



The Light of America

The Anthroposophical Movement in Ecuador

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Looking back, I am bemused by my visit to Quito. It feels as if we were on a roller coaster of achievement, if that means anything in spiritual affairs. Luckily, we all came to rest and no one fell off!

Perhaps, though, and to change the image, some healing has happened or begun to happen, along with clarification about the Anthroposophical Society and the School of Spiritual Science, such that one can look forward to when all the initiatives in Ecuador that bear or claim a link to the names of Anthroposophy and Rudolf Steiner will avow their membership of the Anthroposophical Movement, with its many streams, nuances and colours. And all the while mindful of the Society as its breathing heart. Not as a strange or sectarian place, but as a willing host and able facilitator of Ecuador's consciousness soul development. With the School and its sections, classes and lessons quietly having a leavening and ordering effect.

By 'spiritual development' I mean furthering the true goals of humanity in the context of Ecuador as it was, as it has become, and as it may evolve.

The 'roller coaster' began with the suggestion of an event hosted by but not of the Anthroposophical Society in Valle de los Chillos,³⁸ to invite the various players in Quito as a whole (and Ecuador more widely) to share their 'anthroposophical' work in the light and context of the Anthroposophical Society and School of Spiritual Science, *post* 1923. At the same time, we gave thought to how a country group of the Society might come into being.

The Complex History of the Society

The background to the event was given by a review of the history of the Anthroposophical Society and its relevance to Latin American experience today entitled, *Esperanza. Fuentes. Eternal. – From separate Branches to a Country Group*.

Prior to refounding the Anthroposophical Society at Christmas 1923, Rudolf Steiner encouraged the creation of Country Societies, thirteen³⁹ of which were represented at the meeting and so, presumably, became the Country Groups of the new Society. Now, 100 years later, Peter Selg has reminded us of this aspect of our story, calling on us to give it fresh consideration.⁴⁰

At the same time, the Goetheanum Fund Worldwide has been established,⁴¹ in part to give the Country Groups a shared financial ground and so encourage them to clarify and strengthen both their own finances and those of the Goetheanum in the light of the three financial 'calls' made during the refounding, concerning membership dues, funding for Section research, and seeking gifts and funding from beyond the membership.⁴²

Money is always a reflection of intention and will, so it seems fitting to mark the centenary of the Anthroposophical Society with a fresh effort to stabilise our finances together. The more so when one recalls the maxim 'as above, so below', or Rudolf Steiner's image of how the economic life is related to the spiritual life as a shell is to its nut.⁴³

³⁷ Economic and monetary historian, convenor of the Economics Conference of the Goetheanum, and treasurer in Quito.

³⁸ A town in southern Quito.

³⁹ Gleaned from *The Christmas Conference 1923/4*, Anthroposophic Press, New York, 1990. CW 260.

⁴⁰ 'The Autonomous Country Societies and the World Society', a talk given to the Swiss Anthroposophical Society in February 2023.

⁴¹ On 30 March 2023 at the Goetheanum.

⁴² See *Truthening our finances in the Anthroposophical Society*, Meg Freeling:

http://www.hopespringseternal.world/fileadmin/pdf/essays_etc/MF_Truth_in_our_Finances.pdf

⁴³ See 'The Abstract Nature of Modern Economic Life', a lecture given on 15 September 1920 in Stuttgart, in *Rudolf Steiner, Economist. Articles and Essays by Rudolf Steiner, Emil Leinhas and Christopher Houghton Budd*. New Economy Publications, Canterbury 2018 [1996]. Search aebookstore.com.

This conference will look at what is needed to meet this challenge.⁴⁴ But it also has a second intention. The original Country Societies had a somewhat euro-centric bias in the sense that they were mostly located in Europe or, as with the USA, Hawaii and Brazil, represented by people of European, rather than indigenous or 'enslaved' descent.

How do things stand now, 100 years later, with empires and colonies mostly gone? Of the 31 Country Groups listed on the Goetheanum website,⁴⁵ three are in Latin America.⁴⁶ Anthroposophically, however, one can ask what lives there that is *not* of European origin – whether by way of transposed European blood or the influences brought by Jesuits and Freemasons? What is being born out of non-European souls or cultures?

