



# Hope.Springs.Eternal

Chicago / 10-12 March 2023

Christopher Houghton Budd<sup>1</sup>

Held at 4249 N. Lincoln Avenue, Chicago, and supported by the Economics Group of the Anthroposophical Society in America and open to any member of the Anthroposophical Society, the idea of the seminar was twofold. Firstly, to invite members of the Society to take further the enquiry begun by Meg Freeling (Columbus, Ohio) when in Advent 2021 she published her paper, *Truthening our Finances in the Anthroposophical Society*,<sup>2</sup> on the website of the Economics Conference of the Goetheanum, having sought unsuccessfully to draw fellow members' attention to it via the newsletter of the Society in America, *being human*. Secondly, to quicken this investigation by way of a centennial event marking the 100 years since Rudolf Steiner began his journey with country societies, a development that led to the Christmas Refounding Meeting, without which the latter event cannot really be understood (see recent publications and videos by Peter Selg under the heading, 'The Autonomous<sup>3</sup> Country Societies and the World Society', and based on a talk he gave to the Swiss Anthroposophical Society in February 2023.)

Intended to convey the gathering's mood and imagery rather than to report verbatim what was said, this report is a montage rather than a set of minutes. Insofar as some of these remarks record things I said at various points in the seminar, they have been edited by me from notes taken mainly by Meg Freeling. The gathering was announced and described in the following way:

'Financial sovereignty and spiritual autonomy are two sides of the one coin. Is or can the Anthroposophical Society in America be seen as an exemplar of this? This event will build on and explore further themes backgrounded by blogs, talks and other material available here:  
<http://www.hopespringseternal.world>

Most members will be aware of the financial challenges at the Goetheanum and the related AGM struggles. From *Anthroposophy Worldwide*, they may also know of the 'Many Groups; One Society' project of the Circle of Treasurers, as part of their worldwide efforts to increase members' understanding and support of the Anthroposophical Society both at home and in Dornach.

And yet, how can one get to grips with such, seemingly remote, matters? And are we aware of their root cause in the incomplete, and therefore troubled, realization of the Refounding of the Anthroposophical Society in 1923/4, and its attendant challenges of providing a home for the School of Spiritual Science and resourcing that work, including the provision of physical premises?

Timed as a 'launch event' for the website of the same name,<sup>4</sup> the gathering is an opportunity for members in the USA (but also more widely) to consider these issues on an in-person (i.e. non-hybrid) basis.'

With the forthcoming AGM of the worldwide Anthroposophical Society in Dornach in mind, the idea of the event was further elaborated:

'Having convened this event, what am I expecting? Simply that, as concerned members of the Anthroposophical Society, we consider more close-to (in our own cases) the challenges concerning real estate, project finance and plain membership contributions that trouble the Anthroposophical Society wherever it is alive in the world through its many groups of all kinds – country, local, working fields.

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Houghton Budd has been a member of the Anthroposophical Society since 1972 and a member of the School of Spiritual Science since 1979. A former treasurer in Ireland, he is currently linked to Groups of the Anthroposophical Society in Ecuador and Mexico, and is a member of the Circle of Treasurers working with Country Groups around the world.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.hopespringseternal.world/fileadmin/pdf/essays\\_etc/MF\\_Truth\\_in\\_our\\_Finances.pdf](http://www.hopespringseternal.world/fileadmin/pdf/essays_etc/MF_Truth_in_our_Finances.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Does autonomous really mean interdependent, recognising one is part of a larger whole?

<sup>4</sup> [www.hopespringseternal.world](http://www.hopespringseternal.world)

As one can see from the difficulties at Goetheanum AGMs, members are struggling to find the will forces to carry the Society. Are we 'post culmination' – no longer finding a source of will in traditional anthroposophical ways? Is this because the tide has gone out, perhaps never to return? Or is it simply that we do not take the Christmas 1923 statutes, including their financial aspect, seriously enough as an ordering document in its own right, independently of outer management concepts, non-profit rules and external accounting precepts?

As members, can we be aware of the complexities reported in *Anthroposophy Worldwide* and elsewhere when they are outside our immediate ken? Moreover, have covid and the culture it has given rise to estranged us from our will – convenience and comfort never being watchwords for an awake inner life? Can we somehow cut through the thickets and thorns of the last 100 years by taking the initiative as members to start over, retracing our steps into and out of the Society's refounding moment?

Outwardly, the seminar will consider two very different things – a presentation by Meg Freeling (Columbus, Ohio) of her paper, *Truthening our Finances in the Anthroposophical Society*,<sup>5</sup> and a case study of our actual venue<sup>6</sup> as if it were a Rudolf Steiner Cultural Center (my word, but true to the venue's potential), but without direct mention of Anthroposophy. However 'local' these topics may seem and regardless of attendance, as members we are each representative of every human soul today, so we can experience them hologrammatically, as it were. The idea is to see what these topics bring up in us as challenges, that is to say, as unexpected, even late-in-the-day sources of *fresh* will.

Where will this find us in regard to Anthroposophy, the School of Spiritual Science, real estate matters and the related topics that swirl around at the Goetheanum, but also in our own souls and immediate circumstances? Backgrounding all these challenges is the question of whether we are branches or groups, each one paddling its own canoe, or do we experience ourselves as part of and so contributing to a larger worldwide whole? In all these respects, can we retrace our steps and so find, even found, new ground?'

A provisional program eventually unfolded based on the following themes:

- Retracing our Steps
- Truthening our Finances
- What does a Rudolf Steiner Cultural Center look like in the second third of this Michael Age?
- One Society; Many Groups – The work of the Circle of Treasurers
- Vows Confirmed

The Gathering was attended by:

Kim Chotzen  
Mary Spalding  
Paulette Arnold  
Patricial Delisa  
Meg Freeling  
Daniel Osmer  
Lorene Allen  
Charles Burkham  
Christopher Houghton Budd  
Jenny Doty  
Gordon Edwards  
David Kavesh  
Mihai Rosu  
Mary Adams  
Chuck Ginsberg

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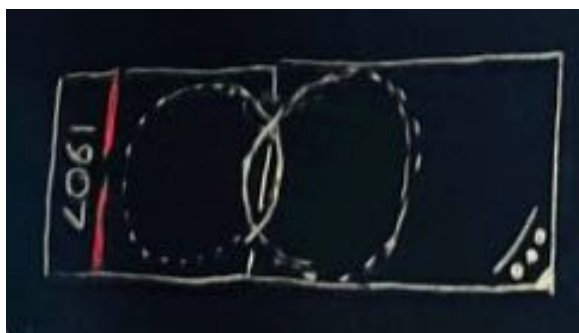
<sup>5</sup> [http://www.hopespringseternal.world/fileadmin/pdf/essays\\_etc/MF\\_Truth\\_in\\_our\\_Finances.pdf](http://www.hopespringseternal.world/fileadmin/pdf/essays_etc/MF_Truth_in_our_Finances.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Part of the idea of the seminar was to live into and 'road test' the Chicago venue as a US-wide hub for such events, be they national or international.

