

# Anthroposophical Society

in the Western Cape & the Basil Gibaud Library  
18 Firfield Rd, Plumstead, 021 7619600 – info@aswc.org.za

December Issue – 2014

## EDITORIAL

When I look at the vast stretch of activity, content and the passage of time within this newsletter I am humbled.

We acknowledge Michaelmas through Martin Wigand powerful “Reflections on Michaelmas” and end with a “Christmas Mood” in preparation towards the season ahead. And then within the newsletter we find an article on the remarkable breadth and activity of Peter Guttenhöfer’s visit to us during mid-winter of this year, where we also glimpse into many initiatives in our environs. Then there is the profound research of fellow member Margaretha Wegerif, on “Karlstein” and its creator Emperor Charles IV.

Never-to-be-forgotten was our annual Fundraiser - which I experienced as if blessed by all that is good, true and beautiful. The atmosphere of a Community gathering in support around the performances of Artists (Eurythmists and Musicians) whose ‘high’ work serves the Spirit was an exalted occasion. And being active behind the scenes, I became aware of the huge amounts of giving and receiving taking place and the generosity of our members.

Then, most recently (and not otherwise mentioned in the newsletter), was Richard Goodall’s talk on “The Appearance of Christ in the Etheric”. He made us aware that Rudolf Steiner spoke of this as being the most important phenomenon of our time and that it marks the possibility of radical new changes in Mankind’s faculties and connection with Spirit. To make sense of this new



Tyrol by Franz Marc painted in 1913 and retouched in 1914

Editorial

News / Membership

Events

Articles / Lecture

Meditation

phenomenon we need Anthroposophy, and it is our task to understand the language of the etheric. Spiritual Science is the Herald of The Etheric Christ, as John was the Herald for the physical Christ. Richard gave us an enthusiastic invitation to “think differently” (thoughts with informed feeling/Michaelic thinking) and to be active in loving what needs to come about for the future, for love is a force that can bring great change. Then, in a most moving way, Richard used a painting of Franz Marc’s – “Tyrol” 1914 (which Marc painted after his experiences in the trenches of WW1) – to show how this sensitive artist’s soul was able to find meaning behind the apparent meaningless devastation about him, and reveal the appearance of Christ in the etheric.

To end, I wish that we may have the opportunity to share time together during the visit of Claus-Peter Röh, in January, and that our Anthroposophical life in the new year be an awakening – as individuals, as a Community and in service to the World.

Caroline Hurner

## Events

### Annual Fundraiser in support of Anthroposophy

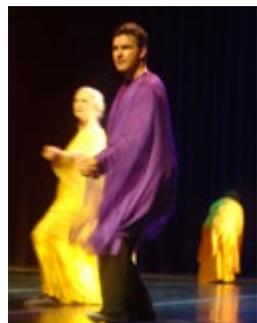
Dear Friends,

Our fundraiser was once again a wonderful evening in every aspect! We are so grateful to the wonderful artists who supported us with the most brilliant program and performance. So many people stopped at the exit to tell me how much they enjoyed it and that they are looking forward to coming again next year. I hope a tradition has started and that support will grow more and more.

Caroline and Debbie out did themselves as usual in their support - Thank you! Without them the evening wouldn't have been what it was. I also want to acknowledge the immense help and support of Michelle and Silke for contacting the musicians and organising the program and rehearsals. It was a great evening for Eurythmy too!

We doubled the income of last year with around 75 people attending and with some EFT donations bringing the total to R6110.00! I hope next year we will come closer to the magical 200 attendees so that through these evenings of quality performances, warm community life, and delicious snacks we may support the Anthroposophical Society (G.A.S, ASSA and ASWC) and the members who due to their pressing economic situation can't pay their fees in full (this includes the many dear friends who for years and years have supported the society, but who after retirement can no longer pay).

For me this is the best way to do this! – Cecilia Solis-Peralta



## Annual Fundraiser in support of Anthroposophy

'ARTISTIC EVENING OF WORLD MUSIC, SINGING & EURYTHMY



### Annual Fundraiser Report 2014 - 'Artistic Evening of World Music & Eurythmy'

#### Income

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| Tickets sale (at the door & pre-sales) | R 8 683.50        |
| EFTS (Donations)                       | R 880.00          |
|  | <b>R 9 563.50</b> |

#### Expenses

|                                |                   |                                  |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| Novalis                        | R 1 000.00        | Normal fee R2500. Discount R1500 |
| Svetlana Ivanova               | R 1 000.00        | Normal fee R1500. Discount R500  |
| Security                       | R 200.00          | R160 plus R40 tip for extra help |
| Flowers                        | R 132.00          |                                  |
| Programs                       | R 99.00           |                                  |
| Food Musians & Kairos students | R 250.00          |                                  |
| Food/ drinks ingredients       | R 567.00          |                                  |
| Posters & Tickets              | R 205.50          |                                  |
|                                | <b>R 3 453.50</b> |                                  |

#### Result

**R 6 110.00** Donation to cover sub shortfalls

#### Donations

##### ARTISTS

Kairos Eurythmy School (1st, 2nd & 3rd years)  
 Kairos Eurythmy Stage Group Performance (Perry Havranek, Silke Sponheuer and Michelle Kaplan)  
 Celeste & Rainhard Roux  
 Ingrid Salzmann  
 Tim Hyslop  
 Luke Townsend

##### Logistic & Admin

Logistic & Admin arrangements (Caroline, Debbie & Cecilia)  
 Logistic help on the night of the fundraiser (Caroline, Johanna, Cobie, Debbie, Cecilia & Novalis staff)

##### Food preparation

Hanna Hack & Caroline and Johanna - Food preparation

##### Design

Design of advertisement material (Cecilia)

## The Enigma that is Peter Guttenhöfer

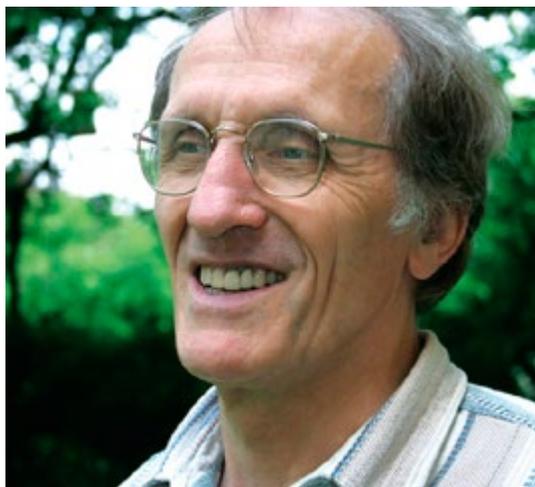
His plane landed, he stepped onto Cape Town soil, a week in Windhoek behind him – where days began before sun rise, collecting children along winding country roads for school, returning from lesson observations, teacher training, parent meetings late in the night. No wonder he touched down flu-ridden...

And then – ten days with thirty three lectures, a string of meetings, conversations till midnight, early rising - life is a race to beat the darkness, to find ways to keep the flame of light burning to complete our journey to Vulcan ... and we all gulped for air with him.

