All the contributions within this Newsletter were given or created with such goodwill, they simply flowed in. And when I look over all the various offerings, be they remembrances of ‘our’ departed Irma, recollections of activities and experiences when groups within our community came together, or members’ research or concerns, I am deeply moved and warmed. I feel too, the reality that much has happened, is happening and will happen amongst us.

We have moved from winter/ St John’s tide, with its call to ‘change our ways/thinking’. Now we reach glorious spring…and in this I hear an echo from Beni Kleynhans “Awake each morn, With senses newly born!” Archangel Michael calls us now - in his Time and Season - that our ‘Intelligence’ may be born of clear seeing and clear thinking warmed by the truth… our awakening consciousness in life.

I become newly aware that, within our community in Anthroposophy, an emerging wish, or even a need, arises: that we find what the “culture of Anthroposophy is” and strive to create it together- “I want to wake up in the encounter with my fellow man/woman”. I find a recognition of this in Carole Penfold’s words on our St John’s festival, Karen Suskin’s words on the workshop led by Bernard Hurner and also in Ernst Wegerif’s stirring article ‘I Am Because You Are’.

This is all enhanced as we move towards the awareness that it is nearly 100 years since the founding of the New Mysteries, at the Foundation Stone Meeting- a call to us to renew, awaken and participate. So whether it be my task in coordinating activities for next year, or how we use the ASWC’s financial assets or even how we together regenerate our Society’s deepest impulses. Three lines from Rudolf Steiner’s mighty poem ‘Twelve Cosmic Moods’, (the Sun, the Venus and the Moon lines from the Capricorn verse) come to mind -

“May the future rest upon the past.
May the past feel the future.
May the past bear the future!”

These three planetary qualities speak of a great balancing for which we must always strive. Heinz Zimmerman masterfully used these three lines (at a conference here in Cape Town in the 90’s) as a guiding principle for the evolving of our Anthroposophical Society, from its conception.

1. Recognise what is done – and come into a deep love with it.
2. Feel what is to be done.
3. Initiative must be welcomed

May we, with the help of those beyond the threshold, work together now “For a vigorous present existence”.

Caroline Hurner

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1. Awakening to Community 23 January – 4 March 1923, by Rudolf Steiner
2. The Mercury line of the Capricorn verse
Irmgard Anna Röhling (27.4.1923)

Known to us as Irma, she was the heart of Camphill Hermanus and also the heart of our Anthroposophical work here, longest standing member of our study group and class lessons.

She moved to Hermannus almost 40 years ago, having been a founder member of a Camphill place in America and before that working at the original Camphill in Scotland, still under its founder Dr Karl König.

She loved to relate how she heard Karl König speak in Stuttgart and how she, as a young girl, went up to him and asked him whether she too could come to Camphill. How he said to her: “You can come, you can go, you are absolutely free”. And how she then made her way to Scotland with hardly any money in her pocket, but she was helped all the way to get there. This was soon after both her parents had died within a few days of each other.

Irma was born in Germany in Krefeld (West Germany). Then the family moved to Berlin, where her father held a position in a bank which, however, he lost when he refused to become a member of the Nazi party. They then moved to the Black Forest, which left a deep impression on Irma’s whole being, walking through the woods, looking for mushrooms and picking berries. She had a pet goose which used to sleep on her bed. From there the family used to go on big excursions wandering on foot or on bicycle through the length and breadth of Germany. They also had a friend visiting them, an anthroposophist, who helped Irma when she was in a state of depression after returning from a hug task which she had performed. This was to bring safely back home a large group of girls from the East of Germany where she had taken them for a vacation. They had to make their own way back through all kinds of difficulties near the end of World War II. At one stage Irma managed to get them onto one of the last trains getting out of Dresden before the big bombing. She persuaded the conductor to let them travel in the postal carriage of the totally overcrowded train. After recovering from her depression Irma did a training in horticulture.

One of Irma’s great loves was Kaspar Hauser, the so called “Wild Child of Europe”, 1812-1833. She never tired of reading about him.

Her very last words to me from her hospital bed 2 days before her death were: “Welcome” and “How are you?” And this spirit of “Welcome” and “How is life for you?” and “What can I do for you?” was what greeted one when one visited Irma in “The Old Farm House” at Camphill Farm. May our thoughts of love and gratitude reach out to you, dear Irma.

Luise Boeddinghaus

Irma Roeling’s Passing.

It was only last week when I addressed all the envelopes for the members’ letter posting that I could pause over her name, recall her gentle childlike interest in the spiritual world and also her strong support for her community there. She acted as the eyes and ears of her companion, Ruth Borchard, for years.

I notice that she was born before the founding of the Society and the appearance of the Foundation Stone verse. She has truly carried the new mysteries for us. She gives us the trust that it is possible to pursue the pure and hopeful journey she was on.

She was the 243rd member of the ASSA. Her spiritual stamina and humility stand, in my experience, as her contribution to our society.

With grateful thanks for your example and strength for the journey ahead.

Love from
Noy 24 th July 2015

Jeanne Malherbe’s Gravestone

In the early evening on Saturday 22 August friends and acquaintances of Jeanne met at her graveside in a memorial ceremony to mark the setting of her gravestone. While the concrete foundation and plinth were still setting Briar Grimley warmly welcomed everyone present and to all those who sent apologies, best wishes and greetings.

Christiane Wigand opened the ceremony leading us with the hallakahjah eurythmy gestures. Marion Penfold recited the closing part of the Foundation Stone verse which Jeanne used to read with her workers every morning. She also described this morning event as a special feature of Jeanne’s community building impulse. I then described the inspiration for the stone based on Rudolf Steiner’s sun seal and seedling motifs. He then shared two anecdotes from Jeanne’s life that prepared and inspired her to found Bio Dynamic farming on the African continent. The ceremony ended with Birgit Blumer reciting a poem by Breyten Breytenbach, followed by a lovely Mozart violin sonata played by Christiane. We all returned to the farm house and shared many fond memories of Jeanne as the sun went down. It was deeply satisfying to feel Jeanne’s presence and participation in the whole process.

We wish to thank all those who so kindly donated enough funds to cover all costs especially to Theo and Tobi Megaw for their warm gesture in designing and creating it without charge except for the materials. Wendy Lilje’s son, Ishaan, for setting it in place; Darcelle for the catering, and to Wendy for all her preparations of the whole event.

Michael Grimley
Preventing to Celebrate the Festival of Michael

Those of us who met at Sophia House on Sunday afternoon, 20 September, were fortunate. Cobie Roebert, with infinite care and seeming simplicity led us in a process of opening our faculties with which to raise ourselves from out of the power of the Dragon, through a warmed and illumined soul, that we might bear within ourselves the Strength of Michael.

Firstly Cobie, with Cyril Coetzees help, had gathered five art works, spanning five centuries, and guided us in ‘opening our eyes’. She then brought forth powerful images: that of the Dragon, the enchantment of the elemental world and the luminous figure of Michael that stands at each of our backs.*

Cobie then aided us in recognising the Spirit that is within, behind and beyond all the manifestations of the natural world. This she did by contrasting two different ways of perceiving: firstly through an abstract, more pointed approach where one perceives the physical/material realm only, to an approach that inclusive, ‘peripheral’ and more warmed by the heart. We practised both these ways through eurythmy and observation techniques.

Cobie lastly brought two meditative verses given by Rudolf Steiner, one for the evening:-

*I carry my sorrow into the setting sun,
Place all my cares into her radiating womb.
Purified through love,
Transformed through Light,
They return as helpful thoughts,
As strength for self-sacrificing deeds.

And in the morning:-
*O Michael!
Into your protection I place myself,
With your guidance I connect myself whole-heartedly,
That this day may become an image of your destiny-ordering will.

