



The Founding Intentions Spiritual Leadership, Current Work, and the Goals of the Medical Section

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The tasks of the School of Spiritual Science are rooted in what Rudolf Steiner perceived as a “spiritual influx” into the rising tides of materialism during the last third of the nineteenth century: “A revelation of the spirit was opened up for mankind. Not from any arbitrary earthly consideration, but in obedience to a call resounding from the spiritual world; not from any arbitrary earthly consideration, but through a vision of the sublime pictures given out of the spiritual world as a modern revelation for the spiritual life of mankind—from this flowed the impulse for the anthroposophical movement.

This anthroposophical movement is not an act of service to the earth. This anthroposophical movement in its totality and in all its details is a service to divine beings, a service to God. We create the right mood for it when we see it in all its wholeness as a service to God.”¹

These words state clearly that the founding of the Goetheanum as an independent school for anthroposophy was an initiative that Rudolf Steiner intended to facilitate practical divine service in daily life. Not only those who practice the vocation of priest, but every member of a profession can learn to feel responsible in his or her actions towards a real, divine-spiritual world. Spirituality is not just a matter for religion, but also for science, art, and for how people lead their daily lives.

With such an endeavor, Steiner harkens back to the most ancient mystery traditions. The word *mysterium*, which can be translated as “secret,” denotes the search for a spiritual path and a temple that remained secret until one had found what one sought or strove for. Steiner and his colleagues

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conceived of the Goetheanum as a place to facilitate such seeking and finding in contemporary times, so that each interested person could find an inner path of development fitting for his profession, fruits of work and study within the specialist Sections of the School would address contemporary issues and foster further cultural development of individuals, and support could be given to collegiate collaboration and community building.

Steiner therefore outlines the following tasks of the School at the Goetheanum: “Since the School of Spiritual Science cannot be a college or university in the normal sense, it will not attempt to compete with these in any way or be a substitute for them. What one will be able to find at the Goetheanum, however, which is not to be found at ordinary universities, is esoteric deepening of knowledge. People will be able to receive there something that the soul seeks in its quest for knowledge. This quest for knowledge can be something universally human. The General Section will exist for those who have only the universally human need to find the paths of the soul towards the world of spirit. The other Sections will endeavor to indicate paths whereby those who wish to orient their lives in accord with a specific scientific, artistic or other vocation can do so. Thus every seeking human being will find at the ‘Goetheanum School’ what he wishes to strive for, depending on the particular circumstances of his life. In other words, the School does not aim to be a purely academic institution, but a purely human one; but at the same time it should be able to fully engage with the esoteric needs of the scientist and the artist.”²

The Threshold to the Spiritual World

Already in a public lecture given in Stuttgart on May 1, 1919,³ Rudolf Steiner states how necessary it is to come to recognize that the thresholds of birth and death are transitions leading into spiritual forms of human existence, to which earthly life is directly related. He describes how a person's happiness in life and his capacity to withstand crises are dependent on the extent to which he can become aware of this fact. Those who live in an awareness that the spiritual world—in the form of life after death and before birth—actually exists develop different values and perspectives on earthly life. One learns to live daily life with more mindfulness in all of its details and to acknowledge responsibility for one's own actions towards oneself and one's guiding spirit. If we do not become aware of this fact, we lose insight into the meaning and purpose of life, as well as into the precious nature of every moment granted us to develop ourselves and our work for others. Cultivating "threshold consciousness" on the other hand, in professional life and in social interaction, awakens each person's experience of meaning and sense of responsibility for the developmental context in which he stands and gives life value and orientation. At the same time, much is also "unveiled" in the sense of an "apocalypse," that is, as revelation. Consciously approaching the spiritual world gives life meaning but it is also a serious matter. It is simultaneously uncomfortable and beautiful, in the same way as are truth and self-knowledge.⁴

In the esoteric tradition, the three decisive steps for preparing the conscious individual crossings of the threshold are called the trials by fire, water, and air.⁵ Formerly, at the time of the ancient mysteries, these trials or tests could be undergone only in the form of initiation rituals in a temple. Today, inner and outer circumstances of life require most of us to experience them. Life itself has become a mystery, the meaning and developmental opportunities of which have to be uncovered. The initiation experiences arising from these circumstances pertain to our life of cognition, feeling, and will.

