

This PDF document contains an English translation by deepl.com of three articles in the German-language magazine "Die Christengemeinschaft" (The Christian Community). Version August 10, 2025

Die Christengemeinschaft

Zeitschrift zur religiösen Erneuerung

10 | 2024

Social processes in the Christian Community

Part 1: On the path to a *common ground among members* in the spirit of Dieter Brüll

Ingrid Feustel, Wolfgang Jaschinski, Achim Weiser

[Letter to the editor, Christian Community Magazine Regarding the article "Social Processes in the Christian Community" in issue 10/24 by Ingrid Feustel, Wolfgang Jaschinski and Armin Weiser Erich

Colsman

12 | 2024

Social processes in the Christian Community

Part 2: How social laws work in the Christian Community

Ingrid Feustel and Wolfgang Jaschinski

3 | 2025

Social Processes in the Christian Community

Part 3: A path to social threefolding

A dialogue between Ingrid Feustel and Wolfgang Jaschinski

These articles were written by the working group "Priests and the Community," which has been working on social issues in the Christian Community since the LOGOS conference in 2022.

Since summer 2025, our group has had a new name:

Initiative Sozialimpuls in der Christengemeinschaft (Social Impulse in the Christian Community). <https://cg-sozialimpuls.de/>

Documentation 7
of the *Priests and Parish Working Group* in the *Forum for the Christian Community*

Social Processes in the Christian Community

This PDF document contains our three articles in the magazine *Die Christengemeinschaft*. It begins with our article in the *Mitteilungen für die Christengemeinschaft Ostern 2025 (Newsletter for the Christian Community, Easter 2025)*.

In 2022, Ulrich Meier wrote twelve articles on the topic of "The mission and work of the priest in the congregation." We worked on this topic at our meetings and at a workshop at the LOGOS conference in 2022. Congregational life is a social process that takes on its own forms in each congregation, but also has supra-regional, even global characteristics. This became clear to us as we worked through the writings of Dieter Brüll, the protagonist of social threefolding, in the course of 2024. Against the background of his main work, *"The Anthroposophical Social Impulse,"* we read his lecture "Community and Commonality," which he gave in the Wangen community in 1984. This work led to our three articles entitled *"Social Processes in the Christian Community,"* published in the magazine *Die Christengemeinschaft* (10 and 12|2024, 3|2025). A letter to the editor by Erich Colsman was also published (1|2025). See downloads at forum-cg.de/arbeitsgruppen.

With our articles and documentation, we would like to initiate a discussion process that extends beyond the region. We are also inspired by the suggestion made by Pastor Arnold Suckau in the LOGOS newsletter Michaeli 2021

"I could also imagine the leadership of the Christian Community calling in a committee of non-priests to discuss certain matters together – especially for contact with the so-called

"Outside world" that important experiences and processes are sufficiently communicated to central management. In other areas of society, there are institutions with similar objectives: in politics, science and culture, for example, we talk about boards of trustees, advisory boards, ethics councils and commissions of inquiry.

We enjoy visiting congregations in our thoughts, talking to each other via video on the first Sunday of every month, and planning the third interregional Kassel Friday (31 October 2025) on the topic of *"The mission and work of members"* directly before the Kassel meeting (1-2 November 2025). We would like to invite members and pastors to Kassel, either as listeners or as active participants who would like to contribute their thoughts on this topic. We will announce the programme in the Michaeli-Mitteilungen. Three years after the LOGOS conference in 2022, Kassel Friday 2025 will thus draw a thematic arc from the role of priests to the role of members.

We want to learn from our shared experiences, take constructive steps and further develop the role and responsibility of our members. Sacramental life is at the heart of a community, but it cannot be brought into the world by the priest alone; it requires the participation of all members: planning together, working together, growing together, always with respect for individuality. Today, there are people who perceive and feel the atmosphere in a community and who want to play a responsible and creative role in the Christian community. Our group provides a meeting place for this.

Ingrid Feustel, Wolfgang Jaschinski, Martin Metz, Achim Weiser

"Working Group on Priests and Congregations" in the "Forum for the Christian Community" cg-priester-und-gemeinde@posteo.de

Social processes in the Christian Community

Part 1: Towards a *common ground among members* in the spirit of Dieter Brüll

Ingrid Feustel, Wolfgang Jaschinski, Achim Weiser

G

1 https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dieter_Brüll

2 Dieter Brüll: *The Anthroposophical Social Impulse*, Novallis Verlag, 1984

3 <https://forum-cg.de/>

4 <https://forum-cg.de/arbeitsgruppen/>

Community, fellowship, togetherness – these terms all sound very similar, but they mean different things according to Dieter Brüll (1922–1998), social scientist¹ and protagonist of social threefolding².

Dieter Brüll's insights and experiences provide us with important ideas on how members can take initiative across regions today to perceive and renew social processes in the Christian community. This first article describes the vision for the future of a cross-regional body initiated by members. A second article will deal with the implementation of social threefolding in communities.

at the universities of Rotterdam and Tilburg, he was appointed professor of tax sociology and philosophy at the University of Amsterdam in 1974. Having been involved with the threefold social order since 1938, he published his magnum opus, "Der anthroposophische Sozialimpuls" (The Anthroposophical Social Impulse), in 1984.

The Christian Community played an important role in his life: he taught at the Stuttgart Priests' Seminary and wrote an article on the hierarchy in the Christian Community. His extensive knowledge and experience in social sciences, anthroposophy, the threefold social order and the Christian Community form the basis of our work.

He describes the social structure in the Christian Community and in congregations in a pointed manner at the very end of his lecture:

Where can we find common ground in practice? First and foremost, we can think of the priesthood, provided that it acts out of a correct understanding. Individual priests do not work together in the earthly sense. Each has his own parish. But together they administer the perfect, the cult. Certainly, they can be kings, heroes of the spirit. But if they also wanted to rule in their community, they would have been better off becoming entrepreneurs. And where communities form within the community because certain goals require cooperation, that is, when they move from the oratory to the laboratory, then the above image of the interlocking of commonality and community can be fulfilled.