*Friday Afternoon*

## **Introduction**

With two spaces we began  
Both were filled, both were crammed  
Filled with ev'rything under the sun  
But none united, nothing one  
Two great spaces nonetheless  
Walls and ceilings all are rough  
But they'll do, they leave us free  
And serve our purpose well enough



## *Verse for America*

The Verse for America was recited in several versions.

Dringe unser Fühlen  
In unseres Herzens Mittelpunkt  
Und suche in Liebe sich zu vereinen  
Mit den Menschen gleichen Zieles  
Mit den Geistern die gnadevoll  
Auf unser ernstlich herzliches Streben  
Aus Lichtregionen uns stärkend  
Und unsere Liebe erhellend  
Herunterschauen.

– *Rudolf Steiner*

Penetrate our feeling  
In the midpoint of our heart  
And seek to unite itself in love  
With men of the same goal  
With spirits full of grace  
Who look upon  
Our earnest heartfelt striving  
Strengthening us from realms of light  
And illuminating our love.

– *Christopher Houghton Budd*

May our feeling penetrate  
Into the center of our heart,  
And seek, in love, to unite itself  
With the human beings seeking the same goal,  
With the spirit beings who, bearing grace,  
Strengthening us from realms of light  
And illuminating our love,  
Are gazing down upon  
Our earnest, heartfelt striving.

– *Frederick Heckel*

May our feeling reach  
Into the centre of our heart,  
And seek to unite in love  
With men seeking the same goal.  
With those spirits who, full of grace,  
Strengthening us from regions of light,  
And illuminating our love,  
Look down on our earnest heartfelt striving.

– *Marc Desaulles*



## *Background*

Christopher Houghton Budd gave a recapitulation of the history of the Hope.Springs.Eternal project as a private initiative on his part, but inviting others to join in. It originated on 30 March 2022 when he gave a talk on 'the crisis in the Anthroposophical Society', at the invitation of Dottie Zold. This was followed by a visit to Ann Arbor, Chicago and Pasadena, where a second seminar was given on finances and the Society. It seems important that these themes are being considered in the USA at this time.

### *Some Expectations*

The session included participants naming some expectations of the weekend:

- Finance and spirituality
- Picture of what the Society can become
- Inclusive language
- Unity in diversity
- How to support anthroposophical initiatives?
- How to love the Anthroposophical Society?
- Love the 'not yet'
- Ownership of buildings
- Legal persons
- FPs/NPs
- Meaning of 'association of members'
- Branches, Recognized Groups, Groups (see Appendix 1)
- Threefold model
- Shared space

### *Friday Evening*

#### **Retracing our Steps**

*1907 > Anthroposophical Society > And Beyond*

We reviewed Rudolf Steiner's journey from his doctoral study and editing of the Goethe Archive, into the Theosophical Society, until in 1907 he broke with it through the hanging of red curtains in Munich (replicated by a simple installation in the window of the Chicago venue). He then accompanied the original Anthroposophical Society until 1923 when he refounded it, along with his inauguration of the School of Spiritual Science.

An important aspect of this is the journey of Sophia to earth as *Theosophia*, humanity's embracing of her as *Philosophia*, and then her proceeding on ahead as *Anthroposophia* – an image of what we can become. For a certain period, Rudolf Steiner's incarnation became coincident with Anthroposophia's, necessarily so as it fell to him to bring anthroposophy into modern existence.

After the Refounding, the way opens, along which one can pass from being a member of the Society, to a member (not pupil) of the School, to becoming a colleague with Rudolf Steiner. This thought leads to another: to the degree that we step on this path, we leave behind any remaining links to theosophy, or at least recognize the extent to which this still informs our inner and outer habit life.

### *Juridical Form*

The relation established by Rudolf Steiner at the 1923 Christmas Conference between the Society and the School of Spiritual Science was carefully crafted to protect the School. In that way, the School is carried by the Society and is not itself a legal entity (and therefore has no bank account of its own), and so, for example, can never be sued.



If a group opens a bank account, it becomes a legal entity of the simplest kind, an unincorporated association, the liabilities and assets of which jointly and severally belong to its member-individuals. A further step is to create a legal person in its own right, such as the Anthroposophical Society in America is insofar as it is a 501(c)(3), at which point one is required to comply with the rules, regulations and tax filing requirements relevant to such an entity.

Insofar as the Christmas Conference Statute 9 reads, 'The purpose of the Anthroposophical Society will be the furtherance of spiritual research; that of the School of Spiritual Science will be this research itself', the Society is there to serve the School. It is not there to serve its members in the manner, for example, of a golf club. Rather, it affords a means and opportunity for the members collectively to support *Anthroposophia* in her mission, as she continues on her own journey, having come to earth via *Theosophia*, become wed to humanity via *Philosophia*, and now going on ahead of us as an image of what we would become.

In the first two of the Christmas Statutes, the Society itself is described as 'an association of people whose will it is to nurture the life of the soul, both in the individual and in human society, on the basis of a true knowledge of the spiritual world... They are convinced that there exists in our time a genuine science of the spiritual world ... and that the civilization of today is lacking the cultivation of such a science [whose] cultivation is to be the task of the Anthroposophical Society.'

A major aspect of this seminar asked if and how such an association could remain free in its task when it receives 'serious' amounts of capital by way of legacies or donations, or acquires real estate. Is the anthroposophical study, for example, not impacted by such things, requiring extraneous competences? The board of a non-profit, for example, is not the same creature as a group of people studying anthroposophy. It is one thing, in this seminar, for example, to pay \$50 to rent a room, and collect it from the post-tax income of the participants, whether pro rata or collectively in some way. But quite another to manage and own the room thereby rented.