Every morning he gave lectures to the student teachers at the Centre for Creative Education, and fitted in a visit to 'Work for Love' in Noordhoek. Lunch meetings, afternoons for Pedagogical Section gatherings with practicing teachers, Social Initiative Forum at Zenzeleni, a lecture for High School teachers... Peter loves INITIATIVE and came prepared to share the initiative close to his heart – The Basic School Initiative. On to the Foot of the World Conference, giving three keynote lectures.

Saturday morning he gave a Class Lesson and a presentation to Class members. Then to Bloublommetjieskloof, Wellington for lunch and tea and over Bainskloof Pass to Hoekiesdam Biodynamic farm in Wolseley for the night and Sunday morning.

To McGregor for lunch, an afternoon walk and belated celebration of Michael's and my wedding anniversary – Peter was a witness



at our wedding just over five years ago. The next morning he visited the Breede Centre – our skills training initiative in McGregor, in the afternoon he spoke on Basic Schools, and in the evening he condensed into one presentation the three lectures he gave at the Foot of the World Conference! Next day a long walk with Michael to praise the freshly blooming flowers, ponder on questions arising from his visit and begin the planning for the next one... In the afternoon a presentation at the McGregor Waldorf School – fourteen to seventeen people at each of the three McGregor events. In the evening we watched the film 'Animal Communicator' which brought tears to all of our eyes and of course kept us talking and sipping cocoa till late in the night. The next morning he set off with Michael to Genadendal to visit what Michael calls the 'First Basic School', which, in modern day vernacular 'blew Peter's mind' – a MUST visit, especially for educators. And then, finally to the airport ... and home.

And now let us pause for some of the details...

### From Nicola Cox – founder of Work for Love

Work for Love unites communities by offering holistic, sustainable programmes that heal, empower and support. We took Peter to see the Siyakhula Educare in the heart of the Masiphumelele Township, and to

our newly acquired Chameleon Gardens properties where we can expand the Educare and hopefully begin a Primary School. Already we are offering courses in Early Childhood Development for Kindergarten teachers from Masiphumelele and Ocean View through the Centre for Creative Education and Eefka Young. After Peter had a good look at everything we settled down with the teachers for a workshop on the future school. Peter got a spark in his eyes and became very excited when he saw the run down property with partly occupied shacks and the dilapidated main house. Like us he saw the potential. First he suggested a Waldorf Class 11 to help and fix up the place. He said that THAT would be perfect Waldorf Education. And truly from the next Monday six students from Constantia and Imhoff schools came and did just that for their two week social practical.

Then he advised us to keep it small and basic. He spoke of few children and the basics of learning. He passionately developed his thoughts on how children need to experience the daily activities performed by adults who make a meaningful living from gardening, looking after animals, harvesting, making bread, washing and fixing and making things. Ideal would be to have adults devoting about a third of their time with the education of the children and the rest in their meaningful activities – in this way children will learn all the necessary skills. The adults surrounding the child should be lovingly engaged in the activities the child is asked to do. The child would see adults for example writing and reading for pleasure. This is what will inspire a child. Many children nowadays do not see active adults and they are becoming immobile - confined to their rooms and TV/ computers, like their parents. Basic schools would include curriculum activities such as story time, but most of the time the child would be participating in adult work or be surrounded by it.

Our teachers were excited about this concept and thought of ways to incorporate the concepts into our planning of the grounds and how to incorporate the people already living on and near the land in the school environment. We left full of new ideas and possibilities. Peter managed to spark our thinking. It was a wonderful morning.

### The Social Initiative Forum

This Forum creates a platform for social initiatives inspired by Anthroposophy in Africa to share ideas and experiences and to connect to the growing movement worldwide. The Forum invited Peter Guttenhöfer to share his ideas on Basic Schools. This meeting at the Zenzeleni Waldorf School was attended by The Vulamasango (Open Gates) Orphan Project, Work for Love, Zenzeleni Waldorf School, Abalimi Organic Gardens Project, The Farm and Garden National Trust, and the Centre for Creative Education were all represented and spoke about their initiatives. Apologies were received from Novalis, Butterfly Art Project, Breede Centre and Africara.

Peter Guttenhoefer shared his views on the absolute priorities regarding the schooling of young children and the need to transform education - both mainstream and existing Waldorf structured schooling. He explained that as a Waldorf teacher and teacher trainer in Germany for 40 years and through his involvement in anthroposophy and his visits to schools in Middle Europe, South America



and Africa it is clear that while the Waldorf pedagogy in his view is the best schooling available to children today it is not meeting children in quite the way currently needed. He feels there is a decay happening in education that also affects Waldorf schools because of the way they are influenced by the requirements of the governments of countries, affecting children from an earlier and earlier age and because Waldorf schools are set up like mainstream schools where children sit at desks for much of the day – a fact not conducive to the natural way young children learn. His suggestion is that an attempt be made to maintain freedom from government control and too-early academic demands on young children for at least the pre-primary and lower primary years – first four years of formal education for children.

He feels that new learning and growing initiatives need to be started – to move away from schools as we know them today and for them not to be called ‘schools’ – he feels young children need to play and be included in daily activities alongside adults while they work – doing basic skills work – like working in a garden/farm, or working with caring for animals as on a farm, or while an adult goes about their daily work; carpentry, building furniture; making pots from clay; building/repairing equipment like machinery; sewing; washing dishes/clothing; cooking... While the

Waldorf schools do try to involve children in craft and hand work and gardening/farming experience work in a way that mainstream schools do not he feels it is still insufficient for what is needed by humanity. He emphasized that he is not advocating a return to the past and a movement away from technology and academic study – he is not rejecting what has been gained by humanity, rather proposing a different way of approaching how and when children are introduced to technology and academic study. He gave examples of the need for encouraging the development of basic skills and of the need to develop an awareness of working together in community, in a consciously caring way with nature and each other, of a real understanding and interest in agriculture. A lively discussion followed with many questions and ideas shared.

### From Wendy Lilje, farmer, Blou-blommetjieskloof Biodynamic Farm

Peter’s visit - well - he arrived with Michael and Eastlynne, in the pouring rain – a warm lunch was waiting and we immediately set to, after a wonderful Russian blessing from Peter. During the meal Peter told us a bit about his connection to Iran - which was interesting for me as I too have a connection there - and his work in Russia. We spoke a bit about farming in general and his



visit to the farm when Jeanne was still alive. Then an animated conversation about the idea of a Basic School on the farm with Ishaan, my son and co-farmer, followed by a Bloublommetjies Special (cappuccino). Peter then requested a quick walk up to Jeanne’s house and her grave - which we did – in the pouring rain. Peter seemed totally delighted with everything he encountered on the way - picking some wild fynbos to take home – “to put in a bottle and smell from time to time, to remember” - and then a quick wet goodbye and they were off.

### From Aletta Venter, Hoekiesdam Biodynamic Farm

We talked late into the night about the possibility of a Basic School on the farm, where children could learn from healthy farm activities and routines, and be truly educated into life amongst caring adults working around them. The child’s natural inclination to imitate will inculcate the work ethic he experiences around him. ‘It will take courage’, Peter said, ‘for parents to break away from the formal school idea, and come together on the farm to teach the children whilst doing the farm tasks’. ‘Start with two or three dedicated families’, he encouraged, ‘It is important that the people working on the farm have the feeling that they are masters at what they do, and not unskilled labourers uninspired by what they are doing.’ And so the seed has been planted...

