

Glimpses

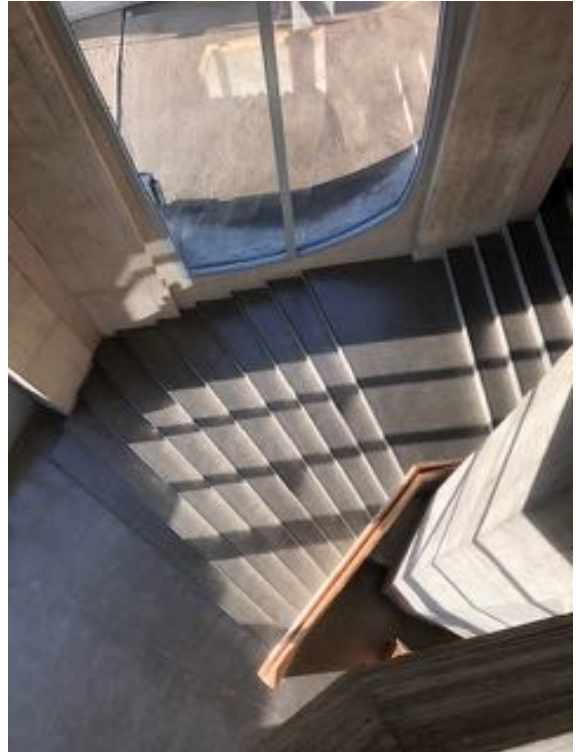
Newsletter of the
Anthroposophical Society in
Canada

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JANUARY

**Dear Members and Friends of the
Anthroposophical Society in Canada,**

During a series of autumn meetings, the gift of an uncommitted afternoon made it possible for me to spend several hours with a companion who, unfamiliar with Rudolf Steiner or anthroposophy, was visiting Dornach for the first time. Our shared love of architecture and art was our guide through these hours together. A bright, crisp late autumn day accompanied us as we walked unhurriedly around the Goetheanum grounds, wandered through the reshaped landscape and followed the pathways laid out by Rudolf Steiner. We marvelled at the breadth of Rudolf Steiner's architectural work, an extraordinary collection of buildings realized in just over a decade early in the 20th century. As the light began to fade, we found ourselves beside the steps leading to the Rudolf Steiner Halde, one of the earliest of the completed buildings.



Standing quietly together we turned toward the West, watching the sky over France gradually descend into a wash of golds and rose. We fell silent, as if in anticipation.

Pointing to the staircase cascading from the building's entrance, to the sweeping forms above us and the windows mirroring them, my companion asked; "Why are the stairways like that, the doors and windows as they are?" He recalled different entrances with their flowing staircases curving into the landscape. He remembered doors and windows with their irregular and unfamiliar forms.

The question was almost too familiar. Having worked with these artistic impulses for decades, integrating them into my own architectural practice, this was a question I had been asked many times. Having lectured on Rudolf Steiner's artistic legacy for many years, I was prepared to give an accustomed answer. But I hesitated. It seemed that the question asked was but the face of one not yet formed, the words not yet found. Stand-

ing together, facing the setting sun, the silence lingered between us.

As often happens when I stand on the brow of this hill, I am startled by an unexpected experience. I am suddenly conscious of the magnitude of undertaking this architectural work within hearing of the battle sounds of World War I, continuing to create while accompanied by unimaginable devastation on all sides. I could then hear an unspoken question – how to understand Rudolf Steiner and his work within the context of his contemporary world, and of our current world? I could then try to approach this unarticulated question.

“For me the most striking sense of Rudolf Steiner is that he had a deep, a profound love and concern for his fellow human beings.”

“All of what was created in Dornach came at a time when the world was descending into an abyss. The disintegration of civilization that occurred during World War I was, for him, but the face of a profound and fundamental challenge faced by all of humanity. We are still in that chaos. He describes our time as being pivotal for the future of humanity. What had been the foundations of civilization were at an end, and the possibility for what might arise had not yet taken on form.

“Rudolf Steiner saw that the roots of this chaos had been woven into western culture throughout the preceding millennia. Slowly a soul darkness enveloped us, a darkness embedded in our inner experience of ourselves - of each other. He asked us to recognize this leaden-ness within ourselves and to discern the ways of seeing the world, of seeing each other, that continuously recreate the roots of this social chaos. Can we identify what these habits of thinking are now, in our time?”

My companion paused, reflecting - then searched for an answer.

“We live in an unequal world. Everything that takes place has to do with privilege, with advantage over each other. We see in hierarchies, in the need to influence, in the exercise of power. We orient ourselves to these, unconsciously. We live in a world formed out of privilege.”

The truth of his observations was clear, they gave me a way to continue.

“Rudolf Steiner perceived these same influences at work. Ever and again he pointed out that unless we recognize these seemingly all-pervading forces, we will remain unfree – controlled and shaped by them. He asked that we be ever vigilant, understanding how these principles determine our lives. They structure our associations. They determine educational curricula. They inform how we see ourselves as masters over nature. They are the hidden language of our laws. They teach us to see how we are different from each other. All have their origins in the processes that have led to our common experience of an inner darkening, to isolation, alone-ness. There is something in this stream flowing out of the past that would imprison the human soul.

“These same principles work directly into how we think about and form our surroundings. The principles we have learned to use to shape our environments are also based on strengthening hierarchies, reinforcing power structures, increasing privilege. For millennia, major buildings have been designed to accentuate their axis, limiting how we can connect with them. Raised above us we must climb ranks of stairs to access them. The environment is designed to ‘make small’ the individual, to inflate institutionalized power structures. These are the buildings of governments, of corporations, of religious institutions. As we move through these spaces we draw these principles into ourselves, they press unconsciously into us from all sides. These environments intend to make us feel ‘lesser than’ - diminished. Each engagement with our fellow human beings triggers these deeply embedded, embodied principles of hierarchy, privilege, pow-

er. The designs of our cities, the organization of our environments, are all intended to do this. To make us un-equal.

“As we begin to recognize how deeply, how fundamentally, these embodied responses to each other are – responses that have been woven into culture with intention – we can marvel at the exactness, the precision, with which Rudolf Steiner re-shapes environments. He creates for us environments that can awaken experiences of our deep human inter-connectedness rather than of hierarchies, awaken a sense for our inter-relatedness rather than of power and privilege. He creates environments that can transform our relationships with each other, transform our connection with nature ... if we allow it.

“This is the gift of his buildings, of his landscapes. He makes apparent that the paths we take through space have their inner reflections. If we pass through space orthographically, along straight pathways that cross in right angles, our passage through space reinforces and triggers these anti-social principles. By contrast we approach his buildings tangentially. We move along sweeping curves, our gaze and our movement through space meandering – at times enclosed, at times expanding toward the horizon. We do not move in ways where we confront each other. We flow around and pass by each other along these sweeping, curving ways - we greet each other. These same helical organizational principles carry into his buildings. The great double helix of the Goetheanum’s western staircase rises up in interconnected spirals, mixing streams of people. Moving through his environments becomes a healing process for us.”

Standing together and looking about us with new eyes, we could recognize that the staircase beside us was turned in welcome. It flowed out from the building to meet us and also to engage with the landscape itself. It not only welcomed us but invited us to turn to the distant view. The door, with its articulated forms, makes evident the process of entering. It inclines over us as we enter, no longer a puncture in a wall but the invi-

tation into a process. The windows too, no longer simply openings in a surface, but an invitation to relate to the world. They frame the landscape and the backdrop of hills. They invite observation, to appreciate the uniqueness of a particular view.

The sun descended behind the rolling hills of France. The reds and golds took on the deep blues of an approaching night. The brightest of the evening stars appeared. The warm crispness of the day shifted to a chill breeze. We turned to walk along the sweeping path that Rudolf Steiner had laid out for us, the sharp crunch of gravel beneath our feet, the first peals of evening bells rising from the valley.

With warm regards,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bert Chase'.

Bert Chase
General Secretary for Canada

The Essence of Conversation

The humanist, consciousness that awakens other consciousnesses

Michel Dongois

What is a human being? This question was the starting point for a spontaneous four-way conversation over coffee and croissants which took place in Montreal in early November. The conversation was full of warmth, while outside, winter was preparing to make its yearly appearance over the city. The four individuals seated around the table were: Renée Cossette, Bodo von Plato, Arie van Ameringen and Michel Dongois.

Renée Cossette, Bodo von Plato and Arie van Ameringen (photo Michel Dongois).

What is a human being? This question has been asked during every period of human history. The great philosophers, artists and politicians have approached it in a multitude of ways. “If one does not ask (oneself) this question, consciousness cannot take hold of it. And consciousness is the very essence of a human being’s autonomy, and, in today’s world, the sign of an individual’s capacity for taking responsibility for the planet.” This notion was put forward by Bodo at the very outset of the conversation.

Arie then went on to say that “It is up to us to make this question relevant for today’s world, and to individualise it. And this becomes increasingly essential, since our traditional points of reference – social, cultural, spiritual – are rapidly being lost.” But it is only the human being who can take the initiative to ask the question, and do so in complete freedom.

Risks

What risks must we take today in order to expand our awareness? And what risks must soci-

ety take in order to become more human, and therefore more aware?

On the subject of risk taking, Renée gave the example of her own field of expertise, that of workplace safety and security. Even though clear rules and regulations are absolutely necessary, they are not enough to minimise the risks of accidents. The workers themselves must be educated, “*formés pour transformer*” – trained in such a way that they themselves can bring about a transformation. This means creating awareness of the risks inherent in one’s own surroundings, since prevention is the best protection.



In her humanist approach, Renée uses the Enneagram, a tool for self-knowledge and behavioural awareness based on personality profiles. By means of this tool, a worker becomes more aware of his or her *personal predisposition* in relation to various risk factors and learns why he or she takes undue risks.

Speech is Gold

At this point in the conversation, the four participants agreed that the thing that connects us all is “otherness.” We can even go so far as to speak of the “mystery of otherness.” Bodo von Plato advocates a pragmatic humanism that cultivates care for a fellow human being’s inner life and that represents our innate desire to serve others. Carrying on a conversation “at eye level,” he says, is one sign of our search for the human quality in our meetings with others.

In today’s world we seem to be intent on destroying everything on both the social and ecological levels; we risk causing disruption in the hopes of seeing some sort of new consciousness emerge. In point of fact, we must become co-creators, because creation itself is in an unfinished state; the spiritual world needs the help of human beings who act in complete freedom. Mankind must provide assistance in creating a new order, one that is in accordance with cosmic evolution.

