Announcing the Social Spirituality of the Future

"Just as in the physical, social life consists of deeds carried out in common, so we strive for common deeds in the spirit, really then for a social life in the supersensible."

(from *Notes from the Original Participants to the Youth Circle*)



Painting by Denis Schneider

CONTENTS

Introduction 3

Quakerism and the Practice of Consensus 7

George Fox and the Birth of Quakerism 8

The Practice of Quaker Consensus 12

Leadership / Stewardship 16

Dynamic Facilitation, Wisdom Councils and the Citizens Amendment 20

Choice-Creating and Dynamic Facilitation 21

The Wisdom Council and the Austrian Bürgerrat 26

The Citizens Amendment 31

A.A., 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts 34

The Individual in Recovery and the Twelve Steps 35

The AA Group and the Idea of Unity 41

The A.A. Fellowship, the Twelve Concepts and Service 44

The Statutes of the General Anthroposophical Society and
Their Relationship to the Foundation Stone Meditation 51

Statutes and Polarities 52

The Statutes and the Foundation Stone Meditation 57

First Class, Anthroposophical Society and Goetheanum Association 58

The Social Spirituality of the Future: The Esoteric Youth Circle 60

Origins of the Esoteric Youth Circle 60

The Youth Circle Mantra 64

Why is this Circle important for the Future? 67

Spirit of the Circle, Membership, Belonging 68

Youth Circle, Social Form, Moral Imagination & Moral Technique 69

Conclusions 72

Appendix 1: The Statutes of the General Anthroposophical Society 75

Appendix 2: The Foundation Stone Meditation 79

Appendix 3: The Youth Circle Mantra 81

Introduction

The expression "social spirituality" has been occupying my mind in the last couple of years before coming across the quote above with the expression "social life in the supersensible" in light of my participation in the Youth Circle. I wanted to find a confirmation from another source before seeing that this assertion has ground other than in my lived experience. In this essay the term will cover both what is possible through spiritual means alone—the Youth Circle is one such example—and what is made possible through the large-scale use of "moral technique", of which more will be said shortly.

The coining of the term social spirituality derived from an experience common to anyone who has had the chance to facilitate turning points in organizational or community life. The moment in which we embark collectively on a new course has magical qualities. As a participant you can let yourself be carried in its wake; as a facilitator/organizer you cannot but vibrate at a higher level, as it were. The moment opens you up to the realization of what lies as a possibility in the not too far evolutionary future of humanity—something that is worth working for even though we know how frail it may be at present.

These turning points are also easy to recognize because they are genuinely rare, except perhaps for those who work professionally as organizational consultants. On my path, two such moments have arisen: one in a work setting and another in cohousing community life. Having helped bring both experiences about from beginning to end, I could see how a group can collectively enter a new dimension of collaboration—and even a new experience of being. These moments are as powerful as they are fleeting. Bernard Lievegoed points to the importance of collectively remembering and treasuring them when they are obscured or seemingly swept aside by the prevailing anti-social impulses of our time.

This essay explores the emerging of a social spirituality of the future in the preliminary forms that it has taken in the fifth post-Atlantean epoch. It ultimately points to what will be more fully possible in the sixth post-Atlantean epoch. In so doing it has no claim to be exhaustive, neither in content nor in scope. What will be presented here are just some milestones coming from history, starting from the 17th-18th century to the present. Others will be hinted at in passing or referred to from other writings.

We will find some themes interweaving. At the time of the Consciousness Soul the fuller examples of social spirituality are given to us from the Anglo-

Saxon or Germanic cultures. Some of them are founded on a prevalently empirical basis, and those are more generally derived from the English-speaking world; others are more deliberately esoteric/spiritual in nature and come directly from Rudolf Steiner's work within the Anthroposophical Society. We can say that the two aspects complement each other. The pragmatic approach, more results-oriented, offers a balance to the esoteric approach, broader in its aims and forming a seed for the future. We could say the first forms a bridge toward the second.

The pragmatic approach rests on the application of "moral technique" to the social realm. So, it is important to characterize this concept from Rudolf Steiner's legacy. It is explored most of all, though only very briefly, in *The Philosophy of Freedom* thus:

> "Moral action, then, pre-supposes, in addition to the faculty of moral concepts and of moral imagination, the ability to alter the world of percepts without violating the natural laws by which they are connected. This ability is moral technique. It may be learnt in the same sense in which science in general may be learnt. For, in general, men are better able to find concepts for the world as it is, than productively to originate out of their imaginations future, and as yet non-existing, actions. Hence, it is very well possible for men without moral imagination to receive moral ideas from others, and to embody these skilfully in the actual world. Vice versa, it may happen that men with moral imagination lack technical skill, and are dependent on the service of other men for the realization of their ideas."

In the instances that we will highlight moral technique rests on the repeated trial and error process of refining social interventions through the subsequent review of their implementation. To thoroughly planned social interventions follows the patient observation of the results obtained and how they can be improved upon. The sum total of years of experience becomes then codified in social processes and forms that amount to a mix of science and art. They are scientific because they can accurately predict outcomes in most instances. They are artistic because no two situations are ever alike, and this means that they require a thorough presence of mind in the moment and insight into what is needed on the part of the facilitator or social artist that implements them. This will become obvious when we will turn to concrete examples. It is for this reason that we will offer a level of detail that some may deem redundant. It is not possible, however, to speak about moral technique without erring in this direction.

Another series of themes that we will find lies in the striving to differentiate and integrate human soul faculties and human groupings; in working with archetypes of the human soul in order to integrate polarities; in moving from change at a political level to change at the cultural level; in transitioning from designated individual leadership to diffuse leadership through the expression of the new group souls; and finally in weaving the exoteric and the esoteric and in so doing moving from a pole of complex social structures to another of pure consciousness.

In addition, a temporal theme unfolds in the essay in relation to the flow from the fifth to the sixth post-Atlantean epochs. We live at the time of strong anti-social instincts and need to create practices that work against them, that teach us to become more social, that elicit the best of us within clearly established boundaries. At the same time working actively with spiritual content can bring us to walking humanity's future footsteps and therefore anticipating what it will mean to overcome the anti-social instincts in the sixth cultural epoch. This may be achieved, first of all, in a purely spiritual manner, meaning in the work of circles that create a new social / spiritual reality among their members, and extend their influence to further circles of practical activity. The latter's intentions also work across time boundaries since in such circles members may be able to work from both sides of the threshold.

In practical terms we will follow this sequence of examples:

- The Quaker impulse in its evolution from its origins to the present
- The expression of a particular form of participatory facilitation / dialogue and deliberation tool aiming at unleashing the wisdom of the people. This takes the form of Dynamic Facilitation at the lower level and of Wisdom Councils at the larger social level
- The birth of Twelve Step with a particular emphasis on its organizational / social structure through the so-called Twelve Concepts
- The Statutes / Principles that Rudolf Steiner gave to the General Anthroposophical Society at the Christmas Meeting
- The social spirituality expressed in the Esoteric Youth Circle (*Jugendkreis*).

In the first three examples we will move primarily within the realm of moral technique. In the fourth one moral technique will interweave with social spiritual principles. In the last one we will find ourselves in a primarily spiritual pole with minimal need for forms and rules.

Such an ordering will serve the purpose of singling out the larger principles behind the practice of and yearning for a social spirituality. It will also serve

as a template for those of us who want to keep working at manifesting this reality in their own world.

Quakerism and the Practice of Consensus



Painting of a Quaker meeting by an unknown British artist, about 1790 (Wikimedia).

We can start our exploration of impulses that have historical roots in the English-speaking world, first in the UK, then primarily in the US. These roots have created continuity in modern time. The Quaker are still well-known in the present for their social processes. Their original ways of seeking consensus, that we will explore below, have evolved into the modern "Consensus Decision-Making."

In the last four, even five, decades the U.S. and Canada have witnessed an explosion of the growth of so-called "social technologies." These are participatory processes that supersede political approaches to social change. Among these we can mention Appreciative Inquiry, Technology of Participation, Future Search, Open Space Technology, World Café, and of late Theory

U.[1] In this essay we will mention Consensus Decision-Making in relation to its Quakers antecedents and explore more fully Dynamic Facilitation and its derived form of the Wisdom Council. These approaches to organizational, community and social change conjugate full participation, complete transparency and efficiency and lead to decision-making that satisfies all stakeholders involved. We could say that this proliferation was possible in North America because it was seeded in the same spirit that allowed the Quaker impulse to blossom. The Quaker Meeting is the form that anticipated in time everything that we see in the present.

The unique place that the Quakers occupied within organized religion and spirituality in the English-speaking world is reflected in the personality of George Fox and the way he gave birth to this particular movement of religious renewal. In his biography is enshrined the particular and unique relationship of the individual to the spiritual that was reflected in Quakerism, a movement that has a unique position among all other Christian denominations.

George Fox and the Birth of Quakerism

George Fox was born in 1624 in Fenny Drayton, Leicestershire in the heart of England and was destined to come of age within the years of the English Civil Wars (1642-1651). He was the son of a weaver, reputed for his honesty, and a mother whom he later remembered as "imparting intense religious enthusiasm and deep spiritual impulses." Having received little education, initially he could neither write nor spell. From his early days the child was solitary and thoughtful, spending much time pondering on his own, besieged with many questions. He became an apprentice to a shoemaker who also kept cattle and sheep, thus learning to spend time alone in nature.

His youth was spent in pursuing spiritual interests across the denominations of his time. Although he was grateful to one or another man of faith he felt he came out empty-handed in his attempt to deepen his faith, concluding "I went to many a priest to look for comfort, but found no comfort from them."[2] This disappointment strengthened the necessity to lean on his inner voice and seek an avenue to direct revelation. After wandering for a time he returned home and his biographer reported that his sorrow and depression

[1] We refer the interested reader to the excellent compilation of more than sixty such approaches in Peggy Holman, Tom Devane and Steven Cady's *The Change Handbook: The Definitive Resource on Today's Best Methods for Engaging Whole Systems*.
[2] George Fox, *An Autobiography*, Chapter 1: Boyhood—A Seeker, 1624-1648.

affected his health to the point of a "dangerous physical and mental condition."

Already at this time he started finding solace and rescue in the inner voice which revealed to him that "…-temples and churches were not the most holy places; the soul of man itself was the really holy place, for God and man could meet therein."[3] Depression alternated with flashes of joy, light with darkness. In a vision he claimed he saw that the same Jesus Christ who lived in Palestine and helped human beings out of their sins, sorrows and troubles, was still bestowing love and goodness in the present. He recognized that the Christ who had walked in the flesh, now came as a Spirit, bringing comfort and healing. ""I heard a voice," he wrote in his Journal "which said, 'There is one, even Christ Jesus that can speak to thy condition' and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy."[4] He now felt that he had met Christ much in the way that one would meet a human friend. He called it a concrete experience, not a guess. This personal encounter pushed him away from the message of man's sin and wickedness, proclaimed by the Puritans, toward the recognition of Christ's love: "I saw that there was an ocean of darkness and death; but an infinite ocean of light and love flowed over the ocean of darkness. In that I saw the infinite love of God."[5]

A major experience followed that presented itself as a temptation and strengthened his faith. As he was walking through the Vale of Beavor he began to wonder whether, after all, everything in the world had not come to be by a simple, natural process: "Is not, perhaps, Nature its own author, its own maker and builder?" When the thought seemed to be answered in the affirmative he was reassured to hear the inner voice confirming the presence of the "living God who made all things." This was followed externally in meeting with people who professed the worldview that he had experienced as an inner temptation. He countered their arguments, inducing some of them to rally to his views.

It was more than just a confirmation, rather a revelation. Looking back at the experience he amplified: "Now was I come up in spirit through the flaming sword, into the paradise of God. All things were new; and all the creation gave another smell unto me than before, beyond what words can utter. I knew nothing but pureness, and innocency, and righteousness, being renewed up into the image of God by Christ Jesus, to the state of Adam, which he was in before he fell. The creation was opened to me; and it was shewed me how all things had their names given them according to their nature and

[3] Rufus M. Jones, *The Story of George Fox*, Chapter 2.
[4] George Fox, *An Autobiography*, Chapter 1.
[5] Ibid.

virtue."[6] After this Pauline revelation he wondered at the experience and asked himself for a time whether he should become a healer. This option too he discarded in order to return to his purely spiritual impulse.

From that moment on he started preaching, with a very clear focus, asking his listeners to seek the quiet voice within, rather than arguing about matters of doctrine, and to carry the mandates of this voice into their daily life. In integrity with this stance he started to develop a militant and sometime zealot dislike toward organized religion that landed him into confrontations and into jail. Through all of it he was willing to suffer silently for his conscience and started leaving deep impressions upon his listeners.

A central dilemma entered Fox' soul: the dichotomy between scriptures and revelation. With keen insight he realized that the modern human being could no longer read the revelations from the past in the spirit in which they had been brought forth: "Thus I saw plainly that none could read Moses aright without Moses' spirit, by which Moses saw how man was in the image of God in Paradise, and how he fell, how death came over him, and how all men have been under this death. I saw how Moses received the pure law, that went over all transgressors; and how the clean beasts, which were figures and types, were offered up, when the people were come into the righteous law that went over the first transgression. Both Moses and the prophets saw through the types and figures and beyond them, and saw Christ, the great prophet, that was to come to fulfil them. I saw that none could read John's words aright, and with a true understanding of them, but in and with the same divine Spirit by which John spake them; and by his burning, shining light, which is sent from God."[7]

In a true seeker fashion he allowed himself to live with questions until new "openings" came about—sort of incremental revelations—then observe that one opening would support another and together render the revelation of scripture more approachable. Rarely, if ever, would they work against it. "I had no slight esteem of the Holy Scriptures, but they were very precious to me, for I was in that Spirit by which they were given forth: and what the Lord opened in me I afterwards found was agreeable to them."[8] Thus, for Fox scripture needed to be re-enlivened and reassessed in a living fashion out of a pure thirst for knowledge and experience.

Quakerism is, in final analysis that position of soul that we find mid-way between organized religion and esotericism. As a religion it is negatively circumscribed as to eschew most dogmatic positions, established creed and

[6] George Fox, *An Autobiography*, Chapter 1.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.

doctrinal disputes. That is what rendered Quakerism a meeting point of all other tendencies, and this is why it was easy for the authorities to assimilate it to other currents and impute to it their perceived shortcomings.

Making appeal to the inner voice Quakerism proclaimed the universally human in a generous, though naïve way. Rufus M. Jones summarizes it succinctly thus: "He meant to put vital religion within the reach of everybody. He wanted to make everybody his own priest. He hoped to make religion as free and as universal as sunlight and air. He tried to reproduce in the world of his day the kind of Church which the New Testament tells about in its wonderful pages. It would be a Church in which everybody should have a part and a share. It would be a Church with Christ for the real Head of it, a Church with the living Spirit of God moving and working in all its members. It would be a Church through which the will of God was constantly being freshly revealed, a living, growing, expanding, transforming Church."[9]

While this ample vision corresponds to the call of the time, it only does so negatively. It cannot offer the positive safeguards obtained by esoteric knowledge. By letting the voice of each speak through the "individual leadings" that would take the place of doctrine, Fox found out that the door was opened to all sorts of possible mistakes and excesses. This could only partly be addressed through corrective measures within the sanctuary of the soul, or in conversation with fellow believers and, finally, through the agency of the public Meeting. When schisms threatened the integrity of the movement, its public image or the ire of the authorities, Fox—rarely prone to exert his own authority—had to implement the corrective voice of the local Meeting, by balancing the voice of the individual through the voice of the community. When this would not be enough the Quarterly (regional) Meeting could address and temper divergent views. If not, this was left to the Yearly ("national") Meeting and the trusted voices of the elders. In this way a balance was struck between self-governance of the local Meeting and a minimum of hierarchy to preserve unity within the ranks and in front of opposition and persecution. In America, due to a greater religious tolerance, self-governance could be preserved to a larger extent than in Great Britain.

Even with all the above safeguards in place the question of individual self-reliance in matters of revelation and religion could not be answered completely. It can only be fully addressed within the precinct of the modern Christian Mysteries, such as Rosicrucianism, Manichaeism, or Celtic Christianity. While Quakerism offers a space with healthy boundaries toward the

[9] Rufus M. Jones, *The Story of George* Fox, Chapter 16: all of God Almighty's Making.

containment of dogma, it cannot replace this dogma with the spiritual knowledge that alone can fill the space thus preserved. To that end only a modern knowledge of the spirit can satisfy the human being's yearning for understanding to strengthen or replace faith.

The Practice of Quaker Consensus

The Quaker impulse favored the individual's voice of conscience in the silence of the soul; it favored the presence of the group soul in the silence of the Meeting, their sacred gathering. It offered an independence from creed and dogma at a time when it was far from the norm. The limitations of this approach lie in coming before the time in which the Michaelic revelations could reach humankind. It was a negative approach protecting the individual from the tendencies of the Intellectual Soul carried beyond their time. In effect the Meeting can be described by a host of negatives: no doctrine, no altar, no pulpit, no liturgy, no sacrament, no sermon, and no designated authority. This could be described as a negative space of power, that favors the collective power of a group conscience, a spiritual presence.

Quaker business meetings differed little in format from a worship meeting, rather they did in their purpose and dynamic. Michael J. Sheeran, argues: "The regular Meetings for worship, we may say, seek God's presence, the meetings for business seek God's will."[10] And meetings for business—called Meetings for Sufferings in the early days—were inaugurated by George Fox, in order to address special needs of the local community. They were formally established at the 1675 Yearly Meeting. They had became important as the Quakers faced persecution, and those left without family members needed help and support. These meetings' goals were later enlarged to encompass wider practical ends and business matters. At the early stages the groups (Meetings) were autonomous and self-governing. They were encouraged to solve their own problems, safe delegating larger, more complex issues to regional Meetings.

In line with previous work we will look at the archetype of the seven life processes, as they metamorphose into social processes. For practical purposes it is easier to refer to the general progression outlined in the work of Otto Scharmer's so called "Theory U." Although not openly referring to the seven life processes it shows a progression in seven stages, all in all reflecting of their progression: breathing, warming, digesting, secreting, maintaining, growing and reproducing. The first stages are those in which the organism enters in relationship with the external environment. The central stage

[10] Michael J. Sheeran, *Beyond Majority Rule: Voteless Decisions in the Religious Society of Friends*, 6.

is the one that transforms what comes from the environment within the organism. It is a step of making one's own, of individualizing. After these the organism expresses itself from within; it ensures its own evolution in maintaining, growing and reproducing.