### The Breede Centre in McGregor

The Breede Centre is a fledgling skills training centre aiming to cultivate self-reliant young people who can use their skills and practical initiative to work in the world with confidence.

Pieter Holloway (manager) and I (coordinator) met with Peter for the whole morning. It was wonderful to see two such animated people inspire each other. They were both almost jumping up and down with excitement! This is what Peter Guttenhöfer has written: ‘Given the large unemployment of young people in many countries of the world

it is one of the most important tasks for us educators to provide young people with an opportunity to learn what is really needed in the world. These are agriculture and the crafts, even if all the world holds the opposite is true! Even if all people today yearn not to have to work hard with their hands! The initiators of the Breede Centre in McGregor, are committed to build such a training facility. For me, who has worked for 42 years at the Kassel Waldorf school in Germany, which has a full state-recognized vocational training integrated into their high school, it was a special pleasure to see the initial effort for this wonderful project when I was in McGregor. I wish the brave ones who do this important initiative a lot of strength and a lot of help and encouragement from other people who can read the signs of the times.’



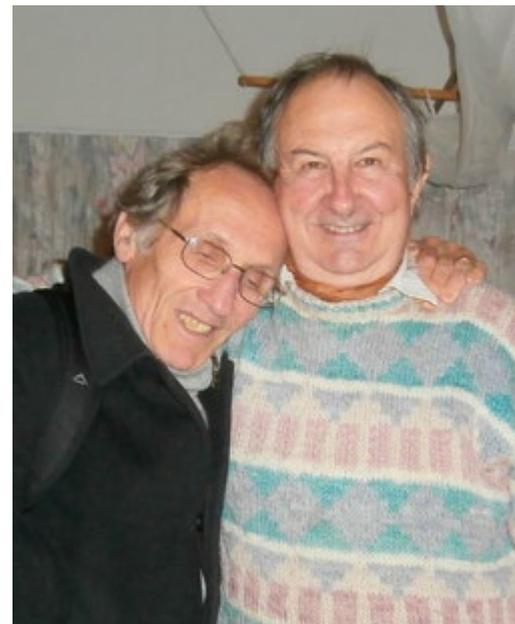
### From Grethe Botha – teacher at the McGregor Waldorf Primary School and McGregor College (High School)

Most teachers attended the talks on the previous day, but those meeting Peter for the first time were quite astonished at his thought provoking approach. What is the purpose of school as we know it? School as we know it now was actually made for a time before our time! Who still writes? Everyone is typing and texting. Who still reads? Who cleans and cooks? Who grows food? Parents and Society still expect children to learn these skills but why are they not inspired to learn?

The teacher's becoming meets the reality of the child. The 'present' teacher cannot teach the child of the present. The teacher needs to meet the past of the child with reverence (who was he or she in previous lifetimes?), and needs to have enthusiasm for the future of the child. The present child cannot be met with an authoritarian approach – this would be a Luciferic approach. The child should also not be left alone to follow what he or she wants – this would be an Ahrimanic approach. The teacher needs to accompany the child in all that he or she is learning by mobilizing musical forces within to work on the child's sculptural forces. Inspire enthusiasm by working with the child, consciously composing and orchestrating the learning process.

And so, with creative thoughts to chew on until his next visit, we warmly thanked Peter, said goodbye and wished him well on his journey to ever new creative ideas. We would especially like to thank Michael Grimley for master minding Peter's visit, to Richard and Nicola Cox for hosting him in Cape Town, Wendy Lilje and Aletta Venter for hosting him on their farms and Katleen Verschoore for hosting him in McGregor. Also a big thank you to Cecilia who carried all the organisational details of Peter's work at Sophia House, the Centre for Creative Education for caring for Peter's lunches, and Richard Cox and Michael Oak for organising and hosting Peter's presentation for High School teachers.

Briar Grimley



## Eurythmy Conference, Cape Town – October

'Rhythm - the breath and pulse of life'- was the theme of our conference and it was a rich and lively sharing between all of us participants.

We started off each day with a 'simple' rhythmical form exercise: breathing together, joy of being together, the choriambus. This took up the theme of the conference in a humble but definite way, using a meter in which the inner and the outer come into a fine breathing relationship.

In different sessions and talks, this relationship was again and again brought to our awareness – the apple blossom shows in its form the path of Venus – the fennel head, an image of the collaboration of Sun, Jupiter and Mars. The whole human being is immersed and configured by cosmic rhythms.

We 'people of today' are asked to awaken to these life-giving rhythms, work consciously with them and create anew our own relationship with them.

What is the eurythmist asked to do in tone eurythmy? "The shorter the length of the notes the more filled with life does your soul become.... Long slow notes denote a certain indifference or emptiness of soul .....Duration of tone expresses a certain participation in the world outside, a contact with the world" (GA 278 R. Steiner). Between an awakening (short) and dreaming (long), moving from one into the other, we enliven our soul forces. What a rich and healing medium music is!

We were witnesses of the movement used in rhythmical massage to stimulate and harmonise the life forces of a patient and heard how we can support and strengthen the growing plant using the planting calendar.

As experienced with music, the colours, the rhythm of colour, moved and made our body feel like a newly strung instrument.

Towards the end of three days we still entered the world of fairy tales, the rhythmic unfolding of a story: the human being on a path, contracting and expanding, evolving (the evolutionary sequence, the colour movements, the four elements used to create the images into a moving space).

Living consciously with the healing rhythms of life, we come under the ruling influence of Raphael (Mercury) and Michael. (The Mercury seal is on all our eurythmy books!)

The Mercury Staff experienced anew through form drawing in our last session gave us, as mentioned in the review, a feeling of utmost joy.

Each day was very stimulating. A thank you to all of the participants, the people who brought contributions and shared their work and last but not least, the organization team.

Christine Allsop

(Eurythmy Teacher and Therapist, based in Johannesburg)



**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** Please notice that the office and library of the ASWC, will be closed for our annual 4 week holiday, from Monday 15 December, until Monday 13 January.

# Articles

## KARLSTEIN

Karlstein had no significance for me before my first visit there.

I knew absolutely nothing about it. I was invited on a weekend tour to Prague by a friend in 1967 and she requested the guide to put Karlstein on the agenda.

The visit to Karlstein made an impact on me as no other visit to cathedral, museum or burg did, except perhaps the St. Vite's Cathedral, also in Prague and also built by Charles I of Bohemia, Emperor Charles IV. In fact Prague altogether impressed me in spite of the oppression that I noticed in the expression of the people at that time.

What amazed me most was the visit to the final and most important chapel at Karlstein. To get to it we had to progress up a stairway.

I was ahead with the guide the rest of the party following further behind. We did not speak. And then to my astonishment I heard the walls singing. It was a light singing sound, for me a wonder. When we entered the Chapel I sensed a purity in the atmosphere. I had experienced this once before in a sunken holy Indian temple in Durban where I had sat in meditation. It is as when the fire has consumed all the material leaving only ashes and nothingness.

