, your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your latter works exceed the first".	They tolerate the false prophetess Jezebel practicing temple prostitution and eating food sacrificed to idols. Threat: to suffer intensely, unless they repent, and strike her children dead. "I will give to each of you as your works deserve". To the rest who do not hold her teaching: "I do not lay upon you any other burden; only hold fast what you have, until I come."	"To him who overcomes and does my works to the end, I will give authority over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received power from my Father; I will also give him the morning star."

in Sardis	He, "who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars"	"I know your works". "You have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy."	"you have the reputation of being alive, and you are dead. Awake, and strengthen what is about to die, for I have not found your works perfect in the sight of my God." Remember what you received and heard; keep that, and repent. If you will not awake, I will come like a thief".	"He who overcomes, like them, shall be dressed in white, and I will not remove his name out of the book of life; I will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels."
in Philadelphia	"the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one shall shut, who shuts and no one opens"	"I know your works. I know that you have a little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. Because you have kept my word of enduring patiently, I will keep you from the hour of trial which is going to come on the whole world, to try those who live on the earth."	"I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie - I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and learn that I have loved you." "Hold fast what you have, so that no one may take your crown."	Him who overcomes, I will make a pillar in the temple of my God; never shall he leave it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.
in Laodicea	"the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation"	("I know your deeds"; but here is no clear positive acknowledgement.)	"because you are lukewarm****, neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth". "...You don't know, that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. Therefore I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire...", "and white clothes...", "and salve to anoint your eyes...". "Those whom I love, I rebuke and chasten; so be zealous and repent."	"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. Him who overcomes, I will grant to sit with me on my throne, as I myself overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne."

* other translation: "in rapid succession"; ** other translation: "communities"; ** other translations: "and the kingdom of the death"/ "and the hell"; *** more usual translation: "hate" (Christ hates nobody!); see also Paul's letter to the Ephesians; **** "lukewarm" does not mean a clear differentiated third position, but the absence of a position.

Already that Christ is speaking to every church with another quality of himself, shows that every church gets another "curriculum".

b.) The Churches of today.

The "seven early churches" really existed. In the main text of ways-of-christ.net the general significance of various cultural groups is also mentioned. It is also possible to explore the question of whether qualities similar to those of the "7 churches" are present within today's churches or groups within churches and Christian movements. No schematic identification is intended and for this reason the results are not mentioned here, but in the following paragraphs the churches with their various sides are briefly outlined to allow each person to look for similarities themselves. No

church is being judged here - as that might only be done by Christ himself. On the contrary, one may even get a feeling for the hidden significance of the ecumenical movement's "unity in diversity", like the universal pattern of the "seven tones".

Table

Churches of today/ movements.	strong points of them.	things which interested people in that churches must put up with them.
<p>Greek, Russian, Serbian Orthodox Churches; Syrian-Orthodox Church, & some adherents of old celtic christianity; Armenian Church; Egyptian Coptic and Ethiopian Church;</p> <p>"St. Thomas Church" in India; Nepalesian Church;...</p>	<p>Often deep faith, sometimes deep spiritual aspiration - e.g. monks etc - , perseverance, consequence.</p> <p>A touch of originality. Often a crypt below the church, a reminiscence of old christian - esoteric traditions. Teachings about the Wisdom (Mary / Sophia).</p>	<p>In most cases a beautiful but strict traditional rite, e.g. 3 hours standing. (except e.g. the unique St. Tom's Church). Small adaptibility to the manifold search of modern and young people, especially in the former atheist surroundings - who so often are more or less on the edge of the church and think more secularly.</p> <p>Communist pressure or nationalist preferences led some of this churches to limitations of the work, or to enmity with other churches or peoples. ...</p>
<p>Free Churches, Evangelical ones, also Pentecost Churches, Quakers;</p> <p>Other organisations - sometimes seen as "sects"* with questionable arguments-: Adventists, New Apostolic Church, Mormons, and others.</p>	<p>Simplicity and uncompromisingness according to the own faith and morals. For persons suited for it, this uncomplicated relation to Jesus Christ gives also a more direkt entry to his power: strong experiences with faith, like getting answered a prayer extraordinarily and healing; sometimes with testimonies etc. in the divine services.</p> <p>Intensive Bible study without arguing difficult places away; Good mutual support of the members of the living community - no bare "Sunday-" or "Christmas- Christianity".</p>	<p>Except the manifold encouragement in one's faith no direct methods for preparation for spiritual experiences. So in most cases also lack of silence and of methods based on this like christian meditation (as most other churches are lacking this).</p> <p>The well-meant ethical rigorousness in human relations consists often of prohibitions, seldom accompanied with sufficient advices, how e.g. friendship can be mastered really. Often limited willingness to understand the manifold christian experiences beyond those known in this part of the ecumene. Often the opinion, what was sufficient for oneself, should also be sufficient for missionizing all others. Sometimes a feeling, the own church is especially elected. Sometimes - in contrary to the image promoted of this movements - they one-sidedly backed political agendas....</p>
<p>The majority in the Protestant Churches</p> <p>& progressive "open church" movement</p>	<p>F.e Luther's direct resort to the Bible as the source of the belief.</p> <p>Many social services. Often the openness, to take the belief seriously also in one's political decisions; to think oneself, and to admonish people - also beyond the topics of morals. Openness for the ecumenical relations between the churches. ...</p>	<p>Today the historiocritical study of theology often removes parts of the belief, - and in seminaries for ministers is taught how to preach it in spite of this.</p> <p>Some are searching ways for spiritual deepening of belief, but this is seldom offered. Widespread is Superficiality and too much adaptation to the society, in gatherings too. Sometimes churches were even concurring causes of problematic developments in the performance- oriented society (Calvinism). ...</p>

<p>Leftist catholicism, Feminist Theology, Theology of Liberation in the "Third World"</p> <p>Old Catholic Church</p>	<p>Very near to the life of the people; - motivated by Christianity - strong efforts for social and human rights etc. With respect to this also watchfulness within the church.</p> <p>Efforts to find an adequate spiritual and human role for women too. Since some time also a minimum of openness for ways of mystical experiences. ...</p>	<p>The belief of some became shallow. Sometimes only viewpoints of deep psychology and social teachings (which would be valid for everyone, for pure humanists too).</p> <p>Some in feminist theology are inspired by old cults, which are not always checked, to what extent they are compatible with Christianity. ...</p>
<p>Roman Catholic Church</p> <p>& more strict catholic movements for instance around the Prophecy of Maria, and mysticism.</p>	<p>Maintenance of the belief and rites given to this church. E.g. within the adoration of Mary and other traditions elements missing in some other churches.</p> <p>Much charitable work; social watchfulness also in the world church. Partially a "brake" against the general ethical decay of the society. At least some methods for the inner development (spiritual exercises, simple meditations) for a few members of the church. In this church appeared many mystics: duplication of the secrets connected with the crucifixion of Jesus. (Also the wellknown theologian Rahner stated, that the church of the future should cultivate christian myticism.)</p> <p>...</p>	<p>This church wagered much on doctrines/ dogmas and the power of the church office to assert itself - instead of teaching with empathy and understanding for today's people, which are often self- reliant. Little endeavour towards "languages" necessary for imparting topics of faith for different people spiritedly. Morals consisting mainly of commandments and prohibitions. The ethical "brake" function does not go on to real transformation and renewal.</p> <p>Working off the earlier inquisitorial and martial practices and the cooperation with special ruling powers has been started, but is difficult. The imagination, that only the own church is the fully valid one. Also the mystics were at best tolerated, instead of recognizing their pathbreaking function. ...</p>
<p>Christengemeinschaft and Christology of Rudolf Steiner; and christian Rosicrucians;</p> <p>Special communities: New Revelation movements****,</p> <p>Other schools, for instance going on from teachings of Prof. J. Hurtak.</p>	<p>Congenial to the neglected approaches of a Christianity with recognition*** - not identical with "Gnosticism" -. Based e.g. on John's Gospel, which were exterminated by persecution in most cases. (So this kind of Christianity was missing, and this led to many circumstances in today's churches, which are in need of improvement.)</p> <p>Several paths of training for opening oneself on the way to God. Hurtak e.g. works with the "Names of God" from the old language of the bible. ...</p>	<p>E.g. in the Anthroposophy often only "work according to Christ", instead also including him directly in prayer etc. (The "Christengemeinschaft" - a church including elements inspired by R.Steiner - is not looked at as a part of anthroposophy directly.)</p> <p>(Not all modern groups of Rosicrucians and Alchemists show the same clear relation to Christianity.) New Revelation Movements like those going on from the mystic Jakob Lorber are besides the bible including some kind of "prophecy". Viewpoints for discernment in that field are necessary, if one wants to evaluate such teachings****.</p>

<p>Some of the circles hardly tangible as organisations on the edge of Christianity, for instance close to New Age Groups</p>	<p>Partially seeking a new time beyond the imperfectness of today's materialistic societies, so far related to the promise of the Revelation.</p> <p>Looking at one's own qualities and experiences instead of condemning others.</p> <p>Dialogues between many schools. ...</p>	<p>Not always clear distinction between Christ and alleged "Christs" or the "Christ consciousness" of some schools.</p> <p>Because there is a comprehensive common ground between the religions only in ethics, but less in questions of faith, the differences are sometimes argued away -which does not help.</p> <p>Because God is above all, sometimes it is not understood, how on earth ethical decisions between constructive and destructive powers are necessary. Therefore partially tolerating problematical things, and lacking that amount of ethical, patient bearing of difficulties among people, which formed the organized Christianity. As movements little engagement in problems of the society. ...</p>
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* Also it would be possible to compare churches with the original 12 Apostles. The different people have in different churches, what helps them on.

** If You are interested in a group, and: a.) they let you have your personal freedom, and your contacts to family and friends; b.) they don't support deeds which are not ethical; c.) they don't try to get your property (except your membership fee - or in some countries the tax - and voluntary donations); d.) they refer to the Bible or the New Testament, respectively to Jesus Christ with the same meaning; e.) they accept, that they are not the only true christian group; - then at least the invalidating term "sect" is not correct. This is independent from the evaluation of their theological interpretations - which all churches have -, and from the evaluation of their additional traditions - which exist in almost all churches except the protestant Free Churches.

*** for instance John himself, Clemens of Alexandria, Origenes, the Paulikians, Joachim de Fiore, Master Eckehart, Tauler, Seuse, Nicolaus of Kues (Cusanus), Jakob Boehme, Angelus Silesius, Paracelsus, Novalis a.s.o. Circles like this also may have had their limitations as all churches have theirs, but they are a part of the whole christianity too. The Bogumiles and the Catharians were partially similar, but were one-sidedly withdrawing from the world.

**** See the chapter "How to deal with prophecy" in the main text of ways-of-christ.net. Not all groups like this are working as some competitors of churches, and so they don't advise their people to leave their churches (for instance Lorber). Other groups criticize the big churches, because they feel themselves persecuted by them.

c) Approaches to solutions for conflicts between the churches in the (o)ecumenical movement.

The full scope of Christianity only starts to become visible by looking at the ecumenical diversity of the churches. Those who want to reduce Christian information to the lowest common denominator of the big churches withholds that very impulse from people and churches which they need to get ahead in the renewal of Christianity. Christianity has become superficial when compared with the early church. Christians need to learn from each other. But during this process everyone can keep their own identity. More consciousness about belonging together within the diversity of the churches does not mean attempting a fully unified Christianity now. Christ himself, in his letters to the 7 churches, did not mention this unity at all. He knew that people are different. He elsewhere predicts a time with one shepherd and one "herd", but does not mean that this herd is without any kind of inner diversity. The highest shepherd is Christ himself. He is also the only one, who would achieve the union of the churches in the right way. Who would listen to anyone else? But steps in this direction are possible. Here are some comments on the points the main Churches think are the main obstacles in this discussion (Most people in the churches are not interested in having obstacles):

0. An important basis is the mutual view of baptism as a sacrament.

During the Second Vatican Council of the Catholic Church in 1962 there was some opening for the ecumenical movement. It was accepted that elements like the Word of God, living mercy, hope, love and the gifts of the Holy Spirit - both invisible and visible elements - exist beyond the Catholic Church too and that sanctification and redemption are possible in other Churches too. But still the Catholic Church saw themselves as the only complete Church.

1. The Catholic Church says, the Protestant Churches don't have the unbroken "**apostolic Succession**" by laying on of hands since the original Apostles, connected with the consecration of bishops and priests. That is why they are not accepted as full sister churches. However, some Protestant Churches partially came into being through conversions with the help of their state; so consecrated priests must have converted too. They then participated in the ordination of other pastors. Laying on hands for blessing and healing, etc. is indeed biblical. The bible does not say definitively that priests need an unbroken chain of laying on hands. But if one wants to interpret it this way, it is possible that the Protestant Churches again start laying on hands too, which would not do them any harm. For this purpose they could find someone within or outside of their church who is part of this unbroken chain. This would be a bigger challenge for the self-consciousness of the Protestant Churches.

There is also another possibility, one that all churches accept, that one can also directly pray for one's connection to the Holy Spirit, otherwise given by laying on hands. (Even every Believer could do this. There are people who are especially able to do Christian healing by laying on hands without any consecration - more able than most consecrated people.) Then a pastor who received the Holy Spirit might be able to pass it on in the classical way by laying on hands. This version would probably be strange for the Catholic Church. (But the Protestant Church has not practised it either, so neither of them would have an unfair advantage.) To be exact, the Catholic Church can recognize this as a possibility - with the reservation, that by usual means it would not be possible to know whether the Holy Spirit was really there in the same valid way or not. However, there were always Catholics who would have been able to say whether it was effective or not. (E.g. people like Padre Pio, etc.) Moreover, there is the question of what to do about a consecrated person in the Catholic Church who probably blocked the flow of the Holy Spirit through drastic misdeeds? Would he still be able to give the Holy Spirit? Without explorations and/or people like Padre Pio a trustworthy answer would not be possible.

2. The Catholic Church wants the question of the role of St. Peter's office, which means the **Pope** for the other churches, to be connected with its concept of a visible full unity of the churches headed by him. Jesus told St. Peter to take care of his "lambs" and "sheep". (*John 21*). However, Jesus did not assign the other Disciples and their circles to Peter, but the existing main stream of Christians. E.g. John had his own Churches in Asia (see above), Paul looked for many communities, etc. So the question arises of what it might mean today that a successor of St. Peter "puts sheep out to pasture". Representatives of Orthodox Churches had signalled that they would accept some "honorary primacy" of the pope without direct power over other churches; similar to the role of the Roman bishop in the early church as the first one among equals. Even some Protestant theologians thought about that, but the Vatican did not react directly. Later the Pope wrote that the other churches should consider the role they think the Papacy should have. Considerations would not hurt anyone. If the Churches unite, they would surely choose a mutual leader.

3. Protestant Churches would like to see the **ordination of women as priests** in the Catholic Church. But Orthodox Churches, parts of the Anglican Church and some Protestants also have difficulties with this question. On the other hand, within the Catholic Church there is also, e.g. in Germany, the group "Plebiscite We are the Church", who also demands it. No matter how important this question is, it is difficult to understand why it must be resolved through ecumenical discussions. This is a question which must be resolved by each of the churches, according to their consciousness. In any case, for the time being, the Vatican should not deny the Protestants' right to go on with their ordination of women, especially during the process of the increasing convergence of the Churches. The various practices can be a positive challenge to work on it in one's own church.

The Bible (Paul) states only a slightly different traditional role for men and women in the community. At that time, no one discussed, that women should have less rights in general. The circle of disciples still knew how important the role, e.g. of Mary or women in general was, even during the first Whitsun event (Pentecost). "The woman be silent in the community" certainly had another meaning than that which was later interpreted and does not have much to do with the named question of less rights. But there are doubts whether or not the churches can come to the same interpretation. Therefore, the only argument left is that this question must not be resolved in the context of the discussion about unity at the present time. Those who think they can solve this question by combining it with the unity discussion may be disappointed. It is probably easier to handle these two topics separately. When the time for unity approaches, we shall see which church is ready to do what.

4. **The adoration of Mary** as known in the Catholic and Orthodox Churches is not practised in protestant Churches, but this is not looked upon as a main obstruction to more unity. The Second Vatican Council accepted that in liturgical questions there may be beneficial differences, according to the mentality of the believers. We know, e.g. of the endeavours of a pastor in the fifties and sixties who tried to re-establish some kind of Mary worship in a protestant Church.

5. On one hand one can understand that **the church's law (CIC)** is a delicate subject, because its earlier state had also led to misuse. But its role today should not be a question which obstructs the efforts of the churches for more unity. The Bible itself does not enforce the role of the traditional church's law in the Catholic Church. For the moment this concerns one single Church. Every church can have and even must have its own statute, and therefore its own "law" to a certain degree, as long as it exists as a single unit or even as a subordinate unit defined somehow or other. Changing such rules within the churches is up to the churches themselves - as long as nobody wants all the other churches to accept it without question. Even if someone wanted to discuss taking over the CIC, even the Catholic Church know that this project would require a new mutual council, creating or inspiring a new mutual statute. In 1983, the Catholic Church itself adapted its own law to the new "theology of God's People", agreed on at the Second Vatican Council in 1962. So this is not a topic which would hinder the way to unity.

6. Another point of controversy was the question of the **justification** of man before God, either by one's works or by the Redeemer. However, since there is a mutual paper of the Catholic and the Protestant Church concerning this question, it can be considered as sufficiently cleared up.

7. See also our [page about the Lord's Supper \(Holy Communion, Eucharist\)](#).

Indeed it would be possible for the churches to come closer to each other in a real ecumenical community, instead of tormenting* Christ with their delimitations. This should be done indeed "with sensitivity and consideration for each other, in patience and with courage, holding truth in reverence" (as John Paul II. named it). Nevertheless, today one can already experience the "general" Church in the spirit of Jesus Christ, consisting of all those who follow Christ in their own way and endeavour "to do the will of the Father"; -no matter, what Churches they belong to, or whether or not they are members of any Church at all, or whether they necessarily use the term Christianity all the time. This is the basis for the "Ways of Christ" website. This kind of experience does not replace approaches to visible unity. However, this unity must be really attempted; a signature on paper would not be sufficient.

*) Churches like the Catholic one might get some inspiration from the related messages of Christ by the Orthodox Christian *Vassula Ryden*, "*The true life in God*", vol. 1. The Catholic Church looks at such writings as "private inspirations". However, the content is often more than just interesting for the person concerned. (This website only mentions literature as additional information and our insights are independent of it.)

[back](#).

Inspiration and the Churches.

According to the New Testament, the direct inspiration of the individual faithful and other gifts of the Holy Spirit (see the chapter "*Ascension*") are something important for Christians (e.g. *1.Kor. 14,26; Mark. 16,17*). The ways to reach it were obviously made more difficult. However, it is possible to pray for receiving the Holy Spirit.

Besides the Pentecostal Churches, the Catholic Church also accepts the possibility of divine messages. But this Church distinguishes between a "general revelation" for the common good through the Bible, the tradition and the ministry on the one hand - and mystical "private revelations" (private inspirations) on the other hand. The latter of the two are accepted as long as there is useful content for the persons and their surroundings usually without commitment and without much support. If they contained prophetic*) messages of Mary or Christ to the Church or to mankind, the Church often reacted critically. Since Paul VI the Church no longer stops Catholic publishers printing it. But still some testimonies like this have been kept secret for many years, like the 3rd message of Fatima. In such cases the Church reserves a final judgement about it. The

Church's law says that if messages are checked, then this must be done fairly, e.g. one must hear the writers (*Can. 844 §3*). *Can. 220* forbids illegal damage to one's reputation. These inspirations don't play a big role in many other churches. Either that or they haven't yet developed practices to deal with it. Some Protestant Churches think, revelation has come to an end in the time of the New Testament. On the other hand there are many phenomena like this outside the big churches, cf. *John 14:21-26*. The whole situation leaves the impression that God is interested in "speaking" to us, teaching people and warning them too. However, this is difficult, lifelong learning process; and spreading such messages requires an actual call to do this, a special connection with God, and adequate preparation.

The first Apostles - people who were able to represent Christ with their gifts of the Spirit - taught direct inspiration and its interpretation as a part of the gatherings (*1.Kor 14,26*). *1.Kor. 12,4-7*: "...Now to each one the manifestation of the spirit is given for the common good." In *1.Kor. 12,28* the role of the apostles can be interpreted as prior to the "prophets" *) and in the third place the teachers. *1. Kor. 14* distinguishes "speaking in tongues" edifying oneself, and prophecy edifying the community. People with the gift of prophecy were extraordinarily appreciated, because the other disciples could not automatically fulfil this task (e.g. *Matthew 10,41*).

Distinctive marks:

- The main question is not whether there is such a thing as inspiration, which is not the result of autosuggestion, mass suggestion, or schizophrenic or other psychological phenomena**. If someone studies such phenomena in Christianity without prejudices, he/she may first notice, that in most cases the attempted mental explanations like autosuggestion, mass suggestion, schizophrenia are not sufficient**. Then the really interesting questions can start:

- It is useful to seek insight regarding what comes from God and what does not, cf. *1.Joh.4,1*. However, this must be done with caution and respect. The Bible itself does not state that a priest is automatically competent to judge possible manifestations of the Spirit by theoretical, theological considerations. Only a very few can directly perceive what kind of spirit a message is coming from; therefore Jesus says: "By their fruits You will recognize them" - *Matthew 7,15-20*. That means, if it leads to Christ, e.g. to a so-called "reclamation"/return to God, with a positive change in life or to healing in mind or body, it would be very dubious to dismiss it as not genuine or even as "coming from the devil"; because it happened by mercy. *John 15,5*: "without me you can do nothing". If more love of Christ and people manifests itself, this is a good sign too. Compare also *Matthew 7,1; Matthew 12,24-30 and Acts 5,38-39*, warning of judgements. According to moral theology and principles of secular law it would also be wrong to condemn someone, as long as there is room for doubt.

Another distinctive mark is the modesty of these persons, because only when someone becomes quieter, he/she can hear God's Spirit. Theological knowledge is not a distinctive mark at all; often it is especially simple persons that have been chosen ("charisma of laymen"). Educated persons are only prepared if they are not conceited and do not get stuck and so nonetheless belong to the "poor in spirit" of *Matthew 5,3*. (E.g. the Sadducees - rationalists and materialists -, and the Pharisees, as far as their majority got stuck in their intellectual knowledge - neither of these belonged to those who were "poor in spirit".)

- "...That You live like human beings and fulfil Your daily duties, but also properly leave room for God the almighty father in Your daily life." (From messages of Mother Mary to the seers at Garabandal and elsewhere).

- Loving behaviour according to the ethics of Jesus - e.g. *Matthew 7:12* - is also a distinctive mark. The more someone emulates God's qualities, like love, the closer they draw to the spirit - which is above the intellect - through an inner self connected with Christ. However, in this context ethics does not automatically mean adhering to the usual ideas we have about pious people, for instance concerning their clothes, or going to church on Sundays, or whatever.

For instance, if somebody were to spread aggressively some defamation against another Christian, using opinions acquired by reading, and claiming a personal inspiration from Christ - and so causing discord - most probably it is neither a legitimate activity nor a true message from Christ or the Holy Spirit.

Apart from that, freedom of suppression from outside is also a factor. Experience and the Bible says, that the Holy Spirit is free of human classifications (*Joh. 3,8;...*) and needs freedom for its growth. *The human being has its own conscience, which is not a matter of conditioning. Acts 5,29: "We must obey God rather than men!"* This is not contrary to the useful purpose of spiritual guidance. Not every generation needs to start from the beginning with the same mistakes.

- Criteria like the "supernatural character" have been investigated often: for instance concomitant phenomena like lacking the eye's reflex, a changed heart beat, the pulse slowed down, a higher blood pressure - without manipulations or drugs -; or that the person could not know what has been revealed. But that criterion is not necessary, because the Spirit can use the "natural" abilities of man too.

There are many forms in which a message of the Spirit can express itself. For example, through the "inner voice/ inner word in the heart" which is fully conscious and therefore not to be confused with hypnotic or schizophrenic phenomena. Some experience in practice shows that its nature is different from telepathic phenomena too. (Cf. *"Vom Inneren Wort" - German: The inner word, extracts from Johannes Tennyhardt, Jakob Lorber, etc.; Lorber-Verlag*). In rare cases, a trance-like state can be achieved, in which the person plays more of a secondary role; but even here the circumstances - the attunement to God and a good effect on the people present - show the difference between this and a trance brought about through spiritualism (spiritism) - which has a weakening influence on those present. It can also happen that someone experiences a vision, inner light or an idea and can write down it in words afterwards. There is also a kind of direct writing with full consciousness, different to the "automatic writing" of spiritualism, which is usually connected with some kind of trance (Consciously seeking the Spirit of God is spirituality, and seeking contacts to ghosts in trance is named spirit(ual)ism.)The Holy Spirit may also have been the source of a message, without directly addressing the persons concerned ("..."): a thought, a conversation, a piece of writing or a book can partially or completely originate from this source of inspiration, because it can activate human creativity in any way it wants.

*) Prophecy - from Greek - means first extrasensory informations, in the Christian context coming from God or the Holy Spirit; cf. *1. Thess.5,19*. Inspirations, which are warnings or predictions of the future, are a special case.

Concerning the Holy Spirit in general see *John 3,8; John 14,26* and the main text of *ways-of-christ, part 1, chapter "The first Whitsun event (Pentecost)"*.

Concerning prophecy through visions of the future, see the related chapters in the main text of *ways-of-christ, part 2, e.g. the chapter "How to deal with prophecies"*.

Here are also some passages from the Old Testament concerning the nature of prophecy - with reservations due to the change in conditions since that time (in the time of Jesus the ancient kind of prophecy had almost vanished, but became renewed): *Joel 3,1-2; Amos 3,7-8*).

**) In some cases, however, even people with a genuine capacity for inspiration may undergo experiences similar to recognised mentally disturbed states - where the inner dialogues may continue obsessively and where the person remains unable to handle earthly necessities. To avoid such excesses as far as possible, it may help to take into account - besides the above aspects - some practical prerequisites like: enough sleep; adequate nutrition, e.g. with enough B vitamins (that means caution with fasting, if one does not have sufficient experience with it); a clear attunement to the desired source (Christ); the avoidance of overlong sessions, with the associated tendency to go off at a tangent and to become overexcited; and after intensive inner experiences, sufficient effort to return to the present "earthly" reality; to digest self-consciously the things heard. Helpers, spiritual guides (e.g. priests), therapists etc. may only be of practical assistance if they have specific experience / knowledge, which means taking not only the disturbed state seriously, but the undisturbed basic phenomenon too. The Catholic Saint *Teresa of Avila* wrote in *"Interior Castle"*, that "half learned" priests, who don't understand true gifts of God's mercy, cannot help in distinguishing between true and false ones.

[Back to the index.](#)

Why do I need a church or community ?

It is, of course, possible to have an individual connection to Jesus Christ and to God. (See also the page "[A Prayer...](#)".) This is the heart of the matter. Even the impulses required from outside can come directly by God's guidance if one notices these finer signs.

However, there is another level of this connection, which can only unfold in community with others: "Where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them (*Matthew 18, 19-20*). At first this simply means what it says. This experience would be more difficult from a distance, e.g. if people synchronize it; but it is possible. A mystic might experience that unity even without verbal arrangement, although that would be too much for most people. People are not usually born for the hermit life.

This kind of prayer fellowship can lead to a regular private circle. One can also find it in a parish, or in another religious community fitting to one's individual belief. Even though the tradition of some churches may over-emphasize their role for the believers, this doesn't change the purpose of being in community with others.

If more profoundly interested in the manifold Churches etc. see also the extra page "[The 7 Churches of the Revelation and the Churches of today](#)".

[back](#).

The seven seals.

The subsequent vision describes, first of all, the "24 Elders", the "7 spirits before the throne of God", and the "four living creatures" worshipping God - as an expression of various original qualities and creation. Then only the "Lamb" - with qualities of the Christ - could open the book with the seven seals (*Revelation 4 - 8, 1*). This vision is set in "Heaven" - in this context the divine field. The contents of the seals are described, first of all, on a level, the powers of which are characterized by symbols - the four variously coloured horses and riders. Modifications on this level, like images in dreams, have only indirect effects on the events on earth.

In spite of the nature of these levels, directed primarily towards the development of the psychical realm on the large scale, it is said in the beginning: "I will show You, what is to happen after this" (after the 7 communities.) Correspondingly, R. Steiner and Arthur Schult suggested 7 further "cultures of the seals" on earth, that associate with that cleaning of the appropriate level of consciousness. The Christian-inspired "*Book of true life*" from Mexico explains the seals as starting from the earliest times of "Cain and Abel" up to the coming time of completion.