In social terms the process can be more easily described in terms of the steps of moving from Open Mind to Open Heart and Open Will in order to reach the key step of "presencing." The steps are reversed on the other side of presencing (Figure 1).

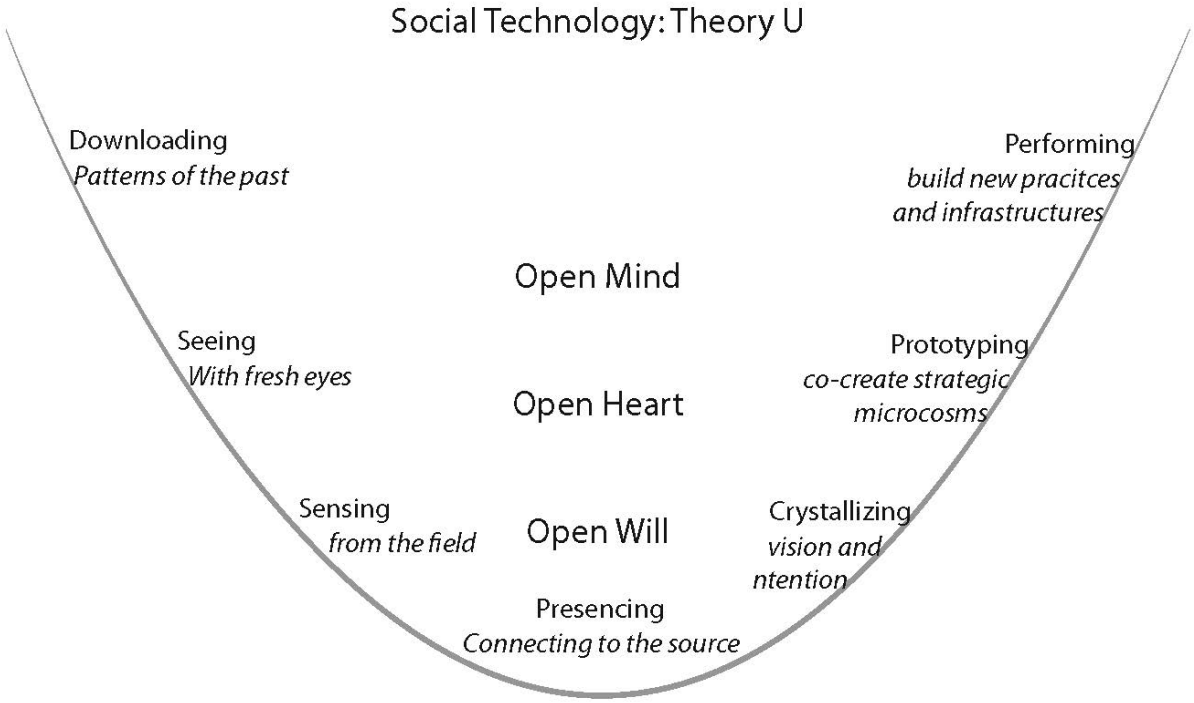


Figure 1: Theory U

For all practical purposes when we turn to social processes the first four or five steps are sufficient to describe and characterize social processes. The other steps arise over longer spans of time when a project is brought to an end or a practice becomes part of a culture. We will see now how these apply to the Quaker Meeting and the process of consensus that it promotes.

The meeting seeks to reach decisions "in the Life" out of the experience of God's guidance, his so-called "leadings." Careful preparation of the agenda is assigned most of the time to a highly trusted and experienced "clerk."

Important factors in Quaker decision-making are the participation of all parties involved; no leader, just a clerk in a facilitator role; equal standing of all; reaching unanimity (or "unity") without need for vote; keeping emotions to a minimum (e.g., use of time of silence when conflict arises), postponement when agreement cannot be reached, etc. It is suggested to offer

opinions humbly and tentatively; when the contrary happens, and emotions surface, an established etiquette is to politely ignore them. Shy people's comments can be encouraged by being picked up by more seasoned participants. In the best instances: "The final result is not a compromise of conflicting views but a synthesis of the best thought of all, a case where two and two make five."[11]

While evolving during a Meeting, proposals are seen as stepping stones for further development, not as something final to be decided by a yes or no. Because traditional Quaker consensus usually creates the proposal in the very moment, instead of preparing it beforehand, the process is a continuous flow with transition stages, rather than discontinuous steps, as we presently see in the Quaker-inspired process of Consensus Decision-Making.

Business meetings place a very high responsibility and expectation of competence upon the clerk. Below are the basic stages of the conversation.

Open Mind

At a preliminary stage some individuals will present the issues and we'll see emerge possible solutions. This is a very open and exploratory process. We see a transition with floating of trial balloons. It is up to the clerk to sense and differentiate the tentative or ambiguous from the serious and more founded ideas.

Open Heart

At this point positions will emerge and people will resonate with them offering signs of assent ("I agree", "I can unite with that", "that speaks my mind," …). Discussion continues until a dominant position emerges or until it is clear that no decision will prevail. In the latter instance there will be postponement. Otherwise, the group moves to the next stage.

Open Will

When he feels it appropriate the clerk proposes a minute. Participants ask themselves: does the minute capture the essence of the agreement? They will express themselves and from what he hears the clerk amends or withdraws the minute. With an experienced clerk misreadings of the group's preferences are relatively rare.

Expressing dissent is a very important and codified step of the process. The Quaker etiquette gives power and responsibility to the single individual, not to a majority. There are three possible positions, plus variations:

[11] Michael J. Sheeran, *Beyond Majority Rule*, 54.

- Stand aside: this signals that the objection is not strong enough to block the group. It also indicates that the person will actively abide by the decision once it is taken and implemented. Here lies an important option that prevents polarization.
- Opposing (not blocking!): the person asks to be "minuted as opposed." This step is not very common at present. The group can still move forward, but in general it will take the objection seriously and explore alternatives. This individual stance may motivate others to state their objections.
- "Unable to unite with the proposal": this is blocking, one step further than opposing. This time there will usually be postponement. In consequence the group is usually moved to wanting to understand the nature of the objection. Often in the in-between time it may be found that the objection does not constitute an unsurmountable obstacle, or the objector herself may feel understood and therefore realize that she can live with the decision.

Presencing

At this stage we reach consensus. The experience of reaching it together bears many names: "The Presence in the Midst" (vii) or "Presence and Guide." (viii) When the Presence is felt the Meeting is "covered" or "gathered," even "gathered into the Life." When the will of this Presence is captured the clerk would call it the "sense of the meeting." This is based on the idea that it is the same spirit who speaks in each individual heart.

In Quaker tradition, more than at present, the seeking of this Presence was sought, no matter how mundane the decision be. "Every business meeting was concerned with knowing the mind of the Lord and sought to guide the action by the weight of spiritual judgment rather than by mechanical counting of heads or the rhetorical and argumentative skill of the speaker."[12]

We come here to what differentiates Quakerism from all other denominations and places it at the doorstep of esoteric Christianity. Quakerism does not need a creed because it builds on the experience of the gathered meeting. The gathered Friends experience something beyond themselves, superior to human shortcomings, and sharing this event is what is crucial. Reaching consensus requires willingness to sacrifice self-interest, to seek after a higher truth than what can be achieved individually. When this happens the individuals can stand in awe before it and let such event take centerstage and dominate their conduct as they take counsel together. All the steps taken in reaching a decision were designed in order to reach that common

[12] William Braithwaite, quoted in Michael J. Sheeran, *Beyond Majority Rule*, viii.

experience. Such are the silent openings and closings, the moments of reflection, the pauses between one meeting and the next, etc.

Leadership/Stewardship

The task of leading the Meeting was and still is entrusted to the clerk, who is in effect much more of a steward than a leader. An optimal process gives the clerk ample prerogatives, as long as he remains within a purely facilitator role. He will not be hurried nor allow himself to feel pressured by numbers or by persistence, nor be hindered from trying innovative approaches. The clerk's special skills include: good listening and ability to draw out shy people, clear thinking, ability to prepare succinct minutes of the meeting, faith in the presence of the Spirit and faith in the wisdom of the group, patience and ability to withstand pressure, good preparation of the agenda and, when necessary, consulting with others to establish it, objectivity and finally detachment from her own agendas and expectations. On the other hand she must be able to intervene decisively, as in reining in on someone who monopolizes the floor. Most of all she must be able to read the "sense of the meeting" and sense what is left unsaid. In coming to express the sense of the meeting the clerk must intervene when further discussion becomes futile.

Abuse of the power of the clerk is generally rare, also because it would mark him out as an unreliable clerk. In more than one way the clerks must be committed Quakers who can sense the Presence and have faith in its work. This is also a guarantee that they will act objectively and neutrally because they trust a higher power. A good clerk really listens to the environment and the mood of the group, e.g., whether the individuals feel safe and are able to speak truly. In last analysis the clerk is not a leader but a servant to the group and the higher presence. He must be able to "read the group." However, the participants can also challenge the clerk, and the latter realize that he has misinterpreted the common will.

To see what the above means in practice only examples can offer clear responses. Michael J. Sheeran reports that an apparently banal decision over expanding a burial ground became emotional during a Quaker business meeting. Those in favor voiced concerns for equal space for burial and unfair discrimination; those against it were concerned about encroachments on a school playground area. After the first meeting a month time of reflection

was called for. This led to allowing for a small enlargement that would not compromise significantly playground space.[13]

What we see above concerning a small-scale decision is amplified in a 1967 event. The Philadelphia meeting house had been externally vandalized as a retaliation for its public stance against the Vietnam War. The Meeting debated a strong reply in the press but feared the publicity and further reaction it would raise. Finally, unity was reached in putting an announcement in the local papers asking for the help of local churches to join a "paint-in" of the meeting house.[14]

Consider the final example. The American Friends Service Committee's experience in Philadelphia in 1971 was otherwise dramatic because African American militants had seized the meeting house in protest for what was going on in North Vietnam, demanding reparations. Facing hundreds of silent worshippers the militants first asked that their leader co-chair with the clerk, then finally withdrew. Friends were split on the matter of reparations, but they agreed on establishing an investment fund to promote black business enterprises.[15]

M. J. Michael J. Sheeran, judging the demographic tendencies at play at the Philadelphia meeting, recognized various groups/tendencies, which can be partly overlapping: Christo-centrism, Universalism (religious/spiritual or humanist), social activism, practice of democracy. Within these limitations and constraints to a unified vision and expectation of Quakerism, it is not surprising that Quaker consensus generated during the business meetings has evolved, outside of Quaker settings, into a more codified Consensus Decision Making (Figure 2). While the approach recognizes a debt of gratitude toward Quaker practice, its reaching of consensus has been both simplified and universalized.

In modern time the cohesion behind the belief in and experience of the Presence are often open to questions. In adapting this remarkable process outside of a sacred setting, experienced facilitators have introduced a number of modifications. Among others, the process is more highly formatted in order to render it more familiar to the participants, simpler to handle for the facilitator and more time-efficient. One big change is that of forming a tentative proposal beforehand, rather than letting it emerge wholesale. Like its forerunner, Consensus Decision-Making is highly participatory and transparent. It honors all participants and calls on the help of the group soul through the moment of presencing that emerges in consensus. There is no longer

[13] Michael J. Sheeran, *Beyond Majority Rule*, 50.
[14] Ibid, 53.
[15] Ibid, 83.

the prerequisite of a spiritual belief, nor the need to harken back to Quaker origins to recognize the phenomenon of presencing, as a prelude to a deeper experience of consensus. The role of the facilitator is also simpler than that of the clerk.

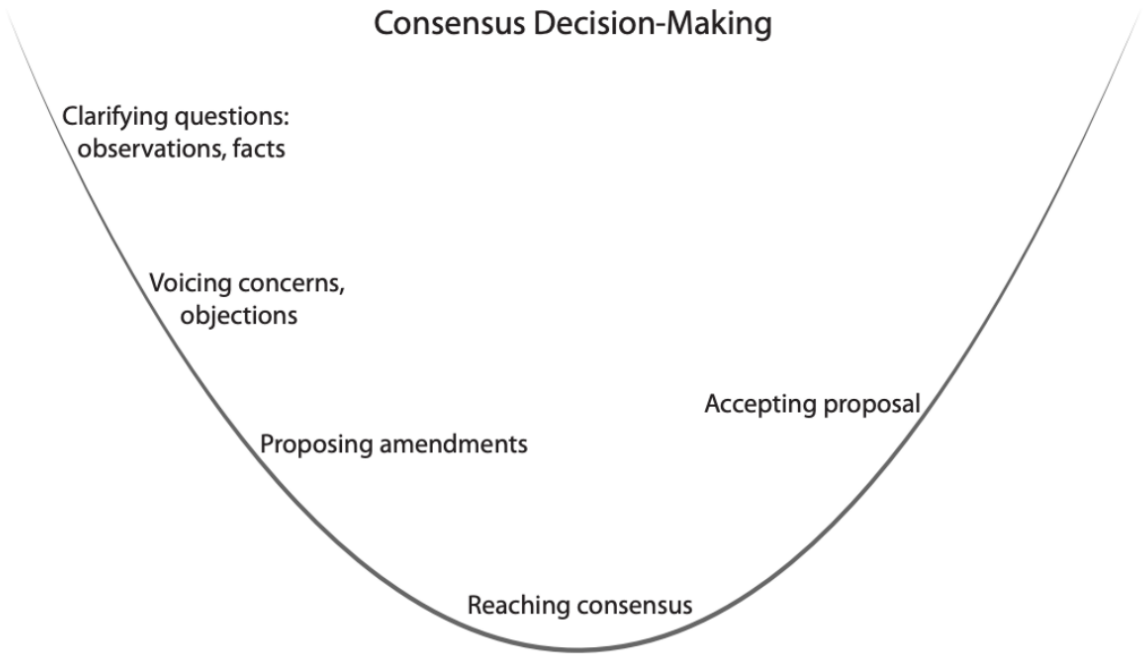


Figure 2: Consensus Decision-Making

The exploration of Quakerism we have just completed offers an exhaustive illustration of what Rudolf Steiner calls moral technique, specifically applied at a collective level, moral technique in service of social spirituality. As we saw the term itself appears sporadically in Steiner's writings and lectures, and most of all in *The Philosophy of Freedom*. Here is how it is characterized:

> "Moral action, then, pre-supposes, in addition to the faculty of moral concepts and of moral imagination, the *ability to alter the world of percepts without violating the natural laws by which they are connected*. This ability is moral technique."[16] (emphasis added)

It seems to this author that the clerk must possess a degree of moral imagination—through her earnest connection to Quaker ideas—and most of all moral technique in order to discharge her mission successfully. The paramount skill of the clerk is that of "*alter[ing] the world of percepts without violating the natural laws by which they are connected*." She is the one who can foster all the necessary steps without the group feeling that any of its

[16] Rudolf Steiner, *The Philosophy of Freedom*, Chapter 12: Moral Imagination: Darwinism and Morality.

guiding core values suffer from them. Change and the decisions reached emerge organically, without any sense of coercion or manipulation. The sense of the meeting is reached when individual autonomy and freedom, choice, mutual consent and all other Quaker core values are respected. These are in this instance the *natural laws by which* people in a Quaker meeting *are connected*. The clerk has only taken a next step when the group felt it was completely natural to take it.

To use another analogy, the guidance of the clerk is in Friedrich Schiller's terms the highest form of art, because it applies the impulse of play—which mediates between the impulses of freedom and necessity—and does so with the most refined material at his disposal, the human being himself.

> "The political and educating artist follows a very different course, while making man at once his material and his end. In this case the aim or end meets in the material, and it is only because the whole serves the parts that the parts adapt themselves to the end. The political artist has to treat his material, man, with a very different kind of respect from that shown by the artist of fine art to his work. He must spare man's peculiarity and personality, not to produce a deceptive effect on the senses, but objectively and out of consideration for his inner being."[17]

In Quaker practice, spirituality is expressly allied to a very refined form of moral technique applied to the social realm. From now on, we will follow how moral technique on one hand, and esoteric principles on the other work together, or separately, in different social endeavors pointing to the evolutionary future. We will start with a process which claims continuity with Quaker precedent.

[17] Friedrich Schiller, *Letters Upon The Aesthetic Education of Man*, Letter 4.



In seeing the continuity with Quaker precedent Jim Rough indicates that Dynamic Facilitation continues two traditional Quaker ideas—that every individual has a spark of the divine within and that everyone is seeking to discern "God's truth." Even though Dynamic Facilitation moves away from religious grounds it still honors the divine in the individual in modern ways. It rests on what Rough calls "choice-creating" in contrast to the common practice of decision-making: "Choice-creating encourages this in-the-moment 'sense of the meeting' which captures what everyone wants, but which may not fit into predetermined expectations."[18] In moving to modern times, claiming universality can be done by turning to core values instead of religious tenets. Among others Dynamic Facilitation claims to fulfill the following values:

- Authenticity: allowing individuals to be fully heard
- Open-mindedness
- Open-heartedness through a deep listening which opens us to other people's perspectives

[18] Jim Rough, *Society's Breakthrough!: Releasing Essential Wisdom and Virtue in All the People*, 84.

- Curiosity leading to new learning
- Participation and inclusion of as many as possible diverse perspectives
- Respectfulness provided by a safe container
- Creativity leading to genuine breakthroughs
- Great efficiency in spite of apparent spontaneity and chaos[19]

Choice-Creating and Dynamic Facilitation

"Choice-creating" is a heartfelt, creative quality of practical thinking where breakthroughs regularly take place. It is a free-flowing process where the real issues are naturally identified, and where consensus on solutions is a common experience. It is particularly indicated for building trust, addressing and solving "wicked problems" and for fostering new capacities in the organization. This process integrates and celebrates the unique perspectives of each individual.