Then in small groups of three we listened to each other, using only a brief phrase from one of the verses, e.g. ‘Suns radiating womb’. We found that each of us was given the opportunity of expressing more than that which we thought we knew, through the quality of listening of the other!

Within all that Cobie allowed us to experience, a quote from Rudolf Steiner remains powerfully within me – “The possibility of celebrating a Michael Festival in all seriousness must inevitably be brought about, and it is the anthroposophical movement out of which an understanding for such a Michael Festival must be able to arise. But just as the Christmas and Easter Festivals were led up to by outer events, in evolutionary objectivity, so a radical transformation must take place in the inner being of mankind before such a step is taken. Anthroposophy must become a profound experience, an experience men can think of in a way similar to that which they feel when imbued with the whole power dwelling in the birth of Christ Jesus, in the Mystery of Golgotha. As was said, this may be so to a lesser degree in the case of the Michael Festival; but something of this soul-transmuting force must proceed from the anthroposophical movement. This is indeed what we long for: that anthroposophy might be imbued with this power to transmute souls: and this can only come about if the substance of its teaching – if I may call it that-becomes actual experience.”

This ‘challenge’ was given at Rudolf Steiner’s final Michaelmas with members. Nine months previously he had inaugurated the New Mysteries and guided The Foundation Stone Meditation down to earth. Surely it is with this meditation that, if we work at it, we may be enabled to make this ‘radical transformation within the inner being of mankind’.

I am grateful to have witnessed Cobie’s sharing of her spirit research, brought in such an accessible and deeply touching form. We all grew through your growth, thank you.

Caroline Hurner
ST. JOHN’S FESTIVAL

The St. John’s Festival at the Society began three weeks prior to St. John’s Day with an initiative of Tania Babb’s (a well-known ceramist, and part of the Thursday morning study group) offering to give a fundraising workshop on the making of a Porcelain Lantern.

Twelve people gathered on Sunday 7th June in the Art Room where Caroline gave a sensitive and warm introduction to the cultivation of Festivals. Thence we proceeded to enjoy a lively morning together, each creating a lantern. It was suggested that each lantern should be inscribed with a verse or phrase pertaining to Light - embraced within the theme of St. John’s.

These lanterns were taken for firing, by Tania, who promised to return the theme of St. John’s. Festivals. Thence we proceeded to enjoy a lively morning together, whilst singing the St. John’s song, composed by Janine Humen many years ago.

Thank you to Hanna Antoine (a Beau Soleil music student) who played her flute for us, and to dear Cobie, Penny, Jody, Tania and Caroline for creating such a meaningful festival occasion. Truly a cultural event!!!

The celebration, initially led by Caroline, had a deep Esoteric quality. She presented a warm picture of the being of St. John – his incarnations from the realm of the Spiritual world – to his own search on earth, whilst singing the St. John’s song, composed by Janine Humen many years ago.

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Carole Penfold

For the St. John’s Fire
May the fire we light
Consuming the dead branches of a living past
Kindle to life in us
The fire of love which creates anew.

May the fire of love
Consuming the dead wood within our souls
Unite us in the living word of John:
“He must increase but I must decrease.”
So may the mingling of many flames
Betoken the interweaving of our destinies
In sacrificial deeds of love
To lift a beacon of new hope for all.

Francis Edmunds
June, 1975

CELEBRATING OUR WEBSITE LAUNCH

We have had the most incredible and supportive response to our website launch, in fact we have never received so many emails related to one issue as this one. It is not possible to include them all here but please enjoy these few:

“Wow! To those responsible a very deep bow and many thanks. I’ve just been exploring and everything is so simple and comprehensive that even I could manage. I note with joy that on the international library lists my books have 5 stars and many hits...how wonderful...you’ve made my day!”
Estelle Bryer

“Bravo! This is wonderful – lectures, links, news, courses etc. all from one source. I have bookmarked it for everyday reference. Thank you.”
Jenny Wyeth

“This is simply spectacularly beautiful and thoughtfully written and designed! I have not been through all of it yet - and had a hard time tearing myself away from the quotations on the homepage - but it is a wonderful window into anthroposophy and its fruits, and into the life of the ASWC. It also seems very functional and even the way the newsletters were organized and were easy to access and read are a great accomplishment. I will be sharing this with my friends, one of whom is the new program director for the Anthroposophical Society of America - I will make sure she gets this out as far as possible.

Please thank Cecilia, Sue, and Belinda on my behalf for this incredible gift to the world!”
Lisa Majores

“What a magnificent piece of work! Well done and thank you so very much! This website is so absolutely inclusive, artistic, informative, captivating and soul nourishing – it makes me want to go back to it time and time again.”
Briar Grimley

“I think the website is absolutely lovely! It is beautiful visually as well as in content, and has obviously been compiled with love as well as expertise. I do congratulate everyone involved.”
Jane Abrahms

“Congratulations, So much appreciation of the work of others in the society so we can all benefit...”
Avice Hindmarsh

“It is lovely. Please extend my congratulations and thanks for Cecilia and everyone for the beautiful website, comprehensive and informative.”
Julio Laset

“To all those involved with this powerful piece of communication. Well done on so many levels. One can only imagine how much preparation and work it has taken to get this impulse out in the world. Well, well done!”
Margaret Laubser

So dear members and friends, please feel encouraged to open the website regularly and share the news of its existence on to many.

Margaret Laubser

Margaret Laubser

Debbie Ludik

“Seek the truly practical life, but seek it in such a way that it does not blind you to the spirit working in it. Seek the spirit, but seek it not out of spiritual greed, but so that you may apply it in the genuinely practical life.”
Rudolf Steiner

PRACTICAL & INNER LIFE
Dragon Silence

A STORY FOR MICHAELMAS

By Gwynn Dawson

Once there lived a sleek dragon who had a golden tongue. The dragon did not lurk in closed and hidden places, for it was maroon and magnificent. The people thought it was not dangerous because of its beauty—but it was exceedingly dangerous.

The dragon did not waste its energy on fiery breath and smoke; rather words dripped off its tongue like a deadly honey—words that whirled and whispered, spinning pictures like a winter moon on water, glittering and cold. But once the dragon had slipped away and the listeners could no longer see it, its words left them confused and fearful.

The dragon loved the mist and cloud, and on such nights would call and whisper, spinning pictures like a winter moon on water, glittering and cold. But once the dragon had slipped away and the listeners could no longer see it, its words left them confused and fearful.

The people thought it was not dangerous because of its beauty—but it was exceedingly dangerous.

The dragon became bored and changed its tactics. "You are small-brained and weak-headed if you imagine you can defeat me," it snarled, and spat venom at the shepherd's eyes.

"Brave and foolish, he who comes against me with no sword," mocked the dragon. "Speak, Man, perhaps we can negotiate a painless death for you."

On nights of mist and cloud, he would hear the dragon chant and ensnaring his own words. The silence lengthened, and lengthened. Slowly, the dragon began to sink down into a posture of submission.

"You have defeated me with the weapon I cannot counter; the silence of a good man," it moaned.

To the shepherd’s amazement, the dragon drew a red silk ribbon from under its wing and dropped it at his feet. It continued to speak in a low voice. “It is dragon lore that if a human being can defeat me, then I must serve that being until they choose to set me free again. The ribbon is a symbol of my submission. Tie it around my neck and lead me away.”

The shepherd stared at the caverning beast; suddenly he felt saddened by this lamp of dark flesh. Taking out his knife, he cut the ribbon into pieces. He gave the dragon a look straight into its yellow eyes. Then he began to walk away. Half way down the hill he turned back and beckoned the beast to follow him.

As he walked, the shepherd began to sing. For the first time in all its ancient days, the dragon heard a song from a human being instead of their fearful whisperings and mutterings. It rose up and followed the shepherd.

“You have learnt well, O Man,” said the dragon, “silence is the sign of focus and power. When a man learns this, I am defeated and his path is cleared of my influence. But remember; I never die and I never forget.”

