

*This is an article based on a talk that was held on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2023 as part of a conference held in Stroud, UK reflecting on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the burning of the first Goetheanum. The conference was called 'Civilization should live and not die' and was created by Richard Ramsbotham and Gregers Brinch as 'Fourfold Living Arts'*

## **FOUNDING OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**

Representatives of the Abel stream

Aaron Mirkin

The fire that burned down the First Goetheanum during the night from the 31<sup>st</sup> December 1922 to the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1923 was first discovered in the White Hall in the roof space of the south wing. The very hall where, just 3 ½ months before, The Christian Community had been founded. Rudolf Steiner emphasised this fact several times during the following two years to the Newly ordained priest circle and to others, as though he expected them to feel the particular significance of this fact. And as we shall see, it clearly was and is of very great significance. But first it could be helpful to provide a potted overview of the founding of The Christian Community.

Friedrich Rittelmeyer, a well-known and respected Lutheran minister based in Berlin, had the task in 1910 to research some of the 'alternative' spiritual streams active in Germany at the time and decided to include the Theosophical Society.<sup>1</sup> He thus met Michael Bauer who was head of the Nuremburg branch and already a pupil of Rudolf Steiner. Rittelmeyer was immediately taken with Bauer's profound spiritual depth and integrity and quickly became engrossed in this new world view; and the following year met Rudolf Steiner and soon became his pupil.

There can be no doubt that Rudolf Steiner already saw the spiritual tasks that lay ahead for Rittelmeyer, and in the following years made several hints in various lectures where Rittelmeyer was present,

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<sup>1</sup> Which German branch under Rudolf Steiner later became the Anthroposophical Society in 1912

regarding the need for a renewal of the religious life; sometimes even deliberately diverting from the main thrust of his lecture to do so.<sup>2</sup> However there is no indication that these elicited the response from Rittelmeyer that in retrospect was almost certainly hoped for by Steiner at the time.<sup>3</sup>

Instead it required the wakefulness of three young theologians and Anthroposophists<sup>4</sup> to discover the hints, also derived from sparse conversations with Rudolf Steiner; and eventually in April 1921 to write to Rudolf Steiner requesting a course on the subject of religious renewal. Steiner at once agreed and this first course took place in June 1921 with 18 participants – mostly young Lutheran theology students. Here Rudolf Steiner spoke for the first time of the need for a renewal of the sacramental life. It is of interest also to note that he emphasized the need to cultivate communities of free individuals as the basis for renewed harmony in the social life.

After exhorting those present to find *'ten times as many participants'* and that *'there wasn't any time to lose'* Rudolf Steiner then held a much longer course a few months later in September and October 1921 where, amongst much else, he presented the content of the renewed sacraments and the inner aspects of a possible renewed priesthood. There were 105 participants. Out of this group, 45, committed themselves to pursuing this path towards a new priesthood and agreed to come to Dornach the next year to take the next decisive steps under the guidance of Rudolf Steiner. This took place from the 6<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1922.

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<sup>2</sup> See especially a lecture of the 20<sup>th</sup> February 1917 published in 'Building stones for an understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha'. Here Steiner makes a short insert to speak about the need for a renewed 'religious milieu'.

<sup>3</sup> In due course Rittelmeyer did indeed recognise what was needed, and wholeheartedly joined the pioneering group of founders of The Christian Community, also alternatively named by Rudolf Steiner, as the Movement for Religious Renewal

<sup>4</sup> Johannes Werner Klein, Gertrude Spörri and Martin Borchart

For two weeks prior to this, the group of 45 gathered at Breitbrunn on the Ammersee in Bavaria, in a barn on the property of Michael Bauer and Margarethe Morgenstern, the widow of Christian Morgenstern. Many of the group slept on straw beds in the barn. Every day the group read the text of the renewed Mass (The Act of Consecration of Man), held related talks and discussions, sang songs, danced, and had private consultations with Michael Bauer who, although he was by now very ill with Tuberculosis, still maintained absolute spiritual clarity and strength, and became something of a spirit god-father to this founding group of mostly very young and inexperienced participants. The soul mood was described later by several of the participants as something of a 'Bethlehem' experience. Amongst them were three women who became the first women to be ordained as priests in the history of Christianity.

Having had to row themselves across the Ammersee and later take a ferry across the lake of Constance (described by the participants later as a kind of 'Galilee' experience) the group finally arrived in Dornach on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 1922.

The first two days were spent with preparatory meetings in the Glass House where, most interestingly, they read two of Rudolf Steiner's lectures from the collection entitled 'The Temple Legend'.<sup>5</sup> The first was from the 4<sup>th</sup> November 1904 describing the Temple Legend itself and the Cain and Abel streams. The second was from the 11<sup>th</sup> November 1904 describing the enmity between the Freemasons and the Jesuits, and the principle of Manichaeism with its principle of overcoming darkness through mildness and the light within.

