

Anthroposophical Society: What Ails Thee?

by Fred Janney

In the spring of 2015 I placed Ita Wegman's photograph and a copy of her handwritten note of 1920 on my desk and invited her to participate in my Saturday morning meditative practice. I received a message of the need for **healing**. In subsequent Saturday sittings and in dream messages I heard the word **urgency** and finally that I needed to **rise to the occasion**. I related these events to my fellow board members of the Great Lakes Branch. As if by design resources came into my life to facilitate the directions for my research.

I read biographies and important historical perspectives including works by T.H. Meyer (*The Development of Anthroposophy Since Rudolf Steiner's Death*), and J.E. Zeylmans van Emmichoven's *Who Was Ita Wegman Volume 3-1924 until 1935*. I was led to *The Esoteric Archetype of the Original Council*, Chapter 5 of Sergei Prokofieff's book *May Human Beings Hear It!* These readings, personal reflections, group studies with members of the Great lakes Branch and, in particular, Prokofieff's Chapter 5, enabled me to develop a meditation that I call *Community In Continuity, Continuing Community*. This meditation based partly on Prokofieff's indications has come to life for me and is having profound effects on my understanding of the tragic splitting apart of the General Anthroposophical Society in 1935. As well, the chapter provides meaning and direction for my own life in Anthroposophy and leads me to agree with Prokofieff that *we* in our time *urgently* need to actively work together toward healing the karma of the Anthroposophical Society.

Let us remember the profound events that took place at the Christmas Conference at the end of 1923 when Rudolf Steiner reformulated the Anthroposophical Society, taking on the responsibility of the Presidency. He chose Marie Steiner, Ita Wegman, Albert Steffen, Elisabeth Vreede and Guenther Wachsmuth as an esoteric council "answerable only to the spiritual world," planted the Foundation Stone Verse into the hearts and souls of members in perpetuity, and later announced these events as the "*start of a World-Turning-point of time*."

In 1992 J.E. Zeylmans von Emmichoven (the son of F.W. Zeylmans van Emmichoven, Rudolf Steiner's chosen leader of the Dutch Anthroposophical Society at the time of its expulsion from the General Anthroposophical Society in 1935) wrote: "This is a thankless task, which in my opinion ought long ago to have been carried out by others." He is referring here to the "thankless task" of amassing and studying the quotes, documents, and perspectives needed to understand the evil dynamics that led to the ouster of Ita Wegman and Elizabeth Vreede from the executive council in 1935.

In a 2001 email interview T.H. Meyer stated "such exclusions [Elizabeth Vreede and Ita Wegman] did, of course occur. To my knowledge, they remain in effect."

In 2004 Sergei Prokofieff wrote in *May Human Beings Hear It*: "This resulted on the one side from Rudolf Steiner's premature departure from the physical plane and on the other in a whole series of conflicts within the Society that broke out soon after his death, *conflicts whose catastrophic effects have not been overcome to this day*," [my emphasis.]

It is now **twelve years** since Prokofieff's profound plea for healing and reconciliation of the Anthroposophical Society and appears to require a world-wide effort of members to heal the wounds that even today plague our movement.

Among other deeply esoteric anthroposophical dynamics Prokofieff shares his research into the spiritual streams from which Rudolf Steiner chose these five individualities to be on the executive council, their karmic gifts, and their yearnings for the future. Each of these individualities, according to Prokofieff, is a representative and "archetype" into the future, of all who have taken up anthroposophy as a life journey since 1923. That means you and me. If we are to avoid ongoing conflicts and polarizations with our current anthroposophical colleagues, our task is to identify and take up the stream for which we came to earth, and then to empathize and identify with the opposite stream's representative so that our lives

flow in a more meaningful and holistic way with our mutual past, present and future. Prokofieff places particular emphasis on the two different streams from which Marie Steiner and Ita Wegman were called by destiny to Rudolf Steiner. Prokofieff reviews Rudolf Steiner's historical panorama from the end of Atlantis when Manu, the Sun Initiate sent off two mystery streams from west to east. Marie Steiner is a representative of the northern stream (the Kings, the Magi, the stream of the Matthew Gospel, the Solomon Jesus, Zarathushtra, overcoming the barriers of the outer senses, communication with the upper gods, the Apollo-cult, persons who came from the Theosophical Movement, and person focused on inner development.) Ita Wegman, is a representative of the southern stream (the Shepherds, the stream of the Luke gospel, the Nathan Jesus, Gautama Buddha, penetrating the inner veil of the soul, communication with the lower gods, the Dionysius cult, and persons focused on anthroposophy's practical initiatives.) These descriptions provide touchstones and markers for our own spiritual journey in this life. Then through the process of understanding and living-into the opposite stream's representatives and further inner work, a metamorphosis can take place which fosters healing and harmonious teamwork that includes members on both sides of the threshold. These tasks need to be taken up now in order to heal and lead us all into *a community in continuity, continuing community*. (Please see the accompanying healing meditation.)