In 1910, Rudolf Steiner spoke of the *Mission of Folks Souls*,⁴⁷ a fascinating story but, again, with a focus on north European Teutonic mythology as the source of human development in our times. For the most part, he gives little detail as regards the various individual European folk souls, and none as regards Latin America with the exception of Mexico, but which is well documented elsewhere.⁴⁸

Might it be, therefore, that to understand the idea of Country Groups, and especially to give them clear financial footing, one has also to ask how the idea of folk souls and their tasks relates to Latin America, *today* – especially when, hopefully, their long history of fratricide and military interventions has come to an end? Being held in Ecuador, but with the presence of Eduardo Rincon from Mexico, the paucity of detail from Rudolf Steiner enables this seminar to be investigatory, an exploration into one's own soul and national experience.

Invitation Letter

The conference flier continued this story through the theme of *Quito – Light of America! 100 years later, what awaits the Anthroposophical Society?*

Both outwardly and inwardly, 1923 was an important year in human history. The world was in chaos; the gods having left us to our own devices for the first time, it was being organised dishonestly on the basis of the false principles of self-determination of peoples, instead of the threefold nature of society. Inwardly, Rudolf Steiner refounded the Anthroposophical Society and inaugurated the School of Spiritual Science as a twin arrangement intended to bring example and stability into human affairs. How do things stand one hundred years later? Outwardly, what is the contribution of Ecuador in today's world, and what role does the Society/School play in that?

This is what we would like to explore through a three-part event. Each part represents an 'esoteric day', so it begins with a thematic evening session, which is then explored the next day. The first day takes as its focus the history and purpose of the Anthroposophical Society and the School of Spiritual Science. The first is the body, the second its soul. But what of its spirit?!

The second day aims to look at the contribution of Ecuador to humanity's development through the work done in education, farming and medicine, not for themselves, as it were, but in terms of the larger concerns that Rudolf Steiner sought to address through them. The reason for Waldorf pedagogy, for example, is to give the foundation, through education, of a free spiritual life. Forget that, and the societal role of Waldorf education becomes lost to sight, as also recognition of that role by the world at large. Similarly, biodynamic farming exists on the one hand to give a conscious basis to what previously has lived instinctively; on the other, as represented by the topsoil, it is to enable a dying earth to be regenerated. For anthroposophical medicine, in Ecuador as elsewhere, the need is 'to revitalize the art of healing'. To what extent are those who work in these fields or benefit from them aware of and animated by these larger concerns and the ground and opportunity our biographies in regard to them give for their unfolding? And does the Society/School have a part to play in this?

⁴⁴ Including the Treasurers' Guidelines

(http://www.hopespringseternal.world/fileadmin/COT_Treasurers_Guidelines_en_.pdf) and the Hibernia currency (https://economics.goetheanum.org/fileadmin/economics/Articles_and_Papers/EC_Paper_2021_CHB_Hibernia_Currency.pdf).

⁴⁵ <https://www.goetheanum.org/en/addresses>.

⁴⁶ Argentina, Brazil, Peru.

⁴⁷ *The Mission of the Individual Folk Souls in Relation to Teutonic Mythology*, 7-17 June of 1910, Oslo. Rudolf Steiner Press, London 1970. CW 121.

⁴⁸ *Inner Impulses of Evolution. The Mexican Mysteries and the Knights Templar*. CW 171.

Day Three is about looking ahead to see how the Society/School can host and so strengthen these challenges in the years ahead, with c. 2230 marking the end of this Michaelic Period. The idea is to work with a combination of presentations intended only to set the stage in the light of Rudolf Steiner's indications for discussions among members.

The accompanying programme had several main themes:

- 1923-2023
- Groups and Country Groups
- The Nature of the Society and School
- The Mission of Folk Souls
- What is the signature of Ecuador?
- 2023-2223



Casa de la Espiritualidad

Some 20 people met in the Casa de la Espiritualidad, a suitably-named Roman Catholic venue, which offered a great facility, with great food, and at a great price! Christopher Houghton Budd provided the main material by way of illustrated presentations. Collected here (together with images from two previous seminars in February 2021 and August 2022), their detail informs a substantial narrative, into which this brief document serves as a portal.

We met to consider the 100th anniversary of the formation of country groups of the Anthroposophical Society and to ask if

Ecuador might eventually become a case in point. The topic was addressed on the first day by recapitulating the history of the Society as both it and Rudolf Steiner 'outgrew' the Theosophical Movement. Building our picture out of the many themes shown in the accompanying images, often repeated from prior gatherings in 2021 and 2022, we created a powerful context for what became a review of the Anthroposophical Movement as it has developed and now stands in Ecuador. (Meaning for the most part, a collection of initiatives dating back to the 1970s that, for want of a cohesive understanding of the Society and School, are somewhat disparate. Indeed, the one school bearing Rudolf Steiner's name has no connection at all with his work!)