On and on together they went, the man leading and the dragon following, until they disappeared over the ridge of the hill.

Wise from years of living alone, he knew that no clever strategy, hopeful plan or sharp sword would be of use against this evil.

The shepherd opened his mouth, but snapped it shut again like a trap, ensnaring his own words. The silence lengthened, and lengthened. Slowly, the dragon began to sink down into a posture of submission.

“You have defeated me with the weapon I cannot counter; the silence of a good man,” it moaned.

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On and on together they went, the man leading and the dragon follow-
WHAT MOVES YOU?
– an inspiring film documentary about Eurythmy

Eightly three 19 year olds, fresh from school in 14 different countries, flew into Berlin in 2012 to work together for a month to prepare a public performance in eurythmy of the 3rd movement of Beethoven’s 5th symphony.

It was at the same age of 19 that a young woman, Lori Maier-Smit, a hundred years ago asked Rudolf Steiner the question that resulted in his creating the art of Eurythmy, taught and developed in Waldorf schools worldwide as an art of movement to music and the spoken word, and now also used most effectively in the field of curative education.

Focused and eager, but also seemingly somewhat nervous to begin with, many were aware that they might not be able to rise to the demands of the challenge of 5 solid hours of training each day. As time progressed they experienced periods of pain and self-doubt, but also profound joy and revelation. The film showed teaching and learning, discussions and questioning, socialising and a growing understanding and support for each other.

The inspired teachers, fired with creativity, trained them to listen so keenly that they appeared to become one with the music moving from within. The transformation over the month through dedication and determination to go beyond their previous limitations led to a performance of extraordinary large-group beauty and dynamic movement, gesture and expression.

One sees in this remarkable documentary how eurythmy is used as a medium for profound growth through self-discovery in the individual and in community; what a valuable gift for all on the threshold of adulthood!

Marion Penfold

This DVD is available for loan from The Basil Gibaud Library, and further information on future “What moves You?” initiatives can be found on their web site http://whatmovesyou.de.

A sabbatical in Cape Town

When I arrived here on the 1st September last year, I had spent a whole year gathering funds for a project which was to bring Eurythmy and Eurythmy therapy to the townships. Having lived for forty years in Germany where the citizens are imbued with a highly developed intellectual soul and pride in their work and surroundings, Cape Town surrounded by gigantic oceans with its south – easterly wind – blown people has been a very different experience. My journey started in Vrygrond where I was for four months. I then transferred my project to Siyakhula in Masiphumalele and have learned a lot working with these township children and their teachers.

Eurythmy is a wonderful tool to help all children find meaningful and joyful movement and a huge counterbalance to the hardening forces working into the children. People are quick to smile here, friendly conversations can start up almost anywhere. I hear that there is a lot going on in people’s lives and that they are open to share their feelings and thoughts. But it is a huge battlefield for the counterforces as well. That I could experience from the first day. There are no ancient cultures to fall back on to guide us. That is our big challenge for this country and its people. For me personally, the waves of life have brought up much onto the sands. That goes hand in hand with being here. Somewhat exhausting but also exciting.

Katherine Christen

The workshop was practical rather than theoretical in its presentation. An atmosphere of nurturing and sharing and mutual support was established and maintained. The participants were guided through carefully selected, “simple”, essential and profound exercises. These individual exercises have each arisen out of a deep penetration into the nature of Man, and the range of exercises presented was also comprehensive in scope. These factors had the effect that, at whatever stage you were at, the exercises could meet you and take you further. The program provided the material through which one could deepen and consolidate one’s own self-knowledge. Therefore most importantly, through this experience, one could rejuvenate and improve or renew the habits that one had got into in ones isolated practice.

The presenter’s obvious enjoyment gave what was presented yet another dimension of accessibility.

The group’s inner work and sharing could be felt in a communal quality during periods of silence.

It is just a wonderful Anthroposophical offering.

Thank you Perry and Silke

Charles Hugo

NOTE – this was the second of three workshops this year. We have the third still to look forward to on Friday evening the 23rd October. Michael and Briar Grimley will join Silke in leading this evening. All are welcome - there is no need to have attended the previous evenings.
THE INVISIBLE GEOMETRY OF PLANTS AND ARCHITECTURE

What engenders uprightness in plants, orchestrates their astonishing display of beautifully ordered geometrical shapes and nourishes their aliveness?

Some botanists refer to ‘morphological fields’, or unseen formative forces, which induce levity, are inherently geometric and cultivate aliveness. These fields are family to physicists’ invisible ‘force fields’ – gravity, magnetism or electricity – that animate inert matter. Minerals are only influenced by ‘force fields’, whereas plants are influenced by both ‘force and morphological fields’ simultaneously.

Both fields are intrinsically mathematical, which is why we can calculate the force of gravity; however their inherent geometries are different. The geometry of plants needs to account for the changing mutual relationships of their emerging forms as they grow and morph over time.

Synthetic geometry, also known as non-Euclidean or Projective geometry – a derivative of which Einstein used for his curved space calculations - has been in development since the 17th century and is, more recently, being used to understand the geometric nature of the forces influencing the shapes of plants. This geometry functions within three different kinds of space. Astral Space, which functions in infinity, and two other kinds of space which are polar opposite to one another: normal physical space, in which Euclidean geometry functions, and then the polar inversion of this space which is called counter-space. The interweaving of geometrical entities, such as points, lines and planes, in these three spaces can produce particular curves characteristic of living forms known as ‘path-curves’.

Felix Klein first developed this branch of mathematics in the late 1850s. It remained almost unknown until George Adams rekindled life in 1950s and Lawrence Edwards in 1960s. After this Nick Thomas and numerous others have been further developing these ideas. Edwards describes how after experiencing the eloquence of these path-curve forms, he decided to measure precisely whether natural entities exists in infinity. These fields are family to physicists’ invisible ‘force fields’ – gravity, magnetism or electricity – that animate inert matter. Minerals are only influenced by ‘force fields’, whereas plants are influenced by both ‘force and morphological fields’ simultaneously.

Edwards showed that an emerging bud, or the doubly curved surfaces of water vortexes do not describe arbitrary curvatures but that of path curves. This is true of the edges and surfaces of plants coming into life, or full of life, as opposed to when they are dying. These calculations were only possible because of the introduction of astral space and counter-space into the lexicon of mathematics. To give you a sense of the relationship between Synthetic geometry and botany we need to characterize the nature of these different spaces briefly.

In the Euclidean geometry taught at school, if you move a point along a line, you never reach infinity, because you can always go a little further. This is predicated on the idea that space is infinitely expansive. Now imagine two infinitely long lines in a plane intersecting through a point. As you rotate one of the lines so it starts becoming parallel relative to the other line the intersecting point moves towards the distant horizon. If you rotate the line at a constant rate the point of intersection incrementally accelerates away from you along the static line.

Now what happens to the point of intersection when the lines are parallel? Euclid would say it disappears. And it does, but only from physical space. Felix Klein, who established the mathematical ground for the use of non-Euclidian or curved space, says the lines meet in an ‘ideal’ point in the Absolute Plane. And for clarity it is worth noting that the point on the left is the same as the point on the right. It is still one point, not physical but ideal.

Rudolf Steiner indicates that a straight line can be seen as a circle with an infinitely large diameter. When moving in one direction along the straight line, as with the circle, we also eventually return from the other side. This occurs through what Steiner calls the Astral dimension, which has the quality of being curved and self-contained. It lacks the three dimensional qualities of normal space. In the astral dimension entities do not become infinitely large or distant, but return inside out and from the opposite side.

The difficulty with the straight-line circle example is we cannot lengthen the radius until the circle center seamlessly migrates from measurable space into immeasurable infinity. If we think of physical space as endless we can repeatedly lengthen the radius by always adding a little, onto the existing radius.

