

Three Lectures on Esoteric Christianity

Reverend Jonah Evans

The Toronto Branch of the Anthroposophical Society in Canada was delighted to host Reverend Jonah Evans, of the Thornhill Christian Community Church, who provided three excellent, highly original lectures on esoteric Christianity at the Metropolitan United Church in the heart of the city earlier this fall. The three lectures were organized by Theresia Schier and were held on September 17, 24 and October 8 with good attendance on all three evenings.

The three lectures were simultaneously accessible to anyone and grand in scope, as suggested by their titles:

The Hidden God – Christ in You

The Evolving God – Christ in Us

The Resurrecting God – Christ and the Earth

Drawing on his deep understanding of Rudolf Steiner's Christology and his years of experience as a Christian Community priest, Reverend Evans lectures built up a wondrous sense of Jesus Christ that touched the intimacies of the human heart and shed light on the great cosmic dramas of the evolution of humanity and the earth.

In the first lecture, working with several powerful stories of human becoming, Reverend Evans traced the activity of Jesus Christ in the heart forces at work in moments of personal transformation. Quoting the Gospel of Matthew (Chapter 12, Verses 38 – 41) where Jesus Christ refers to the "sign of Jonah", Reverend Evans explained that in addition to the macrocosmic event of the Christ Being's descent into the centre of the earth, this sign also pertains to each of us as we encounter life's challenges, as we descend into the heart of our own earthly destiny. He revealed a pattern in human becoming where we endure an experience of dying – of letting go in some way – and through this experience, give birth to a higher soul capacity, and take a step toward becoming ourselves.

In the second lecture, Reverend Evans explored how the Incarnation was a healing event for human beings, showing how the life of Jesus Christ restored the archetype of the human being, thus infusing humanity with the power to undertake the ascent back to the spiritual world. He showed how this process of working toward spiritual development requires us to work together in this world - which we must take up the healing work in relationship to each other, and as communities. In this context, he explored the meaning of illness and death, karma and reincarnation, showing these as gifts that can help us achieve a greater victory.

In the third lecture, Reverend Evans moved to macro- cosmic level, drawing out a magnificent picture of how Jesus Christ is working now as the driving force in the evolution of the earth itself. It was an amazing experience to move from the personal, to the social, and to the cosmic in a way that linked our day-to-day challenges with these great forces, to gain a glimpse of Jesus Christ as both intimate guide and world-shaping power.

Nobody Gets Me! The Challenge of Empathy in Parenting and Teaching

by Joan Sleigh

With the support of the Toronto Branch, on Friday, October 2nd, mother, teacher and international leader, Joan Sleigh gave a remarkable lecture on empathy as a fundraiser for the Waldorf Academy. The evening began with a heart-warming welcome by several Grade 7 students who expressed their appreciation for the support for their future class trip.

The lecture was psychologically sophisticated and skillfully delivered. Working from experiences that anyone can recognize, Joan built up a rich understanding of the nature of human encounters and the central role of empathy in realizing the potential in our moments of meeting. Her talk was warmed throughout with poetic flourishes. She spoke of “venturing into the borderlands”, as the space where we move out from our comfort zones to encounter the other, and of “threads of light” that grow between human hearts when we find each other.

Joan gave us a fine example of anthroposophy in the 21st century, enriching the life of the soul with warmth, wit and clarity!