Anyway, this text does not make it possible to identify the seals clearly with the physical earth of today. If we thought in the same way as some of the free churches, then at best weak echoes of the first four seals might correspond to the two world wars, the subsequent balance of power between east and west and hunger and epidemics. Persecutions of religions and disasters of cosmic origin might follow: meteorites, earthquakes, possibly polar changes - see chapter: "The seven bowls of wrath" too.

Between the 6th and 7th seal the text names the "sealed ones" and the "great multitude in white robes in heaven".

That scene in *John's Gospel 2*: the wedding at Cana and Jesus driving out the traders and money-changers from the temple - with its uniting and engaged nature – already remind us of these chapters of the revelation (*cf. our chapters "The wedding at Cana" and "The holy zeal..."*, and *John 2*)

While in *John's Gospel 5* Jesus prophesied the separation of the spirits which have done good from those who have done evil, the description of the seven seals goes on to describe the "Sealing of the souls of the chosen ones from twelve tribes".

[back.](#)

The seven trumpets.

The vision of the angels with the seven trumpets takes place in "Heaven" (*Revelation 8,2 - 11,19*). The ascending "prayers of the saints", the "fire of the altar sent down to earth", and also the trumpets themselves as instruments used with the head (the mouth) reflect a more mental level - as it would be in dreams with these types of symbols. In this case, this is the origin of the changes which partially reach the earth, where various kinds of shadows are stirred up.

In spite of this mental, not physical nature of the "trumpets", esoterics also tried here to describe them as earthly "cultures of the 7 trumpets" after the seals. Although it is difficult to find reminiscences of it in our time, it would not be impossible to see suffering forests and poisons in connection with the quality of the 1st/2nd trumpets. In the 3rd trumpet some groups noticed that torch that fell on 1/3 of the rivers named "vermouth" = Chernobyl, that means the same in local languages. The 4th trumpet might emphasize a star constellation, as it occurred in the middle of August 1987 with a triangle of all planets. Parts of the New-Age-circles meditated then without referring to the revelation, but with reference to the apocalyptic number of 144,000 people - named "Rainbow Warriors" in the language of (American) Indian prophecy - about the assumed beginning or an intermediate state on the way to a New Age. The 5th trumpet - smoke from the well of the abyss, iron locusts, five months of pain ... - could leave the impression of some connection to the gulf war of 1991; the 6th trumpet too, which may also show earthquakes. The seventh trumpet leads into the "temple of God", accompanied by flashes and voices, thunder and hail, which can also have an inner, mystical meaning.

With the 7th trumpet there are also voices: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ"; at least on a mental level something has already been decided that has not yet been fully worked out on earth. The power of the "trumpets" is comparable with the "transfiguration" on Mount Tabor (*see our related chapter and Matthew 17*) and with the teachings in its context, also the Sermon on the Mount, etc. (*See our chapter "The Sermon on the Mount", and Matthew 5-7*).

[back.](#)

The "seven thunders" and the two prophets.

After the 6th trumpet "seven thunders spoke" (*Revelation 10 - Rev. 11, 14*). John is supposed to "seal" its content and not to write it down. Then "the temple is measured in Heaven". Two prophets will be killed and revived. Here is a parallel to the raising of Lazarus from the dead in the Gospels (*John 11 and our chapter*).

[back.](#)

The woman and the dragon.

In all phases of the events the spiritually leading powers and the various reluctant, negative powers participate. The text sometimes explains the one side in more detail, at another time the other one. The sign in heaven, the "Woman clothed in the sun, the moon below the feet, and a crown of twelve stars on her head" (*Revelation 12*) unmistakably shows "Sophia" - Greek: wisdom - the heavenly or universal mother, not so much the aspect of a mother of the earth; see *the chapter "the first Whitsun event" of this site*. Her sometimes accepted relationship to Mary has already been mentioned. In her old age Mary lived in a cave, in which the ancient mother goddess Kybele had been worship(p)ed. This was heavily symbolic, in the sense of being something new in this context. Her "child" in the revelation - a child of a heavenly being is, first of all, a heavenly being too- who "will rule all nations with an iron sceptre, and who will continuously admonish people to follow their sincere, individual heart; and it must refer to a special way in which the cosmic Christ works. The "sceptre" can also be translated as "iron staff", so it is not only the symbol of a king, but also that of an "initiator" and may have something to do with the "heavenly hosts" too. See the chapter "The 7 bowls of wrath".

Here we may recognize a relationship between the spiritual nature of "foot washing" and the previous anointing by Mary of Bethany (*Our chapter "Christ Washing the feet" and John's Gospel 12, 13*). Also the resumption of the "new birth" on increasingly high levels of development is included.

The "dragon" with its negative angels is the reverse side. Through "Michael and his angels" they are conquered in the cosmos and flung to the earth. Heaven and earth now protect them from the woman.

[back.](#)

The "beast with seven heads" out of the sea.

The other two negative powers also appear in this vision. Firstly the one directed towards desires and thoughtlessness (*Revelation 13, 1-10; cf. our chapter "The temptations" and Matthew.4, 5-11*). The seven heads are later interpreted in the revelation itself as "seven mountains, on which the whore 'Babylon' sits" and the mountains in turn as "seven kings". The revelation itself explains the ten horns as "ten kings", which share the same opinion and give their power to this beast.

Among other things because of the "seven mountains", which might remind us of Rome as the "city of the seven hills", there are Christian free churches who interpret the "whore Babylon" as the papacy. But that seems to be a little far-fetched and not covered by the other parts of the symbolism, in spite of the historical problems of the Catholic church. Rev. 18:11-23 is related to world trade. See later the chapter "The 7 bowls of wrath, the end of Babylon...". The "image" of this beast - cf. the next chapter Rev. 14 - might be related to false "images" (imaginings) of Jesus. There may be a relation to a dependency of multimedia devices, which is sometimes like an addiction or a cult.

The underlying tempting powers of this "beast" can be transformed, particularly by that power described in *our chapter "The whipping" - John 19,1*.

[back.](#)

The "beast with two horns" out of the earth.

Here (*Revelation 13, 11-18*) we see that negative power directed towards materialistic constraints ("inherent necessities"). Cf. our chapter "*The temptations*" and *Matthew 4, 1-4*.

The idea of marking people on the forehead or on the right hand, as well as the number 666 in these chapters, as a requirement for being able to buy and sell, can already be found very clearly in world events. The possibilities of computer networking with exchange of personal data, cheque cards, an international bank code 666, the barcodes with the three double lines as demarcations = 666 in this code, the devices develop(ed) in Canada or already tested in Malaysia for personal identification on the forehead or on the hand, the nick-name "La bête" = French "the beast", for the old European communities' transaction headquarters at Brussels and so forth show a tendency, however unconsciously or even consciously and possibly wittily meant. The biblical "beast out of the earth" is identical with the "Idol Mammon".

A further tendency, which is not yet completely over is to work on the increasingly dramatic environmental problems, firstly with ineffective technical environmental "cosmetics", and then, the possibly even more deceiving, technocratic eco-dictatorship - instead of letting an effective, intense course correction by democratic means happen, with the support of the people. Mechanisms of manipulation come closer to its end by recognising its nature. This process has a connection with the power mentioned concerning *the "crowning with thorns"* (our chapter and *John 19,2-3*)

In the chapters about the dragon and the two animals its reminiscences in occurrences of the present time are possibly not the whole story. Everything plays, as we mentioned, not only on the physical earth. In the following vision of the 144,000 (*Revelation 14*) several beings and angels again appear one after the other, who "harvest" two different groups from the earth. Those allied with the beast are flung into the "great winepress of God's wrath", which means they are left to the effects of the forces of nature. But finally the revelation teaches no "eternal damnation"; finally everything can find a way to God; and in a higher meaning everything is wrapped in God. Cf. *Revelation, 22*, and the related chapter in this page about the New Earth....

[back.](#)

The "seven bowls of God's wrath", the end of "Babylon" and the Second Coming of Christ.

Those who remained stable in the face of the beast and its image appear in the next vision, on a level of existence paraphrased "sea of glass, mixed with fire". From the "temple in Heaven" again seven angels come with the "last seven troubles" in "bowls of God's wrath", to pour onto the earth, onto the "sea", into the "rivers of water", into the sun, onto the "throne of the beast", into the river "Euphrates" and into the "air" (*Revelation 15, 5 - Rev. 21*).

On the one hand we see here an even higher level of consciousness at work; on the other hand this causes an even deeper and more existential stirring up of all elements of the earth and the visible part of the surrounding cosmos. Ulcers, poisons, suffering, fire, darkness, negative "spirits" and a worldwide disaster with continental drifts, sinking or flooding, meteorite falls, including dividing the materialistic civilisation of "Babylon" into three and its destruction (*Revelation 17 -Rev. 18, 24*). A possibility or "time window" for events in this direction already showed itself with the 6th seal.

Here it is also possible to use longer periods as a basis. However the "final speeches" of Jesus (e.g. *Mark 13*), and many prophecies that arose after John's Revelation unanimously suggest a central event in the years around (about) 2000* that changes the course of everything again. (See above: "How to deal with prophecies"). Scientific discoveries, not yet recognized in their significance, point to the same thing. The massive decrease in the geomagnetic field during the last 200 years and an unusual accumulation of earthquakes and volcanic activities which ensued in

the last years; and the sun becoming "brighter" independent of classical cycles of solar activity like its maximum of 1999/2000 - in 2003 there were still gigantic activities - show those who are awake that something unusual is about to happen.

If the magnetic poles suddenly shift a lot or the magnetic field practically collapses and reconstructs itself in the reverse direction, as it has repeatedly occurred in the history of the earth, this would lead to a radical geological change too. This would not only be a new situation for mankind, but probably a new geological era too. If the magnetic "Van Allen Belt" surrounding the earth would lose its probable protective function against particles and "cosmic dust" for an unknown period of time, the prophetically announced meteorite falls could easily become reality.

Our own insights and those of others indeed indicate that the comprehensive destruction feared by some authors will not necessarily take place, neither in the form of a third atomic world war, nor through a complete ecological disaster, nor by way of the theory of the polar change of the axis of rotation, or its change with respect to the cosmos . A lot has changed in the basis of these types of visions.

However, because apocalyptic processes with a divine destination and the manipulation of many natural processes by egoistic members of mankind and their "elite" both seem to exist, as well as some positive human influences, **limited changes to the earth, i.e. "new adjustments" of an astronomical scale might be unavoidable, apart from modifications in mankind and its consciousness.**

"Anti-Christian" dictatorial attempts by people who want to keep their power and also the shortening or the end of this old time by a change with up to three days of darkness have often been predicted. This change can no longer simply be dismissed as nonsense.

In this connection, a **vision of Mary at Garabandal (Spain) contains the prophecy of a "Great Warning" which shows all people inwardly what they must overcome within themselves - see also John 16:8; Rev. 14:6-20 - if they want to manage the transition to God's light - see also John 16:13. This is connected with a sign in the sky. Within one year after this event a "Great (healing) miracle" is announced - leaving a "sign" at Garabandal. As far as mankind would not turn over a new leaf, later the Judgement day with fire from heaven (the "bowls of God's wrath") is said to come - revelation 16; see additionally Matthew 24:28.** (You may search for the English literature in the bookshops, or in the web with the keyword "Garabandal"). After this people might have to reconsider everything.

A possible preparation might be - besides changing one's life - to [pray](#) for the Holy Spirit just now.

Newer "channellings" from other sources - see *the chapter "How to deal with prophecies"* - name this a transition through a "zero zone", after which those who have the maturity enter a cosmic-spiritual field of force on earth - often inaccurately named "Photon Belt" - and would be able to live with the abilities of the "light bodies" of higher dimensions in the material reality (see *the chapters "The Resurrection" and "The Kingdom of Peace"*).

Relief actions were also announced, like people being temporarily "fetched" by Christ (cf. *Revelation 14, 14-16*) or by the angels of people who were prepared, or provisional evacuations and further assistance by friendly extraterrestrials. It is up to each person to decide where they hope for help. Since there is both light and darkness in the cosmos too, one is faced with the probable complexity of events and it is good to ask Christ for his guidance in all situations and to apply **ones own ability to make exact distinctions - because this is a specifically earthly way of finding unity - in the context of new powers arriving on the scene from above.**

This period fundamentally deals with the last possible decision in each person's soul as to whether one wants to continue participating in development towards the coming "Kingdom of peace", which God prepared for the earth. **This stage ends with the "Second Coming of Christ"**. See also *Revelation 19, cf. Revelation 12; Matthew 24:30; Acts 1:6-8*. He does not simply come as a human

being born on earth, but as the core of something more comprehensive – the approach of God's heaven (and the beyond) and earth ; of spirit, (mind and) body. Nevertheless Christ is described as coming back as a real being - not only as his power to spiritualize mankind, as some modern groups assume. This is of significance for everyone, not only Christians. The Quran also describes the Second Coming of Jesus as witness for his people on "Doomsday". One can conclude from the prophecy of several other religions, that their prophets will also play a role in the same period in one or another way, helping their adherents understand what is going on.

In this step of the revelation too, thoughts of penalization are inappropriate. It is rather a part of a concept logical in itself that points to a further stage of the evolution of life on earth. The challenge is to experience it as a mutual transition to higher things - in which each of us will find the place correct for our development. **Whoever takes in and applies the renewing powers at the right time and with a good will, can experience the positive side of it, but also feel the suffering of the world. On the other hand those who do not want to accept the new powers experience them as something hitting from outside. That is the actual nature of the "doomsday" in the sense of the revelation. Man has the great freedom to make his own decisions but, as so often in life, he must make his decision at an appropriate time, otherwise no decision is possibly a decision too. The "lukewarm" (Rev. 3:16) / "half-hearted" ones are not appreciated much in the revelation (See in "The 7 churches" with extra page). The "separation of the spirits" is a part of the heart of the events of the revelation, on the way to final unity.**

The "seven plagues" - the 7th one ends with a voice from Heaven "It has happened (it is done)!" - this is a parallel to the words of Jesus on the cross "It is finished (accomplished)!". See e.g. *John 19, and our chapter "The crucifixion"*.

Mystically or with sensitivity one can already experience today how the earth suffers and shouts for help as it prepares itself for a "difficult birth". The crucifixion and the burial as a transition to the resurrection concerns the whole earth and its effects extend beyond these. Here too, one can find the transition from the crucifixion and a state beyond life and death to the resurrection working as a whole. When looked at from this viewpoint, the steps of the "last plagues" can happen without a catastrophe as if it were the end of the world.

Since this prophecy is complex (see the first chapter "The Revelation of John"), the real development in the world may be more advanced than it

seems to people who look at particular details of the prophecy, which are not manifested fully. Other areas show plagues, which are even more "advanced" than those outlined in the Revelation.

A Supplement: The new books of Wladimir Megre about the Siberian wise woman Anastasia also contain the inner knowledge that the old programs of the global catastrophe can be changed and optimization of everything with the help of people and in accord with God is the goal. But this does not mean that the contemporary world can go on as it is. (German: email wega@verlag-wega.de. The first book in English may have been published by a Canadian editor.) Ways of Christ is independent from the endeavours of others and does not automatically support all (of) the contents of their books or websites.

*) When examining such a possible window of time, there is no major significance in theories that refer to the time of Jesus' birth as being 300 or even 700 years later than indicated by today's Gregorian calendar. It is primarily the quality of time – in relation to the biblical prophetic visions – that indicates whether the time would be ripe. Newer visions would, in any case, be based on today's calendar – assuming they contain a general time frame at all. See also the chapter on "How to deal with prophecies".

Question:

Do I want Jesus Christ to appear again clearly, as prophesied, transforming human life and the world?

[back](#).

The Scenarios for the future.

This short overall view assumes that one knows at least the chapter "How to deal with prophecies" of the main text part 2 of ways-of-christ.net. It is an addition to the chapters about the Revelation of John. Not all of the following scenarios have christian sources, and most of it is not supported by this website. But we have only one world, where such concepts are / were "competitive". Here are the different concepts of future from prophecies, clearvoyants and channelings, compared with the current development and futurology.

1.) This material civilization, based on egotism and group egotism, as it is still predominating externally, would **simply go on** without great changes. Concepts of money and technical - if necessary, military - solutions would dominate. Futurologists and many other people discuss the risks for human rights, environment and the planet; because of apparently missing alternatives this critical viewpoints are often trivialized or seen with some fatalism. Advances in consciousness of many people might not come to fruition in the large scale, and the necessary further advances would be almost blocked. Such a simple extrapolation of the current development without new basic factors is not acknowledged by any prophetic or similar source. It would be one of the most destructive scenarios; its unspoken final effects would be such catastrophies, as given in some other scenarios. But some values have been produced or kept within this civilization, which are fit for the future in the transition to other scenarios too. Everywhere are germs of a New World.

2a.) Interestingly, no serious prophecy contains a pure scenario of an End of the world.

2b.) Mainly old clearvoyants' testimonies, working out the feeling for a megacrisis into images of a nuclear "**Third World War**"; it would destroy this civilization, but giving the chance of a better new begin - of a more conscious culture. This Scenario with its versions is the most wellknown one in many books about visions of the future from clearvoyants. The basis of this scenario is outdated since around 1990, in spite of the fact, that there are still some dangers of war, and that it is still necessary for the existence of mankind, to make a breakthrough in consciousness.

2c.) Old visions of **other pure physical catastrophe scenarios**, based on geological changes and/ or impacts of meteorites - as it often happened in the history of the earth - would not automatically lead to a positive outlook in the end as given in biblical prophecy or the prophecy of other cultures; there is not a lot to be said for an inevitable cataclysm.

3a.) "Channelings" mainly from the first decades after world war two, based on a world war and/ or geological/ cosmical catastrophies too, but announcing different versions of gigantic **actions for saving the well-meaning people of the earth**. Some hope for well-meaning extraterrestrials (UFOs) - the evacuated ones would later create a new civilization on earth. Others hope for Angels, an "ascension" or a "rapture" by Jesus Christ. Many people having such concepts understood too, that there are steps of development, they must carry out themselves in spite of the help. So it would be wrong, to explain this phenomenon simply as people longing for anyone taking away their problems. Some prerequisites for this scenario are outdated too, as far as it is based on physical catastrophies. But there are still situations, when mankind would be stumped, if there would be no help. Of whom one hopes for help, everyone must know him-/herself, according to one's religion or philosophy of life. But someone, who would be willing to help, and who so could find a connection to that possibilities of development as given on earth, could not bypass God or him, who has a special role for the earth (see for instance *Revelation 19, 11-14*). Everyone would be wanted to learn, including any Hierarchies between man and God. The Earth has already helped to carry some of the problems of the universe, too.

3b.) Other versions of scenario 3a didn't say much about what shall happen later on this earth or its present time "3rd dimension"; or they stressed, that **the new promised time** for the saved ones takes place on another level of existence or **on another planet**, and that the earth continues existing, and fall behind. Because the special role of the earth and its relation to mankind is obviously not taken up by that inspirators, they cannot give conclusive prospects.

3c.) A part of the Channelings since around 1991 stresses, that it is possible, to avoid the earlier prophecied catastrophies at all, with the united kinds of help from outside (see 3a.), with divine guidance and power, and to lead **almost the whole mankind into a new higher state of civilization**. They ignored for instance, that

the different circles of mankind have already drifted apart from each other in consciousness, that there is no mutual "school class" for everyone - unless as some horror civilization with higher abilities and technologies and big misuses of this -. That means, such scenarios without any kind of (for instance biblical) separated "schools" (within one universe) are simply illusions. That the basic problems of mankind might be resolved by an even more technical control over all areas of life. But correct is, that catastrophies indeed can be avoided, if all well-meaning powers between Heaven and Earth would work together; and parts of mankind - from all its regions - can indeed approach a great step forward of mankind and earth. Some other technologies more adapted to human beings and ecology are necessary too.

3d.) The imagination, **negative Extraterrestrials would conquer the earth** in the future, is rather a matter of Hollywood. In the cosmos surely is light and shadow; and the universe is full of theoretical possibilities of every kind. But one can hardly find such a fate of the earth in checkable prophetic views. Where one finds something like this, one can see also, that the beings of the earth besides their special imperfection have also their special abilities, here being well ahead: for instance their free human empathy, and the immense creativity behind all terrestrial creatures. It might turn out, that the earth and its context with God is also an important field for study - necessarily keeping the freedom of the human beings - instead of a place for "conquerors". Further, one may conclude, that the world will not become penetrated by negative forces in the future, but that it is penetrated by them today.

3e.)A: So behind all these scenarios in the meantime another scenario becomes clearer, a possibility, that indeed a great impulse for the development of mankind can take place - according to the complex Revelation of John, which is not completely meant physically -; with extensive divine company; with a preserved and higher developing earth; with different schools for different people, whatever that means. But also according to the Sermon on the Mount, which says "The meek ones will own the earth".

As already explained in the chapter "How to deal with prophecies", future depends on the people. This concerns their inner decisions about the direction of their way; and the mutual effort of the well-meaning ones in prayer and life. It is possible, also beyond the old polarities of the quarrels on earth, from the higher insights of conscience, to work for new developments in the world: "In the world, but not from the world", as the table at the end of the chapters about the Revelation in the main text of "ways-of-christ.net" shows.

[back](#).

The (real) "1000 Years of Peace".

After the transition through time of the "7 bowls with the last plagues", the cosmic vision of Christ returning from Heaven follows - as a rider on a white horse, "called Faithful and True...the Word of God", with the armies of heaven dressed in white (*Revelation 19*). This does not mean the contemporary human "pseudo-Christ". The "false prophet" (with false/one-sided ideas about Jesus, or about what is Christian...) is overturned. The "1000 years of peace" (*Revelation 20, 1-6*) are not a classical "empire". The "Big machine" of society, the external negative forces and their manifestations, are banished.

Here we find the spiritual Last Judgement too. The translation of *Rev. 20:4* - "... they came to life" does not fully meet the original meaning, that is simply "... they lived", (as it was translated literally for instance in the footnotes of the "Elberfelder Bible"). In the case of the souls this could mean "a coming to life again", but people who did not follow the beast may also continue to live on earth. It would be a misunderstanding to think that all of them have to die.

This stage is related to the resurrection of Christ (*our chapter and John 20 - 21*). Even in the text of the revelation itself it is called the "first resurrection".

The negative powers are not yet completely dissolved, however; the incompleteness of individuals still has to be worked on, which is now easier.

After "1000 years" the residue of negative powers emerges concentrated, in order to become dissolved. See next chapter.

[back.](#)

The New Heaven, the New Earth and the "New Jerusalem".

After the "1000 years of peace" for the judgement of the dead "books were opened" - showing the events, "and ... the book of life" - which shows one's resulting state. Only after the subsequent consuming fire on the newly tempted army and the ejecting of the "devil" into the "fiery lake of burning sulphur" (*Revelation, after 19, 19-20, 3 now in 20:11-15*) the New Heaven and the New Earth approach. The actual length of the periods of time remains an open question.

[*& update in the German version.](#)

The motto of Christ is "Behold, I make all things new" - without exceptions (*Revelation 21,5*). This "new creation" is, however, similar to the immortal values previously unfolded both in each individual and on the large scale. Current action also remains important for those who expect apocalyptic events to happen soon.

In the New Heaven - mentioned in the text before the earth and the New Jerusalem - something like a cosmic Ascension is pointed to. (*Cf. the chapter "The Ascension" and Luke 24, Mark 16*). The emphasis of the description had been up to now on the earth; but now the importance of the events for the visible and invisible "heaven" comes to the foreground. Here the eternal Heaven of God beyond space and time is not meant - this remains unchanged - but worlds that have been created. The small planet earth might prove to be more than a "developing country" even on the cosmic scale; but resolving its problems might be a highly specialized, far-reaching task. The problematic nature due to great human freedom and great entanglement in material affairs can not be found in all possibly "inhabited" worlds, according to Lorber and others. The negative powers that were flung onto the earth, and now into the "lake of burning sulphur" according to the visions of John can't be found in all worlds. Just as Jesus had an effect on mankind, in the same way a transition of the whole of mankind or earth with Christ would certainly have a further, extended effect.

The then renewed "New Earth" and the connected event of the "New Heavenly Jerusalem" coming down to earth can be compared with the Whitsun event of the *Acts*, but here also on a cosmic scale. This is not the geographical Jerusalem. The earth is in exchange with the surrounding cosmos at various levels.

"There will be no more curse" /other translation "there will no longer be banished things" ...no more negative powers", "no more darkness" (*Revelation 22,3*). Consequentially that means, **here the negative powers are also delivered, the divided world is now over. For the first time the world appears as a conscious whole**, a state, which can be foreseen 'close to God' in visions and so forth, but indescribable. A weak copy of this state would be **when, starting from some point in inner life, all other points could be filled with life, which is an experience that can occur on the path; "All In All"**. In God himself the higher unity of everything is already there.

The divine model of creation - the A(lpha) - and the new creation with all beings consciously re-connected with everything in God – the O(mega), the beginning and the end, become congruent, and nevertheless the A and the O remain. So the "end" is more than the beginning, although the beginning already contains everything. As a tendency to become congruent in small parts e.g. of the human being which is going through everything continuously, even this direction of events is already recognizable.

It is additionally pointed out here, that e.g. according to the vision of R. Steiner, the events of the "new earth" relate to one of three new "earth incarnations", following each other in gigantic periods of time. Without attempting to comment this, it is at least mentioned here that the nature of the biblical "New Earth" also comes from another process than an incarnation rhythm as calculated, e.g. in Hindu Cosmology also for planets and so forth and the whole cosmos. If once taken seriously, it exceeds the kind of Becoming and Decay we have known or presumed to be true up to now and enters higher and higher "octaves" or "spirals".

Even in contrast to the experiences possible today, the opinion of some theologians that the revelation only contains admonishing parables without reality fades completely.

The parables of Jesus in the Gospels were taken from the lives of the people in order to illustrate certain aspects. Later, but still during his life on earth, Jesus stressed in contact with his disciples that now he would no longer talk in parables, but openly. The Revelation does not come from human life; everywhere, where the text itself gives interpretations, there are direct "correspondences"; that is, on that level of consciousness, the things seen "really exist", like experiences of contemporary spiritual investigation, e.g. of R. Steiner. **The apocalypse admonishes, however, too; e.g. in order to proceed from a theo-logy to a "theo-practice"; to look at what "is in the air" and "to let God also appear at each present time". God also acts through people** - but not through arbitrary actions of people: human beings are not to play God or the Apocalypse. Man can develop more and more along the lines of God's plan for the world - the Creation Program.

[back.](#)

Final chapter of both parts of the main text: The Christian spirit.

Real "Christianity" is Jesus Christ himself, and to search for the connection to the present Christ in our inner lives – "Seek, and you will find". To take the dialogue with him seriously and to use and work out these impulses in our own lives is the most direct way of understanding him. These chapters have been written to encourage those interested to do just that.

Another way, which may be associated with the above mentioned "most direct" way, is to feel for each of Jesus Christ's specific qualities and to bring them into our own lives little by little. The passages in bold type (in our main texts) may be helpful for this purpose.

What these various characteristics have in common and which could be expanded upon, is that Christ is obviously beyond the "contradictions" (dichotomies) of this world: Neither does he simply mix the respective two sides, but the attitudes implied by him are a "Third Way", which has the ability to include the fruitful and steady parts of everything, as seen from another level, transforming that which has become hardened. *See also the table at the end.*

Further consequences may also result from the characteristics considered for the differences between older and newer attempts in our contemporary society. A lot of these groups have something necessary to say, which at least in one point and in one respect, has not been considered by other groups, e.g. because of being entangled in obsolete left - right wing contrasts. Quarrels between old and new will not disappear - at least not in the foreseeable future - but the inflexible positions and apparent contradictions can be replaced with a dialogue, creating new lines of discussion; for instance, one can serve God or accept money as one's god. This would also allow like-minded people to meet and work on new projects together - without it all ending in one-sidedness again. Many other things considered in these chapters could also be put into practice, going beyond just studying,

according to the individual development and intensity - even if some of the viewpoints are somewhat scattered and not always repeated in every chapter.

This kind of investigation goes beyond the habit that many theological and other schools of thought have, of "using" Jesus for their well-meant, but one-sided view of things. For this purpose they stressed the passages that matched their respective opinion and either explained the others away, changed their meaning, or ignored them. The early authors of the gospels already basically realized that the versatility of Jesus can be better described by using several sources. They were clever enough to notice how different the various viewpoints were. Many theologians, however, thought they had made a great discovery by finding various sources with different views hidden in the Gospels that had been handed down, e.g. a so-called "source Q"; connected with the rashly formulated question of which of the authors may have been right. It is now easy to recognize that each of the authors may be right for the most part, with the exception of their respective one-sidedness. This might be a new impulse for the (o)ecumenical movement.

People who identify themselves with other religious or ideological backgrounds, but are positively interested in a Christian approach, neither hardened nor superficial, or who can see something useful in it can surely learn from it too, just as the author of this article also became acquainted with all kinds of different groups and came to appreciate them. Already today, some representatives or members of other religions have at least come to recognise some of the traits of Jesus, much more clearly than many historical-critical (historiocritical) theologians. This is difficult to explain in a material way, but it might make them think.