#### *Concerning Leadership*

Insofar as it has an 'initiative council', the effective leadership of the Society is, or should be, vested in the School. The Vorstand members are not, therefore, decided upon by the members of the Society in the usual outer sense, but affirmed by them. This is readily understood when one recalls that the original Vorstand members were also section leaders. These confluent and overlapping roles imply that the administration of the Society (as, indeed, any 'anthroposophical' undertaking) is, or ought to be, carried by members of the School.

#### *Saturday Morning*

##### **Truthening our Finances**

On Saturday morning, Meg Freeling presented her paper, none of which has lost its relevance or urgency since it was originally written in late 2021.

Indeed, now, 100 years since Christmas 1923, we need to restore a culture of true, innovative initiative throughout the Anthroposophical Movement. As regards the Anthroposophical Society itself, the starting point concerns the members' contributions.

In 1923, dues were set at CHF 15 per member, then 12,000, whose membership cards were personally signed by Rudolf Steiner. So the first budget was, presumably, CHF 180,000, to be met by the Councils of the Societies pro rata of their membership numbers.

Today, per the Swiss National Bank index, the 15 would be 90 (a factor of 6). If we multiply 90 by the current membership of 40,000 members, the amount is 3.6 million CHF, which matches the annual operating budget at the Goetheanum, albeit with a skewed distribution due to the German and Swiss Societies continuing to pay 125 per member on a basis of c. 14,000 members. 35% of the fee revenue comes, therefore, from 49% of the membership. If this amount were evenly distributed – a challenge to today's Society Councils – one could imagine that inwardly each of the 40,000 membership cards had been signed by the member her or himself *per pro* Rudolf Steiner, as it were.

If, in this way, the Society can show to the world that its own operating costs are covered by the members, the flow of members' contributions can act as a siphon for monies from beyond the Society. This is critical, given that the 75 million CHF mentioned by Rudolf Steiner in 1923 as needed to fund the research work of the School, would today be  $(75 \times 6)$  450 million – an amount arguably beyond the capacity of the Society's membership as such. Being seen as a legitimate destination for donations on this scale would at the same time require and demonstrate the relevance of the Society/School as judged by the humanity it purports to serve, rather than as judged by its own self-declamations.

$$12,000 \times 15 = 180,000$$

$$40,000 \div 90 = 3,600,000$$

To summarize Meg's concerns in a word: Can any member really not set aside 66 cents a day in favor of the Anthroposophical Society? In the case of the USA, this would result in 915,420 USD (66 cents  $\times$  365 days  $\times$  3,800 members). Deducting the 90 per member for the Goetheanum, amounting to 342,000, this would leave 573,420 for the overall Society in the USA. Out of daily dimes, a considerable amount can be realized.

*Note:* In 2021, the amount was 410,142 (108 per member; c.29 cents per day); the amount sent to the Goetheanum was 67,600 (c.18 dollars per member).

#### *Saturday Afternoon*

#### **What does a Rudolf Steiner Cultural Center look like in the second third of this Michael Age?**

A question of this kind is necessarily wide-ranging. In the background stood another question: Is 'anthroposophy' the name that needs to be fronted all the time, or has it, post culmination, taken on a 'hosting' role? However worded, it is not anthroposophy – which is a particular destiny bringing with it particular responsibilities – that matters to the world at large today. It would be more grounded to start by recognizing that everyone today is a case of the I at the threshold, and that this is what, out of anthroposophy *but only insofar as we are able to represent it out of our own being*, we should be tending to.

The case of Rudolf Steiner Branch, Chicago served as metaphor for the actual situation and the need and possibility of a refresh. For example, instead of 'Rudolf Steiner Branch' being written on the building, maybe 'Steiner on Lincoln' or 'Putting the I in Lincoln'. (The venue is on North Lincoln Avenue.) This would suggest that, rather than the constant iteration of 'anthroposophy', the emphasis should go on sharing Rudolf Steiner's insights with the world. And with that, being attentive to when one is citing or interpreting such insights or corroborating them out of one's own experience, or even having an insight of equivalent merit.

In the same vein, rather than, however unconsciously, seeing the public in terms of potential anthroposophists or friends of anthroposophy, we need to be attentive to what is coming towards us. And remain flexible enough to perceive it.

'Sharing Rudolf Steiner's insights with the world' might in fact be a better ground for property tax exemption, for example. Notwithstanding the current challenges associated with his name (concerning which, 'don't complain, don't explain' might be a better PR strategy), this would make evident that the true beneficiary is the public generally insofar as Rudolf Steiner's insights bring spiritual science to bear in modern civilization, to paraphrase Christmas Statute 2.

As well as the question of juridical form (see p.5.), this change of emphasis would likely transpose into two other areas. Firstly, how to house such hosting in terms of premises and real estate? With what kind and shape of building? Whether owned, leased or rented? Secondly, should one stand ready to finance the initiatives which will likely be part of such a re-imagined situation – our own and those of those who come towards us?

For we are not only entering the second third of this Michael Age; we are in what Steiner called the third stage of the fundamental sociological law, to wit: 'In the early stages of cultural evolution mankind tends towards the formation of social units; initially the interests of individuals are sacrificed to the interests of those associations; the further course of development leads to the emancipation of the individual from the interests of the associations; *and then to the unrestricted development of the needs and capacities of the individual*





(editor's emphasis).<sup>7</sup> Does this not mean that recognizing the spirit in someone today likely as not entails capitalizing that person's initiative? This, rather than focusing on their meditative life or self-development achievements?

The above image shows that, as well as considering the coincidence of Steiner's biography with Anthroposophia, as She came to earth then moved on ahead, we also 'visited' Samothrace and Vezelay along the way, as antecedent examples of a first space or atrium (humanity at large, general consciousness), a second space or nave (the Society) in which 'devotion' to or recognition of anthroposophy arose in the soul, and then a third space (the School) in which one took responsibility for anthroposophy, becoming a 'representant'. But also a further step, becoming a colleague with Rudolf Steiner through knowing that, whereas in Samothrace Nike meant victory of the I over circumstance through thinking, nowadays, in our time of willing, it means the mastery of one's situation through financial literacy.

