

THY WILL BE DONE:
The Task *of the*
College of Teachers *in*
Waldorf Schools

Roberto Trostli

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This book is dedicated to

EKKEHARD PIENING and PATTI LIVINGSTON
who encouraged me to embark on my career
as a Waldorf teacher

and to my wife
DONNA MARIE TROSTLI
who has sustained me in all my endeavors
through the years.

Introduction

Every idea that does not become an ideal for you kills a force in your soul, but every idea that becomes an ideal for you creates forces of life within you.

– Rudolf Steiner, *How to Know Higher Worlds*

IN THIS BOOK I have tried to express my ideas and ideals about the College of Teachers. What I have presented has been gleaned from over thirty-five years of teaching and of serving on the Colleges in three schools. Some of my ideas have changed over the years while others have remained true to the form in which they were first revealed. My ideals have not changed, however, but still burn with an intensity that belies the decades.

In this work I have tried to be faithful to Rudolf Steiner and to present accurate accounts and carefully considered interpretations of his words and deeds. I have also tried to express my thoughts and opinions boldly because I think that our times demand courage for the truth, as best as we can perceive it.

Our thinking allows us to discern whether an idea is true, but ideals do not live in the realm of thought; they live in the realm of the will, in our intentions and resolves. Ideals are not true or false, they are worthy or unworthy and result in good or harm. When we remain in the realm of thoughts, we stay linked to the past. Only when a thought enters the realm of deeds do we move toward the future. This is how ideas begin to be transformed into ideals.

Ideals are lofty goals, and when I look back on my experiences in the College, I feel dismayed by how rarely my colleagues and I achieved them. We tried to work on a higher plane but too often remained earth-bound. We tried to manifest our higher selves, but most of the time our lower selves held sway. We tried to deal with our colleagues properly but still made countless mistakes, causing karmic wounds. Alongside these collective failings, I am all too well aware of my own shortcomings: my narrow perspective and lack of tolerance; my impulsiveness and impatience; and, most of all, my limited success in the pursuit of inner work and moral development.

Such reflections are deeply discouraging and engender regret; but rather than regretting how poorly we did, Rudolf Steiner suggests that we look for future opportunities to do better. The past is past; it cannot be changed. The best that we can do with the past is to allow it to inform the present and to inspire us to envision and create a better future.

Working on this book has helped me to realize that the College is an ideal that is just starting to come into being. It is still young and inexperienced; it has not yet been fully tried by life or seasoned by time. We should not expect it to fulfill its potential at this early stage. Nor should we give up on it because of its many shortcomings.

In recent decades I have become increasingly worried that the ideal of the College of Teachers has gotten lost. In response to the challenges that schools are facing, Colleges are moving away from the kind of work that I describe and now focus mostly on pedagogy, research, and study. I understand that Waldorf schools need to survive in the competitive, modern educational marketplace, and I applaud the steps that schools are taking to professionalize their work. But as we restructure our schools to increase our efficiency, timeliness of decision-

making, and clarity of communication, we must be careful not to discard the fundamental ideals of Waldorf schools: that there needs to be a place where spirit can manifest; that those working with children should be intimately involved in every aspect of a school's operations; and that a pedagogical perspective should inform everything that happens in a school. Without these ideals, Waldorf schools may begin to lose their identity, their very reason for being.

I have written this book to inspire us to keep thinking about the idea of the College and to encourage us to dedicate ourselves to bringing the ideal of the College to life. As Michael's charioteers, let us work together with one another and with our spiritual colleagues to create a better future.

Blessings on our work!

– Roberto Trostli
Richmond, VA, 2015

Chapter 1

The Founding of The Waldorf School

THE WALDORF SCHOOL was inaugurated almost a century ago, but when was it actually founded? Was it on August 21, 1919, when Rudolf Steiner first spoke to the future teachers during the Founding Ceremony celebrating that “festive moment in the Cosmic Order”? Was it a few months earlier, when Emil Molt met with Rudolf Steiner and two future teachers to start planning a school for the factory workers’ children? Was it twelve years earlier when Rudolf Steiner first lectured on the theme of education? Or was it founded even earlier, in the spiritual world, long before any of these earthly events?

I believe that earthly events are manifestations of spiritual impulses. If that is true, then the founding of The Waldorf School occurred in the spiritual world decades before the impulse found its expression on earth. I can well imagine that the souls whom Rudolf Steiner identified as members of The Michael School were working together in the spiritual world, waiting for the opportunity to realize the aims of The Good Spirit of Our Time. In the last lecture of *The Younger Generation*, Rudolf Steiner spoke about The Waldorf School as a chariot of Michael that would bring healing impulses into the world. It seems likely to me that many years prior to 1919, those souls who were united with Michael were already looking forward to the manifestation of that chariot on the earthly plane.

The earthly seeds for Waldorf education were planted by Rudolf Steiner on January 10, 1907, when he gave a lecture in

Berlin titled “The Education of the Child in the Light of Spiritual Science.” This lecture, which was published in April of that year as an essay in the journal *Lucifer-Gnosis*, contained the basic elements of Waldorf education:

- the fourfold nature of the human being;
- the course of child development in seven-year cycles;
- the educational approach for the first three cycles;
- how to approach the major academic subjects;
- the importance of the arts and practical subjects.

Tucked in the middle of the lecture, Rudolf Steiner proclaimed prophetic words: “Of course, these things can only be touched on here, but in the future, spiritual science will be called on to give the necessary indications in detail, which it is in a position to do.”¹

Although Rudolf Steiner spoke about the teacher’s work in these lectures, he made no mention of the schools in which this education could manifest, nor did he mention the collegial work that teachers were to do together as members of the College of Teachers. These important aspects of the education would have to wait another dozen years to be developed.

Twelve years after this seminal lecture, Emil Molt, the director of the Waldorf Astoria Cigarette Factory in Stuttgart, Germany, asked Rudolf Steiner to establish a school based on the anthroposophical view of the human being. Spiritual Science had at last been called on to meet the needs of the time. And it was in a position to do so.

Emil Molt embraced anthroposophy not only as a path of inner development but also as a means of achieving social change. A progressive businessman, Molt believed that there need be no conflict between management and labor, and he recognized that what was good for workers was also good for

business. Molt treated his employees like an extended family, and he sought to establish lasting bonds among the workers and between the workers and the managers, giving the factory its unique character and strength.

Emil Molt promised his workers that their jobs would be waiting for them when they returned from military duty in World War I. When the workers resumed their positions, they swelled the factory's workforce beyond its capacity to utilize them. Because some employees were working only partial shifts, they had time on their hands. Molt saw this as an opportunity, and he organized classes and lectures that he thought would enrich the workers' lives. Classes were offered in foreign languages, painting, history, and geography. There were also lectures on business questions and current issues. In order to give the workers a sense of how their specialty related to the whole process of cigarette manufacturing, presentations were given about every aspect of tobacco production: growth, shipment, manufacturing, and marketing.²

During the war, Rudolf Steiner had been developing his ideas regarding the configuration of the body social. In the Appendix to *The Riddles of the Soul*, published in 1917, he described—for the first time in writing—the threefold nature of the human being and how this corresponded to the three domains of social life. When the war ended in 1918, Europe was in turmoil, and Rudolf Steiner recognized that the old social forms were not equal to the task of rebuilding the war-torn countries. He developed his ideas for a new structuring of society, which he called The Threefold Social Order. Although Rudolf Steiner had previously been reluctant to promote any of his ideas publicly, he was persuaded to share his thoughts about The Threefold Social Order in March of 1919, when “Call to the German People and the Civilized World” was published in many newspapers in

Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. In the spring of 1919 Rudolf Steiner lectured widely on social themes. These lectures were attended by ever-greater numbers of people, and for a brief time it seemed as if there were an opening in Europe for putting his ideas into practice.

Although Emil Molt had discussed with his workers the possibility of a school for their children and had broached the idea of founding a school with Rudolf Steiner, Molt considered April 23, 1919, to be “the true birthday of The Waldorf School.” On that day Rudolf Steiner gave a lecture to the Waldorf Astoria employees titled “Proletarian Demands and How to Put Them into Practice.” In this lecture Steiner depicted the proletariat’s situation in post-war Germany and described the difference that a free cultural life would make in the lives of the workers and their children. In a meeting with the Workers’ Council after the lecture, Emil Molt announced that he wanted to found a school, and said that he had already spoken with the Minister of Culture, who had promised his support. Molt formally asked Rudolf Steiner whether he would take on the planning and assume the school’s leadership, and Steiner agreed. Emil Molt then pledged 100,000 Marks—the factory’s profits from 1918—to the venture. In the coming years, Emil Molt and the Waldorf Astoria would provide the school with many times that initial amount.

On April 25, 1919, Rudolf Steiner met with Emil Molt, Herbert Hahn, and E.A. Karl Stockmeyer. Herbert Hahn had coordinated the adult education program at the Waldorf Astoria Factory, and Karl Stockmeyer was a high school teacher who had already discussed ideas for a school with Emil Molt. At this meeting Herbert Hahn asked Rudolf Steiner where one would have to start in order to lay the foundation of genuine social feeling in the communal life. Rudolf Steiner answered at length, developing the following motifs:

1. the need to address not only the thinking, but to summon into activity the deeper strata of consciousness: the dreaming feeling and the sleeping will;
2. the importance of expanding workers' narrow focus and overcoming their feeling of detachment by giving them a sense of the whole process of which they hold only a part;
3. the importance of building bridges from one people to another by means of foreign language instruction.³

All three motifs were to find expression in the curriculum and methods of The Waldorf School, and the second motif was to have direct implications for the teachers' role in administration and for their work as members of the College of Teachers.

In May and June, 1919, Rudolf Steiner gave three lectures on "The Social Basis of Public Education" and another lecture on "The Tasks of Schools and the Threefold Social Organism." In August, two weeks prior to the teacher foundation courses, he gave six lectures on "Education as a Social Force." These lectures are compiled in the volume *Education as a Force for Social Change*, and they provide a broad context for the founding of The Waldorf School.⁴

A truly unified school

The Waldorf School had a lofty goal: "to be living proof of the effectiveness of the anthroposophical orientation toward life." It would do so by being an *Einheitschule*—a unified school in every sense of the word.⁵ This meant that it would

1. include a pre-school, elementary grades, middle school, and high school;
2. have a student body composed from all social classes;

3. utilize a curriculum that blended modern and classical subjects;
4. be non-denominational, with religious instruction for children of all faiths;
5. be co-educational;
6. teach children in a way that addressed the whole human being;
7. be a 'self-administered' school—i.e. teachers would make decisions regarding their work and would oversee all aspects of administration that had to do with the educational program.

This principle of *Einheit*—unity—which permeated The Waldorf School expressed itself in every realm of the school. It was also intended to be the principle which united the teachers on the collegial and spiritual levels: They were expected to work with one another and with spiritual world to achieve the school's goals. Rudolf Steiner gave clear indications of how this could be accomplished at the formal founding of The Waldorf School⁶ in Stuttgart, Germany, in August of 1919.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Steiner, Rudolf. *Education of the Child: Early Lectures on Education*. Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 1996, p. 20.
- 2 This principle—recognizing how the parts relate to the whole—became a central tenet of Waldorf education, and is one of the reasons why Rudolf Steiner insisted that members of the College know what is happening throughout the school.
- 3 Herbert Hahn. "How The Waldorf School Arose from the Threefold Social Movement" in *A Man Before Others: Rudolf Steiner Remembered*. George Adams, et al., Forest Row, UK: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1993, pp. 64–66.
- 4 In the introduction to *Education as a Force for Social Change*, Robert Lathe and Nancy Whittaker write:

Of all the myriad events between the December, 1916, German peace initiative and the opening of the first Waldorf school in September, 1919, certain events are particularly important in understanding Rudolf Steiner's original goal of social reformation, and how it transformed into the founding of the Waldorf school in Stuttgart. This metamorphosis in the face of overwhelming historical reality teaches that we must all move toward a greater understanding of truth and set our intentions accordingly. Nevertheless, spiritual reality will not unite with earthly destiny until we discover what is truly possible, which very often does not resemble our original plans. When Steiner shifted his vision from political and social reform to the creation of a truly human education, he performed such a unification. His life activity itself acts as a healing within the destiny of the modern world. (Rudolf Steiner. *Education as a Force for Social Change*. Great Barrington: MA: SteinerBooks, 1997.) They then provide a chronology of all the events that led to the founding of The Waldorf School in August 1919.

- 5 The German term *Einheitschule* had a very specific meaning during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In *Education and Society in Modern Germany* (Routledge, 2003) R.H. Samuel characterized the *Einheitschule*: "This term denoted co-ordination of all aspects of education into a unified whole, in such a way that elementary, intermediate and secondary schools would cease to be separate categories, diversely administered and with unrelated curricula, and become integral elements in a harmonious whole."
- 6 Throughout this book I use the term "The Waldorf School" to refer to the archetype of the school envisioned by Rudolf Steiner. The first attempt to bring this archetype down to earth was begun in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1919, but Waldorf schools throughout the world continue to strive to realize this archetype.

Chapter 2

The Teachers' Republic

THE WALDORF SCHOOL was founded in the context of the movement for social renewal that arose at the end of World War I. Central to The Waldorf School was the principle of *Selbstverwaltung* or self-administration. Although he expressed his ideas slightly differently depending on the occasion, Rudolf Steiner made the following major points about this principle:

1. Teachers work best when they stand in a free, individual relationship to their pupils, and their work should be guided by their knowledge of human nature and the principles of social life.
2. Instead of having laws that identify educational goals or regulate the curriculum or methods of instruction, teachers should be the ones who determine what they should teach by observing, listening to, and learning from the children in their care and from life.
3. Students benefit from being taught by teachers who are independent of the political and economic systems, and teachers should be free of these systems in order to be most effective.

In his lectures on the Threefold Social Order, Rudolf Steiner repeatedly stated that only those who are directly engaged in teaching should make decisions regarding the educational program in a school. This will allow what is experienced in the

teaching process to flow naturally into the school's administration, and this kind of work engenders competence and objectivity in the teachers. Schools benefit from the vitality and energy of people actively engaged in teaching, and such energy and vitality are essential to a school's success.

In Steiner's view, teachers should be just as much at home attending to administrative as to classroom matters, and every teacher should spend part of his or her time being an administrator in some part of the school. When they do so, teachers carry out their administration in the way they carry out their teaching, and what is learned in teaching passes over into administrative work.¹ In "The Social Future" he said that

we must build all pedagogical art on a knowledge of the soul that is closely tied to the personality of the teacher. This personality must be able to freely express itself in pedagogical creativity. That, however, is possible only if the entire administration of the school system is autonomous, if practicing teachers need to deal only with other practicing teachers in administrative questions. An educator not actively teaching would be just as much out of place in the school administration as a person without artistic creativity would be in giving directions to creative artists. The nature of the pedagogical art requires that the Faculty divide its time between teaching and administering the school. The spirit formed out of the attitude of all teachers united in an educating community thus comes to full effect in the administration. In this community only what comes from a recognition, an understanding, of the soul will have value.²

Self-administration

Rudolf Steiner expressed the ideal of self-administration in his first address to the participants of the foundations course for teachers of The Waldorf School when he said:

Therefore, we will organize the school not bureaucratically, but collegially, and will administer it in a republican way. In a true teachers' republic we will not have the comfort of receiving directions from the Board of Education. Rather, we must bring to our work what gives each of us the possibility and the full responsibility for what we have to do. Each one of us must be completely responsible.

We can create a replacement for the supervision of the School Board as we form this preparatory course, and, through the work, receive what unifies the school. We can achieve that sense of unity through this course if we work with all diligence.³

It is worth reviewing the four essential ideas contained in this passage:

1. The teachers are integral to the organization and administration of the school;
2. Each person needs to act with full responsibility;
3. We can create a replacement for the direction or supervision provided by educational authorities;
4. We can work together in a way that unifies the school.

What do these ideas mean for the teachers' work?

The teachers are integral to the organization and administration of the school.

According to Rudolf Steiner, schools must never lose sight of their most important function: to educate students. To serve that

function, a school's administration benefits when those closest to the educational process participate in aspects of the school's administration.

The extent to which teachers should take on administrative responsibilities needs to be determined by each school according to its circumstances. In each school, the teachers and administrative staff need to find the right balance between the educational and administrative realms, recognizing that this balance will change over time. If the school views these realms as two faces of the same coin, then the school's operations will be illuminated by pedagogical insight, and the work of the teachers will be enhanced by their involvement in the school's administration.

Each person needs to act in full responsibility.

In order to act with full responsibility, teachers need to identify to whom we are responsible. Waldorf teachers are responsible to many: to the students and their families; to ourselves and our colleagues; to the school and its community; and to the spiritual beings who are involved in our school. In a larger sense, I think we are also responsible to the country in which we live; to the needs of our times; to the earthly world; and to the spiritual world. If we recognize and accept this view of concentric responsibilities, then working in full responsibility means being aware of our own place in the cosmos as workers for the unfolding of earth evolution.

If the Faculty of a school understands and supports this view, it can help teachers shoulder responsibilities according to their abilities. This means that the Faculty has to determine how much teachers can or should take on and how much needs to be delegated. Delegation does not mean that we are no longer fully responsible; it only means that we are not responsible for the

execution of a task. When individuals or groups act on behalf of the Faculty, they need to know that they share the responsibility with the Faculty, which bears the ultimate responsibility.

We can create a replacement for the direction or supervision provided by educational authorities.