Gold is Sun transformed into matter. But better than gold is Light – the origin of being itself. And even higher than Gold and Light is conversation, when two consciousnesses raise each other to a higher level. Referring to Goethe’s view on the matter, Bodo says that this phenomenon is indeed the future of existence itself. “True conversation elevates us towards a more expansive consciousness; we seek the other person’s Light. Gold makes you rich, Light illuminates you, but conversation alone can awaken and heighten your consciousness.”

Order and Chaos

Our conversation then turned towards the idea of order and chaos. Renée referred to the novel by Michel Tournier entitled *Vendredi ou les limbes du Pacifique*. In the novel, Robinson, lost on a deserted island, is haunted by his own inner chaos. He is reduced to reading his Bible at the same time every day and making perfectly straight furrows in his rice paddies. But when Vendredi suddenly comes into his life, he begins to ease his stringently conditioned existence and

make way for a more relaxed world order. This event opens up new horizons for him.

Bodo then admitted the following: “Paradoxically, I hate order, but I also crave order; it is impossible to live in chaos, it is impossible to live without chaos. We need both. Michael, the Spirit of intelligence, of Cosmic Order, causes us to seek to create order ourselves by exerting our attention, our care for knowledge and for doing the right thing – yet all this must go through a state of chaos.” We are now called upon to bring about a new order – not only privately or personally, but also on the truly human level – in order that human beings acquire the possibility of meeting what is universal. “Human awareness and human evolution constantly swing back and forth between order and chaos, and they do so in a necessarily tragic manner.” Chaos naturally tends towards order, and then, when an excess of order creates rigidity and “impedes life,” we have to bring in a certain amount of chaos.

Coming back to Vendredi, this “savage” brings a sort of awakening. And here, “savage” means that he is not yet organised, still irrational, and waiting to find the order that lies within. On the opposite side of the scale, rigidity can be exemplified by what is overly academic, totally structured, fixed.

What is a human being? In our current times, with the gaping chasm existing between an excess of rationality on the one hand and a lack of awareness on the other, we are in danger of becoming sub-human, says Bodo. Mankind could then sink below the human level, unable to bridge the two sides of this chasm of modernity, unable to deal with spiritual reality. “Advanced technology, which is a result of the rational thinking that has numbed us and closed us off from nature, has created a one-sided world free of risks, hiding the reality that, though it is beyond our immediate perception, makes us who we are.”

Science and consciousness

All those around the table recognised that science, which is only interested in studying matter, evolves much faster than does human consciousness. Bodo made it clear that it cannot be a question of disregarding or slowing the pace of technological advancement, but rather a question of strengthening our belief in the capacity of consciousness to evolve.

Renée pointed out how our society is quick to invest money in science, technology, computer science, and objects in general, but is much less generous when it comes to investing in developing essential human qualities. We only have to look at the feeble budgets allocated to universities or to personal development sessions, other than technical training, in the context of the workplace. And we can also see how relational occupations such as health care workers, teachers, etc. are not given the respect they deserve.

Ethical individualism

And as for anthroposophy, it offers us a new way of asking the age-old question: what is a human being, and what is the human being's place in the universe? A century has passed since its introduction to the world, and, Bodo states, we can recognise that the most important notion anthroposophy has introduced is that of ethical individualism (*The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*). Rudolf Steiner began to speak of ethical individualism in the late 1880's, referring to great historical figures who dared to risk being individuals (Aristotle, Saint Augustine, Fichte, Stirner, and also Friedrich Nietzsche.).

Bodo stressed the need for creating an ethical individualism by becoming fully consciousness of the "incredible tension" existing between total individualism (narcissism) and care for our fellow human beings (altruism).

Bodo explained how it is now left up to each individual to forge his or her own moral outlook, because a major reversal took place during the 20th century with respect to what had until then been the human being's concept of beauty,

truth, and goodness – and conversely, the notion of what is ugly, false, and evil. Auschwitz and Hiroshima/Nagasaki overturned this moral system, said Bodo, referring to the work of philosopher Hannah Arendt (1906-1975).

With whom do I want to work?

In 1965, Arendt arrived at the conclusion that the most important decision facing an individual at the present time is the choice of whom one wants to live with and whom one wants to work with. Bodo summed this up in the following words: "What really interests Me is You. Between the two of us, a new world can come into being. I choose to live in an atmosphere of authenticity and friendship on my path forward towards my true self, which also means moving *towards* the world and *into* the world. I choose to live with those who will allow us to move forward together, and I choose to work with those who are also treading a path towards the future."

What then is a human being? Besides ethical individualism, Bodo also brought up the practical undertakings Rudolf Steiner became involved in at the request of those who would be his collaborators in the projects they themselves asked for. "He wanted to be able to show that through inner and outer practice, another world becomes possible." But if we truly want to stand at the vanguard of a new humanity, he added, the development of a new culture is indispensable. And this was the reason for Rudolf Steiner's establishing the School for Spiritual Science, which he founded before his death – an institution of higher learning designed to connect the transformation of consciousness with endeavours in daily life, having at its very heart 19 mantric verses given for the inner meditative work of its members.

Meditation

Previously, we were prisoners of tradition; today we are prisoners of the narrowness of our daily lives, completely caught up in external circumstances. Everything combines to distract us if we

do not make a conscious effort to meditate. Bodo pointed out the importance of cultivating an inner life through meditation, with the following affirmation: meditation is “an invisible, conscious act which is carried out alone; and each individual act establishes relationships.” And Renée added: “Yes, like love, which is an act requiring a conscious decision.” If we cling to tradition, we run the risk of forgetting that we are required to act out of our own volition. Rudolf Steiner encouraged us to take initiative, in spite of the fact that the undertaking might seem to involve inherent risks.

In our 21st century, the message of anthroposophy must not be dogmatic, but must rather become humanist in its approach. Arie van Ameringen went on to say: “What matters is that we awaken the other person’s awareness. This is the principle of reciprocity, one consciousness that awakens another consciousness.” He then added that now, one century later, we cannot speak of a mission as such, but rather of a reciprocity of consciousnesses. This also includes working with individuals whose awareness has been awakened through other spiritual approaches.

“Another person’s consciousness - another “I” – awakens me if I am truly attentive during the encounter,” was Arie’s reply. He pointed how important it is to also work with individuals who are not anthroposophists. “Anthroposophy takes on its full meaning when it urges me to act in response to the needs of the world.”

And if we can say now that the notion of reciprocity has replaced the idea of mission, this means that the former one-way teacher-pupil relationship is now outdated and has been replaced by the idea of conversation, of truly engaging with another human being. Bodo reminded us that Rudolf Steiner himself needed others in order to launch his initiatives (Ita Wegman for medicine, Emil Molt for Waldorf education, etc.). and Arie added that “awakened consciousness attracts awakened consciousness.”

Freedom for each individual, of course! Yet this freedom requires entering into conversations with one’s fellow human beings. In short, the art of human conversation must be given once again its rightful place. And friendship allows this to happen in an atmosphere of joy and human warmth.

Bodo ended the conversation by quoting Hélène Cixous, an author and playwright. The following line reflects beautifully the miraculous contemporary human quest for true human encounters: “Being together without losing one’s individual loneliness. Remaining alone as an individual yet without losing the reality of togetherness; this is the mechanism that creates the miracle.”

***Bodo von Plato** earned degrees in philosophy and history. He served as a member of the Goetheanum leadership from 2001 to 2018. He created a public service foundation in Berlin and an action-research project to study the change in attitudes that has occurred at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century.

Renée Cossette, psychologist, researcher and lecturer. Founder of Creanim, a training firm aimed at establishing workplace health and safety prevention awareness through a humanistic approach, both in Quebec and in France.

Arie van Ameringen, received a degree in linguistics. He has worked as a teacher at all levels within the educational system, notably in Waldorf schools. He served on the council of the Anthroposophical Society in Canada (2003 – 2018) and as the Society’s General Secretary from 2011 to 2018. Arie speaks several languages and is active as a translator and publisher.

Michel Dongois,journalist, recently retired.

Ross Alden posthumous 100th birthday celebration

The Canadian Music Centre (CMC) recognises Ross Alden (1920-2008) as a composer posthumously, cataloguing and publishing all of his music on the occasion of the composer's 100th anniversary memorial concert in Vancouver on 10 February 2020.

Ross Alden was drawn to the work of Rudolf Steiner and in 1976 was invited as a pianist and composer to work at the Goetheanum in Switzerland, the Headquarters of the Anthroposophical Society. He also accepted an invitation from Else Klink and moved to the Eurythmeum in Stuttgart, Germany.

Ross Alden (aka Murray Carmack)

February 1920 – 15 October 2008



My father grew up on a family farm just outside of Nanton, Alberta. He was the eldest child of a family of five. It was a hard life and he began helping his father with chores at the tender age

of four. His father came from American pioneer stock, whereas his mother was a teacher whose family was from Ontario.

His love of intellectual study must have come from his mother. Ross excelled at school, graduating from high school with honours two years early. He suffered from violence in the home and developed a stutter, overcoming it only through force of mind.

One of his earliest and happiest memories as a child was learning to read music from his mother's hymnal when he accompanied her to church. An upright piano came into the house a little later, through a debt someone owed his father. For Ross, music became a kind of sanctuary.

He loved reading, and books not only fired his imagination, but created another form of refuge from the drudgery of farm life.

His father thought him a disappointment and a failure, whereas his teachers found him unusually intelligent. It's no surprise that he left home at sixteen, and moved to Calgary, where he earned a living playing the piano.

He was a deep and complex thinker and his innate sensitivity is continually expressed through his music. It was through music that my father overcame his suffering and expressed a deeply refined sense of the spirit. And it was this spiritual quality of my father that impressed those that knew him.

Like many composers, he was multi-talented. As a pianist he took his LRSM and passed his ARCT at the age of 18, later completing his LTCL and FTCL exams in piano solo performance from Trinity College London. He wrote ten surprisingly mature works for piano between the age of 15 and 22, known as Juvenilia, which he later performed within the context of his live Pacific Pianoforte broadcasts for the CBC.

He received his teaching certificate with honours from Calgary Normal School at age 19 and went

on to teach in Calgary and Vancouver. Just as his hours of disciplined practice at the keyboard resulted in compositions for piano, his experience of teaching inspired a period of choral writing for children. A collaboration with Burton Kurth and Mildred McManus on the music curriculum for the BC public school system produced two publications: "We Like to Sing" (1954) for primary school children and "Sing Me a Song" (1956) for grades four to six. When "Sing Me a Song Teacher's Edition" (1958) was published, the Board of Education in Ontario, as well as London, England adopted the book as their music curriculum. Winning the BC Centennial Song Competition in 1958 was a high point of those years of choral composition.