From the 8<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> September the meetings took place in the aforementioned White Hall of the first Goetheanum. The White Hall was a space of about 8m x 8m with a 4m high ceiling in which roof were mounted several large, heavy glass windows. It was used primarily as a eurythmy rehearsal room. Access was via a longish, steep wooden

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<sup>5</sup> GA 93

ladder. Steiner and Rittelmeyer, as the oldest present, had to ascend and descend slowly, and with extra caution each time. Besides the 45 priest candidates the only others permitted to be present were Marie Steiner and Albert Steffen as Members of Society Council (Vorstand), Ernst Uehli as member of the German Society Council and Rudolf Hahn as stenographer (No relation to Herbert Hahn) No one else was to even know that the gathering was taking place. For instance the required vestments were sewn by local seamstresses who were sworn to secrecy.

A make-shift altar was created by balancing a board on top of a pulpit, made level with some books. The candle-holder was a Jewish seven-armed menorah (candelabra) on whose base were inscribed the Tetragram of the name Jehovah in Hebrew letters. Rudolf Steiner covered this inscription with a carefully folded piece of card. The altar 'wall' was provided by a portable blackboard covered with a purple cloth on which hung black and white reproductions of Foppa's Redentore painting of the Risen Christ, and below one of Grünewald's Crucifixions. The censer that was used was retrieved from a store room at the rear of the small Goetheanum cupola. It had once been used in rituals by Rudolf Steiner from the time of the 'Mystica Aeterna' (more on that later).

On the 8<sup>th</sup> September Rudolf Steiner 'demonstrated' The Act of Consecration of Man for the first time; without substances or vestments.<sup>6</sup> Over the days of the 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> September Rudolf Steiner 'demonstrated' The Act of Consecration of Man for a second time in parts over the 3 days, during which he carried out the ordination of

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<sup>6</sup> Rudolf Steiner himself used the word 'demonstration' in this regard. See lecture of 30<sup>th</sup> December 1922, quoted later in this article. Those present however experienced such depth and piety from the 'demonstrated' service, and from Rudolf Steiner himself, that for them it was altogether one of the most profound ritual experiences they had ever had.

Friedrich Rittelmeyer, who later became the centre of the priest circle and the Movement as the first Erzoerlenker (Arch-upper-steward).<sup>7</sup>

In conversation with some of the priests Rudolf Steiner later made clear that The Christian Community could not have been founded without Rittelmeyer's acceptance of this task. It is worth noting too, at this point, the enormous sacrifice this meant for Rittelmeyer, who had to leave behind his previous life of renown in the Lutheran church and effectively 'start again'. A true renewal right into his own life. From that time on he was utterly ignored and considered 'lost' to the Lutheran church.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> September 1922 Rittelmeyer could now celebrate the Act of Consecration of Man for the first time using vestments and substances with two servers in vestments. This was the first full and 'proper' Act of Consecration of Man; generally considered as the birth moment of The Christian Community.

At one point during the Transubstantiation, Rudolf Steiner, who had been sitting with the others, rose, walked to the left of the altar, and then around the back of it to emerge standing on the right-hand side facing the gathering with his right hand placed on the altar. There he remained until the end of the Transubstantiation, and then returned to his place retracing his steps around the back of the altar again. Rittelmeyer, although somewhat surprised, nonetheless continued with the service uninterrupted. As far as we know this was never spoken of afterwards with the Rudolf Steiner, although one can't help bringing to mind an extraordinary picture that Rudolf Steiner once gave in response to a question from Ita Wegmann after the Christmas Foundation Conference as to how one might think of him and Christian Rosenkreuz in the spirit. He reportedly said, accompanied with a sketch:

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<sup>7</sup> Although there is uncertainty as to whether bread and wine were used, it is sure that Rudolf Steiner did use oil for the ordination of Rittelmeyer

*'In the spirit world Christian Rosenkreuz and I stand together at an altar, on the left Christian Rosenkreuz with a blue stole and on the right, I with a red stole.'*<sup>8</sup>

This picture is made additionally intriguing, and possibly confusing, when one also includes a picture that Rudolf Steiner drew for an esoteric pupil, Prof. Hans Wohlbold, sometime in 1923, where he depicted the Summer path of the Abel stream on the left-hand side of a circular form with the primary colour red, and the Winter path of the Cain stream on the right-hand side with the primary colour being blue.<sup>9</sup> We will come back to this later in the article.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> September, so in the middle of the days where Rittelmeyer was being ordained, an extraordinary elemental event took place. In the early afternoon a terrific mini-storm arose over the Dornach hill which threw a chimney pot onto the road right in front of Rudolf Steiner who was being accompanied up to the Goetheanum by Emil Bock, one of the central Founders of The Christian Community, and next Erzoerlenker after Rittelmeyer died in 1938. Steiner reportedly walked on entirely unperturbed, although Bock found it rather shocking. On arrival in the White Hall they discovered that one of the large and heavy, 3cm thick roof windows had been lifted up and out of its mountings by the storm and dropped down again, very fortunately to be caught by the ropes normally used for opening the window. 4m below had been standing a group of the Founders.