In educational systems that have a Board of Education, the Board establishes the school's educational goals and determines the staffing, facilities, and programs by which these goals can be achieved. In The Waldorf School, these responsibilities are delegated to the "teachers' republic."

Rudolf Steiner prepared teachers to work in such a republic through the preparatory course given in August, 1919 for those who would become teachers in the first Waldorf school. In that course he laid the foundation for the teachers' understanding of the nature of the human beings and the needs of the developing child, and he outlined the curriculum and the methods that would best serve the educational process. I do not think that he did this only to prepare the teachers for their pedagogical tasks; rather, he wanted to help the teachers begin to recognize what it meant to become co-creative and co-responsible for the education and for the school.

I believe that Rudolf Steiner intended for the teachers—as individuals and as a group—to replace the educational authorities by becoming their own authority. This authority would be born out of proper preparation, continual review and reflection, and a willingness to develop and change in order to meet the needs of the students and the times. If teachers are to be their own authority, they have to demonstrate their competence and be accountable. The teachers who are responsible for the school need to cultivate a school culture that inspires and encourages each teacher's striving. That group also needs to ensure that this

striving is supported by providing the circumstances and means for teacher development, effective procedures for review and evaluation, and mentoring and peer supervision at all levels.

When Rudolf Steiner said, “We can create a replacement for the supervision of the School Board as we form this preparatory course,” I believe he was referring to what would be presented in The College Founding the following morning. In that founding, he urged teachers to form a connection with the spiritual powers who are interested in and seek to support their work. If we form this connection, if we allow the beings of the Third Hierarchy—the Angels, Archangels, and Archai—to “direct” and to “supervise” us, they will show us what is needed and give us what we need to do our work.

Through our work with our Angel, we are given the strength to face our shortcomings and to work on ourselves in service to our students. Through our work together with the Archangels, we are given the courage to receive and to give to one another what we have developed in our individual work in service to our school. Through our work with the Archai, we are given the light of wisdom to perceive the needs of our time.

We can work together in a way that unifies the school.

Rudolf Steiner told the participants in the preparatory course that they would receive what unifies the school, and that if they worked with due diligence, they would achieve a sense of unity through the course. What was presented in this course, and how does that engender a sense of unity?

In the morning lectures, published as *The Foundations of Human Experience*, Rudolf Steiner presented a description of the human being from the psychological, spiritual, and physical perspectives. In the lectures that were given later in the morning, called *Practical Advice to Teachers*, he gave an overview of the

curriculum in the light of child development and described teaching methods for each stage of development. In the afternoon seminar, titled *Discussions with Teachers*, Steiner gave further curricular indications, describing and demonstrating how some of the subjects might be taught.

This three-part preparatory course was intended to prepare the founding teachers for their pedagogical tasks, and their work in this course was intended to engender a spirit of unity that would allow the teachers to govern themselves and to guide the school. How do we imagine such work can engender a spirit of unity?

Every teacher who works with the preparatory course unites him or herself with other teachers who are working with the course. This work creates a community of ideas—of Imaginations—which exist in the realm of the Angels that are guiding each teacher.

When teachers in a school work with the preparatory course, they create a community of ideals—of Inspirations—which exist in the realm of the Archangels, which unite the members of the group with one another in their work towards common goals.

When groups of teachers in different schools work with the preparatory course, they unite themselves with Michael, The Good Spirit of the Time, whose work is furthered by Waldorf education. This creates a community of moral deeds—of Intuitions—which exist in the realm of the Archai, a community of all who are working for the fulfillment of the tasks of our times.

A teacher's republic is possible when teachers are involved in the organization and administration of the school, when each person acts with full responsibility, and when colleagues work together in a way that unifies the school. These lofty ideals need to be realized every day and in every aspect of our work—a daunting task. Fortunately, Rudolf Steiner showed us how we can

work towards these goals in *The Opening Address*, in *The College Founding*, and in the preparatory course.

ENDNOTES

- 1 The points in this section are drawn from the following sources:
Rudolf Steiner. *Basic Issues of the Social Question*. Southern Cross Review.org (1919);
Rudolf Steiner. *The Threefold Order of the Body Social*. London: Anthroposophical Society, 1919; available at wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA330/English/ASGB1950/TOBS-1_index.html
Rudolf Steiner. *The Renewal of the Social Organism* (GA 24), Great Barrington, MA: Anthroposophic Press, 1985; available at wn.rsarchive.org/Books/GA024/English/AP1985/GA024_Index.html and *The Threefold Social Organism*.
- 2 Rudolf Steiner. *The Spirit of the Waldorf School*. Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1995, p. 168.
- 3 See *The Opening Address*, which is included in the Appendix.

Chapter 3

The College of Teachers

THE TEACHERS' REPUBLIC that Rudolf Steiner envisioned was to find its expression through The Waldorf School. At the center of The Waldorf School was a new form and a new way of working: the College of Teachers.¹ Rudolf Steiner broadly sketched out the intentions and tasks of the College, but he left it to us to make this form our own. If we study the remarks that Rudolf Steiner made to the participants of the foundation course that he gave before The Waldorf School opened, we can find clues about his intentions for the College, but these clues are open to interpretation.

Rudolf Steiner gave two addresses at the beginning of The Waldorf School. The first was given on the evening of August 20, 1919, prior to the course he was to give to the teachers of the first Waldorf school; the second was given the following morning. These addresses deal with similar topics but from very different points of view. The first, which I have called *The Opening Address*, deals primarily with *exoteric* matters; the second, which I have named *The College Founding*, deals mostly with *esoteric* matters. I believe that through these two addresses Rudolf Steiner expressed his fundamental intention for the College of Teachers: to be a group that works in both the exoteric and esoteric realms and strives to bridge the worlds of matter and spirit.²

In both of these addresses, Rudolf Steiner spoke about the goals of education, the context in which this new form of education was coming into being, the tasks of the teachers, and

how they would work together. *The Opening Address* approaches these topics from a realistic, pragmatic, even functional point of view; *The College Founding* approaches them from a spiritual perspective. When we examine the two addresses side by side, we can find many correspondences and ways in which they complement each other. It is almost as if the first address poses earthly questions and the second offers spiritual answers. How can teachers work in full responsibility? By working with our Angels, who give us strength. How can we work together in a teachers' republic? By working with the Archangels, who give us courage. How can the spirit of unity be developed? By working with the Archai, who grace us with the light of wisdom.

These addresses were given to a group of people who were to become the first Waldorf teachers. In *The College Founding*, Rudolf Steiner initiated them into a new way of working together with one another and with the spiritual beings in whose service and in whose name each of them would work. The work of the original teachers lives on. All of us follow in their footsteps: Their tasks are our tasks, and we can view our work in light of what Rudolf Steiner shared with them.

Goals of the College of Teachers

In *The Opening Address* Rudolf Steiner presented the original College of Teachers with three goals:

1. to achieve a renewal of modern spiritual life;
2. to reform and revolutionize the educational system;
3. to accomplish a great cultural deed.

In *The College Founding* he also presented three goals:

1. to view their task as a moral spiritual task;
2. to recognize the importance of their work;
3. to be conscious that this school fulfills something special.

These goals are just as apt today as they were in 1919. We are still trying to renew education, and in order to achieve this, we need to recognize how special The Waldorf school is and to consider the importance of our work. When a Waldorf school creates its own version of the goals that Rudolf Steiner identified, it helps the Waldorf movement accomplish great cultural deeds.

How we go about identifying and achieving these goals depends on the time and place in which we live and work. It is up to the College in every school to try to read the signs of the times and the needs of its community. It is up to each College to perceive what the present times need and to determine how their school can strive to meet those needs. If we work toward these goals, we will fulfill Rudolf Steiner's intention for The Waldorf School: to bring about a renewal of modern spiritual life.

Our work with anthroposophy

In *The Opening Address* Rudolf Steiner spoke about the relationship of anthroposophy to The Waldorf School. He told the teachers that The Waldorf School would be living proof of the effectiveness of the anthroposophical orientation toward life. It would accomplish this by being a unified school that only considers how to teach in the way demanded by the human being. In *The College Founding* Rudolf Steiner revealed how anthroposophy can be brought to earth: by creating a connection between our activity and the activity of spiritual beings.

Strengthening the anthroposophical foundations of Waldorf education remains as important today as it was when The Waldorf School was first founded. The College must serve as the fount of inspiration for the processes by which teachers can learn how to "transform what is gained through anthroposophy into truly practical instruction." It can support these processes through study, research, artistic and contemplative activity, and through a way of working that brings out the best in each colleague.

Rudolf Steiner described the founding of The Waldorf School in the loftiest terms: as a ceremony within the Cosmic Order. I think that the founding of every Waldorf school since 1919 also has cosmic significance. When a child is born, we celebrate the birth of a soul-spiritual being that has chosen to enter the earthly realm. So too can we celebrate the founding of a Waldorf school because it strives to bring the soul-spiritual into the realm of human life. This spirit of celebration should permeate the founding of the College, because it is a moment when a school awakens to its destiny and its purpose. This spirit of celebration can extend to every College meeting because, during each of our meetings, we have the opportunity to experience ourselves as working within the Cosmic Order to midwife the birth of spirit into matter.

The context in which we work

In *The Opening Address* Rudolf Steiner described the difficult social and educational context in which The Waldorf School was being founded:

The state imposes terrible learning goals and terrible standards, the worst imaginable, but people will imagine them to be the best. Today's policies and political activity treat people like pawns. More than ever before, attempts will be made to use people like cogs in a wheel. People will be handled like puppets on strings, and everyone will think that this reflects the greatest progress imaginable. Things like institutions of learning will be created incompetently and with the greatest arrogance.³

Much of this description still holds true today. Although most Waldorf schools may technically be free from "terrible learning goals and terrible standards," these goals and standards

permeate our culture. They establish expectations among the parents and the community and often become the standard against which Waldorf teachers are measured and by which they judge themselves. Standardized educational materials and the behavioral methods that are almost universally applied in other schools find their ways into our schools too.

As Waldorf teachers, we need to inform ourselves about about and understand the prevailing view of the human being. We must be careful, however, not to allow that view to erode our recognition that the child is a spiritual being who has come to earth to do what it is not possible to do in the spiritual world. The College is the place where this view of the human being is broadened and deepened. The College strives to serve as the source of strength and inspiration for teachers who are trying to “teach in the way demanded by the human being.” By keeping the school’s focus on the becoming human being, the College remains true to its intention.

In *The College Founding* Rudolf Steiner said, “We wish to see each other as human beings brought together by karma, who will bring about, not something common, but something that, for those doing this work, will include the feeling of a festive Cosmic moment.” Many of us who work together in a College most likely have a common destiny, and our current relationships are affected by our past lifetimes. Remembering this can help us raise our eyes above the challenges we face in our work together. Devoting ourselves to our work together and to our work with spiritual beings can help us bring our best selves to bear on our common tasks.

The compromises we have to make

Rudolf Steiner told the original teachers in *The Opening Address* that they would have to make compromises. They would

have to know their ideals and have the flexibility to conform to what lies far from those ideals. This remains true for us today as well. Every Waldorf school exists in a context—a community, a state, a country, modern society—and it must adapt to that context through positive, creative, realistic means. It behooves us to emulate Rudolf Steiner’s calm, objective attitude toward this challenge. Rather than bemoaning our situation, Waldorf teachers and Waldorf schools must embrace the opportunities and challenges of our time. We must love the age in which we and our students have incarnated because it presents us with exactly what we came to earth to meet.

The College should be the place in the school where a sense of contemporaneity is cultivated, where teachers are helped to become true citizens of the time and place into which they have incarnated. The challenges posed to us by the parents, our communities, and our culture provide us with the opportunities to develop the flexibility and strength that we need to create a truly modern art of education. If the College can stay true to its vision while adapting to its challenges, it will serve as a model that students will emulate in their adult lives.

The strength to make compromises comes from knowing who we are and what we have come to earth to do. Among the main tasks of the College of Teachers are to foster a school’s sense of identity and individuality and to recognize its mission in the context of its community and the times in which we live. Waldorf education has a lofty mission: to bring about a renewal of culture. Each school has the opportunity to bring this mission into reality in the place and time in which it exists.

The qualities we need to develop

In *The Opening Address* and at the end of the preparatory course, Rudolf Steiner described the qualities and attitudes that

Waldorf teachers should cultivate. Imagination, courage for the truth, responsibility of soul, initiative, interest in the world, integrity, and freshness of soul—these are the seven “virtues” that Waldorf teachers strive to practice in and out of the classroom in the service of their students. They practice these virtues in the College in service to each other and to the school. They are helped to do so by the Angels, Archangels, and Archai, who grant them the strength, the courage, and the light of wisdom to do their work. By creating a true *philadelphia*, a city of brotherly love in their meetings, members of the College further the work of The Good Spirit of Our Time and of The Spirit of The Waldorf School.

The tasks of the College of Teachers were identified at the founding of the original College of The Waldorf School. These tasks remain relevant for every College in every school today and in the future. During the two weeks of the preparatory course, Rudolf Steiner helped the teachers to recognize and embrace these tasks. In our Colleges throughout the years, we have the honor of continuing to work on them.

Finding the balance

A College of Teachers has earthly tasks and spiritual tasks, and every College must strive to find the proper balance between them. This balance will change as a school matures and as its circumstances change, and it can even change during the course of a school year. At every meeting, the College must find the balance between its earthly focus—administration, personnel, facilities, finances, etc.—and its spiritual focus—anthroposophy, child development, and pedagogy. Whether a College focuses more on earthly or on spiritual matters depends on the needs of the school. What is most important is that earthly matters be informed from the point of view of the spirit and that spiritual

matters be informed by down-to-earth practicality. By working in this way, the College will fulfill its mandate: to find a living relationship between matter and spirit.

The word “balance” comes from the Latin name for scale. It is derived from the words *bi* and *lanx*, which mean “two dishes or trays.” The trays of a scale hold what is to be weighed. Unequal weights cause the dishes to move vertically, with the heavier dish ending up lower than the lighter. Equal weights result in the trays reaching the horizontal, the balance point.

We can look at *The Opening Address* and *The College Founding* as resting on the two pans of a scale. In one pan lie our earthly tasks; in the other, our cosmic tasks. These two sides of the scale complement and balance each other. A scale also has a bar that links the trays. This connecting bar pivots around a central fulcrum, mediating the polarity of the trays. When the trays are “in balance,” the opposites are held in dynamic equilibrium. To achieve balance we need polarity, but we also need something that mediates the polarity. What mediates the polarities we encounter: matter and spirit; individual and group; past and future? What strikes a dynamic equilibrium between these opposite but complementary realms? Our work with one another. Aided by our spiritual helpers and by Michael, The Good Spirit of Our Time, we can strike the necessary balance.

In the constellation Libra, the goddess Astraea holds the scales of justice. Here on earth the College of Teachers holds the scales of the school. But as members of the College, we need to do more than hold the scale; we need to *be* the balance in the school, we need to transform the noun *balance* into the verb *to balance* and find a dynamic equilibrium in all that we do as individuals and as a group.

ENDNOTES

- 1 “College of Teachers” is the English phrase for the German term *Lehrerkollegium*. Throughout this book the terms “College” and “College of Teachers” will be used interchangeably.
- 2 The full texts of *The Opening Address* and *The College Founding* are included in the Appendix.
- 3 Rudolf Steiner. *The Foundations of Human Experience*. Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 1996, pp. 29–30.

Chapter 4

The Faculty and the College of Teachers

WHEN THE FIRST WALDORF SCHOOL was founded, the Faculty or *Lehrerkollegium* consisted of those individuals whom Rudolf Steiner invited to participate in the preparatory course and to work at the school. As additional teachers joined the Faculty, questions arose about whether everyone who was working at the school should be considered part of the Faculty. On July 30, 1920, after discussing the situation of a shop/gardening teacher who was struggling, Rudolf Steiner said:

It is certainly not so that we will include every specialty teacher in the Faculty [*Lehrerkollegium*]. The intent is that the inner Faculty [*engeres Kollegium*] includes the class teachers and the older specialty teachers, and that we also have an extended Faculty [*erweitertes Kollegium*].... Only the main teachers, those who are practicing, not on leave, should be on the Faculty. In principle, the Faculty should consist of those who originally were part of the school and those who came later but who we wish had participated in the course last year. We have always discussed who is to be here as a real teacher. If someone is to sit with us, he or she must be practicing and must be a real teacher.

Is there a difference between the Faculty and the College of Teachers?

This quote can be interpreted in different ways depending on how we translate the words used to describe the Faculty. Having reviewed the lengthy discussion that precedes this quote, I believe that Rudolf Steiner was simply drawing a distinction between a “Core Faculty”—those who were truly part of the spirit of the school—and an “Extended Faculty”—which included those who were working at the school in a more ancillary capacity.

For many years I thought that the reference to the *engeres Kollegium* referred to the College of Teachers as distinct from the *erweitertes Kollegium*, or the Faculty, but I no longer think that this interpretation was correct. From the way that Rudolf Steiner spoke to the members of the Foundation Course, it is clear that he hoped that everyone on the Faculty or *Lehrerkollegium* would strive to fulfill the high ideals that he set forth in *The Opening Address* and *The College Founding*. And if we read Rudolf Steiner’s comments carefully, we will recognize that he identified the qualities necessary to be considered a member of the Faculty.