Later in life Ross studied composition, history, and counterpoint from Durham, Harvard, Oxford and Brown universities. In 1966 Ross went to Harvard University on scholarship and completed his two year master's degree in eleven months. Later during his graduate studies at Brown University, his skill in composition and counterpoint was recognized, resulting in a lectureship in music theory in the Department of Music. In 1970 he was appointed to set up the university transfer program in the Music Department at Douglas College, where his two string quartets were completed with the first premiered by the Purcell String Quartet in 1973.

Alienated by modernist serialism, Ross Alden persisted with tonal music despite encountering the kind of hostility expressed by Pierre Boulez, when he wrote: "All composition other than twelve-tone serialism is useless." It was this hostility of the time and his desire to remain true to his own voice that led him to remain focused on teaching, so as not to lose heart as a composer.

Aware of his sexual orientation from a young age, the societal strictures of the time and the fear of religious persecution, legal prosecution and outright ruin kept him from openly acknowledging he was gay. Denied the simple solace of the companionship and love he needed, he sought refuge in traditional marriage, a double-

edged sword that protected him socially, but stifled his inner creativity and passion.

In Vancouver he married opera singer Edith Paull, an indispensable mentor in the early years of my father's musical career. But they divorced and it was on a teacher's exchange to England where he met my mother, Mary Dudman, in London in 1955.

My parents met while my mother was teaching in the East End of London. Mary was a strong human rights advocate and had aligned herself with the lobby working to decriminalize homosexuality. As a result, Ross felt he could trust her and was completely open. However, to my mother's surprise rather than just wanting friendship, my father insisted on a traditional marriage with the prospect of children, which led to the birth of my older sister Catherine in 1957 and myself in 1961. My father's wish for this life was in part inspired by wanting to work as a composer for the Gurdjieff movement/s. Although initially rejected for openly admitting he was gay, once married he was granted access to this secret society with the help of his wife's support.

Although Ross continued teaching school in England, his reputation developed on account of his recorder ensemble ultimately championing the London Music Festival. At this time he was also afforded work as a music critic for The Times, but also published academic articles in the Times Educational Supplement and The Musical Times.

Ross not only worked abroad in England, but also spent five years in Switzerland. My father was drawn to the work of Rudolf Steiner and in 1976 was invited as a pianist and composer to work at the Goetheanum in Switzerland, the Headquarters of the Anthroposophical Society. He also accepted an invitation from Else Klink and moved to the Eurythmeum in Stuttgart, Germany.

Towards the end of his life, retiring from teaching to live in Vancouver, he was finally able to turn his full attention to composition, leading to three

piano quartets written between 1989 and 1992. These chamber works, in my estimation, are the best music he ever composed.

He also returned to his first love as well, the piano, completing his last project of performing the 48 Preludes and Fugues of J. S. Bach, something unknown at the time, although more common today. Completing his series of twelve Bach recitals by 1996, he presented ten more concert programs, featuring the piano music of Schumann, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Beethoven and Grieg, as well as his own compositions. His last public performance was in 2005 at age 85.

Whether on account of Jewish Mysticism, Numerology or J. S. Bach's music, my father opted for a Kabalarian name change at the age of 69.

Ross Alden's musical composition remains the golden thread and golden mean, that made his life possible, quickening every life he touched.

Elizabeth Carmack - 16 January 2020 - Written for the Canadian Music Centre

FEBRUARY

From the World Society On Our Wounds and Our Healing

Dear Members and Friends of the Anthroposophical Society in Canada,

Many years ago, I was very fortunate to be part of the architectural group at Emerson College in Sussex, England when one of the leading anthroposophical physicians from the Netherlands visited the college and spoke about wounds and their healing. He made a seemingly simple statement, one that affected me deeply and has been a guide in my life since.



What he brought as a distillation of his long career in anthroposophical medicine was this:

“The wound that is healed becomes a sense organ”

We all have the experience of scar tissue formed by the healing of a physical wound. We can experience how this tissue becomes more sensitive than it had been. He used this example of the physical process to help us understand the much more significant wounding of our souls. This is the wounding that is the path of human incarnation we have chosen before birth, reaching back into intentions arising out of our previous incarnations. Perhaps the greatest gift of anthroposophy is this knowledge, this startling revelation, that what we meet in life, what we draw toward ourselves in life, arises out of the mysteries of destiny, the countenance of karma. This reality, the fundamental understanding of the working of karma and destiny in our time – and the centrality of

the Archetype of Humanity in these processes, Rudolf Steiner saw as his primary task, that which he was meant to bring to humanity at this time.

As we journey through our lives, meeting the situations and conditions we have pre-planned for ourselves, we meet what we seek so that we can accomplish what is only possible in a human incarnation – the transformation of the hindrances we have built up in this remarkable journey toward becoming fully human. If we pay attention to our biographies, we can recognize that it is at those points where we feel deeply hurt, deeply wounded, that have provided the doorways to fuller self-knowledge.

But we must choose to step through.

As we reflect on this extraordinary process, we can also recognize that in truly walking this ‘path of life’ toward our true self, we develop remarkable sensitivities of soul that do indeed become soul organs. To be conscious of this process, to awaken to this, is especially critical in our time at the beginning of a completely new stage in human development.

The age which came to its conclusion at the beginning of the 20th century awakened the unique experience of ourselves as distinct individuals that we now take for granted. We feel ourselves enclosed within our own experience of being, standing in the midst of a surrounding world that is separate from our sense of identity - a necessary step in our human journey. It has left us with the deep soul wound of experiencing ourselves as being alienated from our fellow human beings and from the world; isolated in our individual identities, the illusion of a self.

It is within this great world condition that we are given an extraordinary gift of how

to begin healing this wound of isolation – our Society of seekers in anthroposophy with its central principle being the cultivation of the life of soul in the individual and in the world. This Anthroposophical Society is a place of healing for the wound of the age that is now behind us.

It is extraordinary to realize that Rudolf Steiner’s initiatives made conscious what was awakening within the shared soul life of humanity. We can marvel that the development of the psycho-therapeutic path of healing, which had its birth in a form necessary for our time, struggled through its infancy at the same time as Rudolf Steiner brought clarity to what the soul drama of humanity is now. What can touch us deeply is to observe how this collective mood of soul sought new language to describe these newly developing experiences. What developed was a new way of perceiving our interrelationships that we have begun to describe as the cultivation of ‘empathy’: a collective recognition, a collective human longing, that Rudolf Steiner so remarkably places into the context of our life reaching back before birth into our previous incarnations.

The Council had its midwinter meeting in Calgary, Alberta and took the opportunity with members there to turn to the fundamental human process of facing our soul wounds within the context of our shared life in anthroposophy. We spent a day together, working in small groups, with the intention of creating spaces of deep listening, of non-judgement, with focused attention on each other - the foundation for cultivating this newly developing capacity. We can consider whether this would have been possible in a previous age where the insertions of sympathy and antipathy, the activity of counter forces in our souls, could so easily be activated. Once again, the awareness given to us by

Rudolf Steiner is immensely helpful, therapeutic. There can be something in our souls that rises up in relationship to one who has not been able to heal. On the one hand we may have an urgent need to take on the healing process, to expedite it, to heal the wound for them. Sympathy flows into the relationship; a luciferic insertion into the life of soul occurs. Or we can have an inverse response; we can have a deep need to rid ourselves of the wound – to cauterize the wound – and an ahrimanic insertion into soul life occurs. In both cases we can ask, perhaps we must ask, am I supporting or am I hindering the healing process?

Or we can ask, in seeking to meet each other within the context of this Anthroposophical Society - dedicated to the cultivation of the life of soul in the individual and in the community – have we made a commitment to each other to find a way between these two counter poles, to seek for the middle way?

What is this middle path? How can I recognize its presence in my own soul? How can I experience it in our meetings with each other? These are the questions that we are left with as a Council - significant questions that can perhaps inform and guide us all.

As our days together in this cold midwinter drew to a close, we shared a deep gratitude for having had the opportunity to work together with such sensitivity and care. As we made our various trips to the airport, breathing in the frigid air, crunching through frozen snow, our shared experience was the deep warmth of our fellow seekers in anthroposophy – a profound longing for healing.

Facing these fundamental challenges is perhaps not so apparent in most of our

centres across the country, where larger groups of members can find those with whom they can undertake this sensitive task of becoming truly human. As we move away from these vibrant centres into areas of our vast country where circles of members become smaller, where they become isolated, finding the right way to carry this fundamental pain of humanity, our current soul condition, becomes ever more difficult.

For those who have the privilege of being in active vibrant centres of anthroposophy, where we too may be ‘snowed in’, perhaps it is critical that we cultivate together the consciousness that across our country there are small, isolated, groups of members working sincerely and conscientiously to cultivate in the right way the wonder of our shared cosmos of soul. Carry them with you, warmly.

With warm regards,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bert Chase'.

Bert Chase

The Council Visits Calgary: Reflections from the Secretary

This January the Council with our General Secretary visited Calgary for a retreat and also to meet active members. Landing at the airport on a Thursday in a cold, snowy landscape was a bit of a shock because I had been enjoying almost spring-like temperatures in Vancouver, where I live.

Christof Wuerscher met me and I was whisked away to his house where his wife, Christine, was getting ready for visitors. Later the other Council members joined us for a fine dinner with food that Calgary friends had provided. In the evening we met with local members, including a few who had travelled from Edmonton, several hours away. We introduced ourselves and shared news of initiatives in our areas. It was freezing cold outside but inside the Wuerscher's home that night, there was so much laughter and light and warmth.

The next day the Council met at Mike Galbraith's house for a full day of meetings. We took over his dining room with its long wooden table. We discovered that Mike has many talents and one of them is cooking. He plied us with quiche, soup and salad and loaves and cookies during our lunch and break times, everything made from scratch.

As a Council, we try to meet in person three times a year. It is an expense to be sure in this huge country of ours for the Society to fly Council members to be together but it would be an impossible job and not one I would have taken on, as a volunteer, if we couldn't meet in person. We do have monthly Zoom meetings but we all agree that we interact more deeply when we meet face-to-face and more gets decided.