- In the fire of honest self- and world-knowledge, the self-deception with which one unconsciously wants to protect oneself and others from uncomfortable truths is burned away (the fire trial).
- In the crisis of trust that very often follows a severe disappointment in oneself or another person, one can experience the quality of the trial by water, in which "nothing upholds you." In the face of the deep uncertainty associated with this—the falling away of recognition, support, and encouragement from within and without—one can develop further in a healthy way only by deriving one's motives for action entirely out of the matter at hand. Personal sympathies can and must fall silent. The love for an action rooted solely in the matter at hand sustains us, even if we are otherwise floundering, without firm ground under our feet.
- The quality of the trial by air, in contrast, concerns a capacity that the modern human being especially needs if he or she wishes to act in a culturally creative and healing way. Here we must not only educate ourselves to be truthful to ourselves and others (the fire-trial process) and develop a capacity for human understanding or love (the water-trial process), but also, in particular, we need a capacity for moral intuition;⁶ we need an ability to make the right decision in the specific situation at hand. For this, courage, tolerance, and unconditional love of freedom are needed.

These three new ways of handling thinking, feeling, and will—even if we initially practice them only in a tentative way—make the dynamics of social interaction into a developmental space for all. They are also the capacities or attitudes towards life that connect the spiritual and sensory worlds, facilitating a conscious crossing of the threshold to the spiritual world.

Moral Techniques for Social Commitment and the Tasks of the Goetheanum

In the face of the social deficiencies that so commonly arise today, it is important to detail the social skills that are required of us:

1. In the spiritual/cultural sphere, we need to develop individualism and personal commitment—what one might call spiritual entrepreneurship.
2. In the sphere of rights, we need clear structures for reaching agreements and opportunities to reflect on the forms of work in which we are embedded, so that we can optimize them for the benefit of all.
3. In the economic-social sphere, the prime need is for a culture of acknowledgement of what is done, of what each individual can contribute with his or her specific gifts and capacities.

When these three primary needs of modern human beings are taken into account, we can meet what is “difficult” in social life in a constructive way. The creative development of all can replace the chaotic drifting apart of individuals’ intentions. To initiate a schooling oriented towards this, on December 27, 1923, during the Christmas Conference, Steiner outlined three possible forms of community building—two with a horizontal structure and one that vertically crosses and connects them.⁷ The working forms characterized by horizontal lines are those of the General Anthroposophical Society and the School of Spiritual Science with its three classes (see sketch: I, II, III) of which Steiner himself was only able to establish the First Class in its first division.

The “vertical” community building in the Section context is rooted in an inner attitude to accomplish daily work out of spiritual responsibility. This requires the autonomy and fraternal stance that can be learned in the forms of work of the Anthroposophical Society and the School. In the statutes of the General Anthroposophical Society as conceived by Steiner,⁸ the working

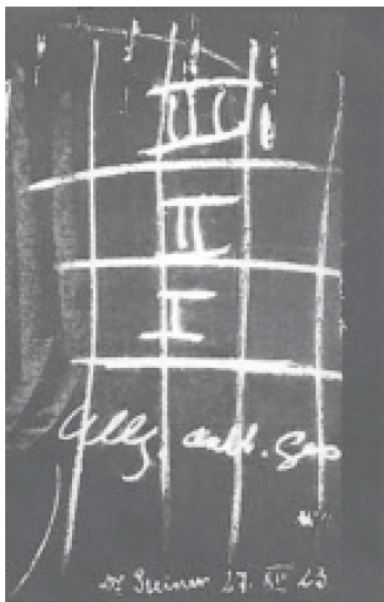
forms of this Society are entirely founded on each individual’s initiative. Every member is accorded the autonomous right to join a working group or to form a group with others that has a local or thematic focus (GA 260, p. 43). In the School of Spiritual Science, on the other hand, there are no statutes describing the rights and duties of members. Steiner calls this the “soul of the Anthroposophical Society” (GA 260, p. 161). To become a member of the School, no admission test is required nor is any testimony of one’s capacity, such as is otherwise normally expected in order to enter a university. Nor is any member’s contribution stipulated, as is the case in the Anthroposophical Society. Three conditions of entry are given which one affirms—both to oneself and to the School collegium (the group of Section leaders)—that one will strive to fulfill as a binding commitment:

- To pursue the anthroposophic path of development independently and with commitment.
- To “stay connected” with the other School members.
- To be a representative of the anthroposophic cultural impulse “in all details of life.”⁹

These three conditions give each individual a clear orientation and create the coherence necessary for forming working contexts, or “communities of free spirits.”

How Can a Christian Style of Leadership Succeed?

On January 1, 1924, at the end of the Christmas Conference for the new spiritual foundation of the Anthroposophical Society and the School, Louis Werbeck expressed the thanks of the participants, calling Rudolf Steiner “you great, pure human brother” and asking him for his “fatherly blessing” for further work in the Anthroposophical Society.



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Rudolf Steiner's sketch explained at the Christmas Conference of 1923/24 to clarify the working forms of the Anthroposophical Society, School of Spiritual Science and the Sections

Steiner replied as follows: “. . . My dear friends, what has taken place here is something, I know, that I was allowed to say, for it was spoken with full responsibility and in upward gaze to the spirit who is there and should be and will be, the spirit of the Goetheanum. In the name of this spirit I have allowed myself to speak things that could not have been uttered so forcefully if not uttered with upward gaze to the spirit of the Goetheanum. And so let me accept these thanks from you on behalf of the spirit of the Goetheanum, for whom we wish to exert ourselves, and strive and work in the world.”¹⁰ This is at the same time clear acknowledgement of the “vertical succession” in which Steiner included himself as the inaugurator of anthroposophy.

As little as he himself wished to receive thanks from others for his work, but rather to pass this on to his source of inspiration, just as little did he value it when people cited his authority in terms of “horizontal succession.” A “Christian style of leadership” takes its lead from the Pauline attitude, “Not I but Christ in me” (Letters of St. Paul). But this is an attitude of “vertical succession.” Anthroposophy aims to be a path whereby the

human being achieves independent spiritual knowledge and insight. In the field of science this is possible by spiritualizing thinking and developing it further meditatively. In the artistic sphere, we can do so by drawing on the artistic elements of composition, such as building materials, forms, colors, tones, words, and movements so that spiritual qualities can become manifest.¹¹ In practical life, on the other hand, as much of this spiritually grasped and longed-for spirit can be realized as individuals are each able to integrate it into their work and the way they live their lives. Of these three forms of manifestation of spiritual realities, art has advanced the furthest. It can fashion images and revelations of what is “perfect.” It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Rudolf Steiner spoke often and in such a moving way about the nature of the Dornach building and its central sculpture, the “Representative of Humanity.” Over nine meters high, the statue shows Christ striding between the powers that seek to divert human beings from their path: Lucifer as the radiant spirit of hubris, and Ahriman as the power-conscious spirit of conformity and de-individualization.

When construction of the first Goetheanum was starting, at the inauguration of the artist studio on June 17, 1914, Steiner said: “. . . but then, when all is ensouled by this spirit whom I wish to invoke with these words in this room this evening, when everything that rises above this hill through our work is filled with this spirit of love, which at the same time is also always the spirit of authentic art, then from this hill and what stands here there will radiate out into the world the spirit of peace, the spirit of harmony, the spirit of love.”¹² To let this spirit inspire us in the realm of medicine and in the organs of the anthroposophic medical movement is the great ideal of anthroposophic medicine.