When the circle center is real and located in space the circumference remains curved irrespective of the circle’s size. To ‘enter’ non-spatial infinity we need to transcend measurable space, but cannot do this by going increasing further away. We need to relinquish three-dimensional space to enter another dimension. In our example, the circumference approaches straightness but never achieves it until the circle center dissolves out of physical space, which happens when the center changes from being real to being ideal. It does this when making the qualitative transition into infinity.

Let’s consider another example. Imagine a point enlarging into a sphere. As the sphere expands its surface flattens. Similar to the circle becoming a straight-line circle, when the radius of the sphere is infinitely long its curved surface is a flat plane in infinity. This ‘Absolute Plane’ in the astral dimension has the remarkable quality of being completely flat yet retaining its spherical quality in that it ‘surrounds’ and contains space. This Absolute Plane in the Astral dimension, which is not real but ideal, geometrically qualifies the outer extent of Euclidean space.

Now imagine two infinitely long lines in a plane intersecting through a point. As you rotate one of the lines so it starts becoming parallel relative to the other line the intersecting point moves towards the distant horizon. If you rotate the line at a constant rate the point of intersection incrementally accelerates away from you along the static line.

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Our understanding shifts when thinking of the single intersecting point of two lines as being simultaneously quantitative and qualitative. We have the place of meeting, in the lines themselves, and the activity of meeting, or the quality of incidence. When lines are in the same plane they necessarily intersect. When they are parallel they still intersect, but only in infinity, which is not in space but in the astral dimension where their quality or activity of incidence is always active.

When thinking of infinity as impossibly far away we are considering infinity as if it were a physical location, which is not concordant with the nature of infinity. When two lines intersect in a point, irrespective of where the point is along the lines, it’s proximity to infinity never changes. This is true even when the lines near being parallel and the point approaches the distant horizon relative to physical space. Conventionally we think of the point as approaching infinity, but as we have seen with the expanding circle and sphere this is not true. We cannot approach infinity from physical space. Because infinity exists in another dimension all points along the line are equally far or close to it. Even the term ‘infinity’ is predicated on a physical conception of space, in that the ‘formula’ of infinity is qualified, not in its own terms, but relative to physical space.

The difficult comes in because from a physical perspective we want to place infinity in a particular location, that’s how we understand physical space, as different to understanding infinity as qualitatively different to physical space. However as geometric entities appear to recede from us towards the infinitely distant horizon, a place that is conceptually unclear since we can never get there physically, this conception does give use a sense of moving towards another dimension.

This understanding mathematically mirrors some to extent the reality of our earthly habitat where as human beings we occupy both physical space and the Astral dimension simultaneously.

The third kind of space, called negative or counter-space is connected to the etheric. These formative forces function in non-physical counter-space and can be geometrically thought of as a multiplicity of planes or surfaces originating from the periphery. Steiner says that if you want to describe a space created from the starry heavens inward, it is not
dependent on the three dimensions but is a space made of planar forc-  2s, which move in from all sides, plasticly forming the physical earth. They induce a dynamic levity condition in everything that grows; failing which it will disintegrate and be overcome by the force of gravity; point  centered in middle of the earth.

The communal planes of counter space are the direct opposite of phys-  ical space, which is made up of single points in space. In three-dimen-  sional physical space a line is composed of points, and a plane of lines, and a volume of planes. The basic entity is the point. In counter-space we need to turn our thinking inside out. Here we do not think of a single entity but a community of non-physical infinitely large planes, each of which is not a divisible entity composed of points, but whole unto itself. And when you think of it as a completely flat plane that returns on itself from all directions through infinity. Note in projective geometry when we talk of a line or plane it is always taken to reach the absolute plane in infinity.

When two of these planes intersect they produce a line. The mem- bers of this line are not points but the two planes. So the nature of this line is different to that of a point-space line; here the line is defined as the meet of the planes. A point is defined as the meet of three such planes that are not in a line. You can imagine it as the corner of a room where two walls and the floor meet in a point, except the planes are non-physical and extensive and there is not an actual point at the inter- section but only the intersecting lines. So in physical space the whole is always bigger than the parts; for ex- ample, the line is bigger than the points along it. In counter space the parts are bigger than the whole; the planes are bigger than the line or the point.

For every geometric construction in physical space there is the pos-  sibility of constructing its counter-space equivalent and visa versa. In 3D it is usually called a Polarity and in 2D a Duality. The counter-part constructions are usually visually completely unrecognizable, as well as, in 3D points become planes and planes become points. As in the  previous example of the line, which is made up of points in physical space and of planes in counter space. In 2D points become lines and lines become points.

In the same way as there is an outer limit to physical space, the Absolute plane, there is also an inner limit to counter-space which has originated from the periphery. In physical space we have an ideal point in the Absolute Plane in outer infinity. In counter space we have a com-  munity of ideal planes in the Absolute Point in the infinity within.

So both space and counter space are the same size, interpenetrate each other and are ‘bounded’ inwardly and outwardly by Astral space which inverts and reverses everything.

Concerning plants, morphological fields function in counter-space and the growing of a plant is the infinity within. To grasp this requires the mental gymnastics of reversing and inverting our normal way of thinking about space. As Steiner says, ‘we need to think of the inten- sively extensive and the intensively intensive.’

Now, observing a growing plant, we note that its physical body is composed of the substances found in normal space – minerals, nu- trients etc. Its morphological field, which is non-substantial and exten- sive in nature, is active in counter-space. From the viewpoint of normal space, the plant’s substance occupies its spatial volume and the sur- 7 rounding space is empty or non-substantial. From the perspective of counter-space, the space surrounding the plant is ‘substantial’ and 9 space occupied by the plant is empty or non-substantial. It is the sub- 10 stance of the plant’s morphological field that occupies this surrounding space. Despite these two spaces interpenetrating the principle is that the substantiality of space is the emptiness of counter-space, and vice versa. (Diagram B)

Nick Thomas writes, ‘Membranes are usually semi-permeable which means that some substances, including water, can cross them one way but not the other. Geometrically a membrane has an inside and an outside. Physically this is obvious, but if a membrane is linked to both space and counter-space then from a counter-space perspective those terms are reversed, and the ‘outside’ is for counter-space what 11 we would normally call the inside and vice versa’. It is the interplay of these three spaces which brings about the path curves that Lawrence Edwards demonstrated as being inherent in various natural forms as diverse as plant buds, flowers, pine cones, 12 birds’ eggs and the human heart. His decades of precise research revealed the astonishing discovery that the rhythmic variation in size and form of particular bud shapes correlate to the moon’s conjunc- 13 tions and oppositions with specific plants, that is to say, forces em- 14 anating concurrently from different orbiting planets influence plants’ 15 growth and shape. For example, the beechn tree responded to the 16 rhythm of the Moon and Saturn, the Cherry tree to the Moon and Sun. Having taken measurements of hundreds of bud shapes from 1895 up until 1994. It is important to note from this that the planes of the ethic 17 forms force originate from specific locations of the periphery, namely the sun and planets. This is obviously different to the universal nature of the Absolute plane of Astral space which ‘circum- 18 scribes’ all of physical space.

Edwards also found a connection between knapweed and Jupiter’s rela- 19 tion to the moon. When the comet Shoemaker-Levy collided with Jupiter in 1994, all the knapweed buds’ shapes suddenly changed slightly!

Using Synthetic geometry we can begin emulating nature’s creative process by underpinning our designs with a mobile, yet ordered system of proportioning: not copying external forms, but designing according to natural principles inspired by our individual and cultural sensibilities. My experience is that we can configure our designs within a dynam- ics of geometric field, which, as in the case of natural forms, awakens a sense of inspiration, wholeness and liveliness in us.