Prokofieff quotes Ita Wegman from a notebook (no. 44) of May or June 1934: "Dr. Steiner told me when speaking of esotericism, that the new form within which esoteric activity should unfold, must, if it is to be truly spiritual, always in some way be established in continuity with the old. The new must link itself with what already existed, even if it has become decadent."

Most of us don't know that the seeds of healing and metamorphosis were already planted among some of the original council members when they were on this side of the threshold. We on earth today, however, continue to maintain and reinforce the beings, forces, and practices which pulled the original council members apart in the first place. Some of us believe that because the breakup happened a long time ago, it doesn't matter anymore and we should just forget about it. Others maintain favorites, choose sides, identify "bad guys" and go on to blame the others consciously or otherwise. We are left holding onto ignorance, avoiding truth, pointing fingers, demonizing members of the streams for which we have attained no

understanding, and allowing the wounds to go unhealed.

Prokofieff, through his research, brings us the good news that we have been given a great inheritance in this regard through Marie Steiner and Ita Wegman in their public statements of intention toward the end of their lives. In December 1942, seven years after the breakup of the executive council, Marie Steiner wrote in the anthroposophical news-sheet: "In view of this sacrifice and this death [Rudolf Steiner] for which we as individuals and as a Society surely bear guilt—for he took on our karma—can we not forget, forgive, and open our portals wide to the seekers?" After these years of banishment Ita Wegman replied to these heartfelt words calling them "great and momentous." In a letter to Marie Steiner she wrote; "Your words have made a deep impression on me, they are profound and filled with future promise." One week before her death she summed up her relationship with Marie Steiner to Madelaine van Deventer in the words: "The tragedy is over along with this life. Nothing stands between us anymore that would be in the way of future joint activities for Rudolf Steiner." Shortly before her death she said, "I now know how I could have avoided the conflicts of the past—I should have absorbed the whole battle into my heart. When I die all of you come." She crossed the threshold on March 4, 1943. Strikingly, Marie Steiner's last words in Russian were also "all of you come." She crossed the threshold five years later on December 27, 1948.

Prokofieff's research also describes Elisabeth Vreede and Guenther Wachsmuth as individuals and as archetypes and representatives of two other polar streams destined to support the mission of Rudolf Steiner. Elisabeth Knottenbelt in her memoirs describes statements about her friend Elisabeth Vreede made by Rudolf Steiner; 'this individuality does not wish to be recognized ...' "For his [Rudolf Steiner's] sake she incarnated too early..." "For this task [the work with Rudolf Steiner] she had assumed the sacrifice of a premature incarnation. One who, for the sake of a spiritual mission, comes in this way to earth too early must forego a lot. To a great extent one leaves one's [karmic] circle [of human beings] behind in the spiritual word. Her life was thus really a quite lonely one, only a few [persons] were grouped around her without any real connection."

In order to share a sense of Elisabeth Vreede's gifts and sufferings, the following quote from a letter written by her prior to her removal from the executive council on January 31, 1934 is presented: "The being of Anthro-

posophy—I myself have always felt it as a spiritual being newly created by Dr. Steiner, as it were the first hierarchical Being that men have begotten, quite young and still underdeveloped, as is the case with a child—a Being that must now begin to develop further through our common work as a ‘community of knowledge’, and with the cooperation of its creator from the spiritual world. Just for this reason I find it so painful when attacks are continually made against part of the active members such as to exclude them from the work, from creating together the Being of Anthroposophy.”

Guenther Wachsmuth was the youngest of the original council members. He joined the society in 1919. He became Rudolf Steiner’s secretary early on and was introduced by Rudolf Steiner at the Christmas Conference four years later as Secretary and Treasurer with the following words. “We need furthermore in the Anthroposophical Council an individual who will take on many cares off our shoulders, cares which cannot all be borne by us because of course the initiatives have to be kept separate. This is someone who will have to think on everyone’s behalf... What is needed is someone who, so to speak, does not knock heads together but does hold them together.” Rudolf Steiner’s assessment proved prescient as demonstrated years later by two prominent anthroposophists.

