



Anthroposophy worldwide

What is happening in the Anthroposophical Society

5/19

■ ANTROPOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

May 2019 • N° 5

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Anthroposophical Society

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General Anthroposophical Society

Joyful encounters and intensive work

Dear readers,

The General Anthroposophical Society's recent Annual Conference and AGM were attended by more than 500 members. Entitled 'In the Heartbeat of Time', this gathering had moving moments in the plenary sessions as well as in other encounters. It was evident that a new movement had entered into the relationship between the members, who had come from near and far, the Goetheanum Leadership and the Executive Council. There had been active involvement of young members both in preparing and presenting the conference. The representatives of the different countries had organized stalls in the Foyer and were leading the work groups. Lively discussions and consultations on possible future amendments to the Society's Statutes took place.

From reflections on the inner heartbeat and life of the Anthroposophical Society and its School of Spiritual Science the topics addressed opened up to the question as to the effectiveness of Anthroposophy in the world: with the big «birthdays» of social threefolding and Waldorf Education as a background, the audience heard deeply touching contributions on the future of education in deprived areas (Alejandro Ranovsky, AR), on trauma education (Melanie Reveriego, DE) and on psychotherapy for severely traumatized

adolescents (Rob Gordon, AU). Wolfgang Rissmann (DE) spoke impressively of a soul exercise that involves «walking at the right pace», while Gerald Häfner (Goetheanum) highlighted the importance of social threefolding in world history. Li Zhang from China spoke about the growth and challenges of Waldorf Education in her country. The Annual Conference was immediately followed by a major international conference on Early Years Education.

We thank everyone who took part in and helped to shape this Annual Conference, which made many joyful encounters possible, as well as intensive work on countless topics and the sharing of questions regarding the future development of the Anthroposophical Society. Next year, the series of centenaries will continue with the hundredth birthday of Anthroposophic Medicine. And we, the four members of the Executive Council, will continue to explore further impulses for the future.

We would also like to express our heartfelt gratitude, on behalf of the Goetheanum Leadership, that the members of the Society have reaffirmed Justus Wittich for another period in office – a decision that also had the unanimous support of the conference of country representatives. We are looking forward with confidence to the tasks that lie ahead. With warm greetings, | *Constanza Kaliks, Joan Sleigh and Matthias Girke*

Image Executive Council: Constanza Kaliks (left), (from right to left) Matthias Girke, Joan Sleigh and Justus Wittich

Rudolf Steiner

Disturbed incarnation

If you look at life, you will find that cases like the one I just described occur frequently, particularly in a time that is so materialistic. [...] Something is caught within the individuality and cannot come out, because the other developmental stream was unable to unfold in the right way at the right time. [...] The most horrible confusions happen when [the persons in question] don't have the organ for developing primarily their good dispositions in their present incarnation. They might feel it as a relief that these «I»-dispositions destroy, tear apart, the protective membrane in order to create better possibilities for its development in a later incarnation. [...] We will not always see it as radically expressed, but it occurs in something that is quite ubiquitous in our time: in inner moods of discontent, in hopelessness, in not knowing what to do with oneself, particularly between the ages of 14 or 15 and 21.

Source GA 118, lecture of 30 January 1910. This passage was referred to during the Annual Conference in a contribution about children and adolescents who display violent behaviours (see also page 3, central column, and page 11, left column).

«**Anthroposophy Worldwide. What is happening in the Anthroposophical Society**» appears monthly in German, English, French and Spanish as a supplement to the weekly «Das Goetheanum». **Publisher** General Anthroposophical Society represented by Justus Wittich. **Editors** Sebastian Jüngel (responsible for the German edition), Margot M. Saar (responsible for the English edition), Michael Kranawetvogl (responsible for the Spanish edition), Jean Pierre Ablard and Anselme Killian (French edition; coordinator: Louis Defèche). Proofreader for the English edition: Amadeus Bodenstein. **Address** Anthroposophy Worldwide, PO Box, 4143 Dornach, Switzerland, fax +41 61 706 4465, aww@dasgoetheanum.com • We expressly wish for active support and collaboration. Subscriptions To receive «Anthroposophy Worldwide» please apply to newsletter@anthroposophie.org. Digital subscriptions are free. As a supplement to «Das Goetheanum» «Anthroposophy Worldwide» is also free. If the printed edition is posted to you directly, we ask for a donation to cover costs. **Printed** by Birkäuser + GBC, 4153 Reinach, Switzerland. Design concept according to Karl Lierl, Unterföhring, Germany. © 2019 General Anthroposophical Society, Switzerland.

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Keeping the anthroposophical impulse alive

Internalizing anthroposophy is the foundation, not the goal

The effectiveness of the anthroposophical work relies on a spiritual impulse and the study of anthroposophy, which was not given to a specific group but is available to everyone. The following are extracts from Alejandro Ranovsky's contribution to this year's Annual Conference at the Goetheanum.

What is the advantage of being so far away, in Argentina? It forces people to become creative. There is also the distance in time: it is a hundred years since the first Waldorf School was founded. It is a treasure that has been given to us. We can hide this treasure and give it back unchanged, or we can make it fertile so that it grows into something bigger than what we received.

How can we keep the Waldorf movement alive and fruitful today, in whatever context? Keeping something means «preserving» it, but the movement needs constant interaction with the world around it, which is itself constantly changing and being changed. What do we need to preserve and what do we need to change in order to keep the anthroposophical impulse alive? The spiritual impulse has to remain spiritual; it cannot be changed. The historical and local conditions, on the other hand, are no longer valid today.

For every child

We see Rudolf Steiner's creative gesture in 1919, when he was active out of the social situation then. This gesture needs to be nurtured and preserved. And yet, if we only ever imitated the first Waldorf School, we would end up with ever paler copies. In taking up this creative gesture, we must, according to Rudolf Steiner, enter into dialogue with the legal life, with the academic world and with the social reality. The first Waldorf School was founded for the children of workers; today we don't necessarily find workers' children in Waldorf Schools. We have to make sure that the improvement of the Waldorf School does not happen in a closed environment and that the spiritual impulse can be made fertile for every child.

In our work with Waldorf Education in Argentina we had three Achilles heels: in the cultural realm, our internal language was not suited to the scientific discourse. In our relation with the authorities, we had to keep asking for legal exceptions in order to retain our educational freedom. And at the social level, we have focused for decades on a particular – privileged, homo-



geneous – group and have therefore neglected other groups in the country. In short, we did not follow Rudolf Steiner's threefolding impulse in all three spheres of society.

Adapting to the conditions

We sought to establish contact with the authorities and looked at the teacher training programmes with a view to complementing them with insights from anthroposophy so that these insights would become available to all teachers. We will, for instance, not insist on not teaching geometry to very young children because it is too intellectual but, if the state expects us to, we do it in an age-appropriate way.

The young teachers and the student teachers at our officially recognized Institute are keen to work out of anthroposophy. They do not find ideal situations but have to deal with the challenges they meet and shape their work accordingly. We hope that we can manage to come out of the niche of alternative education with this approach – because it is a niche of self-defence, where the treasure ends up being protected from contamination: a dangerous place of purity, perfection and stagnation.