While in Calgary we discussed many things. One key issue was the Administration. Jef Saunders has retired from being the membership administrator, though he continues his work as editor of

the eNews, He also works actively with Christine Tansley, his replacement. The Council is taking a year to envision how the administrator job might change. Christine had agreed to take on the task in the interim but she has asked us to be looking actively for a replacement. Can we imagine the role of the administrator in a new way? When this is done would we advertise for this position in the newspapers? Could our new administrator live outside of Toronto? Should we hire an ad hoc professional development officer to help with initiatives? We are keeping an open mind with these questions at the moment.

Here are a few items we discussed (there were more): issues around our new logo, our new publication (Perspectives), issues with Class holders, our website (we are thinking of refreshing it), the funding of initiatives (can we strike a balance between those at the centre of our meditative work and those initiatives at the periphery of our practical working together), our plans for celebrating the 100th anniversary of the re-founding of the Anthroposophical Society in 1923/24, our plans for the next AGM (to be held in Vancouver with the theme: the second panel of the Foundation Stone Meditation), the writing of short articles for Anthroposophy Worldwide and who will do this, news about a Latin Language conference in Dornach (a Canadian contact is needed), the Treasurer's letter (going out in the next little while) and mandate groups (their scope of activity). John also reported on the work of the worldwide Treasurers' Circle which met recently in November in England. This Circle has come up with Nine Points which it wants each of the country societies to consider and perhaps agree to adopt as the Circle strives financially to support the important work carried out at the Goetheanum.

A highlight of the weekend for me was the clay workshop on Saturday led by Jef on healing our wounds. The workshop was also open to any local members who wanted to attend.

Jef Saunders is a graduate of both the Arscura Art for Life and Life as Art – Biography Studies programs and he has 25 years of experience both in psychodynamic and anthroposophical therapeutic work.

Jef started by mentioning that he had woken up that morning and decided that the title of the workshop should be instead, “The Wonder of Wounds” which was an intriguing title to consider.

My first thought was that because wounds come from trauma, isn't it important to find healing and then move on as quickly as possible to a bigger life? Might it not, instead, be possible to think of wounds in a new way? Could they be thought of as “wonderful” in the same way that one would linger over the wonder and beauty of a landscape? Jef also explained briefly the two directions that one can move to create development after being wounded: the direction of loosening (Luciferic) or the direction of contracting (Ahrimanic).



Christof, Julia & Ingrid at the clay workshop

We were randomly divided into groups of three; each person was given a lump of clay and asked to think about an incident where there had been a wounding. Each molded in clay a gesture of their wound, afterwards describing the process

to their two partners. We were told not to share the story of the hurt and trauma but to characterize the experience briefly and objectively.

I shared with the group that my wound had been a physical one in which a part was “scooped” out of a whole.

Next, the other two members of my group were given another lump of clay with the instructions to work further with my wound -- one person took the gesture more in the loosening direction and the other in the contracting.

I found myself watching very carefully how each of them did this and, in a healing way, I was lifted out of the pain of my own personal “wounded” experience and into the sense-world. This I experienced as “freeing.” We then repeated this process for each member of the group.

Then we were given the opportunity to find something new in our original modelled wound out of how we had observed our group members work with it. Some extra clay was provided should we need it. I decided with this last shaping that I would take the gesture more in the direction of contraction.



My wound (Centre) Right: the loosening Lucifer influence: Left: the contracting Ahrimanic influence

At the closing, each of us took a few moments to consider where best to place our “redeemed wound “ on a big table as representative of our place in the community. A few people chose to place their sculptures on the floor either under the table or beside it and shared their reasons

for doing this. Later we were allowed to move another's work, but only if we first asked permission. Finally, a picture of our place in the community revealed itself.

Thank you, Jef, for sharing with us a novel and inspired way to work artistically together!

Later that night we were hosted by Class members in a private room at a local restaurant. There was some time after our meal for us to share a conversation and answer questions.

The next morning, a Sunday, in the kindergarten of the beautiful Calgary Waldorf School, John Glanzer led us with the 18th Class lesson. Afterwards, the Council headed back to John's house for a hearty lunch prepared by Margaret Glanzer; there was also time for further conversation before we headed back out to the airport.

A big thanks to those who hosted us in Calgary and provided meals: the Glanzers, the Galbraiths, the Wuerschers and Sanda Stafie.

I had hoped to return home to mild temperatures but I arrived back in Vancouver to more bleak weather and a snowstorm that shut down the city for days. But I had sunny memories of the hospitality of our Calgary friends that warmed my heart and will continue to do so.

Susan Koppersmith
BC Council Rep.

Class Holders/Council meeting October 17 – 20, 2019 Thornhill, Ontario, Canada

Kim Hunter

A first conference exploring the General Anthroposophical Section as experienced in Cana-

da included local (Toronto area) Class members as well as Class Holders and Council members.

My questions going into this conference were about deepening my understanding of the General Anthroposophical Section, its role in Anthroposophy, its role in my life. A challenge for me has been this word, 'section'. It seems counter-intuitive to call it a section. Olaf Lampson once suggested that we think of it as a 'field' while Ute Weinmann suggested 'sphere'. These options appeal to me more than 'section'.

What started for me as an exploration of the landscape of the General Anthroposophical Section over the last year as I became a part of the organizing team of four (with Dorothy LeBaron, John Glanzer and Greg Scott) who carried the torch of this conference, became a deepening process of my orientation to the significance anthroposophy plays in my life. In the last decades, since I came to anthroposophy, it has become a part of me both inwardly and outwardly in ways that I wasn't fully conscious of. It informs my work as a Class holder, and as a teacher, and 'breathes' into the rhythm of my days and in my relationships. The General Anthroposophical Section runs through my life like a river in the landscape, providing a place of beauty and truth, a place to come and renew myself. It enriches my life in both subtle and profound ways.

The conference offered an excellent balance between the artistic work – speech, eurythmy, painting –, social working - biography, collaborative artistic work and 'cafe conversations' – and talks on the early history of the GAS -Eric Philips-Oxford brought his talk 'From Fire to Foundation Stone' while Bert Chase carried the historical context further with a talk he called 'Growth: Centre and Periphery - Goetheanum and Collegium'. John Glanzer added to these elements that which activated us to hold this conference namely the question posed to Class Holders world-wide last fall by the Executive

Council: What might it look like were the world circle of Class Holders to help carry the General Anthroposophical Section?

Each day the mood was set with the reading of the Foundation Stone Meditation in English, French and German, as brought by Rudolf Steiner at the Christmas Conference of 1923. This was carried by speech artist, Patricia Smith with Eric Philips-Oxford reading the French.



We explored the present realities and future possibilities of the General Anthroposophical Section in “Cafe Conversations” (one question at each table in smaller groups). After these conversations we returned to the whole group with a gesture or word or two from each group. This led to fruitful discussions in our plenum.

Eurythmy, brought two very different experiences, with the smaller group of Class holders and Council we explored thinking, feeling and willing in two sessions with the challenge to work/move together: with a verse as guide we moved in different inter-mingling rhythms (will with feeling, thinking with feeling etc) first in a small group and then as one. Having 3 differentiated soul forces find their way harmoniously proved a bit of a challenge at first, but we overcame that with practise. I could relate these experiences to times in my biography where my soul forces were in conflict with each other. The process was both engaging and challenging but

once we were in sync it felt harmonious and beautiful – I can imagine this being done with veils of colour representing thinking(blue), feeling(red) and willing(yellow).

Painting (with Regine Kurek) in the smaller group worked with the three soul forces.

In the larger group – Friday evening and a full Saturday - of about 40 participants in total– we heard from Eric, Bert and John and then, carried by Regine Kurek, those of us who had painted in the smaller group were given back our paintings and asked to find someone to partner with who did not have a painting. A wonderful experience as some of us had the opportunity to collaborate with a new friend. This created a dynamic energy in the room as we were asked to speak with our partner about the process of the earlier painting. We were then given the instructions: There was a huge 'cavass' on a wall, and we were to glue our paintings there – the paintings could be left whole or ripped/cut up – and then, using



crayons, pastels and charcoal, we were to work together to fill the spaces between the paintings. The enthusiasm and collaboration was exciting to be a part of, I think most of us had both active times and also moments when we moved back to allow others to move in and also to observe as the spaces between the paintings were filled in. We ended up with...well, a large, busy piece of work reminiscent of graffiti that

could have been called almost anything...from a mess to a treasure. For me, the result was less significant than the process, the buzz of activity, of transformation, of adults playing filled my cup for a long, long time!

On Saturday morning we began with Ute bringing the 5th Lesson with a Goethean conversation which was wonderful on its own, and amazing as it provided a real entry into the Intervalic Eurythmy with Michael Chapitis, exploring tones and the spaces between them. This offered an experience of a personal relationship with one's path particularly in relationship to a threshold. The musical sound carried the mood and the individual could experience a threshold through the suggested movements – given by Rudolf Steiner - with different tones and the spaces between them. Here we moved together as a group and seemed to be able to master the movements quickly, it was wonderful. A few elder-anthroposophists who were not able to participate were on the sidelines taking it all in; I'm certain it nourished them as much as it did those of us who were able to move the suggested forms.

After a morning break we explored one of three themes in the Cafe Conversations at six tables with up to eight participants at each table. These themes came from the Vorstand in the December 2018 edition of Anthroposophy Worldwide at p.11, “General Anthroposophical Section – Culture of Human Dignity” and were as follows:

- o Anthroposophy as a spiritual anthropology of the Human Being
- o Anthroposophy as world knowledge and self knowledge creating ethical thinking
- o The GAS as context and carrier of the First Class

A session with Gabriela Freydank-Edelstein took us from an overview of biographical rhythms and thresholds in general to an exploration of a threshold in our own biography first on our own in a short drawing exercise and then shared in

an intimate group of three. She also guided us in a surprisingly profound experience of consciously crossing a threshold: As we individually left the room through the door, we inwardly carried a personal experience of a threshold and then, upon crossing, looked back from whence we came.

Saturday ended with a plenum. Which was full and rich.

When Council and Class Holders convened on Sunday morning we agreed that it would be most valuable in Canada to hold these General Anthroposophical Section conferences annually at the opposite side of the country from where the AGM (in May) is held. This will provide the opportunity for an annual anthroposophical conference on either side of our vast land. Since the AGM in 2020 is set to be in Vancouver in May, we are in the very early stages of planning a General Anthroposophical Section conference (hopefully) to be held in Montreal next October.