In some schools, the College of Teachers functions as an *engeres Kollegium*, while the Faculty functions as an *erweitertes Kollegium*. In other schools the entire Faculty serves as the *Lehrerkollegium* or College of Teachers. I have only worked in schools that have both a Faculty and a College, and I find it hard to imagine how a group that includes all the teachers could take up the material/spiritual work that I view as the true task of the College. I certainly have experienced, however, how a large group of teachers can work together in the ways Rudolf Steiner described in his educational lectures.

Rudolf Steiner characterized the Faculty as the heart and soul of a school, and he stated that the Faculty meetings are what make the school into a living organism. “No school is really alive,” he

said, “where this is not the most important thing, this regular meeting of the teachers.”

Rudolf Steiner repeatedly spoke about the importance of Faculty meetings in his educational lectures. He described these meetings as opportunities for teachers to continue their education, as the place where teachers could learn about individual children and classes and could practice practical psychology. Faculty meetings gave teachers the possibility of bringing their individual work into relation with the work of their colleagues, thus creating a spirit of unity, which was vital to their success.

The Faculty meetings were also the place where teachers could renew their souls, because teachers would always have a chance to learn something new. In a lecture in Ilkley he said:

Perhaps the best effect of all is that the meetings enable teachers to maintain their inner vitality, instead of growing old in soul and spirit. It must be the teacher’s constant aim to maintain a youthful freshness of soul and spirit, but this cannot be done unless real life flows through a central organ, just as human blood flows into and out of the heart. This is concentrated as a system of soul and spirit forces in the life that teachers work for in their meetings at The Waldorf School.¹

Faculty meetings were intended to be the classroom for the “students of the highest grade of all”—the teachers. They were meant to provide a training academy of higher learning because every practical experience could become part of the teachers’ education. According to Rudolf Steiner, teachers would share what they learned from their classes and from the children. In *The Kingdom of Childhood* he said:

In our teachers' meetings, which are the heart of the whole school life, the single individualities of the children are carefully discussed, and what the teachers themselves learn from their meetings, week by week, is derived first and foremost from this consideration of the children's individualities. In this way the teachers may perfect themselves. The child presents a whole series of riddles, and out of solving these riddles there will grow the feelings that you must carry into the class.²

In *The Opening Address*, Rudolf Steiner spoke about the spirit of unity that would arise out of the work with the preparatory course. On several later occasions he described how Faculty meetings could also engender this spirit of unity. The sense of unity that can arise in a group is mysterious and paradoxical. How can whole and part be reconciled so that the parts retain their identity but also compose a whole? Rudolf Steiner hinted at an answer when he said:

There are no prescribed rules for teaching in The Waldorf School, but only one unifying spirit that permeates the whole. It is very important that you understand this. Teachers are autonomous. Within this one unifying spirit, they can do entirely what they think is right for themselves.

[Teachers] have the greatest liberty, and yet the teaching in each class is what is right for that age. The strange thing is that no teacher has ever opposed this. They all quite voluntarily accept this principle of a unifying spirit in the work.³

A Waldorf school is strengthened when teachers work in a highly individual manner, figuring out what is right for

the students before them. A school is also strengthened when teachers work out of a common spiritual foundation. Although the spirit expresses itself differently in each person and in each individual situation, when people share a common spiritual striving, they create a whole that is much greater than the sum of its parts.

How does the work of the College of Teachers fit into this picture? Is it done in the Faculty meetings, where study, research, and practical psychology are the major aims, or does it need its own space in which to flourish? Henry Barnes, a long-time Waldorf teacher and leader in the Anthroposophical Society in America, shed light on the role of the College in a pamphlet called *The Third Space*. Barnes's work calls attention to a comment by Rudolf Steiner that directed members of the Anthroposophical Society to two examples of the way anthroposophy is able, and wishes, to enter into life today: 1) the form and structure of the First Goetheanum, and 2) the ways in which The Waldorf School was founded and conducted its affairs.

Barnes first examines the architecture of the first Goetheanum, with its two domes of unequal size. He describes these domes in terms of polarities that go beyond their structure. The larger dome was over the auditorium, a place where everyone who wished to participate was welcome; there democracy held sway. The smaller dome was over the stage, a place where those who had a special training performed their tasks; there hierarchy held sway. These two domes intersected over a "third space" that mediated between these two realms. When that space was filled with a mood of the threshold, "the building became human in the giving and receiving, in the crossing of that invisible threshold that both united and separated the two spheres."⁴

Henry Barnes then examines the founding of The Waldorf School and how it was operated. Just like the polarity between

the two domes in the First Goetheanum, The Waldorf School contained a polarity between two gestures: 1) the metamorphosis into the universally human that anthroposophy undergoes when it is put to work, and 2) the need for anthroposophy to have an area where it is energetically fostered by members who are fully conscious of their responsibilities to the Society. In Barnes's opinion, these two gestures correspond to the gestures of the two domes of the First Goetheanum. The metamorphosis of anthroposophy into the universal human corresponds to the gesture of the large dome; the area where it is energetically fostered corresponds to the gesture of the small dome.

Barnes points out that the Anthroposophical Society also contains these two polarities. The Society as a whole has a broad and open gesture; anyone is welcome to join. Within the Society is the *School of Spiritual Science*, which has a more demanding, esoteric gesture; only those who make a special commitment are allowed to join. According to Barnes, the Waldorf schools also contain these polarities. Within a single living social institution—a school—that includes children, teachers, parents, board members, alumni, friends—we find an organ whose members carry an esoteric responsibility: the College of Teachers.⁵

I interpret Henry Barnes's comments to refer to the College as distinct from the Faculty, but this interpretation may be a result of a perspective shaped by working only in schools that had both a Faculty and a College. Waldorf schools are still relatively new forms of community, and they will continue to develop and change for centuries to come. The future will reveal what forms allow The Waldorf School to fulfill its mission most fully; in the meantime, we need to make the most of the forms that we have.

Membership in the College of Teachers

In my experience, the Faculty—which includes all members of the staff—is concerned primarily with the daily life of the school, especially the work with the students and the parents. Assemblies and festivals, scheduling and minor program modifications, study of children and classes, of curriculum and methods all fall under the Faculty's purview. In contrast, the College of Teachers is concerned primarily with the life of the school for the long term—the past, present, and, most importantly, the future. Program, staffing, facilities, issues of governance, management, and operations, and long-term planning all fall under the College's purview.

In my opinion, everyone who works in a Waldorf school is, by definition, a member of the Faculty, but those who wish to serve on the College of Teachers need to develop certain qualities and to meet specific criteria. In most schools, the College is composed primarily of teachers. This makes sense because they are the ones directly involved in the education of students and can bring an educational perspective to all of the school's functions. Because teachers work with children who have recently arrived from the spiritual world, they may have a clearer sense of what is needed here on earth and what the future requires.

Some people have argued that College membership should be restricted to teachers because they develop special qualities through their work with the children. I do not agree with this. I think that College membership should not be restricted to teachers but should include anyone working in the school who meets the criteria. While working with the children certainly demands that we grow and work on ourselves, every vocation, profession, and job offers opportunities for growth and self-development. Someone who does not work directly with

children develops other qualities and perspectives than those who do, and the College can benefit from including a broad spectrum of travelers on this path of service. Even the College of the first Waldorf School included several members who were not teachers, so there is no historical precedent for limiting College membership to teachers.

Qualities of the teacher

What qualities do teachers need to develop? Rudolf Steiner identified seven of them on three different occasions during the training course. He first mentioned these qualities at the end of *The Opening Address* on the first evening. At the end of the training course, he again mentioned seven qualities that echo those of the first group. During *The College Founding* he presented seven qualities which, in my opinion, apply especially to members of the College of Teachers. The correspondences among these qualities can be seen when they are viewed together. (See chart on the following page.)

Anyone who intends to work in the earthly and in the spiritual realms needs to strive to develop these qualities. The qualities from the beginning and at the end of the course (the outer columns) are addressed to us as individuals, while those presented at *The College Founding* (the middle column) address us as a group. Members of the College must take up their individual work, but they also have a collective task, because only where two or more are gathered is it possible to work directly with the higher spiritual powers.

QUALITIES OF THE TEACHER

<i>The Opening Address</i>	<i>The College Founding</i>	<i>Final Words</i>
Know your ideals	View our work as a moral spiritual task	“Imbue yourself with the power of imagination”
Have the flexibility to conform to what lies far from your ideals	Reflect on the connection between our activity and the spiritual worlds	“Have courage for the truth”
Be completely responsible	Work with the spiritual powers	“Sharpen thy feeling for responsibility of soul”
Be conscious of the great tasks	See the importance of our work	Be a person of initiative
Have a living interest in the world	View the founding of this school as a ceremony held within the Cosmic Order	Have an interest in everything in the world
Obtain enthusiasm for our school and our tasks	See each other as human beings brought together by karma	Never compromise with what is untrue
Develop flexibility of spirit and devotion to our tasks	More will be said at the end of the course (working with the <i>Teachers' Meditations</i>)	Never grow stale or sour; cultivate freshness of soul

Criteria for College membership

Many years ago, the Council of the Pedagogical Section of the School of Spiritual Science in North America established the following criteria for membership in the College of Teachers. A candidate should

1. have been confirmed in his or her work in the school;
2. intend to work at the school into the foreseeable future;
3. commit him- or herself to upholding the College's processes;
4. be working with anthroposophy as his or her spiritual path.

I do not know how the Pedagogical Section Council arrived at these criteria, but they are fully congruent with what Rudolf Steiner said in the addresses at the founding of The Waldorf School and with the comments he made in the Faculty meeting of July 30, 1920, where he spoke about who should be a member of the Faculty.

1. The person has been confirmed in his or her work in the school.

At the beginning of *The College Founding*, Rudolf Steiner said we need to view our work as a moral and spiritual task, and at the July 30 Faculty meeting he said that only “true” teachers should be considered members of the Faculty. I think that these two statements established the basis for the criterion of confirmation. By taking up our work as a moral and spiritual task and working on ourselves so that we can be worthy of this task, we begin to develop our higher selves so that we can become “true” teachers.

We cannot confirm ourselves; our striving and our achievements need to be recognized by others. When we receive this recognition, we must remain worthy of it. A College benefits

from having individuals who have reached a certain level of maturity in their work. To be a member of a College, we have to be able to stand firmly on the foundation of our pedagogical work with our students and lift our gaze to the needs of the school. This level of professional competence can be recognized by our peers, who confirm our abilities and our striving to utilize them for the good of the school.

It is important that College membership be viewed as a pledge of one's willingness to make the sacrifices that are required to work together. College work is group work, and it can occur only when a person is recognized in relationship to the group and when the group demonstrates its regard for the person. The work of the College is very demanding on both the earthly and spiritual levels. Although none of us is fully qualified, our intention and our striving will bind us to our colleagues and attract the spiritual beings who wish to help us with our work.

2. The person intends to work at the school into the foreseeable future.

At *The College Founding*, Rudolf Steiner told those who were present that they were brought together by karma. I believe that this is true in our collegial circles as well. Although we cannot know this for sure, it behooves us to conduct ourselves as if it were, because what we do together will certainly have karmic implications for the future.

In the Faculty meeting of July 30, Rudolf Steiner said, "The Faculty should consist of those who originally were part of the school and those who came later but who we wish had participated in the course last year." This comment reinforces the idea that colleagues have karmic bonds that can be discerned. One way to discern this is by determining whether a person is ready to link his or her destiny with the destiny of the school.

To be a member of a College means to take karmic responsibility for everything that is done in the school's name. One should not do this lightly. It should be done only by those who have united themselves with the school's biography and united their own karma with the school's karma. Intending to work at the school into the foreseeable future does not refer to our professional plans but should be the touchstone by which we can assess whether we are willing to take responsibility for the consequences of everything done in our school's name.

3. The person commits him- or herself to upholding the processes of the College.

In *The Opening Address*, Rudolf Steiner spoke about the teachers' republic, stating that "each one of us must be completely responsible." This responsibility expresses itself in many ways. With regard to the College processes, a primary responsibility is to participate in meetings in a true spirit of collegiality, to base decisions on our highest ideals, and to uphold confidentiality. All of these require not just good intentions but commitment.

In the *College Imagination*, Rudolf Steiner described how we can work together with our spiritual companions to achieve our goals. I believe that this imagination should inform what happens in College meetings. A College meeting is not an ordinary gathering. It is, ideally, a gathering of human beings and spiritual beings. The processes of the College are not ordinary processes. They are, ideally, the celebration of a ritual whereby the spiritual is brought down to earth and the earthly is raised to the spirit. Unless we view our membership in the College as a sacred duty, unless we work faithfully with our colleagues in confidence, we cannot truly participate in the work of the College. The College is not just a place where words are spoken and decisions are made; the College is a place where we strive to work with our earthly

and spiritual companions. This is a privilege and it demands fidelity and trust. If we want to engage in this kind of work, we must commit ourselves to meet these demands.

4. *The person is working with anthroposophy as his or her spiritual path.*

This criterion corresponds to Rudolf Steiner's description in *The College Founding* of how we connect with the spiritual powers and to his injunction that we work with the *College Imagination* and the *Teachers' Mediations*.

Does a member of the College need to be an anthroposophist? Does he or she need to be a member of the Anthroposophical Society or of the Pedagogical Section of the First Class of the School of Spiritual Science?⁶ I think that the answers to these questions should be developed by the members of each College of Teachers. The process of arriving at a common position on such questions invites the participation of spiritual beings and brings colleagues together to better serve their school.

I think that neither membership in the Anthroposophical Society nor the School of Spiritual Science should be required for College membership. Membership in these groups must be based on the principle of freedom, and if a person were to be required to join in order to be eligible for College membership, it would compromise that principle. The Anthroposophical Society and the School of Spiritual Science benefit when a person joins, supports, and defends them, but that participation should arise out of a gesture of giving rather than taking. The requirements for College membership that have been described are stringent enough; there is no need to add to them.

College membership should not depend on whether a person is a card-carrying anthroposophist, but I am convinced

that whoever intends to serve on a College must be working with anthroposophy as his or her spiritual path and as a way of life. Unless anthroposophy firmly underlies a College member's world view, he or she will not be effective in helping The Waldorf School serve as "living proof of the effectiveness of the anthroposophical orientation toward life." This applies particularly to teaching because Waldorf education is a practical utilization of anthroposophy and it is the teacher's goal to "transform what we can gain through anthroposophy into truly practical instruction."

Those who serve on the College strive to bring anthroposophy to life through the College work. This is most evident in one's work with the *College Imagination*. The *College Imagination* was not intended only as imaginative content for contemplation; it was intended to be used by the teachers in their work on themselves, with the children, and with one another. Working on the College also requires members to try to create the conditions for what Rudolf Steiner called "the reverse ritual," which will be described later. The reverse ritual is built on a foundation of shared idealism. It is fostered through the study and practice of anthroposophy which create a common language that supports community building and a connection to spiritual beings.

I believe that a person working in a Waldorf school must be entirely free to pursue his or her own spiritual path without any kind of judgment or sanction, but there is a big difference between working in a Waldorf school and serving on the College. Working as a member of the College demands fidelity to anthroposophy and to common meditative work that springs from anthroposophy. Without these the College will find it very difficult to serve as a bridge between the spiritual and earthly worlds.

Every school has to develop the processes by which individuals can identify themselves or be recognized as striving to meet these criteria. It is important, however, that College membership be viewed not as a matter of status but as a matter of service, as a sign of our willingness to make the sacrifices that are required to work together. We cannot confirm ourselves in our work; we have to be confirmed by our colleagues. We can commit ourselves to working with the destiny of our school, but we have to do this work with others. College work is group work, and it can occur only when a person is recognized in relationship to the group and when the group demonstrates its regard for the person.

Whenever a College welcomes a new member, the possibility arises for the College to reconnect to *The College Founding* of 1919, to celebrate a new festive moment in the Cosmic Order. The welcoming ceremony provides an opportunity for the College to reaffirm its roots, to acknowledge its connections to the College members who have passed the threshold of death, and to strengthen its commitment to work with spiritual beings. Such a ceremony is also a time to reconnect to Rudolf Steiner, who pledged to remain connected to the work of The Waldorf School.

Our connection to Rudolf Steiner

Everyone who works in Waldorf education is connected to Rudolf Steiner in some way, but those of us who serve on the College need to deepen our connection to the man and his work so that we can continue to receive his help and so that he can continue to participate in The Waldorf School.

At the end of the preparatory course, Rudolf Steiner spoke to the teachers about his relationship to the teachers and to the school:

When you look back in memory to these discussions, then our thoughts will certainly meet again in all the various impulses that have come to life during this time. For myself, I can assure you that I will also be thinking back to these days, because right now this Waldorf School is indeed weighing heavily on the minds of those taking part in its beginning and organization. This Waldorf School must succeed; much depends on its success. Its success will bring a kind of proof of many things in the spiritual evolution of humankind that we must represent.

In conclusion, if you will allow me to speak personally for a moment, I would like to say: For me this Waldorf School will be a veritable child of concern. Again and again I will have to come back to this Waldorf School with anxious, caring thoughts. But when we keep in mind the deep seriousness of the situation, we can really work well together. Let us especially keep before us the thought, which will truly fill our hearts and minds, that connected with the present-day spiritual movement are also the spiritual powers that guide the Cosmos. When we believe in these good spiritual powers, they will inspire our lives, and we will truly be able to teach.⁷

For five years Rudolf Steiner worked with the teachers in the school, visiting classes, attending meetings, speaking at assemblies and festivals, and presenting additional courses on education. When he became ill in 1924, he wrote to the teachers one last time, reaffirming his connection to them.