The event was hosted by the Anthroposophical Society in Valle de los Chillos but was open to all those who identified themselves with the Anthroposophical Movement in Ecuador. As it happened, participants came from both the Anthroposophical Society in Valle de los Chillos and the Michael Branch (linked directly to the Goetheanum).⁴⁹ The council of the Anthroposophical Society in Valle de los Chillos undertook the organization with assistance from its members, and the treasurer, Christopher Houghton Budd, came from England. We were also joined by Eduardo Rincon from Mexico, who is strongly linked to the bio-dynamic work in Latin America, but on this occasion acted as a peripatetic reader of the First Class of the School of Spiritual Science. (The nearest is a two hour flight away in Lima.)

Eduardo's presence allowed a reading of the 1st lesson of the First Class to take place, along with interviews of several members of the Society minded to join the School – i.e. become 'representants' of Anthroposophy. 'Representant' is a reference to one of the major topics considered – namely, the difference between one condition for joining the School of Spiritual Science with its three classes⁵⁰ and the current 'official' image of only one class but with two extra 'conditions' of entry, the other two being that one meditates and is willing to relate to other members as colleagues.

Financially, it was explained at the outset that the event was intended to 'wash its face' – which was achieved by the willingness of all to pay their part and to do so promptly. Indeed, this was described by the treasurer as evidence of and protection for spiritual integrity, ensuring our work can be in but not of the world. That it is a matter of our consequent will whether the spiritual world can become effective in our times. That said, the costs of the visitors from outside were met from a separate budget managed by Christopher Houghton Budd.

⁴⁹ A group of the Society can be location based, as in the Anthroposophical Society in Valle de los Chillos or a branch linked direct to the Goetheanum, as in the case of the Michael Rama (branch) also in Quito.

⁵⁰ See 'The Way Forward', by Marc Desaulles, in *Guarding the Shores – Exploring Hibernia*. Alan Potter, Peter Selg, Marc Desaulles, Vlad Popa, Crispian Villeneuve (Ed. C Houghton Budd) 2020
<https://www.lulu.com/shop/christopher-houghton-budd/guarding-the-shores/paperback/product-9dggjg.html?q=guarding+the+shores&page=1&pageSize=4>

Ecuador's Story

As was intended, the range of topics covered was substantial and far-reaching, beginning with Quito's claim to be the Light of America (and even 'the Face of God')! This last is not a reference to Michael, but might well be an allusion to the search for independence – not of Ecuador from Spain, but independence of the I.

Top of the list was understanding the Anthroposophical Society as part of, not apart from, a country's story. Indeed, key to its own awareness of itself, we looked at many aspects of Ecuadorian history, its present situation and future possibilities. (Prior to our beginning and not so far from our venue, a presidential candidate was assassinated, an aspect of the invasive narcotic economy that challenges the well-being and even the autonomy of many a Latin American country.)

As it happens, the Valle de los Chillos, from which the Anthroposophical Society there takes its name, is the location of the initial meetings held in 1809 that began the process of freeing Ecuador from the Spanish crown. That is a story too complex to tell here, but one can get an idea of its relevance from the idea that the then *closed and conspiring* meeting against the crown, became today's *open and inspiring* meeting for the future, with the question: Is Latin American independence a political or economic story, or do the outer events associated with it mark the birth of the consciousness soul there – and on the West of the Andes (facing Lemuria or Mongolia, rather than Atlantis)?