In the "Forum for the Christian Community"⁽³⁾ we began in 2019 with an exchange of personal social experiences in congregations. Then, in the working group "Priests and Communities"⁽⁴⁾ we discussed Ulrich Meier's series of articles "The Mission and Work of Priests in the Community"⁽⁵⁾. This led to a joint workshop at *LOGOS – Consecrating Humanity 2022*⁽⁶⁾. This preliminary work has now led to this article, which outlines the possible supraregional role of members in social processes. We do not look at individual communities, but at the bigger picture in order to develop generalisable solutions to social challenges. We refer to Dieter Brüll and are working on his lecture text "Community and Commonality"⁽⁷⁾, which includes this short biography:

"Professor Dr Dieter Brüll studied economics and political science after graduating from a Waldorf school. After teaching

Ingrid Feustel, born in 1941, in Wangen since 1981, involved in establishing the emerging community and then working there, since 1999 mentor in the Baden-Württemberg Civic Engagement Programme Württemberg

Wolfgang Jaschinski, born in 1952, 20 years of local and 5 years of regional involvement in the Christian Community, Hagen

Achim Weiser, born in 1954, psychotherapist, many years as an altar boy in the Christian Community

Martin Metz, editorial assistant. Active in the Bielefeld community since 1995; for three years in the "Forum for the Christian Community".

The terms "commonality" and "community" are used here in a specific, rather unusual way. We therefore quote the definitions here:

The community

"If we look for the archetype of community, we find it easily in Christ and his circle of disciples. In all his majesty, the Son of God needed the help of a circle of people to accomplish his mission on earth. This circle is a co-creator in the great work."⁽¹⁰⁾

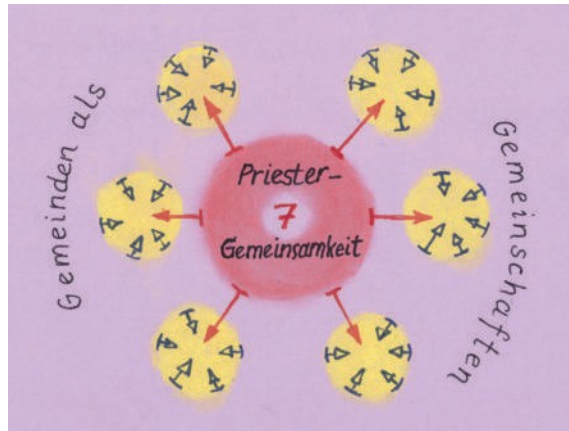
In our communities today, such communities would be all groups that take on tasks of various kinds, e.g. the planning of a building group, practical tasks in ongoing house and yard work, bookkeeping, etc. These are forms of cooperation.

The commonality

This is the opposite of cooperation. People find each other who share a common impulse. An impulse is a concrete spiritual force that has taken hold of them as a real ideal and to which they want to devote their lives. They have also recognised this impulse in each other, and they come together to pledge their loyalty to this force, which they experience as something higher, as something perfect in relation to human beings, and to support each other in this endeavour. In this way, they form the shell that captures the living workings of this force. It is the form that gives the spirit its power. In contrast to the community, the companions stand with their backs to each other: each stands in his own circle of work. They rarely need to meet. But in every step of life, one feels the spiritual presence of all the others: admonishing or helping to master the situation in accordance with the impulse.⁽¹¹⁾

However, similarities are not limited to spiritual content. He writes:

But because the social is a component of all self-realising social endeavours,



commonality and members in their parish communities (redrawn by Wolfgang Jaschinski)

Since all institutional endeavours are common goals, commonalities can very well be formed by educators, doctors, practical economists, etc. These are then consciously created structures whose members want to realise a certain aspect of the educational, therapeutic or economic impulse – by no means as a study group, but as a spiritual group – each in their own place.

The commonalities (of the "spiritual heroes") and the communities (of the "creators") should be connected and interlocked, as shown in Figure 1: The priests stand back to back in their commonality (priesthood, red) in the inner circle, strengthening each other; they are sent out into the communities (outer circles), where they are active, namely in community with members (blue).

The commonality of the priesthood carries out a spiritual mission to care for a cult whose content and forms spring from a highest spiritual source. If the cult represents the highest ideal, then the surrounding social environment, i.e. the communities in parishes, should also have forms and principles of order that correspond to the high ideal of the cult. Rudolf Steiner

5 Ulrich Meier: *The task and work of the priest in the community*, in: *Die Christengemeinschaft*, 1–12, 2022

6 Ulrich Meier and Wolfgang Jaschinski: LOGOS workshop "The mission and work of the priest in and with the community." Documentation at <https://forum-cg.de/arbeitsgruppen/>

7 Dieter Brüll: *Community and Togetherness*, published by Urachhaus Johannes M. Mayer, 1986

8 Dieter Brüll: *Hierarchy in the Christian Community*. 1985 Info 3. See <https://forum-cg.de/arbeitsgruppen/>

9 Page 31 in quote 7

10 Page 26 in quote 7

11 Page 20-21 in Quote 7

12 Page 22 in quote 7

was the mediator of culture, but also the mediator of the principles of order in social processes. In the foreword to *Anthroposophical Social Impulses*², Dieter Brüll quotes Rudolf Steiner (GA 93/1979/p. 130):

The real mishap of our time is this ignorance that there are laws for the construction of the human state and social organism just as there are for tunnel construction, which must first be known in order to accomplish the most necessary, the most everyday things in the social organism.