Goetheanum, 15th March, 1925

My dear teachers of The Waldorf School,

Not to be able to be with you all means great deprivation to me. And so I must hand over to your care

the important task of decision-making, which I naturally used to share with you since the opening of the school. It is a trial of destiny. I am with you in thought. More I cannot do just now without taking the risk of extending this period of physical hindrance indefinitely.

*May active power of thought unite us,
Since parted in space we needs must be.
May what has been achieved so far
Strongly work among the teachers of this school.
May it live within their counseling,
Since the counselor, who would so gladly come,
Has wings no longer free to fly.*

So let us strive all the more strongly for spiritual communion, as long as this is the only way left open to us. The Waldorf School is truly a child needing special care, but above all, it is also a visible sign of the fruitfulness of anthroposophy within the spiritual life of mankind.

If all teachers faithfully carry within their hearts the awareness of this fruitfulness, then the Good Spirits, watching over this school, will be able to work actively; then divine spirit-power will prevail in all the deeds of the teachers. With this in mind, I send you my affectionate thoughts and greetings.

I enclose a short letter to the pupils which I ask you to read out to each class.

With heartfelt greetings,
Rudolf Steiner⁸

Rudolf Steiner is able to remain connected to The Waldorf School through our relationship to him. Like every relationship, it takes work to keep it strong and vibrant. We can strengthen

our relationship to Rudolf Steiner by continuing to work with anthroposophy, by bringing it to life in us and through us.

In *The Christmas Foundation: Beginning of a New Cosmic Age*, Rudolf Grosse refers to an essay by Ita Wegman that quotes Rudolf Steiner as saying:

If the opposition forces then succeed in separating anthroposophy from me by allowing the broad masses of humanity to hear of the teaching without knowing anything about me, it would become superficial, and this would be just what the Ahrimanic beings want and intend.⁹

As Rudolf Steiner's life recedes into the distances of time, it will become increasingly possible to speak about Waldorf education without reference to him. If this occurs, Waldorf education will suffer; it will lose some of its integrity and become just another effective educational philosophy and method. We can prevent this from happening by continuing to affirm Rudolf Steiner's role as the founder of Waldorf education. This does not mean that we need to exalt or deify him, but we must continue to acknowledge his contribution. When the College cultivates its relationship to Rudolf Steiner, it gives him the opportunity to continue to help us and guide us in our work.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Rudolf Steiner. *A Modern Art of Education*. Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2004, pp. 198–199.
- 2 Rudolf Steiner. *Kingdom of Childhood: Introductory Talks on Waldorf Education*. Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 1995, p. 62.
- 3 Ibid., p. 29.
- 4 Ibid., p. 13.
- 5 Ibid., pp. 21–22.

- 6 The School of Spiritual Science is that part of the Anthroposophical Society that works with the meditative content that Rudolf Steiner shared in the “Class Lessons.” Anyone can join the Anthroposophical Society who recognizes the validity of anthroposophy and of the Goetheanum as the center for anthroposophical activities, but in order to join the School of Spiritual Science one must also be willing to represent and defend anthroposophy. The Pedagogical Section is one of the vocational sections of the School of Spiritual Science.
- 7 Rudolf Steiner. *Practical Advice to Teachers*. Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2000, p. 189.
- 8 H.R. Niederhauser, H. von Kügelgen, S. Leber and J. Tautz (eds.), *Toward the Deepening of Waldorf Education*, Dornach, Switzerland: Pedagogical Section Council, 2012, p. 90.
- 9 Rudolf Grosse, *The Christmas Foundation: Beginning of a New Cosmic Age*. Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 1984, p. 132.

Chapter 5

Esoteric Community Building

A WALDORF SCHOOL IS MORE than an earthly institution or a community; it is also a spiritual community. Spiritual beings are interested in everything we humans do on earth, but they need the means by which to participate in our earthly affairs. In a Waldorf school, the College of Teachers strives to serve as a conduit to and from the spiritual world. If it is able to provide a living link with the spiritual world, the school will find ways to perceive and express the will of spiritual beings.

Rudolf Steiner spoke about esoteric community building in *The College Founding*, but he explored this subject in other lectures as well. It is useful to examine some of these indications because they shed light on our work as a College.

Building community

Long before the founding of The Waldorf School, Rudolf Steiner was already addressing the need to found communities out of the spirit, out of the highest ideals of the soul. In such communities, spiritual beings help us accomplish our goals.

Human communities are mystery places where higher spiritual beings descend to act through the individual human beings just as the soul expresses itself in the members of the body.... One cannot see the spirits who live in communities but they are there. They are there because of the sisterly, brotherly love of the personalities

working in these communities. As the body has a soul, so a guild or community also has a soul, and I repeat, it is not spoken allegorically but must be taken as a full reality.

Those who work together in mutual help are magicians because they pull in higher beings. One does not call upon the machinations of spiritism if one works together in a community in sisterly, brotherly love. Higher beings manifest themselves there. If we give up ourselves to mutual help, through this giving up to the community, a powerful strengthening of our organs takes place. If we then speak or act as a member of such a community, there speaks or acts in us not the singular soul only but the spirit of the community. This is the secret of progress for the future of mankind: to work out of communities....¹

At the founding ceremony of The Waldorf School, Rudolf Steiner spoke about how teachers need to establish a connection with spiritual beings. Four years after the founding, he returned to the theme of community building. In Lectures 6 and 9 of *Awakening to Community*, he described how communities can attract and engage spiritual beings through a process called the “reverse ritual.” This process is key to College work.

In *Awakening to Community*, Rudolf Steiner described how communities are established on foundations of common experiences. According to Rudolf Steiner, the most basic level of community building is a common language. We have all experienced how speaking and understanding the same language creates a deep sense of connection and belonging among those who speak it. When a baby first learns to speak, she enters into a new level of relationship with those around her. As children learn to express themselves, they join ever-broader circles of

community. From the earliest grades, most Waldorf students learn two different world languages—and these languages are learned much like their mother tongue—so that they will develop the capacity for experiencing a connection with other peoples of the earth.

The second foundation for community building is provided by sharing and remembering childhood experiences. These experiences create a sense of connection among those who participated in them. Children who have grown up together or have gone to school together feel a sense of kinship that goes deeper than the relationships they develop later in their lives. A class community in a Waldorf school provides children with the opportunity to develop this sense of belonging to a group that has a shared history.

The third foundation for community building is our participation in rituals and traditions because they allow us to join together on a deep level with those who celebrate them with us. Rituals, especially religious rituals, create a common language and a set of shared experiences that bind people to one another.

According to Rudolf Steiner, the most powerful and meaningful rituals are earthly reflections of realities that we experienced in the spiritual world before birth. When we participate in these rituals with other people, we feel connected to them. This sense of connection derives not only from our shared earthly experiences but from our common cosmic memories of the experiences we had together before birth. A true ritual, Rudolf Steiner states, “derives its binding power from the fact that it conveys spiritual forces from the spiritual world to earth and presents supernatural realities to the contemplation of human beings living on the earth.”²

All three of these types of community building are mostly experienced unconsciously, which is why they live so deeply

in our souls. The fourth foundation for community must be established consciously at every moment. Rudolf Steiner called this the “reverse cultus” or “reverse ritual.” The reverse ritual can occur only when we truly awaken to the soul and spiritual nature of our fellow human beings. According to Rudolf Steiner, when we begin to awaken to one another in this way, we are able to enter the supersensible realm together.

This awakening to each other’s soul-spiritual nature can occur by sharing a common life of ideals. Especially when we seek to realize our anthroposophical ideals, a spiritual being is attracted to our work. “Just as the genius of a language lives in that language and spreads its wings over those who speak it, so do those who experience anthroposophical ideas together in the right, idealistic frame of mind live in the shelter of the wings of a higher being.”³ Rudolf Steiner called the process by which spiritual beings are invited to participate in what is happening on the earthly plane the reverse ritual.

A ritual brings the supersensible down into the physical world through words and actions, but the reverse ritual raises earthly deeds into the supersensible realm. Rudolf Steiner described it pictorially as follows:

The community of the cultus seeks to draw the Angels of heaven down to the place where the cultus is being celebrated, so that they may be present in the congregation, whereas the anthroposophical community seeks to lift human souls into supersensible realms so that they may enter the company of Angels.

If anthroposophy is to serve man as a real means of entering the spiritual world, ...we must do more than just talk about spiritual beings; we must look for the opportunities nearest at hand to enter their company.⁴

When we participate in the reverse ritual, spiritual beings are attracted to our spiritualized thoughts, feelings and deeds. They are able to participate in the earthly matters that we are striving to raise into the realm of the spirit. Just as true rituals bring the life of the spirit into the realm of earth, the reverse ritual lifts the life of the earth into the realm of spirit.

The reverse ritual is particularly important for College members because it creates spiritual kinship with one another. It is possible only if the members of the College are working on themselves and working together in a way that fosters an awakening to each other's soul-spiritual nature. This means that College members need to learn to see one another in a new light and to relate to each other in new ways. In order to awaken to our colleagues' soul-spiritual nature, we must develop heightened interest in, compassion for, and commitment to one another. This requires dedication and persistence.

We all know how hard it is to reach beyond our everyday selves. It takes more than striving; it takes conscious effort and repeated practice. Rudolf Steiner described many paths of self-development, but knowing the path is not enough—we have to travel it. Luckily, we are not alone on that path; our College colleagues are also on this journey and can give us reassurance and support when we stumble or fall. Our Angel too helps us on our way, renewing our commitment, strengthening our resolve. When we are able to make even the smallest steps in our self-development, we begin to awaken to each other. We find a new level of connection that allows us to work together not only on earth but in spiritual realms as well.

The reverse ritual is at the crux of College work. When a meeting achieves the reverse ritual—and in my experience, this occurs very rarely—spiritual beings receive an offering of spiritualized earthly substance that is akin to the blessing that

we human beings receive when we partake of a sacrament. When the reverse ritual occurs, the will of the spiritual world may be perceived by the listening heart. What is finally voiced by a member of the group goes far beyond the sum of the individual opinions or perspectives that have been expressed. In those moments, we feel humbled by the recognition that we are participating in something rare and holy: the transmutation of earthly thoughts, words, and deeds into spiritual substance.

The College Imagination

In order for the reverse ritual to be fruitful for our work as a College, we also have to cultivate the ability to perceive what the spiritual beings are trying to communicate so that we can hearken to the will of the spiritual worlds. This demands that we develop ourselves as meditants so that we can awaken to the still small voice of the spirit. It demands that we engage in meetings that are structured to allow us to perceive that voice of the spirit. And it demands that we develop the qualities of soul that will allow us to speak to and listen to each other in such a way that doesn't stifle the expression of the spirit.

In the *College Imagination* and the *Final Words*, Rudolf Steiner gave the participants in the preparatory course the means by which to imagine, understand, and practice working together with the spiritual powers who help us in our work.

We wish to begin our preparation by first reflecting upon how we connect with the spiritual powers in whose service and in whose name each one of us must work. I ask you to understand these introductory words as a kind of prayer to those powers who stand behind us with Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition as we take up this task.⁵

Rudolf Steiner asked that his words not be transcribed at that point, but three of the participants later wrote down their recollection of what he said. These are included in the Appendix. The accounts differ in terms of the level of detail they record, but they share the following essential elements:

Our Angel helps us in our striving to realize our goals for this incarnation. Rudolf Steiner describes an Angel standing behind each member of the College and laying hands on the person's head. Our Angel faces the same direction as we do—perhaps in recognition that it will stand by us as we meet our destiny—and it gives us the strength we need to do our tasks. The Angels work in the realm of Imaginations.

The Archangels help us in our work with one another. Rudolf Steiner describes the Archangels circling above our heads, carrying from one to the other what arises out of our spiritual encounters with our Angel. Unlike the Angel, who stands still behind us, the Archangels are always in movement. Their movement creates a chalice made of courage. This chalice receives the common striving of the members of the College. The Archangels work in the realm of Inspirations.

The Archai help us in our work to realize the goals of the Spirit of the Time. Rudolf Steiner says that they do not form themselves into a chalice but come from primal beginnings and vanish again into the eternal distances. This is a movement in time, not in space. The Archai allow a drop of the light of wisdom to fill the chalice created by the Archangels. The Archai work in the realm of Intuitions.

Rudolf Steiner shared this *Imagination* so that the participants of the course could recognize the essential elements of how to work with the spiritual beings. We work with our Angel on our own tasks; we work with the Archangels on our common tasks; we work with the Archai on the tasks of our age.

Working with meditative content must be an act of freedom, but when members of a group such as the College decide to work with the same content in an ongoing way, it strengthens the meditative work of each individual in the group. When a person becomes a member of the College, he or she should be prepared to commit to engage in a group meditative practice in service to one's colleagues and to the school. When all the members of a College make that commitment, they create a spiritual tapestry woven out of the strands of each one's striving and achievements.

Rudolf Steiner intended that teachers work with the *Imagination* as part of their daily meditative practice. During *The College Founding* he had said, "At the end of our course I will say what I would like to say following today's festive commencement of our preparation. Then much will have been clarified, and we will be able to stand before our task much more concretely than we can today."⁶ At the end of the last lectures in the course, Rudolf Steiner spoke about the qualities that the teachers must develop. A few days afterwards, he gathered the teachers and spoke about what he had alluded to in *The College Founding*: how teachers could work together with the beings of the Third Hierarchy. Then he asked that the teachers pledge themselves to work in the way he described.

According to Caroline von Heydebrand's notes, here is what occurred:

On 9th September at 9am, Rudolf Steiner assembled the first Waldorf teachers. He asked them always to remember the way of working which he had shown to them, namely to work in full consciousness of the reality of the spiritual world. He said: "In the evenings before your meditation, ask the Angels, Archangels, and Archai

that they may help you in your work on the following day. In the mornings, after the meditation, you may feel yourself united with the beings of the Third Hierarchy.”

Then Dr. Steiner walked around the table, shaking hands with each teacher and looking deeply and with moving, utmost earnestness into the eyes of each.

Here is how Walter J. Stein recorded that moment:

9am meeting. Dr. Steiner asks us, clasping the hand of each teacher in turn, to promise to work together in the way he has shown us:

In the evening, before the meditation, ask the Angeloi, Archangeloi and Archai to help in our work on the next day. In the morning, after the meditation, know ourselves united with them.⁷

Although we were not present at this solemn moment, it lives on as a cosmic moment in which we can participate through our intentions and our efforts. Each of us can receive what Rudolf Steiner offered if we take up his work with earnestness, and each of us can pledge to work in the way that he has shown. If we do so, we connect ourselves with Rudolf Steiner and with The Being of The Waldorf School.

The challenges of working together

One of the major goals of Waldorf education is to help the students become individuals in the context of a group. The College tries to exemplify this, and its members try to work in a way that allows the capacities of each individual to serve the group that recognizes and utilizes those capacities. A verse by Rudolf Steiner points to the dynamic balance that must be achieved in order for an individual to work as a member of a group.

*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 virtue of each one is living.⁸*

Working as a College depends on the striving of the members to wake up to one another so that they can recognize each other in the deepest sense. Out of that recognition comes the possibility for delegation and for shared responsibility. When Rudolf Steiner spoke about a republican form of administration, he was identifying a way of working together that demands that each person be fully responsible for his or her own work and that the group share the responsibility for the work as a whole.

Any group trying to work together faces many challenges, some in the earthly realm and some in the spiritual. While the earthly challenges are unique to each school, all schools face similar spiritual challenges because they are the result of the work of two spiritual beings who take a special interest in human beings. Rudolf Steiner calls these beings Lucifer and Ahriman. Both of them play a special role in human affairs, and they are especially attracted to a group such as a College in a Waldorf school which is working for the further development of human beings and society. It is easy to think about Lucifer and Ahriman only as adversarial forces and as the embodiments of evil, but both of these beings are necessary for our full development.

Ahriman is a being who is deeply connected to physical, material existence. His influence can be found wherever earthly matters are most important. Science and technology; government and economics; industry and the military—all have developed in accordance with Ahrimanic forms of thinking and working. Ahrimanic thinking is clear and logical; work inspired by Ahriman is realistic and pragmatic; and Ahrimanic goals justify

the means to achieve them. In groups, Ahriman expresses himself through the principle of power, and groups that are inspired by Ahriman have a strictly hierarchical organization. Ahriman's cosmic intention is to keep human beings from developing their spiritual nature. If Ahriman were to succeed, we would remain purely physical beings who are tied to the earth, governed by our passions and needs.

When we consider practical matters in the College, Ahriman draws near. He can help us solve problems, but we must make sure that the solution is consistent with our values. He can help us streamline our operations, but we must make sure that our processes and procedures remain human. Ahriman can help us be more realistic, pragmatic, and decisive—which is necessary if the College is to work efficiently and effectively—but we must be careful to keep his help in perspective and not to depend on him too much.

Lucifer is a being who is connected to the world of the spirit. His influence can be found wherever ideas and ideals hold sway with little regard for the practicalities of life. Culture, religion, the arts, and all forms of self-expression have been developed under Lucifer's influence. Lucifer inspires creativity in thinking and working; in groups, he works through the principles of individual autonomy, personal initiative, and freedom from constraints. Lucifer's cosmic intention is to transform human beings into purely spiritual beings who would have no need to be incarnated into physical bodies. If Lucifer were to succeed, human beings would be drawn away from the earth to lead a purely spiritual existence as moral automatons.