Apart from that, **Christ cannot be leased by the various religious communities of Christianity.** His approach can give people the strength of unity in diversity - love a deeply serious will to understand and a harmonizing energy. However, this does not even out all differences, but allows that which is compatible to coexist lovingly making the incompatible visible as such. Christians have often withheld Christ's power to unite (to make convergent) various schools of thought from the world. In the interest of rescuing the earth, it's time for Christians to contemplate their actual tasks - presuming they really want to think of themselves as Christians.

A christian attitude: In the world, but not of the world; see John 17.

Whoever seeks to progress from their own imperfection to promising qualities - with Jesus as a standard and help - (compare the pages "...healing" and "...ethics"), must first

- deal with themselves truthfully, and based on this think about other people (instead of projecting everything onto others), *compare Mt. 5,3 and "A Christian way: digestion of the daily life";*
- listen to the impulses of one's conscience, and nevertheless come out of one's shell (instead of suppressing these impulses), *compare Mt. 5,5 and 5,9 ...;*
- notice that one is here for others too, although one's physical well-being may be a prerequisite für being able to help others *compare Mt. 5,7;*
- seek the living Spirit of God, although forms may be useful (instead of too rigid forms), *compare Mt. 6,5-8... and John 4,21-24;*
- seek "to be" religious, and behave adequately, (instead of mere appearances), *compare Mt. 5,8;*
- have courage, to live according to one's new insights, and consider others as well (even if these insights are not always appreciated in this world), *compare Mt. 5,15;*
- be modest and serve others - in spite of new insights (instead of becoming conceited), *compare Mt. 5,19 and Luke 9,48...'*

This is a more loving and wise orientation. So one is no longer one's own obstacle on the path. One can observe that Christianity is not only a way of life, but a real spiritual path. On this path one can also have Jesus as a compass which allows us to find a new balance beyond the one-sided "wrong tracks":

<p>Neither to be taken up only in outward appearances →</p> <p>But to be active in outer life →</p>	<p>- nor to lift off into pure spiritual inwardness</p> <p>- and to be founded in inner life</p>
<p>Instead of only thinking →</p> <p>To concentrate on the contents →</p>	<p>- or only meditative emptiness</p> <p>- in conscious, meditative quietness</p>
To seek the "external God in Heaven"	- and to let him take shape in one's personality
To see the traces of the unchangeable Creator	- in the changes of (free) life
To study the laws of the natural world	- and to feel the order of creation behind them
<p>Neither to live out urges fully →</p> <p>But to integrate them →</p>	<p>- nor to dispel them</p> <p>- and to transform them</p>
To use time, space and circumstances and the harmony that goes with them	- in spite of being independent of them in one's self
To work outwardly	- and to pray inwardly (<i>a Benedictine principle</i>)
To try to understand the positive contribution of others (active tolerance)	- and to enfold oneself from one's own faith
To use the rational-analytic hemisphere	- and the "mythical" and synthetic hemisphere of the brain – with the bridge between
To know about subjective perception	- and to seek the differentiated truth beyond the various subjective considerations
To learn from (constructive) traditions	- and let them become one's own living spirituality
Practise preparing exercises	- and to hope for mercy (<i>Christian mysticism</i>)
To speak to God personally	- and in his powers
'To love our neighbours'	- as we love ourselves
To keep up the intellect	- and to look beyond it
<p>Neither to "dissolve into the universe" →</p> <p>But to be in the whole →</p>	<p>- nor to harden one's "ego"</p> <p>- as a conscious cell of it</p>
To respect the body as an instrument	- and to grow in mind and spirit
To accept fullness of life and responsibility	- after the "narrow portals"
Struggle for right decisions in the consciousness on earth	- and to suspect God's plan existing on an other level (of consciousness)
To give insights to others too	- as it is good for them
To change in one's surroundings/in the society	- that which has also improved in the individual consciousness
To be compassionate with the tribulations on earth	- and to enjoy God's guidance
To be in spiritual communities	- and to make one's way to God as an individual
To respect diversity among the peoples	- and to let the general human core in everyone flourish

***...So the way of Christ shows itself to be a Third Way beyond the apparent contradictions* of the world - a way to full life and to real spiritual freedom in God. Some of the bold-typed parts of the main text and the context will explain more about this. See also *John 17, and the apocryphal St. Thomas' Gospel 22*. This is no indecision – which would keep the apparent contradictions in place as a problem – and so it equally does not mean confusing the two ("flogging something to death"). To keep out of something completely - or to decide for the one or the other, knowing that someone else may just as well choose the opposite - would sometimes be better than indecision too. The third way of thought involves searching for an overriding viewpoint beyond the contradictions instead, facilitating a new, free statement (postulate, affirmation, thesis, decision, establishment) – and thus resolves the problem. He who holds his ground on this tightrope walk can now take the further steps of Jesus in the Gospels (Passion) and in Acts (Pentecost) with greater success. This ability of man to increasingly approach the "true light" of God (Joh. 1:9) behind the appearance of the world is both the starting point and the goal of this description of the tightrope walk. (See our main text, part 1).**

There is a relation between the individual steps in the Gospels and the development on the large scale in the Revelation.

*) "Dichotomies" too.

[Back to the index.](#)

[Table: "Archetypes" \(models, symbols\) from the earliest history -elucidated by the bible- to Jesus, and to the future.](#)

Part 3: Topics, questions of life:

A Prayer for Peace, Life and Earth.

The first paragraph leads to the attitude adequate to an effective prayer, without much explanation. Instead of the third paragraph you may also give other matters to God. You may change the prayer to adapt it to your feelings. Best read slowly and with imagination:

God, my origin, my help and my hope!
In unity with Jesus Christ I thank You for everything coming from You;.
and I ask You, forgive me everything that took me a long way from You;.
in this silence, please let me become creative by Your Spirit.

Guide me, that I will not harm Others on their way to You;.
Guide me to help Others according to Your will;.
Save me on my way. *

Inspire the people to leave decisions about life and death in Your hands **.
Help those who work for Your creation***.
Lead this world to the breakthrough to Your promised new time.****

*) Here others may be included.

**) here details may be added, or be considered meditatively after the prayer, like this: 'to stop building up violence', 'resolving problems by taking away one cause of violence', 'to apply only such security measures necessary to allow peaceful people their human rights', 'to start a peaceful dialogue between well-meaning

people of the various religions', You may consult Mt 5:9 and 26:52, and [Churches' declarations for peace](#).

The holy scriptures of the various religions originally stressed the struggle of man with his/her own negative sides - the Bible, the Koran, the Zend Avesta, and the Bhagavad Gita ... and not external wars. Later, this was often overlooked or misunderstood, but today there are some ethical common grounds of the religions, contrary to the decaying values of this egotistical civilisation. The various religions can, of course, keep their differences.

***) Nature cries for help. It's time for praying, Lord save us from the 'excited' forces of nature. However, this does not replace a change in the behaviour of man in relation to the rest of the creation.

****) Luke 11:2; 21:31. Revelation 11:16;

See Mark 12:30. Prayer involves both the heart-felt belief in the attainment of what is being requested - according to the will of God - and the corresponding thanks. Jesus' words handed down in John 16:23, "My Father will give you whatever you ask in my name", also contained the words "... let the answer surround you" in the old Aramaic texts (cf. Neil Douglas-Klotz, *Prayers of the Cosmos: Meditations on the Aramaic Words of Jesus*). To pray, live and act in the same "spirit" belong together. (The viewpoints published here, although partly new, are not contrary to the manifold prayers practised by the churches.) See [the Lord's Prayer, with bible passages etc. concerning prayer](#) too. God can share out the love, given to him, in all churches. You may consult Mt 5:9 and 26:52, and [Churches' declarations for peace](#).

[Back to the index.](#)

Basics of ethical values.

Jesus Christ set a high value on standards for ethical behaviour which live within the individual instead of only being effective because of the pressure of an external law or custom. This is not achieved by hammering it into somebody from outside, but by a life, unfolding the "love of God, to our neighbour... as to oneself". To "love each other" (*John 13, 34*) gives us the ability to act according to our real conscience. Loving God, we can guess what are his higher goals. Wherever individuals, couples, groups, etc. include this universal love, one can see the difference. The more these attitudes live in everyone, the less important the external, detailed rules will become.

The contents, e.g. of the older "Ten Commandments" are not outdated, but have become acknowledged. They are subject to cultural change, not in their basics, but in certain details. This is already substantiated by the report of Moses himself, who initially received a higher version of the commandments and then had to ask for a simple version for those who were not sufficiently developed. So far these ethical principles are the same in Christianity, in Judaism and in Islam. Almost all other religions have similar principles too, as shown in the "World Ethos - Declaration for the Parliament of the World's Religions" (see our links page). Even a system of ethics that sees itself as "non-religious" or humanistic shows connections to values of religious cultures. **Ethics mainly deal with treating others as humanly as we want to be treated ourselves, not to harm others, but to help.** This is essential for one's destiny, because of the biblical principle of sowing and harvesting (*Gal. 6:7; 2 Cor. 9:6*). It is the minimum requirement for survival in a society that keeps evolving. This is, in the end, the main criterion for one's participation in the new time, about which **the Lord's Prayer** says: "...Your kingdom come!" (*Matthew 6*) and about which the Sermon on the Mount says: "The meek shall inherit the earth".

In a wider sense this results in vital viewpoints for various levels of human existence. Some Christians dismiss the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount as an "ethics of the turn of mind", falsely thinking that it is not applicable. Although it does not necessarily provide us with instructions, e.g. for making difficult political decisions, it is a yardstick for them. If a human, so-called "ethics of responsibility" leads to decisions in society, which are the opposite of what the Sermon on the

Mount expects the individual to do, one should not think that Jesus would have decided this way. Each individual is responsible for his/her part. Groups with their compulsions and models are also responsible for their part. Each group would need their own "group code of ethics", as some professions already have. So beyond the individual ethics some "structural ethics" of groups and society would be necessary. Law with its arbitrariness cannot replace this. Especially a formalistic and general legal practice, which would not sufficiently consider the single deeds and motivations, would be viewed as critical, as this would emanate from the thinking of some ancient Pharisees and Sadducees that was most sharply rejected by Jesus.

Table

The Ten Commandments of Moses (Exodus 20)	Ethics in the Koran (Quran)	"World Ethos" (see our links page)
<p>1. I am the Lord Your God... You shall have no other gods before me. (You shall not make for Yourself an idol...)</p> <p>2. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord Your God (for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name)</p>	<p>Set not up with Allah any other god... (<i>sura 62,9*</i>)</p>	<p>(This interreligious agreement did not concern a mutual concept of God. for instance with regard to the buddhists, only a "Last truth/ last reality" was acknowledged in the paper, meaning something beyond the physical world.)</p>
<p>3. Remember the Sunday/ Sabbath day by keeping it holy.</p>	<p>When the call is proclaimed to prayer on Friday (the Day of Assembly), hasten earnestly to the Remembrance of Allah (<i>sura 62,9*</i>)</p>	
<p>4. Honour your father and your mother, (so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.</p>	<p>Your Lord has decreed, that you show kindness to parents..., speak unto them a gracious word. ...Give the kinsman his due, and the needy, and the wayfarer... (<i>sura 7,23-26*</i>)</p>	
<p>5. You shall not murder.</p>	<p>Do not kill any one whom Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause... (<i>suras 17,33 und 5,32*</i>).</p>	<p>Commitment for a culture of non-violence and the reverence for all life.</p>
<p>6. You shall not commit adultery. **</p>	<p>And come not near unto adultery. Lo! it is an abomination and an evil way (<i>sura 17,32</i>).</p>	<p>Commitment for a culture of partnership of man and woman (, against destructive use of sexuality...)</p>
<p>7. You shall not steal.</p> <p>9. You shall not covet your neighbours house.</p> <p>10. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.</p>	<p>As for the thief, both male and female, cut off their hands... But whoever repents after his wrongdoing amends his conduct, then surely Allah will turn to him (in forgiveness). (<i>sura 5,38-41*</i>)</p> <p>(This concerns aggravated larcery.)</p>	<p>Commitment for a culture of solidarity and a fair economy...</p>

8. You shall not give false testimony against Your neighbour.	...Be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness of Allah's sake, though it may be against your own selves or (your) parents or near relatives... <i>Sura 4, 135*</i> . (concerning betrayal see <i>sura 2, 188*</i>)	Commitment for a culture of tolerance and a life in truthfulness...
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*) Particularly here the various religions have added many different details. This might help us to understand that not all details are necessarily good for everyone. Additionally - for today's purposes - there has not always been enough distinction between purely religious principles and detailed secular laws. This doesn't mean, however, that beliefs and laws should have big contradictions.

Already after the great flood - before the mentioned 10 commandments - according to the biblical tradition there were some basic ethical principles valid for all mankind, beyond the Israelites too:

- the reverence for human life (Gen 9:6), and not to eat meat of living animals. The rabbinic Judaism later derived versions of 7 "**Noachian commandments**" for Non-Jews:

You shall not murder; you shall not torment animals; you shall not steal; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not worship idols (in spite of the fact, that Non-Jews did not have to worship God like Jews) ; you shall not blaspheme against God; you shall have courts of justice.

It is helpful to note down both the problems we have discovered in our own characters and our own positive qualities, in order to consciously monitor progress. There are several ways of doing this:

1. Directly working on problematic incidents in life. Positive intentions. Jesus also encourages people to look at their own problems first. In the Koran this is known as the "Great Jihad", the "Great Holy War", which is more important and more difficult than any external conflict. Many conflicts could be positively solved this way.
2. Direct reparation and 3. Directly forgiving each other, as far as possible. or to offer the problems up to God in prayer for him to work them out and to forgive in one's soul. Jesus also speaks about "paying to the last penny". (But see 5.)
4. If there is no other way, one can also perform good deeds for others, apart from those one has harmed. A lot of things are made good by God if one, e.g. takes up tasks for the public benefit.
5. "Pray to God in my name", here for his forgiveness and mercy in the further development of one's life. This is the significant help, which pure humanistic ethics cannot give. Destiny is no longer experienced as something mechanical, but as guided by God. Everything is worked out and developed in the best interests of ourselves and others, seen in the light of His higher wisdom. The qualities of man become more similar to God.

There are also our Extra pages "[General christian viewpoints for society and politics](#)" and "[Christian viewpoints for economy and social affairs](#)".

[Back to the index.](#)

An additional correction of the modern "Everything about Jesus disclosure stories".

In the website text some one-sided theological theories have already been directly or indirectly corrected - with the help of new methods and insights. Here another confusing best-seller story, full of "sensationalism", is spoken about. We don't promote these kinds of books, so the following text is meant only for those who know it and feel irritated about.

1. Related to the scrolls of Qumran these writers interpreted most biblical descriptions of Jesus as false. Jesus and his disciples were supposed to have been simple guerrillas against the roman rule. *

They tried to make it more interesting with a conspiracy theory saying that 75% of the scriptures of Qumran - found 1947-1956 - would have been kept secret by mainly Catholic researchers. We do not need to defend the churches - but this information is simply wrong. The team investigating the old materials included Roman Catholic, various Protestant, Anglican, Jewish and even atheistic scientists. There was indeed some delay caused by their manifold interpretations of the small and damaged pieces of the old writings. But when the "sensational" book was published, 80% of the Qumran texts had already been published. In 1992 - one year before the "sensational" authors wrote another paperback saying that 75% had not yet been published - the rest of the Qumran-Texts had already been published.

When writing their interpretation, the authors had to produce and combine several daring theories, in order to achieve their result. According to them, the old writings were not pre-Christian, but from the time of Jesus **. However, they are obviously different in terms of background and time. The Community of Qumran existed for centuries. Neither can it be fully identified with the Essenes -as the authors attempt - nor with the militant "Zelotes", who later had the centre "Massada" some distance away. One might compare Qumran with an ecological-spiritual community of our time. They must have had contacts everywhere. They received some rites from the Essenes; the Priests of the temple at Jerusalem gave them a list of the temple' s treasure - which means they thought that the Qumran people had no direct relation to the conflicts with the Romans and so the list would be secure with them. They might also have had contacts to persons close to the Zelotes.

The authors wrote that the Essenes were not ascetic monks, but militant resisters against the Romans. Everything handed down about the Essenes gives the impression that they would have been a pacifist, vegetarian, faithful Jewish-esoteric school, which withdrew from the world because of their Zoroastrian-like rules of purity. So the authors mixed up Essenes and Zelotes without due reason.

According to the authors, John the Baptist, Jesus and Jacob (James), the (half-)brother of Jesus, all had the same "violent" ideas as the Essenes. This theory - also based on the other previously mentioned constructions - cannot be based on the Qumran writings. It is not possible to clearly identify Jesus, Jacob and John in any of these writings. The authors identified the "teacher of righteousness/justice", obviously a leading person in the community, with Jacob – without any kind of proof. The theory that this teacher of righteousness was a leader of militant people has no proof and is not very probable. It is possible that the community accepted him as the higher spiritual authority, compared with the degenerated authorities of the temple. Similarly, the descriptions of Jacob that have been handed down do not suggest a militant imagination. This Jacob -not the disciple Jacob, but the brother of Jesus, who guided the Early Christian community at Jerusalem - must have been extraordinarily tolerant and harmonious in his character. He was the very moderator of the disciples with their various opinions. He - spoken in images - had to sit between Peter and Paul, in order to hold the community together.

In order to state that Paul was a Roman agent, they had to construct another theory that the Romans captured Paul, in order to produce the "illusion" to the people of that time that he was one of the disciples of Jesus. (In our text "Ways of Christ", Paul's mystical experiences are said to be authentic, no matter what some traditional ideas of him may suggest, e.g. concerning women. This can be recognized by really and practically studying mystical experiences - something which the authors obviously did not do).

The Qumran documents are simply some of the many writings of the centuries about the life of Jesus. They give us some kind of an impression about some of the customs of that time and are, in some points, similar to some of the teachings of Jesus - of the Jesus as described, and not the imaginary, militant Jesus. Other writings are long since known as "apocryphal", some were found later - e.g. the writings of Naq Hammadi, to originate from a Christian group in Egypt. It is possible that John the Baptist was originally connected with the Essenes or with Qumran, or that he was at least accepted as an honoured guest. It is possible too, that Jesus met these interesting people. (But in our website "Ways of Christ" it is mentioned, that he met people of many different schools and that this does not mean he or his teachings originated from one of these schools.)

2. Other authors also joined in the previously mentioned speculation regarding Jesus with many details connected with Jewish history, but without resolving the mentioned contradictions. By reducing Jesus' resurrection in some parts of this literature to a historically tangible, pure resurrection ritual similar to that of the late Egyptian kings and possibly the Essenes and later traditions stemming from it, they withhold from the readers that renewing contribution that Jesus gave in this regard. It would not have damaged the relationships between historical groups such as the Essenes and the Order of the Templars if they had simply done without the anti-resurrection dogma. The purely mystical way of looking at the deeds carried out by Jesus already became lost in early Christian times because it was too difficult for some early Judo-Christian and Gnostic groups to understand and for this reason it is pointless trying to attempt to prove that what they had understood was the complete truth when one takes their beliefs into account. Others understood other parts of the truth, as shown, for instance, by the many early Christians who believed in a more universal significance of the resurrection; and there were also those who used the "paper for discussions" known as the ["Gospel of Philip"](#) in this regard. Paul, who was excellently suited to play the "bogey man", was not the only source of those traditions that kept the teachings of the physically and spiritually transforming nature of the [Resurrection](#) alive. Those who have some respect for the broadly accepted version handed down through the history of the churches can more easily approach the truth than those who thoughtlessly discard everything that does not agree with their beliefs.

When such activities lead to a continual defamation of Jesus Christ, it can have spiritual consequences that exceed a purely human matter.

3. There was also speculation about several "tombs containing the bones of Jesus" in Israel and elsewhere. In the context of the Middle East, where grave robbers are involved - a bone case from such a tomb was stolen for example - and where thousands of such cases are stored in museums, and where bones were removed and handed on for second burial, etc., it is almost impossible to get trustworthy findings about the persons. The names that are frequently engraved on the cases also do not prove anything. Probability theory also cannot rule out the similarities between names of different families.

Holistic historical research would not start from the assumption that resurrection in the traditional meaning would not have been possible. Also it would correspond rather to the contemporary state of awareness, not only to understand prophecy that can be related to Jesus as a source of subjective hope about Jesus 2000 years ago, but rather to view it as something quite real, which is still awaiting fulfilment, until it has come about.

* 4. There is also more speculation about the life of Jesus, leading to various ideas. For example, one theory was that Jesus was a follower of the Cynicism school of philosophy, which had its origins in Greece... See also an [update concerning Maria of Magdala](#). There was even more speculation: Jesus might have been Moses, or an Egyptian Pharaoh, or Julius Caesar, or a Byzantine emperor(!).

** Strangely enough, these types of books don't mention the fact that a very old Gospel text of the first century was also found at Qumran, which shows, when compared with today's texts, that texts were also handed down quite correctly.

[Back to the index.](#)

(Natural) Science and the Belief in God.

The legitimacy of Scientists' way to God

Jesus accepted that there are people who need to monitor, count, measure and weigh, in order to answer questions of faith, as in the case of [Thomas](#), who represents "the scientist type" among the disciples and portrays many people of our time. When he had the opportunity to test whether in

fact Jesus Christ was standing in front of him, Jesus said: "Be not unbelieving, but faithful". This meant that Thomas was supposed to apply his new experience by pondering honestly and deeply, so that the root of his doubt disappeared and the truth dawned on him. The fact that Jesus still had to say this afterwards, did not mean that Thomas was a sceptic, now "slain" by the external reality and "forced to believe", even through fear of punishment. It did, however, mean that Thomas had still kept his ability to reach new convictions autonomously. This way of dealing with facts and thoughts is not condemned here, as misunderstood by some interpreters because of lacking knowledge about human consciousness. In spite of that, Thomas was wanted to learn that there are other ways of arriving at a conviction, even without considering the physical facts. Jesus knew what was adequate for Thomas. He did not want to force anybody. That would have been too much like a court and there is obviously no intention to provoke anyone into refusing something he was not ready to decide about.

A science which ignores frequent experiences when something does not fit into the old theory is not worthy of the name. A true genius like Einstein did not "administer knowledge", but started with open questions. This search can be one of the many ways to God too - as long as the motive is honest and the science is not corrupted by economical or other problematic interests.

The external work of scientists - observation, hypothesis, theory and verification - is in most cases insufficient as the only method, when humane disciplines and questions of religion are explored. There is not always a being on the spot who indubitably or even reproducibly represents a higher reality (as the disciples of Jesus experienced it); or who opens our eyes for it (as mentioned in John 1, 51). Nevertheless there are many indications of "layers" within the human being and beyond it, which don't originate in the known spectrum of substances and forces, but which manifest themselves there only in their effects. The energy of life, the activities of the psyche/the mind and consciousness... (Some examples at several places in the main text of ways.of-christ.net). Often "pre-scientific" traditions of various old cultures reveal some empiricism and scientific character. Today it is also possible to develop adequate methods of perception and evaluation, as Goethe's scientific considerations show. There is also epistemology (theory of cognition) for science, which R. Steiner built up on Goethe's preparations. New scientific approaches like quantum physics and quantum biology, new astrophysics and finally the development of a new "paradigm" or world view have the same tendency; but in most cases without the search for adapted new methods for the new contents like Steiner's.

So, we know that the present scientific knowledge a) shows only a tiny part of reality;
b) the basics of science have become increasingly relative. Matter can be looked upon as compressed energy - or even as condensed spirit. Forms of energy can take on a speed above the velocity of light up to infinite ("tachyons"...). These particles can become "younger". Time becomes even more relative than it was in the theory of relativity. These particles can leave our space this way and appear again from something like the beyond/the transcendence - so even space is less absolute than it had appeared to be in the theory of the "curvature of space". The "information" left (a concept in cybernetics) is not tangible, without matter and energy, and therefore cannot be described with old methods. One could name it "consciousness".

c.) So far, this breakdown of the old world view, to be exact, would not yet be a "proof of the existence of God", but at best a preparation. Some people find this to be enough, because they were only blocked by the out-dated materialistic view and can now take further steps to God more directly. But - look at that! It continues. What is that "information" or the other processes in the universe (b.)? What/who continuously creates new matter and energy and erases it again? What/who regulates in matter and in human life the thresholds between life and death and the transition between - and equally between being awake and sleep? What/who is perpetually having effects on the universe outside of time and space and the reverse? Is the human being - capable of experiencing energy, time, and space in his consciousness like being "outside" - indeed a nascent image of One who can do this on a large scale (compare *Genesis 1,26*)?

d.) Above all, chaos and accident are ruled out. This world, living beings, and, particles and processes in life show a high degree of order within the chaos beyond any possibility of mere accident. The determination and meaning within the whole is like a synthesis of the arts and the connecting links which would be necessary for an accidental evolution are lacking. . This insight alone makes it more difficult to not believe than to believe - in a central original intelligent being,

who determines the beginning and the end of a "creation program" and who designs the changing regularities. So it became possible that analytical thoughts can lead to the same result as the "right, mythical hemisphere" (of the brain) of the old peoples before around 800 BC, who found God to be the worker. The "gods" of some peoples were originally only qualities of the one God too and only when this wisdom got lost were they taken for independent "gods" and even confused with highly developed human beings who also existed.) *Similar ways have led non-believing scientists like Max Thürkauf, Georg Todoroff, and others to faith.*

e.) Finally faith, as a deep conviction, is more than just intellectually believing something.

f.) Moreover, other people are also relevant who – not only as mystics, etc., but as simple faithful persons too - have testified transforming experiences with God and with Christ and who, in this context, had real experiences with the creative divine Spirit within themselves. These ways can also lead to a fully independent kind of understanding and to insights concerning the nature of their experiences. This is where the viewpoints of the main text of "ways-of-christ.net" set in.

In 1998, the Catholic Church issued the encyclical "Fides et Ratio" (Faith and Reason) and Pope Benedict XVI also stressed the topic in a speech in 2006 at Regensburg in the following way: "Belief without reason and reason without belief are worth nothing, because man in his wholeness is missed". Michael Springer writes in "Spektrum der Wissenschaft" ("American Science", German issue) in January 2007, that not every missing piece of knowledge refers automatically to things that cannot be explained scientifically, or to God. This is not, by the way, our intention, but for exact conclusions, see above. He admits that the opinion that science will some day be able to fill the 'gaps' is a belief too. In this case, a lot of effort was obviously necessary to leave the question open as to whether scientists are forced to believe in God. This may not be an atheistic ideology, but rather an agnostic one, implying a missing faith without the specified doctrine that there is no God. And another new concept which only recognised belief in God as providing ethical validation of a material culture, is, in itself, insufficient to meet the above-mentioned criteria.

[Back to the index.](#)

Consciousness, brain and the free will of man.

A long time before the existence of modern science, clever people of all cultures had had experiences concerning the origin of the various impulses, which may lead to making decisions. Spiritual and/or religious paths show that it is possible to win the daily struggle for ethical decisions more and more, instead of believing that everything is pre-determined. Nevertheless, some of these people tend towards fatalism.

In most cases, even the ability to think is not a fully conscious one. If someone wants to become aware and remain aware of the feelings influencing thoughts, he or she may have to pay attention to them for a long time, in order to become more sensitive to them. The impulses of will are even more unconscious and great efforts are necessary to realize them fully or, more than that, to "produce" the will to do something freely. For instance, Rudolf Steiner already knew that the will was something unconscious - independent from modern brain research. But he also knew that controlling ones own will is something that can be trained - something which has not yet been reproduced in modern science. Many Christians experience that even more is possible, i.e. "To commit one's will to God". Even for someone who has not yet had much experience, it is still possible to a certain degree. There is definitely an "instance" that helps us to follow this path. Indeed, sooner or later this way leads to a more conscious life. (This practice has nothing to do with being obedient to the authorities of a church.)

In this context, the findings of some modern neurologists point to conclusions that differ from those found in several scientific magazines. They measured the biological effects during experimental movement of the hands and found out that a certain "readiness potential" was already present in the nervous system as soon as the intention to move the hand became conscious. Later, the person being tested thought that the action had begun, but in actual fact it had really started 1/100 millisecond after that thought.**

This only acknowledges that - as mentioned in the paragraph above - the complexity of the human being usually influences its decisions and that conscious thoughts are not the only factor influencing decision-making. However, the "readiness potential" does not mean that people are automatically determined to do so. This would be an inadmissible case of jumping to conclusions. So the "free will" is in no way disproved, as some scientists had thought. Nevertheless, according to the mentioned experiences of the people (which can be looked at as "field research" through the centuries), it would be correct to assume that the mere intellect is insufficient in controlling free will. Thoughts and good intentions can only be a first step to a more responsible role for oneself. Additionally, one should examine the subconscious feelings and unconscious, habitual impulses of the will. Then one will awaken more quickly to the nervous "readiness potential" that exists. So indeed it is possible to aspire to a more responsible life.