Rudolf Steiner characterised these laws as the elements of the threefold social organism, namely freedom in spiritual and cultural life, equality in legal life and solidarity in economic life.

However, we usually find that these social laws are taken into account in the Christian community rather only in the initial stages. The social aspect of the Christian Community often appears arbitrary, with forms in the communities emerging in a free interplay of forces based on the characters and temperaments of those involved, in an interaction between the striving for power and obedience to authority. Or pragmatism and chance often prevail. It is unclear where the will of the members is formed independently of the priesthood at the supra-regional level.

This makes it clear to us that we do have committees, meetings and conferences of those responsible for economic matters and decision-makers, both in congregations and at a supra-regional level, for the practical business of social processes. But we have no supraregional body whose members *are responsible* for social processes, *maintain loyalty and support each other in this endeavour*. This concerns the way we interact with each other, inform each other, enable transparency and make decisions. This current lack of "common ground for social processes" could focus his attention on perception, understanding and shaping the

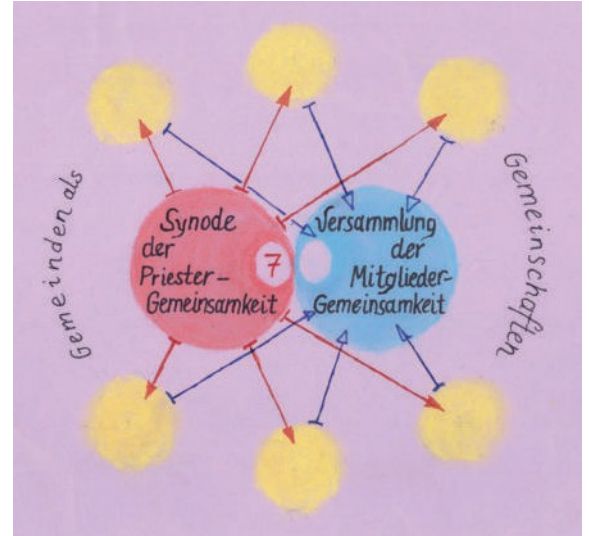


Figure 2: Vision of the future of a gathering of a community of members for social processes, as a complement to the synod of the community of priests for worship (drawn by Wolfgang Jaschinski)

Principles of social processes. This concerns the fundamental principles of the entire Christian community; it is not about concrete intervention in individual congregations, where everyone is certainly committed to social coexistence. In such a "community for social processes," the main actors should come from the membership, although priests should not be excluded.

Figure 2 shows how spiritual community for worship (within the priesthood) could be complemented by a corresponding community for social processes (within the membership). From the priesthood community (red ring), the circle of seven priests sends priests to congregations, where they form communities that work together with the members. In the congregations, individual members could feel responsible for social processes in the Christian community on a supra-regional level. These members could form an ideal community on their own initiative, the organisation of which is currently open and for which we do not yet have any terms. If members from many congregations came together, this would be a gathering of members in accordance with the priestly synod.

13 Arnold Suckau:
*Community life in the
future*. LOGOS
Newsletter
Michaelmas 2021
[https://cg-2022.
org/wp/index.php/
newsletter-
documents/](https://cg-2022.org/wp/index.php/newsletter-documents/)

Commonality (blue ring), which sometimes comes together. This would require a continuously active, smaller committee, represented here as an open oval area. This could be provisionally called a members' committee. Priesthood community and Membership community appear similar here in an ideal sense. For while the ideal priesthood community is responsible for the spiritual affairs of the cult, the membership community focuses its attention on social structures. In terms of actual real-world impact, there are clear differences: the circle of seven, the leadership, has executive offices for community organisation in the priesthood through the principle of delegation. The community of members described here would have no assigned, agreed responsibility for the actual shaping of social processes, but could work spiritually, perceive, propose, and stimulate.

We currently have no common terms to differentiate between the ideal similarities. In the case of priests, we know what a synod and a circle of seven are. In the case of members, we initially speak awkwardly of a "Assembly of the community of members." Only with growing awareness of these social laws and necessities will suitable terms perhaps emerge. In other areas of society, there are institutions with fundamentally similar goals: in politics, science and culture, for example, we speak of boards of trustees, advisory boards, ethics councils and commissions of inquiry.

In all of this, there is of course a need for exchange between the priesthood and the membership. In this respect, the two circles overlap in Figure 2. And let us not forget what Pastor Arnold Suckau wrote in the LOGOS newsletter:

I could also imagine that the leadership of the Christian Community could consult a committee of non-priests, in which certain matters could be discussed jointly – especially with regard to contact with the so-called "outside world" – so that important experiences and developments are adequately communicated to the central leadership

As members, we have a strong personal desire for a community of members for social processes, which we do not see as a utopia for the distant future. Rather, we would like to encourage a broad, supra-regional exchange of ideas on this subject.



Gudrun Burkhard

Taking life into your own hands

Working on your own biography

With a foreword by Sylke Ober-Brödlin 269

pages, paperback | €18 (Germany)

ISBN 978-3-7725-3315-0

www.geistesleben.com

Now available in bookshops!

In this classic work on biographical writing, Gudrun Burkhard shows how we can learn to gain insight into our own biography and take conscious control of our lives.

Because this also enables us to understand our fellow human beings better, our biography becomes an organ for those social processes from which we ourselves have emerged with our history.

"Recognising spiritual laws frees us from the compulsion to view events or even life itself as mere coincidence. Only through this awareness can what is today described as self-efficacy begin to take effect." Sylke Ober-Brödlin

Free spiritual life

Science and the art of living

Letter to the editor| Regarding the article "Social Processes in the Christian Community" in issue 10/24 by Ingrid Feustel, Wolfgang Jaschinski and Armin Weiser

Erich Colsman

The article mentioned in the title challenges me as a former co-organiser of the Kassel meeting.