When we consider spiritual matters in the College, Lucifer draws near. He can help us develop insight into a problem, but we must make sure we don't lose sight of the need to find a timely solution. He can help us humanize our operations, but we must

make sure that our processes and procedures don't get derailed by personal considerations. Lucifer can help us be receptive and responsive—which is necessary if the College is to work with sensitivity—but we must be careful to keep his help in perspective and not to depend on him too much.

We need Ahriman and Lucifer in order to perform the earthly and spiritual tasks of our schools, but we must remain awake to these beings' one-sidedness and their intention to deprive us of our essential humanity. As members of the College, we need to find our position between Lucifer and Ahriman, where we can strive to be true to ourselves, to each other, and to the highest intentions of the spiritual worlds.

According to Rudolf Steiner, the Christ being holds Lucifer and Ahriman in a dynamic balance. Rudolf Steiner represented the relationship between the Christ and humanity's great adversaries in the great wooden statue which was to stand in the first Goetheanum. This statue depicts the Christ, the Representative of Humanity, reaching upward with one hand, holding Lucifer at bay, and reaching downward with the other hand, keeping Ahriman in his place. The Christ holds the adversaries at arm's length, allowing them to do their necessary work while he continues striding forward toward his goal.

The statue of the Representative of Humanity provides a picture of the balance that we must strive to achieve: a balance that holds Lucifer and Ahriman in a dynamic balance; a balance in which each of these beings can share his gifts but also be held in check so that his excesses do not harm us. If we become true followers of the Christ, He will help us to achieve this balance in ourselves and in our work.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Rudolf Steiner. "Brotherhood and the Fight for Survival" (GA 54). Lecture in Berlin, November 23, 1905; available at wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/19051123p01.html
- 2 Rudolf Steiner, *Awakening to Community* (GA 237). (Spring Valley, NY: Anthroposophical Press, 1974, pp. 92–95.
- 3 Ibid., p. 156.
- 4 Ibid., p. 157.
- 5 Rudolf Steiner. *The Foundations of Human Experience*. Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 1996, p. 33.
- 6 Ibid., p. 34.
- 7 H.R. Niederhauser, H. von Kügelgen, S. Leber and J. Tautz (eds.), *Toward the Deepening of Waldorf Education*, Dornach, Switzerland: Pedagogical Section Council, 2012, p. 62.
- 8 "Reordering of Society: The Fundamental Social Law" (GA 34), *Anthroposophy and the Social Question*, Vol. 2, 1927. London: Anthroposophical Publishing Co.; available at http://wn.rsarchive.org/Articles/FuSoLa_index.html

Chapter 6

The Being and The Spirit of The Waldorf School

IN WALDORF CIRCLES people sometimes refer to the Being of their school. What is meant by that? Whom are they speaking about? Is this simply a turn of phrase or does this name point to a spiritual reality?

According to Rudolf Steiner each human being has an Angel who has the spiritual task of helping that human being fulfill his or her pre-birth intentions. Archangels are on the next higher level. They concern themselves with groups of people who have a basic background in common: a tribe, a race, people from a geographical region, or people who share a language. These beings are sometimes known as the “folk-soul” of a people. The Archai are one level above the Archangels. As Spirits of the Time, they are responsible for the developments that occur within an age. The major Archangels may also serve as the Spirit of the Time for part of an epoch, and during this period of regency, they act as if they were in the ranks of the Archai.

The Being of The Waldorf School

What kind of spiritual being is the “Being of the School”? In my opinion, there are two possibilities: If we view “the school” as a specific Waldorf school, I think the “Being of the School” is one type of spiritual being. If we view “The Waldorf School” as an archetype, then I think “The Being of The Waldorf School” is another type of spiritual being.

As Rudolf Steiner described in “Brotherhood and the Fight for Survival,” and in *Awakening to Community*, wherever a group of people come together in the service of an ideal, a spiritual being is drawn to them. I believe that this being comes from the ranks of the Archangels, because the Archangels are responsible for and express themselves through a group of people.

The Archangels have the astral body as their lowest member, which allows them to manifest themselves in many places at once. Because the Being of the School expresses itself through many members of the school community, this might explain why people in a school have the feeling that they speak a common language, share common values, and belong together.

The astral body can be thought of as a body of air. The air is common to us all, uniting us through a type of communion as we inhale each other’s air. Because the air carries our voices, it unites us through our common language. When a school community sings or speaks together, uniting in its breathing, we can imagine the Being of the School breathing through and with them.

The astral body also provides the foundation for our soul life, expressing itself through our personality. A school’s personality may be the earthly expression of the nature of its archangelic being. We can experience something about this being when we share our school’s vision and values, participate in its customs and traditions, experience and understand our community better through the common ground of the school’s biography.

By working to perceive the character of the school, by finding the common language that unites the school, by seeking ways to recognize and utilize each other’s gifts for the common good, the members of the College can get to know the being of their school and invite it to participate in their work.

“The Waldorf School” transcends all individual Waldorf schools. It is an archetype that expresses itself throughout all

the places and times where Waldorf education has been, is, and will be realized. When we review *The Opening Address* and *The College Founding*, we sense that Rudolf Steiner was inaugurating The Waldorf School, not just the Waldorf school in Stuttgart. We sense that this festive moment in the Cosmic Order celebrated the beginning of something greater than the establishment of a particular school. When we read and work with Rudolf Steiner's words and ideas from the preparatory course, we sense that what he presented to those original teachers was being presented to Waldorf teachers in all places and times to come. If "The Waldorf School" is an archetype that expresses itself through individual Waldorf schools, then "The Being of The Waldorf School" is on a higher level than the Archangels who are connected to the individual schools.

I think that The Being of The Waldorf School is The Good Spirit of Our Time, whom Rudolf Steiner thanked in *The College Founding* and referred to in the *College Imagination* as that spirit who bestows upon us the drop of the light of wisdom. Although he did not mention The Good Spirit by name, I think that Rudolf Steiner was referring to the Archangel Michael, who is serving in the ranks of the Archai during our age. Just as Archangels can manifest in different places at once, the Archai can manifest in different times at once. As The Spirit of Our Time, Michael is able to manifest in all of the different Waldorf schools wherever and whenever they exist.

The Archangel Michael has a special connection to all who are involved in Waldorf education because we were already members in The School of Michael before our birth. In the last lecture of *The Younger Generation*, Rudolf Steiner spoke about Michael in connection with education.

Michael needs, as it were, a chariot by means of which to enter our civilization. And this chariot reveals itself to the true educator as coming forth from the young, growing human being, yes, even from the child. Here the power of the pre-earthly life is still working. Here we find, if we nurture it, what becomes the chariot by means of which Michael will enter our civilization. By educating in the right way we are preparing Michael's chariot for entrance into our civilization.¹

A year later, during in the last lecture of *Deeper Insights into Waldorf Education*, given to the teachers of the original Waldorf school, Rudolf Steiner again stressed the importance of uniting ourselves with Michael. Afterwards he presented the second Teacher Meditation, which gives teachers the means by which to connect more deeply with the spiritual wellsprings of their work.²

The College in every Waldorf school has the sacred duty to get to know and to work with the Archangel Michael. Through him the College can receive the drop of light that enlightens their work; through him they can unite themselves with his mission to create a more human future; through him they can experience more fully The Spirit of The Waldorf School.

The Spirit of The Waldorf School

The Being of The Waldorf School expresses and is the countenance of The Spirit of The Waldorf School. The Spirit of The Waldorf School expresses itself wherever groups are gathered in their striving to realize the ideals of Waldorf education. Rudolf Steiner spoke explicitly about The Spirit of The Waldorf School in several of his assembly talks and festival addresses to students, teachers, and parents.

At the Christmas assembly of the first school, Rudolf Steiner said to the children:

And do you know where your teachers get all the strength and ability they need so that they can teach you to grow up to be good and capable people? They get it from the Christ....³

At the assembly at the end of the first school year he said:

There is still something I would like to say today. Alongside everything we have learned here, which the individual teachers have demonstrated so beautifully, there is something else present, something that I would like to call the Spirit of The Waldorf School. It is meant to lead us to true piety again. Basically, it is the spirit of Christianity that wafts through all our rooms, that comes from every teacher and goes out to every child, even when it seems that something very far from religion is being taught, such as arithmetic, for example. Here it is always the spirit of Christ that comes from the teacher and is to enter the hearts of the children—this spirit that is imbued with love, real human love.⁴

During the second school year, at the assembly of November 20, 1920, he said:

What your teachers say to you comes from incredibly hard work on their part, from the strength of their devotion, and from their love for you. But what comes from their love must also be able to get to you, and that is why I always say the same thing to you: Love your teachers, because love will carry what comes from your teachers' hearts into your hearts and into your heads. Love is the

best way for what teachers have to give to flow into their students. That is why I am going to ask you again today, “Do you love your teachers? Do you still love them?” [The children shout, “Yes!”]

A little later in this assembly, Rudolf Steiner said:

Thus the spirit of Christ is always with you....This spirit of Christ is also your teachers’ great teacher. Through your teachers, the spirit of Christ works into your hearts.⁵

At the assembly marking the beginning of the sixth school year, Rudolf Steiner again mentioned the teachers’ teacher:

Dear students of the highest grade of all—that is, dear teachers! In this new school year, let us begin teaching with courage and enthusiasm to prepare these children for the school of life. Thus may the school be guided by the greatest leader of all, by the Christ Himself. May this be the case in our school.⁶

When Rudolf Steiner visited The Waldorf School, he would ask the students, “Do you love your teachers?” and he would sometimes repeat the question several times. By asking this question Rudolf Steiner was helping the students and the teachers to recognize that without the love that streams from teacher to student and from student to teacher, no education is possible. Rudolf Steiner did not explicitly ask the students of the highest grade of all—the teachers—if they loved their teacher, but that question is implicit in all that we do as Waldorf teachers and as human beings living at this time. The Christ is The Spirit of The Waldorf School. If we are truly to serve Waldorf education, we must find our way to the Christ and learn to love Him.

Working with the Christ Being

In Lecture 6 of *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, Rudolf Steiner spoke about the need for teachers to reach beyond their narrow selves in service of their students. He said:

For people in general there may be many kinds of prayers. Over and above these there is a special prayer for the teacher:

Dear God, cause that I—inasmuch as my personal ambitions are concerned—negate myself. And Christ make true in me the Pauline words, ‘Not I, but the Christ in me.’

This prayer, addressed to God in general and to Christ in particular, continues: “...so that the Holy Spirit may hold sway in the teacher.” This is the true Trinity.⁷

I think that this prayer also helps us to reach beyond our narrow selves in service to one another. If the task of the teacher is to provide the student with the opportunities and conditions for self-education, our tasks as colleagues is to provide each other with the opportunities and conditions for each other's self-education. Colleagues provide a mirror—an objective, and, one would hope, a loving and forgiving mirror—to help each other to become.

In my experience, parents have three questions of their children's teachers: *Do you love my child? Do you understand my child? Do you believe in my child?* Don't we all have the same three questions for one another as colleagues: *Do you believe in me? Do you understand me? Do you love me?*

It is easy to bandy the word *love* around as if it were a gift or a form of grace, but love is hard work. A wise man said: “Work is love made visible,” but we could also say: “Love is work made

visible.” Through the hard work of interest and recognition, of understanding and acceptance, of support and trust—in other words, through the hard work of love—a group of colleagues can create a community which lives in the soul of each of its members, a community which recognizes and values the virtue of each of its members.

As colleagues, we provide each other with the opportunity for our self-education. Christ, as the teacher’s Teacher, provides us with the opportunity for our self-education as a community of teachers. What does our Teacher want us to learn? If all education is a matter of self-education, the major lesson our community of teachers has to learn from the Christ is how to become a truly human community—a community that is built on the strength of individual ego-hood; a community that is built on the courage of giving, and the even greater courage of receiving what others have to give; a community that is built on the wisdom that allows us to recognize and embrace our task.

As individuals, we are inherently one-sided and narrow, no matter how hard we work to develop ourselves. We need one another to create a vessel that can receive spiritual substance. We need to learn how to transform our individual “I” gestures into embracing “O” gestures, for it is into the space between and among us that something can enter.

How can we work with the Christ in our work as members of a College? Whenever we gather in His name, we turn to Him and ask Him to help us become greater than the sum of our parts. We ask Him to teach us to transform our everyday encounters into sacraments through which we experience each other’s divinity. We ask Him to inspire us to make love visible so that we can help the earth fulfill its destiny: to become the planet of love.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Rudolf Steiner. *The Younger Generation*. Great Barrington, MA: Anthroposophic Press, 1967, p. 174.
- 2 Rudolf Steiner. *Deeper Insights into Waldorf Education*. Forest Row, UK: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1983, pp. 50–51.
- 3 Rudolf Steiner. *Rudolf Steiner in The Waldorf School*. Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 1996, p. 59.
- 4 Ibid., p. 58.
- 5 Ibid., p. 62.
- 6 Ibid., p. 207.
- 7 Rudolf Steiner. *The Child's Changing Consciousness as the Basis of Pedagogical Practice*. Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 1996, p. 142.

Chapter 7

Working as a College

THE IDEAS AND IDEALS that have been presented in the previous chapters are based on my understanding and interpretation of Rudolf Steiner's work. Those that will be presented in these last three chapters are my own. During the past decades, my colleagues and I have realized only some of these ideals, but they continue to serve as beacons for our earnest, heartfelt striving.

A whole school

A Waldorf school is an organism that has a physical body, an etheric body, an astral body, and an ego. Just like our physical body that expresses what we are made of, a school's physical body is expressed by its grounds, facilities, and location—what and where it is. Just like our etheric body that expresses itself in our life processes and our thoughts and memories, a school's etheric body is expressed by its program and by the life of the school—its rhythms, traditions, and memories. Just like our astral body that expresses itself through our perceptions, sensations, and emotions, a school's astral body is expressed by the school's staff and community—their character, personality, and soul. And just like our ego which expresses itself through our individuality and by everything we do in our lives, a school's ego is expressed by the school's unique identity—its biography and its purpose, its reason for being.

Our ego enables us to take a stand in the world and to act on our convictions; the ego of the school seeks to realize its mission.

Just as each of us came to earth to do what we could not do in the spiritual world, the ego of a school incarnates in order to bring a spiritual impulse into reality. The College of Teachers in a Waldorf school embodies and expresses its ego. It has the duty to try to nurture and support the other bodies of the school. When a school is ailing, it is the College's responsibility to read the symptoms, try to diagnose the causes, and determine what the school needs in order for health to be restored. As the school's ego, the College needs to try to perceive the destiny of the school and to consider the karma the school creates.

The physical, etheric, and astral bodies of a Waldorf school

A school's facilities express its physical body, and the care of those facilities expresses how a school identifies with its body. A dirty or unkempt school shows that the ego of the school is not taking care of its body. A school in disrepair shows that the ego of the school is not tending to its health. Ideally, a Waldorf school lives in a physical body that allows it to express itself fully, but many schools do not have the financial resources to build or purchase their own buildings. When a school has to rent or renovate its buildings, it needs to make extra efforts to penetrate those buildings with its individuality, to make that inherited body its own.

A school's program expresses its etheric body, its life forces. All Waldorf schools share a common philosophical foundation, basic curriculum and methodology, but each school needs to adapt and individualize its program in terms of the needs of its community. Periodically the College needs to assess whether its program is meeting those needs and to consider what changes may be necessary. In Waldorf schools that have financial or staffing limitations, the program needs to be limited to fit within

the school's circumstances. This requires the ego of the school to compromise, prioritize, and make hard choices. Just like the process by which our true self is forged on the anvil of hardship, the limitations and necessities a school must face awaken its resourcefulness and creativity, helping it to express itself more fully.

A school's community—students, parents, and staff—expresses its astral body. When entering a Waldorf school, we can immediately sense something about its character and personality. We perceive aspects of this personality through our relationships and interactions with the people, activities, and events at the school. How people in a school work together largely determines whether the school will prosper. If a school is to thrive, the College has to toil unceasingly to foster healthy relationships among the Faculty and staff and between the school and the parent community. This is easier said than done, but it is a vital task.

Nowadays many parents are worried about their children's welfare and anxious about their future. This often expresses itself as doubt in the Faculty—in their background and training, skill, or professionalism. In the face of such doubts, a College needs to remember that it is more important who the teacher is than what the teacher knows. This does not mean that just anyone can teach anything, but the important qualities of a teacher do not arise from a teacher's past—from her background and training; rather, they come from her future—her striving to work on herself so that she can accomplish what she came to earth to do. Life presents us with the challenges we need. Although we don't always feel equal to these challenges, we often find that we have what it takes to meet them.

Experience has its benefits, but what is most important in teaching is our urge to learn, our enthusiasm. Although

experience gives us the sense that we know what we're doing, that is not the most important aspect of teaching: *Not* knowing is a powerful force in our process of becoming. Teaching is more like improvising than like performing a rehearsed piece. The new, not the old; the unexpected, not the predictable; the response to the moment, not the reflexive reaction—these are what strengthen the soul connections with our students. It is heartening to remember what Rudolf Steiner said to Herbert Hahn about Hahn's lack of experience when, as a young man, he was given the responsibility to advocate for and represent the Threefold Social Movement: "Yes, but you may also be sure that the spiritual world accepts enthusiasm as a substitute for maturity."¹

The ego of a Waldorf school

The College of Teachers expresses the school's ego. Just as our individual egos penetrate our astral bodies, the ego of the school needs to penetrate the school's astral body by establishing and maintaining harmonious relationships with the students, parents, staff, trustees, and the broader community.