Below is a contrast between choice-creating and traditional decision-making:

Decision-making	**Choice-creating**
Where the best option is sought from a pre-set number of options	Where all join to continually create better options
A rational process – weighing and selecting	A creative process with insights, changes of heart, and other shifts
Emotions are suppressed – people try to maintain a "professional" demeanor	Emotions leverage shifts, e.g. a passion for ideas
Works for well-defined issues that are possible to solve	Works for whatever issues people care about, including those that are unclear or seemingly impossible

[19] Ibid.

Breaks big issues into smaller ones	Can make issues bigger or smaller – but, even when they get bigger, people feel more empowered
Uses objectives, plans, and guidelines to keep control of the process	Assures safety and creativity and the process is self-controlling
Measures all progress	Uses measures when appropriate, otherwise use dialogue to assess progress
Often breaks down into rational-seeming arguments, endless data analysis, going in circles, frustration, or lack of authenticity	May seem chaotic at times, but yields faster and better results, plus people grow into a team or community

(From Rosa Zubizarreta and Jim Rough, *A Manual and Reader for Dynamic Facilitation and the Choice-Creating Process)*

Dynamic Facilitation (DF) is one of the more open-ended formats among the great variety using the divergence/convergence process. Whereas most participatory facilitation approaches start with precisely framed questions and most often a single movement of divergence / convergence, DF allows the participants to discover key issues as they emerge from the process itself. Among the many divergent threads the participants will then tackle a particular one. The facilitator doesn't hurry the process of convergence, quite the contrary. She senses and allows group energy and intrinsic motivation, rather than extrinsic factors such as preset agendas or objectives to direct the process. She helps people make progress in leaps, achieve creative insights and spontaneous changes of heart. The obvious trade-off is the need for more time.

The following is a list of twelve criteria for a successful DF:

1. While the facilitator's task is to focus on the process—how people talk—the participants determine the content—what they will talk about—and they generate the results.

2. The process helps the group work on what matters most to them, regardless of whether it may seem impossible or unlikely to be solved.
3. The Dynamic Facilitator reflects back to the participants what they are saying and what she senses they may be feeling or needing. She captures the main points on flipcharts. The deep listening process stimulates breakthroughs, helping people discover what they really want but cannot immediately capture.
4. The flipcharts consist of four major items: problem-statements, data, concerns and solutions. The contributions are listed numerically under each heading. The Dynamic Facilitator often begins by asking, "What are some of the issues we might address?" to suggest that there may be a great number of them rather than a very few. In fact every comment can be turned into a contribution; an example a criticism may be turned into a concern or a solution. Once a consensus starts to form, other lists can be created, such as decisions, outcomes or next steps.
5. DF orients the conversation to numbered lists on the flipcharts. The facilitator begins by opening the field as wide as possible, suggesting that there is an infinite number of issues rather than one or two. With the help of the four lists he turns every comment into a contribution.
6. Initially people need to familiarize themselves with the process and feel that they are really heard. The facilitator will encourage them to express themselves at length. She ensures that their input is fully captured on the flipcharts, in what is called "purging," a deep, exhaustive listening of initial answers. This allows people to feel truly heard, boundaries of exploration to expand and creativity to be unleashed. People can move away from the agree/disagree dynamics that generate polarization.
7. The facilitator takes great care in defusing judgments from one particpant to another by acting promptly and asking that these be addressed to the center of the room or to herself, ensuring safety for those who are "attacked" and recording/reformulating each contribution in order to recognize its validity.
8. The facilitator must go with the flow and encourage spontaneity. By capturing all comments she helps people see that whatever anyone says is an asset to the group. Often, once people have "purged" their initial solutions, they tend to become more curious and open-minded. They start noticing other perspectives and contributing more solutions. The facilitator notices these shifts and occasionally, helps

them to happen, knowing that they can spark breakthroughs. In the end the focus and perspectives, even issues, of the group may change and the group will notice its own progress.

9. The rhythmic movement of divergence/convergence is central to Dynamic Facilitation and is what differetiates it from other participatory decision-making processes. The process of divergence / convergence may take place a few times before true consensus emerges. What enables it is not the narrowing down to one option but the fostering of a breakthrough that has everybody's support.
10. The above (9) is encouraged by shifting from decision-making toward choice-creating and the birth of new scenarios. The facilitator doesn't push for a premature narrowing down of options. Rather s/he will ask for further ideas that work even better than the previous ones.
11. The facilitator pays attention to pace, rhythm, levels of energy, learning styles, etc. At times he may suggest that everyone pause to stretch, work individually by writing down one's responses, or to discuss matters in small groups.
12. The facilitator helps people highlight and celebrate progress. She helps them see the process in which they are too deeply immersed and whose progress they often miss. She acts as a kind of chronicler, reminding people of the stages they went through and how unique their work has been and helps them to celebrate progress. She captures the group's progress in clear statements, that help carry momentum forward .

A Dynamic Facilitator is all in all a modern-day Quaker clerk working within a more profane setting to produce an equally sacred space. As seen above the facilitator uses four charts—Problem Statements, and Data, Concerns and Solutions—to help people be fully heard and records all contributions succinctly but as close as possible to the participants choices of words and expressions. The process is not very different from the movement of the U that we have found in other instances. Such are Consensus Decision-Making, World Café, Conversation Cafés, Focused Conversation, Appreciative Inquiry, Future Search, etc. What is unique here is the multiplicity of directions the process can take before converging into a single one. This is indicated by the Problem Statement chart that tracks new, possible themes for which one convergence may or may not emerge. The Data chart corresponds to the Open Mind part of the Process, the Concerns chart steps into the Open Heat part, the Solutions chart is an exploration of the will stage that corresponds to the Open Will. On the other side of the U,

once consensus emerges, we will have Decisions, Next Steps charts. The Decisions chart is something akin to "crystallizing ideas" (step 5 of theory U), whereas Next Steps chart is closer to the stage of prototyping (step 6 of Theory U).

The deliberations attained through DF do not follow a linear path. They make room for the unpredictable, the uncharted territory. One way to do this is to safely allow the passion behind emotions. Most of all DF enables those who carry the greatest passion to offer meaningful contributions. These are most often the same people which in most common settings would be considered problematic or controversial. DF renders possible changes of mind and changes of heart. Jim Rough sees these in perception-building, trust-building, mission-building and innovation-building.[20]

In perception-building the focus goes to data and details. The participants reach a place of allowing new perceptions in their sense-field. Such would be the possibility of resolving a purely technical problem with an Open Mind. Trust building is particularly important when feelings and emotions run high. Such may be the cases that are often resolved with the establishment of new rules or regulations. Instead, allowing room for strong feelings allows the positions to be articulated and fosters "heart creativity."

In mission-building we can discern overlapping shifts leading to breakthroughs. It is a matter of finding out what is really wanted, based on the common ground of deeply held values. When the participants can collectively connect to what truly matters a deeper heart connection is possible and the will is freed creatively. Deeply recognized common needs allow for the emergence of better strategies.

Innovation-building addresses the next stage of choice-creating. It addresses a creative, out of the box thinking that would not be suited for deeply emotional issues. It rests on freeing the mind, often through the use of daring imaginations.

Through encouraging deeper commitment—the expression of passion for the matter at hand—and true vulnerability DF allows to operate from a higher perspective. The process itself becomes the solution as the following example illustrates.

---

[20] Jim Rough, *Creative Choices: Breakthroughs in Thinking* in Rosa Zubizarreta and Jim Rough, *A Manual and Reader for Dynamic Facilitation and the Choice-Creating Process: Evoking Practical Group Creativity and Transformation through Generative Dialogue*. Also available at https://www.scribd.com/document/403917595/Dynamic-Facilitation-Manual.

A DF seminar explored the loss of traditional family values. Frustrations and emotions ran high, targeting the educational system, the excess of media in child-rearing and their high doses of violence and sex, the parents saddled by financial constraints or the little knowledge about how to raise children, the decline of the role of religious institutions, the impact of technology. etc. Through all of this the Dynamic Facilitator made sure not to place limits, until eventually the whole picture felt overwhelming.

At this point the group reached a qualitative breakthrough when a parent, speaking from personal experience, bemoaned how difficult it was to give children anything like the upbringing that she had enjoyed. Other parents essentially restated earlier points, but this time from their personal perspectives, enlarging the picture from the family to the larger community. Together the group realized how today's challenges vary considerably from those of the past, leading them to redefine the problem—in DF lingo arrive at a new problem statement—and come up with a new question: "How can we create a society where everyone feels included, as though belonging to one family?" Though they had landed on an even larger question, the tone in the room was palpably different. The participants felt re-energized and empowered to come up with better solutions. The group had reached a qualitative breakthrough, and broken through beyond logical thinking, control-oriented approaches and traditional decision-making.

In conclusion we can summarize what DF brings to the table as an integration of creative thinking and passion for what matters. When we make room for both of these we witness the paradox of self-organizing, a process that follows completely natural laws, but one that is not fostered by the anti-social tendencies of the Consciousness Soul. A careful preparation is necessary in order to invite social tendencies.

We can now move further with variations of this process at the regional level and then at the national level. In the first we will speak of the "Wisdom Council" and at the second level of a proposed "Citizens Amendment."

The Wisdom Council and the Austrian Bürgerrat

The Wisdom Council operates in ways that are essentially similar to what we saw of Dynamic Facilitation. What changes are the settings, dimensions and scopes, the preliminary preparation steps of consultation, or the spreading of recommendations reached. They turn into so-called processes of dialogue and deliberation, rather than simple meeting facilitation. Wisdom Councils can be used with cities, towns, schools, hospitals, professional organizations, businesses and corporations, agencies, regional

political units and even nations. The Wisdom Councils are very appropriate for new issues or concerns in order to review and rethink the past and develop new policies, or for important issues for which a new course of action is needed.

The Wisdom Council has been most extensively and successfully implemented in the Austrian region of Voralberg, just close to the Swiss border, where they have been dubbed "Bürgerrat" (plural Bürgerräte) Their implementation followed the use of similar formats in the past, such as the Citizens' Juries and Planning Cells. It replaced them by virtue of being more cost effective. The tradition of volunteer citizen involvement was thus already well established. In addition, though the Bürgerrat is the major intervention it is often accompanied by other forms of volunteer involvement, such as the "meeting point for the Governor" [sic] or visits to communities involved.[21]

The catalyst for the spread of the Councils was Manfred Hellrigi, the then director of the Office for Voluntary Engagement and Participation (from now on the "Office"), who had attended a Dynamic Facilitation workshop and familiarized himself on the occasion with the idea of the Wisdom Council. The Office set up the first statewide Bürgerrat in 2011. It was so successful that three years later the Office hosted thirty-two such councils at the municipal, intercity and regional levels. The events explored issues such as how to retain youth in rural areas, how to support the elderly, improving downtown areas, designing child-friendly and family-friendly policies among others.[22]

The Wisdom Council / Bürgerrat format has acquired an institutional role in 2013 as a process regularly used by the Voralberg State government in Austria. The format was even integrated at the state level through an amendment to the State Constitution. Local communities can convene a *Bürgerrat* on matters of their choice after gathering a thousand signatures.

From Austria the Councils have spread to Germany. The German Federal Ministry for the Environment (BMUB) organized Citizens' Councils in 2016 in six major German cities to gather input for their Integrated Environmental Plan 2030. By 2020 there were more than one hundred such events.[23]

---

[21] See Büro für Zukunftsfragen, *Bürgerräte in Voralberg: An Interim Report*, available at https://docs.google.com/document/d/1oQmlZLdVbP-scSOeFg1csK7RpKeDpT9sgcURA68N3iqM/edit?tab=t.0

[22] Rosa Zubizarreta, Andy Paice and Martha Cuffy, *Citizen's Councils: What Are They and Why Are They so Popular in Austria?*, 2.

[23] Ibid, 3, 5.

Wisdom Councils are part of larger dialogue and deliberation approaches. There are in fact more than thirty such formats, among which Planning Cells, Round Tables, Consensus Conferences, Bürgerhaushalt, Citizens' Dialogues, Deliberative Polls or World Wide Views, etc. Interestingly we find once more twelve characteristics at the heart of a Wisdom Council:

- The Council is chartered by the people: it is approved by those who constitute the system
- Its 12 to 15 participants are purely randomly selected; there is no stratified sampling process according to stakeholder groups. This allows people to speak purely for themselves.
- The choosing lottery takes place during a ceremony
- Participation is purely voluntary: no one is forced to serve on a Wisdom Council.
- It is up to the participants to select and frame the issues under a minimal guidance of the overhead topic. And the Voralberg Bürgerräte have ample latitude under the Voralberg Constitution.
- It operates in a "fishbowl": the meetings are made public and whoever wants can witness the deliberations in person or remotely
- The whole is facilitated dynamically
- The process incorporates a great variety of perspectives and minority views. The group reaches consensus in formulating its conclusions.
- The conclusions are unveiled during a ceremony. Like its beginning, the end of a Wisdom Council is a public event. In sharing their results the participants also share the story of their group and how it evolved throughout the deliberations.
- In Vorlaberg the presentation of the results is followed by World Café conversations. In the Citizens Amendment proposal, that we will see shortly, the presentation of the results would be done in such a way that as many people as possible would be invited to participate in small group dialogues.
- The Wisdom Council process is continuous, not a one-time event. It promotes a whole-system conversation. One group can evolve upon and grow from another one.
- The process, especially at regional and national levels, operates in parallel with normal governance structures. It forms a simple addition to the existing system.[24]

[24] *Jim Rough, Society's Breakthrough!*, 98.

After deciding to convene a Bürgerrat on a given theme, a pool of 400-600 citizens is chosen using a mathematically random process. The sponsoring entity sends an invitation to the randomly selected group and invites them to participate to a 1 ½ day facilitated event. A second random selection process is carried out from those who accept the invitation to choose a group of 12 to 15 to form the Council. The event is conducted through Dynamic Facilitation. No thematic expert briefings are needed.

After reaching their unanimous decisions, at the end of their Bürgerrat the group offers a presentation at a public event, using the World Café format. In general fifty to one-hundred-fifty people come to the Cafés. In addition, the Office is experimenting online platforms to reach a larger public beyond the Cafés.

The results generated are summarized into recommendations shared with a "resonance group" including representatives from the administration and the political body (figure 3).

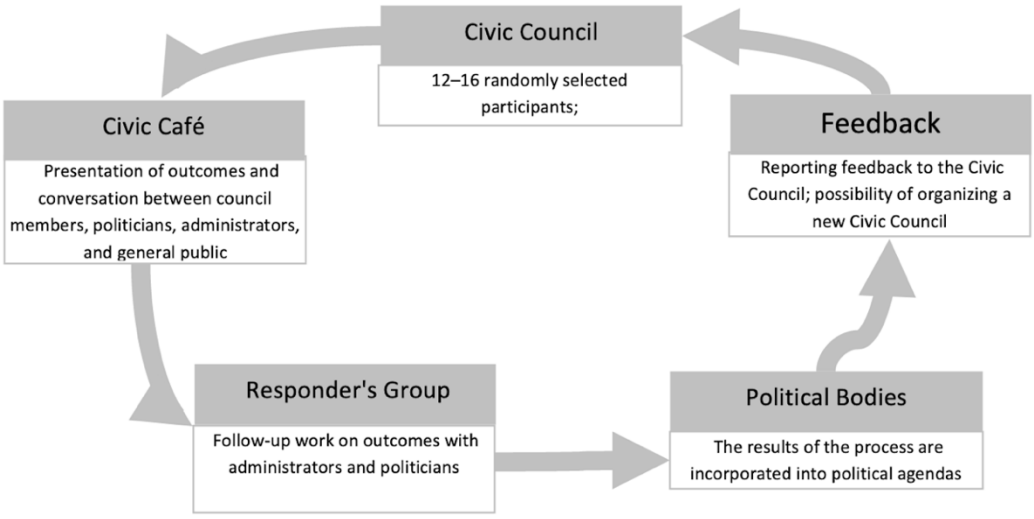


Figure 3: Bürgerrat (Civic Council) cycle of dialogue and deliberation
(From Rosa Zubibarreta et alia, *Citizens' Councils: What are they, and why are they so popular in Austria?*)

From most Bürgerräte that have taken place the participants have shared how deeply grateful they have been of having taken part in the deliberations, how much they have learned from them and how much they have felt heard. Finally, they expressed appreciation for the diversity of viewpoints. Likewise, people who subsequently come to the World Cafés express being inspired by the work of the Bürgerräte. Overall, the Bürgerräte offer an

important contribution to a culture of cooperation and to the generation of ideas that confront difficult problems, generally hard to tackle.

In fact, it is surprising how precise can the suggestions and ideas generated be. It can be said that the results have been as good as what could have been generated by experts, because the citizens are in effect experts in local matters when they think collectively and collaboratively. "The results are valuable and usable. … constructive proposals predominate, and essential things are named in ways that are completely self-critical realistic and responsible. "[25]

Bürgerrat participants find that they have become more interested and active around local issues, that they have woven new relationships and friendships that can make a difference. Whereas politicians can hardly be fully candid, the randomly sampled participants to a Wisdom Council speak for themselves alone and they can grow and change their views. The required unanimity promotes collaboration.

The Bürgerrat has become a useful addition to the political system, because it doesn't operate in competition with it. It serves as a supplement to representative democracy. People see their involvement pay dividends that they don't find in politics.

The convening of Bürgerräte has addressed a variety of finalities. Some Bürgerräte have served as pre-evaluations of planned implementations: a good example is that of a large planned urban development in Bregenz, the regional capital. Before the project went public the planners presented the final drafts to a Citizens Council. The group pointed out what was missing thus: "The very lovely and scenic Bodenseeufer lakeshore is severed from the city by the railway line and a busy road. The area about to be developed was located exactly on a strategically important point, that had the potential to resolve this fissure."[26] And it went on to offer many ideas about what could be done. In response the City Council unanimously adopted the main concerns and suggestions generated by the Bürgerrat.

At the state level a Bürgerrat was convened to address the question "How do good neighborhoods succeed?" The gatherings offered ideas, and among these a model for "Neighborhood Democracy". From the above concrete implementations have evolved which have been enshrined through the Institute of Social Services in the concept of "settlement work" for the Voralberg region. Parts of this spell out:

- The use of a conciliatory boards to settle cases of conflict

[25] Büro für Zukunftsfragen, *Bürgerräte in Voralberg: An Interim Report*.
[26] Ibid.

