

THE SEMINARY OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

NORTH AMERICAN SEMINARY NEWSLETTER
FALL 2014

A New Beginning — BASTIAAN BAAN, SEMINARY DIRECTOR

After a year of relative quiet in our building, the Seminary is full of life again. While the Act of Consecration of Man is celebrated each morning at the church, someone is already preparing breakfast for our nine students.

After a full morning program, there are usually practical lessons in the afternoon: eurythmy, speech, and work at the Seminary and in our garden. Almost every week, the students meet a new guest-teacher. A special feature of this group of students is that they want to make a deeper connection to these teachers—not only during lessons, but also to the people they are outside the classroom. The students invite each teacher to join them for a dinner at the dormitory, where they listen to stories of their life and work. The students also use as many opportunities as possible to sing together. It makes our house seem more like a bustling youth hostel than a quiet monastery!

In November, our ninth student joined us: Lisa Hildreth is in her fourth year of study and in the final portion of her priest training. In December, we will hear more about a possible priest ordination next spring.

In the winter/spring semester we will offer three Open Courses, in which we hope to meet many of our friends and supporters of the Seminary. *For the program, see the last page of this newsletter.* ✦



Javelin throwing in speech class

The Way to the Seminary — VERA SWIFT

Looking back and trying to find the starting-point, that milestone that reads “Zero”—it must be somewhere in my biography, or perhaps at a very concrete place in the world, where I started walking, knowing where I was headed.

Maybe this milestone was the conversation with Rev. Oliver Steinrueck back in October, maybe it was seeing the road to Carmen Court, both paths dotted with brilliant light. Or maybe there were multiple, overlapping roads and milestones and mile-pebbles on the roads, and big questions asked throughout my life in Brazil and in Florida?

Sometimes the questions came from within: What am I supposed to do with my life? Occasionally the questions were asked by friends: “Do you want to study at the Seminary?” I did not think so in 1996, when I first visited the Seminary in Stuttgart, together with a larger delegation of members of the Christian Community in South America. There was, however, admiration, maybe a slight envy, of the people who were allowed to study there. All these cool subjects they got to learn rather than tending to the immediate concerns of survival.

One morning in April I woke up and knew: This may be allowed, may be available, maybe even for me, who have lived this long and have felt like the workers in the parable of the owner of the vineyard, waiting, waiting, that the call would finally come for us to work where it is needed.

So I started this journey of learning more about this Master. And He has made me see the work that wants to be done inside myself, and the generous pay for all of us, independent of when we start working: the self, the radiant I. ✨



L-R, back: Vera Swift, Brazil; Rev. Gisela Wielki; Melissa Barton, USA; David Buckner, USA; Linda Michaels, US; Bastiaan Baan, Seminary Director; Manuel Toro, Colombia. Front: Olive Nicole Wells, USA; Dorothea Foerster, Germany.

IRON

*Here's what I don't know:
How come it rains in the desert
and spares my poor, ignorant, city-dwelling head?
Why does it endure so much heat, so much beating up,
so much contact with us stupid, war-faring people?
Rich and warm sounds—
Here's to the courage to be iron.
Here's to the will to be steel.
Here's to find it, modestly clad in leaves.*

— Vera Swift

from the class "The World of Things"

My Path to the Seminary — MELISSA BARTON

My path to the Seminary began long ago, when I first discovered The Christian Community in Seventh Grade. I began attending the Children's Service and then The Act of Consecration of Man every Sunday. For ten years I was involved in the Christian Community Summer Camp, first as a camper and then as a counselor. As a teenager I participated in every group trip and youth gathering available.

This was not because I was forced to attend by my family—as was the case with some of my friends—in fact, I would often walk alone to church on Sundays. I felt connected to the Christian Community in a deep and mysterious way—a way that I cannot describe in words.

I always knew that Seminary would be a part of my path one day. But I thought that "one day would probably not come for a long, long time". It seemed that the Seminary was too big, too grand, too special for an ordinary young person like me. First I had other things to do (so I thought): travel, finish college, become a Waldorf class teacher, maybe even get married and have a family; that was my plan.

Then things changed. In February 2014, my life was turned upside-down when, at the young age of 62, my mother was diagnosed with cancer. It was the kind of cancer not easy to cure. I was devastated, to say the least. Would she live to see me graduate college or to be at my wedding? Would she live to hold my firstborn child in her arms—become a grandmother?