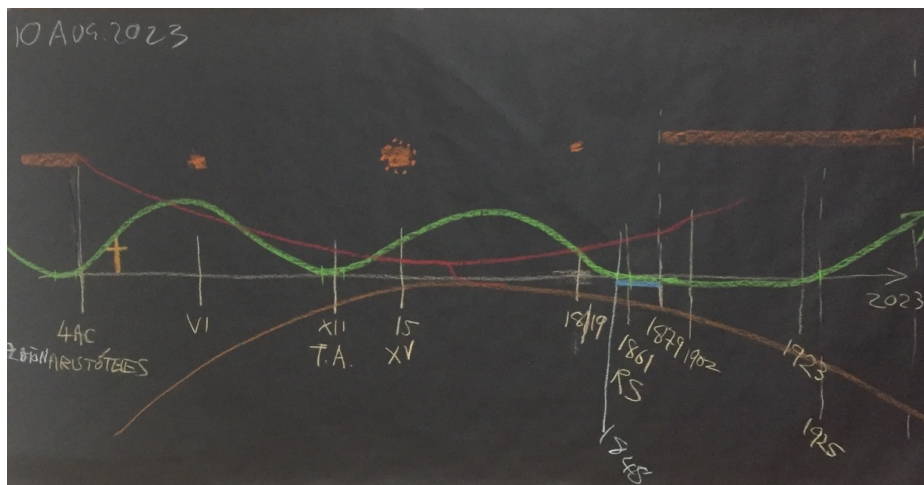
Whether actual or fortuitous, the Valle de los Chillos connection lends weight to the idea that the Anthroposophical Society replicates a nation's journey. In similar vein, our conference began on Ecuador's independence day, 10 August, and so the first evening was accompanied by fireworks.

One says 'nation', but in fact this was much discussed. Is it where we come from, our naissance, that matters, or where we are going, our re-naissance? Is it Michael we take our cues from or Gabriel? More professionally, is not the consciousness soul all about the I stepping away from of its reliance on the blood, and is this not a special challenge for Latin American cultures? More so, perhaps, for Spanish- than Portuguese-related people?

Main Themes

Our review of the Anthroposophical Society and associated movement covered a number of central themes, including:

- The Michael Mystery (from the 15th century Michael School, through Goethe and Schiller, to Rudolf Steiner and spiritual science)
- the period 1902–1923, marked by Rudolf Steiner's 'outgrowing' of the Theosophical Movement and culminating in the chaos of 1923 and the need to refound the Society, this time by becoming its president and inaugurating the School as its soul, and by linking his karma to mankind as a whole, *but through the members of the Anthroposophical Society*.
- the fact that the Anthroposophical Society is one Society composed of many groups – country, location and working fields; and that one can grasp the generic nature of the Society by the way one 'models' the Society in one's specific country. And that this is perhaps the only way that those members not embedded in events at the Goetheanum directly are able to comprehend and contribute to a resolution of the Anthroposophical Society's fraught Dornach debates.



– the possibility that Ecuador's journey towards a possible country group might prove instructive elsewhere, whether in new or well-established situations. For example, where countries are huge, and have outgrown the 'model' of one major (headquarters) group and other subset groups or branches.

– the distinction between Rudolf Steiner's direct task

as being about a modern expression of reincarnation and karma, and the reliance this placed on Anthroposophy first coming to earth.

The Anthroposophical Movement in Ecuador

As regards attendance by representatives of the wider Anthroposophical Movement in particular – Waldorf education, biodynamic farming and anthroposophical medicine – this proved lighter than originally hoped for but perhaps more substantial even so. No-one came from the bio-dynamic world, although Eduardo Rincon is well-related to that and so brought it via his own biography.

Medicine was represented by a valuable presentation made by Ligia Saltos on behalf of Maritza Leiva, the main anthroposophical doctor in Ecuador.

Waldorf education was the focus of two presentations – one on the Nina Pacha Educational Community (School)⁵¹ founded in 2007, run by Moisés Arcos and now in its 16th year with 214 students. The other on a home schooling project bringing Waldorf understanding to parents. Both examples are innovations, and as one-off or pilot projects have found ‘friends’ and received recognition.

Their success speaks of their originality and authenticity. Rather than hiding behind the current tendency to treat ‘Waldorf’ as a protected brand or to be ‘certified by the Goetheanum’, the challenge is to find one’s own credibility and recognition locally. The corollary of this would be more and more teachers, farmers and medical professionals realizing in their biographies the substance of becoming members of the Society and then – as representants of Anthroposophy – members of the School, and even colleagues with Rudolf Steiner, no longer just pupils. In this way, too, one can begin in the outer aspects of the methods and assumed features of anthroposophical approaches but then undergird them with the forces that come from not just studying anthroposophy but becoming representative of it.