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<sup>8</sup> There are several indirect sources for this. One is 'Mystery streams in Europe' by Bernard Lievegoed pg 71 which apparently goes back to a conversation with Margarethe Kirchner-Bockholt. Another is from 'Im Schutz der Meister' by Werner-Christian Simonis who quotes the same.

There exists apparently however also the opposite picture with left and right reversed given in 'Das Geistgebäude der Rosenkreuzer' by Viktor Stracke, Goetheanum publishing, 1993, page 236

<sup>9</sup> GA 265 'Zur Geschichte und aus den Inhalten der erkenntniskultischen Abteilung der Esoterische Schule 1904 – 1914' Page 454

Rudolf Steiner immediately grew very earnest and insisted on returning all the way down to the architect's offices where Bock witnessed his tremendous outburst of anger towards the architects. *'That is how you have to speak to the devil'* Steiner is quoted by Bock as having said afterwards.

Rudolf Steiner insisted that the altar should be entirely dismantled before the workmen came up to replace and securely remount the displaced window. They should not see anything of it. It is however thought that a day or two before that some workers had in fact been on that very roof for adjustments to the window mountings and had very likely seen the built-up altar then.

Not only did the participants experience Steiner's 'demonstration' of the Act of Consecration as real and authentic, but all the more so, the Ordination of Rittelmeyer. However, Steiner is later quoted as having said to enquiring Anthroposophists 'I did not ordain Rittelmeyer'. How is one then to understand this? He applied the consecrated oil to Rittelmeyer and otherwise spoke and performed all the words and deeds that belong to the Ordination sacrament that has continued to be celebrated in exactly the same way ever since. One view, as expressed by some of those present, is that, while Steiner often spoke these words of Paul 'Not I, but the Christ in me', he also had the possibility to make these words fully real on certain occasions. Was this such an occasion?

The three churches that still maintain a sacrament of Ordination – Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox – all derive it's validity from the original Ordination of Peter by the Christ. Peter then went on to ordain the other disciples who went on to ordain further generations of priests, etc etc This is known as the Horizontal Succession. All priests in these three churches can say they have been ordained by a succession of priests going all the way back to the Christ. It is clear The Christian Community has no such Horizontal Succession.<sup>10</sup> This is naturally something that

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<sup>10</sup> Had there been even one Catholic priest amongst the founding priests, Steiner indicated that a rather different Ordination would have had to have

makes it impossible for the three afore-mentioned churches able to accept the validity of The Christian Community.

What The Christian Community does have is a Horizontal Succession back to Rudolf Steiner, and if what was said a paragraph ago is taken to have any validity, then the Ordination of Rittelmeyer can therefore not been seen in any other way than as one of having been a direct Vertical Succession. From another point of view, and yet also related, one might, with great caution, even dare to suggest that the modern Consciousness Soul Ordination is one where the priest ordains himself! One might also think of its being a continuous Vertical Succession. Later we will also touch on how this idea might relate in an interesting and important way to the Raising of Lazarus.

During the following days Rittelmeyer ordained several of the more senior founders, some of whom then went on to ordain the others until all 45 were ordained as the founding priests of the new Movement for Religious Renewal.

On the final day of the Founding events, the 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1922, they had a final gathering together with Rudolf Steiner who then held a closing address. At the end of this address he spoke the following very earnest and moving words:

*'You will have to watch, first of all, how strongly the spirit of darkness darkens the very soul itself. And you will have to keep watch, so that in no hour, no minute, no second of your active life the spirit of darkness himself seizes you.'*

*Therefore I say to you, my dear friends, as you must resolve to go away on your mission; as I speak yet again the words that have often been spoken, yet now also out of the spirit which is to inaugurate your movement, I say to you:*

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been conceived for the founding of The Christian Community. As it was there wasn't one.

*Watch, and raise your souls to the spirit that rules through all world cycles. If you develop the strength, you will be able to do it, for you will not be alone. These spiritual powers will themselves help you. They will enlighten your thinking, they will empower your feeling, they will strengthen your willing. And with thoughts enlightened by the spirit world, with feelings empowered by the spirit world, with will strengthened by the spirit world, you will be able to work. Take with you the assurance that my thoughts will accompany you always, so that where in the true sense you need their help, you will always find me ready to help.*

*These are the words that I now impart to you in conclusion as you begin upon the way to your mission, chosen by yourselves, willed through the power of Christ.'*

Rudolf Steiner later referred to the founding events of The Christian Community as *'one of the great festivals of my life.'*

Two things are noteworthy from these closing words. One is the warning regarding the spirit of darkness; and the other is the final sentence *'...chosen by yourselves...'*

It is clear, and certainly so in hindsight, also confirmed by many other related comments made during the Founding, and also later during 1923, that Rudolf Steiner wanted it to be understood that The Christian Community arose out of an impulse outside of the Anthroposophical Society *'...chosen by yourselves...'*, and that this impulse would attract the attention of the forces of darkness. This second aspect is possibly at least one of the reasons that it all had to take place in such secrecy.