Needless to say, the months following the diagnosis were full of turmoil. How do we spend our time? Do we focus on researching methods of healing, or do we spend quality-time together creating memories? When could we take a trip abroad together? How can we feel light and laughter when faced with darkness? Suddenly, we were racing against the clock and it seemed as if there would not be enough time to do everything we so much wished ...

That's when the thought occurred to me: You never know how much time you will have on this earth! If you already know what you love and are passionate about, then why not just stop putting other things before it? Before it's too late, do that thing you've always wanted to do! This thought lived so strongly within me, that within a few short months, my application was sent off to the Seminary.

I knew what had been living in my heart—what I wanted to do—and yet I had been allowing other things cloud it over. But that would not be anymore. Now the time was ripe for me to take hold of this desire to deepen my relationship to the Christian Community. I would set aside time to study and learn what the Christian Community really is! Why did Steiner give the indications that he did for the service? What is the importance of the Act of Consecration of Man for the earth? What is the significance of the existence of the Christian Community? How can Christ become more and more a part of daily life, and how to harness the power from His endless sources?

And just like that, I became a student in the Seminary, studying alongside eight other passionate people who hold the same kinds of questions in their hearts. We are on a path of discovery. We look out into the world to find what is waiting to be discovered; we go into ourselves to discover the world inside. We learn more and more what it is to be walking the Christian path.

Sadly, I had to hug my earthly mother goodbye on September 26, 2014, just two weeks after the start of my studies at the Seminary. My mother will not be on earth to see me graduate college, to see me get married, or to become a grandmother, but she did get to witness the beginning of my Seminary studies, and that made her very happy.

My mother knew it was a dream of mine to study at the Seminary. She always knew that it was a part of my path, and she was right. So far, it is deeply satisfying to be here. The Seminary is big and grand and special, but I am ready now to meet it. I am delighted and incredibly grateful that my path has led me to study at the Seminary just at this time. ❖

THE HAND

*The inner palm is curved and gentle,
The outer hand is straight and rigid.
The hand is flexible, malleable, movable.
It can hold everything or nothing.
As soft as a cloud or rough as stone?
The hand can tell a story of where it's been.*

*The hand mediates between us and the world.
We reach beyond ourselves to other realms.
The hand is our tool.*

*In reaching out, our will becomes deed.
How will it give? How will it receive? How will it touch?
My will be done or Thy will be done?*

—Melissa Barton

from the class "The World of Things"

MY DAD

*We didn't have long conversations,
I don't remember him giving me advice.*

*Besides reminding me to pray
with love he'd say—
"You can always come home."*

*His kindness and acceptance of my wanderings
sheltered me like the strong, tall oak.*

*Its leaves are falling,
the angel is calling—
"You can always come home."*

*In loving memory
Jim Wemhoff (1937-2014)*

—Linda Michaels

Finding Support for Life's Challenges — LINDA MICHAELS

How many students are there? Where do you live? Are you having fun? What have you been learning?

These are just a few of the many questions I've been asked since arriving in September for the Seminary training. Since most of the answers are easy—there are eight of us in the first-year class, the Holder House dorm, and Yes!—I thought that I would do my best to answer "What have you been learning?" in this article. Please note that this is a very brief summary, as each Main Lesson is five hours of classtime. I would be happy to go into more detail about the classes if anyone wants to email me at SunChiGirl@yahoo.com.

Our first week's Main Lesson was with our Seminary Director, Rev. Bastiaan Baan. The class was *Finding Our Own Sources*, and we talked about prayer and meditation. Besides talking about the basics, i.e., having a designated place to meditate daily so that our etheric bodies are helped into the rhythm, and choosing one or two verses or prayers rather than having too many, we talked about developing "active receptiveness" and "receptive activity"; references in the gospels to finding a quiet place within; and how what is gained from meditation and prayer helps us in our daily lives. We also talked about how meditation is the only completely free activity in our lifetime, how consistency is important (one stitch every day in a year makes a sleeve) and how meditating at night gives direction before other forces take over the ship, and in the morning because the morning hour has gold in its mouth.