- "Neighborhood democracy" that would allow more co-determination at the local level, creative options for financing projects and raising the awareness of as diverse groups of stakeholders as possible.

At the more local level a Bürgerrat was called for in an area of thirteen municipalities. From the first experience emerged an annual regional gathering ("Regio-Café") on a theme to be determined by community members and policy-makers, and the creation of a "street workout" regional fitness trail.[27]

Four of the Bürgerräte were so-called "Youth Councils." One of them took place in Höchst, a town of 7,000 at the border with Switzerland. Four teenage participants appreciated the supportive environment as well as the implementation of some of their ideas, such as a regularly held Youth Council in each community.[28]

A Bürgerrat, held on themes relative to environment and resources, has led to the development of the following ideas: Ökoland tourism strategy; energy autonomy 2050; expansion of the bicycle paths; a yearly pass for public transportation in the whole of Voralberg for the modest amount of 365 Euros.[29]

In Voralberg the Bürgerräte add a transformative conversation in a position of overall importance to a traditional transactional infrastructure. They give a new direction to an existing system in order to promote a shift from decision-making to choice-creating. They do so with simple structural devices. They do not replace the constitution but introduce choice-creating in the fabric of the region.

What if this were possible at the national level? Jim Rough has advanced such an idea in the U.S. though the so-called "Citizens Amendment."

The Citizens Amendment

The transition from authority based (the king) to contract-based (the Constitution) had to take place with a degree of violence in our nation through the American Revolution. The transition came because people were yearning for individual freedom and the rule of law but could not have reached it before overthrowing the monarchy and the empire. The establishment of a fully participatory structure does not require the elimination of the present contractual / transactional set of rules enshrined

[27] Büro für Zukunftsfragen, *Bürgerräte in Voralberg: An Interim Report*.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

in the Constitution. It can operate from outside the boundaries of the present paradigm in an encompassing way.

The birth of the U.S. Constitution is a story enshrining the idea that the people are wise and capable of self-governance. However, today we can rely passively on this symbol as a gift and legacy of remote Founders, rather than a living reality we can continue to shape and update to evolving needs. This is where the Citizens Amendment has a place.

In a first approximation we can say that the Citizens Amendment, resorting to a Wisdom Council, is a spokesperson version of a classical Dynamic Facilitation group in which twelve randomly selected individuals speak not just for themselves but for a larger community.

The new transition from the transactional stance of the parliamentary process to the participatory process of the proposed Citizens Amendment is also a transition from extrinsic to intrinsic values: "We look deeply inside to determine what is right and to know what to do. Paradoxically, the result of this thoughtful, inner questioning is not increased selfishness or lawlessness, but the discovery of innate wisdom, virtue, and the motivation to serve others. … people find that what really drives them, what they really want in life, is to help others and to serve life."[30] In fact the convening of choice-creating conversations can override the need for exclusive reliance on the written agreement.

The vision of the Citizens Amendment is not an isolated one. It is a sign of the time. Others in North America have thought how to alter the dominant paradigm and how to introduce seeds of change to shift the present balance of power toward more encompassing and more inclusive participation.

Ernest Callenbach and Michael Phillips envision an institution to replace the House of Representatives in their *A Citizen Legislature*. Closer to the Wisdom Council as a fourth branch of government is the idea exposed by Ethan J. Leib in his *Deliberative Democracy in America: A Proposal for a Popular Branch of Government*.[31] The Popular Branch would be an addition to the three branches of government. Another option is that of randomly selected pools of citizens to advise the government.

[30] Jim Rough, *Society's Breakthrough!*, 29.
[31] These alternatives are presented in Tom Atlee, *Empowering Public Wisdom: A Practical Vision of Citizen-Led Politics*, 179.

Most of these approaches have in common the desire to bring about greater collaboration between representative bodies through the intermediary of different, more inclusive and non-partisan bodies resorting to established dialogue and deliberation approaches. They aim at obtaining the greatest change through the smallest possible efforts. In line with the social art of Schiller and the moral technique of Steiner, we are looking at respecting what is—the present dynamics of majorities and minorities— and moving it to what is possible, a greater participation expressed in super-majorities or in consensus.

Whereas the Citizens Amendment makes recourse to a minimal number of participants, the Citizen Legislature would count on some 450 people representing the country's population through a stratified sampling that keeps in mind various demographics and minimizes statistical variations. At the level of 450 the statistical margin of error of the country's representation would be of a mere 5%. Differently from a Wisdom Council, and understandably, there would be no consensus requirement, rather that of a super-majority of 2/3 to 3/4. Without going into the further details of other approaches we can recognize the yearning for a new way to express the social will by transcending party politics, without opposing it frontally.

So far we have mostly looked at social processes aimed at integrating the new group souls. Dynamic Facilitation recognizes its filiation with earlier processes such as those present in Quaker consensus. It aims at fostering the possibility of the expression of a common will, which is more than what the sum of the individuals could generate.

We will now incorporate higher degrees of moral technique in the case of A.A. Here we reach a new level of complexity of the social structure. The sobriety of an individual in A.A. rests not only on the solidity of individual and group practices. It also depends on the social architecture expressed by A.A. World Services in enabling a high degree of participation and efficiency at the North American level. A.A. World Services brings about through its yearly Service Conference a high degree of resilience through which, year after year, the alcoholic has been able to receive treatment with as little repercussion as possible due to organizational changes. In other words, we can ask ourselves: "how do we create an extremely resilient social structure in support of the individual in need, so that an organization of great solidity can adapt to any macrolevel change without affecting the micro-level of the local group and the individual?"

A.A., 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts



What will be recapitulated here has been variously explored in a couple of places previously.[32] The reason to include the A.A. Fellowship in this exploration of the social spirituality of the future lies in the careful architecture of the 12 Steps, the 12 Traditions and the 12 Concepts. These denote three levels of growing complexity, going from individual recovery (12 Steps) to unity (12 Traditions), applying to the local group, to service (12 Concepts), which is the goal of the whole fellowship.

On one hand we are moving from smaller to larger units. On the other we can also note and wonder at the integration of one level into the other. What happens at the lower level already prepares what we will see at the following levels. And what is encompassed at the higher levels—groups and

[32] See Luigi Morelli, *A Revolution of Hope: Spirituality, Cultural Renewal and Social Change*, Chapter 6, Experiential Spirituality, Heading "Bill Wison and the Story of A.A." and *Searching for the Spirit of the West: A Hidden History of the USA and the Twentieth Century*, Chapter 9, America and the Transformation of the Will.

fellowship—is obviously aiming at sustaining the single individual. Complementarity goes hand in hand with subsidiarity.

We will look at the history that cemented the principles at one level and the other and the results that ensued, then at the whole as an integration of the parts and something larger than their sum.

The Individual in Recovery and the Twelve Steps

The birth of Alcoholics Anonymous was the attempt on the part of an individual to reproduce the process of healing from alcohol that he had undergone. Bill Wilson had reached something unhoped for, in fact truly unprecedented, when he cemented his recovery from alcohol in 1934.

By the year 1933, Bill Wilson in constant physical and emotional stress had lost forty pounds and seriously contemplated suicide. William D. Silkworth—his personal doctor and an authority in the treatment of alcoholics—raised concerns about his sanity. Apart from his utter despair, Bill was besieged with remorse for the pain he had imposed on his wife, Lois. Feeling he had reached the end, he nevertheless found the strength to turn to God, crying out:

> "I'll do anything, anything at all!" He had reached a point of total, utter deflation—a state of complete, absolute surrender. With neither faith nor hope, he cried, "If there be a God, let Him show Himself!"
>
> What happened next was electric. "Suddenly, my room blazed with an indescribably white light. I was seized with an ecstasy beyond description. Every joy I had known was pale by comparison. The light, the ecstasy—I was conscious of nothing else for a time.
>
> "Then, seen in the mind's eye, there was a mountain. I stood upon its summit, where a great wind blew. A wind, not of air, but of spirit. In great, clean strength, it blew right through me. Then came the blazing thought 'You are a free man.' I know not at all how long I remained in this state, but finally the light and the ecstasy subsided. I again saw the wall of my room. As I became more quiet, a great peace stole over me, and this was accompanied by a sensation difficult to describe. I became acutely conscious of a Presence which seemed like a veritable sea of living spirit. I lay on the shores of a new world. 'This,' I thought, 'must be the great reality. The God of the preachers.'
>
> "Savoring my new world, I remained in this state for a long time. I seemed to be possessed by the absolute, and the curious conviction deepened that no matter how wrong things seemed to be, there could

be no question of the ultimate Tightness of God's universe. For the first time, I felt that I really belonged, I knew that I was loved and could love in return. I thanked my God, who had given me a glimpse of His absolute self. Even though a pilgrim upon an uncertain highway, I need be concerned no more, for I had glimpsed the great beyond.''[33]

Bill, who had just turned thirty-nine, owed to this Near Death Experience that he neither doubted God's existence nor drank another glass. His recovered vitality defied rational unerstanding. A man in the last stages of alcoholism, that afflicted him both physically and mentally, lived another thirtyseven years despite his heavy smoking.

In the following years Bill's recovered vitality and inner certainty convinced him that there was a way into the seemingly impossible—offer a permanent cure for alcoholics. In essence Bill wanted to recapture what lived in that moment of rapture and otherworldliness. He wanted to render the experience possible for others, to convey the essential steps, though in a modified fashion.

However, before turning the tide, he had to experience the danger of relapse that brought forth a whole new chain of events. Bill had gone to Akron, Ohio, in order to become an officer of the National Rubber Machinery Company. Having lost the bid, he fell prey to the old ghosts of failure. At this crucial turning point he hit upon the revelation that only the help of another alcoholic would allow him to stay sober. Leafing through the yellow pages at random he came upon the name of a minister, Rev. Walter Tunks, who then contacted a certain Henrietta Seiberling. The latter put Bill in touch with doctor Bob Smith, an inveterate alcoholic. Bob knew what Bill was going through. He knew it so well that the conversation between the two men carried on into the late hours of the night and resumed the next day. The two decided to start working with other alcoholics right away. The date of their neeting has been enshrined as the symbolic beginning of A.A. in more than one way.

We could say that the two turning points highlight the importance of the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the recovery of Bill Wilson and all other alcoholics in A.A. To the encounter with the Higher Power cementing a new outlook in life, followed the meeting with Bob Smith, so emblematic of the social-spiritual dimension of the work of Twelve Step.

---

[33] A.A. World Services Inc., *Pass It On: The Story of Bill Wilson and How the A.A. Message Reached the World*, Chapter 5.

During the three years that followed Dr. Bob's recovery the Akron, New York and Cleveland groups started to state their principles along the following lines:

1. We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol
2. We got honest with ourselves
3. We got honest with another person, in confidence
4. We made amends for harms done to others
5. We worked with other alcoholics without demand for prestige or money
6. We prayed to God to help us to do these things as best we could.

Under many variations the above was the gist of the message given to incoming alcoholics up to 1939, when Bill Wilson felt inspired to codify the twelve steps. Wilson reminisced that in the evening in which this took place he was feeling depressed by the enormous difficulty of collectively cowriting four chapters of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Bill feared he was going to be a simple mediator between the contentious parties, rather than a co-author. Still, he wanted to convey the core message with crystal clarity and precision to both motivate and prevent room for evasion, denial or rationalizing shortcuts on the part of the recovering alcoholic.

The rest is better told in Bil Wilson's words: "At length I began to write on a cheap yellow tablet. I split the word-of-mouth program up into smaller pieces, meanwhile enlarging its scope considerably. Uninspired as I felt, I was surprised that in a short time, perhaps half an hour, I had set down certain principles which, on being counted, turned out to be twelve in number. And for some unaccountable reason, I had moved the idea of God into the Second Step, right up front. Besides, I had named God very liberally throughout the other steps. In one of the steps I had even suggested that the newcomer get down on his knees."[34]

Of course this wasn't the end of the process and a new round of negotiations followed. In what turned out to be a crucial contribution, the so-called "agnostic contingent", finally convinced the rest of the group that the terms "a Higher Power" or "God as we understand Him!" would be easier to accept by all alcoholics.

When the process was completed the present 12 Steps arose as we know them:

[34] *Origin Of The Twelve Steps*, Grapevine Article of July 1953 By Bill W. at https://gugogs.org/2024/12/23/origin-of-the-twelve-steps-grapevine-article-july-1953-by-bill-w/

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.

2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

A look at the twelve steps will indicate some of the cardinal elements of the social / spiritual dimension of A.A. In what is probably a first in modern time, a spiritual movement allows the recovery of an individual through the presence of a group soul. We will return to this later. In practical terms I have showed elsewhere how the twelve steps can be regrouped in six and how to these can be added the silent step of presencing.[35] When this is done (Figure 4) shows what the whole looks like:

[35] See Luigi Morelli, *Karl Julius Schröer and Rudolf Steiner Anthroposophy and the Teachings of Karma and Reincarnation*, Chapter 7, heading "The Breadth of the Impulse of Spirit Recollection." Also available at https://millenniumculmination.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/The-Breadth-of-the-Impulse-of-Spirit-Recollection.pdf

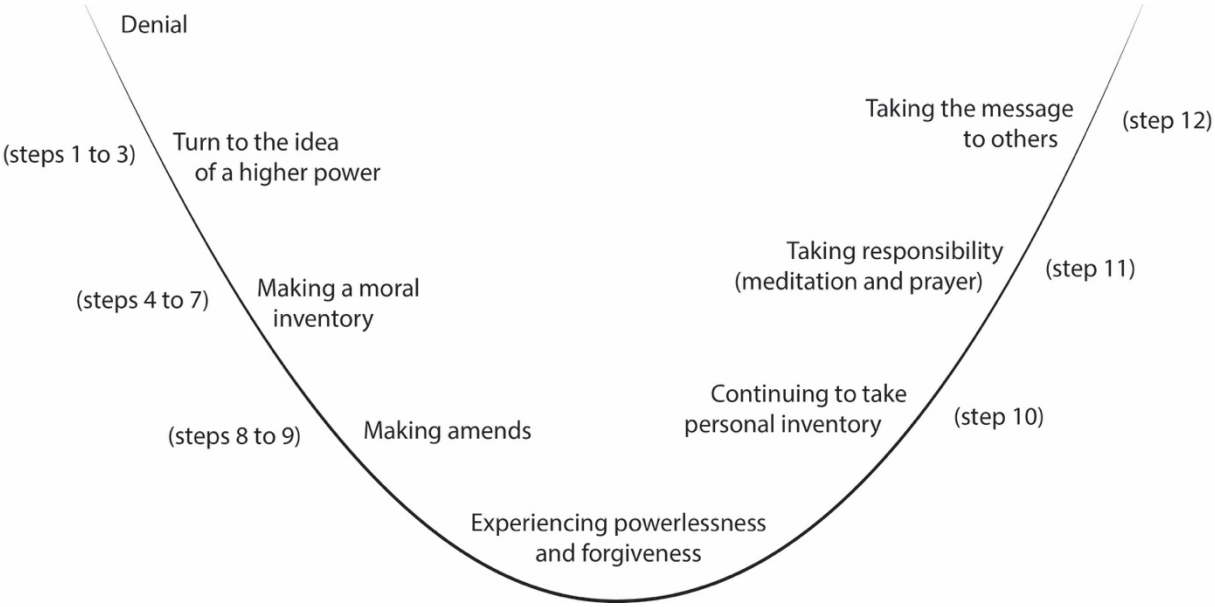


Figure 4: Twelve Step in relation to the seven life processes

The whole of the recovery of the individual in Alcoholics Anonymous starts with something that is not explicitly stated in the twelve steps: the individual, who has the humility to question his whole life up to the present, can do so through the support of a sponsor. He needs this presence at his side to face a formidable task of change.

In the first three steps the alcoholic can question all his beliefs up to the present. He can start to explore the notion of a Higher Power and of a life much larger than the one he has hitherto considered his own. Up to the present his horizon did not move further than his own ego. It is a stretch to make room for a Higher Power when even the word God could cause, so to speak, allergic reactions. This corresponds, broadly speaking to the stage of changing our thinking, what Otto Scharmer calls the Open Mind in Theory U.

In a second step the individual starts taking a moral inventory, writing down a list of all the wrongs he has committed and all the people he has hurt so far. He moves from the realm of thought into the feelings. He starts opening up to the possibility that the higher Self has architected the events of his life in such a manner that he could wake up to another understanding of destiny. He can start to realize how alcohol was a choice, not an unavoidable outcome. And he experiences what we normally fully awaken to only in passing through *kamaloca* after death, the pain caused to the people in our lives. The individual awakens to the level of the feelings in what we can equate to the Open Heart step in Theory U.

It is important for the recovery that we move further into the will. This is signified by the momentous step of making amends for our own past behavior—at least where we would not add significant damage in the present. It is a profoundly humbling experience, one that curbs an overweening ego. It is the stage of the Open Will, prelude to that experience that Otto Scharmer has called "presencing." The experience of presencing renders possible a seeming paradox. It is in the moment of most complete, apparent powerlessness that the individual can experience forgiveness, self-forgiveness and the source of true power coming from a lower self aligned with the higher Self. We could say that, though not fully consciously experienced, the Christ being stands behind the moment of presencing just as it did in the momentous N.D.E. of Bill Wilson.

From a social spiritual dimension there is more than meet the eye here. Only when an individual becomes capable of—though not necessarily always faithful to—the idea of taking responsibility for his life, he enables social work to move to a next level. From this level the lower ego starts looking at the higher Self as a growing reality, which directs his life and has a greater influence over future events than anything he can attribute to other human beings or to the blind hand of fate. He is in effect saying that he will stop placing blame on others, or weighing himself down with guilt, and starting to become co-creator at the social level. The other dimensions of the work of group and fellowship will further highlight this shift.