Moreover, if, for instance, the electrical potential of the nerves is measured, one should consider that only classical science*****) would speak of "causes". Looked at from a humanitarian point of view, it is possible to see an "effect" in it, like a piano, played by the being including mind, psyche and will. On the purely scientific level, this cannot be decided upon. Likewise, biology cannot decide on if and how God is present in this complicated human organism.***). However, one can find scientific approaches to such questions. Scientists might, for instance, try measuring how a person fighting in prayer against an unwanted impulse manages to change the resulting action.****). However, this method will still not enable them to judge what praying "is" for faithful people.

*) Note, however, the differences in the various development stages of human consciousness (e.g. archaic, magical, mythical and intellectual), as presented on our pages "[General viewpoints concerning natural religions](#)" and "[Religion as a 'reconnection' of man with God...](#)" The sources of human emotions were more strongly observed *outside* the person at certain times, while at other times they were more strongly observed *inside* the person. Today's possibilities in the area of consciousness development are carved out in part 1 of our main text, based on the steps in the life of Jesus. Today, for example, a person can consciously learn – in contrast to earlier, more instinctive means – to again more intensely recognize the relationships with his or her surroundings and the environment and earth. Thus, besides social and ecological insights, there are also general ethical and religio-philosophical aspects that emerge for society.

**) For instance in "Spektrum der Wissenschaft" (Scientific American, German edition), April 2005.

***) See our page "[Science and the Belief in God](#)" too.

****) See also our page concerning the "[Digestion of the daily life](#)".

*****) There is a movie called: "What the Bleep Do We Know?".

[Back to the index.](#)

Jesus Christ, human nourishment and protection of animals.

The preceding events: *The 1st Book of Moses (Genesis)*, 1,29 says: Then God said, "I give You every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth, and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food". This corresponds to the insight that man has mainly the teeth and digestive organs of a "fruitarian" being - eating fruits - (and not "omnivorous" - eating everything - as one might think, if one only knows the categories of animals "eating meat", "eating everything" and "eating grass").

However, after the Flood - archeologically known, e.g. in the middle-east - (*Genesis 9,3-4*) to Noe: "Everything that lives and moves will be food for you; ... But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it." Up to here everything relates to an era before that of today; so it did not only concern the later Jews - presuming it has been handed down correctly.

After the exodus from Egypt it became acknowledged and further details were added in the *5th Book of Moses (Deuteronomy)* 14,3-21. It seemsthat after the flood, the principle was to allow everything and to exclude only the most unsuited foods.** Some of these points can be found in

dietetics too. Nevertheless, there were still cases in which the special value of vegetable food was stressed - without any binding regulations, see *Daniel 1,8*.

There often seemed to be a relationship between the many extensive rules concerning sacrifices and the eating of sacrificed meat –which is hard to understand today. The *Prophet Hosea (6.6)* already passed on the message: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice - and recognition of God rather than burnt offerings." With reference to this passage, Jesus said: "But go and learn what it means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice'" (*Matthew 9,13 and 12,7*). Concerning *Luke 22,11*, where Jesus asks, where he may eat the Passover (meat) – which does not occur during the following Last Supper at all - there are early Christian "apocryphal" scriptures (which were not included in the biblical canon around 400 after Christ) like the "*Gospel of the Ebionians*". Here he says, answering: "Would I happen to desire to eat meat (of a lamb) with you this Passover?" The Aramaic language used fewer words for sentences like this, thus allowing various interpretations if the original intonation was not known. This led to various translations, destined to conflict with each other. The former Judeo-Christian communities - later most of them were Islamized - were a true part of Early Christianity; in spite of the fact that there were some differences between them and other developing churches.

Acts 15,19 reports the judgement of Jacob, leading the Early Community, that "We should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who turn to God (taught by Paul). Instead we should write to them, only telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood." But the early church's historian Eusebius, and apocryphal Apostles' acts and so on lead to the view, that Jesus, John, Peter, Jacobus ... themselves usually lived without meat.

According to *Matthew 15,11-20 and Mark 7, 17-21* Jesus stressed more "things that come out of the mouth", than "whatever enters the mouth"; however this was more related to questions of Pharisees concerning washing the hands before eating. The same relation of values is given in Jesus' wording about the "beam in one's own eye" and the "splinter in the eye of someone else". That means, it is better to start with one's own weak points, instead of with the fear of influences from outside. Anyway, the said passage does not say that one must eat meat.

In *Luke 10,8* Jesus recommended the disciples to eat whatever is offered by their hosts during their travels. That does not automatically mean that this is an indifferent question. Still today, e.g. in the Arabic countries, a guest refusing offered food or drinks can produce the most incalculable reactions if he/she is not very skilled. Furthermore, the original disciples had been given the special ability not to be harmed by even very harmful substances (*Mark 16,18*). So it is of no use to generalize about such bible quotes without limits outside of the context.

Religious Fasting shows even more clearly the purification which may lead to more openness to spiritual experiences. This was for instance a Catholic tradition - on Fridays, with reminiscences of Good Friday, and the Shrovetide in the weeks before Good Friday. This practice has not been taken very seriously for a long time, but now its significance has risen again, even beyond the Catholic context. People practise abstinence in many different ways, not only in the narrow sense of fasting. Additionally, they think of the many hungry people in the world. In this context some medieval and more recent Christian and other mystics from the Medieval Age up to our time had the deeper experience of living without food in general - Latin: "inedia". Some people in our own time named it "living on light". This is a hint that the spirit can handle matter better than has been explored in science. (This requires that one knows oneself guided by God, and is accompanied by a competent person to avoid danger. It is not meant as a recommendation to go that way.)

The body is a tool and a tool needs dealing with responsibly and ethically.

And animals – in the biblical view - are creations of the same God; so they are not "things", as they are often still treated as today (limited by modern laws for the protection of animals.) Considering this, one must finally decide oneself how one wants to live.

*) Who is seeking Informations about today's vegetarian forms of diet, finds it for example here: <http://www.ivu.org> (*Ways-of-christ.net is not responsible for websites of others, and does not automatically support all changing contents.*)

Due to health, ethical, environmental and other reasons resulting from increasing awareness, there has been a greater prevalence of whole-food nutrition practices, which have clearly developed through various efforts for more than 100 years now, and which have been recommended by health advisors, among others. (Such nutrition practices include the consumption of whole-grain products – ideally from organic farms – fresh produce, unrefined oils, etc.)

**) Such guidelines are followed still today, for example, by devout Jews when it comes to "kosher" foods (e.g. no pork, no blood, using special rituals for killing other animals). Similarly, the "Halal" food guidelines of Islam avoid pork in particular.

[Back to the index.](#)

Jesus Christ and Healing - even today.

Many people experienced Jesus with his disciples and further companions as a movement for healing body and soul because today this is not a matter of course, one must work on it.

The will to get well.

Jesus asks an unprepared person an important question: "Do You want to get well?" (*John 5,6*). Jesus is speaking to the soul. The sick person describes his difficulty in finding help. However, the question also helps the sick person to realize that he **wants** to get well **really**. This is the first prerequisite for recovery. As long as the subconscious blocks his way to seek cure and help, it is hardly possible to accept the help. In spite of this, it might be possible to give First Aid, or to change a symptom. But Healing is more than that and only works if the sick person can integrate it, combining it with his/her own curative power. Those from the medical professions who co-operate with the patient and also honest "Healers" and people supporting patients by their faith and prayer are in accordance with this principle.

The power of faith.

Matthew 9,22: A woman touched the garments of Jesus and got well. Jesus: "Your faith has healed you". Whoever has had experience with it will acknowledge that the power of faith is something real in his/her relationship to God. Though physicians know the power of human conviction from the "placebo effect" (where sugar may be taken instead of the remedy), this does not produce such profound changes as those which occur by the power of faith. Jesus is also the model of a human being - healthy and sane in the most comprehensive way, in body, mind and spirit.

Excerpts from the chapter about the "miracles " in the main text): Jesus Christ not only refers - as some modern healers do - to "cosmic energy", that they feel pouring through themselves, but also refers to the belief in the possibility of becoming healthy through him, ultimately by God through the visible person of Jesus.*

*Even today cures are accomplished in the original way, as practised by the first Disciples, by prayer and with regard to that innermost of the human being, connected with Christ, who wants people to be cured and become complete - who can then do even "greater things than he" (*John 14,12-13*).*

But the spiritual healing itself and the growth in mind and spirit connected with that, remain "mercy", and cannot be forced. We can only do so much to prepare for this.

*Cures were often "signs", actions that stood for something larger and more fundamental. During the cure of the person born blind at the Sabbath, Jesus answered that it is not a question of sins, "but (it is a matter of) the works of God becoming apparent" (*John 5, 6-9; John 6; John 9, 3 ...*). Today, many experiences and parapsychological research suggest that Jesus could actually influence natural forces. It is just important for us at the present time to contemplate this*

phenomenon; for our contemporary view of human nature, for a holistic, integrated, or Christian cure and so forth.

Laying hands on someone.

Jesus and the Disciples often laid hands on people in order to heal them. In a few cases this practice is still alive today. The person who lays their hands on the head or the shoulders of the sick person speaks a prayer, possibly accompanied by the community. It supports empathy and the awareness of being a channel for God's help. This may be taken as a symbol. But there are also conscious Christians among the modern spiritual healing movements - and we know that it is a reality. In early Christianity this power was called the "pneuma" (Greek), the "breath of life" or the Holy Spirit*). This practice was used for healing and blessing as well, partially combined with further practices. *See for example Matthew 19,13; Mark 8,23; Mark 10,16 (blessing children); Luke 4,40-41 (healing and exorcism); Luke 24,50 (blessing disciples); Acts 6,6 and 19,12 and 28,8.* But a prayer for Healing does not absolutely require laying hands on the sick person. It also works from distance - which may be thought to be more difficult.

Psychical/psychosomatic diseases.

Recuperation of the psyche, the vital energy and the body are closely connected. Even good pastoral counselling or life counselling can influence psychosomatic diseases - if reasonable advice is taken to heart, instead of continuing to make the same mistakes in (the conduct of) life.

*Excerpts from the chapter "The Holy Zeal, and... emotions" from our 'main text' *): Jesus constantly lived in "positive awe of God" and compassion for the people... In normal people, nearly all emotions are initially mixed at least with subconscious stimulation and response mechanisms that vary biographically and vary in strength, but are quite similar in their basic pattern. It is a long process of learning to look at this in oneself... and discover more of these mechanisms in one's own reactions, and by **looking at it** instead of suppressing it, finally mastering it and/or **to offer it up to God**. It is not usually very effective to work on whole complexes of these problems immediately. It is more effective to first search for related occurrences and then try and distinguish whether it is a "beam in one's own eye" or a "splinter in the eye of someone else" (Matthew 7,1-5) and who is responsible for it. Jesus and some Christian schools stress the "beam in one's own eye", because it is more difficult to look at one's own problems and has to be learned. It is also easier to correct one's own mistakes. Psychological schools sometimes prefer to start by taking the other viewpoint as a victim, but in the end that leads to looking at both sides.*

One possible way of doing this is:

1. to look at the emotion felt as negative as it occurred (e.g. anxiety, hate and anger, indifference and arrogance, extreme doubt).
2. Instead of ruminating over it, wait a moment, in order to become aware of what it is.
3. to give this problem that can now be felt - to God in prayer**).
4. to wait calmly until some relief is felt.

With some meditative*** practice one may feel this like some kind of current going up and out, and possibly afterwards like a current of renewing positive power coming from above and flowing downwards. It is also possible to combine this with breathing: to exhale problematic qualities, with the attitude of giving it to God and to inhale positive qualities, which God's mercy wants to give. *(Modified from the continuous prayer of the Christian monks of Mount Athos, as mentioned in the chapter "The silence in the desert" in the main text.)*

Mental problems.

Excerpt from the chapter "The Transfiguration" from the main text: There is "positive thinking" and "positive affirmations" (guiding principles). If this is practised in a non-egoistic and non-megalomaniacal way, without technical manipulations, it might indeed transform the thoughts into a state closer to that which comes from God thereby opening oneself for God. However, the literature of this school of thought has not discussed this point with the necessary care and it can sometimes lead to self-deception.*

"Problems of fate / destiny".

Modern spiritual healers report the experience of cases in which one gets the impression that healing is not yet possible or "not yet permitted". This is the level of something like "programs". E.g. the sick person may first "want" to learn something from the disease. With God, a solution for that is possible too. See also above the paragraph "The will to get well".

The legal situation.

In Germany, for instance, the constitutional freedom of religious practices allows pure Christian healing by prayer and laying hands on sick persons. However, those who want to offer it as a service beyond the private circle and the church should first inform themselves about the legal situation in the country. If one includes activities which others might interpret as diagnosis or direct therapy - even if it is free or completely based on donations - one must be a physician or a non-medical practitioner in Germany (Spiritual healers, e.g. can often feel diseases with their hands. Their practice is in most cases different from the original Christian practice, but they do have things in common too). Although it would be desirable for laws to become better adapted to the special nature of such practices with less bureaucracy, the German federation of spiritual healers recommends skilled persons to take their examination as a practitioner. If one only wants to practice psychological counselling or spiritual healing, it is possible to sit a simplified examination. Other countries****: In England**** Spiritual Healers are more accepted, even in hospitals.

Independent from legal issues, the person seeking healing should continue making his own efforts too, such as good nutrition or diet, physiotherapy, and - as far as possible - enough sleep, and praying.*****

*) The 'Main text' of ways-of-christ.net deals with this and other topics from a viewpoint exceeding healing in the usual sense and also concerns human development in general.

***) Concerning the best attitude during prayer, compare our extra page "A prayer for peace..."

****) We have an extra page "Christian Meditation"

*****) National Federation of Spiritual Healers (NFSH) - e.g. Harry Edwards Movement; offers a healer referral service as well as healing development training and courses. <http://www.nfsh.org.uk>

World Federation of Healing - worldwide many different groups. <http://www.wfh.org.uk>

At the moment we don't know of any association based on purely Christian sources or which have Christian healers alone among the many associations in that field in Germany etc. One can, however, sometimes find a simple, intensive and effective biblical prayer for healing in some of the Free Churches like Baptists and Pentecostal Churches. At some Catholic places of pilgrimage like Lourdes there are also cases of extraordinary healing by prayer and faith. (A new "Christliches Heiler-Netzwerk" (Christian Healers' Network) is being built up.

*****) (...) With reference to today's knowledge, the proven regulatory systems inside a person (beyond one-sided molecular biological perspectives) are essential to the understanding of naturopathic and faith healing efforts. The greater inclusion of such efforts could facilitate the collaboration between different medical trends.

[Back to the index.](#)

Blessings.

When You are attuned to God, as a believer You may **ble**ss everyone and everything You want, as far as You feel it is according to the will of God *). There is not only the usual priestly blessing of *Numbers 6:23 - 7:1* :

Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, 'This is how you shall bless the children of Israel.' You shall tell them, 'God bless you, and keep you. God make his face to shine on you, and be gracious to you. God lift up his face toward you, and give you peace.' So they shall put my name on the children of Israel; and I will bless them. It happened on the day that Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle, and had anointed it and sanctified it, with all its furniture, and the altar with all its vessels, and had anointed and sanctified them; ^{7:2} that the princes of Israel, the heads of their fathers' houses, offered...

YOU can spread blessings. You need no formula, and You don't need to speak it aloud, but the right attitude, like "be blessed as the Lord wants ..." . God will not do anything false with Your blessings. This custom has become rare today, but it might be important.

There are many bible places concerning blessings. Some typical ones:

Zecharja 8:13 : It shall come to pass that, as you were a curse among the nations, house of Judah and house of Israel, so will I save you, and you shall be a blessing...

Acts 3:26: God, having raised up his servant, Jesus, sent him to you first, to bless you, in turning away everyone of you from your wickedness.

Ephesians 1:3: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

1 Peter 3:9-11 : Finally, be all like-minded, compassionate, loving as brothers, tenderhearted, courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but instead blessing; knowing that to this were you called, that you may inherit a blessing. For, he who would love life, and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil, and do good. Let him seek peace, and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears open to their prayer; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

Some more bible places: Deuteronomy 11:26; Psalms 115:13; Proverbs 11:25; Matthew 5,44; Hebrews 6:7.

*) For instance if weapons are blessed, the angels might have problems with that "blessings"...

[Back to the index.](#)

Lamentation as a possible part of Christian practice.

Some strict Christian teachings give the one-sided impression that Christians should rather resign themselves to their fate and not lament too much about the developments of the world. They may pray for improvement or do something for it, but to complain bitterly to God about something - see lament(ation) in the Old Testament - is rare. It is more likely to be found in literature such as "Don Camillo and Peppone", but it is rarely taught officially in churches. It is more likely to occur in private prayers. Although we do not recommend Christians to copy the Jewish practice at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, that practice shows that complaining to God might be a very important part of Christian life.

If the specific Christian values and promises - for instance of the Sermon on the Mount *Mt. 5:5* "*The meek shall inherit the earth*" are compared with the tendencies still predominating in the world, one might think that Christians are unable to deal with promises. Biblical promise is no noncommittal mercy, which may or may not come - and which exists too. A promise is a promise; the time when it will be fulfilled may depend on the maturity of man, and/or on prayers. ["The kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing". *Mt. 11:12.*]

It was no longer clear as to who or what was being complained about: is it right to complain about other people? Or about devilish powers, that may have tempted people - argued away by some theologians? Both may have been partly responsible. Or one may stress the idea that "evil has been permitted" (with some human thoughts, for instance "because people must learn to distinguish"). However, is God himself the only "(stage) director" who can permit something or not, and so works out his "rules"? It would be too simple to ascribe the evil(s) in the world or every "allowance" to God himself. In the first centuries, the Early Fathers - still respected by Churches because of other teachings - wrote about the hierarchies of angels which are handed down - standing between God and man (and other creatures). The gnostics also spoke about so-called "Archonts", often having problematic qualities. Other cultures have taken up such experiences in their way, for instance the Tibetan "book of the dead" is filled with recommendations on how to deal with such beings after death. As far as the basic or most important affairs are concerned, beyond the small-minded reciprocal reproaches of people, one may find some day that there is a 'director' - not fully free of errors, below God himself, but very "high" compared with man or with

negative powers. This recognition is a contribution to the old philosophical question of the "theodicy", and/or the relation of God to the evil in the world.

Conclusions: indeed it is possible to complain to God, meaning that he is the right one to talk to, but it makes no sense to complain about him. This complaint may include offering one's insights with their related emotions up to God, even if these feelings include being angry with injustice instead of being sad (*Mt. 5:6*). Because the solution is left to God, this complaint is actually a special kind of intensive prayer. Nevertheless, the love and deep respect for God and/or Jesus Christ is part of it, thereby offering some protection from becoming addicted to pure negativity, which would not lead to God, but rather elsewhere.

Another way is firstly to let the emotions calm so that a classical pure prayer becomes possible, bringing everything as thanks or a request towards God. Surely it is the proper attitude towards God to pray in this way. However, it is permitted to complain as mentioned above, if it is honest (authentic) and seems to be necessary.

[Back to the index.](#)

A Christian way - digestion of the daily life.

Anyone seeking to progress from their own imperfect state to developing promising qualities - with Jesus as a standard and help - (compare the page "...ethics"), may first become conscious of **their own weak points, mistakes and the lapses they have made, instead of projecting their own bad moods, problems and harm onto others** (compare *Matthew 7:1 "Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. 3 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?..."*). Afterwards, you may work on that "speck" of someone else as well = how you suffered.

One notes it down, either mentally or on paper, and seek to improve as soon as possible, quietly (*cf. our main text, chapter "the silence in the dessert"*), and carefully like manufacturing something. If one has some success, one should take note of it. Our own efforts are called for in this case - maybe with the help of a **related prayer, and according to one's faith God's help may come. However, if done seriously, one will look at attitudes, thoughts and emotions, and finally change one's behaviour too.** It is easier to first search for a component of a problem, and then to pray for its solution... (*Cf. the chapter "The holy zeal, and viewpoints concerning emotions"*) It is difficult to change the "habits of a lifetime", but it is possible, if one is able to find out more and more of their unconscious parts. Nevertheless, in certain cases success may come immediately. Compare the successful decision of a smoker to stop smoking now for good. (*Cf. the chapter "The transfiguration of Christ"*).

This practice of "looking at what happened and consciously digesting with prayer" could already be a spiritual path that helps us to progress greatly, and can accompany us through our whole lives. However, with intensive practice at least some important changes may occur soon. "Deeper layers" of these problems may still become apparent to us, although there is already some improvement.

It is then possible to take care of the other person's "speck" or what has been done to someone. In cases where a judgment seems to be necessary – in regard to one's own actions, or those of someone else – this shouldn't be undertaken based on appearances but in a "right"/ "just" manner – that is, in a differentiated way and as constructively as possible (*Cf. John 7:24*).

This leads to a more loving and wise orientation. So one is no longer one's own obstacle on the path. On this path, Jesus can also serve as a compass that allows us to find a new balance beyond the one-sided "wrong tracks": (See the *Table of the final chapter of the main text: "A Christian attitude - in the world, but not of the world"*, *cf. John 17.*).

- Impulses will come from one's own **conscience** too... (*Matthew 5,5 and 5,9*).

(This practice is mainly meant for people whose problems could be evaluated as "normal" by psychologists. If one wants to improve traits of one's own personality, which are looked at as "ill" to a certain degree, it is all the more necessary to get assistance from an experienced, possibly also psychologically trained person - because he or she has even less self control than "normal" people when it comes to looking at their own problems. If this ability were so limited that they could not do this in spite of some help, it would still be possible for the person helping to pray for the person concerned, complementary to an adequate therapy. The "prerequisite" is to seek help: Jesus himself is known to have used the important question "Do you want to get well?" Cf. our page [...Healing](#).)

[Back to the index.](#)

General Christian viewpoints for economical and social questions.

According to the latest economic research*, man is not the purely egoistic being presupposed by the current liberal economic theory. Only a small minority reacted purely out of their own interest. For most people, other values like "voluntary reciprocal co-operation" enjoyed equal or even more importance. However, even this "reciprocal altruism" - like egoism - does not automatically lead to the best for the whole of society, but can produce cliques, so only conscious and consequent ethical decisions can help us to progress.

Here, psychological and religious-ethical viewpoints set in. Man also has an individual and social nature. Modest self-confidence and an attitude of solidarity towards others can be trained if one is open for it. Wherever our egoistic side is too strong, this is simply because the altruist side has not had a chance to unfold, or it has become atrophied by the hard "training" of western society. Socialist societies over-stressed solidarity, causing the individualistic side of our character, with its desire for freedom, to become neglected ('atrophied'), contrary to the nature of man too. If people don't find balanced circumstances, this manifests itself sooner or later through criticism etc. Either society learns in time, or it will go downhill. This concerns today's predominating economy too, with its typical Global Players. Jesus recommends us to deal with our own problems first (*Matthew 7*).

On the one hand, one cannot simply translate the general scale of values in the Sermon of the Mount (*Matthew 5-7*) etc. directly into instructions on how to handle problems in society. But on the other hand it would not be in accordance with Jesus' wisdom to practice charity in private life while applying the opposite principles in unions or political functions. Honest ethical values** must prove their worth on all levels, even on the global one.

E.g. the value of charity and the fact that Jesus turned to the poor, is undoubtedly relevant - even beyond the social services of the Churches - for today's social affairs, including human behaviour within companies. *Matthew 22,21* also speaks about practical aspects: the charity and also the traditional "tithes" becomes acknowledged by Jesus, that is - apart from the Roman tax - a donation of 10% of the income for religious and charitable purposes. However, helpfulness according to Jesus is based on free will. It is not possible to derive concepts of a forced redistribution of property from it. The 9th and 10th commandments are still valid: "You shall not covet ... anything that belongs to your neighbour". In spite of all our endeavours to achieve an improved social situation for many people, our different destinies remain in the hands of God.

The parable in *Matthew 25,14-30 / Luke 19* takes up known material facts. But the context (*Luke*: The ethical behaviour of a publican; *Matthew*: the previous parable about the power of the faith of the virgins) shows, that more is meant than just augmenting earthly goods and finances. More clearly, e.g. *Luke 12,33* shows that treasures of the soul are more highly esteemed than earthly ones. However, responsibly dealing with goods in trust concerns material values too. E.g. the advice to help the poor and handicapped. Here, material or financial support is an accepted value, instead of invalidating material things in general. In this case it depends on what the property or

money is used for.

To lie and cheat, to practise "mobbing" ('freeze colleagues out', 'ostracism of colleagues') and to realize projects without first establishing their harmlessness for (non-criminal) people, and without asking those concerned, is not the responsible togetherness Jesus constantly demonstrated. Jesus does not speak of "inherent necessities" as an excuse for every failure, either.

The prohibition of interest rates is known from Islam; but Jews and Christians might also find similar advice in the bible (In the Old Testament itself they were prohibitions):

Ezekiel 18:8-9: He, who does not lend at usury, or take interest (other translation: excessive interest); he, who withholds his hands from doing wrong, and judges fairly between man and man; he, who follows my decrees and faithfully keeps my laws; this man is righteous; he will surely live, declares the Sovereign Lord. See also *Esra 7:24* (Prohibition of interest, duty and taxes for special occupations);

Some people interpreted traditionally, *Proverbs 28:8* would mean, it does not matter, how the money earned from interest rates is used, because the rich ones finally use it for the benefit of the poor or for public welfare. But wherever today much money is used against that values, the presupposition of the verse is not fulfilled. For fulfilling the values of the verse, it is just important, how money is actually used.

Concerning interest rates see also in the New Testament *Matthew 23:23 and 17:24*.

The first question was, what might be interesting also beyond the context, in which the Old Testament grew. Therefore the differences in *Deuteronomy 23,21* are not discussed here.

The bible urges people to avoid getting into debt unnecessarily (*Proverbs 22:7*); to plan for the future (*Proverbs 21:5*) and to grow in wisdom and understanding (e.g. *Proverbs 4:5-8*). People were encouraged to save goods or money. The "tithes" should be saved each year to enable them to travel to religious festivals and to make donations (*Deuteronomy 14:22-27*). St. Paul called upon Christians to put something aside each week, to be able to give it, if needed, to fellow Christians who had fallen on hard times (*1 Cor. 16:1, 2*) and advised them to adopt a moderate attitude towards earthly goods (*1 Tim. 6:8*). Jesus assumes that calculations will be carried out to make sure that there is enough money available, before starting a building project, for example (*Luke 14:28*). Today sustainable economics is urgently called for, both for therapeutic and preventative reasons. Private, commercial and public debt is the cause of worldwide financial instability. The website Ways of Christ has no political agenda. We only give general viewpoints here.

*) Ernst Fehr, Direktor of the "Institut für Empirische Wirtschaftsforschung" at the university of Zurich, Switzerland, according to an interview in "Spektrum der Wissenschaft" March 2002, "Reziproker Altruismus...".

**) The spiritual aspects of these values are described in the *chapter on the Sermon on the Mount in the main text of Ways of Christ*

***) See also our extra page "[Basics of ethical values](#)".

[Back to the index.](#)

Jesus and peace

Scriptures such as *Luke 2:35*"... a sword shall pierce through thy own soul" show that the "sword" of Jesus is particularly meant as the "sword of the spirit", with which the internal fight for the truth is fought out. Thus, *Matthew 10:34*, "*I came not to send peace, but a sword*", also gains a mental-spiritual meaning. In this spiritual "fight" as well, hate is not meant, but rather the quality of the truth of ultimately being stronger than the lie or wickedness.

Jesus' attitude is a peaceful one (see also our chapter "[Ethics](#)" and [the chapter on the sermon on the mount](#). *Matthew 5:39* "*But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also*" is a drastically expressed call to break free from the eternal cycle of violence and counterviolence. A person is to "pre-programme" a peaceful future by means of his actions, etc.

However, this does not mean that Christians are prohibited from protecting or defending themselves. For example, the fact that Simon the Zealot - "zealot" meaning a resistance fighter against the Roman colonial power - was one of the disciples and also that Peter carried a sword to

the last indicates that at least some of the disciples were armed. On the long peregrinations through the land, they, like others, protected themselves from the lurking, armed robbers, etc.

John 18:11 "Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" shows that the scripture in *Matthew 26:52*, which concerns the same incident, is describing a special situation: "Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." As Jesus, when the time had come for it, wanted to comply with something predetermined by God - and thus did not want to be defended - Peter's act was more of an attack on a man-at-arms of the priests - Peter himself was not threatened -; above all, an undesired and ultimately futile attack.

Such considerations show that Jesus advises against violent attacks as well as acts of revenge. Therefore, an attitude that construes everything as defence that in reality is an attack is not to be justified. A ploy of third persons to drive others into violent conflicts with each other would be just as unjustifiable.