The project proposed in the article, namely to establish a "community assembly" as an equal body alongside the Seven Circle, touches me and reminds me of our ideas at the time for the future of the Kassel Circle.

meeting.

The meeting was originally established as a gathering of those responsible for finances in German congregations. For years, we worked on developing a common understanding of our community accounting systems. When I joined as representative of the Herdecke community, the prevailing opinion in this circle was that this work had reached a certain conclusion. It was questioned whether an annual meeting was still necessary for this purpose. This was at the time of the Urachhaus crisis.

Due to the need to discuss this situation with a larger group of members, the meeting was opened up to all committed members of the community, without requiring those interested in participating to take on specific roles. My wife Heide was also involved in this step. We were impressed by our experience of the first semesters at the newly founded Witten-Herdecker University. There, the management regularly appeared before a plenary assembly of the (at that time still small) student body, reported on their activities and plans, and answered questions from the students.

At that time, there were no meetings in the CG where one could meet members of our priestly hierarchy without holding an official position in one of the committees.

We brought the experiences we gained at the University of Witten-Herdecke to the CG as a request.

into the preparations. This led to meetings in Kassel, where, for example, a senior leader from the Seven Circle reported on his work for the first time, and where the question of priest training could be discussed with the seminar leader of what was then the only seminar.

Now to my specific comment on the article mentioned above. As an entrepreneur and in Waldorf and CG circles in countless work contexts, I have been able to gain a wealth of experience as a contemporary living with the threefold question. My most important insight from this is that any fundamental determination of cooperation structures that transcends individual organisations is not helpful. Organisations, whether small or large, are living beings with a biography. Their structure should, within the limits of what is legally permissible, be determined only by the people who have committed themselves to this organisation in cooperation.

If fixed, albeit temporary, memberships were established in such a circle, power struggles would arise and bureaucracy would develop. We do not need any more committees of functionaries in the CG. (The term "official" is not meant here in a judgmental sense, but only to describe a function).

Looking at it another way, I believe that any leadership in the 21st century would be well advised to engage in dialogue with the people, especially when it comes to planned changes and fundamentally prevailing behaviours or principles of action that are often viewed critically within the organisation. Terms such as "servant leadership" or "leadership art" are contemporary models for this.

Social processes in the Christian community

Part 2: How social laws work in the Christian community

Ingrid Feustel and Wolfgang Jaschinski

Just as the planets in the sky are in constant motion around the sun, so too are the Human life also unfolds in the diversity and unity of our human soul, in individual destinies and in every community, from birth to death. With growing awareness, we perceive the changes around us with our senses and our minds. Cities and churches no longer look the same as they did in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance or 100 years ago. This development was influenced and driven by pioneering, inspiring people, such as artists, poets and thinkers who emerged from their milieu and made a new beginning possible. This is also how the Christian Community came into being 100 years ago, when mainly young people asked Rudolf Steiner whether there could also be a renewal in the religious sphere based on spiritual science. He gave the priesthood not only the sacraments but also the hierarchy in order to preserve the cult, found new communities and win members. Today, we believe it is time for members to take an active role in shaping their communities. ⁽¹⁾Therefore, based on today's awareness, we will explore how members can work together with priests on an equal footing to shape communities in a social context. Currently, the task of membership is less about founding new communities and more about shaping existing communities in a way that is sustainable for the future.

In social processes, Rudolf Steiner had...

regularities in a similar way to those that exist in the natural sciences. These laws are not theoretical constructs, but experiences gleaned from life. We discussed this in Part 1

this series of articles. ²Here we provide a characterisation of these laws and establish links to today's Christian community.

Steiner's path to understanding social issues spanned decades: even before his 1919 magnum opus on the threefold social order he spoke in 1898 about the "fundamental law of sociology". This was followed in 1904 by lectures on the "Social Law" and then in 1918 on the "Social Phenomenon of the Social Sciences". Extensive original source texts can be found in a documentation by Wilfried Schubert.

The Sociological Law (1898):

From social associations to individuals

At the beginning of cultural development, humanity strives to form social associations; the interests of these associations are initially sacrificed to the interests of the individual; further development leads to the liberation of the individual from the interests of the associations and to the free development of the needs and powers of the individual

Over the centuries, this development has progressed to such an extent that the common good is often neglected in favour of the desires and interests of individuals or groups. This fundamental law established by Steiner also applies to the organisation he helped to shape and named *Die*

1 See: Ingrid Feustel and Wolfgang Jaschinski: *The Christian Community in Wangen/Allgäu in the period 1981–2018. Documentation by the Priests and Community Working Group.* <https://forum-cg.de/arbeitsgruppen/>.

2 Ingrid Feustel, Wolfgang Jaschinski, Achim Weiser: *Social Processes in the Christian Community. Part 1: Towards a Common Ground for Members in the Sense of Dieter Brüll*, in: *Die Christengemeinschaft* 10|2024.

3 Rudolf Steiner: *The Core Points of the Social Question*, GA 23, Dornach 1976.

4 Wilfried Schubert: *The Mystery of the Social – Anthroposophical Source Texts from the Work of Rudolf Steiner*. (2023) Available from the author: praxis.dr.schubert@posteo.de.