Folk Souls

The wide, complex and controversial topic of folk souls in Latin America was broached in two ways – by looking into Ecuador’s external history and by asking generic questions:

- Does the consciousness soul in any culture or country not reveal itself in the way the country emancipates itself from past events and takes responsibility for initiating the future by making choices that belong to that future rather than the past.
- Does the gradual displacement of previous soul natures by the consciousness soul not play itself out in such (already mentioned) phenomena as coming off the blood or identifying folk soul borders, such as language, rather than the merely political ones that now define modern countries, Ecuador included?
- Can a country like Ecuador (and indeed most other Latin American countries) find its consciousness soul feet, as it were, in relation to the combination of indigenous populations and throwing off the yoke of the Spanish crown? Or does it need to recognize the scarcely spoken need to discover itself by resisting Anglo-Saxon dominion – itself a kind of false consciousness soul supremacy on the part of the English in particular?
- In the case of Ecuador, does the key to its identity lie in its proximity to the equator and, just outside Quito, the ‘middle of the world’, where North meets South, as also East meets West, where the world is brought to an intensive still point of balance and equilibrium?
- Above all, might a clue be found in the idea that then, when the Europeans first arrived, as now, when Ecuador questions its reliance on the US dollar, the question to ask is: What do we have to do *together* – the Europeans and the indigenous peoples, and today’s Ecuadorian anthroposophists practicing a somewhat silo’d existence.

Our very own Goetheanum Space

On the last morning, our room, which had two areas separated by an angular ‘proscenium arch’, was transformed into a combination of the first and second Goetheanums (see image). Each person who spoke left the ‘auditorium’ where we sat in a circle, walked onto the ‘stage’ turning before an image of the ‘Representative of Man’ which then stood behind one, and spoke to us all across an imaginary ‘vesica pisces’.⁵²

⁵¹ <https://www.ninapacha.org/>

⁵² See description of this in ‘The Way Forward’, by Marc Desaulles, in *Guarding the Shores – Exploring Hibernia*. Alan Potter, Peter Selg, Marc Desaulles, Vlad Popa, Crispian Villeneuve (Ed. C Houghton Budd) 2020

In that space, we ended with two verses. The first, by Christopher Houghton Budd, was written on and for the occasion:

May the Good Spirits of the Goetheanum watch over us
That truth may shine through what we now think
That relevance may arise through what we now breathe
That strength may dawn through what we now do

Titled *Protection from Dark Thoughts*, the second, contributed by Eduardo, was from Denis Klocek:

By the power of the Christ
All curses whether ancient, hidden or repeated
Are found, bound and defeated
And must leave me now
To be: Revealed by the Light
To be: Absolved by the Truth
To be: Returned to the Source
From this time forward!
Right now!
Forever!
So be it!
It is so!
Let it be done!

Prior to that, our 'closing session' looked at the current website of the Michael Branch, which gives an initial overall image of the Anthroposophical Movement in Ecuador, with the idea that this might be a way of envisaging how the movement might look in the future – the difference being that by then all 'anthroposophical' initiatives would own their membership of the Movement, with the Society at its heart, as befits life since 1923.

Finally, in amongst all the weighty themes, quiet steps were also taken to overcome misunderstandings, often consequent on misconceptions of the Society/School. Much that was shared was both new and revelatory to many participants, but also ordering of their soul experiences – especially the journey from appreciating to representing anthroposophy, the all-important distinction between becoming a member of the Society and a member of the School.



100 years later, whither the Anthroposophical Society?

workshop with Christopher Houghton Budd*

Thursday 3rd	Friday 4th	Saturday 5th	Sunday 6th
NOTES 1. Alongside this event there will be a meeting of members of the School of Spiritual Science, held in the mood of First Class Lesson. 2. Numbers in () refer to Statutes of the Anthroposophical Society from Christmas 1923. 3. Economic and monetary historian, participant in the Circle of Treasurers, board member of the Goetheanum Fund Worldwide.	Groups and Country groups (11, 13, 14)	Does Latin America have Folks Souls? ...	2023 – 2123 Looking Ahead
	Pause	Pause	Pause
	The Refounding of the Society (1, 2, 6, 10)	How does Waldorf education further free spiritual life in Ecuador?	Closing
	Pause	Pause	
	Three Financing Calls (3, 11, 12) <i>incl. Goetheanum Fund Worldwide</i>	How does biodynamic farming contribute to soil regeneration in Ecuador?	
	Pause	Pause	
Welcome Introductions and Preview	The Nature and Purpose of the School of Spiritual Science (4, 5, 7, 8, 9)	What is Ecuador's Signature?	
Supper	Supper	Supper	
1923 – 2023 Anticipating the centenary of the Christmas Conference	The Mission of Folk Souls <i>From Atlantis to the Amazon</i>	Ecuador Tomorrow! Celebratory contributions	