Dr. Maria Roeschel was the leader of the Youth Section of the School of Spiritual Science. Seven years after the launch at the Christmas Conference she said: “The Vorstand should transform itself, based on the inner meaning of the Christmas conference, from a circular structure into a lemniscate at whose intersection that person is positioned who is supposed to bring people together, who supports and looks after the Goetheanum building—this common meeting point and spiritual home of all who set off into the world. Dr. Wachsmuth should probably stand at the intersection of the lemniscate as mediator and executor. And the two parts of the lemniscate could develop and grow in accordance with their inherent developmental tendencies.”

Georg Unger was a scientist and mathematician who pioneered studies in projective geometry following Rudolf Steiner’s indications. He said of Guenther Wachsmuth that he was able “to steer the vessel of the Society and the activity of the Goetheanum in the spiritual regard safely through the years of WWII and the post war years.” Please note the word “launch” in the first assessment of Guenther Wachsmuth and the phrase “to steer the vessel” in the second description. It is as if he captained a ship on the rough seas of anthroposophical life safely

for forty years, until his death. On his death bed he was heard to call out; “Tasks, tasks, tasks!”

Thus we find in Guenther Wachsmuth a man who had fully prepared himself with the capacities required for his life in anthroposophy with Rudolf Steiner. He was ready, willing, and able to take on all that was put before him in a cooperative and community minded spirit. He came at the right time, place, and personhood for the age in which he lived. Thus another archetypal polarity is cast as Elizabeth Vreede came into her earthly life earlier than her incarnation cycle called for. She came without benefit of colleagues and other karmic encounters so as to be with Rudolf Steiner.

Rudolf Steiner in a letter to Marie Steiner on February 25th 1925 [Correspondence and Documents 1901-1925] wrote “*And Steffen being with us, that too, I consider to be important karma*” [emphasis mine.] Rudolf Steiner held Albert Steffen in the highest regard as a poet. He was made vice chairman on the executive council and head of the section for *Belle Lettres* (creative work in imagination and fantasy). His imaginative capacities were prolific and gave rise to a variety of forms and artistic outlets including plays, poetry, novels, short stories, and choral requiems. These graced the stage and public forums of the Goetheanum to Rudolf Steiner’s great gratitude and with Marie Steiner’s active collaboration. Steffen nurtured these capacities in imaginative pictures of human spiritual realities cultivated in a personal atmosphere of *disciplined aloneness* [my emphasis].

Prokofieff states that Albert Steffen “was 41 in 1925 when Rudolf Steiner died. He was thrust into the role of Chairman. In Marie Steiner’s view it was quite unreasonable to overburden Steffen with the functions of chairman, which is why, immediately after Steiner’s death, she proposed the Austrian doctor Eugen Kolisko for this position.”

According to Prokofieff, Steffen brought capacities that came from an esoteric stream that was separate from anthroposophy. Through his unique artistic gifts and karmic path he could potentially enhance the spiritual reach of anthroposophy into the distant future and at the same time help bridge the polarities between Marie Steiner and Ita Wegman in their respective spiritual streams.

Prokofieff wrote in Chapter 5: “Albert Steffen had a unique intuitive knowledge of the fact the Manichaeon Mysteries have to remain concealed from mankind for a very long time, because human beings are as yet unprepared inwardly for initiation into them. For to incorpo-

rate evil into oneself for the sake of its inner transformation presupposes forces in the soul that only the leading initiates of esoteric Christianity possess. Nevertheless the Manichaeism aspect, the most important Mystery-principle of the future, likewise had to be represented from the beginning of the New Mysteries, but in such a way that it could not cause harm to any of the participants.”

In a lecture entitled “Freemasonry and Related Occult Movements” (GA93) Rudolf Steiner speaks of the origin and development of Manichaeism. Summarizing here, a learned merchant lived with his wife near Asia Minor. He authored four spiritual texts which he left to her. She then bequeathed these to the slave that she bought and liberated. His name was Mani. He lived in the third century A.D. and drew wisdom from these texts. He called himself the “Son of the Widow.” He started a small community and movement which grew in strength and “became a mighty spiritual current.” This spiritual current has an influence on “the spiritual life of today and will influence it in times to come.” This esoteric stream is expressed in a legend, according to Steiner “a Great Cosmic Legend, a super-sensible legend.”

It tells us that at one time the spirits of darkness wanted to take the kingdom of light by storm. They actually reached the borders of the kingdom of light and hoped to conquer it. But they failed to achieve anything. Now they were to be punished—and that is a very significant feature which I beg you to take account of—they were to be punished by the kingdom of light. But in this realm there was nothing which was in any way evil, there was only good. So what happened? The following: The spirits of light took a part of their own kingdom and mixed it with the materialized kingdom of darkness. Because there was now a part of the kingdom of light mingled with the kingdom of darkness, a leaven had been introduced into the kingdom of darkness, a ferment which produced a chaotic whirling dance, whereby it received a new element in itself; death. Therefore, it continually consumes itself and thus carries within itself the germ of its own destruction. It is further related that just because of this, the race of mankind was brought into existence. Primeval man represents just what was sent down from the kingdom of light to mix with the kingdom of darkness and to conquer, through death what should not have been there; to conquer it within his own being.