When it comes to premises, does one own them directly, as is right for the Old Mysteries, where one takes hold of the earth in order to be free and responsible, or does one use the premises of someone else; freedom and responsibility in the New Mysteries entailing the modern distinction between use and ownership – being in not of this world? Indeed, does one look for or create a sister organization to own property, à la Bau Verein (Building Association),<sup>8</sup> and so continue that story, perhaps bringing it to a better resolution than has so far been possible?<sup>9</sup>

In the case of the Rudolf Steiner Branch/Chicago, we discussed bifurcating the branch into a clear branch of the ASA, independent of the non-profit with that name, which could be renamed the 'Steiner on Lincoln' Corporation, for example. And also reinvent itself as a 'right on' corporation,<sup>10</sup> transferring its property into a for-profit that it controlled. (Similar could be asked of the ASA branches in Pasadena and Ann Arbor and perhaps elsewhere.<sup>11</sup>) A third component might then emerge: the use of the building for a program or as a cultural center, which would require an impresario, a role belonging to neither the branch members nor the board of the property owner.

<sup>7</sup> See *Freedom and Society*, Rudolf Steiner, 1898. (CW31) Transl. Carlotta Holman-Dyson.

<sup>8</sup> The small association that owned the Goetheanum site and building, which in February 1925 changed its name to General Anthroposophical Society (distinct from the Christmas Society) and in 2002 was deemed, controversially, by a Swiss judge to be the only one of the two that still exists, the latter having self-extinguished itself by not meeting. (A view one can, and should, dispute by saying the Christmas Society has 'meta' legal existence and even making this clear whenever one can by styling things as the General Anthroposophical Society (formerly the Bau Verein), whose statutes are a legal extension or enabling of the Christmas Society Statutes (see the Goetheanum website, for example).)

<sup>9</sup> See the content of articles in *Anthroposophy Worldwide* 9/2022 (p.10) and 3/2023 (p.10). [Appendix 3.]

<sup>10</sup> See *The Right On Corporation, Transforming the Corporation, A Micro Response to a Macro Problem*. Search aeBookstore.com

<sup>11</sup> See short report in December 2022 online issue of *being human*. [Appendix 4.]

## **One Society; Many Groups – The work of the Circle of Treasurers**

When we go behind the numbers in bookkeeping and merely external understanding of them, we will start to sense that they are the outer 'skin' of karma as it unfolds. At that point, even as we work to unscramble the omelet, so to speak, we cannot contradict the deeds and realities of the past. As we include the money flows in our study of the past, we begin to see a living flow of funds seeking out the Goetheanum today, or connected to it in some way. We would see backwards, how this was, and also forwards, but above all how it is now, if only our 'financial eyes' were not cataracted, blurred or out of focus, leaving us with less than 20/20 financial vision.

### *Accounts*

Christopher Houghton Budd spoke about the accounts of the Anthroposophical Society and the work of the Circle of Treasurers, where the question is whether, Group by Group, our own affairs are in order?

To this end, there needs to be a template that includes them all, and allows one to have an overview of the finances worldwide, along with clear differentiation between items associated with the Society directly and those linked to the School. One way to look at these (suggested by Swiss treasurer and Country Representative, Marc Desaulles) is to treat Society items as 'ordinary expenses', and School items as 'extraordinary'.

In this way of accounting, the cost of a performance of Faust, for example, would be booked as an extraordinary expense of the Society, but marked as related to the work of the School of Spiritual Science. This assumes, of course, understanding such an event as a form of research activity of the School.

### *Treasurers' Guidelines*

With such concerns in mind, the Treasurers of some 28 Country Societies have begun to meet to compare accounts together bi-annually in April and November, and have agreed upon a set of Guidelines (see Appendix 2) by which to cooperate. These include a built-in travel fund so that all treasurers can attend.

The Dutch Treasurer was the first to intuit these considerations, since revised and re-sequenced following consultation with the Country Councils. The aim is to make our finances living, conscious and intended. When the full picture of our worldwide finances becomes visible in this way, a very powerful story emerges that illustrates and illumines an implied path. Stepping onto this path requires but also enables alignment of one's will towards the Goetheanum (in its largest sense).

Adopted by the Country Councils in April 2019, the nine initial Guidelines were published for the members in *Anthroposophy Worldwide* in the 11/2021 edition. Since then, the Treasurers have revised them further, but these are not yet published.

### *Legacies*

An example of this work concerns the treatment of legacies, where some policies warrant review. In the USA, for example, where the Anthroposophical Society is incorporated as a 501(c)(3), there are three ways to leave a legacy or gift funds:

- 1) Unrestricted Funds under the jurisdiction of the Council.
- 2) Restricted Funds, where the donor specifies a particular research/service project, e.g., medicine, but how to do this remains under the jurisdiction of the Council.
- 3) Designated Funds. In effect, interest-free loans, providing pro tem liquidity, until called upon by the 'lenders' when needed. This requires precise arrangements, fully compliant with IRS rules both for those giving and those receiving such monies. (The Economics Conference Fund serves as an example.)

### *A New Financing Organ*

Mention was also made of a new association (since inaugurated on Rudolf Steiner's deathday, 30 March 2023) intended to act as part of the Society in a larger sense, serving as a funding vehicle where it is not





possible or appropriate to place such activity within a society with 40,000+ members. (This affects the Weleda situation, for example, which has recently so bedeviled the AGMs in Dornach.)

The following notice was published in the Anthroposophical Society in Ireland's Spring 2023 newsletter, based on a letter sent to Country Group councils on Steiner's birthday:

*The Continuity Group of the Circle of Treasurers has been working on the creation of a simple worldwide association based in Switzerland and designed to provide financial and material support to the Goetheanum.*

*We have now arrived at a set of statutes for the association, called Goetheanum Fund Worldwide. The Country Groups of the Society are being invited to join this association and attend where possible its inaugural meeting at the Goetheanum on 30 March 2023. (15 Country Groups joined, with many more in attendance.)*

*The purpose of the Goetheanum Fund (Worldwide) is to provide a means for the Country Groups of the Anthroposophical Society to collaborate with and to demonstrate trust and support of the Vorstand at the Goetheanum.*

*Although registered in Switzerland, as an association the Goetheanum Fund is a tax-exempt entity able to work on a worldwide basis. Though its members are the Country Groups as represented by their Country Representatives, its council is made up of actual and would-be Country Group treasurers, who identify and undertake its initiatives and carry responsibility for the association's finances.*

*Its statutes echo those of the Christmas Conference Statutes, so making it a sister organization to and friendly supporter of the Anthroposophical Society and the Goetheanum. Although legally distinct from the Society, it is part of the Society in a larger sense in that all Country Representatives and all Treasurers are assumed to be members of the Society and, per dint of their active work for the sake of anthroposophy, are members of the School of Spiritual Science in spirit if not in outer fact.*

In the detail, all this work shows up where, on the one hand, our finances are not aligned with how the world at large operates, a discrepancy caused by amateur or uninformed understanding of bookkeeping and taxation, or muddled interpretations of 'threefolding'. On the other, it shows where Steiner's insights into finance can give new direction to conventional finance, where spiritual scientific insights are especially needed today.