And we know how the forces of darkness reacted... during the night between the 31<sup>st</sup> December 1922 and the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1923 the Goetheanum was burnt down. A deliberate act of arson.

Of this terrible heart-wrenching tragedy, the following is reported of Steiner's words from an esoteric lesson of May 1923.

*'And he went on to describe how the Sons of Abel found their way to the Sons of Cain when the theologians asked for a new Cultus. This brought about an intensified animosity from the side of the Sons of Abel and Sons of Cain in the world. (Meant were the Jesuits and the occult brotherhoods; at least that is how I understood it.) And he then went on to say that the fire that destroyed the Goetheanum was lit in the same hall where the theologians had received the new Cultus.'*<sup>11</sup>

A further very important, related record following an esoteric lesson of 1923 states:

*'Hiram Abiff was reborn/reincarnated as Lazarus and became the first to be initiated by Christ. With him began the Stream of the Middle, that lies between the Cain and Abel streams. The Cain stream found, over the course of time, it's chief representatives in the Freemason stream, while the Abel stream found its expression in the priestly stream of the (Catholic?) church. Both of these streams of humanity remained strongly hostile towards each other. Just once did they unite in concord; in their hate towards the Stream of the Middle. The result of this unified concordance between these, normally hostile streams, was the destruction of the John building (Goetheanum).'*<sup>12</sup>

### ***The Cain and Abel streams***

So before we look at these comments in more detail we now need to turn to the question. 'What are the Cain and Abel streams?'

Well as we have already heard, this was the very first theme that the founders of The Christian Community turned to on the 6<sup>th</sup> September to prepare them for the extraordinary events of the following days. They studied the lecture of the 4<sup>th</sup> Nov 1904 from the Temple Legend cycle by

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<sup>11</sup> Report from memory by Helga Geelmuyden 18<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> May 1923 (German GA165, page 452)

<sup>12</sup> Report from memory, possibly of Maria Lehrs-Röschl, following an esoteric lesson of 27<sup>th</sup> May 1923. (German GA165, page 459ff)

Rudolf Steiner. There one can find the essence of what Rudolf Steiner was able to share on this subject. A theme apparently fundamental enough for him to have brought it already in the earliest years of his public working. In addition one can find invaluable related content in GA 265<sup>13</sup>

Essentially the whole of humanity has been divided between the Cain and Abel streams ever since the Fall. One key element is to understand that Cain is in fact not the off-spring of Adam, but rather of a Sun Elohim and Eve. It is Abel who is the off-spring of Adam and Eve. Adam, in turn is the off-spring of a Moon Elohim, Jahve, or Jehovah. (It is very interesting that the name of Jahve, the father of the Abel stream, engraved in the base of the menorah, had to be covered over for the founding of The Christian Community)

These two streams have effectively polar qualities. To gain an overview, hopefully the following lists will be sufficiently self-explanatory enough. As mentioned, more background details can be found in the two volumes GA 93 and GA 265

**Cain Stream**

Sun Elohim and Eve  
 Sun  
 Before the Fall  
 Will pole/Reproduction  
 Masculine  
 Individual ‘self-made’ Karma  
 Art/Science  
 Earth wisdom and consciousness  
**Individual path**

**Abel Stream**

Moon Elohim (Jahve)  
 Adam and Eve  
 After the Fall  
 Thinking/Head  
 Feminine  
 Group ‘mankind’ Karma  
 Religion  
 Divine wisdom and consciousness  
**Community path**

**Chief human representatives**

Cain	Adam/Abel
Tubal-Cain	Elijah
Hiram Abiff	Solomon
<b>Lazarus</b>	<b>John the Baptist</b>
Christian Rosenkreutz	Raphael/Novalis

All initiates up until the Mystery of Golgotha were Abel initiations. One could say they were still initiated out of mankind’s distant past connection with the spirit. A paradisaical connection where a group soul consciousness still worked through the moon forces in the blood of humanity. This was maintained by the religious leaders of humanity through ritual and keeping to strictly managed blood ties. For instance Elijah, and even John the Baptist, are referred to by Rudolf Steiner as having borne the Group soul of the Jewish people. The connection with the spirit was maintained through religious and spiritual practice; through divining and inspiration informing the people how to live according to the will of the gods. The bulk of humanity needed and wanted this stream and sought in this stream a sense of belonging and meaning; and guidance for daily life. The destiny and karma of each one is carried by the community.

The Cain stream on the other hand is that of the free individual who, rather than seeking guidance from above, seeks his guidance through the harsh and tough encounter with earthly reality. They are the researchers of earthly life; and out of this wrestling with earthly reality derives the wisdom to transform the earth through technology and art. For instance, Hiram Abiff was the one who could transform Solomon’s divinely inspired design for the temple in Jerusalem into an actual building on earth. Interestingly enough Steiner refers to this as a Sun wisdom which lies hidden/enchanted within earth existence and requires uncovering and liberating from the world of matter through human beings.