The College needs to maintain a healthy relationship with the Faculty and staff who are not on the College. It needs to be aware that those who are not on the College may view it with distrust or suspicion, or they may feel disenfranchised and unsupportive because the College is an exclusive group that makes so many important decisions. When these kinds of feelings arise, it is hard for the College to do its work.

A College needs to work proactively to prevent or mitigate such feelings. It needs to send the message that College membership is a matter of service, not status or power, and that everyone who is interested should explore joining and participating in the College's work. The College has to bridge

whatever gaps arise as a function of having its own meetings and tasks. In practical terms, this means that the College should post its weekly agenda so that everyone can keep track of what the College is working on. College updates and decisions need to be shared at the Faculty meeting so that everyone stays informed. When the College reports, time should be allocated for explaining or for answering questions about its decisions so that those who were not part of the decision-making process can better understand the issues and outcomes. Although such measures may not fully dispel the sense of exclusivity or “otherness,” such striving will not go unnoticed.

The College also needs to have a well-defined and healthy relationship to the administrative branch of the school. In many schools, the administrative branch is quite distinct, but this was not always the case. During the early decades of Waldorf education in North America, many of the more experienced teachers had administrative responsibilities. This arose partially out of funding constraints but also out of the interpretation of Rudolf Steiner’s remarks regarding self-administration.

In recent decades, as schools have become larger, the internal and external pressures have increased, and administrative functions have grown more complex and time-consuming. Even if they are qualified, teachers rarely have enough time to deal with administrative tasks in the timely manner required. As a result, school administration—enrollment, marketing and development; personnel, finances, and facilities management—has become more professionalized, and schools have sought to hire administrators with experience or who have taken a specialized training for working in anthroposophical institutions.

Although it is becoming rarer nowadays for teachers to take on any major administrative duties, one thing has not changed: the need for all decisions in a Waldorf school to be made with

respect to the education of the children. Because teachers work most intimately with the students, because they experience the results of all decisions most directly, they are best equipped to keep the education central to any deliberations. And this, I think, is the College's role with respect to the administration: to insure that an educational perspective permeates all the non-educational aspects of the school.

In order to achieve this goal, I think that College members should be involved—to the appropriate degree—in all areas of administrative work in a school. This involvement may take the form of actual performance of or assistance with administrative functions; or the College's involvement may be mostly representational. Representation in administration works in two directions: toward the College and from the College. A College member needs to be involved in administrative functions to the degree that she should be able properly to represent whatever is happening in administration to the rest of the College. The College member also needs to be able to represent the College's perspective to the person or people responsible for the administrative function. This insures that administrative functions will remain in the College's consciousness and that the College's perspectives will be taken into account in the performance of administrative tasks.

This representational relationship puts a special responsibility on the College and its members. The College needs to take the time to consider and to develop a perspective on the non-pedagogical areas of the school so that the College's view can be represented by the College member who is involved in that area. Whenever that representative is engaged in administrative work, she needs to remember that she is speaking not for herself but for the College. The College needs to make sure that it is not second-guessing those working in administration; rather, it is providing

perspectives that administrators may not have. This relationship also makes demands of administrators. They need to take the College perspective into account and determine whether and how it can find expression. If administrators truly work with the College rather than just keeping the College informed, the joint perspectives will fructify and strengthen the administrative work in the school.

Finally, the College needs to nurture a strong relationship with the Board of Trustees or Directors. It is important that both the Board and the College understand and respect their respective roles in the school. While the College has primary responsibility for the school's educational functions—its program and staffing—the Board has legal and fiduciary responsibility for the school. This means that the Board is accountable to the state in which the school is incorporated. This is a weighty responsibility, and it needs to be recognized and respected, for Board members are legally responsible for upholding the school's bylaws and for making sure that the school operates according to all relevant laws and regulations.

The College works with the Board in two major ways: by having representatives on the Board and by participating in Board committees. A Board benefits from having College representatives who can serve as a conduit between the two groups. It is important that there be more than one representative because it allows both the Board and the College to work more objectively. I think that more than two representatives is unnecessary, however, and may tip the balance in a Board. The Board needs to be a counterbalance to the College in a school, and it cannot do so if it has too many College representatives.

The perspectives of the Board and College should create a dynamic balance between the spiritual and the earthly. The College strives to bring a spiritual perspective to earthly matters,

but it could easily ignore the realities that it faces. The Board works to bring an earthly perspective to the spiritual aspects of the school—especially the program and staffing—but it could easily approach these from an overly materialistic viewpoint. Both groups need to recognize their inherent one-sidedness and value each other's ability to balance that one-sidedness so that the school can stay poised between the realms of matter and spirit.

I think that every committee of the Board should include a College member who can make sure that the committee's work is represented in the College and that the College's perspective is represented in the committee. The College member can help the committee keep in mind the importance of the education of the children and can help the College work in ways that are most supportive of the committee. Ideally, neither the Board nor the College needs to be the primary executor of tasks within a school, but they both need to provide the vision, the direction, and the oversight to get tasks done. In my experience, this works best if individuals and committees receive and execute mandates from the Board or the College, leaving the larger groups to focus on the big picture.

A person who joins the College of Teachers takes on a special role: College Ambassador. As an ambassador, the person is responsible to represent the College in all of his or her relationships with other individuals and groups in the school and beyond. This representation involves speaking for the College and listening for the College. If College members are able to bring what they hear and experience back to the College, then the College will remain well-informed. If College members speak clearly on behalf of the College, then the College stands less chance of being misperceived and misunderstood. In a larger sense, College members are also ambassadors to and from

the spiritual world. They have the opportunity to perceive and give voice to spiritual impulses so that the College can be more effective in bringing spiritual impulses into earthly form.

Working with mandates in the College of Teachers

The College of Teachers is mostly a deliberative body. It strives to address matters from a spiritual as well as a material perspective, and its value is primarily in its wisdom rather than its capacity to act. There are certainly times when the College as a whole must act, but usually the will of the College will be executed by College members who have been given mandates.

The word “mandate” comes from the Latin verb *mandare* which comes from *manus* (hand) and *dare* (to give). A mandate literally means that a matter is put into someone’s hands. This has a deeper meaning than at first glance. When something is put into someone’s hands, the impulses of the head and heart are carried over into the will. According to Rudolf Steiner, our hands are the part of us that makes us most human, because our hands are free to create, to work, to help others. Therefore, when something is “handed over,” it is with the implication that the person to whom it is handed should humanize the task and do her best to make it serve the ends for which it was intended.

I think that mandates should have the gesture expressed by Michelangelo in his painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel of God creating Adam. In that fresco, God, surrounded by the heavenly host, reaches out his hand toward Adam’s hand. Their two hands do not touch but are in intimate relationship to one another. Just like this painting, which shows a spiritual impulse passing from God to man, we should receive the impulse of a mandate as gently and divinely as Adam received the breath of life from his Creator. When we receive this impulse, we are then empowered to exercise our godly selves by doing good deeds.

Rudolf Steiner began *The College Founding* by referring to the relationship that teachers need to have with “the spiritual powers in whose service and in whose name each one of us must work.” These terms “in whose service” and “in whose name” each of us must work characterize the essence of a mandate. A mandate is the bestowal of trust to someone who fully recognizes and honors the relationship that this trust affirms. One needs to be worthy of receiving a mandate, and one needs to perform the mandate with a sense of service. Each school will determine how best to work with mandates, but there are four principles that I believe hold true in all situations. These principles are freedom, responsibility, trust, and reflection.

A mandate should be given in a spirit of *freedom* to the person or group best suited to execute it. Ideally, a person should not volunteer for a mandate; rather, having indicated a willingness to serve, the person should be recognized by his or her peers as the one to whom the mandate should be given. When we execute a mandate, we face a paradox: We must act as individuals but we are embodying and expressing the impulse of a group. This is why nurturing the group’s identity and consciousness are so important to the College. Each member of the College needs to speak and listen with a collective voice and ear so that he or she can truly represent the group.

With freedom comes *responsibility*. The person who receives the mandate is responsible for carrying out the mandate to the best of her ability. She is responsible for executing the will of the group to the best of her understanding. She is responsible for keeping the group informed about the mandate to the degree that the group has requested. The group also has responsibility: It needs to make the terms of the mandate clear so that the mandated individual knows exactly what is expected of her, and it needs to give the individual the necessary background for

executing the mandate. If the mandate holder is to execute the will of the group, she needs to know where the group stands on the matters at hand.

A mandate is an expression of *trust*. The mandate holder has been chosen because he has been deemed suitable to execute the will of the group. By giving a mandate, the group affirms its trust in the individual's judgment and capacities. If the group has done its work, the mandate holder will have a full picture of where the group stands on the issue. Once the mandate holder sets about performing the task, the group needs to trust him to do it without any more involvement unless the mandate holder asks for input or help. Involvement or interference by the group undermines the trust that has been expressed in the mandate holder, and it undermines the trust that the mandate holder has in the group. Though it is difficult not to meddle, the group needs to recognize that it cannot and should not be involved in the execution of its many mandates, for involvement would prevent it from performing more important duties.

Mandates require *reflection*. The mandate should stipulate when the group will review the tasks that have been mandated. Depending on the task, these reflections could happen part-way through its execution and at its completion. Reviews need to be handled in such a way that the group recognizes what went well and expresses what could go better in similar circumstances in the future. A good review focuses on the deeds and not the doer. It should be objective enough that everyone can learn what needs to be learned. If reviews deteriorate into critiques of the mandate holders, people will be much less willing to take up mandates for the group in the future.

Working with mandates requires a degree of maturity in an institution. It is a form that demands much from the group giving the mandate and from the individual receiving it. A new College

will need to develop a mandating process slowly and carefully; an older College may need periodically to review and renew its processes to make sure that they are truly serving the school.

Destiny and karmic relationships

As the ego of the school, the College of Teachers is responsible for working with the destiny of the school and for the karma that it creates. What is the difference between destiny and karma? I think of *destiny* as the life we weave with the threads that stretch back to our past lives—the karma we created as it expresses itself in the present. I think of *karma* as the life we will weave with the threads that reach into our future—the destiny we will bring to our next lifetime.

Our destiny gives us the possibility of fulfilling the karma and realizing the intentions that we formed after our previous life. Our karma determines what we will need to confront in our next life as a result of what we have done during our current life journey. Destiny is not immutable, because in the course of our lives we encounter new people, circumstances, and events. What arises out of our destined and new encounters forms the basis for our karma for lifetimes to come. Recognizing that our lives are a mixture of effects of the past and causes of the future gives us a valuable perspective on the present.

As colleagues we are linked by our past karma—our destiny—and through our current relationships and work together, we create future karma. This perspective needs to inform how a College hires, evaluates, and makes decisions about retaining or dismissing employees. Because such functions are fraught with karmic consequences, it is imperative that a College be scrupulously professional in executing these functions. While the procedural or functional aspects of personnel processes and decisions are relatively straightforward, what about the spiritual

aspects? I will confine myself to a few general principles, for these are matters that each school needs to work out for itself.

When hiring, evaluating, or making decisions about a colleague, the College needs to determine whether the person truly belongs at the school. This was expressed by Rudolf Steiner in the meeting of July 30, 1920, when he said, “The Faculty should consist of those who originally were part of the school and those who came later but who we wish had participated in the course last year.”

The kind of discernment that allows a College to make such determinations requires that its members work from their egos and their higher selves, not their sympathies and antipathies. One way to take a higher view is to consider the colleague in terms of the criteria for College membership. While College membership may not be everyone’s destiny, the criteria for membership identify the qualities necessary to work effectively in a Waldorf school. The College can therefore consider whether the person has or is developing the competence and qualities to be confirmed in her work. Has she committed, or is she likely to commit, to the school for the foreseeable future? Does the person have the integrity and capacity to uphold the College’s processes? And, most importantly, what is the person’s relationship to anthroposophy? Has she given any indication—or has she already found—that this is her life’s path? While many other questions may need to be answered, posing such fundamental questions will help a College to make decisions that have karmic implications.

Colleagues are not the only ones who are linked by past karma and common destiny: Students and parents and members of the school community are also likely to have karmic relationships with us and with each other. Such relationships can bring great blessings but can also be the source of difficulties. Because

accepting a family into the school has karmic implications, the College of Teachers needs to be especially conscious of who joins and who leaves—or is forced to leave—the school.

Children and parents who present challenges are often the ones who have the strongest connections to the school. While they may have come to the school to fulfill their destiny, it may not be possible to do so. This can be extremely difficult for a family to accept: They have come to their destined place, yet the opportunity to fulfill their destiny is being thwarted. In these situations, parents often feel betrayed because the very people with whom they have come to work out their destiny refuse to do so. In these cases, we should remember that destiny does not compel us; it provides us with opportunities. As free human beings we can decide whether to seize these opportunities or to leave them for another time or another lifetime.

When severing bonds with children or families who have a deep relationship to the school, we must make sure to show how much we respect and honor their destiny impulses, even if we cannot fulfill them. Turning a blind eye or a deaf ear to someone who is seeking to be seen and heard can be experienced as a karmic repudiation. We have an obligation to see and listen as fully and compassionately as we can, but we must still act in accordance with our most important responsibility, which is to the school.

When it makes life-changing decisions, the College creates karma for the future. This means that after death, each of the members of a College of Teachers will encounter and experience the effects of the decisions and deeds done by the College. Each person will extract different lessons from these experiences, and these lessons will help to shape the person's intentions and resolves for the next lifetime. We therefore need to take our responsibilities as members of the College with the utmost

seriousness, for everything we do has repercussions that extend beyond this lifetime.

Whenever we have to make difficult karmic decisions, the College is well served by seeking the help of spiritual beings. Our Angels, the Archangels, the Being of the School, The Good Spirit of the Time, and perhaps even The Lord of Karma himself, are all ready to help us. We can also turn to the members of the school community who have died, for they are eager to stay connected with the school. This connection not only helps us; it is a gift to the souls of the dead, for when we allow them to help us in our work, we may be providing them with the opportunity to fulfill aspects of their destiny that may have remained unfulfilled on earth.

As we know, the path of our lives is difficult, full of pitfalls and stumbling blocks, but we are not alone on this path. This fact is illustrated by a prose poem by Mary Stevenson called "Footprints in the Sand."

One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord. Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky. In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand. Sometimes there were two sets of footprints, other times there was one only.

This bothered me because I noticed that during the low periods of my life, when I was suffering from anguish, sorrow or defeat, I could see only one set of footprints, so I said to the Lord, "You promised me, Lord, that if I followed you, you would walk with me always. But I have noticed that during the most trying periods of my life, there has only been one set of footprints in the sand. Why, when I needed you most, have you not been there for me?"

The Lord replied, “The years when you have seen only one set of footprints, my child, is when I carried you.”

This story affirms that we are never alone; we are carried by spiritual beings through the hardest parts of our lives. Our spiritual companions are there when we need them the most. This is a true picture, one that affirms how we can count on the spiritual world when we are in need. But this picture is missing something: the many other footsteps left by all of our human companions—those who travel with us, those who raise their hands to bear us, those who open their hearts to console us, who never leave our side. No matter how alone we may feel in the darkest moments of our journey, we are not alone; we never walk alone.

ENDNOTE

- 1 Herbert Hahn. “How The Waldorf School Arose from the Threefold Social Movement” in *A Man Before Others: Rudolf Steiner Remembered*. George Adams, et al., Forest Row, UK: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1993, p. 69.

Chapter 8

The College Meeting

IN ORDER FOR THE COLLEGE to serve as the ego of the school, we need to strengthen our individual egos so that we can work to develop our higher selves. As we strengthen our egos, we need to be watchful, for as travelers on the path of righteousness, we can easily become self-righteous, and as followers of truth, we can easily become narrow-minded. To find and keep our balance, we need to make sure that we listen for the voice of the spirit.

When the prophet Elijah climbed Mount Horeb to stand in the presence of God, the Lord passed by, and a great strong wind rent the mountains and broke rocks in pieces, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind came an earthquake, and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the earthquake or the fire. After the fire came a still, small voice. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle, for that was where God was—in that still small voice. The spiritual world doesn't reveal itself to us in grand visions; it reveals itself in a still, small voice that comes to us when we least expect it. Our meditative life can prepare us to listen for it.

Working together in the College of Teachers

Just as we meditate in order to open ourselves up to the spirit and to our higher selves so that we can act in accordance with our destiny, the College meeting is a collaborative, meditative-practical endeavor by which we strive to become conscious of and express the impulses of The Being of the School. A meeting

of the College of Teachers is more than a meeting; it is the opportunity to engage with our colleagues in a heightened manner on a spiritual plane. This doesn't come naturally; it can be achieved only through conscious effort, so we need to structure our meetings so they help us achieve this sense of community and communion.