When we pass this treasure on as a gift, however, it is not diluted but becomes the seed for cultural change and transformation. Studying and internalizing anthroposophy is not the goal but the foundation. The goal is in the future – and the future lies out there. | *Alejandro Ranovsky, Buenos Aires (AR)*

Alejandro Ranovsky is a primary school teacher, lecturer in secondary education and philosophy at Buenos Aires University (BR) and researcher. He is a co-founder of and teaches at the teacher training institute Perito Moreno.

2019 Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting

The world is expecting something from anthroposophists

The General Anthroposophical Society's Annual Conference and AGM, held at the Goetheanum from 11 to 14 April, centred on the vision of a cosmopolitan society that welcomes diversity, is aware of its globally shared impulse and is active in the world.

«We are celebrating a multicultural, complex Society that provides space for many initiatives, where each one is an autonomous part, a separate tone, that contributes to the whole.» With this motif Joan Sleight outlined the objectives of the Executive Council at the Goetheanum. It is a vision that sees the Anthroposophical Society as the image of a cosmopolitan humanity and a diversity which «draws from one source» (Constanza Kaliks).

A space for inner practice

This vision is not a given, as Justus Wittich remarked. «Anthroposophy cannot just be something we read. It is a path on which we, with our questions, can come to find inner balance and serenity.» The Anthroposophical Society becomes a place where we can practise social skills and show how we can be humane even in a technologized world. The young members provided an «Open Space», where others could express what moved them and where many spoke of grievances.

Practising coexistence in a diverse community is an important basis, but it is not an end in itself. This became apparent in contributions that dwelt on the effectiveness of anthroposophy in the social life, in education and in medicine: for Alejandro Ranovsky (AR) it is part of the anthroposophical work to enter into given situations and develop them actively without isolating oneself (Food for Thought, page 2). Gerald Häfner reminded the listeners that social threefolding is based on facts, on humanity's social competence. He also spoke of current efforts to develop a new concept of ownership («steward ownership»). Melanie Reveriego (DE) and Rob Gordon (AU) gave deeply moving insights into the dramatic and tragic circumstances of young criminals and traumatized adults. Wolfgang Rissmann (DE) added paths and exercises for processing and healing inner imbalance and for re-establishing a balanced relationship with oneself and with the cosmos. Like Alejandro Ranovsky, Li Zhang (CN) also showed that the effectiveness of anthroposophy is part of a wider social context that we cannot determine ourselves, but that we need to find ways of dealing with – always confident that solutions can be found.

The world situation as a reason to become active

These contributions were at the same time anthroposophical studies into the soul condition

of humanity and they were presented by individuals who see the situation in the world as a reason for positive activity. The reality needs to be faced. Even in Europe the anthroposophical cultural impulse is under attack, as is apparent in the closures of Waldorf Schools (GB) or of an anthroposophical hospital (SE).

The anthroposophical cultural impulse is nurtured when those representing it work actively together. At the level of the Anthroposophical Society, these are the branches, which Joan Sleight referred to as «beacons»: beacons of working, studying and researching, of knowing of each other and of networking across the world. The activities of the School of Spiritual Science include the inner work in the Michael School as well as the practical application of anthroposophy in the spheres of life. These spheres and the Anthroposophical Society belong together – Matthias Girke spoke of the possibility of specialist professional groups joining the Anthroposophical Society. He said that the world «can expect something of the Anthroposophical Society».

Multifaceted ways of working at the Goetheanum

The Annual Conference and the Annual General Meeting were proof of the multifaceted ways of working that are possible at the Goetheanum. There were sixteen discussion groups for views to be shared, artistic impulses in exhibitions (new: The Art of Education. Artistic Elements in Rudolf Steiner's Education with examples of work from the Friedwart School), eurythmy presented by the Goetheanum Eurythmy Ensemble, music performed by a chamber group formed for the occasion, and creative speech presented by a speech choir. In addition, there were contemplations on the rhythms of the Foundation Stone Meditation. The commemoration of the dead was a celebration that led from music to eurythmy to speech and then back to eurythmy and music. From its sculptural forms to the painted ceiling, Matthias Girke emphasized the importance of fostering and conveying the Goetheanum's special aspects as a means of making anthroposophy visible. The answering of letters addressed to the Executive Council – letters that speak of heartfelt interest in the Anthroposophical Society – can promote dialogue and communication with the members.



Practising humaneness: Alejandro Ranovsky (AR), Gerald Häfner (Goetheanum), Melanie Reveriego (DE), Li Zhang (CN), Wolfgang Rissmann (DE) and Rob Gordon (AU)

One could have easily missed the young members' assurance that they are practising sticking together «even when we have different views». This comment built a bridge to the motif of «living diversity» that resonated in the oral statements of the Executive Council. | Sebastian Jüngel



2019 Annual General Meeting

Votes on motions and concerns

Motions submitted by the Executive Council

Following a consultation on amendments to the Statutes of the General Anthroposophical Society proposed by Gerald Häfner and Justus Wittich, indicative votes were taken to gauge the mood among the membership, with the following results:

- Should the **Conference of Country Representatives be included in the Statutes as an organ**? This conference is an advisory body which is consulted in questions of membership dues, changes to the Executive Council and amendments to the Statutes. The impression was that a majority of members could imagine including the Conference of Country Representatives as an organ in the Statutes, while some wished for a more detailed description of the body's tasks.
- Should the **position of chairperson** of the Executive Council be eliminated from the Statutes? One of the reasons Justus Wittich gave for this was that the four Executive Council members felt that they preferred to work collegially. The impression of the mood in the Auditorium was that the majority could imagine eliminating the position of chairperson, only few could not imagine it.
- What should happen after the **non-affirmation of an Executive Council member**? A transition period of three to twelve months was proposed. In addition, it was proposed

that, before a mandate was extended, the Executive Council should describe why they wished to continue working with the council member in question; a detailed statement of past activities and future intentions of that council member should be presented. It was suggested that several candidates could be suggested for a possible extension of the Executive Council. Justus Wittich explained that, according to the Statutes, the Executive Council made preliminary decisions with regard to its composition, given the fact that this constellation is essential for its functioning; after that it was up to the AGM to judge whether it could approve this decision. The mood among the members suggested that a majority can imagine a provisional transition period of three months (or longer).

- A possible **regulation for AGMs, diverse ways of voting** and a **committee that would deal with motions** were motions submitted but not discussed further because there was no time.

The amendments to the Statutes will be worked on further, particularly with regard to forms of voting such as by letter or with parallel events across the world. In addition, Gerald Häfner, Michael Schmock and Justus Wittich have taken the initiative within the Social Science Section to once more study the question of the constitution of the Anthroposophical Society, systematically, with everyone interested. This could take the form of colloquia, for instance.



The **annual accounts for 2018** were accepted by the majority, with a few votes against and a few abstentions.

Stephan Wenk of Santschi and Partners was elected as the **new auditor**.

The **Executive Council was discharged** by the majority of members present, with a few votes against and some abstentions.

In a secret ballot the AGM **confirmed Justus Wittich for a further seven years as a member of the Executive Council and treasurer**, with 90 per cent of votes in favour (455, with 53 votes against); 22 of the members present abstained.