Keith Struthers – Natural Architecture

www.naturalscool.com

www.naturallarchitecture.co.za

4 Edwards, op. cit, p 77.
8 Edwards, op. cit., p 158.
Exact Imagination: 300 years of Botanically Inspired Art in South Africa – An extract

This article by Keith Struthers was part of the catalogue for the Standard Bank National exhibition in November 2014, curated by Cyril Coetzee and titled, “Exact Imagination: 300 years of Botanically Inspired Art in South Africa”.

After being published, Keith has continued expanding the ideas. Notably he mentions the valued correspondences with the late Nick Thomas(UK)

Keith, I think, would describe himself as a sculptural architect, who deepens his art through a process of reflective practice. He also

writes articles, gives public talks, laughs a lot and runs design cours-

es in Cape Town, Johannesburg, Brazil and Chile for practicing archi-

tects – and other design professionals.

I would highly recommend that you visit his web site www.nat-

uralscool.com where you can be encouraged, through pictures, hu-

mour and recorded inspirational discussions (podcasts) with

architects and artists from around the world, ‘to create a more mean-

ingful life through design.’

The website clearly outlines the many courses that are run.

For example:-

Going over your WILD Edge ~ Nov 2016

This six day course for design professionals in the Towerland wilderness retreat will sharpen your design senses and creative capacity. And amplify your awareness of what engenders aliveness in your designs.

Below, a group of Brazilians having completed a Natural Cool’s course at the Institute for Natural Building Materials in Sao Paulo, where the Naturals Cool ‘method blends uninhibited with rigour’. I Spot Keith in the centre of the back row…as I said… laughing a lot!

Caroline Hurmer

ENLIVENING OUR SPEAKING

December 2015 with Sibylle Eichstaedt Speech Artist & Therapeutic Speech Practitioner

Speech Training Opportunity for Teachers, Eurythmists, Therapists and anyone with a Love of the Spoken Word

A WORD is dead
When it is said,
Some say,
I say it just
Begins to live
That day.
Emily Dickinson

Speaking engages the whole self: it reaches down into our physiology and up into our consciousness. How we speak – how we use our voice and breath, and how we form the sounds – has an effect on our whole organism. As an art, it not only enlivens our words and through them, our listen- ers, but – through the way we engage our forces of body, soul and spirit – it enlivens our own being. The art of the spoken word lends wings to the moving eurythmist. It is an integral part of Waldorf Education, both as a sustaining practice for teachers as well as a class activity. Applied ther-
apeutically, it can help not only with voice, fluency and articulation disor-
ders, but in a wide range of physical and psychological conditions. Sibylle’s talks and speech workshops will (re-) introduce participants to the basic ideas and practice of speech art as inspired by Rudolf and Marie Steiner.

Sibylle Eichstaedt M.A. was born in Germany and has lived in England for over 25 years. She works as a speech artist and anthroposophic therapeutic speech practitioner at Waldorf Schools, Waldorf Teacher Trainings and in private practice, in England and internationally. Having been invited to give a workshop on therapeutic speech at the International Postgraduate Doctors’ Training (IPMT), we invited her to come a week early to offer speech classes and two talks to our community.

Sunday, 6th December  at 4 pm at Sophia House
‘A Living Leaping Logos’
Taking a fresh look at Rudolf and Marie Steiner’s artistic impulse for enlivening our speaking. With audience participation and art-

istic contributions.

Friday evening, 11th December at Sophia House
‘Isis Sophia, Wisdom of God’
An exploration of this theme through reflections, poetry and a story

Speech Training, Wednesday, 9th – Friday 11th December
Please note: We are aware that this is the beginning of our holiday season. The final form, content and duration of these training days (or

half days) will depend on how many people are wishing to attend and on their needs, interest and availability. If you are interested, please contact us (via: coordinator@aswc.org.za), stating your professional background, your particular interest in working with speech and the times during which you would be able to attend so that we can soon create a cohesive schedule.

Speech for Teachers
• How to enliven, strengthen and maintain one’s speech organism
• How to nurture a speech culture in the class room
• How to bring poetic texts to life and make class recitation dynamic
• Speech for health, strength and renewal

Speech for Eurythmists /Eurythmy Therapists
• How to enliven, strengthen and maintain one’s speech organism
• Speaking on the breath whilst keeping grounded
• Speaking the sounds
• Exploring the artistic relationship between sound, word and sentence
• Speech for health, strength and renewal

Speech for Everyone
• Enlivening one’s Speech – enlivening the Soul
• Speech exercises and their relationship to the whole human organism
• Speak a poem and make it your friend
• Speech for health, strength and renewal
Nurturing the Esoteric

In July this year, respected anthroposophist Bernard Hurner, who, until recently, was based in KwaZulu Natal, convened a workshop at Sophia House in Plumstead, entitled ‘Nurturing the Esoteric Element in Professional and Daily Life’.

I was initially drawn to the event by the wording of the invitation, which reads: ‘Our modern lifestyles demand that we give our constant attention to the outer world and its challenging tasks. To develop our inner soul being, we then perhaps practice certain meditations and exercises and never seem to have enough time for this. However our professional lives mostly offer rich opportunities for inner deepening and esoteric work’. Below is my reflection, interpretation and attempt to make meaning of the workshop, though this is a work ‘in process’.

Bernard’s experience in Anthroposophy has evolved over years of being a Waldorf schoolteacher, firstly at Constantia and then at the Rosewood Waldorf School in HILCrest, KwaZulu-Natal, where he integrated Rudolf Steiner’s teachings into his daily and professional life, as well as being a teacher trainer. His understanding and ability to illuminate anthroposophical practice for us was tangible.

Rembrandt’s self-portraits: Meeting the gaze

To start with, we entered into a quiet contemplative state in which to examine Rembrandt van Rijn’s self-portraits. Rembrandt was the first artist to paint self-portraits. He painted these works in the mid-to-late 17th century, during the latter part of the Renaissance period. What is most evident in these paintings is his gaze: it is as if he draws us under his skin and plunges viewers into the depths of human emotion, while at the same time bearing witness to the soulful face of humankind. The self-portraits, of which there are around 90, show Rembrandt’s meta-morphosis from a young boy into an old man, capturing the effects of the passage of time as well as momentary appearances of emotion. Rembrandt’s pictorial content emerges as if out of the darkness, challenging us to see and comprehend the human being as the bearer of the light — to experience the inner qualities of the human soul. It is as if the figures, as a cumulative body of work, seek empathy for the human condition and stand in relation to the ‘Self-world’ and human development.

In Lecture 7 of The Study of Man, in 1919, Rudolf Steiner spoke to Waldorf teachers on the development of the whole human being. He described how, through the young child’s activity and feeling life, conceptual thoughts and new faculties develop. The opposite could be said of old age — bodily vitality recedes, activity slows down, and feelings and concepts grown together through experience become wisdom.

‘Why do we listen to the words of the wise ones? Because in the course of their lives they have connected their personal feeling intimately with their conceptions and ideas.’

Rudolf Steiner, The Study of Man

Whereas Rembrandt’s earlier portraits reflect his creative energy, passion and healthy zest for life, in his later works we witness the unsurmountable personal difficulties he endured — and with these struggles, the aging process and a different mix of emotions. Emotion is reflected in the depth of his eyes, in the subtle colouration of his skin and in the nuanced moody background layering.

My ability to ‘read’ the inter-relational qualities of the physical, psychological, emotional and aesthetic is dependent on my ability to work creatively out of my imagination and enter, as Rembrandt did, into the deep recesses of the soul. There is no fixed system we can follow to make these nuances of meaning more visible. Rather, the viewer must merge with the observational activity itself, and with an open-ended aptitude for interpretation, learn to see what lies behind the painted surface. Actively observing in this way, we practised the capacity for ‘seeing’ with our inner eye.

Rembrandt’s work signifies a small revolution, a shift from outer appearance to inner substance, depth and wisdom. His figures appear out of apparent darkness as if bearing the light within themselves. It is as if they illuminate the space around them with their inner light. He invites us to encounter the agency of his subjects — and in the case of the self-portraits, his subject is himself laid bare.