In my experience, College meetings are most productive when the parts are carefully prepared and when everyone at the meeting understands the function of each part. I recommend that College meetings have two parts: first part – preparation for work; second part – working on the issues. Each of these parts benefits from engaging us fully, so I propose the following meeting structure:

First Part: Gesture of preparation and focus

1. Preparation prior to the meeting – ego
2. Entrance – physical
3. Opening verse – etheric
4. Check-in – astral
5. Meditation, artistic work, or study – ego

Second Part: Gesture of engagement and fulfillment

1. Working with the issues – ego
2. Review – astral
3. Closing verse – etheric
4. Departure – physical
5. Follow-up – ego

First part of the College meeting

We can't just enter a College meeting and launch right into the work at hand. If we do, we will just bring our everyday selves to our tasks and make decisions based primarily on earthly considerations. College meetings need extra preparation so that

we can make decisions that also take the spiritual into account. It is difficult to leave our work behind, to put our daily concerns behind us. It is a challenge to overcome the individualization that we need for our work during the day and to allow ourselves to become part of the group. The first part of the College meeting is designed to develop the spirit of unity that is so necessary to our work. If that sense of unity becomes strong enough, it will help us bridge our individual perspectives and viewpoints and allow a spiritual viewpoint to emerge.

Preparation

As teachers we know how powerfully the environment affects students. Those who work in early childhood know the degree to which the classroom *is* the curriculum. The learning environment is no less important in later grades, but it recedes in our consciousness as we deal with the other issues that get pushed into the forefront. But the background—the physical space of the classroom—continues to affect everything that happens within it.

No less than children, we are deeply affected by the environment in which we meet and work. A prepared space engenders different feelings and thoughts than an unprepared space. A space that shows care and has touches of beauty is more conducive to social harmony and to openness in our thinking. That is why it is so important that someone take responsibility for preparing the room for our meetings.

The College meeting also needs to be prepared in terms of its form and content. In order for a meeting to achieve its goals, someone, or a group, needs to form the agenda, make sure that presentations are ready, have the minutes of the previous meetings on hand, etc. Even though a College meeting is a meeting of peers, someone needs to serve as the ego for the

group, and one of the functions of that person is to plan and prepare for the meeting so that the meeting achieves its goals.

Finally, each member of the College needs to prepare him- or herself for the meeting by reflecting on the previous meeting and considering the topics on the agenda. We have all experienced the difference between responding to something that we have considered previously and reacting to something in the moment. Ideally, a College meeting will have few reactions because its members will have prepared themselves. The less prepared we are, the more tightly we tend to hold onto our own opinions. Preparation therefore serves the group because well-prepared College members are able to consider each other's thoughts with greater openness and to allow something greater than themselves to manifest.

Entrance

The doorway to the room where we meet is a true threshold. How we cross that threshold determines how we receive what others have to offer and how we are received. The physical step that we take as we cross the threshold into the room signifies our commitment to a different way of being and working. Once we have crossed the threshold, we are no longer our everyday selves but celebrants of and participants in a human-divine service. In *Awakening to Community* Rudolf Steiner says that we can prepare ourselves to awaken in soul and spirit when “we feel that the very doorway we reverently enter on our way to an anthroposophical assemblage is consecrated by the common anthroposophical purpose being served in the room it leads to, no matter how mundane the setting.”¹ If we enter the College meeting room as if we were entering a temple, we can be confident that spiritual beings will be more apt to participate in whatever we do in that temple.

Verse

If the material preparation and the threshold express something of the physical nature of our College meeting, the rhythm of the meeting and the opening verse express something of the etheric. We work in the etheric realm when we work with rhythm, repetition, and ritual. In the spiritual world there is no time, only rhythm, so if we do things in a rhythmical manner, spiritual beings can count on these events and can participate. If the College meets at the same time each week, the rhythm that it establishes is perceived by spiritual beings.

The verse that opens the College meeting should be a clarion call to the meeting's members on both sides of the threshold. The verse provides a moment when the earthly members of the College can feel united with those who have passed but who are still interested in the earthly work. The verse can invoke the spiritual beings who seek to help us in our work. Some Colleges use the *College Imagination* as their opening verse because it expresses the truths behind the College work. If that is done, it should be clear to those hearing it that the *Imagination* is not a mantram but an image, and the more vividly the members picture it, the more powerfully it can act. While hearing the *College Imagination* at the meeting can inspire the colleagues who have gathered together, Rudolf Steiner gave this imagination to us so that we could work with it on our own on a daily basis.²

Check-in

An important part of shedding our everyday selves is to let others know how we are in the moment and how we got to where we are. Check-in—or any activity that performs the same function—allows us to experience the astral realm together. The astral realm is the realm of air, of feelings and sensations, of sympathy and antipathy. Just as the etheric realm joins us because

we all recite or listen to the same verse, the astral realm separates us because each of us has our own perceptions and feelings.

We need to strike a balance between unity and separation, between individual and group, in order to work effectively as a College, and check-in helps us achieve that balance. When College members say something about what is on their minds or in their hearts, they create soul bridges to their colleagues. During check-in, it is imperative that colleagues don't respond but just listen, listen with the ears of the soul to what lies behind our colleagues' words. When we refrain from responding we develop special powers, and these powers of restraint allow us to experience ourselves and each other on a new level.

Study, artistic work, or group contemplative activity

The culmination of the first part of the College meeting is some form of group work that does not directly relate to the issues that will be considered in the second half of the meeting but that will prepare us for the work we have to do. I have found that the three most effective types of activities are study, artistic work, and group meditative work.

Study: Anyone treading the path of anthroposophy confronts the question: How can I study and work with anthroposophy in a way that will serve both my inner and outer development? The answers are as varied as the individuals considering the question, but few of those personal answers translate into studying or working as a group. Studying in a group has many limitations, but it also has some advantages. On a thinking level, a group can help us get beyond our personal limitations, broadening and deepening our understanding. On a feeling level, a group can help us get beyond our sense of inadequacy or despair by affirming that our colleagues struggle too. On a willing level,

a group can help us be more disciplined and follow through with tasks.

Colleges have many different reasons for deciding to study, but the main result of study is to bring the members of the College together in an anthroposophical frame of mind so that they can be more open to the spirit when they do their work. The study is a form of preparation for the work to come. It is an invitation to spiritual beings, calling them to the task at hand.

In Lecture 6 of *Awakening to Community*, Rudolf Steiner said:

A real spiritual being must be present in a room where anthroposophy is being carried on, and this is a direct result of the way anthroposophical ideas are being absorbed. Divine powers are present in sense-perceptible form in the cultus celebrated on the physical plane. Our hearts and souls and attitudes must learn similarly to invoke the presence of a real spiritual being in a room where anthroposophy is being talked of. We must so attune our speaking, our feeling, our thinking, our impulses of will to a spiritual purpose, avoiding the pitfall of the abstract, that we can feel a real spiritual being hovering there above us, looking on and listening. We should divine a supersensible presence, invoked by our pursuit of anthroposophy.³

It is up to each College to decide whether and how it wishes to study. If it does, the following principles will help make the study more productive and satisfying.

- 1) Pick a text or topic that will be meaningful to the members and will benefit from being studied in a group.
- 2) Decide how the study should be led and give the leader(s) full support.

- 3) Agree on a realistic and manageable amount of preparatory work and commit to doing it.
- 4) Weave contemplative and artistic activities into the study time so that the material can be experienced and expressed in other ways.
- 5) Utilize the strengths and gifts of the individuals in the group to enhance the study.

Artistic work: Whether a College chooses to study, engage in artistic work, or pursue group contemplative exercises, the goal is the same: to develop a sense of the group and the individuals within it so that they can work together effectively on the issues during the second part of the meeting. The arts have a wonderful ability to call us to ourselves both as individuals and as a group. I think that the group arts—music, speech, and eurythmy—are more suitable for the College meeting because we have to work together to create a whole out of the disparate parts. If we decide to pursue the more individual arts—drawing, painting, and sculpture—we should try to include a group component into our work.

Some of the most rewarding artistic work I have done in College meetings is when the arts have been used to deepen the meditative or study content. For instance, in one of the Colleges I belonged to, we worked with the *College Imagination* through eurythmy, thereby experiencing the different gestures and movements of the higher beings physically, not just imaginatively. We also worked with one of the teachers' meditations in speech and were able to enter into the tonal and mantric aspects of the meditation much more fully.

In the Pedagogical Section Council, we worked on artistic exercises that transformed our thoughts about the material we were studying into form, line, or color. Sometimes we created together, for instance developing meandering forms out of

grains of rice. At other times we each worked alone, for instance, rendering in pastels the passages in the lecture that each of us had paraphrased. Then we arranged our drawings in order and looked for the visual relationships and progressions that corresponded to the flow of the ideas. As teachers we know how exciting and enlivening it can be to develop new powers of perception and new powers of expression through the arts. The arts warm our hearts and enlighten our heads. Every College meeting benefits from this truly human activity.

Group contemplative practice: In the last few years, it has become more accepted that a College of Teachers might decide to engage in group meditation or in contemplative exercises. This was not always so. When I began teaching in the early 1980s, meditation was considered a private and confidential matter, not to be discussed in a group, and certainly not to be practiced together. Even in private conversations it was often difficult to get more experienced anthroposophists to share their ideas or offer advice about meditation. This changed slowly as people such as Georg K hlew nd, Arthur Zajonc, Gertrude Reif Hughes, and Michael Lipson began to give meditation conferences and workshops. In these workshops, participants received instruction in meditation, and the group engaged in contemplative exercises together. There are now many books on anthroposophical meditation and the contemplative path.

Although the Colleges I have belonged to have not engaged in group contemplative practice on a regular basis, I recognize the value of this work. Over the years I have heard from many colleagues that their College meetings have been transformed by the inclusion of meditative exercises or contemplative time. Elan Leibner, one of my colleagues on the Pedagogical Section Council, who worked for many years at the Princeton Waldorf School, says:

In my own experience, a College that had struggled for years to overcome personality-driven conflicts and endless debate was transformed within a matter of weeks into a far more receptive and cogent leadership group once various forms of inner work were practiced during the opening segment of meetings. In my view this occurred because the shared substance of the opening segment was already uniting the individuals' higher capacities by the time discussion of school matters began. The College members had engaged in a demanding text or an exercise, had spent time reflecting on the content or the experience, and had dedicated themselves and their efforts toward the well-being of the school. A shift occurred in their consciousness and mood. The daily hubbub of teaching and the experience of interacting with people on the level of intellectual, informational consciousness had been replaced by a period of intentional dedication at the contemplative level. The ground was then prepared for a different kind of interaction.⁴

Elan Leibner's chapter in *Creating a Circle of Collaborative Spiritual Leadership*, from which this quote is taken, gives a clear description of how a College might engage in contemplative work. I encourage Colleges to work with such ideas and suggestions, for they will deepen the work of the group.

Second part of the College meeting

The second half of the College meeting mirrors the first, but it has an entirely different quality. The first part of the meeting has the gesture of preparation and focus; the second part of engagement and fulfillment. The first part of the College meeting is a process of leaving our earthly selves behind so that we are prepared to walk together in the world of spirit, while the

second part is a process of bringing the spiritual substance of our journey back down to earth so that it can find expression here. If we list the College meeting activities side by side, we can see these correspondences clearly.

<i>The College Meeting</i>		
<i>First Part</i>		<i>Second Part</i>
<i>Gesture of preparation and focus</i>		<i>Gesture of engagement and fulfillment</i>
Meditation, artistic work, study	(ego)	Working with the issues
Check-in	(astral)	Review
Opening Verse	(etheric)	Closing Verse
Entrance	(physical)	Departure
Preparation	ego working in the physical, etheric, and astral realms	Follow-up

Working with the issues

In my experience, a College works most effectively if it makes clear distinctions among the different stages of working with an issue. Where possible, I think that the following three stages should be included: presentation, discussion, and decision. The presentation has more of an etheric quality and calls on our clear thinking to penetrate the ideas. The discussion has more of an astral quality and calls on our refined feeling to weigh the issues carefully. The decision has more of an ego quality and calls on our wills to bring an impulse into the realm of action. The presentation calls on our powers of Imagination: We are asked to picture what is being presented. The discussion calls on our powers of Inspiration: We are asked to listen carefully to what

is being said. The decision calls on our powers of Intuition: We are asked to act morally. This threefold process ought to engage us fully as human beings and to result in good—or better—decisions.

Time can be our ally or our enemy, but time itself is not beneficent or malevolent—its power is determined by how we work with it. Time is a function of the ego, and as the ego of the school, the College has the responsibility to manage time wisely. The three stages that have been described utilize time to allow the College to perceive the issues clearly, consider them fully, and decide them with confidence. If the College follows this outline, its decisions are more likely to be well-founded and to meet the needs of the school. When the College rushes or tries to streamline this process, issues may be less well-penetrated, discussions may be contentious, and decisions may turn out not to be well-grounded. Nevertheless, sometimes time is a luxury that we cannot afford, and issues will arise that require an expedited process. I think that these three steps are still important, but they may need to be compressed into two meetings. Only in extremely urgent—or relatively minor—cases should a College bypass the gifts of the night to arrive at a decision. Because we interact during the night with the spiritual beings who care about our work, when we awaken, the fruits of those encounters can bring new perspectives, insights, or resolves. Whenever possible, we should not deprive ourselves of this opportunity.

However a College structures its work on the issues, it is essential that decisions and outcomes from previous meetings be accounted for in subsequent meetings so that the present and future are always connected to the past. This is part of our review and our preparation for the next meeting.

Review

Just as we bring ourselves to a meeting, it is important to take leave of the meeting by letting each other know something about what we think and how we feel about the meeting, and, through our reflection, to plant the seed for future meetings. This is the counterpart of the astral activity of the check-in, but if the meeting has been successful and worked its magic, the astrality will be refined. A review or check-out should be brief; it should not open new doors but rather have a seed quality, where substance is compressed and potentized.

Closing verse

The closing verse serves as the bookend to the opening verse. It should bring a sense of completion to what has occurred and establish a sense of continuity for the work to come. Some Colleges choose to use the same verse for opening and for closing, and I have experienced the value of working in this way. Even though the same words are spoken and heard, they can have a different gesture and a different meaning. The opening verse creates a sense of anticipation, of preparation; the closing verse a sense of gratitude and completion. The difference between saying and hearing should be considered when trying to decide whether the closing verse should be said by all the College members or by one, with the rest listening. There are advantages to having everyone say the opening verse together, because it instills a sense of joint purpose and will. When the closing verse is heard, there is a sense of reflection. After the closing verse has been said, it is good for there to be silence as everyone leaves. If the closing verse is followed by conversation, the mood that has been engendered by the College meeting is quickly dispelled.

Departure

The departure from the meeting room should have the same kind of reverent mood as the entrance. As we leave the place where something sacred occurred, it is important to do so in a mood of humility and gratitude. This is not the time for casual conversation, nor for continued discussion about College topics. In fact, a College should set clear parameters about whether and how conversations about what occurred in the meeting can take place. There is truth to the image of a door closing on everything that occurred in the College meeting space and the anticipation of that door opening for the next meeting.

Follow-up

Follow-up from the meeting needs to occur on several levels. The physical space needs to be cleared for whatever will happen next in that space. Remnants of the meeting—agendas, hand-outs, etc.—need to be collected. Then there is follow-up on the tasks that arise out of the College meeting. This requires that every member of the College fulfill his or her responsibilities. The wisest decisions may be undermined if follow-through is delayed or not communicated or executed properly. The follow-up demands that each College member work out of his or her own ego, radiating the ego quality of the College into the rest the school.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Rudolf Steiner. *Awakening to Community*. Spring Valley, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1975, p. 98.
- 2 For further thoughts about the *College Imagination*, please refer to chapter 5, p. 62.
- 3 Op. cit., Steiner, p. 99.
- 4 Elan Leibner. "Contemplative Work in the College Meeting," in Roberto Trostli, ed. *Creating a Circle of Collaborative Spiritual Leadership*. Chatham, NY: Waldorf Publications, 2014, p. 71.

Chapter 9

Founding a College

MOST WALDORF SCHOOLS in North America have a College that was founded when the school reached a certain level of maturity. This makes sense for many reasons, but it also poses a question: If a school does not have a College, how can spiritual beings commune with and draw nourishment from the Faculty's work together?

When should a school found the College of Teachers?

I think that the College should be established when a school is conceived or founded. Because the College is essential to the work of a Waldorf school, waiting until a school has reached a certain degree of maturity misses the opportunity of working with the spiritual powers right from the start. The College is the place where spiritual impulses can manifest in the school. I think that a school benefits from establishing that place from its inception so that it can benefit from the help of spiritual beings.

I don't think that having a College in a school should be a matter of maturity or readiness. Just as a young child's higher members are not yet fully present but can be nurtured, a school's College can be nurtured and helped to incarnate in a healthful and productive manner as the school grows and develops. This does not mean that a new or young College is ready to govern or manage a new school. Even a mature College may choose not to perform operational tasks. Rather, a College—young or mature—needs to make sure that the major decisions about the

school are permeated with the spirit, the goals and the values of the education. In the early years of a school, when the Board is engaged in many aspects of operations and management, the College has a special opportunity to develop the spiritual aspects of group work so that when it begins to shoulder more earthly tasks, the group will be strong enough to meet those challenges.

How do the spiritual beings participate in our work before there is a College? In the *College Imagination*, Rudolf Steiner described how each of us works with our Angel, who gives us strength. This work does not depend on a College. The work that we do with our Angels is taken up by the Archangels, who work together to create a chalice of courage. Even without a College, the Archangels can perform this task, but if there is no College, it may be harder for the group of teachers to experience this and to feel unified by it. The Archai allow a drop of light to fill the chalice of courage. This light serves as a beacon for the group of teachers, giving them the wisdom to take up their tasks. If there is no College, I think that this light may not be experienced as fully.