There was a blaze of colour from the many portraits on the walls. They were in rows, each one in its own frame. Beneath the portraits the walls were covered with large inlaid semi-precious stones. The vault was layered in gold with the sun, moon and stars glimmering above. A gold glitter divided the chapel from West to East. The altar was behind this screen in the North. All was a glimmer and yet it was not overpowering. There was a sense of peace and wonder as some of us sat in the deep window niches looking down at

the road far below. All the members were in awe of their surroundings.

The guide was talking and then he told us that only Bishops and Archbishops were allowed to serve mass at the altar. I could barely capture what he said only half understanding the language. But it dawned on me – Yes, I can sense this sacredness even after so long a time, and from then on I wanted to know who this Individual was who had built Karlstein?

So it was that I went from *experience* on the quest to understand of King Charles I, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV.

The first person I asked told me that Rudolf Steiner had said that Emperor Charles IV was the last initiate to sit upon the Emperor's throne!

Charles was the last in the line of the Premyslid dynasty. His Mother, Elizabeth married Johannes of Luxemburg who showed little interest in Bohemia. He spent much of his time on conquests in Italy. Charles spent a great part of his youth in France and in service of his Father on his journeys over the Alps. In this time he experienced his Father's enthusiasm for the knighthood in search of the Grail.

While in France at the age of sixteen he met Peter Roger, Abbot of Fécamp. This was a significant meeting as Charles felt an immediate connection to Peter Roger who became his mentor. Later Peter Roger became Pope Clemence VI. Charles remained loyal to Pope Clemence who also supported Charles in many of his works.

However the loyalty to the Church hampered Charles in the outer expression of that which lived esoterically within him. He had a strong inner leaning towards esoteric Christianity. At the same



time he saw his duty as a ruler, as a task given to him by the Divine world. He was very capable in all that he did also in practical work with his hands. He was not afraid of physical labour and encouraged his followers also in this pursuit.

He saw it as one of his greatest tasks to rebuild Prague. He built churches and the Charles Bridge. He gave his name to many of his buildings which was unusual at that time.

Charles wanted to start a spiritual Brotherhood. However due to the inquisition having taken place shortly before his birth – 1316 – the idea was frowned upon and considered to be heretical. There was a fear that it would be a continuation of the Knights Templars. At the time of the Inquisition some of the Templars escaped to Bohemia.

It appears that Charles needed to keep his inner work in silence – in isolation - so to speak.

Charles felt himself very strongly as part of the Premyslid dynasty of which he was the last. He felt himself far more Bohemian than Luxemburgian. However his Luxemburg heritage softened

the hardness which the Premyslid rulers experienced after the murder of Saint Wenceslaus in the tenth century. Bolaslav, the brother and murderer of Wenceslaus who was educated by his Grandmother, Saint Ludmilla, a devout Christian, wished to bring Bohemia back into the Pagan religion. King Charles's interest in Wenceslaus was strong and he wrote a book of legends about him. This was one impulse. Pictures of the life of Wenceslaus adorn the walls of the staircase leading up to the Kreuzkapelle.

Another strong impulse was his love for relics, and the Apocalypse.

In 1348 the foundation stone for Karlstein was laid. In 1347 Charles installed Johann von Dammbach, a pupil of Johannes Tauler, as teacher in the prospective University of Prague. Two months after the laying of the foundation stone, Charles met Johannes Tauler in Strasburg and had an intensive private conversation with him. There was a strong understanding between them. It could have been that through this incident a connection to the Friends of God of Oberland was made. It

was not possible for Charles to outwardly follow this impulse because of his connection to Pope Clemence VI. However he gave his support to the Friends of God. It was as if it was his destiny to work outwardly into the world especially Europe.

It is as if Charles stood in the middle of the spiritual stream which is carried in the Grail and by the Knight's Templars and later the Friends of God of Oberland. Christian Rosencreutz also would have started his work about the time that Charles met Tauler. It is thought that this meeting could have had a strong impact on the Karlstein building.

But strongest of all was the Grail impulse.

The Apocalypse also played a major part in the building of Karlstein.

Charles carried the concept of the Trinity - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. His approach to the building was three fold - body, soul and spirit. It was the time when the church had done away with the spirit and laid down the rule that there was only body and soul. This took place at the 8th ecumenical council in 869 AD. The whole building is based on the Grail.

In the approach to Karlstein, the Burg appears as a great surprise, unlike the castles in the Middle Ages which dominated the towns where they were located. Karlstein, 16 kms from Prague is situated in thick forest surrounded by hills and one follows a path and all at once it is there - large and impressive. As in the Grail Castle one comes upon Karlstein suddenly. It is hidden. It is built on a steep slope on three levels - rising from the palace, or living quarters of the King to the next building which could be reached by a bridge (a later addition) from the palace. There are basically three buildings or towers, each one a level higher than the one below. Rudolf Steiner once spoke to the students of the Waldorf School in Stuttgart about the Grail.

He said that the word 'Gral' comes from 'gradalis' - stage by stage. In such a way Karlstein is built.

The first building is the Palace, the living quarters for Charles where the day to day physical needs were carried out - here we are on a physical level. The out buildings are also on this level.

On the second level is a building in which there are two chapels. One, the Marienkirche, Mary's Church, which was originally meant to be a meeting room but later changed into a church to house the relics which Charles collected. Adjoining this church was a smaller chapel also named Marienkirche but the name was changed in about the 17th century to the Katherinenkapelle (St Catherine's Chapel). Here Charles would stay and meditate in isolation. There was a small hole at the bottom of the North wall through which important papers for his perusal were passed. Higher up in the wall was a hole in which a lit candle was placed at night.

The walls of the Katherinenkappelle were adorned with precious stones. The roof was vaulted with arches and on the North wall adjoining the Marienkirche were seven portraits of saints - Ludmilla, Wenzel, Veit, Prokop, Adalbert, Cyril and Methodus. Cyril and Methodus introduced Greek Orthodox Christianity to Czechoslovakia.

On the East wall of this small chapel was the altar. Below was a scene of the crucifixion and above in a niche was a fresco of the Madonna sitting on a throne with the child Jesus. This fresco was damaged. The chapel with its strong colours and the glow of the precious stones could make a deep impression.

On the South wall of the Marienkirche - that adjoining the Katherininkappelle - were depicted scenes around the relics. For Charles the adoration of relics meant an experiencing of the eternal in the temporal, the spiritual in the material. The church does not have a vaulted ceiling as it was not originally meant to be a chapel. It was



changed into a church in order to house the relics. They were later removed to the Chapel of the Holy Cross.

What is perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the Marienkirche are the frescos depicting the Apocalypse. There were about nineteen of them altogether. The East wall showed the darker aspects of the Apocalypse and the West wall the lighter. These were (1): The Seven Angels; (2): The Woman fleeing the dragon with the seven heads and ten horns into the desert and (3): The Madonna with the Child clothed in the Sun with the stars around her head and the Moon beneath her feet.

The picture on the left depicts the Angels in light blue guided by Michael fighting the Demons in the depths of the darkness. Above the Angels are Angels in terra-cotta who are in a gesture of waiting. These Angels are not depicted in the bible which is indicative of another influence apart from the Apocalypse in the building of Karlstein by Charles.