Rembrandt’s self-portraits suggest so much more than physiological development. He draws us into the inner nature of his being and challenges us, in every instance, to meet and interpret his gaze and recognize within him the spiritual light in a fully conscious way. From as far back as the 17th century, the works of Rembrandt offer, from the viewpoint of individuality, the possibility to awaken the potential of the ‘Y — a process that would unfold gradually over the next centuries.

Engaging with Rembrandt’s gaze was a prompt for us to reflect back on ourselves, and stimulated deep contemplation. This exercise demonstrated the value of ‘feeling into’ circumstances and reality, visual or otherwise, which entails learning to ‘read’ what’s before us simultaneously gain access to the spiritual activity informing it. Rembrandt’s paintings drew our attention to a man and a human being conected to the time in which he lived — his concerns, doubts and possibly even anguish in relation to the direction in which he perceived humanity to be heading.

Lastly, we examined the human figures and gestures in the inevitable work, Simon and the Christ Child Here, Rembrandt depicts the Christ, Jesus, as the source of light. This painting is well known within the Anthroposophical medical and therapeutic community as an image that brings strength and healing to the patient. In setting the unfolding drama before us, the painting evokes feelings and thoughts that appear to emerge from the depths of each character, constituting distinct personal attitudes. We can discern two attitudes in Rembrandt’s paintings — an outward and an inner gaze. It could be said that Rembrandt brings the representational appearance into accord with the innermost nature of his human subjects. This is the main event of his paintings — his rare capacity to embed these very aspects of the soul, attitudes, emotions, and the importance of relationships into the very substance of paint. His achievement was significant for the whole of humanity, giving rise to the questions: Who are we? is what we think and do significant to the whole of humanity?

Each individual in the group attempted to elucidate and describe aspects of his/her life, and what constitutes a contemporary esoteric path? We were encouraged to meet this question as if for the first time.

In exploring the multilayered aspects of the esoteric in our lives, we came to the consensus that the communal thread running through our lives is mindfulness, inspired by perceiving/discovering truth. When considering mindfulness — the ability to pay attention and keen observation of the outer world — the scientific work of German writer and statesman Johann Wolfgang von Goethe comes to mind. In describing that which is quintessential to human apprehension of phenomena, Goethe states: ‘There is a delicate empiricism that makes itself identical with the object, thereby becoming true theory.’ It is through direct sensory observation and embodied experience that understanding and meaning can arise in relation to how the world is organized. And it is through this process that we can come to deeper realizations of what truth is. And yet this does not happen without effort, persistence and even struggle. Anthroposophy is an esoteric path, and although anyone can choose this path, the prerequisite is ‘serious inner work’. According to Steiner: ‘The mysteries are present in the breast of every human being. All that is required is serious inner work and the possibility to free ourselves of all the fetters obstructing this subtle inner life.’

Direct experience is key to understanding, and this involves returning, over and over, to the painting, phenomenon or mantra (in the case of meditation). In the process of iteration we may discover that the exercise is a self-renewing process. Each time I pay attention to the phenomenon or to a particular meditation, I reconcile the outer world with my inner self. Therefore, each iteration offers me the possibility to become more aware and conscious of the way I participate and think. The collective perspectives and insights from the group were a tremendous aid and helped me move closer to opening up to the realities before me.

Strengthening our practice: An experiment in colour and light

Next, we all became willing participants in an experiment set up by Bernard — ‘Observing Light through Darkness and Darkness through
could be an object, such as a paper clip, or a person or a sunset – and ‘heart-thinking’. To stimulate and develop our ‘spiritual organs of participation and discussion.

If these ideas, once discovered, are shared and made known to others, and if these ideas, once discovered, are shared and made known to others, then we would have added a substantial. A candle was lit and placed either behind or in front of the glass bowl of water. Constantly renewing this gesture, we built a connection between ourselves and the colour – the two colours, blue and yellow/red (light), and came to experience how our souls were moved by ‘breathing in’ and ‘living in’, ‘becoming one with the colour.

My immersion in the act of observation and in the painting exercise ‘lifted’ me out of my everyday reality. I found that I could shift my consciousness from being totally immersed ‘in the colour, to being ‘in the emergence of new colours being formed before my eyes, or at other times, to being ‘out’ on the periphery, taking in the whole experiment at once, or even further out – not engaging at all. These were all aspects of participation and paying attention. I discovered that I could make a shift from ordinary consciousness by slowing down, letting go, steadying my breath, becoming more fluid and mobile in my relationship with the colour, and thereby gain access to the deeper qualities and possible realities within each pure colour and its combinations. This sensation is somewhat difficult to describe.

We then focused on the darkness surrounding the glass bowl, loosely dipping into the ‘moral qualities’ of colour to which Goethe alluded and which Steiner explored in his lectures 'Artistic and Moral Experience'. Our attention was brought to how colour is a bridge, which consolidates the unity of light and dark, and stirs deep feelings. The object itself – the glass jar, candle or black cloth – is but a shadow of another reality. What is the reality of the phenomena and what capacity do I need to develop in order to sense or register this reality more fully?

If we are to embrace the modern path of initiation, Bernard said, our task is to develop the inner capacity with which to perceive outer reality in ways that lead us back to the spiritual world. ‘[W]e do need certain faculties in order to discover the kinds of things we are talking about, but if these ideas, once discovered, are shared and made known to others, they can be understood by anyone willing to apply impartial logic and a healthy feeling for the truth,’ writes Steiner. This was very much my experience in working with the group. Together, we were able to develop a ‘culture of participation and discussion.

Where Goethe refers to developing ‘organs of perception’, Steiner speaks of the need to develop ‘spiritual organs’ to develop future thinking or ‘heart-thinking’. To stimulate and develop our ‘spiritual organs of perception’, Bernard recommended taking one thing from our daily lives – it could be an object, such as a paper clip, or a person or a sunset – and dwell on it every day over a period of time. For instance, if we take a sunset, the importance is to observe the sunset every day for five minutes and to become mindful of the associations that the phenomenon brings. It is important to develop a true interest in the ‘sunset – a deep relationship or love for it and, through the five-minute daily observation, experience what changes. In the process, observe oneself and one’s responses to the sensation, all out of a real interest and heart-felt desire.

Bernard associated the effect of this practice with a homeopathic preparation, which has the potency to have an effect on the whole constitution of the human being. The very practice of engaging with and awakening to the relationship of things around me – in this instance the sunset – develops a kind of ‘frame’ by means of which I can focus my perspective ability. In every way possible, I refrain from slipping into habits and the desire to fix thoughts and name them before experiencing them. By naming, we tend to brush past the ‘thing’ or phenomenon before us. If we look at a plant, the moment we call it by its name – ‘Geranium’ – we tend to discredit all else that makes up this complex organism. The experiment demonstrates how important it is to leave the well-trod path and enter into the unknown, and acknowledge that this open-ended ‘not knowing’ is an integral part of our esoteric work.

As we moved fluidly across boundaries of appearance and reality, we touched on what Steiner referred to as ‘sense-free-thinking’ – a thinking which is spiritual in nature. By strengthening our ability to see the associations and relationships between things, we are able to transform the ‘part’ – the visual appearance – into the ‘whole’ – spiritual reality, the essence of which is revealed in accord with our own being.

Attentionfulness to such small acts of perception begins to reveal that nothing in the world needs be foreign, that all of the world is us, and that knowing the world in this way is also a discipline of self-knowledge, of becoming whole. As a part of our research, we convened a Symposium on the role of icons and the psycho-sphere in our understanding of consciousness and of the inner aspects of his subjects to the viewer, but also on what could be seen in the icon, but rather on what could be seen through it – the love of God expressed through God’s people. Praying with icons is an act of acceptance that promotes paying attention and cultivating an inner attitude of prayer. Prayer is the cultivation of the attentiveness of God’s actual presence.