My 'takeaways' were gratitude to all those who participated in the conference, the recognition that the way I see it, is that it's all about karma, and particularly in our time we need to create opportunities to be in relationship with others in our 'stream'. I experienced a deepening of my relationship with Anthroposophia, of my inner and outer landscapes in the context of her being. I felt my questions were 'met', and sense the answers will continue to be revealed in more depth.

To have spent this time exploring with others who are also in this stream was enriching, enlivening, inspiring.

LETTER AND INFORMATION FROM EMMANUEL VUCOVICH

I hereby wish to thank The Anthroposophical Society of Canada for supporting The Parcival Project this past August 2019 in presenting PARZIVAL & FEIREFIZ - a contemporary musical re-telling of the Grail myth at the following events:

August 6th: The Simons Center for Geometry and Physics - International Conference on Cosmology & String Theory, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, New York: <http://scgp.stony-brook.edu>

August 8th: North American Anthroposophical Youth Section - Question of Courage Conference, Spring Valley, New York: <https://nayouthsection.org>

August 13th: New Music for Strings International Festival, Harpa Concert Hall, Reykjavík, Iceland: <https://www.newmusicforstrings.org/iceland-events>

August 22nd: New Music for Strings International Festival, Staller Center for the Arts, Stony Brook University, New York: <https://www.newmusicforstrings.org/licmf-concerts>

On August 6th, 2019, Emmanuel Vukovich presented a solo violin recital of Bach, Bartok, and the original composition PARZIVAL & FEIREFIZ - a contemporary retelling of the Grail myth at Stony Brook University's Simons Center for Geometry and Physics International Cosmology and String Theory Conference. This annual summer conference brings together some of the most advanced mathematicians and physicists from around the world - including Nobel Prize Laureates - to discuss and present their research on Cosmology and Micro-Cosmology (String Theory). It is an incredible honour for Emmanuel to be invited back to this conference for a 2nd time - to present and perform for this elite audience. On August 8th, he was joined by award-

winning American composer, pianist, and african drummer John McDowell in a performance at the Youth Section of North America - Questions of Courage Conference in Spring Valley, New York. This performance opened the conference with a dramatic and powerful impulse which combined a telling of Eschenbach's story with musical performance. The following day, John and Emmanuel left New York to participate in the New Music for Strings International Festival held between August 9-15th, 2019 in Reykjavik, Iceland

This conference brought together international performers and composers from around the world to share, discuss, present, and perform new works - almost all world premiers - dedicated to the exploration of advancing new music for string instruments (violin, viola, cello, bass - piano and harp were also present). Some of the musicians present included:

Zhou Long (UMKC, Pulitzer Prize) - composition
Eugene Drucker (Emerson String Quartet) violin, composition

Mari Kimura (UC Irvine, Juilliard) - violin, composition,

Lin Wei (Violinist & Artistic Dir., HIMA & Atlanta Festival Academy) chamber music

Ásdís Valdimarsdóttir (Royal Conservatory of the Hague) - viola, chamber music

Ari Þór Vilhjálmsson (Israel Philharmonic, Helsinki Philharmonic) - violin

Eivind Buene (Norwegian Academy of Music) - composition

Henrik Brendstrup (Royal Academy of Music, Aarhus, Denmark) - cello, chamber music

Emmanuel participated in the performance of works by Japanese composer Tomoko Ozawa: Piano Quintet No 1: From High Above and Below (2019) and Piano Quintet No 2: Spring Winds (2019), and performed the Solo Violin Sonata by Dutch composer, violinist, and the founder and artistic director of New Music for Strings Organization - Anne Sophie Anderson. On August 13th, John and Emmanuel performed PARZIVAL &

FEIREFIZ in a Festival concert joined by New Music for Strings faculty Henrik Brendstrup - principal cellist of the world renowned Chamber Orchestra of Europe and faculty at the Royal Academy of Music in Aarhus, Denmark, violinist Patrick Yim - Assistant Professor in the Department of Music at Hong Kong Baptist University, and cellist Þórdís Gerður Jónsdóttir - an Icelandic cellist now a student of Henrik's in Denmark.

The Conference presented many interesting talks, master classes, and presentations all around a central theme: Timbre. Timbre is the musical term used to describe the quality of a sound, in German - Tone Klangfarbe (tone sound colour) - the colour or quality of a given tone. What became clear very quickly is that in this world of New Music, the common parameters of music which have served composers for the past 300 plus years: rhythm, melody, and harmony, were not being discussed, or heard in music. The entire focus of the New Music movement, it appears, is the impulse to search for a new musical language for Timbre or tone quality - both in performance and composition.

Iceland is a country with a history for discovery. In the center of Reykjavik stands a modern cathedral - its spire in the shape of the head of a Viking ship. In front of the cathedral stands a statue of Lief Ericsson "Son of the Iceland discoverer of Vinland - The United States of America to the people of Iceland on the one thousandth anniversary of the althing AD 1930." There was not doubt in my mind after seeing this, that what is of utmost importance to the spirit of this country, and this conference, is the discovery of the new.

Emmanuel

MARCH

From the World Society On Climbing the Mountain

Dear Members and Friends of the Anthropological Society in Canada,

In the years following World War II the disinte-



gration of complex multi-ethnic, multi-religious societies spread as a fracturing impulse across most of the globe. The artificial cohesion imposed by European colonial powers across Asia and Africa unravelled. In the midst of this collapse, the only model provided was the appearance of ever smaller nation-states formed on specific ethnic or religious groupings that had been imposed on Europe after the first World War. The significant step of imagining that we can live in complex societies, while still acknowledging and supporting our distinctions, was all but lost.

In the midst of this fracturing process one remarkable individual saw what might be, Mahat-

ma Gandhi. With quiet strength he held to what he saw, that the Indian subcontinent could go forward in a completely new way by acknowledging and embracing its dizzyingly complex nature, India could be a different model for what the human community could be. This view of 'what might be', which lay beyond what was known from out of the past, was immensely threatening. Powerful forces sought to negate his vision and in January 1948 he was assassinated. Yet, despite his death, and the partition of Pakistan, India remains a complex society of minorities with over 25 official languages and multiple active religions.

This was the year I was born, and often gives me pause to consider this world condition I chose to incarnate into. Not alone, a large number of my fellow anthroposophists chose a similar doorway into life.

A generation later, others chose to incarnate into another significant cultural upheaval, the time of a fundamental struggle to truly recognize each individual as an equal - what became the age of 'civil rights'. Here too arose the voice of an extraordinary individual, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He also had a vision. He could see that beyond all the forms and structures that exist out of the past, something else was possible. History would like to limit his voice to the people out of which he came. Yet his vision was for all humanity. His voice, like that of Gandhi, called for his fellow human beings to connect themselves with a consciousness of a future humanity. His view, his great longing, was also profoundly threatening and he as well was assassinated in April 1968.

These are only two of a group of remarkable individuals who, coming out of disintegration and chaos, had a perception of the archetypal human being.

Last autumn the AGM of the Anthroposophical Society in the US was held in Decatur, Georgia. Decatur is a handsome town with tree-lined streets and columned buildings. Its pleasant cen-

tral square is surrounded by trendy restaurants overlooked by the porticoed County Courthouse, one of the major centres of the US Confederacy. As I walked the few blocks between my accommodation and the conference venue, I was often struck by the lack of a presence of visible minorities. By contrast, the conference gathering had a handful of minorities represented, both African and Native American.

On the Sunday morning of the conference a trip was planned for those who were interested in visiting the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial. In order not to impinge on the conference schedule, those of us who wanted to participate left soon after dawn. The memorial is in a less advantaged area of the city, clearly an African-American community. The memorial is simple, a long reflecting pool with Dr. King and his wife's sarcophagus in the middle. On the flanking walls at its entry are quotations from him that speak to a humanity that could be.

Across the street is the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church where Dr. King was the pastor. Between the church and the memorial is a wide, quite beautiful park. Directly across from the memorial's entrance, at the edge of this park, stands a striking bronze sculpture. The sculpture's beauty belied the unease I experienced standing before it. I felt myself confronted by a question – what am I actually seeing?

On its surface the depiction is straightforward, a striking African-American male nude, larger than life size. His right arm is raised – extended as far as he can reach – and in his upturned palm he lifts up an infant facing the sky. It is as if he is raising this newborn child as far from the earth as he can, as far into the light as possible.

As I stood, pondering, the first arrivals for the morning service began to pass by me. I became aware that slightly behind me was someone who had stopped, observing me. I turned and there stood a very slight, elderly woman in her Sunday finery. She looked at me then turned to the

sculpture saying, "You know his ancestors were kept at stud". She nodded, confirming what she had said, and walked on.

At first, I could not make sense of what she had said, not sure whether her soft southern accent had confused me. As I ran her words over again, the full weight of what she was saying overwhelmed me. A term used for prized breeding stock, stallions and bulls, applied to a man. I felt overcome by an oppressive heaviness. I was confronted by all it would take for the intellect to create the necessary constructs to make this right. I now had the beginning of a sense for what I was standing before.

Later that day, in the midst of the conference, an opportunity was created that had not been previously scheduled. A space was made for a reading of Dr. King's final address, given the day before his assassination. As I sat listening, the full power of his words struck me with an intensity I had not previously experienced. Hearing him describe the climbing of the mountain and seeing what was beyond, had an extraordinary effect. He was speaking of the immense struggle it takes to climb out of the known, to overcome all of our preconceptions, our inherited points of view; to come to the place where we can see what could be, what in his language he called the 'promised land'.

I am left with two experiences that battle within me. On the one hand there is a deep sense of gratitude for the clarity of our human situation, our human possibility, that Rudolf Steiner brings. At the same time there is sadness for the distance – the chasm - between what we have been given and the seeming inaccessibility of this lucidity for so many of our fellow human beings.

The following week the Council of Country Societies, the General Secretaries and Country Representatives, gathered for our autumn meeting at the Goetheanum. One of the very significant questions brought to us by Joan Sleight was how we cultivate the imagination of the Executive

Council as it develops. The context for this is her own re-evaluation and re-appointment to come this spring. She spoke of her work in Africa, in Botswana and Kenya, asking whether we can more broadly imagine the significant processes that the Executive Council carries within a worldwide context. As I looked about the circle, I could not help but be struck by the backgrounds out of which we all come, almost exclusively of Judeo-Christian European heritage. The two members coming from further afield; Joan from South Africa, and Constanza from Brazil, both come out of this same soil. I had to ask whether, as we consider, not only the Executive Council but also those carrying responsibilities for their various country societies, we might more consciously seek those who come out of other ethnic, religious and cultural milieu. What would it be like if we had a native Botswana or an Egyptian Muslim present for Africa? What of the complex cultures of South Asia? What of China? What are the steps we need to take to welcome in those who do not yet feel at home?