Motions relating to the Statutes submitted by members

Eckhart Dönges (CH) moved to amend Article 8 as follows, «Concerns relating to the spiritual goals and tasks of the Society are dealt with in open discussion and voted on consultatively.» This motion was rejected with 175 votes against, 167 in favour and 107 abstentions.

Heidrun Scholze (DE) and others moved that **procedural minutes should be taken** at the AGM in future rather than just minutes on decisions and that this should be entered into the Statutes. Apart from questions as to who would read all that, there was also a new request to present the minutes of the previous year for acceptance. It was objected that the members present at AGMs differed every year. The motion was rejected by a majority, but there were many votes in favour (and abstentions).

The motion to **abolish any time limit on the tenure of Executive Council members**, originally submitted by Paul Mackay (CH), was represented by Agnes Zehnter (CH) and others as a motion from the membership. A no-action motion was supported by a majority.

A motion carried over from the previous year which asked that the appointment or extension in office of an Executive Council member should require a **two-thirds majority** had been withdrawn before the AGM by Gottfried



Caspar and Ingrid Caspar. Ingrid Caspar (CH) stated that there had been no strategic reasons for submitting the motion in 2018; both still think that a greater majority should be required in questions of personnel.

Eckhart Dönges tabled the motion to add to Article 12 that «the initiative Executive Council is **responsible** for making sure that anthroposophical spiritual science and Rudolf Steiner's artistic and social impulses are represented in the world and within the Goetheanum». Dönges thought that artistic impulses had been held back «wholly deliberately» and that spiritual science had been negated at the Goetheanum». Other speakers rejected this. A procedural motion to refrain from voting on this motion was rejected with 208 votes against, 197 in favour and 49 abstentions.

After that, criticism was expressed about using no-action motions as an instrument for preventing debate. A spontaneous motion to eliminate this kind of procedure on principle was not voted on because it would have had to be put on the agenda beforehand. A majority rejected Eckhart Dönges' motion, with a few votes in favour and a few abstentions.

Robert Jan Kelde (NL) submitted the motion «to free the Goetheanum from the «Mixed King» and to **re-establish the Anthroposophical Society**». A procedural motion to not vote on this motion because it could not be put into practice was accepted with a few votes against and abstentions.

Thomas Heck and Eva Lohmann-Heck (CH) moved that **clarification was needed regarding the identity** of the General Anthroposophical Society. Justus Wittich expressed his reservations against an «official definition». A procedural no-action motion from the members present was accepted by a majority, with a few votes against and abstentions.

Heidrun Scholze and others expressed the wish in their motion that the Executive Council should invite **all members three times per year to the Goetheanum for a meeting day** with

open discussion rounds. Justus Wittich suggested changing this motion into an initiative and that those who wished to take it up should contact Heidrun Scholze or the Executive Council. The motion was not voted on.

Moritz Christoph (DE) asked to set up a **members' forum to appoint candidates for the Executive Council**. Again, Justus Wittich pointed out the freedom of the members to take the initiative. Moritz Christoph agreed to use Andreas Heertsch's Members' Forum for this www.forum.goetheanum.org. There was no vote on this.

Ursula Ostermai's (CH) motion was again presented orally: it concerned the question «What does «**emeritus status**» mean in relation to members of the Executive Council and of the Goetheanum Leadership?» Justus Wittich referred to the written statement included in the documentation for the Annual General Meeting.

Concerns

There was opportunity on the final day of the AGM for presenting the concern to form a «**council of elders**» (working title) that would advise the Executive Council in its activities, confirm Executive Council members or remove them from office.

The concern to **rehabilitate Herbert Witzemann** was postponed to the AGM in 2020.

The concern to consider the aspects, as well as their **historic foundation, for updating the Statutes** and to initiate a transparent process for the amendment of the Statutes was accepted by Justus Wittich with the words «That we will do» and a reference to the initiative taken up by the Social Science Section. | *Sebastian Jüngel*

Images (from left to right) Greeting the membership in their own language: the country representatives on the Goetheanum stage, Reaffirmation: Matthias Girke congratulates Justus Wittich, Presenting the Sections of the School of Spiritual Science in five areas: «Becoming human», «with nature» and «through art» «in the social sphere» and «in healing», Wolfgang Held, Silke Sponheuer, Stefan Hasler



Photo series in «Garage» magazine

Statement

Dear members,

Life is a trial. If people approach the Goetheanum because they are interested in it or have questions, we welcome this and we will continue to respond to their inquiries in the future.

In this case the process turned out to be unsatisfactory: we were expecting an homage to eurythmy and to the mother of the photographer, who used to be Else Klink's housekeeper.

Photos were taken of us in eurythmy dresses and designer clothes and we expected to see both in the final publication. It had also been agreed that we would have a say in the choice of photographs that would be printed. Neither of these expectations was met and we are not happy with the publication as it is now.

We were too naïve and failed to enter into a sufficiently restrictive contract and this turned out to be a mistake. We will examine any similar requests much more carefully in the future.

We are deeply sorry about the feelings and sentiments that some of the pictures have evoked. | Stefan Hasler and Silke Sponheuer with Tanja Masukowitz and Nils Frischknecht, Goetheanum

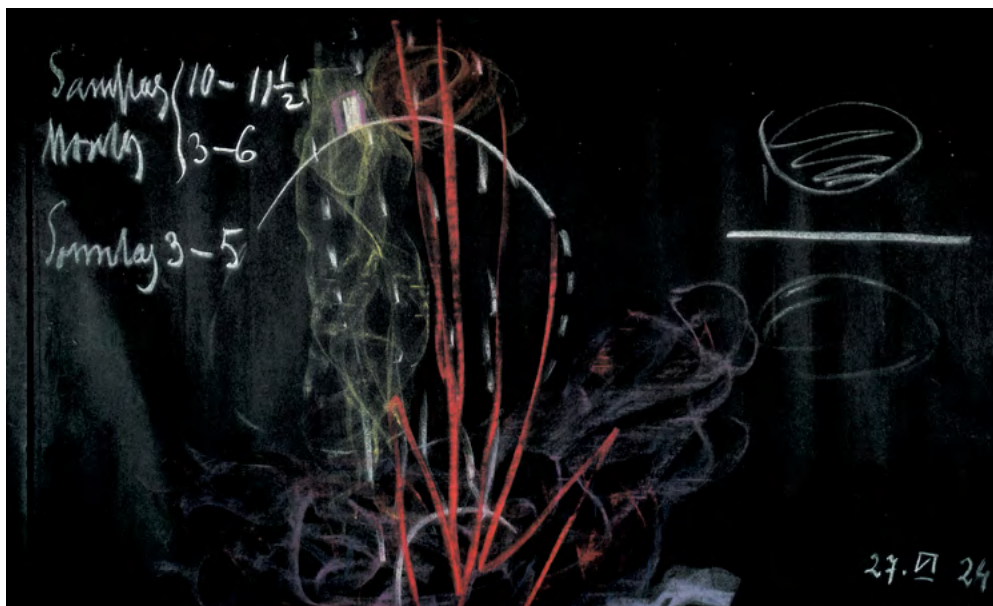
Official minutes of the AGM www.anthroposophie.org/en/news/general-meeting-2019

*Meditative
experience of time*

On deepening the second verse of the Foundation Stone Meditation

The Foundation Stone Meditation has formed the centre of our work for several years now. This meditation makes it possible for our soul to experience itself increasingly, through practice, as a threefold being that is connected with the cosmos. This practising is a central motif that forms and enlivens the Anthroposophical Society and the Sections. In the coming year we would like to continue to deepen our work with the second verse and present exercises of Spirit Awareness that can lead into meditation. Wolfgang Toaschitz, general secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in Austria, and Jaap Sijmons, former general secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in the Netherlands, are contributing an article on this theme.