The mantric elements of verse

Inviting us to uncover the ‘mantric qualities’ of language, Bernard then gave us a verse to contemplate:

I gaze [look] into the darkness.
In it there arises light –
Living Light.

Who is this Light in the darkness?
It is I myself in my reality.
This reality of the I
Enters not into my earthly life;
I am but a picture of it.

But I shall find it again
When good will for the Spirit
I shall have passed through the Gate of Death.

The verse speaks of darkness and light, and of how the ‘light’ of our ‘I’ leads us to a reality beyond our own. I found myself pondering Rembrandt’s rare ability – his capacity not only to offer impression of his subject to the viewer, but to draw the light out of the darkness. It is the light that we carry within ourselves that illuminates the world. In becoming more responsive and developing our spiritual capacities for perceiving spiritual phenomena by learning to ‘see’ the reality around us, we are able to take up what is revealed. We shape our destiny, the future of humanity and that of the world through the forces of the Spirit. Any meditation or mantra that we embody has the potential to permeate our whole life, and it is critical that we do something spiritual in the daytime that we can take into our sleep-life.

Introducing the esoteric in our professional lives

Having observed Rembrandt’s touch, touched on Goethe’s methods of observation and Steiner’s indications for gaining knowledge in the higher worlds, through various experiences and exercises we developed a particular ‘climate’ within ourselves for developing ecologies of higher knowing.

Rudolf Steiner gave us six subsidiary exercises that can help us to re-move hindrances so as to recognise our potential and develop the capacity to perceive the spiritual world out of utter consciousness. The exercises offer opportunities for the path of inner development: control of thoughts, control of actions, equanimity (control of feelings), positivity or inner tolerance, open mindedness, inner harmony, as well as the feeling for the other. It is through schooling our learning to develop objective reality in the phenomena of the everyday that we can find our way to spirit and begin our journey into the second path of ‘spirit-experience’, says Steiner.

After a lengthy discussion and sharing of our professions, we concluded that each of us, in our own way, shared the aspiration to serve humanity in the best possible way we could – that each and every profession has particular tools with which to practice and contribute, and each part serves the whole. The plumber, electrician, labourer, farmer, engineer, healthcare worker all allow me to work in my particular field. We explored what constitutes a culture of professionalism and what gives us authority to practice our professions. What will the future jobs be and the capacities needed to fulfill these new work-roles?

As a group, we also explored how we could direct insights towards a new cultural development in the unfolding of humanity. We briefly looked at the word ‘agriculture’ and how it has to do with the ‘culture’ of the earth and how Anthroposophy is a practice for development, personal, social and cultural. We pondered how we could bring our daily and professional lives towards the inner reality, so it moves towards God’s presence and pointing to a reality beyond our own. For this reason, icons are referred to as ‘a window to heaven’ or ‘a window to the eternal’. They represent more than the beauty of the painting. They are not confined to this world. With their gaze and inward smile, they point us to a new mode of existence.

The central idea of the workshop was that ethnic moments like these – elements of inner study and meditative, reflective practice – could be introduced into our lives to deepen our professional lives and everyday pursuits. Stepping onto this path of self-knowledge and inner development in our daily and professional lives, we are able to intimately connect what we do every day to our ability to carry out our spiritual growth. The structure of the workshop provided an excellent framework for deepening and extending knowledge through action-based experimentation and research. We all agreed that this practice gives meaning to all that we do in our daily lives and vocations, and awakens us to the ever-deepening layers of spiritual becoming. Anthroposophy is process, a journey, and a practice whereby we can develop sensitivity for the world and others around us, responding from a place of Spirit.

Bernard’s offering served, and continues to serve, as a guide to the traveler, helping to make the path more visible, conscious and relevant to our daily and professional lives. He showed us in his special way, how Anthroposophy has a positive influence in all fields of life and how meditation and inner imagination leads us to truth and wisdom. A warm heartfelt thank you to you, Bernard.
**Unity in Diversity – Youth Impulse – Ubuntu**

**Archbishop Desmond Tutu**

Phrases, words, impressive expressions, awe-inspiring, they slide from the tongue imbedded in sombre tones indicative of deep and serious thinking – so it would seem. They can be seen splattered across banners proclaiming the social or political aspirations of those bearing the banner. Three ideals; each an acknowledged concept which we claim to understand and live up to. Do we? Could it be that our understanding of them is somewhat sophisticated? We understand what they mean, yes, but do we in fact know what they imply? Are they truly a living reality for us? And there is always the possibility that many still retain certain inhibitions in our relationship to other races.

Unity in Diversity: Coloureds and Africans may now share our beaches with the Whites. This is unity (?) We’ve overcome petty apartheid. Reality? This Bay Beach on a Saturday afternoon. A short stretch of beach at the western, Chapman’s Peak road end is swamped by Coloured and African families. The remaining 4-5/6 of the beach, up to Marine Wharf at the end, is sparsely occupied by Whites who, incongruously enough, are all brooming themselves. This is segregation based on the wish to be among our own – absolutely natural, no different to the social discrimination in the years before Voortrekkers came to power – nevertheless a succumbing to segregation and it still smacks of first and second class citizenship.

A further serious misconception of this ideal is that it is often confused with the concept of equality. We have lost sight of the fact that each of us has his or her own personality, the bearer of our identity which, in turn, is the earthly imprint of our destiny. One’s Karma can never be the equal of another’s karma. Equality is only warranted in the eyes of the law, in politics and as a consumer. As each of us is an ego karma bearing individual, so too does every race, every nation bear its own spiritually induced civilization and culture, each country has its own identity. This national identity is conveyed by its citizens in that it is part and parcel of every person’s personality – an expression of his or her nationality. By seeking to equate these national differences by bringing all nations to a common cultural denominator we rob them of their spiritually inspired identity. Each culture has its plusses and minuses. Generally speaking an African may not be as sophisticated as a Frenchman but his awareness of his world is richer in spiritual intuition. Differences should be acknowledged. In the words of Arch Bishop Tutu: *“Differences are not intended to separate, to alienate. We are different precisely in order to realize our needs of one another.”*

I have had pupils in my classes who, according to their birth certificates, were 12, 13 or 14 years old. Not so their natures, post middle age is what came to mind on a number of occasions when observing them. I’ve also worked with a 65 plus year old colleague whose outlook on life was as rosy as the colour of his cheeks, as sparkling as the twinkle in his eyes. To be a youth is a question of age whereas youthfulness is determined by an inner spirit eager to engage with the world around.

Two and a half years ago we, (Aid the Future, a German NGO) ran a HIV preventive project that reached some 1,200 high school students in the Eastern Cape all of whom shared similar home environments: broken homes, primitive, overcrowded village communities rife with AIDS, sexual violence and crime. Initially we worked with a group of 13 youngsters from grades 9, 10 and 11. Four of the girls had been raped, one had been gang raped at the age of twelve. Two boys had recently been released after serving a prison sentence for stealing and there was Timothy who was about to drop out of grade nine. Initially we faced a solid wall of teen age scepticism plastered with grey disillusionment: Hur! Another one of those aid organisations that’s going to issue free condoms and tell you what to do with your lives, how you’re going to become good citizens.

And then it changed. Seldom, in 22 years of teaching, have I seen such an enthusiastic demonstration of the youth impulse. For 14 days they spent their afternoons and weekends putting together a stage version of their dire circumstances, their feelings with regard to sex, love, family and the tragedies HIV and AIDS can cause – not a single idea or message came from us as adults. The theme, plot and text were theirs. This drama was then performed to five other upper schools in the area and after each performance there was a discussion between the young cast and the young audience on: “What can we do, what must we undertake to better our circumstances? It is up to us.” These discussions were very intense and there were those who, as they left the hall, were still either intent on heatedly convincing others of their point of view whereas others were wiping away emotion induced tears. I’ve included this account as an example of a youth impulse. The fact that we did not tell them what they should do, that the entire project was made up of their ideas, was their creation. There was the enthusiasm of youth, the excitement of unfolding new inner strengths. Do we remember being 18, 19 years old, our ideals, our answers to the problems of the world? That is a youth impulse which this youth, under their horror ridded cir cumstances, will never have a chance to experience.