What is not meant, however, is that Christians should submit themselves defencelessly to all violent arbitrariness of others. This protection can be primarily God and prayer and, where necessary, by means of other measures.

[Back to the index. Toc509476207](#)

Jesus and Refugees, Migration and Cultures

The biblical record presents a diverse picture.

- In the story of the Good Samaritan (*e.g. Luke 10:24 ff.*) and the Samaritan woman at the well (*John 4*), Jesus sees the traits inside a human being as being the decisive factor – not the fact that they belong to a foreign tribe. Samaritans were generally looked down upon by the Jews – partly because they were not oriented toward Jerusalem. Yet they were relatively close to the Jews in terms of ethnicity, language, culture and religion.

- Even outside of the biblical context, the respectful treatment of guests – even foreign travelers – has always been highly valued in the Orient. However, there also has always been the expectation that guests adapt to the host's customs. Few Immigrants did not significantly affect the existing society.

- Peter's encounter with the Roman centurion Cornelius (*Acts 10:28*) is an example of encounters with and conversions of Gentiles. Here again, what mattered was the person's spiritual core – not their position or religion. However, this does not suggest an insignificance of the cultures or countries of the Jews and Romans, for instance, or the Jews and Samaritans (see above), or Jews and Greeks (as seen elsewhere).

- The commission that was given to the disciples to "teach all nations..." (*Matthew 28:19 and Luke 24:47*) and to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation..." (*Mk. 16:15*) does not automatically indicate – particularly not in Matthew – that the nations' previous cultures were to be ignored, as was often practiced in earlier Christian missionary work. Indeed, the previous cultures are to be taken seriously. Religion can only be taught in a sensitive and liberal way if the objective is to bring about true faith in God.

This provides perspectives for individual behavior, but – as is the case with Bible passages on other topics, such as the Sermon on the Mount – it does not offer specific political instructions for the present day.

Doctor of the Church *Thomas Aquinas (Summa theologiae I-II, Q.105, art. 3, 13th century)*, in keeping with the old Jewish tradition, distinguished between foreigners who had a peaceful or a hostile relationship toward

the people of the country to which they had migrated. Specifically, he distinguished between hostile foreigners who were not accepted at all; peaceful travelers who were not to be oppressed; foreigners who arrived peacefully with intent to remain in the country for a time, who, according to *Exodus 22:20*, also were not to be oppressed or harassed; and other foreigners who, after a long period of integration, were fully received into the national life and religious rites of the country.

[Back to the index.](#)

General Christian viewpoints for society and politics *.

Matthew 22, 21; Mark 12,13-17; Luke 20,20-26: "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's" is a realistic attitude concerning paying the tax to the Romans. It shows a clear discernment between state and religion too. But it does not mean being subservient to the authorities in general; *Acts 5,29: "...We must obey God more than men."* Jesus does not speak of "inherent necessities" as an excuse for every failure.

On the one hand one cannot translate the general scale of values in the Sermon on the Mount (*Matthew 5-7*) etc. directly into instructions on how to handle problems in society. But on the other hand it would not be in accordance with Jesus' teachings to practice charity in private life while applying the opposite principles in unions or political functions. Honest ethical values** must prove their worth on all levels, even on the global one.

E.g. it would contradict the truthfulness and responsibility which Jesus demonstrates to hold one's own against competitors with dishonest methods, to deceive the public and to realize projects without first establishing the harmlessness for (non-criminal) people, and without asking those concerned. So independent Christian thinking beyond traditional "left-wing" or "right-wing" thought patterns may be necessary.

In *Jeremia 29,7* we find a prophetic piece of advice: "Seek the best (the peace and prosperity) of the city to which I have carried you... Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper". It suggests a decision for the sense of solidarity. Also *Matth. 5,13, Matth. 13,33 etc.* recommends being warmly interested in the society and being "the salt of the earth."

There are also situations in which Christians are asked to disassociate from a bad state in social affairs. *Revelation 18,4: "Then I heard another voice from heaven say: Come out of her (the city of Babylon), my people, that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues..."* ***

*) The Website Ways-of-Christ.net has no political purpose. Here only general food for thought about this topic is given.

***) See also our extra pages "[Basics of ethical values](#)";
and "[Christian viewpoints for economy and social questions](#)".

***) The principle of subsidiary, drawn from *Catholic social teaching*, would offer an element of prevention at the social level. If it were taken seriously, each superordinate level would only regulate overriding issues that cannot reasonably be regulated on a smaller scale – that is, from the bottom up.

[Back to the index.](#)

Christianity and Philosophy: A Comment on Habermas' speech "Faith and Knowledge" (2001*).

- With an annotation concerning other philosophical schools -

The philosopher Prof. Dr. Juergen Habermas, till now thought to be atheist, also recognized the significance of religious ideas as a root of the values and of the solidarity of a secular society. Man's likeness to God, created with the ability and the right of freedom, can even mean something to "the religiously unversed" (literal: 'religiously unmusical') " too - as he looks at himself. He says the world is unable to progress without reconciliation and forgiveness - values stemming from religion. He refers to the "suffering of those innocently maltreated , degraded and murdered, exceeding any measure of humanly possible reparation". "The lost hope for resurrection leaves behind a noticeable emptiness" (in secular society).

Habermas realizes the enlightened Christians' important "advance concessions" - which secular thinkers should now show in contacts with these modern Christians:

- *The religious consciousness must work on the mentally "dissonant" contacts with other denominations and religions.* Comments: At least in western countries there is a limited amount of civilization in this respect. Viewpoints important for an ecumenical or inter-religious dialogue are in our 'main text', and in some extra pages, e.g. concerning [Churches](#), and [ethics](#).
- *The religious consciousness had to attune itself to the scientific authorities.* Comments: From our point of view the scientific mainstream is often not in keeping with the latest research, or does not admit it, influenced by economical and other reasons. So, concerning many topics, this kind of authority has become questionable. In the scientific area, there is a lack of interdisciplinary co-operation and pluralism too. This just concerns questions important for the image of man, e.g. genetic engineering; its problems are mentioned by Habermas too); but also in the other sciences. We take up such new scientific explorations at several places in the main text following the steps of the Gospels. Indeed a dialogue between religion and science is necessary. However, according to our experience, the newer schools of (natural) science** would also have to be included and the "research of outsiders" etc. too. Additionally, from the religious point of view, one must include insights stemming from the conscious digestion of deep religious experiences, instead of mere theological thoughts. Only this way is it possible not to talk at cross-purposes. Previous dialogues based on old scientific paradigms (old basic assumptions about the nature of the world) and/or on limited views of Christianity were not sufficient on their own. Humane disciplines might also benefit from a process in which man becomes man again and his soul becomes a soul again, instead of looking at it as a mere chemical function of the brain.
- *The enlightened religious consciousness had to "accept the premises of a constitutional state...". He mentions the destruction possible without this step.* Comments: This adaptation of modern Christians to the values of free citizens is partially a step back to the roots of early Christianity before the mixing of Christianity with the coercive means of the state since 325 AD.

While Christian / religious circles dealing with secular institutions usually adapted their language to the secular language, Habermas now calls upon the secularly thinking people to adapt their language to the religious language when contacting religious people, instead of simply "eliminating what was meant". Secular majorities "should not enforce majority votes" in questions which are essential for Believers, without having sincerely checked to see what they themselves can learn from this protest. Comments: . Scientists, politicians etc. should indeed attune to the additional "certain something" in concepts like "to protect creation", "creature", even "man/human being" etc., compared to concepts like "cosmos" or "biosphere", "ecology", "living being", "Homo sapiens"... .

Habermas hopes for a mediating "third party" between religion and science: a "democratic, enlightened common sense" - in a "post-secular society", prepared for the continued existence of religious groups within this society. Comments: e.g. in Germany this exchange does not work very well, or only as far as at least the big churches must become invited to participate in some discussions. In the USA, for example, religious activities of the individuals are held in higher general esteem - but in a secular society religious values often assume an unrecognizable form.

*) "Glaube und Wissen", a speech by the winner of the German booksellers' prize for peace . FAZ /SZ 15-October-2001, Page 9; or German [Internet text](#) .

**) see also our Extra page "[Science and the Belief in God](#)".

***) **Annotation: Habermas und other philosophical schools:**

Jürgen Habermas - besides Theodor W. Adorno and Herbert Marcuse - belonged to the "Frankfurter Schule" ("Frankfurt School"), - their "critical theory" influenced considerably the students' movement of 1968, and included changed ideas of neomarxist, enlightening and atheistic origin.

Mainly Günter Rohrmoser with his conservative philosophical and -theological view criticized since 1969 the theory and activities of the 1968 movement. He saw their 'utopia' as an "ersatz religion" (a substitute for religion, competing with the Christian doctrine of salvation or 'eschatology'), and tried to preserve the old teachings of 'two kingdoms - religion und state, both wanted by God' - from Augustinus.

The university teachers of the Frankfurt School - and their conservative Christian and economic liberal opponents as well - listed one-sidedly the arguments against each other, describing the opponents sometimes like a united group. So the former ones were not able to ask themselves, if some of the conservative values should be preserved; and the latter ones missed the opportunity to notice a legitimate motivation of the new social movements (beyond the ideological distortions) - which was directed against formalistic authoritarianism -. However, many people in Germany and elsewhere think of this issues now more differentiatedly, because they did no longer accept the old "front lines" of 1968. Nevertheless research did not advance equally - there are still books assigning every evil in the world to the opponents, and ignoring mistakes of their freinds.

[Back to the index.](#)

General Christian viewpoints for ecological questions *.

*Genesis 1:26-28 "Then God said: let us make man in our image, in our likeness**), and let him rule ... over all the earth".* That does not mean, as it was applied, that man can deal with his environment without responsibility; on the contrary. The original divine vision of mankind as the apex of the previous creation is meant, with qualities "in his likeness". This authority of man is a natural authority of people, who could "give names" to other beings and who could indeed deal with them responsibly. *Genesis 2:15 names this responsibility this way: "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden, to work it and take care of it".* The Garden or the creation is a living one, unfolding more and more. Man later left his unity with God and his creation (see the Paradise story), and became selfish. The base was left, and so man must learn everything newly, instead of claiming some authority, which was valid for 'Adam and Eve' in the Paradise.

The New Testament appreciates the creation too: In Romans 1:20 we read, that "since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood by what has been made ...". *Romans 8:19: "The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed" (other translation: "... for the redeemed human being",* beings who become more perfect. *Romans 8:22: "We know that the whole of creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time". Mark 16:15: "He said to them: 'Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation." (see Colossians 1:23 too).* Now Jesus Christ is helping, but he does not take over the human responsibility for other people and living beings. He helps, that human beings can become "perfect, as Your heavenly father is perfect" (*Matthew 5:48*); perfect as they were meant in their origin - a responsible "image of God". So creation becomes one again.**** But this depends on the human will to accept this help. Romans 1:20 even states that someone who continues living without God, "has no excuse".

The *Revelation* (concerning its nature see *part 2 of our main text*) indeed names catastrophic developments, which mankind or parts of mankind and nature might experience. But these concomitants in the time of divine corrections are not defined at any point as something positive or as the very divine goals. The Revelation neither excuses nor encourages people who contribute to the death of many species or other catastrophies. On the contrary, the Revelation looks at this civilization critically. The Revelation does not change the positive vision of the rest of the New Testament, for instance in the Sermon on the Mount (*Matthew 5 "The meek shall inherit the earth".*)

Concerning "Creationism": our site does not promote any "-ism" or denomination. However, creation of world and man shows indeed rather divine wisdom than mere randomness. See also our

page ["Science and the Belief in God"](#). Doubts concerning not verified parts of the archeological and geological chronology are permitted too. But those who want additionally the "seven days of creation" to be 7 days with 24 hours as we know them today, should recognize this as a mere interpretation. So faith should not stand and fall with it. Our present "days" are based on the completed earth and its rotation period - which did not exist in the beginning. Already the Bible states: "For God 1000 years are like a day". The "7 days" will mean something real, but 7 eras or cycles without defined length. To look at especially the most complicated processes of creation as the shortest ones, may not match new ongoing discoveries, like many archeological concepts that will be "out" too. In der Bibel we find, that God could already draw attention of men like Henoch and Noah to himself, a long time before Moses. Our Genesis may be handed down from such - real - origins. Parts of this tradition are preserved in scriptures of other cultures too. Theology knows about some similarities to the Sumeric "Epos of Gilgamesh". That does not mean, that the Genesis must stem from the Sumerians; but remember, that Abraham came from Mesopotamia.

*) This website is not a political one. Therefore we deliver only general viewpoints for such fields of life and no advice for special political agendas of the present time. *) This website is not a political one. Therefore we deliver only general viewpoints for such fields of life and no advice for special political agendas of the present time. Christians from different orientations address certain issues related to the preservation of creation, including such examples as unborn life and the abuse of genetic engineering and nuclear energy.

***) This could be looked at as a special pan-en-theistic view ("God is in his creation too") - not to be confused with pantheism ("God is everything"). However, the most direct relation between God and his creation is made possible by a human being (*cf. John 14:21, 14:23; 15*), who is aware of this connection, and who becomes more and more similar to Jesus. Enjoying the creation may lead to God too. But that "mysticism of creation" may lead people astray instead - if God would be only a word for one's own earthly things.

****) The possibilities for developing consciousness are presented in detail in [part 1 of our main text](#), based on the various stages in the life of Jesus. Today, for example, a person can consciously learn - in contrast to earlier, more instinctive means - to again more intensely recognise the relationships with his or her surroundings and the environment and earth. In doing so, he or she can arrive at "interconnected thinking" (a term used by *Frederic Vester*, though on a different basis) or "multifactorial thinking" (a term used by *Dörner* for the study of complex ecological relationships), instead of the older "linear" or "monocausal" thinking ("1 cause → 1 effect"), which cannot be applied in this context. See also the following pages: ["Consciousness, brain and the free will of man"](#), ["Basics of ethical values"](#), ["General Christian viewpoints for economical and social questions"](#), ["General Christian viewpoints for society and politics"](#), ["Christianity and philosophy..."](#)

[Back to the index.](#)

The unborn human life *.

The beginning of human life:

Conservative and critical Christians have a corresponding view of man, that human life starts with procreation.

In many ways, the Bible shows human life as a unit, from its divine origin to the continued life through the generations, including the various stages of development of the individual. The Bible does not speak of "a life without value or without human dignity", no matter if unborn, old or ill people are concerned.

In the "Handbuch der christlichen Ethik" (a German handbook of Christian ethics) Professor Böckle names some theologians who assumed that instead of the procreation, the "nidation" a short time later to be the start.

Modern science usually wants to be free of values, but its findings only show "flowing transitions" like the state of a fertilized egg cell and a grown-up person. Whatever the particular theories about the starting point of human life are, they are purely arbitrary. For instance, the *embryologist Erich Blechschmidt*: the former "biogenetic law" assumed by *Haeckel* - that the embryo is repeating animal states of evolution - is obsolete. Each organ unfolds according to a plan of its purpose in man. Today, the reactions of an embryo can be filmed by ultrasound cameras. *The human*

geneticist Professor L. Lejeune also stated that the genes in the fertilized egg cell already contain a plan of the grown up organism of man. We could say they are the physical counterpart of that plan. Brain research, neurology of development and psychology deliver similar insights. Holistic and unprejudiced research can find consciousness and memory in earlier and earlier stages. So these values are also significant beyond the boundaries of religious groups.

However, another question is how to deal with such views.

In the time of the Old Testament the commandment "You shall not kill" - *Exodus 20* – meant, in a narrower sense, "You shall not murder"; later the opinions changed concerning what murder and homicide are. In a wider sense, the standard of the commandment is applied to all human life and vegetarians even apply it to animals. The modern approach of the inter-religious "World Ethos" ** contains the model of a "culture of respect of all life".

However, honest maternity centres - in spite of helping to have a child - must take the life of those concerned seriously with their difficulties, fears, inner conflicts and so on - instead of condemning all those who think about having an abortion. Women don't usually make the decision to abort a child "easily". The joint responsibility of men and women should also be considered, instead of ascribing the problem to the woman alone.

If the purpose is to minimize the number of abortions then it is also necessary, as a society, to facilitate life with children in the society. This means addressing social problems instead of producing more burdens for the poor, which is the cause of a lot of the abortions today.

The legal questions *:

Jesus Christ promoted ethical behaviour based on conscious decisions, instead of being effective only by the pressure of an external law or custom, as it was in the era of the Old Testament. Nevertheless, standards of law can support ethical questions, as humanity has tried in many fields of life.

Compared internationally, criminal law, strict or liberal, seems to have only a little effect on the amount of abortions. Therefore, as mentioned, other endeavours are necessary.

Abortion in the context of genetic engineering and medicine of reproduction.

Scientific research and artificial insemination "consume" embryos too. In some countries this is restricted by law. Recently the pre-implantation diagnosis has become a new temptation to produce additional causes for abortions.

Consequences for other areas of life.

Where protection of life is intended, one should also mention the dangers for born or grown up persons - especially risks, which are dangerous for born and unborn life at the same time. Environmental problems have bad influences on both mothers and embryos, which are more sensitive than grown-up persons. Movements for the protection of unborn life did not usually speak about these issues. In the same way, environmentalists usually skipped the problem of abortion. For example, the German television journalist *Franz Alt* was already concerned about this situation in 1985.

*) "Ways of Christ" is not a political Website. We are not against anybody and don't raise political demands. In this chapter we simply inform you about general standards.

**) See also our extra page "[Basics of ethical values](#)"

[Back to the index.](#)

Part 4 The Old Testament and contributions to the dialogue with other religions.

The Old Testament, the Jewish Religion and Jesus Christ with excerpts from the main text and additions.

This additional page is a contribution towards a better understanding of the Old Testament, and the inter-religious dialogue - including deeper spiritual aspects. The books of the Old Testament are not described here as comprehensively as the Gospel and the Acts (Pentecost) in our main texts. Nevertheless, more contributions to this common heritage of Jews and Christians are possible in the future.

The relation between the Holy Scriptures.

Jesus Christ and his disciples often referred to the Holy Scriptures their listeners knew of. This includes the **Old Testament**. It contains a history of creation, books on the history of the Jews, laws, prophetic messages, Apocrypha, etc. Jesus and the disciples explained that their work was not intended to nullify the contents of the Old Testament, but that they had not mainly come to interpret the Scriptures either. Life in direct contact with God and Christ is at stake. (See also "Basics of ethical values" and the main text of "ways-of-christ.net".) These results with new viewpoints, as compared with the Old Testament.

In the **New Testament** there are many indirect references to other religious persuasions of their time. E.g. John's Gospel obviously speaks often to those familiar with Gnostic philosophies, in order to explain them the diverging Christian teachings, using their own "language". A simple example of this is, "He is the true light..." in John 1. Some of Paul's letters etc. took into account the knowledge that people had of the old mysteries, which were sometimes more familiar to them than the Jewish traditions. A person who is unfamiliar with such other philosophies would not notice it. These passages of the New Testament don't condemn the non-Jewish Scriptures altogether. Condemnations are only directed against concrete types of degenerated cults and their misuses, in order to warn people of such paths. The older and more correct method of evangelism (missionization) was to talk to people in a way they could understand, instead of expecting them to forget their whole background - which is more likely to produce additional breaks in their psyche instead of redemption, which heals breaks and makes people whole. People of other origins were not expected to take up the whole Jewish tradition - and were treated equally. Nevertheless there were quarrels about that question among the disciples, which still occur today.

At that time, Jesus' work in this form required the background of a belief in God, and the hope for a great change both in Israel and the rest of the world, as predicted by the prophets. However, it has become possible since that time, to present Christian teachings on the basis of other religious traditions, instead of those in the Old Testament. For instance, in the first centuries there were trials in this direction based on the monotheist Religion of Zarathustra (Zoroaster). (...) We will not, however, attempt to judge those trials here.

Apart from the Hebrew bible, the Jewish religion also produced several more scriptures, such as the **Talmud** with the jurisprudence of the *Mischna* and the commentaries (*Gemara*) - these were created both in the versions of Babylon and of Jerusalem. There are severe problems when the corresponding parts of Judaism attempt to apply the 613 laws (Halacha) formalistically, instead of looking at a situation in the light of God's love, free of prejudices. Handling church law and even secular law schematically, may produce similar problems. There are also basic scriptures of special schools, especially the mystic esoteric books of **kabbalism Zohar (Sohar) / Sepher Jezirah**. These books are said to have originated in the 13th century; however, they may date back to even older traditions. They are even reminiscent of ancient Egypt. Today, Jewish mysticism exists too .

The doctrines of God.

"The God of Abraham" was experienced as the personal God of the family, the tribe and the people of Israel; and as the God of the universe as well. This belief got its strict monotheistic shape (one God only) in the course of time, repeatedly invoked by the prophets.*

In the beginning, the Old Testament calls God "**Elohim**". This means "divine Creator's Spirits" - and not material extraterrestrials with genetic engineering or anything like that, as some books speculate today. (Partially problematic influences seem to have appeared on the scene later.) The semitic words "Elohim" and "Allah" (Islamic) have surely the same linguistic origin; "El" of the Canaanites too.

The name **Jahweh**/Jehovah appears later in the Old Testament. When God came "closer" during the various epochs, it is said, according to mystical and humane sources like J. Lorber or R. Steiner, that the experience of God as Jehovah came up. Only the translations always use the same names for God and the experiences of people of various epochs are missed because of this. The real experience of God as Jehovah has probably sometimes been clouded over and even negative beings might sometimes have been nothing more than misled people. Many modern confusing theories would find their solution, if this viewpoint would be noted. It is a phenomenon in many religions, that e.g. people of weak faith, who were full of hate, were not ready to change their opinions through the words of prophets, . So not every story in the Old Testament necessarily refers to the real "Jahweh" and to "YHWH" as described by *Prof. J. J. Hurtak / USA*. But that does not mean that each incident reported in the Old Testament can be evaluated with today's human logic. God knows better than we do, what he does and why - and what he wants people to do and why.

The Messianic belief and Christ.

"Christos" is the word for the prophesied "**Meshiah**", already mentioned in the "Septuaginta", the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, written by Jews for Jews around (about) the 3rd/2nd century BC. So this is no "fiction" of St. Paul, as some modern writers had believed. The scrolls found in the caves near the Dead Sea (Qumran) show that pious Jews in the decades and centuries before Christ had been awaiting a messianic Kingdom of peace, as it is outlined in *Jesaja 11*; see also *Jer. 31, 31-34*. But already at that time there were various opinions concerning the nature of the Messiah - just as the disciples of Jesus had difficulties understanding that the new "Kingdom" would not simply be a national rebellion against the Romans, but a spiritual development changing everything - a "Kingdom of Heaven". See *the Letter to the Hebrews*.

The community of **Qumran** is often said to have belonged to the Essenic Order, the third school among the Jews of that time besides the Pharisees and the Sadducees. More correctly, it was an independent community, close to the essenic teachings. They had good contacts to all kinds of different schools; not only to the peaceful Essenians, but to independent, militant "Zelotes" too, and to the Pharisees at Jerusalem (who gave them the index of the temple's treasury; obviously the Qumran people were looked on as very trustworthy, in spite of having different opinions.) The "statute of the community" 1QS contained descriptions of the awaited Messiah. They were even awaiting two Messiahs or two family trees of the Messiah. (According to the law of that time, Jesus fitted the description: Joseph from the house of David and Mary from the priestly line of Aaron this point of view was also mentioned by *Carsten Peter Thiede*, who is working on the scrolls for the Israeli authority for antiquities.)

It seems that the prophecy of *Micah 5,1*, that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem, was not noticed or not considered to be important by the messianic movement of that time. Nevertheless, Matthew, for instance, mentions this origin of Jesus. Some rashly called this an "invention" of Matthew, because Jesus was said to have his home at Nazareth, which is far away. **

The passage in prophet *Daniel 9:25* is often related to Christ: 69 "weeks" from the instruction to build the second Jerusalem - see *Nehemia 2:18*; around 445 BC - to the death of the (2nd) "Anointed". If these "weeks" are actually "weeks of years" (compare the "sabbatical years"), this would indeed point to the time around the crucifixion of Jesus.

Common jointly concepts about Jesus, held by Jewish and Christian theologians.

Many modern Jewish and Christian researchers have come to the following mutual conclusions concerning Jesus:

- That he was a real historical person, who was born at Nazareth in Galilee, the son of Joseph and Mary and grew up in a house with brothers and sisters.
- That he was baptized by the preacher John the Baptist and after that, felt called to act publicly and in this context built up the Jesus-movement.
- That, as an itinerant preacher, he taught how to pray to the one God and called on the people to repent in the face of the approaching Divine Kingdom.
- That he did many miracles of healing, for instance of people suffering from mental diseases and that he was accepted especially by those less fortunate in the society of the time, such as the poor, women and the sick.
- That he came into conflict with Jewish scholars in Galilee and Jerusalem until being put to death violently by the Romans.

Certain controversial differences of opinion remain between Jews and Christians:

- Whether Jesus was the prophesied Messiah - but there are the Messianic Jews too, who accept Jesus as their Messiah.
- and how exactly the relation between Jesus and God is.
- How to consider the crucifixion and resurrection.
- How to understand the Christian concept of the more comprehensive "People of God" extending beyond the Jews.

(However, beyond that, there are some Jews and Christians with extreme criticism against each other; but in the interreligious dialogue, they don't play any significant role.)

An idea comes from R. Steiner and is difficult to grasp for a theology limited to a definition of Christianity or Judaism as religious organisations, but possibly all the more interesting for other cultures. That is, Christ as an entity, which was known to high pre-Christian sages, who expressed himself as Vishwas Karman of the Hindus, as the Ahura Mazda of the Parsees, the sun-like being Osiris of the Egyptians, the celtic Belemis = Baldur and Apollo. See the chapter "In the beginning was the Word" of the main text of "Ways of Christ" too. You may also look up Rudolf Steiner's *Christology*, among other things the collection of lectures: (check if available already in English): "*Spiritual beings in celestial bodies*", in 1912; "*Preliminary stages for the mystery of Golgotha*", in 1913, in 1914; "*From Jesus to Christ*", in 1911; "*Christology*". **)

Later, 2000 years ago, we see the physical incarnation of Christ on earth as a yardstick at a turning point in the world's evolution, taking this and mankind on himself and including them into his life again. The former cults were partially degenerated as Christianity later became superficial, though an investigation in this direction would be interesting. Christ would show himself as something, which does not fit with the role sometimes intended for him as a power guarantor of a separated religious community, a being which just represents refreshed humanity, the "new Adam" of Golgotha.

Who is not sure concerning the identity of Jesus / the Messiah / and Christ, may ask God in prayer for more insight.

*) See Hans Küng, *Judaism: Between Yesterday and Tomorrow* for a study of the development of Judaism from the origin to the tragedy 1933-1945 and the present time. He attempts an integrated research that accepts the contents of the Scriptures as a contextual source, in spite of archaeology and critical theological research, which gives some Christians and Jews pause for thought. (We don't accept all the consequences resulting from the historico-critical research. For instance, some events surrounding Jesus appear largely to be only subjective experiences. However, Küng is open to an open, not yet explored kind of reality of such experiences.

** It would also be important for the time of the Old Testament for research to get useful clues, if inspired, visionary writings were taken into account and understood in their special nature. In this case besides Rudolf Steiner, for instance, Anna Katharina Emmerich, "*Das Geheimnis (Die Geheimnisse) des Alten Bundes*" (German; possibly in English too).

Concerning the time before the central Asian flood and the time of the New Testament, see for instance the books of the mystic Jakob Lorber: www.lorber-verlag.de (there are many books translated into English too); and Rudolf Steiner. If one accepts the testimony of Christian mysticism, one can completely forget the

theories of some other writers, saying that Jesus would never have existed as a real person, or that he was nothing more than an itinerant preacher.

[Back to the index.](#)

Information: Jesus Christ and Islam.

The interreligious dialogue

This page is a contribution to better understanding and to the interreligious dialogue****, as it has been occurring for many years. These annotations don't attempt to characterize Islam as a whole. There are different schools in Islam too.

The Koran and the other "Religions of the books"

Islam means "Surrender (to the will of God)", also "(religious) devotion". The Holy Book of Islam, the Koran (Quran) is believed to originate from a divine inspiration, transmitted to the Prophet Mohammed (Muhammad) by the Angel Gibril - sometimes identified with Archangel Gabriel, known in Christianity too. Certainly the Holy Koran should be taken as the most important Scriptures of Islam. Further traditions ("Sunna", literally: "habit") with sayings/ anecdotes of the Prophet (Hadithes) play a part for the interpretation of the Koran. Even a prophet is, in his personal behaviour, a human being, and no God. One should also consider that there are also just as many Moslems who are not well acquainted with their Holy Scriptures as there are Christians who don't know much about the Bible.