Future issues of *Anthroposophy Worldwide* will include further contributions on the same topic that can serve as a basis for study in branches, groups and in the specialist fields. In addition to the recommended reading, we would like to suggest Rudolf Steiner's book *The Christmas Conference for the Foundation of the General Anthroposophical Society 1923/1924 (GA 260)*. | *Christiane Haid and Constanza Kaliks for the Goetheanum Leadership*



Impulse for 2019/2020

Experiencing the future: the rising sun

There are many possibilities for working or living meditatively with the Foundation Stone Meditation. Simply reflecting on a word or a line can open up wider dimensions. The following is an attempt to describe such an exercise.

One of the many aspects in the Foundation Stone Meditation's central verse concerns our experience of time. Meditation can lead us to an experience of time that is more vibrant than the one usually accessible to us in our everyday consciousness, and it can dissolve the forces which are very pronounced today and which repel, as Rudolf Steiner once said, «what seeks to enter our soul from the future».¹

Awaiting the future

The following is one possible way of working on this theme meditatively: we can, in a first step, reflect on how limited our everyday consciousness is when it comes to the future, because the future is impenetrable for this consciousness. We simply don't know what the next minute, hour or day is going to bring. We can only await the future; and this is a situation that informs our daily understanding of ourselves and of the world. Rudolf Steiner referred to this repeatedly.² Our instinctive response is fear. We are afraid of what is uncertain and unplannable, and this fear is an ever-present background for those who – as Rudolf Steiner once said with a touch of humour – always need to be sure of everything.³ If we don't give in to such instinctive emotions, but try to control our feelings in such situations⁴, the outcome of our contemplation can condense into a more positive mood, a sense that the future is entirely open and that it holds a wealth of possibilities.

In a second step we can add an image: the image of the rising sun⁵ in whose fire – and this is the important part of this second step – no aspect of the coming day has as yet taken shape. The image of the warming sun stands for a future as yet unshaped, into which we can step confidently because it is not unfamiliar but holds something for us and wants to help us develop. This is how one could describe what grows from the meditative interaction of contemplation and imagination. The mood is no longer one of anxiety, but one of confident expectation, of being ready «for what reality teaches us»⁶.

What has so far been achieved through meditation can then be accentuated and deepened in a third step, for which we refer to the following lines from the Foundation Stone Meditation's central part: «Let from the East be enkindled, what through the West takes on form». The meditative process gains essence: we can address beings and ask something of them. The future is no longer only open but is experienced as will-like, as a conversation between the as yet unformed and that which assumes and gives form. From there, countless other experiences can open up, as can new questions regarding my involvement⁷ in this conversation, the power of East and West in me, the qualitative aspect of time in the Michael experience⁸, and others.

The interplay of contemplation, image and the verse can be described as a meditative experimental set-up, in which the meaning of the

verse is taken into our soul experience and where this soul experience is at the same time guided and illumined by the verse.

The sun at night

Our practising is completed in the soul on the path from thought, to image, to the word. This path would not exist if it was not for the living light that the spirit casts into the soul, a light that is received as imagination or toned down into thought. We may not be conscious of this, but we encounter actual beings at every step.

Hopefully we live towards the sun. Let us contemplate this inner attitude. Where does this strengthening expectation come from that the light and warmth of the rising sun instils in us? We are referred to the contrasting experience of the sunset and the night. Let us look at the waking up process, when we rise with our consciousness out of a realm that has no light and no images, and we turn to the sun. This day-world cannot be penetrated without preparation. We contemplate how we experience the uncertainty of the open future that lies ahead of us differently from how we experience what the night holds in store for us, or what we are given every morning by what lies behind us. As we wake up refreshed we feel the power of incarnation. It rises from the limbs as the I-organization and astral body enter the physical and etheric body.⁹ It is really the opposite of the worries about the unknown that can arise in the head and rob us of our sleep at night.

Rudolf Steiner offers an imagination that can help us feel our way into the spiritual reality of the night. He asks us to think that the beings of the second hierarchy are at work in the daytime behind the golden rays of the sun; that we were with these beings in the night. The image arises of beholding the sun at midnight, behind the earth, when we have observed its setting in the red evening sky and it appears to the spiritual eye in the night in glimmering hues of blue and red. This night sun makes a moral impression on us and it increasingly assumes the form of beings: these are the hierarchies which we meet in the night sun.¹⁰ In the night we experience or remember all our earlier incarnations before entering again deeply into the present one. The hierarchies also look back on our former earthly lives and they show us, in the daily sun-lit world, what we are karmically entitled to see in the visible world, «the reservoir from which the Gods may draw for their demonstrations of karma».¹¹

We can live confidently towards the sun because we feel deep inside that we have to await what the hierarchies will bestow on us and what we have already lived through in the night. We will find inner balance when we feel that the rhythms of day and night together will let us

experience the meaning of our earthly existence. When we consider this we may hear the following line from the Foundation Stone Meditation: «For the Christ-will encircling us holds sway, in world rhythms bestowing grace upon souls».

The rising sun and our memory of the midnight sun become an image for us of pure time as it unfolds in the souls, hearts and heads, where the sun can rise over the moral impulses that we bring with us from the night. | *Wolfgang Tomaschitz, general secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in Austria, Jaap Sijmons, general secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in the Netherlands (up until April 2019).*

1 Rudolf Steiner: GA 59, lecture of 17 February 1910.

2 Rudolf Steiner: GA 13, chapter «Cosmic Evolution and the Human Being», and GA 115, lecture of 4 November 1910.

3 GA 134, Lecture of 28 December 1911, Hanover.

4 Cf. Rudolf Steiner's exercises for positivity and open-mindedness in GAs 13 and 95, where he also refers to the experience of time.

5 No more needs to be said about the importance of the imagination of the rising sun in meditation; Rudolf Steiner's indications to this extend from How to Attain Knowledge of Higher Worlds (GA 10) to Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts (GA 26). Readers might be less aware of the connection between warmth and the experience of time implied in the words of Benedictus' meditation for Johannes in Scene 3 of Rudolf Steiner's first Mystery Drama: «Love's blessing pours its warmth through time's long ages to call forth revelation of all worlds» (GA 14).

6 Rudolf Steiner: GA 134, lecture of 28 December 1911.

7 Ibid.

8 Rudolf Steiner: GA 229, lecture of 13 October 1923, and GA 26, chapters «The World-Thoughts in the Working of Michael and in the Working of Ahriman» and «Where is the Human Being as a Thinking and Remembering Being?»