Our next Main Lesson was *Places of Ancient Initiation* with Rev. Julia Polter, a priest and Seminary advisor from Boston. It was a fantastic Open Course week,

with fifteen visitors as well as Rev. Liza Marcato (also a Seminary advisor) from Hillsdale, NY, joining our daily classes and our classes in the evenings. Julia and Bastiaan explained how for thousands of years, in different places, initiates from the mystery schools sought connection to the "Source," the spiritual world, by undergoing initiations, and we saw slides from some of these locations. One of the guest participants is writing an article about this Open Course, so I won't try to summarize it; however, my personal reflection in this class was a question about initiations in our modern life.

In the midst of the beauty and peace that we find in the natural world and when we are connected to our Source, the modern world is filled with challenges of "dragon-like" behaviors that cause chaos. It seems like an initiation for each of us to come to see the "dragon-like" behaviors for what they are, and instead of judging and labeling them (also "dragon-like" behaviors!), asking ourselves, "How do I connect to the spiritual world and bring love and understanding to what feels like chaos?" As Georg Kühlewind asks in his book *Becoming Aware of the Logos*: Is not this darkness there, perhaps, in order to make love necessary, to call it forth—so to speak—out of ourselves? In order that love might bridge non-understanding and thereby become?

Our next Main Lesson was on *The Act of Consecration of Man*. Bastiaan brought us into this class by asking each of us to talk about our experiences in the service, and then he explained the four parts of the service that are the next "evolution" of the four parts of the old initiations: Gospel Reading—"Coming into contact with death"; Offertory—"Passing through the elemental world"; Transubstantiation—"Seeing the sun at midnight"; and Communion—"Meeting with the upper and lower Gods." He also explained that this ritual is not



Class with Daniel Hafner



Clockwise from bottom left: Vera Swift, Brazil; Cinzia Giordanelli, Italy; Melissa Barton, USA; Olive Nicole Wells, USA; Dorothea Foerster, Germany; Linda Michaels, USA; David Buckner, USA; Bastiaan Baan, Seminary Director; Manuel Toro, Colombia.

invented; it is a reflection of what is happening in the spiritual world. By bringing ourselves to this sacrament, we unite with our communities and with the spiritual world to support Christ in penetrating into humanity and into the physical material of the earth and transforming it into love.

In our *Philosophy of Freedom* course the following week (the first half of the book), with Rev. Jim Hinds from Denver, we had a thinking workout. Out of all of the recaps, this is the one I'm most unsure about writing, but I'll try. To summarize the book so far: 1) We "train our thinking and our observing" by thinking and observing our own thinking and observing; 2) how we see things depends on the inner state of our souls; 3) by thinking, we unite with humanity and with the spiritual world; and 4) by thinking, we become free, and

we have more options in life. (Jim is coming back to do the second half of the book, so I'll see then if I'm on track with this summary.)

Then we studied *The Christian Community Creed* with Rev. Patrick Kennedy from Washington, DC. Wow. We went through the Creed line by line and talked about how it differs from the Nicene Creed (written in 325 AD); how it creates community and aligns us; how it also came out of the mystery schools; and how it takes us through time with the Trinity and then ends with a call to action for human beings today.

One section of the Creed that fits with the "life challenges" theme of this article is: *He will in time unite for the advancement of the world with those whom, through their bearing, he can wrest from the death of matter. Through Him can the Healing Spirit work.* Even though this verse is referring to souls who have already died, it's also important to remember in our daily lives. When we are in the midst of a personal life challenge, we often experience a temporary loneliness, separation, confusion, or closing in. The Creed reminds us that during those times, Christ will help to "wrest" us from these feelings. If we approach Him and pray for those who are suffering, through Him the Healing Spirit can work.

It has been an amazing few weeks so far. Thank you for holding us in your thoughts and prayers. I hope you can join us for an Open Course soon! ✨

The Teaching Behind the Teaching — MANUEL TORO

Some pretty marvelous concepts are shared with us in class; perhaps most of them have the power, by themselves, to lead us safely towards destiny. That is, if we can simply be attentive enough to beckon the life forces poured within them with tremendous spirit. These precious stones are hard and heavy, one could say dark. If we mount them in a crown, their weight will bend our sight; in our pockets, they make us limp. I mean it is not always easy to bring these teachings to life; one cannot write them in a notebook and expect them to come suddenly alive and make us wise.