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<sup>13</sup> As has already been referenced a few times in this article. From the esoteric lessons of 1904 - 1914

So the Cain people derive their wisdom through their own work, just as Cain produced an agriculture of cultivating the earth and growing plants, whereas Abel merely tended the flocks and herds and harvested the gifts of the gods. A far smaller, but of course significant portion of humanity followed the path of Cain up until the Mystery of Golgotha. This is a far lonelier and tougher stream than the Abel stream, but essential in order ultimately to bring about the free human being who can take full ownership of his own destiny and karma.

Both of these streams had to a certain extent fulfilled their tasks by the time of the Mystery of Golgotha, and needed to take a step in order that humanity should be able to develop further – and in both cases this required an act of sacrifice and surrender – and this took place through two very different and yet very similar deeds of offering. One by Lazarus as the chief representative of the Cain stream, and the other by John the Baptist as the chief representative of the Abel stream.

### ***The two Johns***

Lazarus, we know, is the rich young man who has kept all the complicated and demanding Jewish laws since he was a youth. No mean feat. Clearly he was a highly gifted individual. And we know, he really does sell all he has. He gives up all his inner and outer gifts, wealth and faculties, and becomes, as the Greek word in John 11 says, ASTHENEI - 'one without strength'. He consciously and freely enters into utter helplessness. And mysteriously the Christ delays before coming to Bethany where Lazarus is. It is clear that Lazarus must go through something totally new without the assured presence of the hierophant. This is a totally new initiation, one brought about primarily by the novice himself. This is no longer an Abel initiation. This is the first of a new kind of initiation; a Cain initiation. An initiation of and by the free individual out of his own personal wrestling – and in public! Not in the protected confines of a temple or mystery centre. And it is only in the absolutely final moment that the Christ is permitted to enter and act as the one who calls the new human being back into the world. (Compare with the afore-mentioned idea of the new priesthood 'ordaining itself')

And this is the path of the modern individual today. As Josef Beuys is often quoted as having said: *'The Mysteries now take place in the central railway stations and on the street.'* This is the modern initiation through wrestling with earthly destiny, and just *not* through withdrawing into some holy place for many years as belonged to the Abel initiations. As Rudolf Steiner says in his lecture of the 16<sup>th</sup> October 1918 'How do I find the Christ?' The path to the Christ is through the experience of utter helplessness. So many Christ encounters today attest to this fact.<sup>14</sup>

The path of John the Baptist is similar from the point of view of surrender, but somewhat different. He knows the Abel path is fulfilled. 'I must decrease, He must increase.' We even hear his extraordinary words in John 1 'I am not'. The selfless middle step between the 'I am' and the 'Not I, but the Christ in Me'.

And then extraordinarily John is beheaded. He really does let go of the head forces of the Abel stream, but so movingly described by Rudolf Steiner, he now must take on a new group soul task, but of quite a different sort, that of the 12 disciples, the servants of the Christ. He is the one who is now able to mediate the feeding of the 5000 and becomes the witness and mediator of all Christian communion.<sup>15</sup> But most movingly of all, as was so tantalisingly indicated in Rudolf Steiner's Last Address of the 28<sup>th</sup> Sept 1924, and only able to be clarified through separate private conversations afterwards, John the Baptist and Lazarus come together at the Raising of Lazarus. Lazarus from below up, so to speak, and John the Baptist from above down – as corresponds to the archetypal gestures of the Cain and Abel streams, but now coming together.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See for instance the collection 'We experienced Christ' by Gunnar Hillerdal and Berndt Gustafsson, Temple Lodge Press

<sup>15</sup> 'The Gospel of Mark' by Rudolf Steiner. GA 139. Lecture 20<sup>th</sup> September 1912

<sup>16</sup> See for instance page 5 of 'The mystery of John the Baptist and John the Evangelist' by Sergei Prokofieff. Temple Lodge Press. Steiner is reported as

Together they now become the full human being who is able to unite both above (Abel) and below (Cain). And thus was initiated also a third stream; one that lies between the Cain and Abel streams and in a sense enhances and raises them both to a new way of working. As was previously quoted: *'With Lazarus began the stream of the Middle... ..hate towards the stream of the Middle... (led to the) ...destruction of the John Building'*<sup>17</sup> And it is noteworthy that the building is referred to in that quote as the John building. So presumably even in 1923 Rudolf Steiner still referred to it as the John building (at least in the esoteric circles) although that name had been officially replaced by the name Goetheanum already in 1918.

Although Steiner always stated that the name John in this context referred to the character Johannes Thomasius from his Mystery Dramas, it does seem, at least from this above quote, that the connection with Lazarus-John is very much implied. As though the building itself esoterically had a particular connection to Lazarus-John and hence to the Middle stream. It would make sense from the point of view that the creation of the Goetheanum can certainly be seen as a progression from the Jerusalem temple impulse. As though Steiner himself had been able to bring together the polar working of Abel-Solomon and Cain-Hiram Abiff within his own soul. He not only designed the building but *also* knew how to build it. As though something of Lazarus-John were working through Rudolf Steiner at least as regards the bringing about of the John building.