5 Rudolf Steiner: *Freedom and Society*. First published in: *Magazin für Literatur*, 67 (1898) GA 31, Dornach, p. 255f.

Ingrid Feustel, born in 1941, in Wangen since 1981, helped establish the emerging community and has been active there ever since; since 1999, mentor in the Baden-Württemberg Civic Engagement Programme

Wolfgang Jaschinski, born in 1952, 20 years of local and 5 years of national involvement in the Christian Community, Hagen

Christian Community – Movement for Religious Renewal. The word individuality is not included here, although it is certainly taken seriously; for example, by requiring a conscious, free decision on the part of the individual to become a member. In view of pronounced individualities, we experience inevitable tensions and areas of practice between the legitimate development of individuality and the desire for community, without which the congregation cannot exist. We should recognise this law and not cling to the illusion that community is already created by the sign at the entrance.

community is in need. Recently, for example, knowledge of the situation in Ukrainian and Russian communities – through reports by pastors Yaroslava Black-Terletska and Anna Geyer and others – led to considerable support. Solidarity would also be necessary where priests take on not only spiritual but also organisational and planning tasks in the Christian community or even have to take on secular employment to supplement their income, even though we have a shortage of priests. Since little is generally known about this, it is difficult for help to develop, whether in the form of financial support or the commitment of members.

6 Rudolf Steiner: *Spiritual Science and the Social Question.* First published in *Lucifer-Gnosis*, Nos. 30 and 32, 1905/06. GA 34, Dornach 1960, p. 213.

The Social Law (1905/06):
Solidarity in Economic Life

The well-being of a community of people working together is greater the less the individual claims the fruits of his labour for himself, the more he gives of these fruits to his fellow workers, and the more his needs are satisfied not by his own labour but by the labour of others. ⁶

The social primal phenomenon
(1918/19): *balance between social and antisocial aspects of human nature*

People do not want to admit that they are only half social beings and that the other half is antisocial. ⁷

... the call for social organisation is resounding at a time when people are actually equipped with antisocial drives and instincts in the broadest sense. ... These are manifested in the fact that it is a key characteristic of people to think past each other, talk past each other and ultimately walk past each other.

⁸

... that when one person stands opposite another, one always tries to put the other to sleep, and the other always wants to keep himself upright. But this is, to use Goethe's words, the fundamental phenomenon of social science. ⁹

"The person who wants to understand another must be prepared to let himself be put to sleep by him for a moment. In this respect, he is social: he gives up his own consciousness and the essence of the other fills him. But immediately his antisocial instinct kicks in, which rejects the other in order to assert itself in consciousness. The other becomes the opposite again, the object" ⁽¹⁰⁾

7 Rudolf Steiner: *The Social Programme of Our Time. In a Changed Situation.* GA 186, lecture given on 6 December 1918, Dornach 1963, p. 89.

This contradicts today's prevailing economic liberalism, according to which the common good results from the freedom of the market and the primacy of self-interest. This was propagated by the theorist of capitalism Adam Smith in 1776, and we too are influenced by it today, perhaps to a greater or lesser extent. In the Christian Community, we already do a pretty good job of living up to the social law by letting everyone freely decide how much they want to give. But even just looking at the outside of the churches and how they're set up, you can see how much the financial possibilities differ between communities and between countries. The question therefore arises as to whether solidarity in contributions is limited to one's own community or includes the worldwide Christian community. A first step would be to know where in the Christian community...

8 Rudolf Steiner: *Spiritual Science and Social and Educational Issues,* GA 192, lecture from 11 May 1919, Dornach 1991, p. 87.

9 Rudolf Steiner: *The Social Programme of Our Time. In revised Zeitlage.* GA 186, lecture from 6 December 1918, Dornach 1963, p. 175.

10 Dieter Brüll: *The Anthroposophical Social Impulse,* Novalis Verlag, 1984, p. 141.

Dieter Brüll explains the strange pair of terms "letting oneself be lulled/being self-aware" as follows:

"You can study the phenomenon [of being lulled to sleep] ... in adults who listen 'captivated' to a speaker and, if they don't fall asleep completely, which is also supposed to happen, are so enthralled that afterwards they can only report: 'It was nice. The content has slipped straight into their subconscious because they were so moved that they missed the anti-social pendulum swing.'⁽¹¹⁾

One can often observe one-sided "encounters" and the resulting passivity, whether due to reserved members or dominant priests. The often prevailing one-sided communication was also evident at the LOGOS conference, where the vast majority of contributions came from priests and members largely listened. Gottfried Seitz can therefore be understood across congregations when he describes the widespread systemic or structural phenomenon:

"To put it very exaggeratedly and simplistically, without wanting to offend anyone, I would formulate it as follows: The pastor talks constantly but does not listen, ... the congregation listens constantly but does not speak ..." ¹²

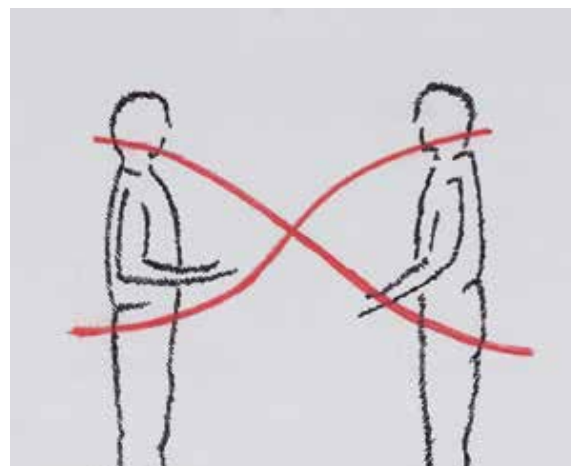
How can we do better? It takes empathy to understand others. It requires perceiving and recognising others and oneself in order to "awaken to oneself through others."¹³ Some people need courage to endure a minute of silence. Others need courage to speak up. Lively encounters with a balance of listening and speaking promote alertness and initiative. An example: A group from *the national Forum for the Christian Community* invited a parish to a series of discussions. This new format with newly met people led to a fresh vitality that the local pastor had long missed.

Dieter Brüll describes the actual conversation, i.e. the ideal form of communication in words and images:

"B puts A to sleep. 'Falling asleep' gives A an insight into what B is aiming for, i.e. the future. In 'sleep', A fulfils himself. He takes it with him into the 'midnight hour' of 'sleeping', which is the point at which, as in nightly sleep, one is completely poured out into the cosmos (in the image, where the lemniscate becomes retrograde). There, what B has said finds its place. A takes it back with him from there, and upon awakening, what moved B becomes clear to him: the past. Thus, what B means is transferred to A in its essence.