9 Rudolf Steiner: GA 236, lecture of 27 June 1924.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid., lecture of 22 June 1924.

General Anthroposophical Society

Christmas Conference 2019

This year's Christmas Conference at the Goetheanum will be about the spiritual forces of the starry world in our life and in community building.

Our relationship with the world of the stars and planets is abstract, and our relationship with the sun is not healthy, given that it is determined by our yearning for its light and an unreflecting fear of its effects. Our spatial understanding of the macrocosm is informed by space research; we need to rediscover the great riddles of its spiritual essence and its relationship to us, and deepen our relationship with the sun.

The sound of the world soul

The rhythms of the starry world have a musical order. This music of the spheres sounds different in every moment and every festival season. Its spiritual resonance is conveyed to the earth's life as the sound of the world soul. We find its rhythms again in our biographies and in many of the organic processes that occur in nature and in us: in biology, for instance, in agriculture and medicine. The arch extends from the starry world of the Christmas sky, to the planetary music of the spheres, to the sun's essence and to their effect on our life and that of the earth.

The Foundation Stone Meditation brings the world's macrocosmic being and our microcosmic being together. From the human soul's practising and contemplation of the Christmas event arises a prayer for the Christ Sun's light and warmth to imbue life's activities. This is related to Rudolf Steiner's request at the end of the Christmas Conference of 1923/1924, to «follow this good star», a request that becomes ever more relevant. (GA 260, lecture of 1 January 1924).

The 2019 Christmas Conference is organized by the General Anthroposophical Section, the Section for Mathematics and Astronomy, the Visual Arts Section and the Medical Section. As part of it, the Goetheanum Eurythmy Ensemble's new programme will be presented. If we have clear night skies, we will conclude the days with guided star gazing from the Goetheanum terrace. | *Matthias Girke, Oliver Conradt, Marianne Schubert, Goetheanum*

Christmas Conference 'Follow this good star. Light and warmth of the Christ Sun', 27–30 December 2019, Goetheanum.

■ SCHOOL OF SPIRITUAL SCIENCE

General Anthroposophy

The Beauty of the Mantras

A School of Spiritual Science study group of around twenty people has been meeting three times a year over the past three years in the southern German town of Niefern-Öschelbrunn.

The conversation group seeks to explore the beauty and power of the mantras of the nineteen Class Lessons and bring their insight into human nature to life. Studying these texts, establishing connections and marvelling at their broad perspectives creates a shared space where an inner attitude of attentive earnestness can live. It is an attempt to connect our individual life experience with the task we have within the School of Spiritual Science.

What happens between the Class Lessons?

Each of these study meetings focuses on one Class Lesson but also looks back at previous lessons and ahead to the following ones. One of the central questions is: What happens between the lessons? We practise asking questions, keeping our questions open, attempting answers, entering into conversation and expressing what we have experienced in eurythmy. In this way, the motifs that have been conveyed through spiritual science can be transformed through clear thinking processes into personal images that can then be meditated.

This local work intends to prepare actively seeking Class members – particularly younger members as potential future class holders – for independent, responsible involvement, by planting seeds for future-oriented activities.

The inspiration or idea for this kind of work arose in me, when I came across a similar endeavour in Sekem (EG).

This intensive working together is prepared by Hans Broder von Laue and complemented with eurythmy exercises guided by Elke E. von Laue.

New members are welcome to the group following an initial conversation. | *Barbara M. Schönstedt, Niefern-Öschelbrunn (DE)*

Contacts Barbara Schönstedt, barosch@gmx.de
Hans-Broder von Laue, bhvlaue@t-online.de

Youth Section

Threshold and subnature

From 28 February to 3 March around 30 young Class members met in Oriago (IT) to study the Class Lessons of the School of Spiritual Science.

Inspired by the Living Connections conference and their work in the Youth Section, six people decided to deepen the contents of the First Class together with other young Class members, relating them to the questions and tasks of young people today. In 2018 all Class members worldwide under the age of 35 were invited to work on the first three Class Lessons which address the soul forces of thinking, feeling and will. After a year of preparations, the young people now came together for an international meeting in Oriago.

Elizabeth Wirsching, Constanza Kaliks and Claudio Puglisi accompanied them in a process that allowed for a deepening of the Class Lessons as well as for conversations about the structure of the School of Spiritual Science, down to specific questions such as whether it is possible to connect Class membership with a particular Section. Daphnee Littmann (IL) helped us with social eurythmy to find ourselves as a group and experience the contents in an artistic way.

Moment of inversion

The concept of the threshold as an experience and part of the knowledge process accompanied us as we studied the contents through eurythmy and through geometrical exercises guided by Constanza Kaliks. This allowed us to experience the moment of inversion that belongs to the threshold.

We also dealt with the questions that the preparation group had studied in advance: What is love and what is its role on the path to knowledge? How do the oppositional forces affect this? How is the relationship between subnature and nature expressed in Rudolf Steiner's Michael Letters and where do we experience subnature today? How can we find suitable ways of dealing with it?

In the concluding plenary session we realized how valuable it is to create space for sharing, where the process of gaining knowledge can take place for young Class members and where they can experience togetherness. | *Ioana Viscrianu, Goetheanum*

Web www.youthsection.org

Medical Section

Oncology training

From 25 to 29 March, physicians from India and Dubai visited the Arlesheim Clinic in order to experience anthroposophic oncology in practice.

The Integrated Oncology Training programme has been developed within the Ita Wegman Campus as a collaboration between the Goetheanum's Medical Section and the Arlesheim Clinic. Aside from specialist contributions, the programme included insights into the manufacturing of mistletoe preparations at Hiscia (Arlesheim, CH) and Helixor (Rosenfeld, DE), a visit to the Goetheanum with a contemplation of the Representative of Humanity.

A broad, as yet unexplored potential

In 2018, the participants of this course had undergone a comprehensive training programme made up of three weekend modules in various cities in India, under the direction of Harihara Murthy (ENT specialist from Bangalore) and the homeopathic physicians Ravi Doctor (Mumbai) and Srinivasa Rao (Hyderabad). These modules included introductions to conventional oncology, anthroposophical anthropology, mistletoe therapy and to a deeper understanding of cancer. (Georg Soldner and Marion Debus visited India regularly to support the project). The course members were encouraged from the beginning to treat patients themselves and report on their experiences at the next meeting.

Having been prepared in this way, the visitors were deeply impressed by their experience of the Arlesheim hospital. The striving of not one individual physician in their surgery but of an entire therapeutic community for a deeper understanding of the human being and of illness, and the working together of diverse professional groups evoked in them a sense of the broad, future-oriented, but as yet unexplored potential of Anthroposophic Medicine.

The three training leaders in India first learned about mistletoe therapy at one of the International Postgraduate Medical Training (IPMT) initiated by Michaela Glöckler. It was their meeting with oncology as a specialization that led quite a number of physicians to experience the germinal power of the anthroposophic approach. | *Marion Debus, Arlesheim (CH)*

Web www.medsektion-goetheanum.org



Social Sciences

Social Threefolding

Impulse for the Future: A Hundred Years of Social Threefolding was the title of a conference that brought 650 people to Stuttgart (DE) from 5 to 7 April.