In one example: we were exposed by Gisela Wielki, in the course on the Sacraments, to the idea of the directions of spiritual force as pertaining to the past and the future. If one can recognize in all traditional religions a foundation in heritage, ancestry, lineage, and blood line, than it may be remarkable to understand "Christ's grace" as reaching towards humanity from a future standpoint. (Or at least, it touches someone like me who has understood spirituality from a Native American point of view, where the concept of knowledge and truth springs out of ancestral memory). So to ponder that we by our own free will may embrace and employ this will grace manifested by Christ's deed, from a complementary direction of time, can be truly unsettling. A stern sense of responsibility and awe is expanded to such wideness as breath cannot attain. If before we were sustained by our ancestors, now we are called to set forth from an infant force, "the I," and the I may seem like a very lonely place from which to shift humanity.

Back home from the Seminary, we turn the direction of our thought, and find ourselves in our inner world. Daily endeavors wash our shore, and we are often distracted. Indeed exalted by the spiritual whirlwind stirred around us by our lessons and spiritual work. Our inward path resembles a night walk in the mountains, in which our breath seems to be disturbingly loud. Our feelings and thoughts chime in our ears. We may ask ourselves if we heard a squirrel or a snake. Judgment becomes all so vague.

So where can we find our precious stones now?

Bastiaan Baan shared a beautiful image with us of a Michael Celebration in Monte Gargano, Italy. There, in celebration of Michaelmas a sword is taken from an altar, deep within a cavern chapel, and in a procession, upright and steady, brought to the surface and into the light. And should we care to find this precious sword in the depths of our soul and with steady hand carry it out into the light of consciousness? Perhaps then we can be attentive to what these stones can transform inside of us so that we may give new meaning to the world around us. And find creative solutions that can transform our reality in accordance to the needs of our time, and so truly live the teaching behind the teaching.

One may ask: But what then is particular to the Seminary that is different from normal living? I would say mostly nothing. Here, it seems to me, we are all just learning to live. ✧

Temple Building — EMMA HEIRMAN

Are you ready?

That question has been coming to me more and more in the last months. I am standing before a door, one that has found its way to me or one that I have put there myself, and I feel the threshold before me. On the other side is change; excitement and fear announce themselves inside of me.

It was in this space that I attended the Open Course on *Places of Ancient Initiation*, given by Bastiaan Baan and Julia Polter at the Seminary. What I came away with was a challenge, an insight, and a question.

The challenge: You cannot stay as you are. You must face death. Today, one of the greatest fears is penetrating one's own inner being. I too face this fear. What can be found in our own depths? Destructive forces are there, forces that I know I must battle. But on an altar deep within there also rests a sword. Find the sword and bring it to the light.

The insight: The ancient temple, whether it was Solomon's Temple or the temple of Apollo at Delphi, contained a space unoccupied by everyday life and very rarely by human beings. It held the ark, or a statue of a god, and was considered the holiest of spaces, where a god could find a dwelling on earth. In our own innermost room we must create a space, not empty, but prepared so that it is open and receptive to the spirit. If we do not tend this space, preparing it always, it can become occupied and taken over, corrupted by a being out of its rightful place.



Open Course art sharing

The question: The Oracle at Delphi gave people an encounter with the truth. It neither spoke nor concealed, but gave signs. This meant that there was no finished recipe and that responses were enigmatic in nature. Such an experience required intellectual and moral effort, and through this effort people found that a path could open before them. Can this enigmatic nature of truth inform how I ask questions? If I know that the true answer is a path that has to be unfolded, might the questions that I carry shift and change, or perhaps even grow and drop away?

So, am I ready? Am I ready to die and change? Yes. And fear helps me stay awake. If I feel it well up in me, I try to say Hello and invite it to stand by my side; I need the space before me clear so that I can see where to place my feet. I won't have it tripping me. I walk inward, into the depths where the battle is. This is where I am building my temple; here I am preparing a space for the spirit. Here I will be, time and again, preparing, because this is my path. ❖

And Now? — EMMA HEIRMAN

Boston is beautiful this time of year. The trees are changing and their leaves are beginning to fall and all around one encounters students studying. The atmosphere is particularly focused. Here I find myself, continuing my Seminary training, if perhaps not in an entirely traditional way. Before stepping into the final semester that prepares one for ordination, I am wishing to have a wider experience of religion and Christianity in North America, while at the same time to deepen my relationship with the Christian Community.