A can now respond from the essence of

^B. The process repeats itself: A puts B to sleep; B learns the purpose and origin of what A has said and can in turn respond from the essence of A."¹⁴



In contrast to this ideal image of successful communication, Dieter Brüll also describes less successful manifestations:

"The conversation partners do not 'reach' each other," "B talks over A," "Intellectual banter – there is no question of putting someone to sleep," "One addresses the emotions of the other," "Hypnosis – the listener becomes an instrument"

Furthermore, conversations may be missed or even avoided in order to avoid controversy: Controversies

11 Ibid., p. 142.

12 Gottfried Seitz: *Listening, Silence and Speaking in the Christian Community* | On searching, finding and continuing to search for one's role as a member of the community. In: *Die Christengemeinschaft* 10|2023. <https://christengemeinschaft.de/zeitschrift/202310>.

13 Ulrich Meier: *Unity of Individuals*, Stuttgart 2022, p. 20.

14 Dieter Brüll: *The Anthroposophical Social Impulse*, Novalis Verlag, 1984, p. 149.

15 Ibid., pp. 152–155.

may then no longer appear, but perhaps neither will the people concerned. Of course, we also experience situations, groups and communities in which the ideals we strive for become reality. This should be acknowledged with admiration. It would be interesting to discuss how this was achieved.

It can be an instructive exercise to observe the culture of conversation in one's own environment. Curbing the inevitable anti-social tendencies in our conversations requires deliberate encouragement and cultivation.

Facets of the social phenomenon can be observed in our organisational and decision-making structures at local and national level.

. Every person faces others with social and anti-social impulses, e.g. in everyday life or in work processes. If they cannot find a balance, an organising principle can help, namely on the basis of the division into the areas of cultural and spiritual life, economic life and legal life. Rudolf Steiner described this as the *threefold social organism*, on the basis of which joint decisions can be reached.

The extent to which this could also happen in Christian communities will be the subject of the third part of this series of articles.

Special issue

On the 100th anniversary of Rudolf Steiner's death

What the Christian
Community owes to
Rudolf Steiner.
A tribute on the
100th anniversary of his
death

Special issue of the
magazine *Die Christen-*

,
April 2025,
80 pages, €15

Following numerous suggestions, the editorial team and publisher have decided to produce a special issue of the magazine Die Christengemeinschaft for April 2025. This issue is not included in the subscription and will be available separately from the publisher or bookshops.

We hope this special initiative will be well received!
Ed.

A milestone in the history of Christianity

Still under the immediate impression of Rudolf Steiner's passing, a collection of articles was compiled 100 years ago that painted a vivid picture of his personality and his work. Rudolf Steiner had placed great importance on not presenting himself as the founder of a new Christian church. He saw himself rather as a helpful

inspirer and spiritual companion to the predominantly young clergy who had come together a few years earlier to found the Christian Community.

With the benefit of a century's hindsight, contemporary voices are now also speaking out, describing from their perspective the significance of Rudolf Steiner's contribution to the founding and further development of the Christian Community.

- New culture, new preaching
- Conveying the Word of the World
- The world of hierarchies
- The Christian cycle of the year

Authors

Hermann Beckh, Michael Debus, Rudolf Frieling, Wolfgang Gädeke, Michaela Glöckler, Frank Hörtreiter, Ulrich Meier, Tom Ravetz, Friedrich Rittelmeyer, Peter Selg, João Torunsky, and others.

Social processes in the Christian community

Part 3¹: A path to social threefolding

A dialogue between Ingrid Feustel and Wolfgang Jaschinski

¹ *Social processes in the Christian community. Part 1: Towards a sense of community among members in the spirit of* Dieter Brüll (Ingrid Feustel, Wolfgang Jaschinski, Achim Weiser), in: *Die Christengemeinschaft*, 10| e 2024. Part 2: *How social laws work in the Christian community* (Ingrid Feustel, Wolfgang Jaschinski), in: *Die Christengemeinschaft*, 12|2024. This and all other works cited can be found at [https:// forum-cg.de/arbeits-gruppen/](https://forum-cg.de/arbeits-gruppen/)

² Dieter Brüll: *The Anthroposophical Social Impulse*, Novalis Verlag, 1984.

Ingrid Feustel, born in 1941, has been involved in building the emerging community in Wangen since 1981 and has worked there ever since. Since 1999, she has been a mentor in the Baden-Württemberg Civic Engagement Programme. Württemberg

Wolfgang Jaschinski, born in 1952, 20 years of local and 5 years of regional involvement in the Christian Community, Hagen

Wolfgang Jaschinski | If you want to learn more about the social organism of the Christian Community, you can study Rudolf Steiner's original sources on social issues, read the extensive secondary literature, or gain experience in groups, companies, institutions, or the state as a whole, provided that they are committed to the threefold social order. How was this for you?

Ingrid Feustel | Well, now I can go back a bit further and look back on my life as an older person. I recently asked myself: When did I begin to remember that my own consciousness began to grow? The first thing was that I consciously experienced myself as me on my sixth birthday as a child. It took decades before I began to see the social life in my environment. And it took even longer to be able to put what I perceived into words. During my school and training years, I simply went along without thinking, almost as if I were just living. And that was also the case in the Christian community. During this time, I also had awakening experiences in cultural and intellectual life in my free time, for example in the theatre, at exhibitions and at lectures. Like everyone else, I experienced economic life and legal life in the form of employment contracts in my professional work to earn a living. What I perceived at the time only became clear to me later as cultural/intellectual, economic and legal life.