The 'three financial calls' of the Christmas Meeting have already been mentioned in Meg's presentation (see p.6). But a wider context for these can be seen when one thinks of the Christmas Meeting as an initiative on Rudolf Steiner's part that came out of 'nowhere' as far as conventional social life is concerned (representative of a free spiritual life that unfolds out of itself); of the Statutes and the wider question of legal form (affirmation of Steiner's initiative indicative of the rights life taking its cue from supporting and facilitating, but not contradicting spiritual initiatives); and of the resourcing of such affirmed initiatives giving to the economic life its ultimate and true task (of serving god not Mammon, the spiritual world, not the members!).

### *Sunday Morning* **Vows Confirmed**

Taken from Meg Freeling's notes and read together with the later received Participants' Reflections, the following words and Lorene's Allen's poem, reflect well this closing theme.

David Kavesh: It's important to take community very seriously. In relation to this, I have studied the story of the Tower of Babel quite extensively. New light has recently been shed on it by recent research on languages. A "bound book" called the Book of 'J' reveals the oldest of the Chaldean writings to date. In it we learn that when people first started building the Tower of Babel, they all spoke the same language. But there came a point when their "tongues were baffled" and they couldn't understand each other any more. So they had to stop their building project and according to their now separate tongues, they scattered over the whole known earth. The community was dependent on their common language. When that was 'scrambled', they

**On the shores of the Great  
Lakes,  
hope springs eternal**

*Lorene Allen*

a circle of folks  
in a makeshift double dome  
bringing forth the past  
to bear light on potential  
next steps of their shared future

**Hope**

hope has two aspects  
a pull to think time is fixed  
as unchangeable  
or the timelessness  
of wisdom's awakening

where hearts beat as one  
stillness holds truthening words  
that motivate deeds  
to financial awareness  
that lifts those who are ready

**Springs**

sun sparkles in green  
waters rush from creeks and wells  
here souls are guided  
through an endless unfolding  
of deep living mysteries

what form will render  
calm to threatening world fears  
let tethers loosen  
that her spiritual research  
can feed those hungry to learn

authority lives  
within one's mobility  
come hold each one  
free  
to engage as member  
of us as sensing organ

**Eternal**

her eyes tell no lie  
her smile holds the truth that speaks  
in each longing soul  
here her love draws one into  
realms of perceptive  
science

remember she weaves  
her name into the fabric  
of our becoming  
wedding our human thinking  
with sharing her mission's call

host her beckoning  
choose an associative path  
nurture the soul life  
of self and society  
serving every fine action

could no longer live and work in community. Today, it's important to have a community in which individuals can remain individuals... It's a both/and that we need to achieve.

Mary Spalding: In reflecting on a shift of focus from the word 'anthroposophy' to the life and insights of Rudolf Steiner himself, as a Waldorf teacher, I am now emphasizing the importance of including Rudolf Steiner's biography and worldwide significance in the twentieth century history curriculum taught in the eighth grade.

**Some Closing Words**

Community  
I  
Yeah!  
Threshold  
New beginning  
Insight  
Speechless  
Colleagueship  
Stand  
Act  
Chicago

**Participants' Reflections**

*Patricia Delisa*

I returned home with a renewed feeling of joy and hope. The warmth with which the event was so gently carried has lit a flame that continues to flicker in my will and spurs me on towards enhanced activity. Moving day by day through the powerful mystery space that was created for us has served deeply to awaken the impulse of our collective task. I am so grateful this has been brought to our location and to have been together with colleagues. I am glad, too, about the Hope-Springs-Eternal.world website, where I can find support documents in my effort to bring these ideas to fruition.

I intend to meet with our group (The Great Lakes Branch of the Anthroposophical Society in America in Ann Arbor) and go over what took place. I would like us to come together on a regular basis, reading, studying and working out diagrams and plans on how to set up and understand new structures for our group. And how our different businesses could also interrelate. Thank you Christopher and Kim for your warm hearts, compassionate support, and unrelenting work in economics!

*Kim Chotzen*

When I review my own notes of this event, I find I left out many details that are completed in this record. The record is important. It documents something that happened which one cannot easily put one's finger on – namely, the speaking into the world of forms and initiatives that, via their financial arrangements, have the possibility to rescue the Deed that Rudolf Steiner gave to all people in the form of the Re-founded Anthroposophical Society back in 1923/24.

There were many examples considered of work being done now, in this year *leading up to* the centennial of that Deed, that demonstrate 're-birth' possibilities inherent in a dissolution process. One idea – that anthroposophy in general, as a word or ideology,

and the Anthroposophical Society in particular – are occluding Rudolf Steiner as an individual with essential insights sought by humanity, is a bold, if not contentious one for our movement. But it relies on another idea, that our modern challenge is to ‘think for ourselves,’ have our own insights. This implies that we can take even further the insights that have been given to us, thus continuing the evolution of thought as sovereign beings, not pupils waiting for the answers. As Rudolf Steiner himself said, there is no question of a finished thought that isn’t expecting to be elaborated, in a present or future incarnation. So it is that we, standing 100 years after the Christmas Conference, are tasked with elaborating further what he did. It represents a huge step which can make one quake in one’s boots at the threshold, where finance becomes The Guardian. This seminar represented just such an effort. The word given by one of the participants in closing summed up our experience perfectly: speechless.