In this regard it is of course well known that the incarnation sequence of Elijah/John the Baptist/Raphael/Novalis appears in the ante chamber to the rooms of the Mystic League in the opening scene of Rudolf Steiner's 3<sup>rd</sup> Mystery Drama 'The Guardian of the threshold'. The Mystery Dramas were meant to be performed on the stage of the John building. Here too

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having described to Ita Wegman how John the Baptist penetrated Lazarus from above and together they became in a sense one. Lazarus-John.

<sup>17</sup> See note 11

is an indication of an esoteric connection between the Goetheanum and at least 'part' of the Lazarus-John being.

For the Christian Community this connection to Lazarus-John became clear especially during the September 1924 Apocalypse Course<sup>18</sup> to the priests, where Rudolf Steiner mentions on several occasions the need for each priest in the priest circle to become aware of his own intimate inner relationship to the 'Apocalypticist' in his priestly work.<sup>19</sup> In addition we know from a reported conversation between Rudolf Steiner and Rittelmeyer that *'All the Gospel writers are deeply interested in the work of your movement, and especially John the evangelist. But you must first prove yourselves. You must first prove yourselves!'*<sup>20</sup> One can't help being reminded of the being of John the Baptist becoming the group soul of the 12 disciples. (See note 14)

Although Lazarus and John the Baptist each continue their own series of individual incarnations afterwards, it seems clear that they continue to work together in this very special and important way and that we can continue to think of Lazarus-John working to bring about a new Middle stream right into the present time and no doubt into the distant future.

So the next question now is: 'What is this Middle stream, and why do the Freemasons and Jesuits hate it so much?'

### ***The Middle stream and its opponents***

It is clear that Rudolf Steiner considered the Anthroposophical Society with its scientific and artistic research and creativity to be of the Cain stream, and The Christian Community with its community rituals to be of the Abel stream.

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<sup>18</sup> For instance Lecture 13 of the 17<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1924

<sup>19</sup> We know from Steiner's indications that the writer of the Apocalypse and the John Gospel is Lazarus-John

<sup>20</sup> Possibly during 1923



How do they relate to the representatives of the Cain and Abel streams in the world; the Freemasons and related brotherhoods, and the Jesuits?

We know that Rudolf Steiner held Freemasonic rituals between 1906 and 1914, but was he in fact a Freemason?

In GA 265 there is a section devoted to this question that appears to resolve it quite well. Largely a report from Marie Steiner first published in 1934. There appear to have been many members of the Theosophical Society who were Freemasons, but, as reported in GA 265, they had become disgruntled with the Freemasonic Lodges as, in their view, they were becoming decadent, politically involved and increasingly materialistic. However they still treasured their rituals and they approached Rudolf Steiner to ask whether he mightn't be willing to fulfil this need. It seems he was, and thus it was that in 1906 he received a certain grade of Freemasonry through Theodore Reuss, who was himself a high-grade Freemason. This permitted Rudolf Steiner to perform their 'Rites and rituals of knowledge', which he did through a working group that he founded called 'Mystica aeterna'. To this end a written agreement/contract was signed between Reuss and Steiner. Steiner however made it a condition that no further contact should take place between the Anthroposophical Society and the Freemasons. So it was something of an anomalous situation.

According to Marie Steiner, Rudolf Steiner had thereby been allowed to 'rescue' something of the last true substance of the Freemasonic inner life. She also points out that Rudolf Steiner had already been the victim of attacks by the Freemasons from his earliest working for revealing their secrets -for instance already with the Temple Legend cycle of 1904.

At the start of the war in 1914, Rudolf Steiner is reported as having torn up the agreement with Reuss and disbanded the 'Mystica aeterna'. As far as is known no further such rituals were held and the equipment was put into storage behind the small cupola of the first Goetheanum. Save a few items, including the first censer used at the founding of The

Christian Community, which are now in the archive of The Christian Community in Berlin, presumably everything else would have been lost in the fire.

As regards The Christian Community, there is no known connection of any kind to the Catholic church or to the Jesuits in particular. It has already been mentioned the question of the Horizontal Succession and the animosity that the 'presumptuous' renewed Vertical Succession has awoken towards The Christian Community from such quarters.

But now we also need to spend a moment looking at the specific relationship of the Anthroposophical Society with The Christian Community. How do and could the Cain and Abel streams relate to each other today? We know of the animosity that exists between the representatives of the Cain and Abel streams in the world, but how does it stand here between us today?