Wolfgang Jaschinski | What you describe so subtly here may also be true for others. I experienced a similar awakening as a student in sociology class when the teacher gave everyone a sheet with the seating arrangement of the class and we were asked to draw lines from ourselves to the person we would most like to spend the afternoon with.

The overlapping sheets of paper from all the students suddenly made me realise the social class structure that I had not seen before. Our experiences have in common that the recognition of social processes develops. How did your learning process continue?

Ingrid Feustel | I had many encounters with people who were interested in the threefold social order. I began to understand the cultural/spiritual life, economic life and legal life with their respective differences, but also in their interaction. While reading Dieter Brüll's book *Der Anthroposophische Sozialimpuls* (*The Anthroposophical Social Impulse*) (2), I noticed that my perceptions of life corresponded to the descriptions of the social organism, whose organs – culture/spirit, economy and law – seemed similar to the organs in my body. Here, as there, the organs have their own tasks. I suddenly understood what economic life is and how it works, for example, until we can buy food. Trade stands between production and consumption. I experienced legal life as a process between people, for example, between employers and employees. I understood that there are different ways of thinking and living among those involved. At first, I saw the world from my own perspective. But at a certain point – at the age of about 35 – I was suddenly able to detach myself from myself, turn around, let go of my subjective view and from then on look at the objective connections in the world neutrally. I realised that I am not outside social contexts, but right in the middle of them. Now I saw and experienced

I see the three areas of culture/spirit, economy and law in their interrelationship.

Wolfgang Jaschinski | In anthroposophical circles, the threefold social order is considered an ideal concept for manufacturing companies or service providers and social institutions, but what about a spiritual community such as the Christian Community? There are different views on this.

Ingrid Feustel | The social threefold division distinguishes between three levels, which can also be found in a community. The micro level describes the individual level of each member. The macro level represents the state level in which the community is embedded. In between is the meso level, namely the institutional level, as in any company, because every community also has to deal with economics and law.

Wolfgang Jaschinski | Why is it important in practice to always distinguish precisely between the three areas of culture/spirit, economy and law?

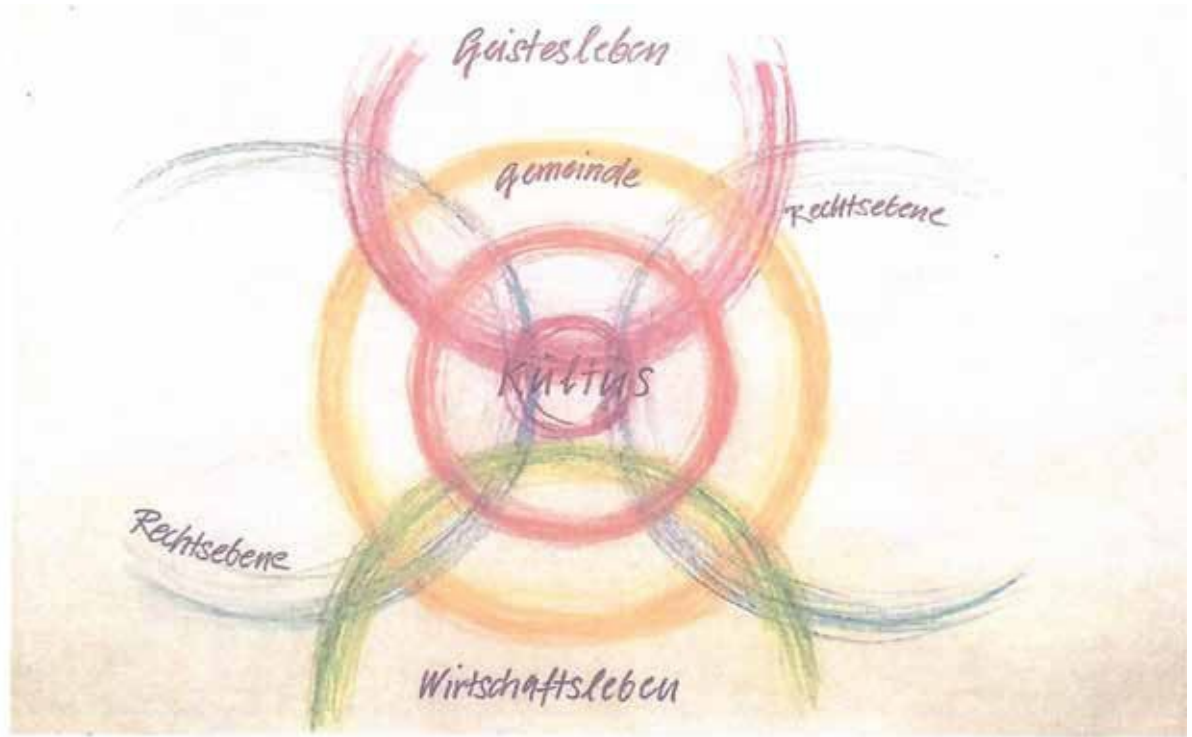
Ingrid Feustel | This is important because these three areas require different attitudes and rules. Let's take a project from community life, such as replacing windows. The building committee discusses the advantages and disadvantages of different types of construction, including costs and social and ecological conditions. Everyone involved can express their ideas and suggestions. In this conceptual planning work in a collegial committee, the principle applies: "Thoughts are free" or "freedom in the life of the mind" in the terminology of social threefolding. Once agreement has been reached in the community, the project moves to the economic level, where the need for new windows is assessed in a spirit of solidarity and brotherhood, depending on the financial possibilities. The purchase itself takes place at the legal level: a purchase contract is concluded, and commercial rules and laws apply.

Wolfgang Jaschinski | Decision-making is often difficult: who has the final say, especially on controversial issues? How are decisions made in the threefold social order?