Heart Function as a Guiding Image

The guiding picture for the leadership culture of the Goetheanum, in particular for the Medical Section with its therapeutic task, is the heart function of the human being. Steiner confirms this task everywhere in his work, for instance when he says, “The inmost principle of anthroposophic endeavor is love for the human being.”¹³ “We can only make what we say and hear into the proper point of departure for the development of the anthroposophic cause if our heart’s blood is capable of beating for it.”¹⁴ And, at the end of the Christmas Conference, his words sound like a Whitsun blessing: “And so, my dear friends, bear your warm hearts, in which you have laid the foundation stone for the Anthroposophical Society, bear these warm hearts into the world for strong, potent and healing work.”¹⁵ “And so the heartfelt ties which you can form with the Goetheanum will be something which, especially as physicians, can profoundly help you in the task you have really set yourselves.”¹⁶

Steiner had a very clear perception of the connection between phenomena of social misery in his time—poverty, the upsurge of racism, abuses of power, violence—and an education that was

Life itself [is] a mystery, the meaning and developmental opportunities of which [are] to be uncovered.

remote from the spirit, making it inadequate for developing freedom and responsibility. He regarded the social question as a pedagogical one. When the first Waldorf school was founded in Stuttgart, he insisted that education must have a therapeutic orientation that would always serve individual development and focus on the child’s developing health.

Thus the pedagogical question becomes a medical-therapeutic question. Ultimately, though, as Paracelsus saw it, the medical question is the question of the “only true medicine,” love. The human heart perceives in a differentiated way—physiologically, emotionally, and spiritually—what is happening in the organs and systems of the whole organism. It is from the heart that the whole receives its impulses, and every single organ and function receive the heart’s blood as needed to meet their individual requirements. It is only in the heart that the particular potential, capacities, needs, and stresses of individual organs are reflected, along with the needs of the whole. In the way the heart functions—its archetypal mediation between periphery and center and between the nerve-sense system and the metabolic-limb system—the heart is a profound and archetypal image of a Christian social culture and quality of leadership.

Counter-Images of a Humane Approach to Leadership

The French revolutionary politician Robespierre stands as a historic example of thinking that, in pursuance of the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity, lost touch with the heart. Where this occurs, guiding pictures and ideals turn into an ideology in which many become emotionally subordinate and dependent on one charismatic personality—in spiritual terms on inspirations emanating from Lucifer. Ahrimanic inspirations are at work where this ideological orientation

is compounded by the enforcing of will and an external imposition of power and authority. As a result, various types of totalitarian systems and authoritarian styles of leadership arise that are characterized by the use of both ideological and material/practical compulsions as a means of power, including the use of financial shortages to achieve certain goals. Common to both Luciferically and ahrimanicly inspired social cultures is the greater or lesser restriction of individual freedom to think, hold opinions and act, along with heartless and inhumane elements in relations and agreements. We can protect ourselves against the fascination of Lucifer through love for the realities of life: “Those who take spiritual science seriously are not concerned with battling about different professions of belief but instead they wish to pursue serious work in all areas of practical life.”¹⁷ We can protect ourselves against the dangers of Ahriman by respecting each person’s individual freedom: “The individual first had to separate from his associations and connections so that the social element could be realized out of the individual.”¹⁸ Organizing one’s own modes and structures of work in as conscious and healing a way as possible for social interaction is therefore the core task of the Medical Section and the professional associations and institutions affiliated with it.