In the Middle Ages people wanted to bring into focus the Apocalypse as a path of experience



towards the New Jerusalem. The collection of relics was also a way of devotion in that time.

On the second level, one experienced the frescos of the Apocalypse in a soul mood in the Marienkapelle. Here too Charles experienced in deep meditation a preparation for the further progress to the third and highest Chapel – the Spiritual – the New Jerusalem.

We progress from the Second level to the Third and highest level.

On the walls of this stairway were frescos depicting the life of Saint Wenceslaus and some of Saint Ludmilla his grandmother.

It was in the Kreuzkapelle – die Kapelle des Kreuzes (the Chapel of the Holy Cross) that Charles expressed the New Jerusalem. This Chapel symbolises the New Jerusalem.

It also symbolises the Grail castle.

The Kreuzkapelle is also threefold in its structure. The walls are again adorned with semi-precious stones along the bottom half. These are in the form of a cross embossed in gold. Nine types of stone are chosen of which seven are mentioned in the description of the heavenly Jerusalem in the Revelation of St. John. This is the mineral world. Above there are many portraits of prophets, martyrs, saintly rulers and knights, pious widows and virgins, beautifully painted. These portraits are not of the full figure. Only the head and the gestures of the hands are shown. Here the countenance is the mirror of the Soul and the gestures of the hands also depict this. By some of the portraits a small niche is made in which a relic was placed.

The Vault is in Gold and there the Sun, Moon and Stars are shining down. The use of Gold in particular was a symbol of the New Jerusalem. Charles also used this in the St. Vites Cathedral in Prague. Here the Spirit is symbolised.

There are also frescos of the Apocalypse in the niches – of God on the Throne of the lamb and more.



Karlstein stands between two worlds. It is situated in the centre of Europe between East and West and between the Greek Orthodox Christianity (introduced by Cyrill and Methodus in Moravia) and the Roman Catholic Church in the West. In time Charles stood between the Intellectual Soul with a glimmering of the Consciousness Soul.

Shortly after his death the way was open for the Reformation of John Huss.

Margaretha Wegerif

**We are looking forward to Part II of this article in our next newsletter.**

The following books were referred to:

- 1) "Karlstein" by Michael Eschborn. Verlag Urachhaus Stuttgart – 1971.
- 2) "Geistimpulse in der Geschichte des tschechischen Volkes von den Ursachen bis Karl IV" by Hanna Kramer-Steiner. J. Ch. Mellinger Verlag Stuttgart – 1971.

## The Matrix – Reflections on Michaelmas

In 1999 the film *The Matrix* was released. In it humans live in a virtual reality created by machines, in order to subdue humans and keep them from realizing that their world is controlled by super-intelligent machines. Once Neo, the lead character, has understood this, he learns to manipulate the Matrix and acquire seemingly super-human faculties.

This theme can remind us of Plato's cave parable. We can also see it as an image of the world we live in at present. When we reflect upon "the world", what comes to mind? Wars, crime, corrupt politicians, climate change.... It can be quite depressing and leave us with a feeling of powerlessness.

But how do we *know* all that? Through the media. Very little of it is our personal experience. We see the world through the lens of the media, which is controlled mainly by governments and multinational corporations. Are they really interested in telling us the truth about the world? We can doubt it. They certainly do not tell us the whole truth. Their story serves to make us feel powerless, pinning our hopes on - or directing our frustrations at – the governments and whatever authorities.

Could it be that there is another reality out there which escapes our awareness, a reality which might be much more relevant, encouraging and empowering than the media's main stream reality?

Enter Eben Alexander, an accomplished neurosurgeon in the United States. One night he is attacked by a severe headache and shortly afterwards a seizure. His last words to his wife are that she must not call paramedics, everything will be OK, he knows what's going on, he is a brain expert after all. Well, he did not know.

In the hospital they finally find the cause: E-coli bacteria have entered his spinal fluid, are multiplying exponentially and are attacking his brain; they virtually devour it – hence the spasms. How did they get there? Their place is in the intestines and there are impenetrable barriers between them and the brain. This remains an unsolved mystery. They are also a strain resistant to antibiotics, and the condition of Dr. Alexander deteriorates rapidly. He is in a deep coma, is in intensive care with artificial breathing. Only the lowest brain functions can still be detected.

After a week the doctors lose hope. Even if he did ever regain consciousness, the brain damage would be severe, he would never be the person he was previously, and the machines should be switched off. His wife and his young son are desperate, they ask for some hours' extension. The son prays with all his heart for his father to come back. This turns out to be crucial.

And the miracle happens. Dr. Alexander opens his eyes and asks the assembled people what they are doing here? Everybody, especially the doctors, are stunned. It takes several weeks for Dr. Alexander to recover fully and he is keen to tell his story. While he was virtually brain dead, he had the most amazing experiences. I will not even attempt to recount them, you can read them in his amazing book *Proof of Heaven*. They convinced him that we can be conscious without a brain, that the reality experienced then appears even much more real than our so-called reality, that we are spiritual beings in a physical body and that the foundations of our world are spirit. It is also clear to him that all our modern brain science cannot explain his experiences. He had heard stories of near death experiences before; his own patients had talked about it, but he had

always smiled: Yes, of course, these were brain functions, meant to alleviate the harsh reality of dying – nothing spiritual! Now he knew better. From a materialistic neurosurgeon he had been converted to a firm believer in the reality of spirit.

Is his experience unique? Not at all. According to a Gallup survey in the United States eight million (yes: 8 000 000!) people have had near death experiences, certainly not all as dramatic and elaborate as the one of Dr. Alexander – but this is by any measure a HUGE number! And these experiences have changed lives permanently!

These experiences speak of a different reality from that of our media that love is the supreme force in the universe; that we are not specks of dust but spirits on an earthly mission; that there are higher beings who love and care for us.

This reality is hidden from the eyes of most people. It must be searched to be found. In that sense it is an occult truth. It is the truth Michael wants us to know. There are powers who do not want us to know it. They use the media to create a virtual reality, a “matrix” of fear and a sense of powerlessness.

It is important to never lose sight of this reality.

Martin Wigand, Michaelmas 2014



## High School Spiritual Science Conference 2015

The countrywide High School Conference will be hosted at Sophia House from the evening of 9 January, till lunch time Monday 12 January.

The theme is extended from last year's namely 'Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition' and gladly, Claus-Peter Roh from Dornach will be joining us.



## Claus-Peter Röh's visit to South Africa 2015

### Workshop and Lectures in Cape Town

We are very happy to announce that Claus-Peter Röh (the co-leader of the Paedagogical Section) will be again visiting us in 2015.

Peter will be offering 3 lectures (see details below) and 3 practical workshops in Cape Town on Meditative Practice. He will also be attending HSSS Retreat and the Teachers' sharing conference, before leaving for Johannesburg.