Ingrid Feustel | Let me give you an example of how it could work: for simple questions, the respective team decides within the framework of a financial budget that has been agreed in advance, e.g. for the purchase of office supplies. For important decisions such as renovating a building, which affects the entire community, the general meeting is the highest decision-making body; all relevant information is gathered in advance, discussed in working groups and a draft resolution is drawn up. This gives those involved sufficient time to consider and weigh up the options. When making decisions, the aim is to achieve agreement among all parties, i.e. a consensus. If individuals continue to hold a dissenting opinion, they are asked whether they can accept that the majority opinion will be implemented despite their own dissent, so as not to prevent progress.

Wolfgang Jaschinski | A secular company could be structured according to these principles of social threefolding, and Dieter Brüll was also involved in such projects in a practical capacity. In contrast, however, a church community has a non-secular core consisting of worship and the sacraments. Dieter Brüll was familiar with worship because he lived for a long time in communities of the Christian Community and was a lecturer at the seminary. This enabled him to write that *"at least with regard to worship, a hierarchical relationship must exist."* For him, *"worship is not spiritual life in the sense of social threefolding."*³ In cult, a spiritual hierarchy is appropriate and necessary to make religious life possible on earth, in communities. Here, there is no freedom for the individual priest, who is bound to the hierarchy of the priesthood in order to preserve the cult. Dieter Brüll draws another analogy: in a clock factory...

³ Dieter Brüll: *The hierarchy in the Christian community*, in: *Info 3*, 1985.



the employees do not decide to produce dials with 10 hours.

Ingrid Feustel⁴ It is indeed not easy to be clear and understandable when using such differentiated terms. That is why, years ago, I began to think about how the special characteristics of the threefold social order could be better communicated and understood in the Christian Community. With the help of a graphic designer⁽⁴⁾, I created some display boards, which I exhibited at the World Conference of the Christian Community in Hamburg in 1997. One of these graphics shows my view of the connections:

At the centre is the service with the congregation and the pastor during the act of consecration of man, shown as an inner red circle. Around it, another red circle describes the members. The yellow circle surrounding it symbolises the members, friends and interested people who together form the congregation. The door is open to everyone.

The spiritual life within the Christian communities is represented in purple.

community can be characterised by four very different aspects. (1) Spiritual life in relation to worship is a sacramental spiritual life, where there is no freedom for pastors or congregations. (2) In spiritual life in relation to proclamation and preaching, pastors have freedom of teaching and members have freedom of belief. Freedom also exists for gospel circles, celebrations, lectures and musical events, in which members can participate on a collegial basis. (3) A free spiritual life in the sense of social threefolding always comes into play when collegial circles engage in intellectual and planning considerations, as happens in every secular enterprise; here, nothing is decided. (4) A special kind of free spiritual life exists when our congregations work together with other church congregations in the city and participate in the cultural life of the city.

The lower green circle symbolises economic life. Blue curves appear on the right and left, representing legal life. Here, rules and regulations are important, e.g. between members and pastors. These are based on the rules laid down in the statutes and thus previously decided by the general meeting. The rules of the church, e.g. the church constitution, apply in addition.

4 Sylvia Kost, Wangen, www.sylvia-kost-illustrationen.de

5 Rudolf Steiner: *Lectures and Courses on Christian Religious Activity, I*, GA 342, p. 50.

, e.g. between members and pastors. Behind them are the rules laid down in the statutes and thus previously decided by the general meeting. In addition, the regulations of the corporation, the steering committee, the foundation and, of course, the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany apply.

This image can be more than a schematic, quasi-technical drawing; it can be an exercise in imagining the circles in constant motion. The spirit descends from above in the form of the purple circle, then retreats upwards again, constantly in motion, alternating between rest and reflection. Economic life – the green circle – forms the basis of life and nature. When people work with love on the earth, everyone works meaningfully for others. Here, movement and the unfolding of energy on earth are the basis for all people. In between, the law weaves in the form of blue circles between people, back and forth at the same level, holding out their hands to one another.

Wolfgang Jaschinski | Your meditative approach to this illustration shows us how vividly and dynamically you can experience the threefold social order in a community. This diagram is therefore not intended as a theoretical organisational chart, but as an inspiration for living according to the ideals of the threefold social order. Rudolf Steiner said to the later founders: *"In your profession, you do not need to agitate for the threefold social order in an abstract way. It is precisely in your profession that it is good to work for the threefold social order in a very practical way."*⁽⁵⁾ This can be understood to mean that our task in the communities is to allow appropriate freedom to prevail and to act as fraternally as possible on the basis of rules and agreements.

Ingrid Feustel | Yes, that's right. The community would be an ideal place for the living practice of threefold social order. For we live in an ideal protective space and in broad independence from the external environment. In a community, we can keep the high ideal before our eyes: we are on the path to Christ. Each person can find this path individually. But it can also lead through a community. *"Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them"* (Matthew 18:19-20). The Christian aspect of the threefold social order could be the guide to understanding what "in my name" means in a social context.



Frank Hörtreiter
**The Christian Community
under National Socialism**

416 pages, hardcover with two ribbon markers
€ 46.00 (Germany) | ISBN 978-3-8251-5282-6

A reappraisal

In 2022, the Christian Community celebrated its centenary. To mark this occasion, this fundamental account of its history was deemed necessary, with the aim of highlighting both the contemporary circumstances and the enduring character of this "movement for religious renewal".

From the contents

How did pastors feel about National Socialism? | Enmity towards the state? Friendship towards the state? | Negotiations with the Gestapo | Rescue operation for Jewish community members | Youth movement, Christian community and National Socialism |

The ban | Arrests and confiscations | Pastors during the war | Underground community | A pastor becomes a National Socialist: Jan Eekhof | Two National Socialists become priests: Benesch and Haverbeck, and many more.

Urach House | www.urachhaus.com