*Meg Freeling*

After the Hope Springs Eternal seminar in Chicago, I came away with this response:

The Hope Springs Eternal seminar in Chicago helped me realize I need to take further initiative toward aligning our current Economics Group in North America with the Christmas Conference Statutes, especially the implied relationships that need to be activated between specific groups (like ours) and the Country Council that meets in Ann Arbor. Both entities need to re-imagine our social organism relations with each other in order to become more energized and fruitful. And I think it needs to be started at the individual group level (not the other way around). Like us. And invite the country-wide group to engage with us to re-create a meaningful relationship, social organism to social organism. (And wouldn’t it be great if it could inspire other groups to find their own process?)

And finally, the dynamics of the red-blue-yellow image Marc Desaulles gave to us in 2019 (see Postscript) has been burning in me to be fulfilled as far as we can possibly manage it. By that I mean to awaken in ourselves the living, back-and-forth across the threshold processes it represents. The movements between here and there, there and here, becoming more conscious, balanced and actionable; to be able to *live* that.



### **Postscript**

Reflections on the Economics Group of the Anthroposophical Society in America, which sponsored the seminar.

*Meg Freeling*

My biggest take-away to date from the Hope Springs Eternal Seminar in Chicago is the following. This is a 'first musing' and will need much further collaborative work, but it came to me with such a sense of clarity and (can I say?) existential purpose? It's just something that needs to be done. And it needs to be initiated from within the Economics Group itself.

After going back and reviewing our Economics Group start-up deliberations before sending our letter to David Alsop in 2017 to become listed on the Anthroposophical Society in America's website, here are my most recent thoughts about changing our structure and relationship to the Society:

Is it time to re-formulate ourselves as an Economics Group within the Anthroposophical Society as it operates in the United States in North America?

Instead of identifying ourselves as a subject matter based 'Study Group' – which is what we have become by default based on the choices of group categories offered to us on the ASA website – what/who are we now, going forward?

If we start from the Statutes and the Foundation Stone of the Christmas Conference of 1923, and discern the spiritual essence of the different group forms present then and how they related to each other within the influence of Rudolf Steiner's discernment (I'm thinking of the group of practicing doctors and the Swiss Society as two separate groups and the emergence of their respective relationships with the new General [human-wide] Anthroposophical Society ), what social organism are we becoming now that would best help us align with that spiritual essence? And what reciprocal relationships do we need to foster with our Country Groups (U.S. et al) and with the Society at Dornach? And how do we develop clear understandings of our responsibilities toward each other.

In other words, if we were to re-apply to the Anthroposophical Society in America to be related to it as a new kind of group that matches more directly with the original intentions we had, and with those intentions revealed in the CC 1923 Statutes' descriptions than the choices available to us in 2017 when we first formed ourselves as a group within the Society as we knew it, what would we need to clarify anew and put into practice?

I believe the Economics Group in the U.S. has grown significantly into a more sensitized and responsive social organism over the past five years. Here are some of the questions we were asking in 2018:

- a. What is our relationship to the Economics Conference?
- b. What is our relationship to the Anthroposophical Society?
- c. What is our relationship to the School of Spiritual Science?
- d. What is our role in representing Anthroposophia as we move toward 2023?
- e. What effect does our electronic 'conference call' way of meeting have on our spiritual work?
- f. What is the best way to open our group to others?
- g. What will allow us to collaborate with the American Folk Soul/Folk Spirit as we grow this Group?

That was in 2018. At the annual Economics Conference in Folkestone, England in June, 2019, Marc Desaulles shared his image of the Christmas Conference of 1923, concerning which, but not seen by him, he shared his understanding that:

The Christmas Conference needs to be seen for what it is. Through the Christmas Conference, all who participated were enabling this teaching to incarnate. It was not meant to just stay around Rudolf Steiner, but it was offered so that the spiritual substance that came through that event could have a body built by and through the Christmas Conference Deed. Rudolf Steiner brought this living intelligence as a field of potential activity. This gives all of anthroposophy a body. You create something that can hold something else. It's linked to the Mystery of Incarnation. You can think something as a soul and give it a body.

In this image, the School for Spiritual Science is the soul (blue) carried by the body (red) when the body is able to form itself into its various place-based and content-based groups via the Statutes.

Through the Foundation Stone (yellow) that was laid into the hearts of the 800 individuals attending the 1923 Christmas Conference, individuals today can put into their hearts and build this same Foundation Stone, and then use the Foundation Stone Meditation as a reminder of this Deed.

Today, when people work with the economic content of anthroposophy, each gathering that has this purpose can be a place to incarnate anthroposophy in economics. If we want it to be not just a teaching, we can give it a place to incarnate so that it has a body in the world through which to do its work for the world.

The Society itself can become local in different places, but the anthroposophical content stays alive because it can incarnate into a body through the Statutes of the Christmas Conference.

Embodying makes a place on earth. I give my soul a place to incarnate by giving it a body. I need my body in order to express my soul. ***Can we do that for economics?***

When people work in this way, each gathering that has this purpose can be a place to incarnate anthroposophy in economics. If we want it to be not just a teaching, we can give it a place to incarnate so that it has a body in the world through which to do its work for the world. The Society itself can become local in different places, but the anthroposophical content stays alive because it can incarnate into a body through the Statutes of the Christmas Conference. Envisioning our economics work in this light, an incarnation into a mutually prepared social-spiritual body becomes a new possibility for our groups.

The Christmas Conference was a kind of quest Rudolf Steiner was making to the spiritual world. He didn't know at first if his deed would be received. On February 15, 1924, fifty days after the Christmas Conference, an answer came from the spiritual world. It came in the form of an inspiration for the First Class of the School for Spiritual Science.

In effect, through the Christmas Conference with its rhythms, its foundation stone and its statutes, Rudolf Steiner was creating a resurrection body, not just for separate individuals, but for a whole social organism made up of those individuals who had come together in freedom for this event.

## Appendix 1: Branches, Recognized Groups, Groups

Reproduced here, in 2019, the Anthroposophical Society in America published its (still current) handbook concerning branches, recognized groups and groups, with its 'Introduction to Groups and Branches & Process for Recognition':

There are no requirements that groups working out of anthroposophy become officially connected with the Anthroposophical Society or with a local group or branch of the Society. When a **group** of people decide to seek recognition within the Society it is a declaration of commitment to link their activities with the Society and to build on the life force that flows from the Society.

Any **group** with seven or more members of the Anthroposophical Society in America may request recognition by the national Society. (See the following steps toward recognition below.) Types of recognized groups may include study groups, performing groups, or subject and interest groups.