The Koran addresses Christians and Jews sometimes directly as "You people of the scriptures..." (people of the book, for instance *sura 4, 171**) and as "You children of Israel". So they can be interested in what is written in this holy book - in spite of the fact that most of them usually will not deal with it. Religious science anyway studies the Holy scriptures of all religions, and explores the historical development of their interpretation** - amongst other things. However, the Holy books should be studied with respect. One section of the Muslim commentators of the Koran wrote, there is an original Koran - kept by God in a safe place -, accessible only to pure angels and pure prophet; an other section of them interpreted, that the reader of the Koran on earth should be in a pure state.

The Prophet is seen as sent for a time (or a time in between; other translation: or after a certain time), when prophets are wanting (*sura 5, 19**). The Holy Koran distinguishes between "Believers" in the teachings of Prophet Mohammed, and "people of the Scriptures"; and "Non-Believers". The "people of the Scriptures" are particularly Jews and Christians, whose beliefs, besides those of the Moslems, are based on the same traditions; sometimes also the Zoroastrians (Parsees; "*Magus*" *sura 22, 17**). The Koran accepts the chain of the "Prophets", who all teach the **One God**, the **Last Judgement** in the Hereafter, and the **prayer** for their peoples or for their time (e.g. *sura 6, 83-92; sura 7**). Insofar as people of these religions believe in the mutual basics, the Koran itself does not name them Non-Believers (e.g. *sura 5, 48**). In the first centuries of Islam, Christians and Jews have not been forced to convert to Islam - according to the teachings in the Koran, "In religion there is no enforcement", *sura 2, 256*.

Abraham is looked on as one of the "Hanifes", who found belief in the one God alone, for instance some hermits.

"Allah" as the Islamic name of God - from pre-islamic arabic "al-ilah" - has even, as a Semitic word, almost surely the same origin as the name "Elohim", one of God's names in the books of Moses (in Hebrew).

"Non-Believers" (literally: "Coverers") were, in the strict sense, the polytheistic cults - idolatry, against which Mohammed fought in Arabia and against which the Bible already warned Jews and

Christians. Today in a wider sense, Islam looks on those as Non-Believers, who don't believe in the one God and the Last Judgement. Sometimes the term is falsely generalized for all non-Muslims; sometimes even by Muslims for the other schools.

Jesus Christ in the Koran

Apart from the Bible, Jesus is also mentioned in the Koran (7th century AD), with some similarities and some differences. Here is noted, that the Koran accepts Jesus as a prophet, and as a messenger sent by God, and as "Word" of God without definition, and as a "spirit of God" (*sura 4,171**), "created like Adam" (*suras 2; 3,47 and 3,59; 5* ...*). This is more than what some modern Christian theologians accept, who only see Jesus as a social reformer. Only Jesus as God's Son - Christians in the time of Mohammed imagined this very physically - in the context of the later doctrine of the trinity, was not accepted by the Koran. Christians, capable of explaining authentically what was meant originally, in such a way that someone coming from somewhere else could understand it, were very rare at that time (e.g. *sura 6,101**). In *Romans 1:4* it is said, that Jesus became "installed" as Son in his spiritual power - and therefore not born. Christians might agree with the Islamic conviction, that God is unborn and was not "born" but "created" Jesus. Further the Greek term "logos" - in the Bible used for the divine origin or mission of Jesus Christ - became translated in the Gospels as "The Word", which is used for Jesus in the Koran. Do the Inspirations of the Koran contain mysteries not yet discovered fully by Muslims or Christians - possibly resulting in pointless quarrelling about terms? Also where Christians present these teachings in words, which must be understood as some polytheistic religion, this is not according to the teachings of Jesus himself: "Pray to the father (God) in my name (meaning with reference to Jesus" - *Bible, John 15:16*. In the life of Jesus everything revolves about the one God, to whom only Jesus can lead people.

The "Logos" (Greek, in John's Gospel the "Word of God", here connected with Christ) appears in *Paret's translation of the Koran (German)* independently of Jesus. Other Koran editions understand it as God's "concern" or God's "command" (*sura 13,2 and 13,11**).

In the Koran Jesus is looked at "like Adam", who was created from earth (*sura 3,59**); and speaks about a messenger sent from God's Spirit to give birth to Jesus (*sura 19,17-22**). The Christian version similarly reports about the angel announcing Jesus' birth by the Holy Spirit to the Virgin Mary. Further, the Koran states, that Jesus has been strengthened with the Holy Spirit / spirit of holiness. (*sura 5,110**).

According to the Koran the young Jesus announced his resurrection (*sura 19,33**); however, here the Koran is possibly referring to his Second coming in the context of the Day of Judgement, with the resurrection of the believers, which is often mentioned in the Koran (see below; *sura 4,159**). The Koran says that Jesus has been taken up to God alive (*sura 4, 157 - 159, sura 3,55**). Moslems and Christians disagree on the question, whether Jesus was crucified, died and overcame death before his ascension to heaven – as Christians say -, or if God raised him alive into heaven - as Muslims believe. However, both believe, that he was not "dead" at that time when he rose (the bible for instance states, he spoke to his disciples immediately before he went to heaven.)

In the *suras 3,55 and 5,48** it is said, „...I will make him pure" and "...you all will come back to me, and I (God) will decide, what you were in disagreement about". So Christians and Moslems might wait for the solution of some remaining mysteries, instead of quarrelling.

The Koran also contains the Last Judgement and the Resurrection of Believers. (e.g. *sura 36,77-83; sura 69,13-37; suras 75, 99**). Jesus will then come again, and be a witness or a judge for the believing people of the Scriptures (*sura 4,159; compare sura 16,89**). Those - also non-Muslims -, who believe in God and the Last Judgement, "and do good", do not have to fear the Judgement (*sura 2,62; sura 4,123-124; sura 7,170**). According to the Koran and to the Bible as well, the Last Judgement is an act of God, and not of human beings, no matter if they are Christians, Moslems or Jews.

(Such comparisons between the religions do not mean to place doubt on the independence of the Koran.)

Ethical principles

The ethical principles of these 3 "Abrahamitic Religions" are also related to each other. The commandments also occur in the Koran, but not listed in the same way, e.g. in *sura 17,22-39; sura 5,38-40; sura 2,188; sura 4,135; sura 2,195; and sura 17,70** (human dignity). The Koran, for example, outlaws the killing of innocent ones without exceptions (*sura 5,27-32**). The term "**Gihad**" ("**Jihad**") means only: fight, struggle, effort; the meaning "Holy war" is not taken from the Koran, but from the sayings of Mohammed and from the schools of Islamic law.*** Inwardly - mentally and morally - working against one's wickedness is called the "Great Gihad", more important than all external conflicts. *Compare the teachings of Jesus, to first take out the beam in one's own eye - many external conflicts would lose their basis.* The "Gihad of the word" is peacefully speaking out for one's beliefs. The "Gihad with the hand" is the active, instructive example of the believer. The "Gihad of the sword", named also "the small Gihad" is only permitted for defending believers who are under attack (*compare Koran sura 2,190**). But some "vehemence" in the contact with other religions can be found already in the Koran (e.g. *sura 48,29; sura 47,4**); one can compare such "vehement" passages with other passages, which limit them (like "In religion there is no enforcement", *sura 2,256*).

There are extensive traditional rules, e.g. for relations between the sexes including the prohibition of marriage with non-Moslems.

The Islamic practice includes: "The statement, that there is no God apart from God (Allah), and that Mohammed is the Prophet of God;

that the prescribed daily prayers are performed (*sura 2,177**);

that the annual fasting month Ramadan is kept (*sura 2,185**);

that the pilgrimage is done at least once in life (*sura 2,196**);

and that 'Zakkat', the religious contribution is given for social purposes (*sura 2,177**)."

In today's Islam, there is no central authority, which decides religious-ethical questions. However, positions that are shared by a clear majority of reputable scholars (ulama), would probably be widely accepted.

*) *The German Koran- Translation of Rudi Paret* was used for this article, with the Egyptian counting most commonly used in Islamic countries. *Other translations may count the verses differently; then you find the named contents before or after that verse number in the same sura(h).* The meaning of the Koran passages has been checked with the help of *the German Koran and - commentary of Adel Theodor Khoury*, whose translation was accepted by Muslims too (for instance by Dr. Inamullah Khan, at that time the General Secretary of the Islamic World Congress.) His commentary gives special attention to the traditional interpretation of Islamic Schools. The difficulties of translating the old Arabic language of the Koran at all, are not so relevant for the above mentioned places, which can be understood clearly.

**) Concerning the historical development of the Islam and the different schools see *Hans Küng, "Islam. Past, Present and Future", Oneworld, Oxford 2007.* (Referencing books of others does not indicate, that this website supports all of their opinions.)

***) Also the medieval "Christian crusades" were not based on the Bible, but human deeds, and they have a bad reputation for instance among most of today's European Christians.

****) (Cf. *sura 164,125*.)

[Back to the index.](#)

Information: Zoroastrianism (Parsee Religion) and Jesus Christ.

Our additional pages concerning the other Religions are a contribution to better understanding and to the inter-religious dialogue. For the part of Christianity the basis is independent research, including the old spiritual depth. The old Persian religion of Zarathustra is not described comprehensively, but some viewpoints are given, which are important for this purpose.

Zarathustra.

Today the Parsees with their Holy Scriptures, the Zend Avesta, maintain the original Zoroastrian teachings. Investigators within this religion in India found out that the old Greek historiographer Herodotus was right in writing, (the first) Zarathustra lived thousands of years before the Trojan war - older than the western researchers assumed. Later "Zarathustra" and "Zarathustrotemo" became a title; so mistaken identities may occur. Zarathustra also directed the people's line of vision to the outer world, in order to find the divine laws of life in nature too. The combination of spiritual purification and a positive attitude concerning physical life shows Zarathustra as an original source, which had not yet laid down a one-sided tendency to withdraw from the world, or to overestimate the physical aspects of life. Furthermore, it was also found that their religion dealt not only with cosmic conflicts between light and darkness, which were later taken up in Gnostic teachings. But the one personal God, here named Ahura Mazda, stood as the more-than-good one above that cosmic forces. Ahura Mazda is also the beginning of the invocations. He is asked to help through the various angelic beings - so the existence of those beings does not mean it is a polytheistic belief. The term for the impersonal side of God was "Ahu".

An address for most spiritual explorations concerning that religion: Mazdayasnie Monasterie, Mustafa Bldg., Sir Pherozeshah Mehta Rd., Bombay 400001, India. (www.indiayellowpages.com/zoroastrian ; mazocol@hotmail.com). They also point out that books of western Zarathustra researchers often voice their thoughts about that culture. So for instance the name "Zarathustra" was sometimes translated as "Owner of old camels"; but the meaning is "Most shining being", "prince", "prince of peace". In order to interpret the spiritual meaning of the old scriptures there were old keys, including the sounds; (by the way, the holy scriptures of other religions included some knowledge like this too, according to modern analyses). Of course, the majority of this religion has also lost much of its original spiritual "depth", which needs to be rediscovered today - just like other religions. But in spite of this, the above mentioned institution is generally appreciated among Indian Parsees.

In the old Iranian tradition one can find hints concerning Noah/Nuakh too, similar to the bible text (*O. Z. Hanish*). Our impression is that the Zend Avesta has at least some things in common with something like an original Inspiration before the flood - that means with the earliest belief in the one God, which Noah kept during that degenerated culture. Abraham was not the first one who worshipped the one God. There are indications that this original belief of a civilization before the Asian flood (which may have happened around 3030 BC or earlier) was written down too and it is possible that such scriptures will be found some day. The Austrian mystic Jakob Lorber names one of these Scriptures "Seanthiast Elli". Lorber wrote, God appeared to people before the flood as "Abedam"; as he later worked through the biblical Melchisedek.

Rudolf Steiner saw in Ahura Mazda the "Cosmic Christ", as some great sages of different cultures guessed or saw him, before he came down to earth.

Furthermore, there are several viewpoints, suggesting that the "3 wise men from the East" or "3 magi", who found and adored Jesus as a child, were Zoroastrian sage-kings, named "Maghav". (*There is a book about this in English called "The Magi", by Adrian Gilbert.*)

Some Islamic theologians in Iran also accept the Parsees as "people of the Scriptures" like the Jews and Christians; which means not as "non-believers", but as people believing in the same God, who were often reminded of this God by their prophets.

Saleman-e-Farshi, who was originally connected with Mohammed and so played a role in the beginning of Islam and who later founded the community of the "Druses" in Lebanon, had a Zoroastrian origin. His original name was Dastur Dinyar, a High Priest of Iran in the reign of Noshirwan e Adil.

The Holy scriptures of the Parsees.

The original writings of Zarathustra, the *Zend Avesta*, are either largely lost or kept at secret places. In the 3rd and 4th century AD its known parts were again composed into 21 books. Some parts have again been lost. The most important parts are, for instance, the old prayers of the "5 gathas" (*T. R. Sethna, India, "Khordeh Avesta"* with English translation), which are recited in the old Iranian language.

Practices.

In the practices of the Parsees the recitation of the prayers and texts of the Avesta is important. Old comprehensive knowledge about the effects of sounds played a role, rather showing some ancient kind of science than a religion in a narrow sense. That knowledge is being explored again today, with applications in successful agricultural, medical, educational and other fields. So, for instance, it was recognized by prism binoculars and special instruments, that the main prayer "Yatha Ahu Vayryoo..." in its three 3 double lines has an effect on the human radiation (aura), corresponding to blue, yellow and red light - together resulting in white according to optical laws. It is said that not only the letters/sounds, but also the imagined content has real effects on man, which can be seen for instance by clairvoyants. Apart from that, one of the interpretations of the old Iranian name of God, "Ahura Mazda" is "the most white light" - man should strive to become more and more similar to it. This knowledge culminates in the "Ilm-e-kshnoom", the "science of bliss". In ancient times there was a tighter connection between knowledge, culture and religion. (Meher Master-Moos, Mazdayasnie Monasterie, see above).

Ethics on the spiritual path.

The ethical values are similar to those in other World Religions: Good thoughts, good words and good deeds... .

The symbol of the Zoroastrian religion, interpreted in the west as an image of the - originally imageless - God, is explained by M. Master-Moos as an illustration of the ability to reconnect oneself to God, lying dormant in each human being. The two feet mean the possibility to choose the way of "light" or the way of "darkness"; which finally leads to anchoring oneself in the circle in the divine middle beyond that polarities. The way (of light) goes along the 3 lower rows of feathers - meaning good thoughts, good words and good deeds - into the 5 higher rows of feathers, meaning higher levels of consciousness. Above the feathers comes the liberation from the limitations of life on earth: a ring of destiny is "in the hand", which means mastery over it.

There are also teachings about an even higher level, "Khaeth-wo-daeth", meaning the "Marriage", but here it means the "marriage" of souls belonging together.

For Christians, Jesus Christ gives them the ability to reconnect themselves to God.

Related schools.

The prayer mentioned above is known in the western **Mazdaznan movement** too, with a different, European melody. That movement is a part of the movement for life reform with teachings about nourishment, rhythmical breath and other practices, established by Dr. Hanish. Many Parsee ceremonies are not included in this. Meher Master-Moos, Mazdayasnie Monasterie (see above): "I think, these people are right, not to take up our Zoroastrian baptism ceremony and so on, but general rules for life according to the laws of nature". - Except in times of decay, there were no Zoroastrian attempts to convert people from other religions and no enforced conversions. All World Religions are looked upon by them as equally necessary because human souls, according to their qualities, were born into one of these religions, which also have corresponding planetary qualities etc.

Mani (216-276 AD.) tried to connect Christian teachings to the old Persian religion of Zarathustra and to compare it with Buddhist viewpoints. Mani stemmed from the "Baptist's Christians" (Mandeans) and - after receiving his own inspirations - he founded the Manicheans. These inspirations were ascribed to the "Comforter", the Spirit as proclaimed by Jesus. Their teachings dealt with the divine light particles of the soul, which one can release from the covering dark matter - by a more or less ascetic and vegetarian way of life. The light particles of eaten plants are supposed to be released this way too and led back to their divine origin. For Mani, Christ came from the light and incarnated in the darkness (the earth), in order to resolve evil through love. The Old Testament (with old wordings like "eye for eye, tooth for tooth...") was more or less refused.

The cult included prayers, hymns,... . The Manicheans spread throughout Asia, sometimes accepted by the Persian emperor. Later, they were persecuted by the Church, by Islam, partially by Zoroastrians and also by the Chinese emperor - and so they are eradicated. The Gnostic movements of the first centuries, which were also partially one-sidedly withdrawing from the world (but believed in something approaching an insight-oriented Christianity) are related, as are the millions of Catharians and Albigenses, who were killed. Those particular schools of thought may have been one-sided in their outlook, but that made no difference to all the other churches because they were all one-sided in their own ways. The Christianity of today also shows another kind of one-sidedness, partially caused by the eradication of these parts of Christianity and are, for instance, much more materially oriented than before the persecutions. So, today it should be impossible to generally characterize those historical groups as "heretic", "non-Christian" and so on. Concerning Gnostic elements in the beliefs of some groups one should also distinguish between "Gnosticism" and "Apostolic Gnosis" (like John the evangelist and Paul.), as even the persecutor of sects, F.W.Haack did. By the way, it is interesting to note that some authors of today who explicitly want to belong to this tradition, stress the preservation and transformation of physical life more than the historical texts of the Manicheans. So it is not possible to attribute them with wanting to withdraw from the world.

[Back to the index.](#)

Information: Jesus Christ and the Buddhism.

Here we go into the common ground and the differences between Buddhist schools and those of Christianity who are conscious of their own spiritual depth. For this purpose, the life and teachings of Buddha (500 BC) will not be described extensively. * Essential points are discussed precisely.

The core of the original teachings of **Buddha** - which the "Hinayana" Buddhism is still based on - is to liberate oneself more and more from everything that does not belong to one's essence. The desires of the senses and the mind, leading to suffering, shall be recognized as "not belonging to the self" ("anatta"); and shall finally vanish and lead to the state of Nirvana. This can be achieved by an adapted way of life and training, including meditation etc. Especially the later school of "Mahayana" Buddhism - which also made progress, such as the empathy with all beings instead of withdrawal from the world - often misunderstood this concept of "not self". They interpreted it as if no "I" would remain at all after one leaves behind the low, egoistic qualities. So they tend to interpret Nirvana as "nothing" too. Buddha himself, however, even spoke about his highest experiences (ninth step): "And I... saw (also) through the misery of the area of 'Neither Perception Nor Non-perception'. In the course of time it became fully clear to me and (I) penetrated into the happiness of the abolition of Perception and Feeling. I have had my fill of it... And so since that time I gain - after full elimination of 'Neither Perception nor Non-Perception' - the 'Abolition of Perception and Feeling' and stay in it; and, after I recognized that all wisely, the influences became exhausted" (*Suttam of the Anguttara Nikaya 9, No.41 ...*).

In so far one can recognize that **Jesus Christ** also inspires people to purify their qualities, and to begin with themselves instead of immediately criticising others (*see the main text of ways-of-christ.net*). He does not identify himself and his disciples with the world or any secular activities, but describes them as not belonging to the world; but - more clearly than in the original Buddhism - as living and working in the world (*John 17*), transforming the world like leaven.

Anyway, sayings of Jesus and Buddha concerning questions of life show such a large number of similarities that for decades some people thought that Jesus was teaching Buddhism. An explanation of these similarities doesn't have to be passed down by some exterior source, as some researchers imagine - even if it's possible that there was a point or two of contact. We could just as well say he taught another one of the old religions. In our main text it is explained, e.g., that such similarities ('partial accordances') are caused by spiritual realities, which everyone can perceive who has access to them, without copying each other. After all, it's inspiration. And if it's

true, then it comes from the eternal source – without which there would be no "something" or "nothing" or "not nothing", etc.; and without which there would be nothing that brought deliverance, since this deliverance itself would be meaningless without it. From that which is behind everything, and is hidden in everything, and yet is also completely outside everything. That which is unmanifested, yet which already contains all things, and which will be even more at the end of creation than at the beginning – something which, in the material sense, is at least as contradictory as a koan (a meditative paradoxical saying, or parable, in Zen Buddhism). Something that cannot be grasped by theoretical means, even if the human mind can gradually be made flexible enough to at least make an indirect approach***** or to process that which has been seen internally. This is a strong point of the religions - if compared with a materialistic and egoistic society - which they don't use enough. But similarities and contacts between the religions do not alter the fact that they all have their own slightly different paths.

Among the **Christian mystics**, Meister Eckhart's work is closest to the Eastern impersonalism. Among the Buddhist schools of thought, the teachings of Nichiren could appear as a bridge. Among the **other Indian philosophers**, the work of Sri Aurobindo – with his partner, "The Mother" – is closest to the European personalism or intrinsicism. He experienced Nirvana and recognized – apparently in a way similar to some Christian mystics – that there is something quite different than "nothing" behind the Nirvana experience. He speaks of the "highest" and wants to bring certain aspects of this "highest" down to earth. There are those for whom Sri Aurobindo could be seen as a bridge leading back to Christianity – but to the true essence of Christianity, encompassing real "Christian discipleship" and even the power that Jesus himself displayed in his resurrection.

The "ultimate reality" and the question of God.

However, in Judaism, Christianity and Islam the qualities one has to purify are additionally associated with sins in relationship to **God**. For one thing, this concerns keeping religious ethical rules; to be more exact, it concerns overcoming all qualities, that separate us from God. Usually there is the conviction - probably among most Buddhists themselves too - that in Buddhism there is no God. Therefore mutual ethical declarations of religions only refer to a "Last Reality" beyond the physical life, accepted by all religions, whatever that means in each of the religions. This is, however, not quite correct. Buddha never stated, that there was no God, but in his time he confined himself to speaking about insights concerning the human way. Buddha answered questions of Hindu priests about Brahma, the creative deity of the Hindus: "I know Brahma well and the world of Brahma, and the path leading to the world of Brahma and how Brahma reached that world, I know this too" - (*Digha Nikaya, 13th speech* - referring to spiritual experiences, not to simply knowing the books of the Hindus.)

The Brahma of the Hindus cannot simply be equated with the Father, taught by Jesus Christ. Brahma is rather one of the personifications of some of God's qualities, which came up in different cultures in the course of time . In any case, Brahma is not the name of negative forces. He speaks about the origin of everything, even of the Hindu deities. So, what is he speaking of? (Obviously for Buddha the origin and the goal were unmanifested. However, the unmanifested Nirvana or highest reality is not "nothing". It is simply beyond human imagination. Note: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam all know that it is of no use - or even forbidden - to make an image of God.

And here we suddenly find a parallel in **Christianity, Judaism and Islam** that is not so consciously recognized. All of these religions acknowledge that it is of no use, or even forbidden, to make an image of God – even if the reason behind this has been forgotten. In Judaism, it was not even permitted to directly utter the Hebrew name for God. See also our [page "Religion as a 'reconnection' of man with God"](#), specifically note ²⁾ on archetypes.

Now when we take a look at the oldest-known "monotheistic" religion – with its earliest precursors dating back many centuries further than the Jewish tradition – namely, the Zoroastrian religion in Central Asia, which we call "the religion of Noah before the flood" (<http://www.ways-of-christ.net/topics/parsism.htm>), then we still find everything clearly distinguished: "Ahu" as the impersonal, unmanifested but very real divinity, and the more well-known "Ahura Mazda" as the God regarded more as a being through a Cosmic Christ. This is not as widely known, even among today's Zoroastrians; rather, it was explored mere decades ago by representatives of this religion in India.

We've applied this to a certain extent in Christian mysticism, when the "Son" or *Logos* is seen as the first

created being, or the mirror in which God sees himself – just a human term, but one that communicates something very important, something that human language cannot clearly express. Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father except by me". This, too, is not usually understood in its fullest sense. (At that time, the God of the Old Testament was experienced more as a "God of the people", in more of a collective sense, and not so much as a personal counterpart of a human individual.)

The Gospels and the Revelation describe the "Father" as both starting creation and as being its final fulfilment (Alpha and Omega). He is said to be above creation and its qualities and it was not possible to reach it before Christ. Christian Mystics like Jakob Boehme, stated, according to their authentic experiences, that this God is not only above the creation of the physical creation, but also above beyond and above the "first, heavenly creation". ** The attempt that most scientific books make to compare religions without including those who have had deep spiritual experiences, will not help anyone much. Without this it is not even possible to find a language that can be understood on both sides. ***

The Buddhist Path leads to entering into "Nirvana", beyond the beyond - something which is, for most Buddhists, as 'far away' as the Mystical Union with God is 'far away' for most Christians.**** Nevertheless, Buddhism also teaches that a "Bodhisattva", one "liberated from reincarnations" can come down voluntarily to help the rest of mankind.

Christ ascended to the Father ("And the grave was empty..."; & Resurrection & Ascension), with the promise to come again. With Christ and his way, today a permeation from the highest divine realm beyond everything down to the physical level has become possible.

Rudolf Steiner might be worth mentioning at this point too. He said that Buddha brought teachings about the wisdom of love and that Christ then brought the power of love.

The power of love ultimately draws everything back – or rather, forward – to divine perfection. "Ask the Father in my name" – meaning, in accordance with him, through him, the Christian way leads to the One. Here the Buddha is seen as some kind of trailblazer.

One who wants to recognize reality, may ask Christ and/or Buddha himself on his/ her way!

Buddha in the "*Kalama Sutra*": "Let yourself not be led..., not by hearsay, ...traditions, ... opinions of the day, ...the authority of holy scriptures, ...mere reason and logical conclusions, fictitious theories and preferred opinions, ...impressions of personal advantages,...the authority of a master. But if You realize yourself...". (Real faith is more similar to recognition & conviction than to an intellectual concept.)

*) *The teachings the Buddha handed down himself can be found in the extensive translations of K.E. Neumann, "Die Reden des Buddha: mittlere Sammlung" (The speeches of the Buddha: medium collection; German; probably also translated into English); in the "längere Sammlung" (long collection) too.*

**) For people with theosophical usage it is mentioned that in theosophical terms, to be exact, the Nirvana or Atman is below the "paranirvanic" and "mahaparanirvanic" divine levels.

***) The Christian Mystic Master Ekkehart described his experiences like the Nirvana experience – without using this word -, but the difference was that for him it was connected with meeting God.

****) Returning to God with the essence from the way through the world is on the one hand a return to something, which was already there all the time. On the other hand it is something additional, which was not there before, like two congruent triangles. This paradox can only be understood through deepened mystical experience.

*****) There are also philosophical aspects. In Mahayana Buddhism, *Nagarjuna described in his commentary on the Prajnaparamita* that something can be looked at as true, or not true, or true and not true, or neither true nor not true – four categories instead of a simple dualistic either/or. Since reason is not capable of understanding this fully, it could lead to a person's attaining a type of enlightenment beyond this dualistic reasoning, resulting in a view from another level of consciousness. It is similar to the effects of the koans – paradoxical sayings, or parables – of Zen Buddhism (see above). In European philosophy there is another way to expand the mind beyond the old dualistic either/or: *Hegel's* dialectics of thesis and antithesis also includes the aspect of synthesis. It enables the mind to be trained to overcome contradictions or apparent contradictions, thus opening itself for the higher truth of God's spirit. Our Christian project has independently developed a similar possibility: different viewpoints may contain parts that are understandable and

compatible from the holistic perspective – which fit together (overcoming apparent contradictions [dichotomies]).

[Back to the index.](#)

Information: Jesus Christ and Hinduism.

Our additional pages concerning the other Religions are a contribution to better understanding and to the interreligious dialogue. Here we deal with the similarities and differences between Hindu schools and those in Christianity that are conscious of their own spiritual depth. It is not an attempt to extensively describe the Hindu Religion. But essential points will be discussed precisely.

Jesus Christ.

In teachings of Hindu origin one finds the term "Avatar(s)" at different stages: i.e. people that are not on earth for their own progress, but voluntarily, to contribute to the progress of a nation or mankind; as a drop "of divine completeness". However, the differences between consecutive "Avatars" in their opinion often melt into one another; while the Jewish and Christian opinion stresses the "God of history", the aspect of development and the special role of the Messiah in this connection (*excerpt from the chapter "In the beginning was the word..." in our main text*).

Nevertheless, this is a permissible *approach* to understand the task of Jesus Christ, in the light of the Indian mentality and vocabulary. Therefore Hindu yogis (masters) often recognize a greater role of Jesus than those of the modern Christian theologians, who look at Jesus as a simple man and social reformer. But there are also Hindus who think that Jesus was simply a teacher. One should consider that the spiritual depths of Christianity were partially lost and need to be made understandable again to make a fruitful dialogue with other Religions (at all) possible. (*This website works on it in its full texts **).

Yoga** and Christianity.

Considering the saying "Be (become) perfect, as Your heavenly father is perfect" (*Matthew 5,48*) the most interesting question of each religion is, where its practical paths lead to. In the context of Hinduism these paths are the many kinds of Yoga, which seek to lead to the divine perfection of the soul by mastering the outer and inner nature of man.