### Claus-Peter Röh - 2015 Programme in Cape Town

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Friday, 9 Jan     | 5pm – <b>HSSS Retreat</b> starts – Sophia House   |
| Saturday, 10 Jan  | All day and evening – <b>HSSS Retreat</b> – Sophia House  |
| Sunday, 11 Jan    | All day and evening – <b>HSSS Retreat</b> – Sophia House  |
| Monday, 12 Jan    | Morning – <b>HSSS Retreat</b> – Sophia House  |
| Monday, 12 Jan    | Workshop: <b>Basic Meditative Practice I</b><br>– 5 till 6.30 pm  |
|                   | Lecture: <b>Awakening to Community in this present – Time of Individuality</b> –<br>– 7.30pm till 9.00 pm         |
| Tuesday, 13 Jan   | Workshop: <b>Basic Meditative Practice II</b><br>– 5 till 6.30 pm   |
|                   | Lecture: <b>How do we develop New Community-Forming Principles out of Anthroposophy.</b><br>– 7.30pm till 9.00 pm |
| Wednesday, 14 Jan | Workshop: <b>Basic Meditative Practice III</b><br>– 5 till 6.30 pm  |
|                   | Lecture: <b>Karmic Phenomena and their Meaning in Community Life.</b><br>– 7.30pm till 9.00 pm                    |

### Workshop and Lectures

For those who wish to attend both the Workshops and Lectures, there is the possibility to join a bring and share supper in Sophia Houses' 'Kitchen'.

Lectures and Workshops are R40 each for Non-members, R30 for Members and R25 for Pensioners and Students

Sophia House, 18 Firfield rd., Plumstead, Cape Town  
021 761 9600

## Sophia House

Lulama and Caroline “gardening activities.....!!! When next you visit Sophia House, please note the new area that they are opening up beneath the Palm tree!

# The Festivals and Their Meaning – Christmas

The Birth of the Sun-Spirit as the Spirit of the Earth – The Thirteen Holy Nights  
Lecture by Rudolf Steiner, Hanover, 26th December, 1911

When the candles are lit on the Christmas Tree, the human soul feels as though the symbol of an eternal reality were standing there, and that this must always have been the symbol of the Christmas Festival, even in a far distant past. For in the autumn, when outer Nature fades, when the sun's creations fall as it were into slumber and man's organs of outer perception must turn away from the phenomena of the physical world, the soul has the opportunity — nay not only the opportunity but the urge — to withdraw into its innermost depths, in order to feel and to experience: Now, when the light of the outer sun is faintest and its warmth feeblest, now is the time when the soul withdraws into the darkness but can find within itself the inner, spiritual Light. The lights on the Christmas Tree stand there before us as a symbol of the inner, spiritual Light that is kindled in the outer darkness. And because what we feel to be the spirit-light of the soul shining into the darkness of Nature seems to be an eternal reality, we imagine that the lighted fir-tree shining out to us on Christmas Night must have been shining ever since our earthly incarnations began.

And yet it is not so. It is only one or at most two centuries ago that the Christmas Tree became a symbol of the thoughts and feelings which arise in man at the Christmas season. The Christmas Tree is a recent symbol but each year anew it reveals to man a great, eternal truth. That is why we imagine that it must always have existed, even in the remote past. It is as if from the Christmas Tree itself there resounded the proclamation of the Divine in the cosmic expanse, in the heavenly heights. The human being can feel this to be the unfailing source of those forces of peace in his soul which spring from good-will. And thus, according to the Christmas Legend, did the

proclamation also resound when the shepherds visited the birthplace of the Child whose festival we celebrate on Christmas Day. To the shepherds there rang forth from the clouds: From the cosmic expanse, from the heavenly heights, the Divine Powers are revealing themselves, bringing peace to the human soul that is filled with good-will.

For centuries and centuries men could not bring themselves to believe that the symbol presented to the world in the Christmas Festival ever had a beginning. They felt in it the hallmark of eternity. Christian ritual has for this reason clothed the intimation of eternity in what takes place symbolically on Christmas Night, in the words: 'To us Christ is born anew!' It is as though every year the soul is called upon to feel anew a reality of which it is thought that it could happen once and once only. The eternity of this symbolic happening is brought home to us with infinite power if we have the true conception of the symbol itself. Yet as late as 353 A.D., 353 years after Christ Jesus had appeared on earth, the birth of Jesus was not celebrated, even in Rome. The Festival of Jesus' birth was celebrated for the first time in Rome in the year A.D. 354. Before then this Festival was not celebrated between the 24th and 25th December; the day of supreme commemoration for those who understood something of the deep wisdom relating to the Mystery of Golgotha, was the 6th of January. The Epiphany was celebrated as a kind of Birth-Festival of the Christ during the first three centuries of our era. It was the Festival which was meant to revive in human souls the remembrance of the descent of the Christ Spirit into the body of Jesus of Nazareth at the Baptism by John in the Jordan. Until the year A.D. 353 the happening which men conceived to have taken place at the Baptism was commemorated on the 6th of January as the Festival of Christ's birth.

For during the first centuries of Christendom an inkling still survived of the mystery that is of all mysteries the most difficult for mankind to grasp, namely, the descent of the Christ Being into the body of Jesus of Nazareth.

What were the feelings of men who had some inkling of the secrets of Christianity during those early centuries? They said to themselves: The Christ Spirit weaves through the world that is revealed through the senses and through the human spirit. In the far distant past this Christ Spirit revealed Himself to Moses. The secret of the human 'I' resounded to Moses as it resounds to us from the symbol on the Christmas Tree from the sounds I A O — the Alpha and the Omega, preceded by the I. This was what resounded in the soul of Moses when the Christ Spirit appeared to him in the burning bush. And this same Christ Spirit led Moses to the place where He was to recognise Him in His true being. This is described in the Old Testament where it is said that the Lord led Moses to Mount Nebo 'over against Jericho' and showed him what must still come to pass before the Christ Spirit could incarnate in the body of a man. To Moses on Mount Nebo, this Spirit said: But thou to whom I revealed myself in advance, mayest not bear what thou hast in thy soul into the evolution of thy people; for they have first to prepare what is to come to pass when the time is fulfilled.

And when, through many centuries, the evolutionary preparation had been completed, the same Spirit by Whom Moses had been held back, did indeed reveal Himself — by becoming Flesh, by taking on a human body, the body of Jesus of Nazareth. Therewith mankind as a whole was led from the stage of Initiation signified by the word 'Jericho' to that indicated by the crossing of the Jordan.

The hearts and minds of those who in the early centuries of our era understood the true import of Christianity turned to the Baptism in the Jordan of Jesus of Nazareth into whom Christ descended,

Christ the Sun-Earth-Spirit. It was this — the birth of Christ — that was celebrated as a Mystery in the early Christian centuries. The insight for which we prepare ourselves to-day through Anthroposophy, through the wisdom belonging to the fifth Post-Atlantean epoch of civilisation, flashed up in the form of vision from the vestiges of ancient clairvoyance still surviving during the age when the Mystery of Golgotha took place; it flashed up in the Gnostics, those remarkable, enlightened men who lived at the turning-point of the old and the new eras, whose conception of the Christ Mystery differed in respect of form but not in respect of content, from our own. What the Gnostics were able to teach trickled through into the world and although what had actually come to pass in the event indicated symbolically by the Baptism in the Jordan was not widely understood, there was nevertheless an inkling that the Sun Spirit had been born at that time as the Spirit of the Earth, that a cosmic Power had dwelt in the body of a man of earth. And so in the early centuries of Christendom the festival of the birth of Christ in the body of Jesus of Nazareth, the festival of Christ's Epiphany, was celebrated on the 6th of January.