A **branch** is an entity larger than a group, which takes on the overall responsibility for receiving the efforts of its members and for fostering anthroposophy where there are a number of diverse forms of activity in a community. Branches often publish newsletters or calendars, coordinate activities, and plan general programs of interest to everyone. Sometimes, there may be two or more recognized groups, or a number of informal study groups, or a study group and a number of initiatives (Waldorf school, biodynamic farm, foundation-year course, etc.) working in the same area. In general, an area needs about 50 Society members to carry a branch, though it is possible with fewer. A branch may or may not have its own building. Some will hold their activities in a school or private home, others find a suitable public location they can use. The character of the branch is often more public than that of a group, but everything depends on the locale and the people. A directory of local contacts is available on the website to help people connect directly with fellows in their area. A list of the more than 120 existing groups and branches can be found here: <https://anthroposophy.org/get-involved/local-groups-regions/>

Requesting formal recognition usually occurs when a group finds itself ready and able to shoulder responsibility for the life of the Anthroposophical Society in their area and wishes to link their efforts with those of the national and international societies.

## Appendix 2: Treasurers' Guidelines as basis of collaboration between the General Anthroposophical Society and the Country Societies

*London, 11 November 2018,<sup>12</sup> amended in Dornach by the Conference of the Councils and Treasurers of the Country Societies on 11 April 2019.*

1. The councils of the country societies (hereafter 'councils') confirm that, since membership of the Society entails a contribution from each member, membership dues are not free donations.<sup>13</sup>
2. The councils will strive for a common awareness of our worldwide financial flows.
3. The councils will collectively contribute to a travel equalisation fund set up to enable every treasurer to meet once yearly.
4. The councils will not condition what should be done at the Goetheanum, or withhold membership dues because they disagree with what is happening at the Goetheanum or consider their own needs more important.

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<sup>12</sup> The treasurers initially present represented about 80% of the members if one takes 43,000 as actual 'live' membership base.

<sup>13</sup> In the spirit of Statute 12 ("Membership dues shall be fixed by the individual groups; each group shall, however, submit 15 Swiss Francs for each of its members to the central leadership of the Society at the Goetheanum"), the amount individual members contribute is left open, but the amount due per member by a country society or group to the General Society is an obligation.

5. The councils aim to transfer to the General Society a yearly minimum of CHF 90<sup>14</sup> per member or a minimum 50% of the membership dues income in their country.
6. The councils collectively aim to underwrite the needs of the General Society as identified by the Vorstand.
7. The councils agree that it is not for the Sections to find alone the funds needed to carry out their work.
8. The councils will aim to include infrastructure when presenting the financing needs of the Sections.<sup>15</sup>
9. On receiving legacies, the councils will consider sharing these funds with the General Society and/or other country societies.

### **Appendix 3: Articles in *Anthroposophy Worldwide***

#### **Regrouping for a Second Christmas**

*Anthroposophy Worldwide* No. 9/22, p.10 – Christopher Houghton Budd, Folkestone (gb)

One third into the current Michael age we get a second chance to rerun what we first tried after World War One. This is true, too, of the Deed of Rudolf Steiner, the refounding of the Anthroposophical Society, which though widely misunderstood to begin with and slow in historical realization, cannot be undone.

#### *A free association*

However, this Deed cannot be understood in terms of Roman law. Today's rights life has to be rethought to accommodate the refounded Society with the School of Spiritual Science. That we are challenged to comprehend its legal significance does not mean the Christmas Conference did not take place. It clearly did, albeit at a meta level.

When one re-enacts the entire event, its meta or supersensible existence comes back to life as a free association of human beings united in their adoption and furtherance of Anthroposophy. This can be experienced directly by anyone who in forming, with others, a Group of the Society ensures that its existence conforms with the Anthroposophical Society as a whole by including in its constitution a reiteration of the original statutes, but especially by ensuring that its finances include the remittance of 90 CHF per member per year to the Goetheanum (*Anthroposophy Worldwide* 11/2021), arrangements to hold funds for the work of the School, and holding enough cash for the Group's activity, but resisting the receipt and/or acquisition of financial and real assets in the abstract.

Why the last? To provide protection from those forces (not to mention beings) involved in owning and managing such assets that are inimical to pluralist and ecumenical appreciation of Anthroposophy. The challenge in this Michael age is to ground the stewardship of 'serious' assets on transparent, entrepreneurial initiative.

Whatever way the history of our two Societies eventually plays out – here, the two Jesus children come to mind – the challenge of melding the exigencies of proactive asset management with the very different dynamics of a membership of thousands will not go away.

I suggest that we all return to the 'meta' level and start over, but on a Group by Group basis, repeating the run-up to the original Christmas Conference. We could then ask ourselves, Group by Group, how this triple financial challenge is being addressed. With goodwill this could be done during 2023 – in time for the Christmas Conference anniversary.

Text <Revisiting the Christmas Conference>

[economics.goetheanum.org/fileadmin/economics/Various\\_pdfs/Revisit\\_CC\\_Retreat.pdf](https://economics.goetheanum.org/fileadmin/economics/Various_pdfs/Revisit_CC_Retreat.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> CHF 90 is the 1923 amount of CHF 15 updated per Swiss National Bank computations.

<sup>15</sup> This accords with the role of the Society as the earthly juridical body of the School.



## Time to review Paragraph 11?

*Anthroposophy Worldwide No. 3/23, p.10 – Christopher Houghton Budd, Folkestone (gb)*

Ever since 'karma began to reign' and the Anthroposophical Society was thrown into disorder, there have been many events through which this chaos has played out. Are the unseen, and not so unseen, battles complete? Has every stream had its say? Have we now understood what Rudolf Steiner had in mind, not only for the 'micro' case of the Anthroposophical Society itself, but for the wider 'macro' social situation humanity finds itself in?

### *The relevance of groups*

I think I see how things stand from within the German language and Swiss rights life, those being the original context of the Christmas Conference 1923/24. But to me, and I suspect many members habituated to the English language and English rights life and its derivatives, the way things stand does not yet 'sing' or find an echo.

I would like to suggest a review of paragraph 11 of the Founding Statute: 'Members may join together in smaller or larger groups on any basis of locality or working field.' Unless understood as a group based on location, this makes no mention of what are increasingly now called Country Groups (with their Representatives). Yet this would allow the other types of groups (whether local or working field) to be subsets of a country group and not worldwide groups.