Rudolf Steiner made it very clear in conversations with the new priest circle that a definite boundary would be needed between the Anthroposophical Movement and The Christian Community. He speaks in one place of both Movements standing united beneath the Archangel Michaël, but as each having their own angel at the next level down. (One can compare this with the clearly separate individualities of Lazarus and John the Baptist, who, however, nonetheless have the possibility for a particularly special new way of working together as Lazarus-John)

In the months preceding the Founding of The Christian Community in Sept. 1922, Rudolf Steiner made many attempts to make clear to the leadership of both movements the need for clear boundaries in their working, but this was not properly grasped at the time. For instance Steiner made the new priest circle undertake not to seek members and finances from anthroposophical circles. This was not adhered to. And on the other hand too, there were many in the Anthroposophical Society who believed that The Christian Community must be the new, next development on the inner path, and neglected their Anthroposophical

Movement commitments to become full participants in The Christian Community. There were even branches of the Anthroposophical Movement that more-or-less overnight renamed themselves as congregations of The Christian Community.

Partly one can understand this, at least on the part of the members of the Anthroposophical Movement, as the actual founding of The Christian Community had been kept entirely secret, and all of a sudden, apparently out of the blue, this gifted and charismatic group of mostly very young, newly-ordained priests appeared, having received some sort of special and mysterious blessing or another from Rudolf Steiner. No-one in the Anthroposophical Movement, other than the Council/Vorstand knew anything of what had passed in the White Hall.

Rudolf Steiner felt he had no other choice than to hold what has now become the somewhat infamous lecture of the 30<sup>th</sup> December 1922 in the Goetheanum (The day before the fire!) in order to clarify the situation. Here are some important quotes from that lecture. It is not hard to imagine that the lecture also brought about quite some confusion and uncertainty too:

*‘What I have given to these persons out of the conditions of spiritual knowledge of the present day, I have given as a human being to other human beings. It has nothing to do with the Anthroposophical Movement. I have given it to them as a private individual, and have given it in such a way that I have emphasised with the necessary firmness that the Anthroposophical Movement must not have anything to do with this Movement for Religious renewal. That, above all, I am not the founder of the Movement for Religious Renewal, that I rely upon this being made quite clear to the world, and that I have given to the several persons who of themselves wished to found this Movement for Religious Renewal the necessary counsel, which was, indeed, adapted to the performance of a valid and spiritually strong cult, filled with spiritual contents, to be celebrated in a lawful manner with the forces out of the spiritual world. When I gave this advice I never performed a ceremony myself, I only demonstrated, step by step, to those who wished to make*

*this ceremony their own, how such a ceremony has to be performed. That was necessary. And today it is also necessary that within the Anthroposophical Society this should be correctly understood.’...*

*...‘Taking into account the fact that the opponents of the Anthroposophical Movement consider every method of attack justifiable, things such as these must be made quite clear, and I must say that each one who acts honestly with respect to the Anthroposophical Movement would be obliged to deny such a statement as the following: “The Movement for Religious Renewal was founded in Dornach in the Goetheanum and by the Goetheanum” – if the Anthroposophical Movement were represented as its founder. For such is not the case. It is as I have just presented it.’*

Perhaps as a bit of a counter-balance to this, one can also bring to mind the picture, already mentioned earlier in this article, that Rudolf Steiner gave to Prof. Hans Wohlbold in Munich sometime in 1923 where is drawn effectively a circle of 12 circles. At the top is written ‘*Spiritual World*’ and at the bottom is written ‘*Earthly world*’. Along the left-hand side is written ‘*Summer path*’ and ‘*Abel path*’, along the right-hand side is written ‘*Winter path*’ and ‘*Cain path*’.<sup>21</sup>

Below this drawing is written:

*Summer path is the path of The Christian Community in the memory of community (pre-birth) in the spiritual worlds. (Abel path)*

*Winter path is the path of the Anthroposophist through cold loneliness to knowledge. (Cain path).*

This is an immensely helpful picture which can also help to better understand the situation. Just as winter and summer belong together in the wholeness of the year, so do the Cain and Abel streams; so do the paths of The Anthroposophical Movement and the path of The Christian Community belong together to make up a wholeness.

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<sup>21</sup> Again from GA 265

Added to this is another valuable quote from the lecture of the 30<sup>th</sup> December 1922:

*'I remarked that it was a case of forming a public body; that that which is to be achieved in connection with Anthroposophy can, however, be attained first of all in the single individual, but that, out of the knowledge thus gained in an individual manner, the ethical, religious and social activity requisite for the future of humanity must follow entirely out of inner necessity.*

*It is therefore a case of giving something to those people who are at first unable to enter directly upon the path of the Anthroposophical Movement. By forming communities in fraternal, mental and spiritual co-operation the spiritual path must be sought for them, adapted to human evolution.'*

Implicit here, and in so many other places especially where Rudolf Steiner speaks of the work in the various daughter movements of the Anthroposophical Movement, is that the path of The Anthroposophist is that from the Individual towards Community. (Think of Bio-dynamic farms, Waldorf Schools, Study Groups, etc), and the path of The Christian Community is that from the Community to the Individual.

We realise now what the Middle stream could be about – especially in the sense of bringing the Cain and Abel streams together in the right way – **The creation of Communities of free Individuals!!!** This is the impulse of Lazarus-John that the representatives of the old Cain and Abel streams feel so threatened by.