In this context there are European paths of spiritual learning which may include nervous or consciousness centres known in Yoga as "chakras" (...). One cannot automatically describe these tendencies as being non-Christian, as churches supposed. Ideas like these were already known to the Christian theosophists of the medieval age ([Johann Georg Gichtel](#)), and can now be experienced as really existing - just as the acupuncture points are not automatically "Taoist", because this points and lines can now be measured electrically and viewed histologically. (*Excerpt from "The holy Zeal" in the main text*). There is a book in German: Albrecht Frenz "Christlicher Yoga" (Christian Yoga), assuming that Christianity and Yoga are compatible.

However, for Christians the attitude is decisive: are exercises looked at as a preparation of oneself for God's influences, or does one falsely think, the perfection in God can be enforced by techniques (exercises for body and breath, singing Mantras = the power of sounds, concentration, meditation, ...)?

Another distinction for Christians: e.g. if concepts like "Christ power" occur in Yoga, does one look at the healing power of Christ as a part of him, over and above influencing the whole human being - or is it only experienced as an isolated cosmic force? If someone does not attune himself to Christ directly, how can he know that his experiences really relate to Christ? (*Partially from the chapter "The question of the miracles " from our main text*). *

There are also original Christian Ways instead of methods adapted from other sources; but they are still being worked out to suit our modern times. E.g. the old practice of the Orthodox monks of

Mount Athos/Greece ("kyrie-eleison", "Lord have mercy") would be a Christian breathing and mantra method, if defined in Indian terms (see *"The silence in the desert" in the main text*)*. There is also a specific Christian Method of meditating on the Gospels, as it is a basis of our main text and as it is described in an *extra page "...Christian Meditation" **.

***)The Indian word Yoga - literally "put to the yoke" - means seeking the reconnection with the origin, like the Latin word "re-ligion". Hindu methods of training body, mind and spirit.

Christian and Hindu types of mysticism.

Today, inwardly experiencing the crucifixion, the "midnight of the soul", the "mystical death", the transition through a "wilderness", without anything a human being could cling to— (that all known Christian mystics, e.g. Master Eckehart have felt in one way or the other) - also has a certain similarity to the peak experience of Yoga, the Nirvikalpa Samadhi or the experience of the emptiness of "Nirvana". However, Christian mysticism supplied the experience that in or behind this emptiness there is "something" more, indeed Christ or God. Aurobindo showed that it is possible to exceed "Nirvana" –into that which is behind it - also from an Indian point of view. On the Christian way, however, something of the abundance behind everything may remain from the first moment of the religious path because the being Christ, having passed through the earth, represents a bridge.

When somebody like Aurobindo is confronted with powers that seem to have connections to the development of Christ but the background is not there, it gives the impression of a difficult balancing act. It is not impossible by any means, however. One may remember the case of the Hindu boy *Sadhu Sundar Singh*, who did not know anything about Christianity; but who, after intensively asking inwardly for God, suddenly had an experience of the living Christ, later written down in books. Also during Hindu Tantric practices, people who were expecting Indian gods suddenly had a vision of Christ. "The spirit moves, where it wants to".

For a theology determined to Christianity as a religious community hardly relevant, but the more interesting for other cultural areas might be the hint of R. Steiner to try to see Christ as a sun-like being known to higher sages before his coming down to earth. (*Excerpt from the chapter "The crucifixion..." in the main text*). * Concerning the many Gods of the Hindus, one may consider that there is some later research suggesting that the "Gods" of many old cultures - as far as they have not been "special Gods of a tribe" or human heroes, were aspects of the one divine being, later adored as independent idols. So, the old theoretical descriptions like "polytheism" (Religion with several Gods) are not very meaningful. The Jews had - in the original Hebrew text - many different names for God and his qualities too. But they didn't go as far as to adore them as different Gods. E.g. the Zoroastrians (Parsees) also had a monotheistic (one god) belief. Among the schools of Hinduism, the "Vaishnavites" can be looked upon as a monotheist one.

In this context it is interesting to note that there are new schools of thought that do not agree with the general assumption of the natural, compulsory mortality of the body anymore, like Christ: (...) E.g. the Indian philosopher and Yogi *Aurobindo* and his spiritual partner, "*Mother*" *Mira Alfassa* searched in a similar direction.... (*Excerpt from the chapter "The resurrection" from the main text*). *

Teachings about "Karma" and God.

Hindus would call the Christian ways of social deeds and of charity "Karma Yoga" (Yoga of cleaning fate/destiny) or "Bhakti Yoga" (Yoga of love). Ways of recognition (including meditative work) could be compared with "Jnana Yoga".

One can really experience that life can become more of an organic whole if one adopts the attitude of getting a guided tour of life by God as conveyed by Christ. If one has an attitude of mechanically effective laws of destiny - in Hindu concepts: of the balance of "Karma" - life can continue more along these principles. Christ speaks of the working things out "down to the last penny" too; but he does not say that this has still to happen in the sense of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (as written in the Old Testament of the Bible). The new task of the individual is given the highest priority - God takes up only those possibilities, which may become fruitful for the person and his/her environment, when it becomes worked out.. Coping with the past is no longer an end in itself and it is no longer motivation for development. Assistance "from above" concerning the combination of man's various possibilities can be observed today. (*Excerpt from the chapter "The crucifixion" from the main text; there is also an extra page related to "teachings about karma and reincarnation"*) *

Ethical values.

The world religions are the most similar in their ethical principles and that is the area in which the dialogue has made most progress . E.g. the first prerequisite for success in the classical Yoga of Patanjali is "Yama": not to harm any living being in thoughts, words and deeds; not to be greedy; truthfulness; sexual purity; not simply accepting donations (being independent). The second stage is "Niyama": inner and outer purification, modesty, being unassuming, asceticism; generosity, readiness to sacrifice; study and adoration of the deity, fervour and faith. The Yogis teach that even the "battle field", in the book Bhagavad Gita, is the purifying battle within one's self. Obviously, there are parallels to the 10 Commandments and the teachings of Jesus. Hindus, Christians, and many other religions supported the project "World Ethos".

Holy scriptures.

The oldest religious basis is the Vedas, ascribed to the "Rishis" of the "Golden Age". Later, for instance, the epic of the Mahabharata was added, with its description of prehistoric occurrences - often looked on as myths - including wars, and therefore from a not so "golden" era. The wisdom literature of the Upanishads followed. The *Bhagavad Gita* is one of the most important sacred texts of the Hindus, the traditions of which combine the earlier Vedas with the philosophy of the Upanishads and yoga wisdom, and is part of the Mahabharata. Krishna, the hero of this didactic poem, is considered to be the Supreme Being manifesting himself in human form – an avatar (see above).

[Back to the index.](#)

Information: Jesus Christ, Taoism & Confucianism.

Our additional pages concerning the other Religions are a contribution to better understanding and to the interreligious dialogue. In this additional page we go into the similarities and differences between traditional Taoism, Confucianism and Christian teachings for those who are conscious of their own spiritual depth. It is not an attempt to describe the old Chinese religions extensively. But essential points will be discussed precisely.

In traditional Chinese Spirituality several similar sources meet:

1. The original teaching of the highest principle.

The original teaching of the highest principle, Tao, "about which nothing can be said", is also the original unity before the separation of the polarities Yin and Yang*) and after that of the "5 elements"*. , This original unity is that which is behind the manifestations of the universe. The Christian missionaries, e.g. the Jesuits, found this highest principle to correspond with God, although the Franciscan and Benedictine monks and finally the Pope disagreed. On one hand the "Tao" is not in keeping with the new experience of God as a Father which one can contact personally, as Jesus taught. On the other hand it is possible, that it is an older way of seeking and experiencing God, as it was possible in ancient China.

*) Yin is an expanding, "female" principle - e.g. in the sympathetic nerve; Yang a constricting, "male" principle - e.g. in the parasympathetic nerve, both working together. The "5 elements of earth, water, wood, fire and metal" correspond to the "4 elements or characteristics of earth, water, air, fire = heat", as the old European alchemy and esoteric schools taught it. (There were Christian alchemists too.) The Chinese 5th Element, the so-called "metal" was sometimes called "prima Materia" in Europe (Latin for "original substance") - compare it with modern elementary particle physics - old Indian theosophical and Anthroposophical sources name it "ether" and ascribe it to contain several levels, resulting finally in 7 aggregate states. Today one would not relate such old ideas to religion in a narrower sense. However, it was not simply a speculative philosophy; it is an ancient type of advanced cosmology with an almost natural scientific nature - it does not matter that today's methods are different.

It does not alter the fact that the practices of the old Chinese and later Taoist masters show a spiritual nature. The old insights about the role of "elements" and forces in the body were taken up, because one can hardly bypass physical imperfection on the way to more spiritual perfection - in a holistic sense. That is a style of spirituality that does not intend to withdraw from the earth, unlike some other eastern spiritual traditions. Striving for perfection as such would not be contrary to the Christian teaching of the redemption. It has often been forgotten that Jesus said, "Be (become) perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (*Matthew 5,48*). However, the methods are different. The Early Christians knew that one can prepare and open oneself actively for the influence of God. However, Christians also knew all the time that it is not possible to force the mercy of God by activities like this: God is free too.

Between heaven, Chinese "T'ien", the earth and man - all stemming from the same original unity - Chinese teachers saw similarities ('correspondences') everywhere. (The "7 Free Arts" of the High Schools of the European medieval age included similar teachings). **So all striving was directed to the harmony of human life with "Heaven" - as the "highest Power" of the manifested world - and the earth.** This shows the religious nature of that aspiration too, apart from the spiritual nature. Re-ligion (from Latin) means reconnection to the origin of everything. Nevertheless, from the Christian viewpoint the **Creator** is the origin and the end of everything and Jesus Christ is the link, helping us to connect with God.

In the course of time, people venerated several "separate Gods": Heaven, Gods of the soil, local spirits and saints. The term "polytheism", used for such religions, is not very meaningful; because the "Gods" were originally characteristics of the one highest principle, as can also be found in some other religions. (A special matter is the adoration of saints - but that will seem familiar to some Christian Churches.)

2. Taoism.

That which has been described so far is the common ground of the later schools of Lao-tse und Con-fu-tse (Confucius) - historians think they lived around 500 BC. Taoism (*Lao-Tse: among others the book "Tao-te-ching"*) taught "To act with the meditative attitude of doing nothing" (Woo-Wai). That is, nothing is done by the egoist and intellectual part of man, but by the natural instincts of the good core of man - being in harmony with nature. This attitude would result in some kind of natural ethics of altruism and modesty. This good core is not automatically identical with Jesus Christ, who can take shape in man, and is active there (*John 15: "...Remain in me and I will remain in you"*). But today's theologians cannot deny that persons of a different faith have a good core - the similar ethics of most religions show that "the Good" has caught on everywhere. Even the Holy Spirit "blows wherever he pleases" (*John 3*).

Taoists were always practitioners, not theoreticians. Taoism makes use of:

- Asceticism. This occurs within all religions. But there are also practices for the sublimation or transformation of sexuality (e.g. *Mantak Chia, "Tao Yoga" and "Tao Yoga of love"*). The old eastern paths often start "from the bottom to the top", unlike European/western paths, which start mainly "from the top to the bottom" today, meaning "from the consciousness".
- Exercises for body, breath, and concentration for awaking and directing the live energy, or "Chi". Since the scientific investigation of acupuncture and electro-acupuncture, the existence of that live energy has been proved. It is not important that these scientists have not yet been able to understand the exact nature of that phenomenon. The "Meridians" of acupuncture have now been proven to exist, even in the tissue, as "empty channels". So this life force is not "Taoist", as some Christians thought, but simply human. In the old Greek and early Christian era it was called "Pneuma", a Greek word meaning the breath and the life force as well - the breath of life, blown into man by God -; and it was also used to mean the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit is in the context of Jesus Christ. So, if someone does not attune himself to Jesus Christ, how should he know that he is experiencing the Holy Spirit which Jesus announced?
- Furthermore, the Taoist methods include - like the Indian Yoga - the meditative absorption into the Origin, to go beyond the limitation of life. The alchemistic search for immortality plays a role too.

In this way, dividing all things into two polarities, yin and yang, may keep the mind within these polarities; but a seeker may successfully aspire to go beyond them, into a mystical state of consciousness.

3. Confucianism.

Con-fu-tse (Confucius) similarly recommends people to adjust themselves to "the cosmic ethical law". But instead of the rather individualist way of the Taoists he searched for an educational system of morals for the whole society. Confucianists worked on the conscious cultivation and perfection of a good human core - by habits and by taking others as an example:

If one learns love and reverence etc., an ethical society should result.

- Since ancient times, e.g. murder, theft, prostitution and cults with images have been forbidden in China.

- Like almost all World Religions Con-fu-tse taught "... charity. Don't do what You don't want to be done" ("Do as You would have done to you")

- This includes self-control, humanity, goodness;

- respectively the ethical virtues: goodwill, legality, appropriate respectful manners (also concerning the ancestors), generosity, wisdom, uprightness;

- double qualities according to the book Shu-djing: friendly and dignified, mild and firm, straight and polite, orderly and respectful, docile and bold, upright and meek, indulgent and moderate, strong and reliable, courageous and fair.

- They strove for an attitude of contentment beyond of anger, grief and fun.

There are timeless values in the old teachings and values which were cultivated at the time of the empire.

4. So this two Chinese schools had things in common, but some points of controversy too. In spite of that they complemented each other in their teachings. This was even true in their later experience with Buddhism, which came from India with its teaching directed to overcoming earthly suffering.

Today's Chinese temples, e.g. in Hong Kong, may give the impression of some simple search for oracles and rites for happiness in life. This is simply because not all people know of the original spiritual depth - like the majority of all other religions.

Concerning the Chinese tradition, some methods should be mentioned which are not directly religious: the oracle book I Ching; the Chinese horoscopes; "Feng shui" - the Chinese version of Geomancy and "Baubiologie-" (healthy construction of buildings); and the previously mentioned traditional Chinese medicine.

[Back to the index.](#)

The relation between Christianity and Shintoism (Kami no michi) - With general viewpoints concerning natural religions.

Our additional pages concerning the other Religions are a contribution to the inter-religious dialogue. On the part of Christianity, the basis is independent research, including the old spiritual depth and modern investigations of consciousness. The old Japanese Shinto Religion (Kami no michi) is not described comprehensively, but some viewpoints are given which are important for this purpose.

Shinto is originally one of the Natural Religions, which are related to one another all around the world and which are older than the well known World Religions like Buddhism and Christianity.

Natural Religions.

The origin of the Natural Religions is a time when human beings mainly had a consciousness different from the intellect dominating today. *Jean Gebser, author of the book "Ursprung und Gegenwart" (German)* would name this level of awareness the "mythical consciousness". The investigator into consciousness *Julian Jaynes, author of "The origin of consciousness..." (English,*

German) would name it a "bicameral mind", with a more direct communication between both hemispheres of the brain.*) The right hemisphere allowed a holistic perception of appearances of all kinds, for example of nature, as "beings". The left hemisphere translated it, that people heard their "voices". European myths with elemental spirits and fairy-tale figures originate in that consciousness too and are not simply fantasy. This old kind of perception disappeared with the spread of writing and reading that replaced oral tradition. In the European and middle east antiquity around 500 BC it had almost disappeared as a phenomenon of social relevance.** Since the forefathers of the mythical age often also adored local or tribal spirits, ancestors or Gods, the early mingling of cultures was another reason for the fact that the older awareness no longer worked without mistakes. The mistakes themselves - making this kind of perception less useful - accelerated this process.

It would be not correct to evaluate these steps of consciousness, as if the newer intellect would be more valuable and that products of the older way of perceiving things were useless today. Indeed, new abilities came up by this process, but other capabilities were lost, which cannot be replaced by the mere intellect. Nevertheless, it is possible to keep the new analytical mind and renew the older, lost abilities of imaginative synthesis consciously; for instance by meditating. So an integrated consciousness can emerge which harmonizes both hemispheres of the brain. Today many problems go to the limits of the intellect's capacity. Obviously it is impossible to understand and resolve the real complexity of ecological problems on the mere intellectual level: *Dörner (Germany)* spoke of a "multifactorial consciousness", necessary for understanding and resolving ecological problems in time; but the students he tested were almost entirely lacking that consciousness. Today's mankind can indeed get impulses from such pre-intellectual traditions too - without being able to simply take up the old type of that mythical consciousness. So fairy-tales are still valuable for children today: this is helpful in stopping the early atrophy of the right hemisphere's functions.

In Early Christianity the "gifts of the Holy Spirit" played an important role (*among others John 16; Cor. 12, 7-11; Acts 2, 17-20. See also the chapter "The first Whitsun event..." in the English main text and some other languages.*) The Holy Spirit is a divine force which allows human creativity to expand beyond itself. Although the Spirit is not just a mere activity of the right brain hemisphere, it uses that too. However, the Holy Spirit is connected with Jesus Christ. Even though Jesus said to his disciples: "The wind (Spirit) blows, wherever he pleases" - if someone does not attune himself to Jesus Christ, how should he know that he is experiencing the Holy Spirit which Jesus announced?

Shinto.

Shinto or Kami-no-michi means "Way of the (heavenly and or venerable) spirits". Unlike our findings concerning other "polytheist" religions, which originally adored one God with manifold "qualities", later adored as separated Gods - here such an origin could not be found.

While the creation myths of some other peoples start with the creation of heaven and earth (and under-world), the Japanese creation myth takes this for granted. The Gods then emerge spontaneously in that image and dwell in all 3 worlds; on earth human beings dwell too, in the under-world there are also many of the dead and demons. Venerable ancestors were also added to the Japanese realm of the Gods. Even though the top of the kami = of the huge realm of the Gods is a Goddess of the Sun, Amaterasu. She is not looked upon as the origin of everything, but was created by the Gods Izanagi and Izanami as ordered by a council of Gods.

The veneration takes place at home or in "Shrines" (temples), through defined prayers (thanksgiving and requests) and by sacrificing rice, rice wine and symbols for animals, which are usually no longer sacrificed themselves.

Shinto was combined with a cult of the state and the emperor, which had to be given up officially after world war two.

In Natural Religions shamans with special knowledge and mediumistic abilities usually play a central role - but the Shinto cult is led by priests.

Ethical teachings: There was a list of sins; in contact with other religions ethical principles were developed, similar to those in all World religions.

In Japan, the various religions are not as separated from each other as is common, for instance, in Europe. In Japan many people are members of several religious communities simultaneously.

*) Jaynes himself gave the impression that the old, natural functions of the brain would be a sufficient explanation for the experiences with divine or natural forces. Our findings showed that this is not correct. His findings don't give an answer to the question of what the perceived beings "are". Neither "Gods" nor God can be found in the brain. It is a special level of reality and the brain can only interpret it one way or another.

Especially the previously mentioned mythical way of perception was not capable of producing fantasies of such beings artificially as the modern consciousness can do. Likewise, spiritual dreams or meditation experiences sometimes mirror something much different to simple impressions of daily life.

***) In Europe, for instance, the time at which the epic of Homer was composed belonged to the mythical era and the later time of the Greek philosophers already shows the intellectual consciousness.

[Back to the index.](#)

Notes on Ancient Egyptian Religion

The Ways of Christ internet project's additional pages on various other religions are both a contribution to a better understanding of these religions as well as to inter-religious dialogue - as far as the religions still exist.

Similarities and differences between ancient Egyptian religiousness and a Christianity which is again becoming aware of its own spiritual depths are discussed. In particular, the relationship between the various ancient Egyptian concepts of God and the Jewish-Christian-Islamic notion of God is examined. We do not claim to offer a comprehensive account of ancient Egyptian religion and its development - which would not be possible even given the current state of published research.

Traditional school knowledge of ancient Egypt, which depicts ancient Egypt as having a religion with many gods (i.e. polytheism) - according to Christianity a "heathen" practice - is too generalized in face of the current state of research, and thus does not do justice to the highly developed search for God in ancient Egypt.

The early Egyptian tradition of "Atum"- the initially unmanifested creator of the world - is just one illustration of the stages of development toward a belief in God that comes to light in various forms and on various levels.

Additionally, it has long been known that for instance the pharaoh Tutanchaton / Echnaton of the new empire introduced the (monotheistic) worship of God, named "Aten". In light of his close affiliation with the long and well-recorded teachings and practices of Egyptian priests which the pharaoh had to study and successfully complete, it cannot be assumed that this was a momentary, arbitrary idea of a single person - although this alone would certainly be of great importance for this examination. There is reason to assume that this bold deed also stemmed from a special, [deeper?] understanding of the written records - an important revelation which possibly arose from inspiration, which then later, to put it in present-day terms, caused controversy for theological interpretations and interests. (The next pharaoh restored the traditional practices back to the priests.)

As we have found in other ancient religions, more assiduous pupils can sometimes find other lessons which go beyond the widespread polytheistic image ("a deity for everything"). For example, some of the many "gods" may have been "names of God" which stood for a specific character trait of the One True God. Just as the planets are assigned their roles from one sun, the gods - indeed, fittingly often named after the planets - take their role from the "father of all gods". According to ancient thinking, these "gods" had counterparts (preferably looked at from the right hemisphere of the brain) - not only in planets, but also days, colors, musical notes, letters (vowels), bodily organs, etc.; thus, they were not merely the planets themselves, but rather cosmic principles and laws created by God. One crux of these teachings concerning analogies was the Tabula Smaragdina, which, in short, roughly means: "As above (in the cosmos, or heaven), so shall it be below (on the earth, or for a human being, man as an image); as below, so shall it be above; to properly connect below and above, that is the work of the sun..." (Yes, again, that which Echnaton later called Aten -

not simply the physical sun, but the center of all being, the "gold" which Christian alchemists later referred to; the archetype of divine perfection...)

These analogy-teachings are still referred to today as the "hermetic tradition" by various circles which deal with this subject. Like all traditions, this tradition surely underwent some changes and amendments over the course of time, in several countries, and much of this may very well also have been lost. Hermes - a later Greek name -, who is credited with these teachings, was the handed down version of the ancient Egyptian wise man of antiquity, Thoth (Djehuty). In this case, we find that in all likelihood an actual human being was also worshiped and later seen as one of the gods, whereas today he would be considered more of a prophet and great teacher or master. Here, again, is something which does not fit the classical image of "polytheism". The Koran also recognizes that there were other prophets before Mohammed, and Muslims may one day discover that Egypt also had a real prophet or two.

Very old written records, which ancient Egyptians themselves traced back to pre-dynastic times, also depict what were likely actual human wise men who were (later?) speculated to have had connections to the divine, which is especially interesting for the issue at hand: Father Osiris, Mother Isis, and Son Horus. Osiris (or the equivalent godly figure), or later Ra or Aten, may have been one and the same in various recorded experiences and descriptions from various time epochs. Here, God shines through; for Rudolf Steiner, this is also "Christ" - since, according to the Gospel of John, Christ already existed with God (created by God) in the very beginning before he was born as a human being (*John 17:5*). In this practice of thinking in analogies, it was natural to detect a glimmer of divinity or a characteristic that surpasses man - or the other way around. These analogies did not necessarily have a blasphemous character, as if someone today were wrongly considered a deity - never mind the fact that, with time, people no longer knew exactly what such beings actually stood for.

Thus, precisely in light of the myth of Osiris, there is no solid evidence of an actual "polytheistic religion". The examples given here show that at several times in Egypt's history at least some beginning steps were made toward a belief in God that would seem related to that of Abrahamic religions; however, this does not automatically mean that God could have been experienced with the same closeness as in the way made possible through Jesus.

Even if religious studies have given relatively little attention to the illustrated relationships up to now, there is reason to be cautious about making premature judgments about this culture. It may be, as Professor J. J. Hurtak claims in "Keys of Enoch", that *Isaiah 19:19** - that there will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of Egypt - refers to the Great Pyramid. The pyramids were clearly erected with the full extent of knowledge of that time - as was the case for old Christian architectural monuments. This kind of "tomb" is also like the tomb of an entire cultural epoch; a witness to the ancient human search for God and eternity that outlasts human life. Christ announced the fulfilment of this search and showed the way. In his own way, the prophet Mohammed likewise announced the resurrection of believers at the last trial. Today, it is not always possible to understand constructions which were built in a time when life was entirely different than today. There is nothing coincidental about such monuments. (Incidentally, for some ancient sites, the field of archaeology would do well to remember its own old insight - that it may be better to leave things where they are found, especially so that later scientists might have the chance to explore the remnants with better knowledge.)

The ancient Egyptian culture is indeed no longer as prevalent as other religions discussed on these pages. At best, today there are a few people who seek to recapture Egyptian life wisdom in the form of seminars, for example. However this culture also attained great importance for later cultures, for example via subsequent Greek culture and philosophy. And Moses' contacts with top-class learned Egyptians were surely not meaningless for him, either, even if he was following his own belief in God.

**Isaiah 19 is generally worth reading, as this prophecy points to the future reconciliation between believers from different lands, and could thus defuse some of today's misguided animosities when it is received*

without prejudice. The Koran, too, points out that God tolerates different religious communities, that everyone will find their way back to Him, and that He himself will make the final decision where there was once disagreement (Sura 5:48 / Egyptian verse numeration).

[Back to the index.](#)

Remarks Concerning Early European Religions

The additional pages of the "Ways of Christ" Internet project address various different religions and serve to contribute toward a better understanding of these religions - rather than rashly categorizing everything as foreign and negative, simply because it "sounds" different than what Christians are accustomed to. This page, dealing with early European religions that were more or less supplanted by Christianity, will address their relationship to other religions and to a Christianity that is becoming aware (again) of its own spiritual roots. It will bring the similarities to light, as well as the differences.

[Assessment of the Greek Religion](#)
[Remarks Concerning the Early Roman Religion](#)
[Old Germanic Religion](#)
[Celtic Religion](#)
[Early Slavic Religion](#)
[Early Baltic Religion](#)
[Early Basque Religion](#)
[Early Finnish Religion](#)

Assessment of the Greek Religion

Thanks to ancient historians and the preservation of mythology, the Greek religion of historic times is relatively well known. Many writings of the Greek philosophers were already known to early Islamic scholars, were translated by them and found their way into the thinking of early Christian theologians. (Today, the realm of Greek gods is perceived more as a complete work of art rather than a religion, as it is hardly practiced as such any more.) Still, there are some points that are not generally known.

The variety of Greek "**gods**" is accounted for by contributions of the pre-Grecian Mediterranean population and the immigrant Indo-European Greeks, as well as by the various successive [epochs of differing consciousness](#). This resulted in different schools of thought at later times, too.

The god Apollo stood for a life marked by temperance and the observance of godly precepts. He can be compared - among others - with the Germanic Baldur ([see below](#)), a particularly revered, sun-like central deity in antiquity. Zeus, regarded as the most powerful god of the heavens in classical Greece, was not the first central deity; rather, by Hesiod's account, the veneration of Uranos (Heaven) goes back even further, superseded by Cronus and later by Zeus. Cronus, for example, corresponds with the planet Saturn and the characteristics ascribed to it in early analogic thinking; likewise, Zeus is reminiscent of Jupiter and its characteristics (cf. Ares/Mars, Aphrodite/Venus, Hermes/Mercury). Traditional accounts of certain events or periods of change that were considered connected in some way with a particular planet also can play a role here, in contrast to the widespread scientific view that the myths are pure poetic fantasy. If anything, these "gods" - that take different forms in the various Indo-European religions - correspond more with an earlier framework of characteristics as today's astrologists, for instance, seek to adapt. This raises the question, "Characteristics of what, or from whom?" In several earlier religions, there are indications - in the absence of scientific prejudice - that the knowledge of a central creator god could go back further than the veneration of multiple "gods", even if there were not automatically the same possibility as today for entering into a direct relationship with him. Even early Greek

philosophers recognized and criticized how, over the course of time, the "gods" became increasingly human in their "deeds."

In other ways, figures like Heracles (Hercules) were not originally "gods" in the traditional sense, but rather "heroes" or humans whose heroic "deeds" were illustrated and often symbolically recast as steps along their spiritual path. This angle has been studied more by certain depth psychologists than by religious scholars.

The early Greek mysteries of Demeter and Dionysus, in particular, represented another course of a spiritual path with different origins - as well as the subsequent Hellenistic mystery cults, which practiced secret ceremonies rich in symbolism.

Doctrines of **morality** did not directly appear until later (Hesiod, Socrates), but a certain morale toward life can be detected in earlier mythology.

Like other cultures, the Greek had differently developed perceptions of human life after death, whether in the surroundings of the burial place, or in an Underworld, or - for the chosen few - in a paradisaical Elysium or an Island of the Blessed.

Remarks Concerning the Early Roman Religion

The records available for researching the pre-Christian, Roman religion give us reason to assume that the oldest form of the religion of the Indo-European Italic people who immigrated to Italy was no longer fully preserved. Traces of the creation myth - as is still discernable in related religions - is not so easily found in the Roman tradition. The Romans later adopted many of the influences from the then-known world.