The idea of taking responsibility for one's own life is implemented on the other side of the U graph. At step 5 of the seven life processes (10 of the 12 Steps) the individual commits to continuing to exercise vigilance over his own destiny by taking an ongoing moral inventory. To the horizontal dimension is added, in reverse to Bill's original experience, the taking up of personal responsibility in the vertical dimension. If it is a higher power which has rendered us able to turn the corner, so to speak, then it is our responsibility to cultivate this vertical relationship through prayer or meditation (step 11). Finally, all of this naturally leads to an active step of bringing help to our fellow alcoholic. As we started our personal journey into Twelve Step through the help of a sponsor, we are now willing to eventually become a sponsor to others. And we are also willing to lend our hand to the preservation and furtherance of the larger edifice of the A.A. Fellowship.

We have finished reviewing the level of recovery. We will move to the level of the group and the idea of "unity."

The AA Group and the Idea of Unity

Once more—as was the case for Bill Wilson's experience of alcohol previous to the spiritual experience—it was a long series of ups and downs that enshrined the need for a group discipline if A.A. wanted to ensure the effective support of the group to the recovering alcoholic.

After a successful 1941 Jack Alexander article on the *Saturday Evening Post* placed A.A. on the American map, the requests to join Alcoholics Anonymous groups skyrocketd. It was a mixed blessing that presented mounting challenges for the groups and for A.A. as a whole. There were problems with money, with power struggles, with the challenges posed by fringe populations seeking access to the groups, with public relations and other obstacles that threatened to destroy the fledgling organization. Let us review a few of them:

- The problem of breaking anonymity: when early members publicly broke anonymity they did so for personal gain, fame, even political power, but also to naïvely try to boost the growth of A.A. This led to very short term gains and successes, but also to misleading claims about Twelve Step beyond the reality of its achievements.
- Problems with money and power: in the attempt to secure resources some groups rented extravagant venues, received funds from donors, even bought buildings. Apart from distracting the alcoholics from their main purpose the attempts fueled disputes and contentions about money and property.
- The problem of external ventures: some early groups endorsed political and religious causes or tried to manage hospitals or farms. These outside affiliations caused severe divisions.
- Power dynamics and strong egos: as was to be expected for lack of clear directives or processes some ambitious, or charismatic, individuals vied for the role of leaders, or tried to exert indirect control over the groups.
- Problem of membership criteria: some of the early threats were more a problem of perception than reality. Feeling fragile in relation to the outside world, caused some groups to enforce strict codes of conduct and prerequisites for would-be-members. When ex-convicts or people with mental illness applied to join the groups many feared for A.A.'s reputation and wanted to put limits to acceptance of new members.

The Twelve Traditions, formulated in 1946, that now help preserve the long-term viability of the groups, were the result of a few years of trial and error.

In the early stages, in order to safeguard the groups the leaders devised conditions of membership. The fellowship thought it needed to go into research and education. Bill Wilson looked for sources of financing for the groups and for himself. At present none of these early ideas have survived. The wisdom emerging from the trials of these years was gathered by Bill Wilson who published the Twelve Traditions, but that was merely the effort of gathering the results of experience and reflecting it back to the early pioneers for suggestions and improvements.

When seen from the perspective of American culture, or modern culture at large, some of the traditions challenge conventional wisdom. Still they masterfully addressed all the challenges presented above, they have withstood the test of time and assured the groups' survival to the present. Here they are in their "short form":

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.

2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.

4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.

5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.

12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

From the above we can see how a group is the operational unit per excellence of A.A. It both serves the interests of the individual and is the building block of the larger social architecture.

In the direction of serving the individual we can highlight the principle of anonymity as a protection for the exposed ego of the newcomer, the very general and minimal conditions of admission, the limitation of the groups' purpose to the needs of the alcoholic alone.

And here a word is in place in pointing to the larger dimension that a group can play in individual recovery, moving beyond simple control of alcohol dependence. The following is taken from the sister fellowship of Emotions Anonymous. The prerequisite for EA membership is the inability to control a certain emotion. Put together these form a very broad and universal spectrum of emotions and behaviors, many of which we encounter commonly. EA brings together compulsive perfectionists, so-called universal "acceptors" or "rejectors," people with phobias, depression, even paranoia and everything in between such as workoholism.

The group is an avenue to controlling strong or extreme behaviors, but it does more than that. It may even have an influence on physical wellbeing. It has been documented that people who had reached irreversible psychoses—those in which physical symptoms have permanently set in—can see their symptoms kept in check on the condition, however, that they continue to rely on the group. Emotions Anonymous, has weaned people from heavy dependence on psychoactive medications for the first time in their lives.[36] It is known that this would be an otherwise long and harrowing process.

Of course, as much as they help the individual, the Twelve Traditions are also critical links to the larger architecture in more than one way. They anticipated the needs of the A.A. World Services and the General Service Conference, which would be enshrined in the Twelve Concepts of 1962. Central to the social dimension are the ideas of leaders as "trusted servants," the autonomy of the groups and their non-professional status, their non-involvement and non-pronouncement in external causes and the public relations "based on attraction." The list would not be complete without anonymity, which protects not only the individual but the collective, ensuring that A.A. place principles over personalities.

[36] Emotions Anonymous International, *Emotions Anonymous*. See Chapter VII: A Prisoner of My Fears, 68–78.

There is another dimension of group work that is not specified in the Twelve Traditions. The service structure of the group organically connects to the whole of the Fellowship or beyond. Members of a single group, acquire over time roles that connect them to the larger structure of A.A. An individual may be responsible for the connection of the group with the Grapevine, with the literature or the archives. Others will be liaisons with the local treatment facilities, with A.A.'s World Services Board, or be involved with the public outreach through local professionals. In essence the group becomes a microcosm of the whole of A.A., including its interactions with the wider world. This is an additional, organic link promoting the growth of the individual (step 12), enhancing the pivotal role of the groups and the social architecture of the Fellowship.

The A.A. Fellowship, the Twelve Concepts and Service

It was again the school of trial and errors that occupied much of Bill Wilson's energy in looking at the larger dimension of the edifice of sobriety. For an eminently social-spiritual enterprise as Twelve Step the organizational architecture becomes central to the healing of the individual.

How did the individual come to depend not just on the healthy group but also on the healthy organization of the larger Fellowship? This is easy to fathom. In the early stages there was a board of trustees for the so-called Alcoholic Foundation as a whole on one side, and the groups on the other. The Foundation coordinated the needs of the loosely affiliated network of groups, taking care of administrative, legal matters, the queries of prospective members from isolated places, or the publishing of the monthly journal, the *AA Grapevine*. The transmission links between the two entities were two key individuals: Bill Wilson and Bob Smith. However, this was a fragile connection at a time of continued growth. Bill and Bob simply couldn't sense and respond to the growing needs of a larger fellowship. Whereas there had been little more than 100 members in 1938, time of the birth of the Foundation, there were 30,000 by 1946.[37] Add to this that Bob was gravely sick with cancer before he died in 1950.

As is the case in many organizations, inertia simply prevailed and the old guard could see no point in changing things from the "good old days." Bill Wilson, who detected the growing needs, acted like the trusted servant who perceives a reality to which many turn a blind eye. Slowly he managed to overcome resistances and gain the ear of one and the other key individuals

[37] Markings (Your Archives Interchange) vol. 26, No 2, Fall 2006, available at https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/newsletters/f-151_markings_fall06.pdf.

and the tacit assent of the members. By 1960 he capitalized on the person of Bernard Smith, the new chairman of the Alcoholic Foundation, who understood what Bill was after and why. And in 1950, just before dying Bob Smith finally rallied vocally to Bill's wish.

This led in the years 1951 to 1955 to the audacious prototyping of the General Service Conferences as an experiment in a new kind of governance, which would be reviewed, commented and improved upon by the representatives of the groups, as a way to enshrine a structure in which the input of the groups would be paramount and the organizational overhead would be minimal, but highly effective, in keeping with the ideas professed in the Twelve Traditions (especially articles 1, 2, 8, 9 and 12). Bill summarized what a time of pralaya and new emergence looks like thus "For ten long years nobody could say whether the forces of destruction would prevail or whether the educational value of trouble would bring the right ideas."[38]

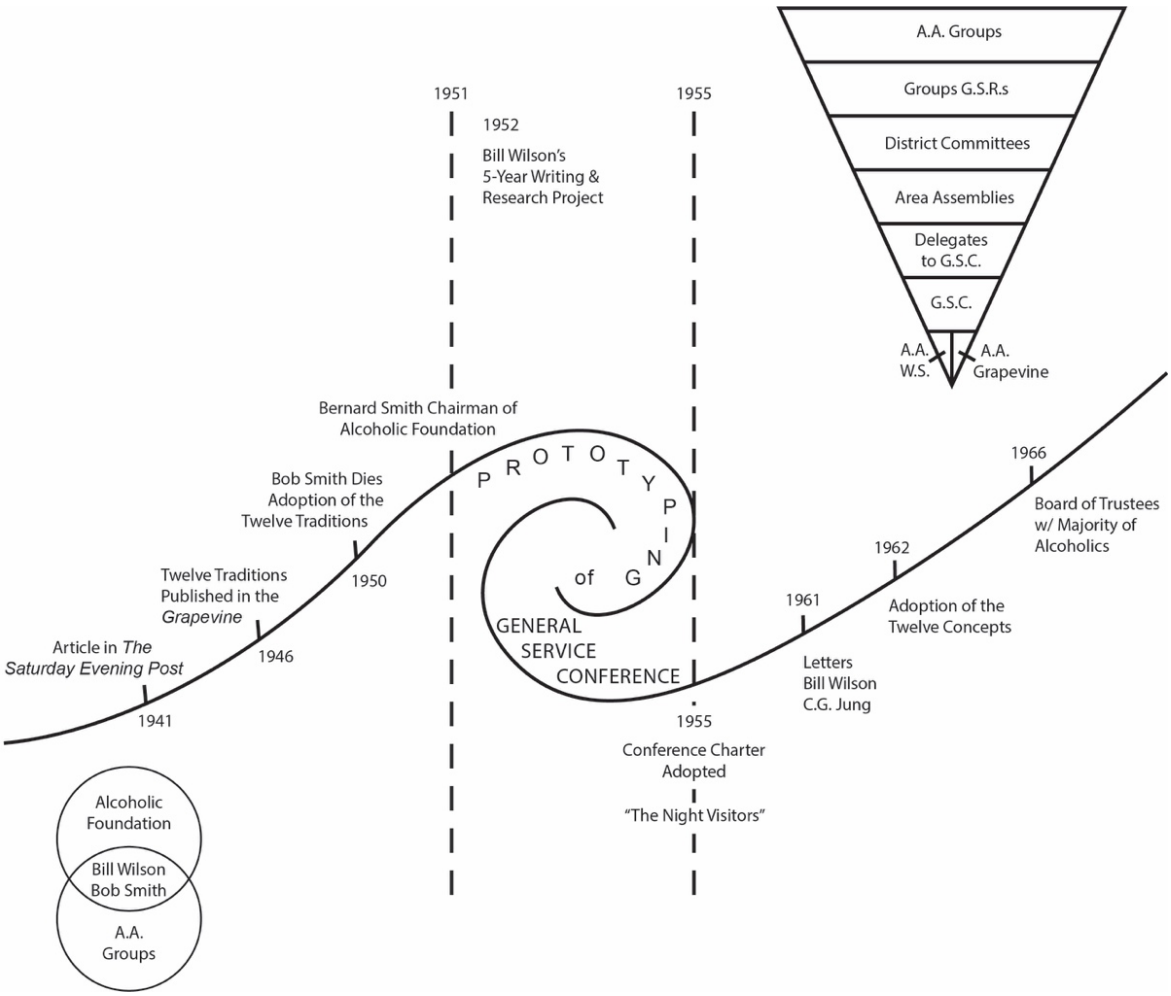


Figure 5: Stages of the A.A.'s Organizational Transformation

[38] Alcoholics Anonymous World Services Inc, *Our Great Responsibility*, 128.

The General Service Conference led to an organizational reversed pyramid structure (Figure 5). It gave great importance and weight to the voice of the groups through a system of regional delegates, from which were chosen the Conference delegates. The power yielded by the delegates was balanced out by the expertise of the board of trustees and the professionals working within A.A. World Services and the Grapevine. What Bill Wilson achieved in the five years of transition was the effective transfer of power primarily from his own persona to the groups.

The General Service Conference has been called an "upside down organization" placing the trustees at the bottom and the groups at the top. However it is not an equalitarian organization, rather it balances the principles of participation through an equalitarian impulse with the role of specific expertise that alone can bring efficiency. Thus the trustees' rights and responsibilities are clearly spelled (see below, concepts 6, 8, 9, 10).

The Conference integrates not only the groups but the individuals. In keeping with Step 12, those who have made their way to recovery assume progressively larger areas of responsibility, as in becoming regional or Conference delegates. To this end they acquire greater knowledge of A.A.'s history, its traditions and its inner workings.

The Twelve Concepts for World Service, written by Bill Wilson and adopted by the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1962 read in their "short form":

1. Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

2. The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole society in its world affairs.

3. To ensure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A.—the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives—with a traditional "Right of Decision."

4. At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation," allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

5. Throughout our structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.

6. The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.

7. The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments, empowering the trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the A.A. purse for final effectiveness.

8. The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of over-all policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.

9. Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees.

10. Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.

11. The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.

12. The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government; that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

The Concepts have developed clear leadership guidelines, and defined rights and responsibilities in ways that minimize conflict. They have put in place sets of checks and balances that distribute power and limit it. "Authority should be equal to responsibility" is an oft-repeated principle.

Key to the Twelve Concepts' system of checks and balances are four important rights: right of decision, right of participation, right of petition and right of appeal. Let us look at them more closely:

- Right of Decision. Though he represents a set of groups, the delegate is a "trusted servant" who is free to act according to his conscience. He

should try to align first and foremost with the conscience of A.A. as a whole, then to his own group. This concept is key to ensuring leaderfulness.

- Right of Participation. Its aim is to curb ultimate authority and mitigate its possible misuse. Practically, this is done through the healthy principle of including all possible stakeholders. Among these we find in different settings: the trustees (of A.A.W.S. or of the Grapevine) volunteer experts, paid office executives, Conference delegates. In this regard established traditions that recommend consultation and inclusion are more effective than regulations. Such are the inclusion of members of one of the two corporations in the decisions of the other and committees created at the annual Conference linked to a corresponding committee of the General Service Board.
- Rights of Appeal and of Petition. Minorities play as important a role as majorities. They may be better able to read the conscience of the fellowship in times of need or crisis, as was recognized by Bill Wilson: "the wellheard minority is our chief protection against an uninformed, misinformed, hasty or angry majority."[39] And what is true of minorities also applies to single individuals, who may otherwise feel pressured to silence or hesitate to file personal grievances for fear of peer pressure or reprisal. In this regard Bill commented: "… during a time of great disturbance the group conscience is not always the best possible guide. When, therefore, the group conscience cannot or should not act directly, who does act for it?" And further "These [trusted] servants must always be in readiness to do for the groups what the groups obviously cannot do or should not do for themselves. Consequently the servants are bound to use their own information and judgment, sometimes to the point of disagreeing with uninformed or biased group opinion."[40]

The health of a large organization can be measured by its ability to change and adapt to the challenges of the time. Thus, safe for a very few exceptions, provisions of the Conference Charter could be amended. Important changes could also be prototyped for a period of time, to allow room for experimentation, in the same spirit that led to the four-year prototyping of the General Service Conference itself.

Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts have built Alcoholics Anonymous' social architecture, one which encompasses every possible set of polarities.

[39] Bill Wilson, *Twelve Concepts for World Service*, in Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., *The A.A. Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service*, 22.
[40] Bill Wilson, Twelve Concepts for World Service, 23.

Such are the contrast between group conscience and trusted servant, between paid staff and volunteers, between rights of leadership and rights of participation or petition, between rights of majorities and minorities, including individuals, between powers established in tradition and those based in law (Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board as legal instruments, Conference Charter as a tradition), between established and accepted forms and processes of amendment and possibilities to prototype change. Resposibilities are weighed in light of personal commitment, e.g. in considering years of sobriety achieved. Finally, the whole social structure contains numerous checks and balances to ensure that principles stand above personalities.

An appreciative and surprised Wilson praised the achievements of the General Service Conference and its effects on the Fellowship thus: "And strangely enough—and this is the paradox—we have been able to do this because of God's grace working through a sober but still defective people who, in his Providence, have been able to bring into being a society seemingly not only sound in principle, but of great beauty and great perfection as a whole." And further: "The Society itself is beauty and perfection. And it stays that way, despite the fact that we each take our turn in being destructive—in being juvenile and generally acting like hell. Is this not a great gift of Providence?"[41] We could say that the Conference truly integrated social and anti-social impulses. Through healthy dispositions the whole may shine as more than the sum of its parts.

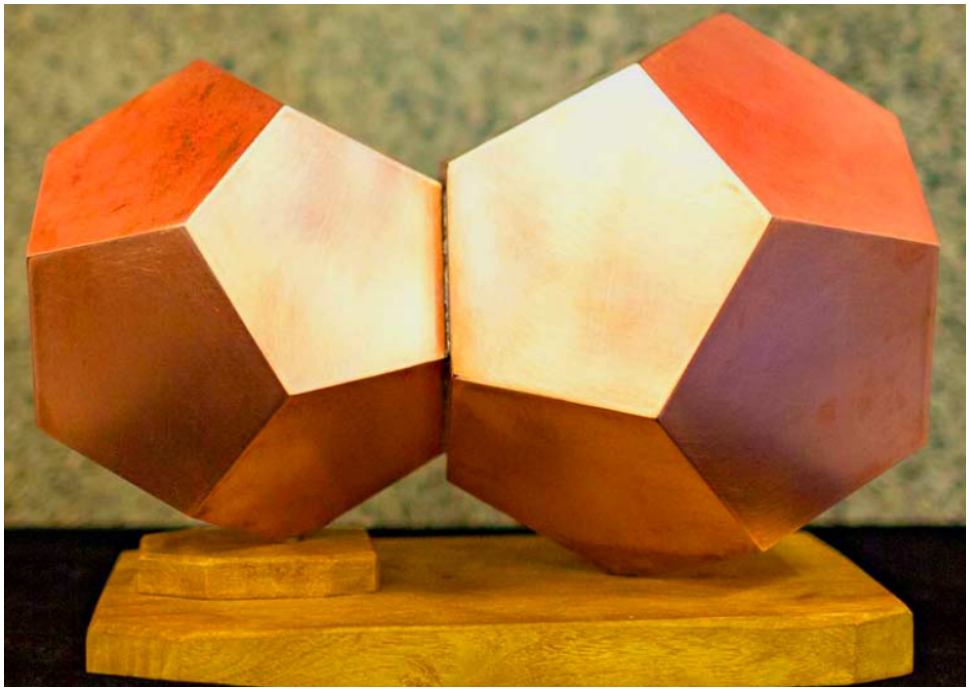
The whole architecture of the A.A. Fellowship depends on the integration of the three sets of twelve that we have explored so far. And it may have been a stroke of genius on the part of Bernard Smith to incorporate Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts in the bylaws, a document of a strictly legal nature. Thus even a legal document can shine with the light of the spirit.