Through the grace of patience and the aid of mentors, the idea and then reality came together to pursue a part-time certificate training at a Divinity school in Boston while working as a ministry assistant in the Boston Christian Community. There are so many things I wish to refine and develop in myself in order to be prepared to work in service of Christ, and one that I am focusing on through this experience is language learning. Can I understand my brothers and sisters who are also seeking the Spirit, and have no connection to Anthroposophy or the Christian Community? Is my own thinking clear and unfettered by jargon or lazy descriptions?

This is one of the learning challenges I have chosen for myself for this year and I believe being with the Boston congregation and in the Boston Divinity schools will support me along the way. So, while it may seem on the outside as though I am stepping away from my path to becoming ordained, I am in fact on the inside still very much on my way and I am so grateful to the congregations that have supported me along this journey and the Seminaries in the US and Germany for their continued interest in and care for my preparation. ❖

The Inner Seed — OLIVE WELLS

Seeds have the same chemistry as ash; they are what's left after the all-consuming fire of summer. This is a small glimpse from the wisdom Daniel Hafner shared with us during our study Christ and the Earth, and this is what I feel ready to share with you all at this point on my journey: contemplation on the seed.

I feel a great change within, a wonderful painful purifying process, a burning. I feel a seed ready for the dark months ahead. To be held within the loving soil of the Seminary, to be offered a place for journeying into the dark unknown to find the inner space that holds the ever-glowing light.

I'm letting go of that within me that must be consumed in order to create the ash for the divine seed to form and awaken. The seed, with chemistry like ash, is also the place where hope for the future waits. It is the promise of spring, of new beginnings, and this I can feel so clearly. ✧

*In the shadows lay slumbering seeds,
awaiting the call of the light.
May we offer a space for the light to shine within us,
that our soul's seed may bear its fruitful spirit.
A fruit that we can offer at heaven's golden table.*

—Olive Wells



Painting by Olive Wells

Between Us — DAVE BUCKNER

I find my fellow Seminary students to be highly skilled in the fine art of conversation. There is an awareness, consciously cultivated here, of the great value of clear, thoughtful communication. It is a subject that, while quite ordinary in many respects, is also so profound that it cannot really be examined exhaustively! We have looked at the ceremonial aspects of giving and receiving in the Act of Consecration of Man: On the one hand, we offer our prayers, censuring and substance; on the other hand, we receive blessings, an inpouring of spirit and the Word of the Gospel. By this oft-repeated ceremony experience—offering our attention and receiving sacred medicine in return—we grow in our everyday exchanges with one another. In the weeks we have been practicing like this together, our words have become kinder, our disagreements more readily talked through, and our listening abilities enhanced. It is a truly special experience to work on speaking with such care.

A wonderful mystery is contained in one of the names given to Christ in the New Testament—Logos, or the Word. Although it belongs to the domain of the great seers and sages to understand such a designation deeply, we can nonetheless appreciate that it has some connection, however obscure, to our own spoken word. Somehow, in the shaping of air to form verbal sounds, in the expression of our inner life in outward speech, through the intoning of words to another person, we are allowing a space to let in something of the divine Word. It is an exciting prospect to think that we can participate, every day, in Christ's promise: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am with them." This understanding lends a certain reverence even to our most mundane interactions, making it a fascinating enterprise to discuss the grocery shopping!

Another intriguing dimension to conversation is the fact that it lives on in the minds of those who have spoken to each other. A dialogue not only seems to echo and reverberate in the soul after it has been spoken; it is as though it carries on and issues forth new words, albeit in an unspoken way. If a verbal exchange doesn't go the way we want it to, and we are left with unpleasant feelings about it (and possibly about the other person too), can we change it by the way we continue to "speak" it in our minds? Does something of our nonverbal attitude toward the ongoing conversation reach the other person? If so, is it related in any way to praying for them? These are questions with potentially revolutionary implications for us, and they might give us a glimpse of a future, wiser perspective on speech. ✦



Olive in the garden



Phillip Uffenbach, ca. 1590, private collection

Last year, when looking at a sixteenth-century German oil painting, picturing a scene in the New Testament, I wanted to know exactly what it referred to. The left side of the painting shows Jesus teaching, surrounded by his followers and the scribes. In the background is a vineyard and landscape with a meandering river, while on the right side of the foreground are images of various punishments. In the New Testament, does Jesus really recommend punishments, as this painting seems to suggest?