This would also counter to-day's tendency (abetted by technology) towards a society based in Dornach with a worldwide direct membership, a tendency that risks rendering groups as such almost meaningless, leading to a situation in which the spiritual world can hardly breathe.

How interesting it would be, therefore, if paragraph 11 were modified by one word to say: 'Members may join together in smaller or larger groups on any basis of **country**, locality or working field.' I had this in mind when, for several reasons, in *Anthroposophy Worldwide* 9/2022, I suggested every kind of group should imagine starting again in the Christmas Conference before the Society and Bau Verein be-came amalgamated.

### *A question of familiarity*

First, so that every member could experience afresh the fact and nature of a free association dedicated to anthroposophy *before* it becomes involved in or impacted by real and/or financial assets (buildings and capital sums), other than those needed for its direct needs.

Second, through the medium of one's immediate group, this would enable all members of the Society worldwide, to experience the challenges that often arise at the Goetheanum, but from which most members are remote, not only in terms of proximity, but informationally. One is so often asked to have a view on matters with which many, if not most, members do not have any direct familiarity.

Third, this is not a problem that can be solved by postal or online attendance at Goetheanum AGMs, but one can experience the same dynamics 'hologrammatically', as it were, through the medium of one's own AGM, close to where one is active and so also familiar.

### *Assessing current arrangements*

Fourth, I would advocate re-visiting the roles and dynamics between mission (Country Representative), financing (Treasurer) and overall responsibility (Council), for in this way, too, one might be able to sense the merits of Rudolf Steiner's original ideas concerning the Goetheanum Leadership and the enlarged Council, and how the School of Spiritual Science is universal while the Anthroposophical Society is, as it were, terrestrial. There is also the question of whether today's World Goetheanum Association is the same as that envisaged by Herr Emmanuel Josef van Leer or whether that is a task still to be taken up.

In such ways, one could assess and review the merits and workings of our current arrangements. For here I confess to a deep concern that the Anthroposophical Society is being conceived and incorporated increasingly as if it were an organization rather than an organism. As regards the Christmas Conference, to quote the poet Alfred Tennyson, this may prove to be a 'little rift within the lute that by and by its music makes mute.'

#### **Appendix 4: Short report in December 2022 online issue of *Being Human*.**

##### **One Society, Many Groups**

20 December 2022

On a recent visit to the USA, I visited Ann Arbor, the Rudolf Steiner Branch in Chicago and the Los Angeles Branch in Pasadena in my capacity as the 'flying around the world' member of the Circle of Treasurers, with a remit to understand more close-to the Anthroposophical Society in America in its financial aspect. For it is one thing to seek support of the Goetheanum, and another to enquire into the wellbeing of the Country Groups themselves (including their branches and groups). After all, we are a single worldwide society, albeit a severalty of earthly organizations.

My main interest focused on two challenges that remain at the center of our Society: if we are to maintain our status as 'an association of people whose will it is to nurture the life of the soul, both in the individual and in human society, on the basis of a true knowledge of the spiritual world' (Christmas Statute 1), how, first, do we raise and manage the considerable funding needed to realize the potential for practical social life that spiritual science promises? In 1923, that was computed by Rudolf Steiner as a membership fee of 15 CHF (15 USD) alongside research funding of 50-75 millions. Using the ratio of 6 (from the Swiss National Bank), that would be 90 and 300-450 millions today. This is a double question of how to convey the relevance of Rudolf Steiner's insights to the world at large (where such sums are to be found), and are we able to hold, account for, and use those funds in an up-to-date, financially-literate way?

This topic was underpinned by discussion of the need to recast the finances of the Anthroposophical Society as an instance of three kinds of money. Talks given in all three places under the heading *Hope. Springs. Eternal – Our financial challenges are also the world's; as are our responses*, covered in detail how the three kinds of money (Purchase Money, Loan Money and Gift Money) when matched to Income Statement, Balance Sheet and Closing Entries, show how a surplus on operating amounts to internally generated capital, which then becomes Own Capital, and that where capital is generated or received in excess of operational needs this can be transferred to fund the work of those active in the Sections of the School of Spiritual Science.

Linked to this is the need to identify a new category: as well as member of the Anthroposophical Society and member (note: not pupil) of the School, there is a need to recognize when we are acting as colleagues of and with Rudolf Steiner. This is especially important when it comes to initiative-taking, be that of those undertaking projects or the work of the Councils of the Society as such.

The second challenge concerns real estate. To what extent does the furtherance of anthroposophy require us to own premises? And do we have the resources and skill base that ownership and care of buildings presupposes? Or does the support they are intended to provide become in fact a burden?

This takes us back to the Christmas Conference when, separate from the Anthroposophical Society, the Goetheanum still belonged to the *Bau Verein*, and before the complex history that resulted when the two become intertwined. We still have to learn how to link a free association (representative of free spiritual life) to the rights life of our times and places, and then how to resource its activity without those two aspects thwarting freedom.

As regard funds, the places I visited do not all analyze their Funds on the basis of the three main categories: unrestricted (at the discretion of the Council), restricted (with a caveat applied by the donor), and designated (where the users of the Funds determine their allocation and distribution). The latter Fund type is especially important when it comes to funding the sections or, rather, those in the School needing funding for their Section work.

As regards the properties, when seen from two points of view – a cold-eyed appraisal of the properties and the extent of anthroposophical life within them – the places I visited represented three different situations: in good fettle, tired, and in urgent need of overhaul, with all under-used. Although my visit was brief, in all cases it seemed to me that the anthroposophical life was reduced and did not really fill (and therefore warrant) the buildings.

The diminished or diminishing anthroposophical life is often attributed to a demographic problem – too many old people, not enough young – and we often seek in desperation to promote 'the youth'. But I doubt that is

our problem. Our real challenge is the occultation of Rudolf Steiner by the Anthroposophical Society. One hundred years on from 1923, we need to have the courage to let the Anthroposophical Society, and indeed overtly-mentioned anthroposophy, take a supporting role, ceding center-stage to the insights and outcomes of Rudolf Steiner's legacy. It is he the world as a whole is looking for and seeking a relationship with; membership of the Anthroposophical Society being by karma decided and small in number.

Reinvent or re-present ourselves in this way, and the life born of public interest in Rudolf Steiner's work will likely grow and thrive. And then we will know what buildings we need and where, going forwards.