In closing we can look up to the history and organization of the Fellowship as a pioneer organization in the field of spirituality, moreover one in which the vertical/spiritual and horizontal/social are admirably integrated. This is what gives the organization the capacity to serve its main aim, the individual, ever more efficiently and deeply in terms of numbers and of quality of recovery. The principle of anonymity and the power of the Twelve Concepts have allowed A.A. to survive its first seventy years—from the time of the first General Service Conferences to the present—unsullied by scandals, controversies or splits.

[41] Alcoholics Anonymous World Services Inc, *Our Great Responsibility*, 160.

We can now remain in the spiritual realm and look at how Rudolf Steiner envisioned the whole field of social spirituality and the organizational aspects of a spiritual endeavor. We will find this articulated in the examples of the General Anthroposophical Society, particularly in its Statutes or Principles, and in the future-looking groups of the Esoteric Youth Circle (Jugendkreis). Both these developments took place in the very last years of Steiner's life.

The Statutes of the General Anthroposophical Society and Their Relationship to the Foundation Stone Meditation



Exploring Twelve Step and the A.A. Fellowship has prepared us to look at how a well devised organizational architecture supports the social dimension of a spiritual endeavor. The same could be said for other more secular pursuits. Every common activity can become a sacramental offering, a little like the Quaker spirit asserts in seeing only practical or technical differences, not qualitative ones, between a business meeting and a worship meeting.

It was in this spirit that Rudolf Steiner wrote the Statutes / Principles of the General Anthroposophical Society (G. A. S.) at the Christmas Meeting and had them carefully presented to and approved by the membership. If the Foundation Stone Meditation is a powerful concentrated essence of the whole of the new Mysteries and therefore the spiritual inspiration of the Anthroposophical Movement, the Statutes hold a very important place in bringing this reality to bear in the G.A.S. They deserve as much attention as the Foundation Stone Meditation when it comes to the renewal of the Mysteries attempted by Rudolf Steiner. In fact, when presenting the newly re-formed Society to the members Steiner spoke of an inner and an outer

aspect; to the first corresponded the Foundation Stone Meditation, to the second the Statutes, which the members adopted on December 28, 1923.[42]

In the following I will explore the importance of the Statutes/Principles mostly through the eyes of the remarkable analysis of Herbert Witzenmann.[43] What has been said in terms of the integration of polarities of A.A. is here brought to a new level. In fact the whole of the Statutes can be placed in relationship to the Foundation Stone Meditation.

Statutes and Polarities

Witzenmann advances that the Statutes were meant to regulate the relationship between the Society in the external world and the movement in the spiritual world. And the Statutes form a whole with the Foundation Stone Meditation, whose seven rhythms Rudolf Steiner offered to the members during the Christmas Meeting. They enshrine the intimate connection between public openness and inner depth.

Whereas the mantras are mostly directed to the inner life, they also have a meaning for the external world; they can inspire those who direct their attention to practical pursuits. Likewise, whereas the Statutes are mostly intended to achieve an external role, they also have an esoteric meaning, as will be shown next. The Statutes address not only structural and organizational aspects; they are also directed to the soul in sustaining its inner life. To that end Witzenmann turns his interest to their structure/architecture and he recognizes a threefoldness of the whole of the fifteen articles. He sees a threefold rhythm that weaves between two poles and moves through a center in alternation between the two.

The polarities of the Twelve Concepts become here an integrated threefoldness, stressing a harmonizing middle. This means that to statute 1, of pole A, corresponds statute 3 of the opposite pole, C. In between them stands the balancing statute 2 (of balancing row B). When we return from statute 3 (row C) to statute 5 (row A) we pass again through the balancing center of Statute 4 (row B). When we look at the whole we therefore have three

[42] See in this regard Wilfried Heidt, *Does the General Anthroposophical Society Need to Be Refounded?* in "A Forum: What Do We Want our Anthroposophical Society to Be? (from *Was in der Anthroposophischen Gesellschaft vorgeht – Nachtrichten für deren Mitglieder* [Das Goetheanum, News-Sheet] No 46, 1997, pp. 270-77).

[43] Herbert Witzenmann, *Les principes de la Societe Anthroposophique Générale comme fondement de vie et comme chemin de développement* (The principles of the General Anthroposophical Society as a Foundation for Life and a Path of Development).

rows, alternating from A to B to C, back to B and A, and so on. This gives the following alternating sequence:

A) 1 5 9 13

B) 2 4 6 8 10 12 14

C) 3 7 11 15

The Statutes in their original form are spelled out in Appendix 1, the Foundation Meditation Stone mantra in Appendix 2.

Row A corresponds to the outer (exoteric), row C to the inner (esoteric) aspects of the ordering of the Society. Statutes of row B qualitatively balance and harmonize A and C. The polarities of the extremes expressing the exoteric and esoteric are united by a rhythmic middle. Rhythm emerges from the expression of integrated polarities. Notice that not only there is a central row; there is also a central statute of the whole, number 8, which we can expect to occupy a special place in the global architecture.

Witzenmann comments: "For a free community to build itself and manifest its own style (what defines its essence) it must unite inner and outer through a middle that integrates the polarities. The middle [row B] becomes a sensitive organ [boundary organ] perceiving and integrating the relationships and differences between inner and outer. A community is the external manifestation of a super-sensible reality."[44] Witzenmann does not go as far as to mention the "new group soul". Rather he calls is a "super-individuality" that does not suppress the various individualities of its members. In effect, however, this is very similar to Steiner's new group soul, of which he spoke clearly in relation to the Anthroposophical Society:

> "An emancipated human being possesses his individual soul which is never lost when it has once been attained. But when men find themselves together in voluntary associations they group themselves round centres. The feelings streaming in this way to a centre once more give beings the opportunity of working as a kind of group soul, though in quite a different sense from the early group souls. All the earlier group souls were beings who made man unfree. These new beings, however, are compatible with man's complete freedom and individuality. Indeed, in a certain respect we may say that they support their existence on human harmony;

[44] Herbert Witzenmann, *Les principes de la Societe Anthroposophique Générale*, 7, author's translation.

> it will lie in the souls of men themselves whether or not they give as many as possible of such higher souls the opportunity of descending to man. The more that men are divided, the fewer lofty souls will descend into the human sphere. The more that associations are formed where feelings of fellowship are developed with complete freedom, the more lofty beings will descend and the more rapidly the earthly planet will be spiritualized."[45]

A true Christ-centered community expresses itself in the 'style' of its external appearance and its inner permeation by the task it seeks to accomplish, leading to its spiritual development in time. It must possess a radiating, dynamic and rhythmic force. It presents itself under the form of a living threefoldness between two poles mediated by a middle.

Row B therefore harmonizes and unifies the exoteric and the esoteric. Before we see it in more detail we can point to its center—and the center of the whole—statute 8. The article sanctions the unity between the publication of Rudolf Steiner's whole opus and the communal cognitive responsibility, embodied in the essential function of the School of Spiritual Science. Behind it stands the central role of the path of spiritual development and initiation as a fundamental impulse of world cultural renewal, which legitimizes, not only Rudolf Steiner's legacy, but the role of the General Anthroposophical Society.

In looking at the threefoldness of the Statutes, we will start from the middle row (B), then move to the upper/exoteric row (A) and finally the lower/esoteric row (C).

The Middle Row (Statutes 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14)

Statute 2 covers the relationship between spiritual science and modern culture, specifying that it is the task of the G.A.S. to aspire to bring it into the general culture, to reunite spiritual research with daily life.

Paragraph 4 specifies the very free conditions for joining the Anthroposophical Society. Anybody who sees in the School of Spiritual Science a new center of the Mysteries needed in our time can be a member. The simplicity of this statute can remind us of A.A.'s third Tradition (The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking). However, in this instance a positive replaces a negative.

[45] Steiner, *The Influence of Spiritual Beings upon Man*, lecture of June 1, 1908.

Paragraph 6 evokes the right of a member to participate in all events and gatherings organized by the Anthroposophical Society.

Paragraph 8 concerns the literary legacy and the publication of Steiner's opus. It mentions the role of the School of Spiritual Science in guaranteeing the continuation of this legacy. In essence the School protects the authenticity of what is published of Steiner's literary estate.

Paragraph 10 relates to the yearly AGM held at the Goetheanum, explaining the duties pertaining to the *Vorstand* (Council) representatives and the rights of the members. It regulates the relationship between center and periphery.

Paragraph 12 establishes the setting of member's dues.

Paragraph 14 concerns the subscription to the Goetheanum Weekly and its supplement. This also regulates a relationship between the internal life of the Society and modern culture through current events.

We could say that these verses cover the concerns of the external society at large and those of a legal nature. They regulate rights and responsibilities.

The Upper Row (Statutes 1, 5, 9, 13)

The verses of the upper row indicate how the Society presents itself to and interacts with the world.

Paragraph 1 describes the Society as a community dedicated to knowledge (*Erkenntnisgemeinschaft*) both at the individual and collective levels.

Paragraph 5 indicates the central importance of the School of Spiritual Science at the center of the G.A.S. and refers to the three levels into which it would ideally have been organized. It also specifies that it is open to the members of the Society with the only condition that they have previously been members of the Society for a given time. The access to the School is preceded by an admission conversation.

Paragraph 9 builds on paragraph 5 by specifying that the goal of the Society is to encourage spiritual research and the goal of the School to conduct this very same research, turning to the needs of the world.

Article 13 indicates the relationship between work groups and the G.A.S. The former can work out their own statutes, provided these do not conflict with the Statutes of the Society. The article hints at the creation of group souls integrated at different levels and cooperating between each other.

The overall row has a different quality from the middle one. In it we see a gesture of definition and characterization of the center (School of Spiritual Science), the wider circle (General Anthroposophical Society) and the periphery (working groups) and their interrelationships and stance toward the larger world. In last analysis through these premises the Statutes show how the Society is situated in relation to the wider society and public life. They show how School and Society want to bring genuine cultural renewal based on the spirit to the larger society. These are Statutes turned toward the world, the results of clarity of thinking. They address the cultural sphere.

Lower Row (Statutes 3, 7, 11, 15)

Paragraph 3 outlines our common human origin in the spirit world and the attitude with which we can turn to the revelations of anthroposophy and test them with an open mind, even if we aren't yet able to vouchsafe for the anthroposophical approach.

Paragraph 7 indicates that anyone with an earnest mind can participate in the task of the School of Spiritual Science of bringing back into human culture the principle of initiation. This endeavor is a historical first in human history.

Paragraph 11 oversees the forming of groups according to geography or themes/fields of work and their relationship to the center (Goetheanum). It echoes the intentions of paragraph 13.

Paragraph 15 names the original members of the 1923 *Vorstand*—members charged with an esoteric task. It enshrines the historical process that took place at the time of the Christmas Conference and its outcome. One could object to the place of paragraph 15 within this division, which was not included in the original version of the Statutes. However, it is here because the forming of the *Vorstand* owes its reality to the recognition of the spiritual world, no doubt consulted by Rudolf Steiner. We know that it owed its legitimacy in the bringing together of the most diverse Michaelic and Christ-imbued spiritual streams.

The lower row verses cover the karma that motivates individuals to join the Society or the School and then to work together in groups. We could say that these verses look at the realm of human relationships, even included the larger karma that brings together the streams through their representatives at the level of the *Vorstand*. They address the realm of the will, transformed into action.

Witzenmann advances: "The manifest mystery of the principles [Statutes] aims at the elaboration of an esoteric community to which the anthroposophical movement entrusts the principle of initiation as the basis for a renewal of civilization. The mystery of the mantras of the Foundation Meditation is in polar contrast, the foundation for a public society as the protective envelope for a free School of Spiritual Science at its center."[46]

We can trace an evolution between the architecture of Twelve Step and the Principles of the G.A.S. Whereas the spirituality of A.A. is one of the transformation of the will, the Foundation Stone Meditation, which stands for the whole heritage of spiritual science, embodies the reality of the three paths, those of Spirit Recollection, Spirit Mindfulness and Spirit Beholding, fostering the transformation of the will, of the feeling life and of thinking. This is what gives rise not only to polarity (rows A and C) but to the integrating element of rhythm and the resulting threefoldness that pivots around a middle element (row B). It is this threefoldness that unites the organizing / practical impulses of the Statutes to the threefoldness of the human being expressed in the Foundation Stone Meditation.

The Statutes and the Foundation Stone Meditation

In reviewing the central row we see a weaving between the Society and the movement, the exoteric and the esoteric, and also something of a legal / rights' sphere. We cultivate a balance between exoteric and esoteric. The quality of the whole row B of the statutes is one of "balance of the soul," the one that the Foundation Stone Meditation qualifies as Spirit Mindfulness (or Spirit Awareness, Spirit Sensing) in the second stanza.

The upper verses (row A) echo of the spirit that is expressed in the Foundation Stone Meditation's third stanza of Spirit Beholding (or Spirit Vision), which takes place in quietness of thought. These are Statutes turned toward the world, the results of clarity of thinking. They address the cultural sphere.

The Statutes of the lower row elaborate on the relationships inside the Anthroposophical Society at all levels; from the Vorstand to the working groups. Through these provisions we are reminded of our common origin in the spirit to which we can offer a workable structure. These Statutes correspond in spirit to what is expressed in the Foundation Stone Meditation as Spirit Recollection (or Spirit Remembrance) that leads to "truly living" in the first stanza. They aim at re-enlivening our origin in the divine. These verses cover the karma that motivates individuals to join the Society or the School

[46] Herbert Witzenmann, *Les principes de la Societe Anthroposophique Générale*, 22, author's translation.

and then to work together in groups. We could say that these Statutes look at the realm of human relationships, even included the larger karma that brings together the streams through their representatives at the level of the *Vorstand*. The verses address the realm of the will transformed into action.

First Class, Anthroposophical Society and Goetheanum Association

The above view of the social architecture at the Goetheanum would not be complete without recognizing the original intentions underlying the re-founding of the General Anthroposophical Society. These can be seen at two overlapping levels: the place that threefolding occupied within the whole of anthroposophy from 1922 onwards and the three levels of intertwining spheres that surrounded the re-founding of the Anthroposophical Society itself.

First of all, it may come as a surprise that from at least the year 1922 the logotype of the Goetheanum Newsletter included the caption "Anthroposophy and Threefolding." Placing the two on seemingly equal standing indicates at the very least that threefolding is crucial to the carrying out of anthroposophy into the world. Following the internal crises in the Society, the logotype was modified to become "Anthroposophy" alone in the year 1935.[47]

Already in the year 1918 Steiner pointed out to the Anthroposophical Society representing the rights sphere of the newly organized Michaelic movement: "I mean the spiritual third, even including the juridical [rights] sphere. For, my dear friends, the principle of human rights which should hold sway from individual to individual, this should really go without saying among anthrosophists."[48] And clearly, as we have seen from the Statutes the School of Spiritual Science corresponded to the cultural sphere. It provided the spiritual inspiration upon which rested the whole edifice of anthroposophy in modern culture.

So what was left? The economic sphere of course. And in this regard it is of note that Steiner included in the concerns of the Society also the Goetheanum Association that owned the Goetheanum building, Marie Steiner's Philosophical-Anthroposophical Publishing House and Ita Wegman's medical clinic, all of which were fiscally sound. The Goetheanum Association was formed by eleven voting members, of which Steiner was not one.

[47] Stephen Usher, *Threefolding the Anthroposophical Society*.
[48] Rudolf Steiner, *The Fundamental Social Demand of Our Time*, lecture of 15 December, 1918.

The threefolding of the Anthroposophical Society at Dornach was reflected in the awarding of cards, two of which are still familiar to present-day anthroposophists. On one hand membership in the First Class of the School of Spiritual Science was and is recognized through a blue and gold card with its own symbol. At the time Rudolf Steiner and Ita Wegman were responsible for bestowing those cards. Membership within the Society was rendered official by bestowing a pink and green card with another symbol. Finally, a circle of economic support for School and Society was also recognizable by its violet and gold card with a third symbol. This circle was comprised of two kinds of members: those who made donations and those who were recognized for their financial and organizational expertise. Although both groups could attend pertinent meetings, only the second group could vote. Such circle came to an end on December 29, 1925.[49]

We can recognize from the above that the three kinds of memberships are very specific. Everybody who wants can be part of the G.A.S. as paragraph 4 specifies. Only those willing to take a stand for anthroposophy and for Rudolf Steiner's legacy can be part of the School of Spiritual Science. Finally, only donors or people with specific skills could be part of the Goetheanum Association.

The exploration of a matter as complex as the world Anthroposophical Society can hardly stop at this level. Remains to be seen how all national anthroposophical societies could be integrated within a worldwide anthroposophical society. This is the matter of coordinating the whole of the group souls of the national societies with, arguably, *anthroposophia* itself.

There is at this point another level of conversation that remains to be explored. We have seen in the last two examples, the A.A. fellowship and the G.A.S., how a carefully devised architecture of exoteric (A.A. and G.A.S.) and esoteric (G.A.S.) principles can build the social spirituality of the future. We can now move to the purely esoteric end of the spectrum in the instance of the Youth Circle (*Jugend Kreis*) that Rudolf Steiner established in 1922.

[49] Stephen Usher, *Threefolding the Anthroposophical Society*.