The Working Principles Conceived by Rudolf Steiner and Their Guiding Image

The principle of interlinked collaboration:

How can the Anthroposophical Society, the School, the anthroposophic movement, and the public work together constructively? Steiner gave a guiding image for this in the blackboard sketch described above. He described as follows the working attitude necessary for realizing this guiding image: “It is very important that we acquire the outlook according to which we do not believe we have the right to give people anything other than what they demand, that we do not have a right to place ourselves

above others to whom we wish to present or give something. We must rid ourselves of the habit of assuming a didactic or campaigning stance, so that we can really make insight and understanding the founding element of life in the Anthroposophical Society.”¹⁹

Heart culture lives from insight into needs and necessities. It creates structures and institutions so as to serve these needs and necessities as best as possible. Thus Steiner allows the forms of collaboration he proposes to interpenetrate each other in his sketch of the social structure for the anthroposophical work. The vertical element stands at the center, however, as a fundamental orientation for each individual who feels an obligation towards one or several Section impulses in his work. This vertical element stands for the *anthropos*, the upright human being, whose insight gives him the strength to turn his heart forces right and left towards various work contexts of anthroposophic life, but also upward to inspiration from the spiritual world, and downward, by standing within the demands of life with all his personal, professional, and social human development.

The principle of individuality:

In the statutes and statute discussions of the Anthroposophical Society at the Christmas Conference of 1923/24, Rudolf Steiner presented the social structure of the School of Spiritual Science, Anthroposophical Society, and the anthroposophic medical movement in a differentiated way. The Anthroposophical Society is underpinned by a democratic-republican gesture: All members have the right to set themselves goals in a local area or sphere of activity, to found contexts of work and lay down the particular statutes for such an organization. These individual goals and statutes should not contradict those of the Anthroposophical Society. Here the full scope of the principle of individuality applies.

The principle of fraternity in spiritual community:

The School of Spiritual Science is structured according to the principle of spiritual fraternity: The spiritual bond is formed by three conditions that regulate the various forms of collaboration.

The principle of representation and service:

The anthroposophic medical movement, like the other Sections, is conceived as a service-providing community. The School of Spiritual Science should focus on making the findings of anthroposophic spiritual research available for fraternal collaboration and community, for moral and religious life, and for artistic and cultural life in general.²⁰ Central to this is the Rosicrucian maxim: “An action performed from goodness of heart is one in which the person who performs it does not pursue his own interest but that of his fellow human beings. Such an action can be called morally good.”²¹ “And at all times complete harmony must prevail between external life and initiation.”²² “Instructions [of good spiritual teachers] lead either to good results or to nothing.”²³ “They are concerned with the development and liberation of all beings, both human and companions of human beings.”²⁴

The principle of flexible structures:

The anthroposophic medical movement, for example, with all its different work contexts, has to adapt continually to growing demands. Where a hierarchy of capacities is needed, this will be set up. Where all are needed and should be involved, democratic arrangements will be made. Otherwise, tasks can be mandated for a defined period, new bodies created, and structures that are no longer needed can be dissolved according to need. All the modes of work developed or suggested by Rudolf Steiner were flexible answers to questions or needs of the time. This principle assures developmental openness, so as to counter stagnation in the social domain and chaotic phenomena of upheaval and dissolution.

Meditations for Those Working in the Field of Curative Education and Social Therapy

– Rüdiger Grimm

The Curative Education Course contains a series of meditative exercises for deepening one’s own inner manner of working with questions and problems relating to curative education and the nature of the human being. The point-circle meditation, which stands at the center of these exercises, was first elaborated by Rudolf Steiner close to the end of the course, in lectures 10 and 11.²⁵ This exercise enables us to meditatively experience and discover the fundamental, polar relationships between the forces which form the human organization and which continually recur as a formative principle in the Curative Education Course. An instance of this can be seen in the polar images of compulsively reproducing the same repeated ideas, on the one hand, and the incapacity, on the other, to recall even the simplest daily experiences. Curative educational insight and deeds thus arise from a process of convergence between external observation, insight into the nature of the human being, the inner recreating and envisaging of constitutional processes, conscious work on the form of relationships, and the development of individual caretaking for people in need of special care. The inner activity involved in the point-circle meditation encompasses several elements by means of which polar experiences can be stimulated and deepened.