It appears that the painting refers to the Parable of the Wicked Tenants, which can be found three times in the New Testament: Matthew 21:33-46, Mark 12:1-12, and Luke 20:9-19. Within each of these three gospels, this confrontational dialogue is narrated during Holy Week and foreshadows what will happen on Good Friday.

Before the parable is mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew and Mark, there is a reference to the fig tree. On the way back to Jerusalem, Jesus was hungry—hungry for what? Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, “May you never bear fruit again!” (Matthew 21:19). In his explanation to the disciples, Jesus essentially says: If you have faith, you bear fruit. Might he also be indicating that those who do not have faith “will not bear fruit again”?

What follows next in the Gospel of Matthew and Mark is the well-known quotation about faith that moves mountains. I particularly like the version of Mark 11:23 (in my translation): “Amen, I say to you: who says to this mountain: ‘Raise yourself and throw yourself into the sea,’ and is not doubting in his heart, but has faith that what he says will occur, then it will happen.” Whereas in Luke 19:46, we hear about the cleansing of the temple: “My house will be a house of prayer; but you have made it a den of robbers.”

Then, while teaching in the temple during Holy Week, Jesus is asked by the chief priests and scribes: “By what authority do you act?” (Mark 11:28) He turns back to the scribes, asking: “John’s baptism—was it from heaven, or from men? Tell me!” (Mark 11:30); in Matthew 21:25 and Luke 20:4 are similar

questions. And now, in response, follows the parable of the wicked tenants:

There was a man, the master of a house. He planted a vineyard and surrounded it with a fence and dug a winepress in it, and built a tower. Then he handed it over to the vine-growers and went away to another country. When the grape season came, he sent his servants to the wine-growers to receive his fruit. (Matthew 21:33-34).

But the tenants maltreat the servants: “they beat one, killed another and stoned the third.” (Matthew 21:35) Then the lord of the vineyard sends his own son, thinking that they will respect him, and the tenants kill the son too—foretelling what will happen on Good Friday.

Turning to his challengers, Jesus asks: “Now when the lord of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?” The chief priests, scribes, and elders say in response to Jesus: The lord of the vineyard “will repay evil with evil and destroy them. And the vineyard he will give to other vine-growers, who will deliver to him the fruits of the vineyard at harvest time.” (Matthew 21:40-41). This judgment follows the teaching of the Old Testament. In Mark 12:9 and Luke 20:16, it is just stated that the lord of the vineyard will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

Now Jesus turns to the Old Testament and quotes from Psalm 118, referring to the stone that was rejected but later used as keystone, he concludes: “Therefore I tell you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it. And whoever runs against this stone will be dashed to pieces; and he on whom it falls will be crushed.” (Matthew 21:43-44).

So, did Jesus recommend punishments? No; rather, he depicts consequences when no fruit is delivered. Another situation, where the New Testament is quite specific about consequences, is described in Matthew 12:32, Mark 3:29, and Luke 12:10, in the warning not to speak against the Holy Spirit. Could the lack of producing and sharing fruit be considered a sin against the Holy Spirit?

The image of bearing fruit appears in the Gospel of John too, also during Holy Week, but reduced to its quintessence: “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5). And then, in John 15:16, Jesus says: “... go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.”

There are three things that this bit of research, triggered by the painting, taught me: I really loved researching and studying the Gospels. I wanted to learn more about the content of the Gospels, so I decided I want to go back to the Seminary of the Christian Community as soon as possible. And now, whenever I read about “bearing fruit” in the New Testament or elsewhere, I try to connect it with the image of “faith and finding the Kingdom of God.” ❖

Next Steps — BASTIAAN BAAN

This summer I was invited to teach in Australia, where a group of eleven mostly young people are working in a pre-Seminary setting in order to prepare for the priest training. Most of them look forward to joining us in Spring Valley; in fact several have already applied for next year. Students from several countries are knocking at our door.