Reflecting on all of this, and turning to our own home, we cannot do other than to recognize that we are in a critical time. Having taken the courageous steps of going through a Truth and Reconciliation process, we are now faced with the consciousness that that process brings. None of us, irrespective of our relationship to the momentous tasks before us, have ways of perceiving or thought processes that can guide us from out of the past. We are all collectively trying to climb the mountain out of the valley of what has been.

As students of anthroposophy we have the possibility of clarity for what can be, what the great potential of humanity is. The chasm between our current reality and this mighty vision seems overwhelming. How do we bridge this gap? What is it that we are called upon to do to enable movement from where we are to the potential that we can all sense is pressing in upon us from out of the future?

As those living with the vision of the power of the future, we carry a critical task. Do we have clarity of vision for how we move into the future, or are we so laden with the weight of the concepts and views of reality that must be transformed?

With warm regards,



Bert Chase
General Secretary for Canada

Compostela Three friends walk the *Way of the Stars* (Part One)

The protagonists of this adventure are three ladies, all having links to the Waldorf School *Les enfants de la Terre*, located in Waterville*. One fine day, Chantal Lamothe mentioned that she would like to do the Santiago de Compostela pilgrimage on foot. “If you go, we’re going with you!” And so last spring the three friends spent 36 days walking the *Camino Francès* (The French



Chantal Lamothe, Suzie Couture and Manon Sévigny (photo Michel Dongois).

Way), from Saint-Palais to Santiago de Compostela, each one equipped with a *credencial* (pilgrim’s passport): the total distance, 943.8 km.

I recently shared a meal with them in Sherbrooke. In reality, it was a meeting of complicity, since I myself had tread the Camino in the mid 1990’s (I covered the 1600 km. *via Podiensis*, the Le Puy Route, in 46 days.) And the experience feels even more complete when shared with others having made the pilgrimage. We tried to capture exactly how walking the Camino can transform a person. And how it can also become “a path of knowledge which guides the Spiritual in the human being to the Spiritual in the universe.” **

Chantal Lamothe was at a crossroads in her life: her spouse had died in 2016, and she retired two years later. “I felt the need to *walk* my life in order to discover what would be the next step.” Indeed, she was in the habit of taking walks before making any important decision. “But would going so far away be an attempt to escape? Since I was in a period of transition, I had to set myself in motion in order for life itself to bring me an answer.”

A Book

Before loading up her backpack, she had read through Manfred Schmidt-Brabant’s volume

*Paths of the Christian Mysteries, from Compostela to the New World.*** The author's vision gave her wings, bringing her a sense of something infinite connected to the journey. "I often had the feeling that the heavens were guiding me, that the full experience of the history and wisdom of the Camino de Santiago would somehow become available to me. This feeling was shrouded in a great, deep mystery, something along the lines of an inner experience difficult to express."

Manfred Schmidt-Brabant gives particular emphasis to the words spoken by the Chancellor of Santiago University in 1987, shortly before the European Council*** requested that its countries explore and protect the Camino everywhere on the continent. "The way to Santiago, to which individuals came from all lands, actually gave form to medieval Christianity – in other words, it created what today we call the Western World."

The revival of interest for Compostela started up again primarily in the 1980's. The individuals behind the idea of the New Europe sought for an elegant way to strengthen that concept by going back to the roots of Western civilisation. These basic principles had been undermined by Nazism and communism, both of which had dragged mankind down to a sub-human level. The "financialization" of economic interests and technology have put a stranglehold on civilisation and all sectors of our social life. A symbol had to be found which could encourage people to gaze upwards and to find hope.

It was thus that the thousand-year old Way of Saint James was seen as something that could truly inspire human souls. "The Main Street of Europe" that had been traveled by all the cultures on the continent became Europe's foremost cultural itinerary. "Definitely the most important one in the world after the Great Wall of China," according to the Spanish promoters of the Camino, the *Consejo Jacobeo*.

Three Pillars

What are the pillars of the European, Western identity? According to one of the itinerary councillors, Eduardo Lourenço, they are Philosophy, Christianity, and the Rule of law. Yet, modern Europe was built on economic concerns, the great market place. This was a source of bitterness for political economist Jean Monnet, one of those responsible for the European Union: "If I had known this would happen, I would have started with culture!"

The president of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, points out that we don't feel *love* for the great marketplace (in the Euro zone). Financial statements and numbers cannot compare with "the enthusiasm, the captivating folly that stirred Europe in the far and not so far past." **** There you have it: with Compostela, it is a question of love.

The Camino is the soul of Europe in its three-foldness: Philosophy, Christianity, and the Rule of law. Rudolf Steiner indicated that Compostela also housed a mystery school linked to the School of Chartres. The Camino, therefore, represents the evolutionary path of the spiritual revival of mankind through Christianity.

Susie Couture had dreamt of "doing Compostela" alone. "There was nothing logical there. Something stronger than me, like a call, and even a physiological need." She had just retired when Chantal Lamothe suggested they go together. She jumped at the chance. "I was tired, I needed a pause. I was looking for a new purpose in life. I liked the idea of travelling on foot, like our nomadic ancestors did."

Manon Sévigny, an organic farmer, has always been an avid walker. She says she does it "for my mental, physical and psychological health." Treading the Camino seemed to her to be a road to self-discovery, a way to experience a certain freedom. "Now was the time to do it, before I got too old and still had enough energy. However, I had created an idealised picture of what it would be like!"

Since she was used to working outdoors, she thought that walking the Camino would be an easy task. “I quickly came back down to earth, my body never letting me forget it was there, from head to toe.” Tight shoes, oppressive heat, water retention due to electrolyte solutions. Her feet became swollen and she developed blisters. She covered half the distance wearing sandals, and had to choose, with heavy heart, to take the occasional shuttle bus. She, who had wanted to walk with her head in the stars, found herself looking at her feet most of the time.

The Milky Way

They say that it was a star that revealed the location of what was purported to be the tomb of Saint James the Greater, one of Christ’s disciples, in a field where herds refused to graze (*campus stellae*, field of the star, or Way of the Star, alluding to the Milky Way). It was Charlemagne who, in a dream, had seen a starry path leading to Compostela (Saint James).

The Camino follows the sun’s path westward, to the place where it sets, where all things die. That is the other origin of the name Compostela (*compostum*, the cemetery, where it is said, the apostle’s tomb was discovered and a shrine erected). Thus, the Medieval pilgrim journeyed to the place where land ended, to the edge of the known world. Beyond the vast ocean, all was still shrouded in mystery, and the pilgrim would contemplate the “death” of the sun in the Atlantic Ocean. We can imagine the effect that would have had on the medieval soul, at a time when the supernatural was a part of normal existence. A time also, let us not forget, when anyone who was 20 kilometres from home was considered a foreigner. A pilgrimage could take months or even years, and all travelling was done on foot!

So then, Compostela – star or decomposition? Both, actually, since in searching for our own star, we go to the very edge of what we know, we die to our old habits and attempt to be born

anew. We forge ahead towards death, towards transformation, like the setting sun that seems to die only to be born again the next morning.

Caring

Chantal Lamothe had certain apprehensions about the plan: “By not travelling alone, was I going to miss out on what I felt I had to experience by myself?” But then she remembered how she had been surrounded by care and support following the death of her husband. “The pilgrimage was a call to open myself up to life. It would give me the gift of openness, a gift I would unwrap together with others.”

Each of the three pilgrims point out that the atmosphere was one of mutual attentiveness to one another’s needs, whether it was something physical or a question of choosing and reserving lodgings. This included a mutual respect for what each one was going through on a personal level; slight body ailments, worries, or simply listening to the various individual needs regarding physical and emotional wellbeing. Manon Sévigny summed it up by saying: “We felt united, and more importantly, we were aware that we were experiencing one of the most significant events of our lives.”

Each one retained her freedom and walked at her own pace. Chantal, who was often the first to arrive at the place they were to stay for the night, took great pains to choose the beds so as to ensure that all three would be as comfortable as possible.

The Dangers of the Road

Besides bad weather, three great dangers threatened the safety of pilgrims in former times: wolves, highway bandits, and river crossings. And today? Manon Sévigny admitted: “I was afraid of being overwhelmed by the feverish excitement of the experience, by the constant need to adapt to new places and new people. How would I cope with all that?” And indeed,

the road to Compostela is crowded with travellers.

Susie Couture had three concerns. One of them had to do with her weakened knees and blisters. The other had to do with the unavoidable lack of privacy in the hostels. In other words, her concern for being able to balance alone time and social interaction. She said that her fears turned out to be for the most part unfounded. "Because when all is said and done, everyone is alone on the road." And yet, being awakened in the morning by early rising pilgrims proved to be a bit unpleasant.

The chore of securing lodgings for three people was a real cause of stress for the "trois Québécoises" – which is what they were called on the Camino. Each of them had a cell phone, to be able to call family members if needed, but primarily to call ahead to reserve lodgings for two nights in advance. Susie Couture explained: "Being able to communicate from time to time was reassuring for each of us as well as a source of freedom."

In Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, located at the foot of the Pyrenees, they learned that approximately 450 pilgrims left for Compostela every day. In the Roncesvalles hostel, which is the first stop in Spanish territory, 200 people were refused lodging that evening due to overcrowding. To be eligible to stay in the official hostels, pilgrims must be travelling either on foot, by bicycle, or on horseback.

"It was a shock to see so many people on the route!" exclaimed Chantal Lamothe, who had no idea she would meet foot travellers from as far away as Korea and Taiwan. "That large crowd tended to make me close myself off from the outside world." Is Compostela a victim of its own success? Last year, the pilgrims' office in Santiago issued more than 347,000 *compostelas* (pilgrim diplomas) – 20,000 more than in 2018 (in 1989, 5,324 *compostelas* were issued). The numbers reach their highest point during the

Compostela Holy Years, when the Feast day of Saint James (July 25) falls on a Sunday. The next one will be in 2021.

Susie Couture, on the other hand, said: "The crowd did not bother me, because I felt I was part of a large family. I didn't know the other travellers, but we were all on the same path and undergoing the same ordeals. There had to be something greater uniting us, something more than the physical adventure itself. As I observed the others, I wondered what their personal quests could be. Were they walking for the same reasons as I was?"

