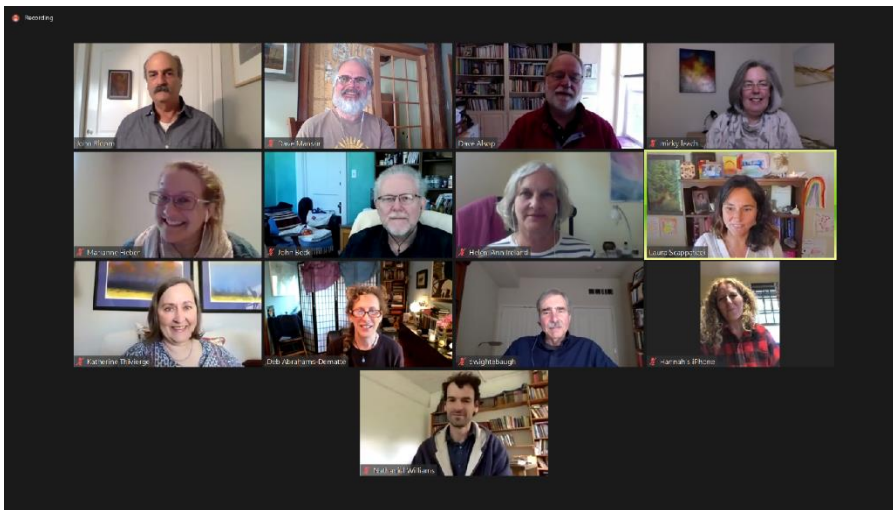


September 13, 2020

Dear Friends,

This is a long overdue report to members in the Eastern Region on the General Council meeting held June 11-14 via Zoom. This meeting was originally scheduled to be held in person in Ann Arbor, but like so many things this year, it was relegated to cyberspace by the ongoing pandemic.



I've had a particularly difficult time writing this report. Perhaps, in part, because of the virtual nature of the meeting. It was very long – 16 hours of meetings over four days – and by the end of it I felt a bit screen-poisoned. And then, the nature of the conversations reflected the uncertainty of the time. In June, we had all lived through the initial abrupt re-ordering of our society brought about to “flatten the curve” and were in that space where nobody was sure how, when or if we would emerge from these foreign conditions. It was also the time when the protests spurred by the murder of George Floyd had taken hold of the national psyche. And so, there we were, in this context of mighty changes in our social structure, being asked to tend the wellspring of anthroposophy without even the benefit of in-person contact. While we did manage to take care of some administrative matters, the meeting was permeated by this sense of uncertainty, by this great gift of being untethered to habit. This, at least, was my experience of the meetings.

A full copy of meeting minutes is available in [the members section of anthroposophy.org](https://anthroposophy.org). I'll offer these highlights:

Reflections on Leadership

There were several opportunities throughout the meetings where the relationship of the Society to the movement was discussed, and where the specific role of the General

Council was contemplated. We recognized that the initiative, contemplative, and governance leadership of the movement have been separated by the structure of our organization, with initiative work being carried by the Council of Anthroposophic Organizations (CAO), the contemplative/esoteric work being carried by the North American Collegium, and the governance work being carried by the General Council of the Anthroposophical Society. One member noted that in this way, we have become like Osiris – weakened by the scattering of our constituent members.

So the question becomes, is this structure serving the spread of anthroposophy in the world? Can we move forward in this configuration, or is a transformation of sorts being called for?

Cultural Questions around Race and Diversity

The Council has been working with the questions of racism, diversity, and materialism as it relates to the anthroposophical movement, both historically and in the context of current events. The content of these conversations is, at this time, intensely personal, so I won't share it here. I will say, however that the Council is committed to carrying this conversation forward in the future. A personal thought that I will share is the recognition that I am playing catch-up with current thinking about race, that my position of privilege has allowed me to carry this topic as something theoretical. We must ask the question: Is anthroposophy actually engaging the most current world issues actively? Are we ready to do this? Do we need to clean up our own act before we can offer help?

We accepted it as our responsibility to figure out how to diversify the Council, and by extension the Society as a whole. Achieving diversity may require a system change, such as bridging the separation between the School for Spiritual Science and the Society to take advantage of the fact that School has no "country".

There is a sense that we should do something, but what is the nature of actually doing something? It's all well and good to say we should be taking initiative but there's nothing more tiresome than talking about initiative.

National Conference/AGM/Meetings with Regional Councils

The decision was made to move the AGM to an on-line format. *Willing the Good: Love, Action, Healing* will be held October 9 - 11. Visit anthroposophy.org/willingthegood to learn more and to register. I hope you will join us.

This year, in addition to the national conference and AGM, the General Council will hold meetings with the three US Regional Councils. This is part of a series of focused meetings leading up to the 2023 Anthroposophical Society Centenary, which started last year with a meeting between the GC and the North American Collegium, and which will be followed up with meetings with the Circle of Class Holders in 2021 and the CAO in 2022.

Meetings with Key Contributors

Virtual meetings were held with Kathy Serafin and Eileen Bristol of Anthroposophical Prison Outreach. APO has been in ~800 prisons through the years. Each prison has a different set of rules on what's allowed, which means the program staff and volunteers need to manually handle each request. At the time of the meeting, APO had 488 packets getting ready to go. In addition to providing reading material, APO volunteer mentors also answers letters from prisoners who often have questions regarding the material.

There is never a lack of requests for material, and the ability to meet all these requests is limited only by funds at this point – more funds would allow hiring of office help, which would increase the number of prisoners we could reach. APO is grateful for the donations that come in from members through the dues forms, for the donations to the Facebook page and the many members who participate each year in the APO walk-a-thon. The 2020 walk-a-thon is coming right up: visit anthroposophy.org/apowalkathon to learn more, participate, or make a gift.

We also met with Eddie Ledermann, a new ASA employee working as our part-time accountant. We are already seeing the benefits of his ability to clearly present the complex financial workings of the Society.

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If you've read this far, I thank you. I'm not telling you anything you don't know when I say 2020 has been an exceptionally challenging year. Your General Council is committed to receiving these challenges as opportunities for new growth and deeper understanding of human condition as we move toward the second century of the Anthroposophical Society working on earth. We are grateful for your support, and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Mansur". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "M".

Dave Mansur

Eastern Region Representative to the General Council, Anthroposophical Society in America

P.S. The AGM and conference, *Willing the Good: Love, Action, Healing* is being held online this year, October 9 -11. Visit anthroposophy.org/willingthegood to learn more and to register. I hope we will see you there!