However, it is becoming increasingly difficult for foreign students to obtain visas for a stay longer than only a few months. To address this issue, our Seminary Board is investigating the possibility of applying for accreditation for the Seminary, a process that will require a major investment of time and money. We will need to hire an administrator who will have the immensely challenging task of preparing this application; the process may take two years.

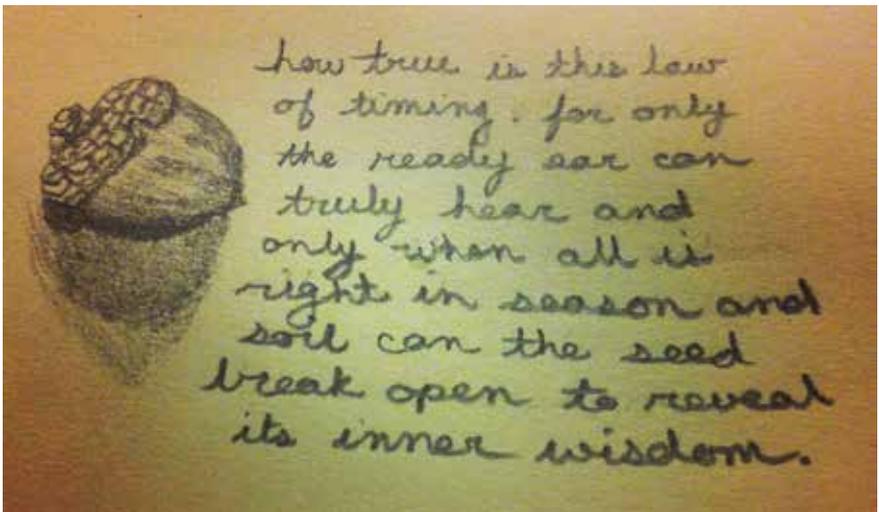
A second area that will require additional resources is operating support for the planned expansion of our programs: From now on, we will have students in different semesters working at the same time.

Finally, we need to create a tuition fund for those students who are unable to pay the full amount of the Seminary tuition. In our last Seminary Newsletter, this initiative was announced for the first time—and resulted in fifteen generous contributions for this purpose.

Please be generous in your support for the Seminary and the vitally important initiatives that we are developing. Our small but vibrant group of students will become even stronger through your active interest and helping thoughts!

Please use the envelope in this newsletter to send your check to the Seminary.

Thank you, on behalf of our students, teachers, and the Seminary Board. ✦



Poem and drawing by Olive Wells from art class

Seminary Winter/Spring Semester 2015

- Week of January 12 – *The Senses in the Act of Consecration* with Bastiaan Baan
Week of January 19 – *Forgiveness* with Jonah Evans
Week of January 26 – *Religious Education* with Bastiaan Baan
Week of February 2 – *Christology* with Erk Ludwig
Week of February 9 – *Baptism and Confirmation* with Oliver Steinrueck
Week of February 16 – *Living with Questions* with Nora Minassian
Week of February 23 – *Christian Initiation* with Bastiaan Baan
Week of March 2 – *Developing and Cultivating Community Life* with Carol Kelly
Week of March 9 – *From Priest Ordination to Priesthood* **OPEN COURSE** with Bastiaan Baan
Week of March 16 – *Renewing Christian Language* with Liza Marcato
Week of March 23 – *Shakespeare & the Bible* **OPEN COURSE** with Peter van Breda
Week of March 30 – Holy Week
Week of April 6 – Vacation
Week of April 13 – *Christianity in the Life of Rudolf Steiner* with Patrick Kennedy
Week of April 20 – *Nuts and Bolts: Tools of the Trade* with Cindy Hindes
Week of April 27 – *Being (a) Patient* **OPEN COURSE** with Bastiaan Baan, Hans van Delden, and Judith Aventura
Week of May 4 – *Adult Learning and Group Processes in the Community Setting* with Julia Polter
Week of May 11 – *Sophia, Wisdom, and the Future of the Earth* with Jim Hindes
Week of May 18 – *The Living Tree* with Peter Skaller

DONATIONS ARE VERY WELCOME.

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**THE
SEMINARY
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