In 1919, just after the First World War, a popular movement started in Stuttgart which, under the name of the «threefolding of the social organism», advocated a comprehensive new social order which was based on comprehensive human self-determination and far ahead of its time.

Our time now asks for a broad transformation of the prevailing system if the climate, the earth, our humanity and human dignity are to be saved. The idea of the threefold social organism is more relevant than ever. At this conference, its underlying idea and history was presented, but above all the focus was its potential contribution to answering the urgent questions we are facing today. The conference was opened by the mayor of Stuttgart, who pointed out how much the city has been influenced by the anthroposophical initiatives that have settled there.

Aside from the big lectures (Nicanor Perlas, Gerald Häfner) on the relevance and future of the threefolding impulse, the Market of Possibilities formed the real heart of this gathering, with over a hundred initiatives presenting themselves in four times 26 conversation rounds. They showed in a compelling way the continuous productivity of this approach and the many possibilities that offer themselves for its meaningful application.

The conference not only brought an aspect of history back to light that had been suppressed; it also provided the opportunity to experience a great number of wonderful people who are working actively out of this impulse on making the world a better place. | *Gerald Häfner, Goetheanum*

Image Plenary session with Nicanor Perlas and Gerald Häfner



Education Section

World Teachers' Conference

More than 1000 Waldorf educators took part in the **International Early Childhood Conference Inner Freedom – Social Responsibility. Finding Paths to a Human Future**, which was hosted by the Goetheanum from 15 to 19 April.

Waldorf education aims to support children in discovering their own impulses and developing their own potential for self-realization. The longer they can openly follow their own motivation, the more broadly can they develop their abilities. «The children's developmental prospects are based on their first years of life and extend far into adulthood,» says Florian Oswald, co-director of the Education Section at the Goetheanum. «And we include the time before birth».

Appreciating the work with children

The implementation of this ideal depends on the cultural and regulatory conditions in the country where the child grows up. The Waldorf movement is looking for forms of cross-country, cross-linguistic and cross-religious cooperation in the sense of the threefold nature of the social organism. For Rudolf Steiner it helps to understand and develop the various areas of society – culture (intellectual life), legislation (legal life) and trade (economic life) – and their respective principles and natural laws. One area of supranational cooperation is the International Association for Steiner/Waldorf Early Childhood Education (IASWECE). Here, educators from America, Europe, Asia and Oceania use reports, conversations and study projects to gain an impression and understanding of young children's current situation; for example on topics such as «sleep» and «digital media».

«The Waldorf movement wants to draw attention to the crucial importance of childhood and adolescence,» adds Philipp Reubke of IASWECE. «It is important therefore, that the work of nursery school teachers, kindergarten teachers and nannies be valued accordingly». | *Sebastian Jüngel, translation by Bettina Hindes*

Web www.iaswece.org, www.goetheanum-paedagogik.ch **Image** Humorous evening: a group from Finland

Humanities Section

Metamorphosis of the senses

The interplay of the senses is the topic of a conference from 10 to 12 May, entitled **Metamorphosis of the Senses**. The conference centres on Rudolf Steiner's book *Anthroposophy – a Fragment*.

Rudolf Steiner once referred to the contemplation of the senses as the «first chapter of Anthroposophy» (GA115, lecture of 23 October 1909). We find out why this is when we look at humanity's cosmic evolution. It was only after a lengthy cosmic development that human beings became citizens of the earth. Now we have entered into a process that is meant to make us inhabitants of the spiritual world again, but in a new way. The spiritual power needed for this has to be practised through the senses. They are the basis and essential precondition of any spiritual activity. Only through the senses can we make the world our home and develop our life in freedom.

Spiritual development relies on sensory development

Spiritual self-knowledge begins when we don't only use the higher senses for perception, but when we recognize ourselves as spiritual beings in the mirror of all of our senses and consciously take the first steps towards the supersensible world. In his Autobiography (GA 28) Rudolf Steiner describes how he realized at a young age that, when we form mental images, we keep intermingling pure thinking and sensory perception and therefore never use either the senses or the spirit in their pure form.

When you really experience the senses, they will be like a miracle to you and you will understand that spiritual development relies on sensory development. Looking at the senses in their totality is particularly important in our time, because all our senses are directed outward now, but – paradoxically – we increasingly lose our connection with the essence and quality of what we perceive. If our senses are not to wither away altogether, we have to train them and learn to appreciate their value. In contributions, exercises, textual work and conversations we will explore the wide realm of the senses and their importance for us as human beings. | *Christiane Haid, Goetheanum Jaap Sijmons (NL), Seija Zimmermann (FI)*

Web www.goetheanum.org/tagungen/vonder-metamorphose-der-sinne

■ FORUM

NEWS TICKER — Young members reported on their work on the Christmas Conference of 1923/1924 and on the rhythms of the Foundation Stone Meditation. — Pacifica College Eurythmy Training has newly started in New Zealand. www.anthroposophy.org.nz — Fonds Goetheanum is a fundraising initiative in Switzerland: www.fondsgoetheanum.ch — With its initiative Social Future the Anthroposophical Society in Germany cultivates its connection with the civil society: www.sozialezukunft.de — The Anthroposophical Society in Austria is preparing the 2022/2023 East-West Congress: www.anthroposophie.or.at — The Anthroposophical Society in America offers webinars at www.anthroposophy.org — During the International Early Childhood Conference at the Goetheanum the Executive Council floor was turned into an exhibition space. — The Humanities Section at the Goetheanum is organizing a second conference on transhumanism from 18 to 20 October 2019: ssw.goetheanum.org — Following the rehabilitation of Ita Wegman, Peter Selg was able to mention this fact in an article commissioned by the Historical Commission at the Bavarian Academy of Sciences (DE). — Michaela Glöckler reminded members of the Eliant petition «For the right to screen-free day care units, kindergartens and primary schools»: www.eliant.eu —

The reports at the Annual Conference illustrated how intensively people all over the world are working with anthroposophy as a source. At the Parzival Centre in Karlsruhe (DE), for instance, one tries, on the basis of the anthroposophical image of the human being, to help children and youngsters with hauntingly moving destinies by providing moments of freedom in lives that are distorted by challenging situations and acts of violence. Giving the innermost human essence, the «I», the possibility to come to the fore is one of the valuable achievements of the Parzival Centre.

The report on the impulse of Waldorf Education in China also showed how the trust we place in human beings and social contexts can create hope. Li Zhang compared the situation to a bamboo forest: the bamboo stems that grow above the ground are flexible, but their deep roots under the earth allow them to stand firm in the face of difficult outer conditions.