Practicing it in the evening and morning means that it engages with differing states of consciousness. In the evening a contemplative awareness arises as we recall the past day and release ourselves from its events and experiences, which can now be formed into inner pictures in retrospective review. In the morning, on the other hand, we enter the individual space of our actions, which we are likely to picture in a goal-oriented way, and yet these actions may result and be co-determined by what comes to meet us. The polar situation in which we live can be experienced

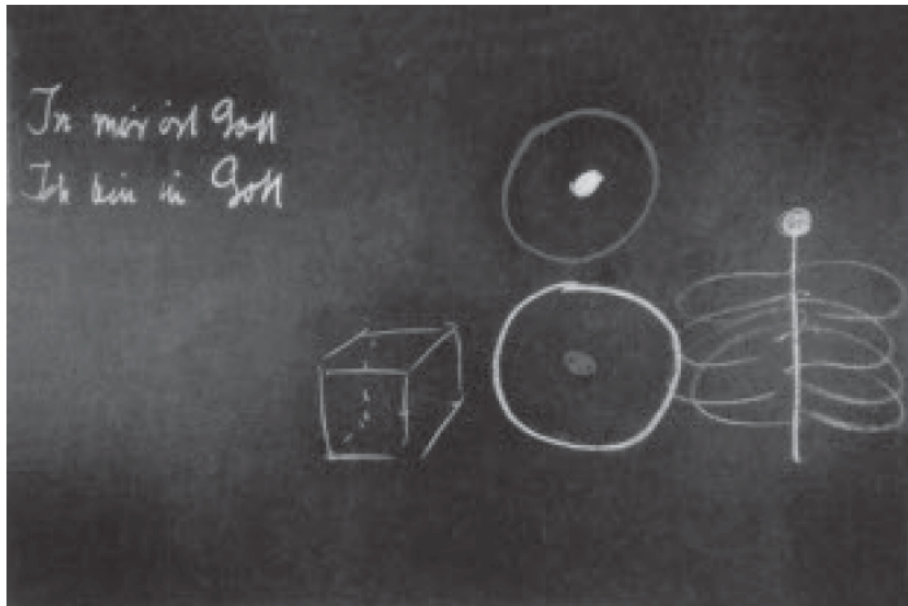
meditatively at the transitions between sleeping and waking.

A second polar element is practiced through the form dynamic of point and circle, or through the inner exercise of centripetal and centrifugal movement. In our mind's eye the point at the center of the circle expands towards its circumference, while at the same time the peripheral circle element concentrates towards the point center. The linked evocation of blue and yellow likewise accentuates the greatest possible contrast of color spaces—of space-creating-withdrawing impressions, on the one hand, and emerging-luminous ones, on the other.

Two meditative phrases enable us to live into the depth of these processes: to experience the activity that gives rise to consciousness in the evening not just as a reflection of day consciousness but as the presence of a spiritual reality in which divine thoughts can fill human awareness: “In me is God.”

In the dawning consciousness of morning, on the other hand, we can experience how, in acting, our will activity touches and affects not only a world of objects but at the same time also a divinely created world in which we encounter each other with our individual destinies and dispositions: “I am in God.”

Inner flexibility can arise from ongoing practice of this meditation, harmonizing the transitions between states of consciousness in us: between waking thinking and sleeping will. As a “professional meditation” it enables us to acquire experiences that are, ultimately, indispensable for work in curative education: a schooling of mindfulness, of devotion to the world of the senses and its often unexpected pointers to key opportunities for perceiving another being. It also creates a space for trusting in our own capacity to be able to act with full presence of mind in the moment and for trusting with courage in the hidden dimensions of our own being.



The point-circle meditation in the Curative Course
—“In me is God, I am in God.”

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Penetration into the phenomena of the world is brought about by a power flowing through the activity of thinking itself—the power of love in its spiritual form. There are no grounds here for the objection that to discern love in the activity of thinking is to project into thinking a feeling, namely love.

– Rudolf Steiner
The Philosophy of Freedom
Steiner Press, p.119