Preparation

Compostela is not exclusively European, it is included in the list of UNESCO world heritage sites. As Goethe wrote: "You must regain what you have inherited from your fathers in order for it to belong to you." European institutions are actively establishing an inventory of the heritage left by former generations and the elements that united people of the various lands. Compostela provided a stimulus for creating 37 other cultural itineraries, the most recent (2019) being the *Chemins de la Réforme*, a Protestant pilgrimage route. But not all of these routes are designed to be travelled on foot.

And how did our three lady pilgrims prepare for their adventure? Susie Couture was clear: "I planned my route the way I planned my class lessons at school, by reading and researching. When you prepare yourself both physically and mentally, you have already begun the journey." All three received the help of the *Association Du Québec à Compostelle*, an organisation which according to them does remarkable work. The association organizes weekly walks with former and future Compostela pilgrims, and also gatherings with those just returning, including individuals whose experience was disappointing. The Association helps them integrate back into post-Camino daily life.

On another note, Manon Sévigny remarked that: "You walk the Camino the way you lead your

life." Each individual reveals his or her true temperament on the route. It took them almost 10 days to adjust to one another, to their respective personalities and walking speeds. Chantal tends to be choleric, Susie is more sanguine, and Manon is somewhat of a melancholic.

Chantal was always the first to get going, taking a quick breakfast and walking with a determined stride. "I am now aware that my habit of focussing on the day's task did not always give me time to take advantage of the present moment." They rarely walked as a group, but would meet up at the hostel to have their evening meal together.

Suzie Couture, on the other hand, wanted to experience everything, even if it meant taking a long detour, like, for example, stopping at a public market to savour some octopus, or waiting a full hour until a little church she wanted to visit opened its doors. As for Manon Sévigny, she feels, looking back, that their adventure might have been a bit too organised. "Were the various legs of the journey too long? I would rather have just gone along with where the route happened to take us on any given day."

Some rituals were unavoidable during the journey, namely the occasional regenerative stopovers. But other rituals were chosen freely. Chantal Lamothe encouraged her two friends to share their experiences of the day with one another. When they found some quiet time together, in the dormitory or in a restaurant, each one described what she had found most difficult that day, and what she had enjoyed the most.

And then one day, they had the most important encounter of the Camino. In the village of Teradillos de los Templarios, located at the edge of the great Mesata plateau, they met Maria, a massage therapist.

To be continued.

*Suzie Couture, 59 years old, class teacher for 17 years. Retired June 2018. Chantal Lamothe, 61

years old, class teacher for 18 years. Retired June 2018. Manon Sévigny, former member of the school's Board of Directors. Retired 2010.

**Manfred Schmidt-Brabant & Virginia Sease, *Paths of the Christian Mysteries, from Compostela to the New World*. Temple Lodge.

***Made up of 47 member countries. Canada and the United States enjoy observer status.

****Based on the work of historian Fernand Braudel.

Michel Dongois



**Dear Branch and Group Leaders,
Dear Friends,**

As a result of the decisions of the Swiss Federal Council on how to deal with the coronavirus, the Goetheanum has been closed to the public from 18th March, and will probably remain closed until April 19. This means that there will be no guided tours, and in principle all events will be cancelled, including both the English and German Class Lessons. The bookshop is closed (books can still be ordered and sent out) as is the cafeteria in the Goetheanum foyer and the Speishaus Restaurant itself. The Vitality Shop is open.

Postponement of the General Assembly
Against this background the Executive Council and the Goetheanum Leadership have had to decide to cancel the Annual Conference and to postpone the Annual General Meeting- as it stands at present - to 31st October 2020, which will be held in a shortened form. The usual timelines and deadlines for motions and notifications will still apply. The meeting of the Council of

Country Representatives will also be postponed to between 28th – 30th October 2020; the conference of the School of Spiritual Science with all 19 Class Lessons will now be held from 1st to 5th November 2020. Due to the given situation, the Gathering of Branch and Group Leaders (1st – 2nd April), including the Easter Festival (1st April) and the International Conference of Board Members and Treasurers (1st – 2nd April) have also been cancelled. It remains to be seen whether a meeting of Branch and Group Leaders at the Goetheanum in autumn will still be possible - especially since a national Branch Meeting is also planned in Germany on 24th – 25th October 2020.

Theme of the Annual Conference

Following the question 'On what we Build?' in 2018 and the theme 'In the Heartbeat of Time' in 2019, this year focusses on turning to the world, in which human self-discovery is realized when it 'Willingly unites with the World in Love' (see Rudolf Steiner, GA 26, Chapter 'The World Thought in the Working of Michael and the Working of Ahriman'). This perspective of becoming human through connecting with the world calls for engagement. Where this is fulfilled, humanness can be felt, no less now than before the measures taken by the state. We have to deal with this new signature of the times.

Work at the Goetheanum continues

Apart from this, operation at the Goetheanum in all departments and Sections of the School of Spiritual Science will continue as always, within the framework of the given circumstances. Staff members can be reached via e-mail and telephone. The Goetheanum reception desk is accessible through the west entrance.

We wish you good health, trust and tranquillity in the face of unpredictable changes, With warm greetings,

for the Executive Council at the Goetheanum
General Anthroposophical Society

Executive Council at the Goetheanum

Dornach, 18th March 2020



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Corona pandemic – aspects and perspectives **Matthias Girke and Georg Soldner** **Medical Section, Goetheanum**



The new coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 is spreading worldwide and has led to unprecedented consequences and restrictions in public life and of civil rights. The symptoms of the frequently only mild infection affect the airways and cardiovascular system in particular. Alongside the general symptoms such as fever, muscle pain and fatigue, it is above all the lungs as the organ of the middle, rhythmical human being which can be seriously

affected if the disease progresses that far. The affinity of the SARS-CoV-2 virus to the ACE2 receptor means that there can be associated cardiovascular regulatory disorders which can, for example, affect patients with high blood pressure, who often take antihypertensive medication (e.g. ACE inhibitors), to a greater extent.

Viruses and other pathogens mostly only lead to the manifestation of a disease if there is the relevant disposition. Not every person develops disease symptoms after infection and if they do, such symptoms can vary greatly in their extent. Thus the estimates of mortality worldwide (calculated across all age groups) for COVID-19 currently fluctuate between 0.25–3%,¹ in Germany between 0.3–0.7%.² Some figures quoted internationally are significantly higher,³ whereby in almost no country a precise comparison of the number of infected people with the number of people who have died has been possible, which would require blanket testing. Thus the true number of infected people is undoubtedly higher than the number of people positively tested, for example in seriously affected Italy.

If the pathogen enters, an inflammation develops as the active response of the person. The aim is to overcome the invader. We thus have to differentiate between the infection by the pathogens, the required disposition of the person and the inflammatory response. As a consequence, the appropriate inflammatory reaction to overcome the pathogen should under no circumstances be uncritically suppressed through antiinflammatory and antipyretic drugs. There are indications that this could encourage a more serious course of the disease. Therapeutic recommendations of Anthroposophic Medicine on the prevention and treatment of the disease have already been published in this regard. Prophylaxis and prevention accordingly have to relate to different levels. Washing hands is of course particularly important, as is coughing into the crook of the arm in order to prevent droplet infection.

But disposition also has to be taken into account. We know about the clearly higher risk from

COVID-19 for elderly people and patients with underlying health conditions such as of the cardiovascular system or sugar metabolism. But stress and anxiety also worsen immune performance and support a more serious course of the disease following infection. Too much tension in our consciousness, too little sleep and lack of movement lead to elevated susceptibility to infection and a disposition for the infectious disease. Currently many people additionally have a real fear of losing the economic basis of their existence as a consequence of the crisis.

The nature of the disease

Diseases have various levels. The visible symptoms coalesce into a whole – the respective clinical “picture”. It expresses a type: diseases can develop clinically in very different ways and yet have something in common. The type of an illness is its spiritual “principle” which manifests and comes to individual expression in the ill person. It thus becomes clear that the disease consists of more than its visible symptoms. The latter point to the nature of the disease which comes to expression in the symptoms. What are the characteristics and qualities of such nature of the disease? The famous pathologist Rudolf Virchow already referred to the necessary disposition for an infectious disease. If an infectious disease requires a disposition, then this is clearly related to its nature. Here we can distinguish several levels:

- General disposition; immunological susceptibility through anxiety; stress; excessive demands of our consciousness and at work – without doubt a signature of the “western model” of a global and materially oriented performance society. Included here is the increasing readiness to ignore disease symptoms such as fever and fatigue – as the reasonable response of the organism calling for rest – for as long as possible and to suppress them with medication. This practice may contribute significantly to a more serious course of the disease. The soul suffering from excessive demands and tension, and thus the development of stress and tension in our emotion, creates the disposition which allows the infection to penetrate the rhythmical system.

- But the content of our consciousness is also important: if we approach truth, we experience the connection of our being with the spiritual world. Recognising truth can awaken joy, confidence, trust and fulfilment. We encounter a quality which gives necessary orientation, frees the human being from tension and insecurity and thus strengthens the healing forces of the body. In contrast, untruths and lies make us ill: they separate human beings from the spiritual world of truth, isolate them and impede the healing forces which flow from truth. Rudolf Steiner indicated that the “lies of humanity”⁴ can be of epidemiological relevance. This is not about the individual patient but rather about the way we handle truth in the public discourse. In a time of fake news and untruthful distortion, this spiritual dimension is also of importance. Rudolf Steiner referred both to cultivating spirituality and the harmful nature of materialistic thoughts: “Bacilli are most intensively cultivated when people take with them into the sleep state nothing other than a materialistic mindset. There is no better way to cultivate them than entering sleep with nothing but materialistic ideas and to act from there, from the spiritual world, from our I and astral body, back on the organs of the physical body[, ...].”⁵

Against this background, conspiracy theories about the origin of this pandemic, as circulate not uncommonly also in anthroposophical contexts, are also problematical. The will to examine the truth with our thinking, to digest the wealth of news ourselves and not simply to let ourselves be infected by mere assertions, forms a part of the immunity for which we are ourselves responsible.

- If the emphasis on the consciousness, that is the nervous and sensory system, gives rise to the disposition for viral colds, its transformation requires warmth-creating movement and will activity. Fear inhibits the will, we are subject to external control, as indeed we are as we “function” in our everyday working lives determined by external “pacemakers”. Accordingly our disposition for disease is marked by excessive demands on our consciousness in the information society;

tension, restlessness and the experience of stress in our emotions; and an increasingly paralysing fear in our will. Against the background of our threefold nature, such a disposition is characterised by a shift of the human constitutional elements towards the nervous and sensory system. The organism they have abandoned becomes accessible for infections and outside “occupation”.