The Social Spirituality of the Future: The Esoteric Youth Circle

> "The healthy social life is found when in the mirror of each human soul the whole community finds its reflection and when in the community the strength of each one is living."
>
> Rudolf Steiner, "social motto"

The last segment of this essay looks at how the social reality of our lives can be strengthened through the spiritual dimension, in a form that is as little subjected as possible to rules, legal forms, even acceptance and exclusion criteria. It is an ideal that turns toward the future, one that anticipates future evolutionary steps. Only spiritual science can lay the basis for such a far-looking attempt. Here the mantras offered to the members acquire centerstage.

In what follows quotations are brought forth from loosely gathered notes, many of them type-written or even handwritten, from the original participants to the Youth Circle. Some of these were written immediately after the facts, some as late as 1998.

Origins of the Esoteric Youth Circle

The request to start the Youth Circle (*Jugendkreis*) came from young people initially connected with the impulse of the "pedagogical youth course." Though many of these carried a great enthusiasm for the new art of education, they were also longing for a truer dimension of community than was the case up to then and felt the need for the deepening of the esoteric impulse. Those who carried the impulse met for the first time at the West-East Congress in Vienna at Whitsun of 1922. Among the leading personalities of this striving were Ernst Lehrs—also one of the first twelve teachers of the Stuttgart Waldorf School—René Maikowski, Wilhelm Rath and Herbert Hahn.

Some of the youth sought an opportunity to call on Rudolf Steiner's attention to their aspirations around the time of the planned pedagogical conference. Lehrs and Maikowski, together with Wilhelm Kuebler, decided to approach Steiner on July 22, 1922. In reply Steiner suggested to meet again in October in Stuttgart.

Kuebler and Lehrs walked out with new energy and formulated a first question: "How do we find a way from speaking about Anthroposophy to speaking out of Anthroposophy itself?" At this point Lehrs met in August in Berlin with another important individual, Wilhelm Rath, who had been concerning himself with the Middle Ages impulse of the "Friend of God"—the then incarnated Master Jesus—the impulse toward spiritual brotherhood at the time preceding the onset of the Consciousness Soul. Here the question of the friends resonated with the challenge posed by the Friend of God to the famous German mystic and priest Johannes Tauler: "So far you have spoken concerning the Holy Ghost, learn now to speak out of the Holy Ghost itself."[50]

The connection between the two questions across centuries became obvious to the modern friends. This of course led to a deepening of the initial question and of the budding impulse. It also awakened the need for a clearer assessment of their goals and articulated the yearning that the future gathering be inaugurated with a mantric verse. As a first response Rudolf Steiner felt his way toward a verse regarding the German spirit and its connection to the Archangel Michael.

As for the deeper reason for the spiritual needs of the youth it seems to have stemmed from the changing spiritual conditions arising at the end of Kali Yuga around the years 1897 to 1899. The generation born after those watershed years presented a new soul complexion vis-à-vis their elders. "The new mood of opposition really begins from that time. Of course, there was always contrast between older and younger generations, but there were not these special spirits of opposition. Just this leads one to see great difficulties for the coming generation, they face the greatest danger of becoming unsteady, of lacking an inner core."[51]

In preparation for the October meeting the youths felt they wanted something more, or different from a "dry program," to which Steiner replied in agreement. It was decided that the participants would come a day earlier to have time to prepare themselves inwardly to what they wanted to receive. This way they would come up with a theme to offer to Rudolf Steiner's first lecture. And from the first lecture they would know what to ask for the second one. This way the program came into being in a living fashion. The course began in Stuttgart on October 1st. The new movement started to

[50] Of Wilhelm Rath Steiner pointed out to the youths that he was the reincarnated Johannes Tauler who had known the Friend of God (The Foundation of the Circle and the Brotherhood-Idea: Recorded for Members of the Circle by Heinz Eckhoff, November 1998, 5). W. Rath wrote the book *The Friend of God From the High Lands* about these very same themes.
[51] Notes from the original participants, *The Story of the Origin of the "Youth Circle"*, 38.

deepen with the yearning for an esoteric content accompanied with the feeling of "spiritual co-working" and a wish for the "renewal of the being of the Orders" along with the founding of a "cultural priesthood which should not appear externally, but would have the task of cultivating the spiritual substance of human culture on earth in sacramental fashion ..."[52] At this point, however, Kuebler and others behind him distanced themselves from the rest of the group, giving birth to a split. The conundrum lay in Kuebler feeling that one should first become a better human being to then be prepared to work with esoteric content, whereas Lehrs and others felt that in order to become better human beings one should resort to esoteric teachings and practice. This concern is mentioned here because it led to a dangerous situation that was averted through an important and symptomatic intervention on the part of Rudolf Steiner, to which we will return shortly.

The remaining group presented their requests to Rudolf Steiner as "beggars for the spirit." What Steiner offered them appeased their souls. When Rath articulated the need for a common meditative practice, Steiner assented but also asked them to prepare themselves further, no doubt to deepen their desire from mere wish to a fuller motivation. The group came around articulating the need to connect with the leadership of Michael. This enabled Rudolf Steiner to offer the last lecture of the course as an outspoken Michael lecture. At the end of the course of twelve lectures things were left open-ended and dependent on the group's desire for more. In response the young people went to him saying "We don't know how many will be able to stay. But as long as you still have something to say to us a number of us will certainly remain in order to hear."[53] Steiner, obviously very pleased about this, offered the thirteenth lecture.

At the first meeting Rudolf Steiner made it a point to listen attentively to the group's wishes. At the second meeting, when it became apparent that only part of the group wanted to deepen an esoteric undertaking, Steiner pointed to the emerging division. To the future Youth Circle Steiner posed the challenge "If you will to take the esoteric seriously, then you must say to yourselves that it is an acting in accordance with concrete impulses from out of the spiritual world." And further, and most importantly: "If you are willing a true community, then you must will it that the whole is influenced by the individual just as the individual is influenced by the whole. It is a mutual taking upon oneself of karma that will be created in such a community organism. There will then be common sufferings to live through, but

[52] Notes, *After Fifty Years from the Events of the Founding 1922*, 1.
[53] Notes from the original participants, *The Story of the Origin of the "Youth Circle"*, 23.

also common joys."[54] He then pointed to the deeper aspiration of an esoteric circle: "What you are seeking is to find a Friend in the spiritual world. To find such a one is not the difficult part of it. But the important thing is, when such a one has been found, to remain true to him in your souls."[55] The pupil must raise awareness of his commitment to the spiritual teacher [friend]. To this "conscious involvement" belongs the deeper knowledge of who the spiritual teacher is and how he works in the present, an understanding of who he was in the past and an inkling of who he will be in the future. And for anthroposophists, no doubt, this teacher is Rudolf Steiner himself. Again, amplifying the notion of spiritual reciprocity Steiner added "Your community will have something in it of that which is the primal secret of all human society, that that which we ourselves do within the society does not bear fruit for us ourselves but rather for the others, and that all the fruits for us come from the others."[56]

After the initial encounters Rudolf Steiner indicated he had no time for further meetings and the participants felt this meant that something was expected from them, that this was a moment of spiritual testing. At first they felt completely empty. They sensed it had something to do with the leadership of Michael—nothing else came to mind—but did not dare to ask. They then chose W. Rath to be the spokesperson to carry the question. When the time came, to the youth's request that the group have a common leadership Steiner replied: "Yes, you want to become a conscious group soul." Then Wilhelm Rath finally mentioned the Michael question to which Steiner pointed out they were running out of time, but that the next day he would give them what they had asked for, the mantras.

The work with the mantras was presented for the first time on the 13th and continued on the 14th, 15th and 16th of October, before Steiner founded the circle on the last day.[57] At one of the meetings Rudolf Steiner let people in and stood at the door, counting the participants; there were twelve of them.

On Friday October 13, 1922, Steiner read to them the mantras, asked them to copy them and went on to speak about the Being of the community. On the sixteenth of October Steiner also offered the group an official vow ("Angelobeformel") for people to first accept each other formally into the group

[54] Ibid, 25.
[55] Explanations by Rudolf Steiner at the Foundation of the Circle That Are Not Contained in the Notes by Ernst Lehrs and Herbert Hahn, 4.
[56] Notes from the original participants, *The Story of the Origin of the "Youth Circle"*, 29.
[57] *The Foundation of the Circle and the Brotherhood-Idea*: recorded for members of the Circle by Heinz Eckhoff, November 1998, 1.

and then accept other newcomers. Through this it was understood that members would bring consequences upon themselves if they did disregard the purposes of the Circle. He concluded "You will hereby consider this *Kreis* as having been founded by the spiritual world itself."[58]

We can now let the content of the mantras speak for the goals that the group tries to achieve, the higher social life and aims that potentially unite the members of the group, and affect wider circles. The mantras themselves are reproduced in Appendix 3.

The Youth Circle Mantras

The meditation integrates polarities and enhancements. Through these it kneads the community of its members into a larger dimensions of cosmic reality. The first sets of polarities develop in the unfolding and progressive enrichment of the meditation from evening to midday.

First part of the meditation

- The first part of meditation is purely individual in the evening
- It becomes social in the morning through the relationship individual / Circle
- It encompasses personal, communal and universal at midday, when it is most fully articulated. The individual is related to the Circle and the Circle to the whole of human evolution through Christ's power as the spirit of the Earth.

Thus, there is a healthy inbreathing into the individual at evening and a breathing out toward Circle members and cosmos during the morning and at the height of the day. During the night I naturally live in community with the whole of the Circle out of the individual ego strength I have developed during the day. At night in effect my social instincts are at their strongest. However, this blending into community is at its least conscious level, it is bestowed upon us by spiritual beings.

The second overlapping polarity is that of night and day, which accompanies our social instincts (night) and anti-social instincts (day). And here the meditation asks us to incorporate the polarity through visualization:

- In the evening we portray the conditions of the morning
- In the morning / sunrise we visualize the conditions of sunset
- At midday we picture the experience of the night

[58] Notes from the original participants, *The Story of the Origin of the "Youth Circle"*, 61.

This is the integration of conscious and unconscious / super-conscious elements of the cosmic reality in which the human being is immersed, the cosmic objective ground of human existence. During the evening, when my social instincts emerge anew I can breathe back into myself, trusting in the night. During the day, when my anti-social instincts are at their highest, I'm asked in meditation to picture the nighttime conditions. Thus, my midday meditation echoes the unspoken part of this cycle—the night-time in which my communal living happens as a matter of fact.

To the more human end of the mediation corresponds the polarities of head and heart and thinking and willing:

- In the evening I integrate polarities of head and heart within myself. The two affirm my selfhood. In the first part of the exercise we should have the feeling of warmth carried in the head and of light carried in the heart.
- In the morning I enlarge this polarity to fully encompass the whole of the Circle; the first, individual polarity, no longer fully expressed, remains implied.
- At midday I feel part of a Circle integrated in the flow of human/cosmic evolution

The first expression of the polarity in the evening is purely individual:

- the head, and thinking, are enveloped in the realm of the warmth of the Sun Soul, the aspect of Christ's Life Spirit, through which He was experienced as the Lord of the Elements in the Arthurian stream.
- the heart, and willing, are bathed in the light of the Sun Spirit, the Spirit Self of Christ experienced in the Grail stream and in the blood.

Throughout the meditation we see the integration of individual and Circle as a sort of lemniscatory movement. The Circle can be witnessed as an objective external reality to which my soul belongs, the first part of the lemniscate. On the other side of the lemniscate there is a reversal through which the whole of the Circle lives in my soul as another concrete reality. We see this breathing in the first part of the meditation—in morning and mid-day sections—during which we speak in terms of the "we" of the Circle (lines 1 and 2), but then at first return to our individual reality in the head (line 3). A second expansion into Circle and into "we" follows (lines 4 and 5) with a return to the individual dimension in the heart (line 6). In line 7 both sides of the lemniscate are expressed through "Thus am I with you, you with me."

The whole of the first part thus manifests the deeper lived reality of the social motto: "The healthy social life is found when in the mirror of each human soul the whole community finds its reflection and when in the community the strength of each one is living." In concrete lived experience this leads the individual members to the realization that they derive their strength from a larger reality than their own personal merits, that the Circle can live in and strengthen their presence, relationship with and impact in the world. In reverse this means that they also derive motivation, sense of belonging and pleasure from their contributions to all other members of the Circle. The individual confrontation of egos common to, and almost necessary in the time of the Consciousness Soul can be consciously countered and/or lessened. The soul lemniscate of I/we integration counters our natural tendencies.

The Second Part of the Meditation

In the second part of the meditation our belonging to a larger social reality means a strengthening of Self in soul and spirit, and particularly a deepening and widening of our participation in the Christ impulse. In concentric circles we move from the sphere of Self and soul to the spirit, and later from the human soul and spirit to the spheres of the hierarchies and the Trinity. The meditation points to the fact that through our inner activity we play a co-creator role in Earth evolution, not just as individuals but now even as a community. This is why our concerted group meditative effort has not just an additive / linear effect but a potentizing—so to speak exponential—effect and impact at the spiritual and physical levels. "The increase of the power doesn't follow the law of multiplication but that of potentizing. With 10 participants not 2 x 10 but 2^{10}."[59] It is therefore a matter of great responsibility whether and how we take up this spiritual task in our daily life.

It is not surprising that part of this greater spiritual reach manifests in the group being able to allow individuals to fully incarnate into their bodies at a time in which the rigidifying of the physical body acts as a barrier to full incarnation. The work of the Circle makes it possible for the ego of some individuals to fully incarnate the sheaths.[60] But this process can cause pain or sorrow, like the suffering of a mysterious melancholy that may affect a group member. It may be felt as a sudden "stupidity" or manifest itself in hyper-activity. If this reality is not recognized it can even be dangerous.

---

[59] *On the Nature and Meaning of Our Community: Utterances by Rudolf Steiner during the Talks Preparing Its Foundation* (Notes from Memory Immediately after the Meeting with Rudolf Steiner, 3.

[60] Notes from memory relating to October 18, 1922 by Herbert Hahn, August 12-14, 1963, 6.

However, spirit is able to penetrate dense physical matter when we are united in spiritual community, when we allow the group soul to work through us. To this end the group can at times direct a special intent to the condition of a single individual, as for the purpose outlined above. We can be reminded here of what is possible for the individual through the work of Twelve Step. While in that instance irreversible physical processes are kept in check, here we can collectively work at the deeper level of the incarnation process itself.

Why is this Circle important for the Future?

The request of the youth formed a great precedent in world history. Rudolf Steiner qualified the importance of this event thus: "What has now happened is something occurring for the first time in the time after Christ, that people in freedom have decided out of themselves and in the presence of the spiritual world to join themselves together esoterically."[61] The reason for this transpires in another comment: "We live in an immensely earnest time of testing of which we must become ever more conscious. Everything evil and everything good now comes to light in the most shocking way. Whoever is now able to meditate exerts a great impact on all events."[62] This is what Rudolf Steiner said to Rector Bartsch in Koberwitz in 1924. It indicates that never before has humanity been so close to the abyss. When Circle members meditate they call not only on the help of spiritual beings but also of the departed, especially previous Circle members. In effect: "He or she who has once found the way to the circle will bear within him/her, in every incarnation, the spiritual impulse to continue the activity of the circle until a brotherhood will encompass all people who have the good will to be spiritually active."[63]

"True meditation is an expression of the spiritual will that the time spirit carries in itself. Where such meditation is practiced, there a spiritual power is able to work into earthly events … Something happens thereby like an opening in the field of the physical, into which spiritual entities and their effects can enter."[64] Among such beings, the new group soul is incorporated particularly when all members consider each other as equal and work together harmoniously. "When an ideal unites all members then a group soul of a higher nature comes into existence ... By striving together within a brotherhood an orientation, and with it inversion of all the soul members

[61] The Foundation of the Circle and the Brotherhood-Idea, 1.
[62] Ibid 18.
[63] Explanations by Rudolf Steiner at the Foundation of the Circle That Are Not Contained in the Notes by Ernst Lehrs and Herbert Hahn, 3.
[64] Notes from the original participants, *The Story of the Origin of the "Youth Circle"*, 44.

takes place, directed towards a common center."[65] It is this change of orientation that allows the initiate's consciousness—"the friend that you have found"—to be present in the circle.

In no uncertain terms Steiner explained why these Circles can have an affect on the whole of culture at large: he indicated that they can become something more than a place for personal satisfaction, or of rest and refuge—though they can be that too, at least momentarily, as we will see shortly. That the circle can become such is due to the active presence of a higher being, which can set further evolutionary goals: "So the human organizations are the mysterious places in which higher spiritual beings descend in order to work through individual human beings as the soul works through the members of the body. ... Men who work together in the brotherhood are magicians because they attract higher beings into their circle."[66]

By virtue of this and other higher presences the Circle will have a multiplier effect, it will affect the destiny of other groups in which its members are involved. "Destiny will immediately begin to work in this group of students or that group of seminarists when a member out of your Circle begins to be active there."[67] But this also means that there is no middle ground: a member has an effect for good or for ill and she has to be aware of it. She must acquire "spiritual discrimination," an inner feeling for one's own responsibility and the consequences of our choices.

The circles will work from now on like a smaller version of the White Lodge in which "Twelve grade initiates who came forth from mankind and raised themselves through the spiritual height, form a brotherhood within a spirit lodge.... they encounter the Christ being who is the thirteenth in their midst... In this way a group soul of the higher nature is formed which is called Personified Omniscience of Our World, or 'Holy Spirit.'"[68]

Spirit of the Circle, Membership, Belonging

Rudolf Steiner stressed that such a group as the Youth Circle could not have the legal form of an organization or association and no such thing as articles or rules. The spiritual beings of the Circle themselves assess the moral qualities of new members, not the older members. Likewise there are no conditions to bring about the expulsion of members. However, this doesn't mean

[65] Heinz Eckhoff, *The Foundation of the Circle and the Brotherhood-Idea*, 19.
[66] Rudolf Steiner, lecture of November 23, 1905, Brotherhood and the Fight for Survival.
[67] Explanations by Rudolf Steiner at the Foundation of the Circle That Are Not Contained in the Notes by Ernst Lehrs and Herbert Hahn, 1.
[68] Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 31 August 1909 in *The East in the Light of the West*.

that new introductions should not be prepared carefully, all the contrary. Entering the Circle entails a crossing of a threshold.