The profound thought which lies in this is that the kingdom of darkness has to be overcome by the

kingdom of light, not by means of punishment, but through mildness, not by resisting evil, but by uniting with it in order to redeem evil as such. Because a part of the light entered into evil, the evil itself is overcome.

Albert Steffen was unable through his artistic gifts and personality to create a bridge-building atmosphere between Marie Steiner and Ita Wegman. Rather, history shows that in the course of his responsibilities as chairman of the Anthroposophical Society, Steffen excluded Ita Wegman and Elisabeth Vreede from the executive council and the society. As well, Rudolf Steiner’s chosen leaders and active members in several European countries were expelled. Then, through a long standing controversy and law suit over the ownership and publication rights to Rudolf Steiner’s writings which he specifically bequeathed to her, Marie Steiner and Albert Steffen were on opposing sides. She persevered and eventually won. On July 13th 1963 after having foretold his departure on the day before, he passed over the threshold. Friedrich Heibel heard his last word, “Now I wish to be alone.” Thus the fabric of relationships and intentions of the Anthroposophical Society were torn asunder, the repercussions of which echo into the present.

Based on the previously noted karmic importance Rudolf Steiner placed on Steffen’s prominent inclusion as Vice Chairman of the executive council and Prokofieff’s view of his future Manichaeism leadership, a continuous loop of isolation and alienation from 1935 to the present time needs to be overcome if we are to respond with healing, hope and harmonious teamwork to the question, Anthroposophical Society: What Ails Thee? I believe Rudolf Steiner considered, as with all the members of the executive council, Albert Steffen’s importance as an individuality in future cycles of time in his decision to include him. Rudolf Steiner tells us that this long view into the future requires overcoming evil with “gentleness” and “charitableness” of Manichaeism proportions in our own time. It is incumbent on us to create the bridge building capacities with all of the members of the first executive council and members past and present, if we are to fully live into anthroposophy. We need the active participation of anthroposophical communities on both sides of the threshold to effectively meet the encounter with evil in our time and in the future.

Is there anything more important at this time (November 2016) to draw us all together in common cause than dealing with the manifestation of Ahriman? Rudolf

Steiner has brought us many indications of his incarnation. He said that Ahriman will come from the west, possibly in North America “before even a part of the third millennium after Christ will have passed.” He will speak English flowered by contradictions. He will speed up developments of all kinds so that the natural course of growth and maturity does not reach its rightful fruition, and he will try to plunder the earth among many other negative conditions. **YES!** As we strive to join with our fellow human beings in love and brotherhood, there is something more important than merely taking a defensive posture against the hindrances of Ahriman. It is our devotion to and gratitude toward the living wisdom available to us and future members through anthroposophia for which Rudolf Steiner and all the original council members dedicated their lives. “The time is at hand.”

In conclusion it behooves each of us individually and in group study to take up and practice Sergei Prokofieff’s comprehensive insights in *The Esoteric Archetype of the Original Council (Chapter 5 of May Human Beings*

Hear It!) We, together, need to consciously strengthen the links that bind us in brother and sisterhood coming from different streams. As Bernard Lievegoed advises in his deathbed testimonial, in *The Battle For The Soul*, “The consciousness-soul develops itself especially in the sometimes difficult cooperation with others.” This group study will enliven the very life blood and progress of each of us and bring a cohesive strength to the members of the Anthroposophical Society from the past, in the present and into the future. Let us reach out to the pioneers so that they we can join them in taking up their unfinished tasks, prepare for their return, fulfill our own karma and prepare seeds for the future.

As Benedictus, the spiritual teacher, says in scene three of *The Portal of Initiation*; “Here in this circle a knot forms, out of the threads which karma spreads in world becoming.”

They are waiting for us.