But insight, even dim, uncertain insight into this deep Mystery faded away more and more as time went by. The age came when men could no longer comprehend that the Being called Christ had been present in a physical human body for three years only. More and more it will be realised that what was accomplished for the whole of earth-evolution during those three years in the physical body of a man is one of the very deepest and most difficult Mysteries to understand. From the fourth century onwards, with the approach of the materialistic age, the powers of the human soul — then still at the stage of preparation — were not strong enough to grasp the deep Mystery which from our time on will be understood in ever greater measure. And so it came about that to the same extent to which the outer power of Christianity increased, inner understanding of

the Christ Mystery decreased and the festival of the 6th of January ceased to have any essential meaning. The birth of Christ was placed thirteen days earlier and envisaged as coincident with the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. But in this very fact we are confronted by something that must always be a source of inspiration and thanksgiving. Actually, the 24th/25th of December was fixed as the day of Christ's Nativity because a great truth had been lost, as we have heard. And yet ... although the error would seem to point to the loss of a great truth, such profound meaning lay behind it that — although the men responsible knew nothing of it — we cannot but marvel at the subconscious wisdom with which the festival of Christmas Day was instituted.

Verily, the working of Divine wisdom can be seen in the fixing of this festival. Just as Divine wisdom can be perceived in outer nature if we know how to decipher what reveals itself there, so we can perceive Divine wisdom working in the unconscious soul of man when the following is borne in mind. In the Calendar, the 24th of December is the day dedicated to Adam and Eve, the following day being the Festival of Christ's Nativity. Thus the loss of an ancient truth caused the date of Christ's birth to be placed thirteen days earlier and to be identified with the birth of Jesus of Nazareth — but in a most wonderful way the birth of Jesus of Nazareth was linked with the thought of man's origin in earth-evolution, his origin in Adam and Eve. All the dim feelings and experiences connected with this festival of Jesus' birth which were alive in the human soul — although in their upper consciousness, men had no knowledge of what lay behind — all these feelings that were astir in the depths of the soul speak a wondrous language.

When understanding was lost of what had streamed from cosmic worlds in the event which would rightly have been celebrated on the 6th of January, forces working in hidden depths of the soul caused the picture to be presented of

man as a being of soul-and-spirit before physical embodiment, at the starting-point of evolution as a physical human being. The picture is of the new-born child whose soul is as yet untouched by the effects of contact with the physical body, of the child at the beginning of physical evolution on earth. But this is not a human child in the ordinary sense; it is the child who was there before human beings had reached the point of the first physical embodiment in earth-evolution. This is the being known in the Kabbala as Adam Kadmon — Man who descended from divine-spiritual heights, with all that he had acquired during the periods of Saturn, Sun and Moon. The human being in his spiritual state at the very beginning of earth-evolution, born in the Jesus Child — this was presented to mankind by a Divine wisdom in the festival of Jesus' birth. At a time when it was no longer possible to understand what had descended from cosmic worlds, from heavenly spheres, to the earth, remembrance of their origin, of their state before the advent of the Luciferic forces in earth-evolution was engraved into the souls of men. And when it was no longer realised that in the highest and truest sense it could be said of the Baptism by John in the Jordan: From cosmic worlds there has come into human souls the power of the self-revealed Godhead, in order that peace may reign among men who are of goodwill — when understanding of how this picture could be presented as a sacred festival was lost, another affirmation was presented in its place, the affirmation that at the beginning of earth revolution, before the Luciferic forces began their work, man had a nature, an entelechy that can inspire him with undying hope.

The Jesus of the Gospel of St. Luke — not the Jesus described in the Gospel of St. Matthew — is the Child before whom the shepherds worship. To them the proclamation rang forth: Now is the Divine revealed from the heavenly heights, bringing peace to the souls of men who are of good-will. And so for the centuries when the higher reality was beyond man's grasp, the

festival was instituted which every year brings to his remembrance: Although you cannot gaze into the heavenly heights and there recognise the great Sun-Spirit, you bear within you, from the time of your earthly beginning, the Child-Soul in its state of purity, unsullied by the effects of physical incarnation; and the forces of this Child-Soul can give you the firm confidence that you can be victorious over the lower nature which clings to you as the result of Lucifer's temptation. The linking of the festival of Jesus' birth with remembrance of Adam and Eve gave emphasis to the thought that at the place visited by the shepherds a human soul had been born in the state of innocence in which the soul existed before the first incarnation on earth.

At this time of festival, therefore, since the birth of the God was no longer understood, the birth of a human being was commemorated. For however greatly man's forces threaten to decline and his sufferings to take the upper hand, there are two unfailing sources of peace, harmony and strength. We are led to the first source when we look out into cosmic space, knowing it to be pervaded by the weaving lift, movement and warmth of the Divine Spirit. And if we hold fast to the conviction that this Divine-Spiritual Power weaving through the universe can permeate our being provided only that our forces do not flag — there we have the Easter thought, equally a source of hope and confidence flowing from the cosmic spheres. And the second source can spring from the dim inkling that as a being of soul-and-spirit, before he became the prey of the Luciferic forces at the beginning of his earthly evolution, man was still part of the same Spirit now awaited from cosmic worlds as in the Easter thought. Turning to the source to be found in man's own, original being, before the onset of the Luciferic influence, we can say to ourselves: Whatever may befall you, whatever may torment you and draw you down from the shining spheres of the spirit, your divine origin is an eternal reality, hidden though it be in the depths of the soul. Recognition of this innermost

power of the soul will give birth to the firm assurance that the heights are within your reach. And if you conjure before your soul all that is innocent, childlike, free from life's temptations, free from all that has already befallen human souls through the many incarnations since the beginning of earthly evolution, then you will have a picture of the human soul as it was before these earthly incarnations began.

But one soul — one soul only — remained in this condition, namely the soul of the Jesus Child described in the Gospel of St. Luke. This soul was kept back in the spiritual life when the other human souls began to pass through their incarnations on the earth. This soul remained in the guardianship of the holiest Mysteries through the Atlantean and Post-Atlantean epochs until the time of the events in Palestine. Then it was sent forth into the body predestined to receive it and became one of the two Jesus children — the Child described in the Gospel of St. Luke.

Thus did the festival of Christ's Nativity become the festival of the Birth of Jesus.

If we rightly understand this festival we must say: That which we believe to be born anew symbolically every Christmas Night, is the human soul in its original nature, the childhood-spirit of man as it was at the beginning of earth-evolution; then it descended as a revelation from the heavenly heights. And when the human heart can become conscious of this reality, the soul is filled with the unshakable peace that can bear us to our lofty goals, if we are of goodwill. Mighty indeed is the word that can resound to us on Christmas Night, do we but understand its import.