Nurturing the inner life

Actions in the outside world were juxtaposed with the nurturing of the inner life. The commemoration of the dead was devoted to Ninetta Sombart, Georg Glöckler and Karl Kaltenbach. The addresses were complemented by Jan Stuten's solemn music for Elisabeth Vreede and Ita Wegman, the two personalities who were rehabilitated at the AGM in 2018 following a members' initiative. Jan Stuten characterized their lives in music, including tender beginnings and evolving light. With Ita Wegman, the intensifying dynamic reflected the path of a soul that had to be active and that connected strongly with the earth. The celebration proceeded from music to eurythmy to the word and back again, reminding the listeners of the human being's cosmic origin and gift of creativity. | *Gabriela Jüngel, Dornach (CH)*

During the Annual Conference «In the Heartbeat of Time» we were led into prison cells in two of the reports we heard. Melanie Riveriego (DE) related how she visited a 14 year old boy in a high security prison and how she was given exceptional permission to hug him. The young boy's biography, which featured many disastrous events, left us shocked. It was as if we had come together for a child conference. The second instance was Rob Gordon's (AU) description of meeting a delinquent youth. Gordon described how, as he observed the young man's gaze empathetically, he could see how in one moment the «I» was pres-

ent and then the gaze was empty, like that of a crocodile whose jaws are about to snap shut. Gordon's detailed descriptions of spiritual experiences inspired me to contemplate this year's AGM, which had passed without a major hitch.

Mending of errors

In contrast to the compassionate child conference, we then seemed to find ourselves in court. A Uriel mood suddenly prevailed: «... addressed and mended are errors and lies, hearts are sifted, clarified»¹.

Lacking consciousness behind the lectern («Am I aware of what I am doing in this moment?») is multiplied by every listener: if you like listening to yourself speaking, you come across as vain. Speaking vaguely or losing yourself in contradictions provokes impatience, washing your dirty laundry in public, embarrassment. A judgmental mood that is void of benevolence is restricted to pros and cons. Strict rules suddenly apply on stage. If you ignore these rules you disgrace yourself and won't be allowed to speak again.

Membership assemblies and the free spiritual life are very dissimilar cultures: the prison of power confronts the freedom of the spiritual life. Is an association, which has an AGM as its highest organ, really the appropriate structure for a society that wishes to cultivate anthroposophy as a spiritual science? | *Andreas Heertsch, Arlesheim (CH)*

1. Uriel Imagination, in Rudolf Steiner, *Breathing the Spirit*, tr. M. Barton

A colourful, almost Faustian

group came together at the beginning of Holy Week. And the four days, during which almost 500 people tried to represent «the Society», did in fact reveal much individual and communal striving. My personal conclusion

is that people increasingly realize why this association is a General Anthroposophical Society rather than a Rudolf Steiner Society.

While these people can occasionally appear as a «seasoned» community, their quest for self-determination is clearly, and legitimately, based on individuality.

From shrill to impressive

This was quite evident, sometimes in rather shrill and at other times in profoundly impressive ways. The active involvement of the young people from the Youth Section in particular added an authenticity and sustainable commitment that commanded respect.

While the much-quoted harmony remained hidden, it was subtly tangible as the unspoken yet quietly effective continuity of a rehabilitation process that seemed to have finally found its heart: the rebirth of the 1923/1924 Christmas Conference out of the spirit of a lived anthroposophy.

The 2019 Annual Conference began exactly one week before the «paradoxical» Holy Thursday and ended officially on Palm Sunday. The time frame was almost sufficient, even with the embedded official AGM. Both left hardly anything to be desired (subjectively), but much to be done (objectively).

The future of humanity lies in active anthroposophy

The actual decision-taking within the sphere of rights could be minimized this year, as had been agreed, with the exception of the reaffirmation, by an overwhelming majority, of Justus Wittich as treasurer. What truly stood out, however, were the reports on global initiatives in connection with the specialist sections of the School of Spiritual Science. The message conveyed by these reports was as clear as it was touching: the future of our humanity reveals itself in the practical applications of anthroposophy! Gratitude and admiration must be expressed for the incredible achievements of the outwardly

■ SOCIETY

considerably reduced Executive Council and its further increased cooperation with the Goetheanum Leadership and the international representatives; and – last but not least – also to the newly formed Goetheanum Eurythmy Ensemble. The fruit of their artistic work brought brilliance and spiritual nourishment to this Annual Meeting.

The whole event found its conclusion on Palm Sunday, when the Foundation Stone Meditation of the Christmas Conference Society was presented in eurythmy. There is nothing more to add...

From people of the night to people of the day

I personally take with me from this special Palm Sunday the imagination of the ‘people’ and its significance for the (now Michaelic) turning point of time – the inner change from a people of the night to a people of the day (cf. GA186, lecture of 7 December 1918) – and the general impression of an Anthroposophical Society that one can live with! | *Felix Scheuerl, Gevelsberg (DE)*

Correction The photo on page 4 of Anthroposophy Worldwide 4/2019 did not show, as indicated, members of the All Africa Anthroposophical Training but participants of the 2017 IPMT in Cape Town. | Ed.

We have been informed that the following 68 members have crossed the threshold of death. In their remembrance we are providing this information for their friends. | Membership Office at the Goetheanum

- Michael Rodgers** Darlington (GB) 11 September 2017
- Charles Williams** Seattle/WA (US) 22 October 2017
- Vjazma Marčić** Omiš (HR) 4 March 2018
- Jared Haslett** Bangor/ME (US) 12 March 2018
- Arnold Dorhout** Mees Ruurlo (NL) 3 April 2018
- Walter Otto** Heidenheim (DE) 16 September 2018
- Marlyn Merchant** North San Juan/CA (US) 20 September 2018
- Marianne Gorge** Aberdeen (GB) 13 October 2018
- Joyce Gee** Montgomery (GB) in October 2018
- Martin Schaffer** Hamburg (DE) 16 November 2018
- Yasmin Italia** Secunderabad (IN) 17 November 2018
- Ellen Hackett** Chiapas (MX) in 2018
- Marcel Pok** Prague (CZ) 15 January 2019
- Ingeborg Pallas** Aalen (DE) 16 January 2019
- Jette Bjerg** Farum (DK) 17 January 2019
- Barbara Moore** Pasadena/CA (US) 22 January 2019
- Dietrich Waldmann** Stuttgart (DE) 25 January 2019
- Jeannette van Wiemeersch** Novi/MI (US) 27 January 2019
- Robert Brandt** Montrose/MI (US) 28 January 2019
- Jacqueline Mathys** Lloret de Mar (ES) 30 January 2019
- Peter Bünese** Schierensee (DE) 6 February 2019
- Ruth Steigerwald** Hamburg (DE) 12 February 2019
- Marga Rödelberger** Niefen-Öschelbronn (DE) 19 February 2019
- Nigel Harrison** Katonah/NY (US) 20 February 2019
- Reinhold Kittel** Buchenbach (DE) 26 February 2019
- Lydia Gorup** Pfeffingen (CH) 28 February 2019
- Annemarie Rohner** Lenk (CH) 28 February 2019
- Hedi Schmid** Walkringen (CH) 28 February 2019
- Reintraut Dellit** Katthammarsvik (SE) 2 March 2019
- Morland Beazley** Dyfed (GB) 4 March 2019
- Helgeborg Hecht** Basel (CH) 4 March 2019
- Gerda Behrendt** Hamburg (DE) 6 March 2019
- Eckehart Templin** Berlin (DE) 7 March 2019