Steiner commented about the Circle that "Your community will have something in it which is the fundamental secret, the 'ur secret', of all human society; that is, that whatever we do within the society does not bear fruit for ourselves but for all the others, and then what is fruitful for ourselves comes from the others."[69] This is repeated in "If you want a community that is real, then it must be your will that the whole is affected by the single member, just as much as the single member is affected by the whole."[70] This brings the reality of the social motto to a higher level than what we are used to think.

In the spirit of the above we must be able to celebrate without envy the success of all circle members, and temper down and transform all feelings of rivalry. In fact, a community like the Circle is a protection against megalomania that can afflict the lonely spiritual seeker. The individual who succeeds should have the feeling that he's able to achieve his aims through the help of the group and its spiritual helpers, not just through his own means.

Paramount to all of the rest is Rudolf Steiner's request that we "get to know each other well." We are forerunners of the 6th post-Atlantean epoch in as much as we learn to share in the blows of destiny that have affected other Circle members. In fact Steiner indicated that at certain times the task of the group will be to support by concentrating on a given individual; this will have a blessing effect on him/her, as may be the case in the help to more fully incarnate.

We have, all in all, a deepening and intensification of social life, a social life rooted in the spirit, as was recorded by the original participants: "Just as in the physical, social life consists of deeds carried out in common, so we strive for common deeds in the spirit, really then for a social life in the supersensible."[71]

Youth Circle, Social Form, Moral Imagination and Moral Technique

When we look at the Circle and the conditions of membership, or of exclusion, we can say that we find ourselves far into the forming of a purely free social form. We are approaching the conditions of a near perfect social imagination, as we have defined it in our premises, with a minimum need for

[69] After 50 Years from the events of the Founding 1922, 2.
[70] Ibid, 4.
[71] Notes from the original participants, *The Story of the Origin of the "Youth Circle"*, 41.

moral technique. It is ironic therefore that it is here that I have found the first clearcut example known to me of Rudolf Steiner acting out of, and resolving a complex issue with, pure moral technique.

In the lead up to the forming of the Youth Circle there had been a division among the youths revolving around whether a circle should be esoteric or exoteric. To complicate matters there were personality conflicts, and most of all the presence of an individual with a serious mental disorder, who exerted very pronounced, mind-altering and divisive effects upon his peers. The man, who was dubbed Mr. R, had a hypnotic effect on many of the present.

At a meeting of the two camps, with Rudolf Steiner present, Mr. R was unconsciously weakening some of the people's physical-psychic powers and leading to fanatical positions. The cleavage between the two groups deepened and witnessing this was painful to many.

Asked about having a meeting, Rudolf Steiner invited both parties and Mr. R came with his supporters. Soon after Mr. R attacked the members of the Youth Circle and started criticizing Steiner's *The Philosophy of Freedom*. The effect on the present was so strong that some people were jumping up from their chairs and the meeting came to an end. In the lobby there were even cases of "fainting and hysterical convulsions" so much so that in looking at the whole Steiner qualified the events as the effect of "whole demonologies" at play.[72]

A new meeting was called for, and to the dismay of many Mr. R was present once more. Steiner specifically instructed that he should not be sent away, limiting himself to commenting "Well, he has to be there." Mr. R, no doubt somehow sobered, got up and tried to paint previous events as resulting from simple misunderstandings. It is reported that Steiner "jumped like lightning from his chair" and he wouldn't have it, pointing to the speaker that he had put labels on the people of the Circle the previous day. Then he asked him to remember what he had said and what he meant by it. When Mr. R assented and proceeded to recount the events, Rudolf Steiner patiently pointed out the inconsistencies and contradictions of his utterances. By this time Mr. R appeared helpless. His tangled explanations even brought laughter from Steiner in such a way that all antagonism faded away, and the meeting ended in a friendly mood. After the fact Mr. R was quoted saying: "Isn't Dr. Steiner a wonderful person? In my whole life I haven't felt as

[72] The whole episode is narrated in Notes from the original participants, *The Story of the Origin of the "Youth Circle"*, 16-36.

well inside my skin as I did in that hour."[73] In another precedent for this author, this seems to be a recorded instance of Rudolf Steiner accomplishing an act of spiritual healing.

[73] *The Story of the Origin of the "Youth Circle"*, 36.

Conclusions

We have started our exploration with the Quakers and with the Wisdom Councils where moral technique is far more important than the moral imaginations attached to the forms. We have completed this exploration with the freest possible social form of the Youth Circle. We can now attempt to see the broader perspective of the balance between social forms, the moral imaginations that animate them and the moral technique that is necessary to their survival.

At one end of the spectrum we can place a spiritual movement like Alcoholics Anonymous, or the work of the Wisdom Councils. Here we find moral technique articulated at its highest. We find it in A.A. in the organic complexity of the social structure that has allowed the Fellowship to be so effective in its outreach and in the help offered to the alcohol-dependent individual. We find it in the Wisdom Councils not so much in the form, quite simple in itself, but in what is required in terms of facilitator skills, though this may not be immediately apparent to or perceived by the participants. Add to this the series of steps through which the Wisdom Council is integrated into the whole of the political and social process.

At the other end the spectrum we can look at the Youth Circle, or all other simple forms that come to life in anthroposophical circles, such as study groups, or local branches of the national anthroposophical societies. Here the social structure seems to be of lesser importance than in the previous examples. The depth of social imaginations that underlie such social forms is paramount. At the Youth Circle end forms and rules reach a minimal level. The Circle operates from a higher vintage point of equality of its members. It can work thus simply because it is supported by the higher image of the human being. The deeper truths encapsulated by the mantras are its true foundation. They support the convergence of individual intentions and invite the new group souls.

The complementarity between social processes and mantras—such as Quaker consensus, Dynamic Facilitation / Wisdom Councils or Foundation Stone Meditation and Youth Circle mantras—appears in a fundamentally parallel path. The social processes call to a separation and subsequent integration of the forces of the soul made possible through the stages of Open Mind, Open Heart and Open Will. The Foundation Stone Meditation and Youth Circle mantras, while much more encompassing, also call to the integration of the three soul forces on one hand, or of warmth of feeling into our thinking and clarity of thinking into our will on the other. We thus see

similar archetypes at different levels. What happens at the soul level in group processes takes place at a spiritual level within the sanctuary of the individual soul that encompasses the Circle in its consciousness. Another qualitative leap is indicated in the fact that in social technology individuals are passively accepting a process, whereas self-determination and full consciousness is needed in order to carry out a meditation three times a day.

Over time the apparent dichotomy between the two sides of the spectrum has been bridged in both directions. People who operate within so-called "social technologies" in the American continent can count on decades of experience. They have seen how their work transforms realities and human souls in ways that go beyond the measurable. They often operate out of a healthy distrust of abstract theories. They seldom feel the need to frame their work and their interventions within a materialistic perspective. In fact, they hardly feel the need to transcend observation and trial and error perspectives. What they can discern, however, are the discontinuities, the leaps in the fabric of social reality that their work manages to bridge. This goes back to the Quakers who recognized the higher presence in their meetings. Their clerks called it, and still call it, the "sense of the meeting." They speak of a meeting being "covered".

In more recent times Otto Scharmer has given the name of presencing to that silent process, the turning point that is present in all social technology, though not openly acknowledged. Through such a turning point we can detect and follow "the future that calls us into being," the stream of future time that calls us to fulfill our deepest individual and collective destinies. All social, participatory processes involving a naturally occurring step of consensus do in fact involve presencing. In the process known as World Café this has been called the "magic in the middle" and producing this magic is a prerequisite of a complete World Café. In other words, the perception has grown, and is still growing, that organic, social participatory processes work at the intersection—or more precisely the boundary—of the sensible and the spiritual, that we find ourselves working at the threshold.

If we look at the freer, more spiritually-grounded forms that naturally emerge from spiritual scientific premises, reality obliges us to come to terms with karmic obstacles and patterns of resistance and hindrance. Obstacles exist in even the simplest social forms, that originate in the karma of the participants. That will be the case in study groups or local branches, all the more so at the level of national Anthroposophical Societies or at the level of the General Anthroposophical Society itself. Youth Circles are not automatically excluded either. Unless they are creatively addressed these hindrances reverberate and create ripples that hinder the realization of their

members' higher aspirations. Here we find the need to address the reality of our humanity and its limitations through even the simplest forms of moral technique / social hygiene to allow the group souls to effectively be present in our midst. And group souls are the ultimate reality that manifests itself in the phenomenon of presencing. They cannot be present among existing discord. If harmony prevails the earnest work with the mantras invites them to fully "incarnate" in our midst.

When we look at the social future something else becomes evident. No matter how evolved may be the forms to which we can give birth, they can only be applied at one end of the spectrum. A spiritual fellowship may very well embody higher principles of social development. The organizations that we need to promote to bring about the transformation of social reality, e.g. in the direction of threefolding, involve people at all levels of personal development, and encompass a great variety of perspectives, values and needs. Here moral technique remains paramount. Thus, we can surmise, social imaginations and social moral technique will need to coexist in the long term.

Appendix 1

The Statutes of the General Anthroposophical Society

(From https://static.goetheanum.ch/assets/archiv/rosa-heft-en-founding-statute.pdf. For comments in parentheses see footnotes at bottom)

1. The Anthroposophical Society is to be an association of people whose will it is to nurture the life of the soul, both in the individual and in human society, on the basis of a true knowledge of the spiritual world.

2. The persons gathered at the Goetheanum in Dornach at Christmas, 1923, both the individuals and the groups represented, form the nucleus of the Society. They are convinced that there exists in our time a genuine science of the spiritual world, elaborated for years past, and in important particulars already published; and that the civilisation of today is lacking the cultivation of such a science. This cultivation is to be the task of the Anthroposophical Society. It will endeavour to fulfill this task by making the anthroposophical spiritual science cultivated at the Goetheanum in Dornach the centre of its activities, together with all that results from this for brotherhood in human relationships and for the moral and religious as well as the artistic and cultural life. (1)

3. The persons gathered in Dornach as the nucleus of the Society recognise and endorse the view of the leadership at the Goetheanum (represented by the Vorstand [Executive Council] formed at the Foundation Meeting): 'Anthroposophy, as fostered at the Goetheanum, leads to results which can serve every human being as a stimulus to spiritual life, whatever his nation, social standing or religion. They can lead to a social life genuinely built on brotherly love. No special degree of academic learning is required to make them one's own and to found one's life upon them, but only an open-minded human nature. Research into these results, however, as well as competent evaluation of them, depends upon spiritual-scientific training, which is to be acquired step by step. These results are in their own way as exact as the results of genuine natural science. When they attain general recognition in the same way as these, they will bring abut comparable progress in all spheres of life, not only in the spiritual but also in the practical realm.'

4. The Anthroposophical Society is in no sense a secret society, but is entirely public. Anyone can become a member, without regard to nationality, social standing, religion, scientific or artistic conviction, who considers as justified the existence of an institution such as the

Goetheanum in Dornach, in its capacity as a School of Spiritual Science. The Anthroposophical Society rejects any kind of sectarian activity. Party politics it considers not to be within its task.

5. The Anthroposophical Society sees the School of Spiritual Science in Dornach as a centre for its activity. The School will be composed of three classes. Members of the Society will be admitted to the School on their own application after a period of membership to be determined by the leadership at the Goetheanum. They enter in this way the First Class of the School of Spiritual Science. Admission to the Second or Third Classes (2) takes place when the person requesting this is deemed eligible by the leadership at the Goetheanum.

6. Every member of the Anthroposophical Society has the right to attend all lectures, performances and meetings arranged by the society, under conditions to be announced by the Vorstand.

7. The organising of the school of Spiritual Science is, to begin with, the responsibility of Rudolf Steiner, who will appoint his collaborators and his possible successor.

8. All publications of the Society shall be public, in the same sense as are those of other public societies. (3) The publications of the School of Spiritual Science will form no exception as regards this public character; however, the leadership of the School reserves the right to deny in advance the validity of any judgment on these publications which is not based on the same training from which they have been derived. Consequently they will regard as justified no judgement which is not based on an appropriate preliminary training, as is also the common practice in the recognised scientific world. Thus the publications of the School of Spiritual Science will bear the following note: 'Printed as manuscript for members of the School of Spiritual Science, Goetheanum, ... Class. No one is considered competent to judge the content, who has not acquired - through the School itself or in a manner recognised by the School as equivalent - the requisite preliminary knowledge. Other opinions will be disregarded, to the extent that the authors of such works will not enter into a discussion about them.'

9. The purpose of the Anthroposophical Society will be the furtherance of spiritual research; that of the School of Spiritual Science will be this research itself. A dogmatic stand in any field whatsoever is to be excluded from the Anthroposophical Society.

10. The Anthroposophical Society shall hold a regular General Meeting at the Goetheanum each year, at which time the Vorstand shall present a full report with accounting. The agenda for this meeting shall be communicated

by the Vorstand to all members, together with the invitation, six weeks before the meeting. The Vorstand may call special meetings and fix the agenda for them. Invitations to such meetings shall be sent to members three weeks in advance. Motions proposed by individual members or groups of members shall be submitted one week before the General Meeting.

11. Members may join together in smaller or larger groups on any basis of locality or subject. The headquarters of the Anthroposophical Society is at the Goetheanum. From there the Vorstand shall bring to the attention of the members or groups of members what it considers to be the task of the Society. The Vorstand communicates with officials elected or appointed by the various groups. Admission of members will be the concern of the individual groups; the certificate of membership shall, however, be placed before the Vorstand in Dornach, and shall be signed by them out of their confidence in the officials of the groups. In general, every member should join a group. Only those for whom it is quite impossible to find entry to a group should apply directly to Dornach for membership.

12. Membership dues shall be fixed by the individual groups; each group shall, however, submit 15 Swiss Francs (4) for each of its members to the central leadership of the Society at the Goetheanum.

13. Each working group formulates its own statutes, but these must not be incompatible with the Statutes of the Anthroposophical Society.

14. The organ of the society is the weekly „Das Goetheanum", which for this purpose is provided with a supplement (5) containing the official communications of the Society. This enlarged edition of 'Das Goetheanum' will be supplied to members of the Anthroposophical Society only.

15. The Founding Vorstand will be:
President Dr. Rudolf Steiner
Vice-President Albert Steffen
Recorder Dr. Ita Wegman
Members Marie Steiner
Dr. Elisabeth Vreede
Secretary and Treasurer Dr. Guenther Wachsmuth

(1) The Anthroposophical Society is in continuity with the Society founded in 1912. It would like, however, to create an independent point of departure, in keeping with the true spirit of the present time, for the objectives established at that time.

(2) These have not yet been established.

(3) The conditions under which one acquires training have also been made public, and their publication will be continued

(4) At the General Meeting at Easter 1990 this was raised from 100 to 125 Swiss Francs, 300 Francs for those attached directly to Dornach.

(5) For English-speaking members, „Anthroposophy worldwide" ten times a year contains translations of the supplement.

Appendix 2:
The Foundation Stone Meditation

Human Soul!
You live within the limbs [in motion]
Which bear you through the world
of space
Into the spirits' ocean-being:
Practice spirit-recalling
In depths of soul,
Where in the wielding
World-Creator-Being
Your own I
Comes into being
In the I of God;
And you will truly live
In human world-all being.

For the Father-Spirit of the
heights holds sway
In depths of worlds begetting life.
Spirits of Strength:
Let ring forth from the heights
What in the depths is echoed,
Speaking:
Out of the Godhead we are born.

This is heard by the sprits of the elements
In east, west, north, south:
May human beings hear it!

Human Soul!
You live within the beat of heart
and lung
Which leads you through the
rhythms of time
Into the feeling of your own soul-
being:
Practice spirit-sensing
In balance of the soul,
Where the surging deeds
Of World-evolving
Unite your own I
With the I of the world;
And you will truly feel
In human soul's creating.

For the Christ-will encircling us
holds sway,
In world rhythms, bestowing
grace upon souls.
Spirits of Light:
Let from the east be enkindled
What through the west takes on form,
Speaking:
In Christ death becomes life.

This is heard by the spirits of the elements
In east, west, north, south:
May human beings hear it!

Human Soul!
You live within the resting head
Which from the grounds of
eternity
Unlocks for you world-thoughts:
Practice spirit-beholding
In stillness of thought,
Where the gods' eternal aims
Bestow the light of cosmic being
On your own I
For free and active willing.
And you will truly think
In human spirit depths.

For the Spirits' world-thoughts
hold sway
In cosmic being, imploring light.
Spirits of Soul:
Let from the depths be entreated
What in the heights will be heard,
Speaking:
In the spirit's cosmic thoughts the soul awakens. This is heard by the spirits of the elements
In east, west, north, south:
May human beings hear it!

At the turning point of time
The spirit light of the world
Entered the stream of earthly being.
Darkness of night had held its sway.
Day radiant light poured into the souls of men
O light divine
O Sun of Christ
Warm Thou our hearts
Enlighten Thou our heads
That good may become
What from our hearts we would found
And from our heads direct
With single purpose.

Appendix 3:

The Youth Circle Mantra

Evening Segment

(Sun gently shining in blue heaven)

May there warm

The Sun Soul

In my head

May there lighten

The Sun Spirit

In my heart

So am I

Morning Segment

(Sun and Moon in heaven)

May there warm us common feeling

The Sun Soul fire us with holy fire

In my head live also your thinking

May there lighten us common light

The Sun Spirit illumine us with pure light

In my heart live also your willing

So am I with you, you with me

Noon Segment

(Starry heavens, Moon among the stars, Sun shining through the Earth from below)

May there warm us common feeling for human deeds

The Sun Soul fire us with holy fire in all situations of life

In my head live also your thinking and bear spiritual beings

May there lighten us common light for human aims

The Sun Spirit illumine us with pure light in all strivings of life

In my heart live also your willing and work divine willing

So am I with you, you with me and Christ's strength in Earth existence.

(wait in awake, empty consciousness)

Part Common to the Three Segments

A Blue heaven	I am	Restful mood
	Soul Lives	Life stirs through the limbs
	Spirit Acts	A streaming of spirit substance
The world goes bright	I in the being of worlds	
	Soul in thew willing of spirit	
	Spirit in the doing of God	
	(empty consciousness)	

…