The earliest known Roman belief was based on distinctly mundane "higher powers" that manifested their presence ("*numen*") in objects - independent of mythical stories, images or temples. In Jupiter, we find something comparable to Zeus, the Greek god of the heavens (see above); a similar case is with Mars, the god of war, who was later synthesized with Quirinus, the Sabine god of war. Further gods fitting this type were Vulcan, Saturn, Neptune and the goddess of Earth, Tellus. These gods were sought after for their influence over ordinary matters ("I give, so that you will give"), while other, negative forces had to be warded off. A distinctive feature of the Roman religion was taking abstract concepts like faithfulness, harmony, hope and victory, and turning these into divine beings.

The Romans adopted further gods, such as Minerva, as well as the construction of temples, from the Etruscans who likely originated in Asia Minor. At this point, Jupiter, Juno and Minerva were the foremost deities.

Greek gods and heroes continued to be adopted - as they appear in the *Sibylline Books* - and were identified with their Roman counterparts to the extent that this was feasible. The Phrygian, Egyptian and Middle Eastern traditions also were adopted - and, later, even Hellenistic mystery cults. In this way, a certain emotional ornamentation developed out of what was previously a very modest faith.

Along with Caesar and Augustus came the imperial cult, in which the emperor demanded deification of himself, both during his lifetime and after his death.

There is also a record of a temple to the "Unknown God." Some assume that - amidst the dizzying array of deified beings - there was indeed some knowledge of the true God; still, that does not mean that there would have been an appropriate way to connect oneself to him.

In view of this variety of deified beings, it should also be noted that both Christians and Muslims recognize that there are certain beings between God and man - namely, the angels; and some Christian churches also recognize the "saints."

Romans did not so much learn ethical principles by way of teaching, but rather through practical experience - for example, learning a sense of honesty and reliability through religious rites or through sophisticated laws. However, an element of faith in the government was also connected with these laws, and in many cases the results can be seen in countries that adopted the Roman law.

At any rate, in the oldest known Roman religion, the fate of the dead - in an Underworld - was not considered a particularly appealing prospect.

In the fourth century, on the initiative of Emperor Constantine, the cult of Roman gods was replaced by Christianity.

Old Germanic Religion

This article is not an attempt to recount the Germanic religion and its development in its entirety - which, given the limited scholarly findings, would not be possible, anyway. Nor will it explore the role - or abuses - of Germanic traditions as seen in more recent German history. Instead, it will examine only the original, spiritual core of this pre-Christian religion - whose potential for abuse should not prove to be more or less than that of other religious traditions. The better one understands the religion's original intent, the less chance it stands of being abused.

The records and traditions from the pre-Christian era that could be traced in Germany were sparse, and the Roman accounts were subjective. Researchers have thus tended to use the written Scandinavian version. The Icelandic *Edda*, or both of the *Eddur* which are known of today, were written down based on the oral account in the 11th, 12th or 13th century, a time when Christianity had already made a considerable advance in the rest of Europe. Since the people of Iceland voted to accept Christianity, a Germanic priest could automatically become a Christian minister. It was considered possible that some features were filtering in from Christianity; however, there is no evidence to prove this. Today, at least the older *Poetic Edda* is considered authentic. We do not know how old the tradition itself is that underlies the book. It must also be considered that the realm of spirituality and religion can consist of spiritual realities that are, by necessity, experienced in different ways in different parts of the world. People can even experience levels of culture or developments of consciousness in human history (cf. e.g. *Jean Gebser, "Ursprung und Gegenwart", The Ever-Present Origin*) independently from each other, yet similarly. Even if insights from Christian sources were to enter into these developments, it would show the possibility for learning from one another - even beyond the borders of culture - without any one tradition having to relinquish its autonomy. This can be seen in direct contrast to the unfortunately rather violent Christian missionary work done in Charlemagne's empire - no doubt one of the biggest transgressions of Christianity, which was fused with the government at that time and clearly forgot its non-violent roots.*

In the *Edda*, various levels of development are brought together through an openness to know the deeper meaning of myths. For example, on the level of mankind's oldest **creation myth** - at a time in which Ginnungagap was the vast primordial void - we find the creation of the world or of levels of existence. Then the fervor of Surtr's (spiritual) fire - "the light from Muspelheim" - struck the cold ice / water in Niflheim ("*land of mist*"), and the "primeval giant" Ymir was brought forth - a foreshadowing of creation. In battles at the end of the world, the world is supposed to melt again in Surtr's flames. Such characteristics gave some authors good reason to draw parallels to the Creator God; however, it does not automatically mean that the people of that time were able to experience God's nearness in the way Jesus taught. Sparks from Muspelheim also created the

stars in the heavens. Ymir's sweat and blood became the sea and rivers, his flesh became the earth, his bones became the mountains, his hair became the trees, and his skull became the heavenly sphere. The giants were created in cooperation with the "primeval cow" Audumla - Earth in its motherly nature (and others?).

This introduces another level - the level of the "gods." They first appear in the vortex of "fire" and "water" (see above), at a time when the heavens, the earth and the giants already existed. The "gods" - like Odin and his brothers, Wili and We - gained authority over the existing world. If "giants" represent raw, formless, natural powers, then the "triumph of the gods" could be seen as the mastery of natural powers through the spirit. The "gods" were active in creation, but they had to let the ongoing progress of the world - and the end of the world - take its course.

The creation of the first people can be interpreted from the traditions in different ways. One account has one man and one woman - if these were not actually giants - created from the flesh under the primeval giant's arm. Another account ascribes the creation of the first people, "Ask and Embla," to the gods mentioned in the previous paragraph.

The different areas of creation between Heaven and Earth and the Underworld - each with their different entities - are connected together through the "Yggdrasil", the World Tree that can be found in different cultures and which seems to be found illustrated on Irminsuls (columns). This realm of the gods itself contains another development. The veneration of Baldur, for example, is relatively old; so, the veneration of the sun-like deity - who stood in the center of their other "gods" and godly characteristics and was without impurities - was placed into this familiar context in a way that was feasible during the mythical time emerging then. Baldur, however, was traditionally the son of Odin - as presented at the time of the *Edda*. He was "shot with an arrow," at the prompting of Loki, adversary of the gods. It is prophesied that - at the end of time, when a new world emerges - Baldur will reappear and reign eternally as the prince of peace. Here we see that it is not the physical sun that is meant - since it was already shining. Instead, this is dealing more with a largely lost ["mythical" way of assessing divine and natural powers with the help of the right side of the brain](#). It was suspected that the mythology of Baldur echoes the account of Christ and his prophetic reappearance.

Parallel to the Greco-Roman period, when Enlightenment was further developed than during the mythical period, the veneration of gods like Wōden / Odin - "leader of the hunt" and god of the clouds and wind - stood in the foreground in the Germanic world. With the interesting term "world spanning", which the earlier *Edda* uses on one occasion, it does not seem to be apparent whether Odin is meant; this would have to be researched further. Odin was compared by the Romans to their god Mercury (the Greek Hermes), the messenger of the gods and the god of language and interaction among humans. He has also been compared with the Egyptian deity, Thoth - though we consider it more likely that he was actually a prehistoric human wise man. Still, we could raise the question whether Wōden was originally a human, spiritual wise man. He is recorded to have a grandfather. A song relates that he hung on a tree for nine days, occupying himself with runes (written characters with symbolic traits). This looks more like something that would be done to master a step along his spiritual path. He subsequently created one teaching after the other out of his mind. It must still be considered, though, that in the farthest corners of Europe, the thinking was cultivated by way of analogies and symbols - up to the newer scientific-technical period. This can still be seen subtly today; and, with its help, it has been attempted to maintain findings from the older periods for use in a reason-oriented period. For example, the cultures saw related qualities of 4, 7 or 12, whether these were planets, colors, tones, letters, human characters or organs, or even the "gods" - some of whose names can be found today in our days of the week. In this practice of thinking in analogies, it was natural to detect a glimmer of divinity or a characteristic that surpasses man - or the other way around. These analogies did not necessarily have a blasphemous character, as if someone today were wrongly considered a deity - never mind the fact that, with time, people no longer knew exactly what beings like Wōden (or heroes such as Heracles / Hercules in Greece) actually stood for.

The "race of gods" known as the Wanen and the Asen may be connected with the different peoples who came into contact with another - the Wanen in connection with the primordial Megalith culture ("giants?"), and the Asen with the newer Indo-European (Indo-Germanic) horse cultures from the East.

The jötunn (also "giants?" "frost giants?"), who were driven into the High North - perhaps Finns - have certainly made their contribution, too, and are mentioned in the *Edda*. They worshipped a supreme god of the heavens and otherwise had a rather shamanistic religion. Shamans concerned themselves with natural powers - among other things - and viewed these powers as entities (like "dwarves," for example), while also examining their relationship to humans. Even in Islam, such examples do not contradict their strict "One God" religion, because it is something entirely different than a god (the "jinn").

The Germanic **ethic** was oriented toward responsibility for one's own actions and loyalty to the tribal community, in which free adults (men) first had to enter. There was hardly any other option - which is evident in the harsh behavior toward those who were excluded and no longer welcome. (But there was no "nation" that automatically would have governed the community using the help of legal articles - as had been the case with the Romans, for example; instead, decisions were reached together by the group. There is historic record of princes being elected, but it is uncertain whether this was also practiced in earlier days.) According to the Roman account, moral principles concerning the sexes were also closely observed. As in other places during the same epochs, there were also archaic elements, such as vendettas - which could be avoided, however, by reaching a settlement. Thus, reparations also played a significant role.

The teaching concerning life after death and rebirth - which is found in almost all ancient cultures - was prevalent.

* In the Christian era following the Saxon Conquest, the book *Heliland* came out - a rewritten gospel that attempts to make the gospel more easily understandable from the viewpoint of Saxon attitude. The heroic aspects of Jesus' life are brought to the fore, more so than the aspect of suffering. On a related note, portions of a rewritten *Genesis* are also available. Something else occurred during the Christianization of the Goths, who received Christianity through prisoners of war. A testament from this period is *Wulfila's Bible Translation*.

Celtic Religion

The early Celtic religious-spiritual tradition cannot yet be portrayed in full. This article will first take a closer look at its relationship to other religions.

The collection of legends and similar accounts that still exist were mostly written in the period from the third through the fifteenth centuries in Ireland (e.g. *The Book of Leinster*), where there are remnants of a living oral tradition even to this day. It is quite possible that the teachings and practices of the early Celtic druids (not originating from the word "oak," but from *dru* = solid and *uid* = seeing / knowing - that is, "the wise ones") were not consistent in the entire Celtic world, but that there were different trends. The Irish tradition alone gives account of five consecutive culture epochs and peoples in Ireland. This tradition was likely influenced by earlier knowledge concerning man's relationship to natural powers and the cosmos, particularly originating in the early European Megalithic culture. This pre-Celtic era can be detected in the language used for naming certain rivers and regions in Europe, which could have originated in an earlier language similar to present-day Basque.

Celtic "gods" were still explicitly referred to in old Roman documents (like those of Caesar). The earlier gods generally appear to have been Indo-European - even if they are not always as easy to equate with Roman gods in the way that was common to the Romans (*Lat.*: Mercury, Apollo, Minerva, Jupiter, Mars). What is meant, for instance, by the Celtic "*Dagda* = the good god"? Or

"Esus = the respected one?" Ogmios corresponds to the Roman Mercury, Taranis to the Germanic god of thunder, and mother goddesses are also found in various places. Depending on the legend, the creation of parts of the Earth is attributed to giants, saints or elven creatures - each of whom, according to scholars, probably held the position of a deity in earlier mythology (cf. the Germanic "primeval giant", Ymir, above). The Celts considered themselves descendents of "Dispater," a god of the Underworld. (Or does it refer to a god who withdrew himself into the Underworld or into man's unconscious as a result of a change in consciousness?) For the most part, such questions are not being asked or satisfactorily answered in the context of religious studies.

The religion of the Celts in the Bronze Age and even later draws parallels with the older shift of the Germanic tradition mentioned above. "Baldur" (see "Old Germanic Religion", above) corresponds with the Celtic "Belenus." It cannot be proven - at least not using an impartial approach - that the pre-Christian Celts never had knowledge of a central deity; if there had been such a central deity, that would not automatically equate it with the way that has been made possible today to draw near to God.

The Celtic **ethic** of antiquity could perhaps be summarized as follows: venerating god, abstaining from evil, cultivating masculine virtues as a man (and feminine virtues as a woman). Accordingly, some people sought to more accurately identify their duties. Human sacrifices also played a role. However, this attempt to "reconcile the gods" could be the result - as in other cultures in the world - of a period of degeneration in the original religion.

Furthermore, the Celts believed in an immortal soul and an immortal cosmos; but this was overshadowed by suspicions of possible events such as "the sky falling."

It appears that Saint Columbcille, the Celtic wise man who adopted Christianity, was not so much concerned about the demonization of his early Celtic beliefs; rather, it appears that his background made him more understanding of what Christianity could bring, in comparison to certain other Christian orientations. For example, the earlier Celtic Christianity was more nature-oriented and, therefore, more "sustainable" and open to the future than the Christianity of the Late Middle Ages - which also supplanted this Celtic Christianity. Currently, there are a few small projects - for instance, in France - where an attempt is being made to reconcile the Celtic tradition with Christianity. (Some other "modern traditions" from the Anglo-Saxon world - like Halloween, for example, which originate from the Celts - do not have much to do with the real, earlier Celts anymore.)

In this context, we can also reference the early Christian grail movement, based on the legend of Robert de Boron concerning Joseph of Arimathea and Mary Magdalene, who supposedly brought the grail containing the blood Jesus shed on the cross to France or England. Further references are Wolfram von Eschenbach's tale of the legendary King Arthur's round table, as well as Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Even here, elements from Celtic legends play a role. (There are certain modern groups today that associate themselves with the grail movement but are not the historic movement. This article will not endeavor to explore the "right" or "wrong" connections to the early tradition.)

Early Slavic Religions

Apart from some later regional forms, very little is certain about any pre-Christian Slavic religions – especially their early periods.

Perun, the god of lightning, was likely identical to the god of thunder in other Indo-European religions, and hence a form of god of the heavens. The fact that Dashbog, the god of the sun, was considered the son of Svarog, the god of fire, could suggest a relationship to the Germanic Baldur myth (see there).

The underworld of the dead, with its god or guardian Veles, was regarded as a kind of paradise during the later period.

What stands out in comparison is that Jesus Christ is seen as the lord or protector of the living and the dead, since he bridged the two realms – which can be considered as advancement.

Early Baltic Religions

There is also little known about the pre-Christian religion of the Baltic people.

Under his Lithuanian name, Perkunas, the god of lightning is likely also identical to the god of thunder in other Indo-European religions.

This religion is probably also closely related to other Indo-European religions. Over the course of time, these religions have taken on aspects from other cultures in their particular areas, yet they remain similar in their basic features.

While Dievs was sometimes worshiped as the deity, the sun is associated with a goddess, Saule, and the earth was sometimes associated with a god and sometimes with a goddess. Laima is a Baltic goddess of fate; this was probably influenced by parts of an older religious tradition in which the mother deities played a major role.

It was believed that the dead continued to live, near the grave.

Worship of the different forces of nature played a major role, although earlier shamanistic practices were probably also incorporated. The involvement with forces of nature* that is more typically associated with shamanism* cannot in the strictest sense be compared with the cults of the gods.

* [In regard to natural religions, see the comments on the page on Shintoism.](#)

Early Basque Religion

In the pre-Christian religion of the Basques and in their language, we find possible remnants of ancient European (pre-Indo-European) megalithic culture ("great stone" culture). Some aspects were retained by oral tradition, even after Christianization. Christian aspects could also have been incorporated in the Basque tradition.

The goddess Mari of the "underworld" was considered the crucial deity, while her masculine counterpart Maju was a sky god. A peculiar account involves the meeting of these two deities on Friday afternoon, resulting in hail, etc. This could be a reference to a convergence of two spiritual paths.

The sun goddess Ekhi was considered the daughter of Lur, the goddess of the earth.

Basque tradition also included the belief in a life after death and in various spirits, some that were helpful and some that were evil.

Apparently lying, stealing and breaking one's word were considered moral offences.

Early Finnish Religion

The pre-Christian religious beliefs and customs of the Finns have remained distinguishable through legends, ballads and practices that survived Christianization. Many such ballads were compiled in the "Kalevala," a national work of epic poetry in the 19th century.

Ilmarinen, the blacksmith or "forger" in this epic, was the creator of the celestial canopy. The originally related Ostyaks, Voguls who likewise spoke non-Indo-European languages, acknowledged a supreme god of the heavens, and a hierarchy of spirits. Spirits are not gods in the strictest sense. The Finnish tradition included a mythical image of duck eggs that roll into the water and turn into the visible cosmos.

It was only later that the worship of the storm-god Ukko became prevalent. A large number of gods of nature, natural beings and protective spirits were also acknowledged in this tradition. The soul, which lived on after death, was regarded as a breath or the shadow of a soul in a realm of the dead.

Väinämöinen, the singer in the epic, follows old shamanistic practices that ultimately trace back to prehistoric times.

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The position of school books concerning such early religions - that early cultures invented a random number of gods, and that they had no concept of the Creator God - is open to debate, at least in the case of several religions. The search for God as the source of all things is really quite old. In the case of Enoch and Noah - the latter being the root of all of today's people groups, from the biblical perspective - even the Bible's account of creation recognizes that the true God was able to reveal himself to them and inspire them. Today, there are new possibilities - through Christ - to come closer to God and his characteristics.

[Back to the index.](#)

Religion¹⁾ as a "reconnection" of man with God - on paths with Jesus Christ.

¹⁾ The origin of the word Religion is Latin re-ligio = re-uniting - with God, who takes shape in us from our "core". Something like this happens on the large scale too, similar to a hologram.

The recognition of deeper problems in human life.

Even for changes that go beyond healing the body, Jesus' first question would be: "Do you want to get well?" (*John 5,6*); or **Do you know the imperfection you still have to change, if you want to come closer to God?** One can find a central thread behind the simple matters of life, which aren't usually associated with Religion. A child growing up to adulthood gains new abilities; however, some of the abilities to experience things intensively become temporarily "lost" ('covered'). Later, one can try to renew these natural abilities. In this case, the newly gained abilities remain, while the hardening of the being diminishes or becomes erased. The breaks in mind and life resulting from the break between the intellectual and the instinctive life - with a weak bridge between them in the "heart" - become better reintegrated. It is possible to show that this break is one of the meanings of "eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge" in the myth of paradise - so overcoming one's negative ("devilish") qualities will include healing this break. The saying of Jesus, "Unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." is based on deep knowledge of the possibilities to change and return - *Matthew 18,1-3; Mark 10,15; Luke 18, 17*. This is not only a matter of the unprejudiced manners of children, but also concerns original basics of development, which are "archetypal"²⁾ patterns - a lost part of an "instruction for the use of man". This path can lead far beyond today's limited intellectual consciousness.

²⁾ Archetypal: a term of the depth psychology of C. G. Jung and others; basic patterns of human existence experienced as different forms/ figures, e.g. in dreams. However, the "archetypes" also have a high level of mixed and misleading content. "God" is portrayed as an old man, and

references to "heaven" and "hell" become "archetypical" symbols of a "collective unconscious". Jung did not know exactly what this was. At least a core of this level of consciousness appears to exist to a certain extent in all people – with its images and ideas that are impressed upon people. Thus, this emerges as a kind of primal memory from a very early time in the history of humankind – even before such periods as the "mythical consciousness", as presented in our chapter "[Consciousness, brain research and free will](#)". This level of consciousness also contains such contrasts (more or less "apparent" contrasts), as addressed on our page "[A Christian attitude...a third way](#)". A closer view reveals that this level's notion of God is a rather problematic caricature. That is why, for example, the *Tibetan Book of the Dead (BardoThodol)* – for which C.G. Jung wrote the preface – warns the living against responding to the deceptive deities and demonic figures of this level after death. A similar writing existed in ancient Egypt. Even Gnostics in the Christian sphere held a critical view of such figures, as they were surely also experienced in dreams and meditation. Fairy tales have attempted to creatively interact with this world of symbolism, which can indeed be useful for children. However, adults may attempt to go beyond these symbols – symbols that have taken on many human aspects. But the real challenge involves seeking God directly, rather than letting him fizzle out with these false concepts of God.

This does not mean that it can easily be managed under one's own steam. Jesus offers a real path and the power or grace to master it. Christian seekers for truth, Christian mystics and Christian alchemists all found their path of (greater) perfection (*compare e.g. Matthew 5,48; John 10,34;...*). Many other Christians, either consciously or unconsciously, have similar experiences, - whether they search inwardly apply their faith in social life, or combine both. This is something we call "full Christianity". For thousands of years, many other cultures have also been searching for solutions to those inner conflicts; e.g. the Taoist alchemists and some schools of Yoga ³⁾.

³⁾The Indian word Yoga, literally "put to the yoke" means seeking the reconnection with the origin and eternity too. This does not mean, that all these paths must lead to the same goal. Concerning the similarities and differences see our special pages.

The "God-man" Jesus Christ, the 'new Adam' is the signal that shows us that human beings can regain the original qualities they "lost" and that it's time to adjust their negative qualities, which have meanwhile become dangerous. Luckily for the earth, Jesus represented both the connection to the original source of the meaning of life - God - and the highly developed human consciousness. He overcame the forces of degeneration. In spite of being different from people, he was also the human being who manifested this. So people can do this too, especially if they do it consciously. But even for those who don't know about the historical Jesus, his life including the resurrection can have effects on them - just as animals learn something on a remote island faster, after animals of the same kind have learned it on another island, influenced by their mutual field of force. This occurrences were discovered by *R. Sheldrake*.

At first, an inner relation to Christ and to God are possible to find without a Church. However, an appropriate community of Christians is helpful. The contradictory theologies, partially describing Christ either as a spiritual adviser or as a social reformer, are no longer the last resort; but they can give some people a clue; if they know about the various schools of theology, the effect must not be one-sided.. Every individual can directly attune himself to Christ in the privacy of his own room, but - with more experience - also in daily life. For this purpose one can remember Jesus' qualities that have been handed down to us in the Gospels. If we believe that Christ survived his death as the resurrected one, we can also contact him as a being that exists in the present time. (There are many testimonies of people surviving after death too, but usually in a state different from that of Christ.) We can feel to pray "in his name", with him as our elder brother to God, who encompasses ('wraps') all. (see. *John 15,16; Matthew 6, 7-15; Matthew 18,19-20*). E.g.:

<p>God, my origin, my help and my hope! In unity with Jesus Christ * I thank You for everything coming from You; and I ask You, forgive me everything that took me a long way from You **; in this silence, please let me become creative by Your Spirit ***;</p>
--

take me up Your path

*) Those who want to include Mary may also do so. This way, both the male and female qualities of man can become exalted.

***) An additional practice can be: 1st to look at an emotion felt as negative as it occurred (e.g. anxiety, hate and anger, indifference and presumption, extreme doubt - or a problem; even if it happened in mind or words only, *compare Matthew 5,22*). 2nd Instead of ruminating over it, wait a moment, in order to become aware of what it is. 3rd to offer this problem - that can now be felt - to God in prayer. (Beyond this, we can also give our whole lives into the hands of God or Christ). 4th to wait calmly, until some relief is felt.

****) The silence calms things which have happened' and so prepares them better for working on or for prayer. Then there is more openness for new things.

The significance of ethics on this path.

One level on the path is "**loving God**", who is above everything, "**and love your neighbour as yourself**" (*Matthew 19,19*). Loving oneself too can also be part of the effort to find one's task for others. Love can connect us with Christ, because it's his main nature, **combined with wisdom**. The path of good deeds with its effects also makes the Christian Path clear. Jesus kept the old ethical basics; because (usually) "a man reaps what he sows" (*Gal. 6,7*) but he stressed the **responsibility** of the individual more than the external law. Here we can experience that there is something within us - e.g. felt as conscience - which is in harmony with the spirit, which Christ exemplified throughout his own life. This point can be individually experienced in the heart, in the soul or in the spirit. It is useful to bring the known qualities of Christ home to oneself as often as possible; to allow a more direct contact to arise - even if there are no big effects for the time being.

The power developing this path within us through mercy can attract the universal healing power approaching from the "external" Christ and God. Here, the individual way of experiencing can be different too; however, in this case the effects on oneself and the context may be intensive. Those experiences, which till now had only been had by a few "mystics" and "saints", can now spread to ordinary people in our "apocalyptic" time, although one may not immediately recognize its significance and so it must be mentioned here. Those concerned can accept this transforming power; otherwise it may painfully hit the barriers of those who have not developed enough qualities in harmony with it - so that it may be felt as some kind of "judgement".

Guide me, that I will not harm Others on their way to You.
Guide me to help Others according to Your will.
Save me on my way. *
Help me to be united with Your love.

*) Here others may also be included.

A similar development on a large scale, in the cultures since prehistoric times.

Like the stages of development from the child to maturity previously mentioned, human cultures also went through similar stages of consciousness. On one hand they resulted in new abilities (a freer will, freer feelings and thoughts than before). On the other hand the original familiarity with the whole of "creation" diminished, with problematical consequences. (*Compare e.g. Jean Gebser, "Ursprung und Gegenwart" – German*). One after the other, an "archaic", a "magical", a "mythical", and an intellectual consciousness arose and beyond that a more integrated common sense has developed. Outstanding beings helped to take these steps in development which were fruitful for their cultures. This happened in spite of all obstacles, but - as mentioned - it impaired previous abilities. In recent history, mankind and its various peoples have had to accept the challenge to continually master smaller or greater evolutionary steps, in order to survive. ⁴⁾ These possibilities have existed for around (about) 2000 years. This development no longer diminishes older qualities such as the intellect. If enough individuals develop a more and more holistic common sense and

renew their connection with their divine origin ¹⁾, mankind can win the race against apocalyptic catastrophies with help from "above". There is also a relationship between activists in the world, e.g. the peace movement etc. All people with a good will have their role to play in the "game". Many people - in all of the established religious schools - are obviously seeking. They go on ahead into the future and help to work off the past - although there may be some "mediocrity". It does not matter whether one thinks that the purpose is to "rescue" humanity or to advance in consciousness. The contemporary scale of values must become transformed, because it is clear where the old "program" is leading to. Everything is part of the whole and so all good deeds help the world.

⁴⁾ We do not agree with the pessimistic attitude, e.g. in Herbert Gruhl's last book "Himmelfahrt ins Nichts" (German, "Ascension into Nothing"), only because one can feel for a forgotten source of development and power - which, nevertheless, is only a chance: God.

Inspire the people to put decisions about life and death in Your hands *.
Help those who work for Your creation.
Lead this world to the breakthrough to Your promised new time.**

*) Here details may be added, or considered meditatively after the prayer, like this: 'to stop building up violence', 'resolving problems for taking away one cause of violence', 'to start a peaceful dialogue between the well-meaning people of various religions'.

**) *Luke 11:2; 21:31. Revelation 11:16.* God can deal out the love given to him.

So a "turnabout" to God on both a small scale and a large scale is in hand.

The importance does not primarily lie on "beliefs" - that is, on human thoughts about religion - but rather on a person's connection to God, lived out in a real way.

John 16,12-13: "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13: When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

[Back to the index.](#)

[The layers of the human being](#)

**Help:
A self-examination for the work with the main text of "Ways of Christ"
- in the inner and outer life:**

Did I read the ["Introduction into the purpose and use of this text"](#) ? (If not: it may help to do so now, especially in case of numerous general ambiguities).

Have I studied the chapters of this commentary in sequence? (If not - and if you are really interested in the emulation of Christ: study also the previous chapters).

If I did not know the related chapters of the Bible, did I take the trouble to read them? .

Have I studied till now without having the distressing feeling that I have skimmed over an earlier passage in the commentary or in the Bible, which I did not understand? (Otherwise consider that passage calmly again and as far as possible without prejudices.

Did I read and use the "[methodical tips, Christian Meditation...](#)" as a possible aid to deeper understanding, experiencing and working out the contents? .

Do I have a general idea of my present abilities, traits of character, habits? (If not: think about it and make notes).

If the answer is yes: [Is there a certain quality - related to the text just studied - which I want to pray for urgently and which I wish to improve, \(or which is already developing\)?](#)

Did I think of applying my latest realizations in my daily life?.

Am I already open for being guided in my conscience?.

Have I attempted to find or achieved a more direct guidance by God through Jesus Christ on my path?.

So, where do I stand in my relation to God?

[Back to the index.](#)

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The sphere of work are all topics of Christianity, and the interreligious dialogue with other Religions. The main field is the profound description of the often neglected spiritual sides of Christianity. However, the other sides of Christianity - concerning social questions - are looked at as equally important, in this differentiated view. (See also the "[Introduction...](#)" of the main text, and the [Methodical tips](#)).

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[Back to the index.](#)