Ubuntu: *‘I am because you are.’ There are quite a few interpretations of Ubuntu but I have chosen one of them as I find it sums up so essentially the basis of real unity among mankind. ‘I am because you are’ five words that unite individual to individual, ego to ego; a concept which I associate with Rudolf Steiner’s placing the foundation stone meditation in the hearts of the members as a foundation for this era’s Michaelian quest: to unite all of mankind regardless of race, nation or belief. That Ubuntu may spread from heart to heart. Archbishop Desmond Tutu is convinced Ubuntu is Africa’s gift to the world and that South Africa is to instigate Ubuntu as a democratic module. I would wish to share this conviction but it cannot be denied that South Africa’s present political, economic and social endeavours by no means lend themselves to realising such a prospect. There is one ray of hope though; today’s youth are who are to run the country tomorrow.*

The torrent of world history is flowing fast, its tempo and tumult increasing, drastically so, as it enters a stretch of rapids – constituting today’s world politics – on its approach to the waterfall of absolute materialism. (Last week’s Spiegel, a major German news magazine, had, as its main theme, an article titled, ‘Synthetic brain challenges human thinking.’) Many feel that mankind is standing on the threshold between the era of industrialisation, in its last throes, and a new world era, an era we’ve never experienced as yet, in which the hearts of all mankind reach out to each other. I often apply the image of the vertical upheld of the cross at Golgotha as a symbol of Christ’s uniting himself with man on earth and the cross bar as representing our reaching out to each other across the face of the earth.

Mankind, globally seen, is economically, politically and socially falling apart. There is no single realm of human endeavour today which is not experiencing such an enthusiastic demonstration of the youth impulse. For 14 days they spent their afternoons and weekends putting together a stage version of their dire circumstances, their feelings with regard to sex, love, family and the tragedies HIV and AIDS can cause – not a single idea or message came from us as adults. The theme, plot and text were theirs. This drama was then performed to five other upper schools in the area and after each performance there was a discussion between the young cast and the young audience on: “What can we do, what must we undertake to better our circumstances? It is up to us.” These discussions were very intense and there were those who, as they left the hall, were still either intent on heatedly convincing others of their point of view whereas others were wiping away emotion induced tears. I’ve included this account as an example of a youth impulse. The fact that we did not tell them what they should do, that the entire project was made up of their ideas, was their creation. There was the enthusiasm of youth, the excitement of unfolding new inner strengths. Do we remember being 18, 19 years old, our ideals, our answers to the problems of the world? That is a youth impulse which this youth, under their horror ridded circumstances, will never have a chance to experience.

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Africa going the way of so many other emerging states practising their pseudo democracy.

There are those in this country who feel that South Africa has a mission, that Nelson Mandela and his true supporters inaugurated the mission to show the world how two segregated civilisations can merge to become one without losing their identity; an example of world citizenship. This met with some destructive underhand counteraction from self-seekers in high positions with the result that we now have a new form of segregation – the Gini Coefficient – as bad, if not worse, than apartheid. One has to be realistic though and accept that the opposition to the present state of affairs is too weak to have any real corrective effect. The only chance to redirect Mandela’s mission back on to track lies in the future, with our present and future youth. They are the ones who are to run this country. They are the ones who have to become aware of South Africa’s mission in the world based on an understanding of the Michaelic dynamics in the words, ‘I am because you are’. I see Ubuntu as the Michaelic pillar of global citizenship. We though – and this is the crux of this article – the older generations have the mission to make them aware that it is they who have to create entirely new modules of government. Introducing a basic income grant for every citizen has got to be their initiative. That they are given courses in the true meaning of ‘Liberté’, ‘Égalité’, ‘Fraternité’ as a three-fold social structure of a state that THEY may adapt it to suit South Africa’s circumstances. Ours and the following generation can only undertake to prepare the youth for their task by relying on a spirit of youth eager to engage with the world without fear for the unknown and the determination to realize Michael’s will on earth. This youth impulse is to permeate the souls of the youth who, as I have experienced at first hand, are desperately seeking a different future to the one they see on the horizon. I shall never forget how, during an ‘AID the FUTURE’ stage presentation to an upper school in the Eastern Cape, one of the young volunteer actors, recently released from prison, spontaneously stepped to the edge of the stage drawing the audience’s full attention as he slowly, relevantly raised his arms, riveting everyone’s eyes on his hands which he brought together as if bearing the Holy Grail. You could have heard a feather fall in the intensity of that silence into which he then reverently pronounced, ‘This, this is your future’. Looking to the phantasm in his hands, ‘You, each one of you, YOU make your own future and are responsible for it’. This had not been rehearsed; it came from his heart on the spur of the moment in the middle of the performance. An incredible expression of the Youth Impulse, until now lying dormant in the hearts of 5,121 million youths in South Africa. Our task is to call it to life.

You say I’m an illusionist. Perhaps. The greatest honour I ever received – not that I received many – was when the staff of my project to cure and rehabilitate leprosy beggars in Nepal hung up a framed photo of myself with the following words: The problems of our world cannot possibly be solved by sceptics or cynics whose horizons are limited by obvious realities. We need women and men who can dream of things that never were and ask why not. (Words by John Kennedy, Dublin, 1963). We were told we were idealistic dreamers when we started Waldorf education in Johannesburg and Cape Town in the 1960s. Jeanne Malherbe was a very pragmatic down to earth farmer. Camp Hill, Christian Community, Weleda in the second half of the last century are evidence that a Michaelic youth impulse can bear fruit. It is time that further members of the South African Anthroposophical Society, those who feel they have a youth impulse now take the initiative to found an NGO with the aim of orientating South Africa’s youth towards creating South Africa’s future as an UBUNTU state. Such an initiative could seek financing, from among other sources, Anthroposophical financial institutions in Europe.

Rudolf Steiner once gave the illustration of candle light in the darkness. Every new spiritual initiative needs to incarnate and very often it first comes to earth to light its way as an idea and is only partially brought to a reality before it withdraws to await the time that it might be fully realized. Might that be the case in this initiative? I don’t know. But I do know it is urgent that Ubuntu be launched. South Africa is in the fast lane towards self-destruction.

Anthroposophy places a heavy burden of responsibility for mankind on our shoulders.

I AM BECAUSE YOU ARE

Ernst Wegerif.

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Ernst Wegerif

Is no newcomer to Anthroposophy. His father was a main initiative taker in the founding of the Anthroposophical Society of South Africa. He spent his extensive “Wanderjahre” as a ballet dancer and stage manager/director in theatres in South Africa, London and three years in the Geotheanum. He returned to South Africa with his wife, Brigitta, in 1962 and was one of the pioneers of Waldorf Education in South Africa. He was also on the executive committee of the Anthroposophical Society S.A. He spent 7 years teaching English at the DHPS in Windhoek before the family moved to Germany where he joined the Dortmund Waldorf School again teaching English and drama. Burnt out as a teacher he resigned after five years and founded NEPRA, a German NGO to cure and rehabilitate leprosy beggars from the streets and temples in Nepal. He ran this project for twelve years before handing over to the local staff in 1999. Unable to relate to retirement he spent another four years as class teacher at the Nant-y-Cwn Waldorf School in Wales and returned to Germany to co-found AID the FUTURE a NGO to run a preventive AIDs/HIV project among the youth in the Eastern Cape. He and Brigitta returned South Africa in 2012 and they have now settled in Cape Town.

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