The Jesuits perceive their work as upholding the path of the old group-soul community, where the individual is subservient to the religious and divine authority, and seeks its comfort and meaning through being embedded within such community life. The wish to seek the Pope as the highest authority for all of life's ways stands at the centre. This indeed would apply to not just the Jesuits or the Catholic church, but to all such religious groups and social structures where the free individual is perceived to be a threat to the harmony of the whole. Strict adherence

to guidelines imposed from above are what are considered essential to hold such forms together. Rudolf Steiner also spoke in other places of Jesuitism as a force in the world working not only within strictly Jesuit circles.

As a matter of interest, one of Rudolf Steiners most vocal and ardent opponents was the Arlesheim priest, Max Kully, who was a member of the Action Francais. A movement of militant Catholics who were right-wing ultranationalists and ultramontanists – who wished to see the pope established as both religious as well as secular head of state. So here we see the decadent Group-soul/Abel principle at work.

Equally is there a decadent individualistic/Cain principle at work today through the Freemasons and other brotherhoods who wish to create a world order based on strictly darwinistic principles. The religion of science that measures and monitors and determines social structures where ultimately the guiding principle is the highly individualistic survival of the fittest in its crassest form. Our whole education system is based on this. The idea that the 'cream' floats to the top. One obvious example is the attempt through gene manipulation to produce, stronger, healthier, more successful people and plants and animals. The transhumanist agenda clearly also belongs to this principle of creating a perfect world that is run like an infallible machine. (One could say a lot about how this is ultimately the aim of the United Nations Agenda 2030 and One Health programme)

Interestingly Rudolf Steiner points out in one place how, although the Freemasons and Jesuits are hostile towards each other in their lower ranks, in their higher ranks they work together.

*'You know that the Jesuits battle against the Freemasons and vice versa. However, the upper orders of the Freemasons and the upper orders of the Jesuits build a special brotherhood; they build a state within a state. Just imagine what you can work in the world where on the one side you have the upper grades of a Freemason community which serves as an Instrument in order to produce certain work, setting up an*

*understanding with the upper grades of a certain Jesuit community and then working together in order to produce certain objectives.*<sup>22</sup>

One can understand this. It is like a fallen picture of the coming together of the Cain and Abel streams. A 'Fallen Middle stream' One where the wish is to create perfect communities of perfect human 'individuals' who have everything they need with the illusion of freedom. (Think of the 15 minute city programme or even the illusion of modern democracy) Rudolf Steiner refers to this in one of the lectures in the apocalypse course to the priests in 1924 as the creation of a global Bolshevism for the benefit of certain elite groups built solely on the principles of determinism. (*'State within a state'*)

It can now become clear why the representatives of the Cain and Abel streams in the world hate the stream of the Middle so much and find it such a threat. The stream of the Middle in it's truest sense, in the sense of Lazarus-John, is the path of surrender out of freedom in order to serve a higher ideal together with others in community, but without giving up one's sovereignty as a free individual. One can recognise in this idea the source of all of Rudolf Steiner's verses and strivings as regards the social life. For instance the Fundamental social law:

*'The well-being of a community of people working together will be the greater, the less the individual claims for himself the proceeds of his work, i.e. the more of these proceeds he makes over to his fellow-workers, the more his own needs are satisfied, not out of his own work but out of the work done by others.'*<sup>23</sup>

One can see how close this could be to a Bolshevistic ideal and yet, especially if one reads the context of this law in the essay, one recognises at once how absolutely essential individual freedom must be at the core of this Fundamental social law and therefore absolutely juxtaposed to the ideals of the 'Fallen Middle'.

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<sup>22</sup> GA 167 lecture of the 4<sup>th</sup> April 1916

<sup>23</sup> GA 34 'Anthroposophy and the social question' 3 essays by Rudolf Steiner 1905/1906

So indeed there continues to be resistance that we must face in the world, and indeed even within our own ranks, if we are to prove ourselves true and worthy pioneers for the bringing together, in the right way, of the Cain and Abel streams in the world; for the creation of a true Middle stream for the benefit of all humanity and not just for a select few.

And yet that which was destroyed in the burning of the Goetheanum, an attempt to thwart the true Middle stream from coming about on earth, can now burn with another fire in our hearts. A fire for the true christianising of society; for thwarting the rise of global Bolshevism. We are still very much on the way.

The Christian Community must bring forces of community summer to the Anthroposophical Movement. The Anthroposophical Movement must bring forces of crystal-clear, individualised winter to The Christian Community. The more both streams seek each other, and indeed more and more experience the need for each other as co-workers together with Lazarus-John, and co-heralds of the Second Coming of Christ, then we shall find ways to bring the transformation of the social life about that the Middle way should bring. Then shall the John building arise again in every striving human soul who would dedicate himself to the founding of communities of free individuals who would serve the Christ!

Aaron Mirkin

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