- Marianne Aemisegger** Zurich (CH) 8 March 2019
- Helene Hassfürther** Esslingen (CH) 10 March 2019
- Gertrud Meyer** Riehen (CH) 10 March 2019
- Hans Ulrich Dürr** Pratteln (CH) 11 March 2019
- Renate Biesel** Zurich (CH) 12 March 2019
- Marlis Donat** Bremen (DE) 12 March 2019
- Ragnhild Hodne Reber** Kristiansand (NO) 12 March 2019
- Jaime Padró** Segovia (ES) 12 March 2019
- Rodo Schupp** Sulzbach (DE) 12 March 2019
- Gisela Kaspar** Vienna (AT) 13 March 2019
- Irmtrud Gruner** Dresden (DE) 14 March 2019
- Gérard Lennuyeux** Montmeyran (FR) 14 March 2019
- Peter Linders** Herrliberg (CH) 14 March 2019
- Hans Wilhelm Nickol** Balingen (DE) 14 March 2019
- Hermann Genzmer** Flensburg (DE) 16 March 2019
- Erhard Kröner** Hanover (DE) 17 March 2019
- Elisabeth Schmundt** Bad Salzschlirf (DE) 17 March 2019
- Margaretha Schuurman** Stuttgart (DE) 17 March 2019
- Anne-Marie Baré** Jemeppe sur Sambre (BE) 18 March 2019
- Jutta Stehr** Berlin (DE) 18 March 2019
- Livio Casetti** Bolzano (IT) 19 March 2019
- Frank Tetley** Manningtree (GB) 19 March 2019
- Heidi Näf** Zurich (CH) 28 March 2019
- Magdalena Pederiva** Dornach (CH) 28. März 2019
- Inge Graf** Fischerhude (DE) 30 March 2019
- Ursula Leisegang** Buchenbach (DE) 30 March 2019
- Brigitta Pauletto** Reinach (CH) 30 March 2019
- John Taylor** Laurencekirk (GB) 30 March 2019
- Irene Scalfi Milan** MI (IT) 31 March 2019
- Johannes Sigler** Neustadt (DE) 31 March 2019
- Hubert Stransky** Uhingen (DE) 31 March 2019
- Gertraude Steurer** Lahr (DE) 9 April 2019
- John Salter** Dunedin (NZ) 11 April 2019
- Andreas Brandt** Hanover (DE) in 2019
- Gertrud Müller** Basel (CH) in 2019

The Membership Office registered 93 new members in March 2019. 46 members left the Society between 12 March and 12 April 2019.



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■ FEATURE

Netherlands: New General Secretary Rik Ten Cate

A world without art becomes sclerotic

Bronze, stone, wood – sculptor Rik Ten Cate is familiar with all these materials. And he is at home in the social realm – as a husband, father of four, teacher and arts lecturer. He became a council member of the Dutch Society in 2014, and its General Secretary this April.

Sebastian Jüngel How were you approached about becoming General Secretary?

Rik Ten Cate This happened in a council meeting in the autumn of 2018. We were talking about the fact that our tenure would end after five years. Three people intended to stop serving, including Jaap Sijmons. He suggested I should become his successor.

Jüngel How did you feel about that?

Ten Cate When I asked him «Why me?» he mentioned my rigorous anthroposophical path as teacher and lecturer, and my work for the Arts Section in the Netherlands and in Dornach, as well as my many connections at the Goetheanum and worldwide. I thought «That much is true». I also reflected that there would be others who could be considered, but not all of those would be able to travel as frequently. I wouldn't necessarily apply for this position, but I can embrace it.

Jüngel In which way is Jaap Sijmons a role model for you?

Ten Cate He is a scientist, a lawyer and a philosophy graduate. He has immersed himself in studies of Christian Rosenkretz and the 12 worldviews. He knows the 1923/1924 Society Statutes inside out. I admire his readiness to take responsibility, and to stand up for his convictions.

Successful outcomes but neglect of the source

Jüngel What impulses do you bring to the Anthroposophical Society?

Ten Cate Five years ago we had a disastrous situation within the Society in the Netherlands: some members experienced the election of a new Council almost as a kind of coup. It took some time to regain their trust. I feel we are standing on firmer ground now. But we are already looking back on the first 20 years of the twenty-first century. Just think what Rudolf Steiner managed to achieve in that timespan! Of course, anthroposophical initiatives are thriving in the world: the Dutch Waldorf schools have long waiting lists, organic food is experiencing a boom, Triodos Bank has more money than it can invest. There is interest in the effects of anthroposophy, but where is the interest in the Anthroposophical Society, in maintaining the flow from the source from which all that has come? We have to work on becoming a modern and contemporary Society, not authoritative, knowing everything better, not by distancing ourselves from the

work in other Sections. We also need to focus on specifically Dutch problems, such as the current ban on anthroposophical medicines.

Openness and honesty – respect for higher beings

Jüngel Through the School of Michael we have ties to the spiritual world. Its requirements have to flow pragmatically into our earthly tasks. How do you deal with this dynamic as a council member?

Ten Cate I experience myself as a child of the Michaelic stream. Michael demands transparency and honesty. Nothing can be covered up, all must become visible. Anything we hide connects itself with the beings of the shadows – we really don't need that. Living in the light gives you enough problems already.

We need to take careful note of the things you mention: Does what we do respect and value the being Anthroposophia appropriately? Is it harmed – really harmed? Are we doing justice to the high values represented in the Goetheanum's forms, its windows, the images on the ceiling? They need our protection. But the real mystery lies not in the words but in the attitude out of which they are spoken.

Jüngel What can the world learn from the Netherlands?

Ten Cate Wind and water bring valuable gifts: flexibility, clarity, humour – also singing and dancing. Rudolf Steiner referred to the cosmopolitan aspects.

Jüngel What can the Netherlands learn from the world?

Ten Cate For one, the ability to absorb solemn, deep contents (there are of course many who do this already). By this I mean that we mustn't forget what spiritual science wants, and that elevated spiritual beings have associated themselves with it. There may be many cultures in the Netherlands – but we need to recognize that there is also anthroposophy in Iceland or Russia, for example, and that it appears and is received differently there. At the meeting of international representatives I noticed that many non-European countries are represented by Europeans. On a personal-emotional level that isn't a problem, I feel, but the thinking has to become more international.

Developing levity

Jüngel How would you respond if a TV station asked you to characterize anthroposophy in 90 seconds?



Ten Cate I would base my answer on the first Leading Thought: «Anthroposophy connects the spiritual in the human being to the spiritual in the cosmos.» This means that it works in the knowledge and consciousness that there is both a physical world and a spiritual world with spiritual beings. This forms the basis for the esoteric work.

Jüngel Can you describe a situation which made you smile?

Ten Cate I remember a difficult meeting between members and the Council in which we were accused of being authoritarian, of treating members as if we were their parents. I replied, «I'm glad I'm not your dad!» One member then laughed and said, «That I can understand». I think it is important that, notwithstanding all our serious challenges, we always succeed in rediscovering levity. Art makes this possible. Without art the world becomes sclerotic and stops moving.

Web www.anthroposofischevereniging.nl

Images Working towards a modern Society:
Rik ten Cate