Fred Janney, Thanksgiving 2016

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Community In Continuity, Continuing Community

Imagine beams of divine light pouring into the sun from all directions of the cosmos. In this manner Christ’s loving presence through Michael’s garment of rays brings life giving energy to the world. Visualize Rudolf Steiner in the sun receiving and sharing the Christ’s light in selfless selfhood with the original Executive Council members. They form a five pointed pentagram star around him as he kindles hope, healing, and “harmonious teamwork” to their ongoing endeavors. Let your own warmth and loving presence flow into the star configuration appearing as the color peach blossom as in the rising and setting sun. Imagine Rudolf Steiner saying “I want to kindle out of the cosmos that each human being becomes a flame [a flaming star] and fiery will unfolds the essence of his being.” “Together with a periphery of world [cosmic] proportions” they serve as an “advisory and initiative collegiate body, like a meditating heart college” pulsating outward for the growth and wellbeing of the Anthroposophical Society. Thus on the other side of the threshold, the members of the original Executive Council offer healing and karmic reconciliation to each other and all members, brothers and sisters in the anthroposophical movement from the Christmas Conference onward to the present.

They form a cosmic ellipse behind the sun as a sky blue aura emanates around the periphery. (Bring to mind

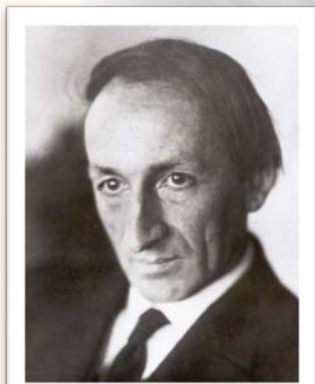
one or more individual anthroposophists who have crossed over to that side of the threshold.) spiritually seeking human beings on earth. Allow awareness of one of the original executive council members (or another anthroposophist) to enter your consciousness and your soul space in the blue aura. Take time to engage, relate, and communicate with this individuality in the silence with openness and patience in the blue aura. Now release awareness of this spirit being back into the ellipse behind the sun.

Allow the blue aura to live in your soul as you bring healing, hope, and harmonious teamwork to individuals in your local anthroposophical community, those you know and don’t know. Allow the group to expand into a second ellipse of seekers, friends and members in this country, hemisphere, and around the world. All of you face outwards into the world as if holding hands in community with peach blossom healing color along the periphery and blue aura in your souls. The earthly ellipse joins together with the anthroposophic community on the other side of the threshold forming a lemniscate. Become aware as individuals travel back and forth through incarnation and excarnation and back again planting and caring for the seeds and growth of anthroposophy.

They are waiting for us

Fred Janney

The Vorstand



Albert Staffan



M. Steiner



E. Keede



Dr. Guenther Kerschbaum



H. Wegman

1925-1935

The Vorstand



Albert Steffen

Lasst uns die Bäume lieben,
die Bäume sind uns gut,
in ihren grünen Trieben
strömt Gottes Lebensblut

Einmal wolle das Holz verbäumen,
da sang sich Christ davoran,
dass wir uns neu erhassten
ein ewiges Leben begann

Albert Steffen

1884-1963

Albert Steffen



M. Steiner

Herr Dolt, der mich heute be-
suchen will, soll die merkwürdige
Geburts tagsgruss überbringen.
Er schliesst vor allem daran
Kunsthin, dass die grässliche
Bürde des geschäftlichen Be-
lagerheiten sich etwas leichter
gestalten möge. Wenn man
geborener Künstler sich die
Aufgabe gestellt ^{hat} die gesamte
Wissenschaft zu beherrschen
so sollte das eigentümlich & der Er-
kennung genügt sein. Erleichtert
werden von den Sorgen des z-
sammenbrechenden Geschäft-
lebens ist das Gemeinsame zu
viel.

1867-1948

Marie Steiner



1879-1943

Elisabeth Vreede



Dr. Guenther Wachsmuth

gebracht in einem ge-
tenthotel "32 Ho-
dauernd ein Wohnen
ist also:
| Dr. J. Wachsmuth

1893-1963

Guenther Wachsmuth



Ita Wegman

Sehr geehrter Hr. Hall,

Hier sind die Schachtel mit Oscar
Hoffenschein haben Sie Glück damit?
Denn Sie sich entgeistert entzweien nach
Deutschland abzuweisen, möchte ich Ihnen
doch noch einiges vorzulegen, mit der
Hoffnung, dass Sie das Vorgebrachte sympo-
tisch gegenüber stellen werden.
Sie wissen, dass ich beabsichtige ein
Sanatorium zu gründen, worin Patienten
nach Angaben von Dr. Steiner behandelt
werden können. Dieses Sanatorium soll
frei für alle Ärzte da sein, niemand per-
sönlich angehört.
Da die glorreiche Seele von der Schweiz aus,
gehen muss um von der ganzen Welt
aufgenommen werden zu können, so muss
das Sanatorium in der Schweiz sein, wie auch
des Forschungsinstitut.
nun meine Frage: wollen wir nicht unser

1876-1943

Ita Wegman

“The I knows itself in the light of Michaelic world affirmation and world connection.”