Whereas in childhood and young adults the spiritual and soul being of the person unites with the body and shapes it, it leaves the body again with increasing age. To this extent it is particularly elderly people who develop a disposition for COVID-19. The corona pandemic affects humans, evidently no animals are falling ill. It thus clearly indicates that it is related to the I being. Prevention and cure must therefore also include the spiritual dimension alongside many other things. Reinforcing hygiogenesis, salutogenesis and autogenesis.

We distinguish various levels of recovery: to begin with we are familiar with physical healing and as defined by Gunther Hildebrandt refer to hygiogenesis. Physical healing requires mental support. Anxiety and fear are not good counsellors and through tension and inner unrest weaken the generative life and healing forces. When meaning can be identified or created, connections understood and there are also possibilities of manageability in threatening situations, a salutogenic potential develops. Aaron Antonovsky called this mentally transformative work of the consciousness guided by the I as sense of coherence. Finally, inner development can take place through the encounter with the illness and lead to self-development, that is autogenesis.

Prevention thus has inner and outer aspects. Inwardly it is about supportive perspectives and spiritual content which can provide strength, about cultivating inner coherence. The control of infectious diseases leads outwardly to isolation: public events are cancelled, borders are closed; confinement to the house can have a particularly

invasive effect if people are separated from the experience of nature, sunlight and the starry sky. To counter this, the inner, spiritual light, the inner sun in the form of increased loving affection, of interest in the other person and inner commitment in the form of lived values, needs in the first instance to be strengthened. After all, there is no healing without hope. To this extent we live on perspectives and inner assurance. External aids are, to the extent possible, our active self-movement and the relationship with the sun (Rudolf Steiner referred to the infectiological relevance of a lack of light in 1920 even before the discovery of vitamin D6). The absorption of sunlight to the right degree and at the right time strengthens our defence against infections; promotes the presence of the I in the body; and forms the basis for stabilising our inner, hormonally mediated light rhythms which are very important for sleep and health. Not only do we need a relationship to the light of the sun freed from fear but also an appreciation of the night, the starry sky, what might be described as "Hymns to the night" to quote Novalis in the title for his cycle of poems. The effects on health of nightly light pollution through artificial light and screens is meanwhile well known.

Our rhythmical system is connected with the sun and its course throughout the day. We thus have a large number of circadian rhythms. A rhythmical structure to the day and particularly a physiological relationship between waking and sleeping are important. Too little or too much sleep both make us ill and lead, among other things, to the restriction of immunological functions. Another crucial factor is the relationship with warmth. The cardiovascular system forms the central organ of our warmth organism and requires strengthening, as does the respiratory system. A central role is played here by our self-movement. Here the hygienic exercises in eurythmy therapy as given by Rudolf Steiner in the fifth lecture of the eurythmy therapy course of 1921 – particularly the triad of A reverence, love E and hope U, supplemented by the rhythmical R – can offer valuable reinforcement and can also be learnt by

many in small groups and then used independently.

The importance of movement outside and the regular absorption of sunlight has already been mentioned. Although being sensible in many respects from an infectiological point of view, "house-bound quarantine" nevertheless also has worrying consequences against this background since it restricts the aids mentioned above.

Why do viruses arise as human pathogens?

There is, however, one big question: where do these evidently new types of virus come from and why have they arisen? Interestingly, many of the viruses, including coronavirus, come from the animal kingdom. We too carry in our intestinal tract not only bacteria, the microbiota, but numerous viruses which are undoubtedly important for our health in a similar way as we know the gut bacteria to be. We know, after all, that it is not just our immune functions but many other areas of the organism, indeed our mental well-being, that is influenced by the gut bacteria.

Why, then, do viruses from the animal kingdom pose a risk to humans? We are currently imposing inexpressible suffering on animals: mass and cruel slaughter, up to and including experiments on laboratory animals, leads to pain to which the animal world is helplessly exposed. Even the normal trade in live animals can put them under exceptional stress with heightened fear. Can such suffering lead to consequences which change viruses living in the animal organism? We are used to looking only at the physical level and to see it mostly as separate from the mental level. We are, however, today aware of relationships which connect the intestine for example with the mind. Thus with regard to many viral diseases it is not just the microbiological question which arises regarding the origin of the virus but also the ecological and moral one as to the way we treat the animal world. Steiner spoke about these connections more than a hundred years ago.⁷ Today it is up to us to investigate these relationships and to ask deeper questions alongside the scientific analysis.

Perspectives

The focus thus turns to the ecological dimension of this pandemic. Globalisation has so far developed very much in the light of economic interests and political power plays. The corona pandemic makes us aware of the great extent to which, as humanity today, we form a whole which is responsible for the health of our fellow human beings, our descendants and the earth. It can teach us a new reverence for life which Albert Schweitzer so urgently called for, the so often neglected dimension of the totality of life in which there is ultimately no separation of one living being from another and their fate. These days and weeks are showing the extent to which apparently incontrovertible principles in the economy, education and transport are turning out to be relative when life is at risk. They can teach us a new flexibility and consideration for others in our behaviour. There can be no question that everything should be done to prevent the at-risk groups in particular being infected. This is where the measures which have meanwhile been taken to halt the spread of the pathogen, particularly the rapidity of it, apply and here everyone should act in solidarity with the whole of civil society and the world community.

If for a long time homage was paid to the goal of eliminating infectious pathogens as radically and comprehensively as possible, the corona epidemic teaches us instead – as does the rapidly increasing antibiotic resistance, for example – that the question of the co-existence with and acquisition of immunity and demarcation from the world of animals, plants, bacteria, fungi and viruses requires a sustainable developmental perspective instead of demonised images of an enemy. The SARS-CoV-2 virus cannot be eliminated or eradicated and we have to expect further new mutations in this field in the coming decades. Protection against infection and, on the other hand, the gradual development of communal immunity (the technical term “herd immunity” also indicates a distorted relationship between humans and animals) requires well-

thought out measures which are guided by the goal of a balance between necessary abstention and necessary relations. Movement outdoors in nature, but also empathy and interest in other people have a health-giving action and are particularly important now. Healing, too, requires affection and human assistance. There are studies which show how social relationships – here the degree of popularity of children – have a positive effect on their longer-term infection risk⁸.

Mentally it is about coping with anxiety, calmness, courage and spiritual perspectives. Anxiety and mental tension restrict immunological functions and can be presumed to contribute to the spread of disease in the same way as careless and thoughtless behaviour. Conversely, a positive mental mood (“positive emotional style”) has a beneficial effect and leads to a reduced risk of falling ill.⁹ The concentration of cortisone in saliva as an indication of mental stress and tension also correlates with the susceptibility to infection.¹⁰

We therefore have inwardly to counter anxiety and often generated fear since only clear thinking, a balanced frame of mind and courage reduce the disposition for disease. “[...] fear of the diseases which occur all around at the source of an epidemic and [if we] enter the night and sleep with fearful thoughts, then unconscious after-images will be generated in the soul, imaginations which are riddled with fear. And that is a good way to foster and cultivate bacilli”¹¹, is how Rudolf Steiner characterised it more than a hundred years ago.

Great questions arise from a spiritual perspective: what do pandemic diseases call for from humanity? On the one hand, this pandemic is dramatically inhibiting the life of society and thus turning into a growing economic, social and societal threat. On the other hand, it is leading to a pause with the possibility of questioning the direction of society, its values and goals, and determining them anew. Here the relationship between humans and the realms of nature, particu-

larly the animals, is of great importance. Currently, in addition to the climate crisis and thus the illness of the earth, we have an acute human global illness of the same magnitude as the great chronic diseases of our time which can make us more awake to a necessary ecological reorientation, including in the field of medicine. In the long term we cannot just wage war on diseases and pathogens, as valuable as such skills are – we have to work with the same strength on the sustained strengthening of the human being and on the ecological balance between humans and nature in the light of our common cosmic origin. Strengthening resilience has a physical, mental and spiritual dimension in this crisis. Alongside maintaining warmth and the rhythms of life as well as getting the sun, attention should be paid at a physical level to healthy nutrition and the avoidance of poisons (tobacco, alcohol). Bitter vegetables strengthen immunity, greater sugar consumption reduced resistance. Prevention and constitutional reinforcement can be supported with appropriate anthroposophical medicines and eurythmy therapy.

When a person falls ill, it requires management of the inflammation as the reasonable response of the organism to eliminate the pathogen, and not uncritical anti-inflammatory and anti-pyretic treatment. We currently do not have any evidence-based treatment for when people fall ill with life-threatening COVID-19 which is still therapeutic uncharted territory for all involved. Just as in intensive-care medicine we know about the treatment of respiratory distress syndromes, Anthroposophic Medicine also has therapeutic experience in the treatment of community-acquired pneumonia which is relatively often triggered by viruses. The therapeutic recommendations of Anthroposophic Medicine can in our judgement be of help in all stages of the disease and particularly support the treatment of pneumonia. Since several anthroposophical hospitals in coordinated action are involved also in the intensive care of patients with serious cases of COVID-19, it may perhaps soon be possible to

continue to update the current recommendations on the basis of experience.

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Building Pathways to the Foundation Stone Meditation

Call for Volunteers

Our Dear Friends,

We are delighted to report that over \$10,000 has been raised to support the creation of an important new book on the Foundation Stone Meditation! Over 57 Canadian Society members from across the country contributed, enabling us to far surpass the original goal of \$5,500.

These funds will be used to support the translation of the various essays as needed, the printing costs of an initial print run, and marketing the book to Society members around the world. It is our shared hope that this book will help a wider audience find a pathway to working with the Foundation Stone Meditation, which in turn will cultivate much-needed health-giving forces for our world.

The project is being led by Arie van Ameringen, the former General Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in Canada, with Christiane Haid, the leader of the Section for Literary Arts and the Humanities at the Goetheanum, as co-publisher.

We will be in touch as soon as the book is available, later this year.

Please note, no further donations are required for this specific project. Donations to the Society's core costs, or to any other of its other specific donation categories, are always welcome.

Our Mandate Group is seeking additional members. No fundraising experience is required. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact John Glanzer (john.glanzer@gmail.com) to discuss the opportunity.

Thank you to all the donors!

John, Dorothy and Rob
Gift Money Mandate Group

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