Why was it that the festival of Christ's birth was set back thirteen days and became the festival of the birth of Jesus? To understand this we must penetrate into deep mysteries of human existence. Of outer nature, man believes, because he sees it with his eyes, that what the rays of the sun charm forth from the depths of the earth,

unfolding into beauty through the spring and summer, withdraws into those same depths at the time when the outer sun-sphere is darkest, and that what will spring forth again the following year is being prepared in the seeds within the depths of the earth. Because his eyes bear witness, man believes that the seed of the plant passes through a yearly cycle, that it must go down into the earth's depths in order to unfold again under the warmth and light of the sun in spring. But to begin with, man has no notion that the human soul too passes through such a cycle. Nor is this revealed until he is initiated into the great mysteries of existence. Just as the force contained in the seed of every plant is bound up with the physical forces of the earth, so is the inmost being of the human soul bound up with the spiritual forces of the earth. And just as the seed of the plant sinks into the depths of the earth at the time we know as Christmas, so does the soul of man descend at that time into deep, deep spirit-realms, drawing strength from these depths as does the seed of the plant for its blossoming in spring. What the soul undergoes in these spirit-depths of the earth is entirely hidden from the ordinary consciousness. But for one whose eyes of spirit are opened the Thirteen Days and Thirteen Nights between the 24th of December and the 6th of January are a time of deep spiritual experience.

Parallel with the experience of the plant-seed in the depths of the natural earth, there is a spiritual experience in the earth's spirit-depths — verily a parallel experience. And the seer for whom this experience is possible either as the result of training or through inherited clairvoyant faculties, can feel himself penetrating into these spiritual depths. During this period of the Thirteen Days and Nights, the seer can behold what must come upon man because he has passed through incarnations which have been under the influence of the forces of Lucifer since the beginning of earthly evolution. The sufferings in Kamaloca that man must endure in the spiritual world because

Lucifer has been at his side since he began to incarnate on the earth — the dearest vision of all this is presented in the mighty Imaginations which can come before the soul during the Thirteen Days and Nights between the Christmas Festival and the Festival of the 6th of January, the Epiphany. At the time when the seed of the plant is passing through its most crucial period in the depths below, the human soul is passing through its deepest experiences. The soul gazes at a vista of all that man must experience in the spiritual worlds because, under Lucifer's influence, he alienated himself from the Powers by whom the world was created. This vision is clearest to the soul during these Thirteen Days and Nights. Hence there is no better preparation for the revelation of that Imagination which may be called the Christ Imagination and which makes us aware that by gaining the victory over Lucifer, Christ Himself becomes the Judge of the deeds of men during the incarnations affected by Lucifer's influence. The soul of the seer lives on from the festival of Jesus' birth to that of the Epiphany in such a way that the Christ Mystery is revealed. It is during these Thirteen Holy Days and Nights that the soul can grasp most deeply of all, the import and meaning of the Baptism by John in the Jordan.

It is remarkable that during the centuries of Christendom, wherever powers of spiritual sight developed in the right way, it was known to seers that vision penetrated most deeply during the period of the Thirteen Holy Nights at the time of the winter solstice. Many a seer — either schooled in the mysteries of the modern age or possessing inherited powers of clairvoyance — makes it evident to us that at the darkest point of the winter solstice the soul can have vision of all that man must undergo because of his alienation from the Christ Spirit, how adjustment and catharsis were made possible through the Mystery enacted in the Baptism by John in the Jordan and then through the Mystery of Golgotha, and how the

visions during the Thirteen Nights are crowned on the 6th of January by the Christ Imagination. Thus it is correct to name the 6th of January as the day of Christ's birth and these Thirteen Nights as the time during which the powers of seership in the human soul discern and perceive what man must undergo through his life in the incarnations from Adam and Eve to the Mystery of Golgotha.

During my visit to Christiania last year (Note 1) it was interesting to me to find the thought which in rather different words has been expressed in so many lectures on the Christ Mystery, embodied in a beautiful saga known as 'The Dream Legend.' Strange to say, it has come to the fore in Norway during the last ten to fifteen years and has become familiar to the people, although its origin is, of course, very much earlier. It is the legend which in a wonderfully beautiful way relates how Olaf Åsteson is initiated, as it were by natural forces, in that he falls asleep on Christmas Eve, sleeps through the Thirteen Days and Nights until the 6th of January, and lives through all the terrors which the human being must experience through the incarnations from the earth's beginning until the Mystery of Golgotha. And it relates how when the 6th of January has come, Olaf Åsteson has the vision of the intervention of the Christ Spirit in humanity, the Michael-Spirit being His forerunner. I hope that on some other occasion we shall be able to present this poem in its entirety, for then you will realise that consciousness of vision during the Thirteen Days and Nights survives even to-day, and is in fact, being revived. A few characteristic lines only will now be quoted. The poem begins:

Come listen to me and hear my song  
The song of a wonderful youth,  
I'll sing you of Olaf Åsteson  
Who slept many days — 'tis the truth.

'Twas Christmas Eve when down he lay  
And slept so long all unknowing,  
He never woke till the thirteenth day  
When to Church the people were going.  
Yes, it was Olaf Åsteson  
Who lay so long a-sleeping.

And so the poem goes on, relating how in his dream during the Thirteen Days and Nights, Olaf Åsteson is led through all that man must experience on account of Lucifer's temptation. A vivid picture is given of Olaf Åsteson's journey through the spheres where human beings have the experiences so often described in connection with Kamaloca, and of how the Christ Spirit, preceded by Michael, streams into this vision.

Thus with the coming of Christ in the Spirit, it will become more and more possible for men to know how the spiritual forces weave and hold sway and that the festivals have not been instituted by arbitrary opinions but by the cosmic wisdom which so often lies beyond the reach of men's consciousness yet works and reigns throughout history. This cosmic wisdom has placed the festival of the birth of Jesus at the beginning of the Thirteen Days. While the Easter Festival can always be a reminder that contemplation of the cosmic worlds will help us to find within ourselves the strength to conquer all that is lower, the Christmas thought — if we understand the festival which commemorates man's divine origin and the symbol before us on Christmas Day in the form of the Jesus Child — says to us ever and again that the powers which bring peace to the soul can be found within ourselves. True peace of soul is present only when that peace has sure foundations, that is to say, when it is a force enabling man to know: In thee lives something which, if truly brought to birth, can, nay must, lead thee to divine Heights, to divine Powers. (continue next page)

The lights on this tree are symbols of the light which shines and glows in our own souls when we grasp what is proclaimed to us by the Jesus Child in its own innocent being on Christmas Night: the inmost being of the human soul itself, which is innocent, strong, and peaceful for life's path to the highest goals of earth existence.

Let us allow these lights to say to us: if you, human soul, ever grow weak, if ever you believe that the goals of earth-existence are beyond your reach, think of our divine origin and become aware of those forces within yourself which are the forces of supreme Love.

And as you develop your highest potential, become inwardly aware of those forces which give you confidence and certainty in all your works, through all your life, now and in all ages of time to come.

## Christmas Mood

*Devotion guide my still soul*

*Deep into sacred Earth- Spaces*

*Where richly-coloured and sun resplendent*

*Celebration of all Beings*

*Resounds.*

*Christ gleams in Everything.*

*In strength of Calm*

*And Power of Peace*

*Grows Being's Hope*

*Stream Life's Light*

*To all creatures*

*In the Heavens*

*And on Earth.*

*(attributed to Rudolf Steiner)*