Whether a school founds its College early on or later in its biography, its members must take up the challenge of working together productively with one another and with spiritual beings. Only by meeting this challenge can the College fulfill its task to serve as a bridge and a balance between the worlds of matter and spirit.

Preparation

Founding a College is a momentous step in a school's history, a turning point in the school's destiny, and it requires careful preparation. Although the exact forms of this preparation will vary from school to school, there are certain practices that will support every school.

A group that wishes to form a College will benefit from working with a qualified advisor, who can help them identify the issues, suggest sound processes, and answer questions. The Pedagogical Section Council of the School of Spiritual Science in North America specializes in advising schools regarding the forming of Colleges.

The founding of a College should begin with an imagination of what the school is and what it is striving to become. In the preparatory meetings, members of the group need to share their individual imaginations. Out of the ensuing discussion, a group imagination will begin to emerge. Working to arrive at a group imagination also creates an opening for spiritual beings to be heard and for their views to be shared.

How this initiative group forms and meets is critical to the success of the College founding, and ultimately, to its work. In our times, when people are very suspicious of secrecy and sensitive to exclusivity, it is vital that the initiative group make its intentions clear and share the results of its work; otherwise the College will be hampered by suspicion, doubt, and even fear. Those who schedule an initial meeting must make sure that everyone who might be interested in the College is informed and invited to attend.

Who should be invited? Anyone who has worked with the impulse of the school in the past and in the present and who might be interested. Depending on the age of the school, this might be a small or quite a large group. But one need not worry that it will be an unwieldy number. People will decide for themselves whether they wish to join this new impulse in the school. Inclusion should be the guiding principle during the first part of the preparatory stage because even if people do not join in the preparatory work, they should know about it so that they can support it. Later in the preparatory work, criteria for

College membership will be reviewed, but at this time, these criteria should not be considered or applied.

The initial meeting is, in fact, the first College meeting, so it should be conducted with a degree of ceremony, because ceremony elevates us and helps us transcend our everyday earthly selves. That means that someone, or a few people, will need to take up the preparation for and guidance of that meeting. Such self-appointment should not be taken up with any sense of authority but as a gesture of service.

What should occur during the first meetings?

The desire to form a College usually begins with a yearning for change or growth within a school. In the preparatory meetings people should have an opportunity to share these yearnings. Listening to each other's hopes and dreams builds community and develops a shared sense of purpose. People should be invited to share their views of the school with positivity, for if the initial meetings focus on complaints, they will end up being divisive rather than unifying. That doesn't mean that a blind eye should be turned to the school's problems and issues; rather, problems can be acknowledged and the way to work on them can be indicated.

The initial meetings should allow the participants to share their views of what a College is and why the school would benefit from having one. There may be widely divergent ideas about what a College is, and participants should expect, be prepared for—and welcome—disagreement. This disagreement will affirm the need to study the question fully and to come up with answers that will be right for the school at this moment in its biography. People may be more united in their ideas about the benefits of having a College. Although everyone may experience the desire or need for a College differently, the very fact that this desire is held in common fosters a sense of unity.

If the initial meetings are well-conducted, the participants will get to know each other more fully and will experience the best in one another. Seeing each other in a positive light is essential to the future work of the College, and the initial meetings can already strengthen this capacity. As participants get to know each other better, they will also begin to sense whether or not they are connected to the others in the group and to the impulse to form a College. The person who begins to feel “this is not for me” needs to be met with just as much warmth and acceptance as the person who recognizes “this *is* for me.” If the people attending the initial meetings generate a feeling of exclusion, the future College will be weakened. If everyone’s feelings and decisions are honored and respected, the College will be strengthened.

In the initial meetings two questions need to be answered: “Is there a true impulse among us to form a College?” and “Is this the right time for us to form the College?” People should strive to approach these questions with open minds and hearts. If the answer to either question is “no,” the group should bring their considerations to a formal end and disband. If this is done in a positive way, it will be that much easier to consider these questions anew at another time. If the initial meetings answer “yes,” then the process enters the next stage: preparation for forming the College.

Preparatory work

The goals of preparatory work are to

- connect with the founding impulse of The Waldorf School;
- learn about the biography of the school;
- begin to understand what a College is and what it does;
- get to know one another in new ways.

Connecting with the founding impulse of The Waldorf School

A school that decides to form a College of Teachers benefits from connecting itself to the founding impulses of Waldorf education and to the founding of the College of Teachers at the first Waldorf School. The founding of The Waldorf School in Stuttgart was not just the founding of that particular school, but the founding of the archetype of Waldorf education. The establishment of the original College of Teachers was not just the confirmation of the group of teachers chosen by Rudolf Steiner. It was a mystery act that can—and should—be reenacted by each group of teachers who commits to working together in a particular way.

One effective way to connect with the founding impulse of The Waldorf School is to read Johannes Tautz's *The Founding of the First Waldorf School*. Dr. Tautz was a history teacher at the Stuttgart Waldorf School from 1945 to 1974. In 1982 Dr. Tautz met with a group of teachers from North America to share his research into the founding of the first Waldorf school. Dr. Tautz's lectures presented a vivid picture of the College founding, the preparatory course, and the work in the school during the early years. In these lectures he gave suggestions of how to work with the *College Imagination* and how to apply it to the challenges of working together in a school.

Connecting with the history of the school

Founding a College of Teachers is a major step in the history of a school, and it is important that this step be seen in the context of the school's founding and biography. If a College is formed while the school is still relatively young, people will still be able to recall the birth of the school and its earliest years. If the school is older, there will be fewer recollections but there may be written accounts.

The group preparing for the formation of the College needs to determine how best to work with the school's biography. Should this be done in one or several intensive sessions or spread out over a period of months? Is it most helpful to hear from individuals or from groups of people? Is there reading material? If so, how should it be used? Such questions should be answered in light of the goal: to get to know the school better so that everyone in the preparatory group will feel more closely aligned with the school as an organism.

Every school, like every person, has a distinctive character and personality, and its history will reveal aspects of that personality. It is important that the members of the preparatory group look for the characteristic features of their school because these will continue to manifest in the future. Every school goes through growing pains; every school has difficulties. When reviewing the school's history, people may feel judgmental and even superior or self-righteous: They would never make those mistakes now! This is likely to be true; they will make different mistakes. It is important that a school, just like a child, or anyone for that matter, be considered with warmth and acceptance.

If a school's founders are still alive, they should be invited to participate in some of the preparatory work and be present at the founding ceremony. To be the founder of an organization is a unique experience, and those who have been privileged to be in this position have much to offer. Including a school's founders in the next major step that the school is preparing to take creates historical continuity, and it affirms the spiritual fact that founders, like parents, never really let go of their children. Just as parents continue to care for their children long after they have left home, the school's founders continue—like Rudolf Steiner and the first Waldorf School—to consider the school “a child of care.”

Begin to understand what a College is and what it does

The preparatory group will be well served by considering the ideas presented in the first part of this book and by determining how those ideas relate to the school at this moment in its biography. Decisions will need to be made about how the College will be constituted, how it will fit into the governance structure in the school, and what its responsibilities will be. Ultimately these clear statements will need to be incorporated into the school's bylaws and table of operations. Because the formation of the College will change the formal and informal relationships within the school, these decisions will need to be arrived at in concert, especially with the Board of Trustees. The kind of relationship that is established between the preparatory group and the Board is likely to persist once the College is founded, so care must be taken to make sure that the relationship is healthy and sound.

Getting to know one another in new ways

If colleagues are going to work together in a new way, they need to get to know each other better, and one of the best ways to get to know each other is through biography work. There are many different approaches to biography work, and I do not consider myself qualified to recommend one rather than another, but the most important elements of the biography work for the forming of a College are 1) giving others a sense of who you are and how you came to this moment in your life; and 2) sharing your path of self-development and your relationship to anthroposophy. Because one's relationship to anthroposophy will be a criterion for College membership, it is important that one's colleagues get a glimpse of how one is treading this moral and spiritual path.

Unless trust has been established, people will not be able to share intimate details of their lives and their spiritual striving,

so it is vital that the working of the preparatory group engender trust. One of the ways to engender trust is to establish a conscious commitment to confidentiality. This will be necessary for the College work, so it is worth beginning to work in this way right from the start. The word “confidentiality” stems from the Latin words *con* which means “with” and *fidere* which means “trust.” When we pledge ourselves to confidentiality, we commit ourselves to trusting fully, to being truly faithful. When a group upholds this pledge, they create a vessel which can hold all that is shared. When someone betrays this pledge, the vessel springs a leak, and it affects the entire group. At my current school, prior to each meeting we reiterate the code of conduct to which we have all agreed. This code includes our commitment to confidentiality. Affirming this commitment anew each time helps us in the difficult moments when we later feel the need to share something from the meeting in order to digest it more fully.

Another way to get to know each other better is through artistic work. We all know as teachers why artistic work is so valuable for children: It helps them feel fully alive; it nurtures their feeling life; and it gives them an opportunity to experience and express beauty. In addition, the social arts create community and work dynamically with the polarity between individual and group. The benefits derived from working with the arts are equally important for us adults. Meetings that contain artistic work feel more worthwhile and are more productive than those that don’t. I especially encourage colleagues to work with eurythmy as part of their College preparatory work because eurythmy is a social art that brings us closer to the spirit, and that is what the College will be attempting; to work together in ways that allow us to find our way to the spirit.

Strengthening the inner work

As teachers, we know that meditation helps us with our work. It focuses our thinking, strengthens our will, and balances our feelings. It aligns us with our higher selves and attunes us to the voice of the spirit. Meditation helps us take the stumbles of life in stride and fosters trust in the guidance of the spiritual world. These gifts bestowed by an earnest meditative practice will serve us as College members.

The preparatory meetings provide an excellent forum for speaking about the inner life of the teacher. Although many consider meditation a purely personal and private matter, there are benefits to considering it in a group. We can learn much about meditation from one another. We can learn much about one another by speaking about this delicate topic. More important than learning, however, are the bonds that are forged when we share our struggles and our sense of inadequacy and unworthiness. These bonds stand us in good stead in our work as College colleagues.

A preparatory group might decide that it prefers to study inner work rather than to discuss the topic directly. This may have the benefit of placing everyone on a more equal footing, because we can all feel united as students. Although such a study can take many directions, but I think it should be about the most basic aspects of meditation such as those outlined in the beginning of Rudolf Steiner's *How to Know Higher Worlds* or the six basic exercises outlined in *Guidance in Esoteric Training* or *An Outline of Esoteric Science*. If the group wishes to consider other authors, I recommend the works of Jörgen Smit, Georg Kühlewind, and Arthur Zajonc.

People have very different reactions to discussions about the inner life. Some are comfortable; others are not. Some will reveal themselves; others will hide. Some will express themselves with

a sense of authority or expertise; others will say little, perhaps because they are too inexperienced or feel inadequate. If the discussions are going to achieve their goal—to bring a group together—the participants need to muster an extra degree of self-awareness and sensitivity to others. College work will demand that we be interested in and open to one another, but these qualities take time to develop, and the preparatory process must give them the time they need.

Once the College is formed, the group will begin to work with the *College Imagination* and perhaps with the *Teachers' Meditations*. Working meditatively as a group unifies and strengthens the College work, making the group more receptive to the spiritual world. I think that there should be no expectation of working meditatively as a group during the preparatory stage of the College, but studying or discussing the inner life of the teacher will bring blessings to the group and the individuals who comprise it.

Final stages

The College charter

During the final stage of preparation, a College charter should be created. This charter identifies the College's role and delineates how it will fit into the structure of the school; it should also describe the processes for joining and leaving the College.

During the preparatory stage, those who are forming the College will have considered what a College is and what it does. These questions may have been approached from many viewpoints—historical, philosophical, comparative, and practical. Now the questions need to be answered specifically with respect to the school. These answers form the basis for the College charter.

While a school should create its own College charter entirely specific to its circumstances, I recommend referring to charters from schools that have a well-functioning College of Teachers to get a sense of what should be included. The mentor working with the school should also have an opportunity to review a draft of the charter to see whether there are glaring omissions or unrealistic or impractical aspects.

Because the College changes the governance of the school, its charter needs to be reviewed by members of the Board of Trustees to make sure that the College's and the Board's roles and responsibilities are clearly delineated. If necessary, the corporation's bylaws may also have to be changed.

Working with the criteria for College membership

Up until this point, members of the preparatory group have participated in the work of forming a College out of their interest. The inclusive gesture of the group may have attracted current and former teachers, administrative staff, and perhaps current or former Board members or parents. Not all of these will be appropriate to serve on the College, and there needs to be a process by which members of the preparatory group determine who can become a College member. This process needs to be handled with great sensitivity and tact because people are apt to feel that they have been judged unworthy.

I believe that Colleges should use or adapt the criteria developed by the Pedagogical Section Council of the School of Spiritual Science in North America which are described in Chapter 4. As they study and discuss these criteria, members of the preparatory group can determine how best to apply them in a way that will not result in dissension or distrust. The mentor can also be asked for suggestions, since sometimes advice from a neutral source is received differently than decisions made by those involved in a process.

I think that for the formation of the College, prospective members should select themselves rather than be selected. That way they are considering their own suitability rather than being judged by their peers. This will allow the College founders to begin their work on an equal basis without any sense of hierarchy. In the future, the College may take it upon itself to evaluate whether a colleague meets the criteria for membership, but the founding members should be answerable only to themselves, to Rudolf Steiner, and to the Being of their school.

The founding ceremony

The founding of a College of Teachers is not only a special moment in the school's biography, it is also a re-enactment of the founding of the first College of Teachers, a festive moment in the Cosmic Order. If a school views the founding of its College in this way, it will recognize the need to plan the ceremony so that it can be a true ritual.

As described in Chapter 5, a ritual derives its community-building power because it allows us to re-experience on earth what we experienced with our colleagues in the spiritual world before birth. If the founding ceremony is viewed as an opportunity to strengthen our cosmic and karmic bonds, it will be more than a meaningful ceremony or celebration. This can be accomplished by taking into account those who were involved with the school who have crossed the threshold and by invoking the spiritual beings who are interested in our work.

I believe that a College founding also benefits by incorporating the elements of the original *Founding Ceremony*. These elements include the following:

1. reflecting on the connection created between our activity and the spiritual worlds;

2. sharing the *College Imagination* “as a kind of prayer to those powers who stand behind us with Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition as we take up this task”;
3. recognizing the importance of our work and that this school fulfills something special;
4. viewing the founding of the College as a ceremony held within the Cosmic Order;
5. thanking that Good Spirit of Our Time and his earthly helpers who have made it possible for the school to exist;
6. seeing each other as human beings brought together by karma to do this work;
7. affirming one’s commitment to teaching and to working with the spiritual powers.

The elements have been listed in the order in which they appeared in the original *College Founding*, but if a school decides to incorporate them, it needs to determine what order makes the most sense to them. I suggest working with these elements in the following order, bracketed or interspersed with artistic offerings.

1. proclaiming the importance of the founding ceremony;
2. thanking the spiritual beings and the earthly companions who have made this moment possible;
3. affirming the importance of the school and of the work;
4. recognizing the karmic bonds that unite all those who work in the school;
5. acknowledging our relationship to the spiritual beings who guide our work;
6. reading the *College Imagination*;
7. declaring the colleagues’ commitment to the work at hand.

I believe that everyone who has an interest in the well-being of the school should be invited to the founding ceremony. If the students are not invited, they should be told about the founding at an assembly or gathering. If the founding ceremony is followed by a festive gathering with refreshments, the group planning it should think carefully how the gathering can complement the ceremony.

The founding of the College is a defining moment in a school's history, and it warrants and evokes dedication and commitment. Every school has a unique identity that it expresses throughout its biography. The formation and founding of the College of Teachers is a potent expression of the school's identity and can be a truly festive moment in the life of the school.

Conclusion

Two weeks after the Foundation Course, Rudolf Steiner reminded the teachers:

Among the Faculty, we must certainly carry within us the knowledge that we are not here for our own sakes, but to carry out the divine cosmic plan. We should always remember that when we do something, we are actually carrying out the intentions of the gods, that we are, in a certain sense, the means by which that streaming down from above will go out into the world. We dare not for one moment lose the feeling of the seriousness and dignity of our work.¹

What do the gods want? What do they will? How can we serve them? Rudolf Steiner laid out the basic principles in the first lecture of the Foundations course when he said that every cultural epoch has its tasks and that education would help our epoch fulfill its tasks.

Our epoch began in the early 15th century and will end in the late 36th century. What are the tasks of this epoch? To bridge the duality between physical and spiritual life. This duality has been ever more apparent during the past 600 years, when we have seen the flourishing of intellectualism and sense-bound thinking; the spread of materialism and the development of science; and the emphasis on technology and processes that will allow us

to master the physical world. All these point to the primacy of physical life during our time.

We have also seen the spiritual life expressing itself during this epoch in the development of our higher selves—especially our capacity to recognize truth, beauty and goodness—and a deepened striving to realize ideals such as freedom, equality, and justice. The consciousness soul, which will develop during this epoch, allows us to express our unique individuality, and it inspires us to join with others in groups based not on family, nation, or religion, but on shared ideals. During our epoch, society will become ever more cosmopolitan; ethical individualism will flourish; and relationships will take on a sacramental quality.

Waldorf education was brought to earth to serve humanity during this epoch. It strives to prepare humanity for a better future by helping human beings develop their spiritual heritage in the context of the material world.

As teachers and schools, we often fall short of realizing our ideals, and when we do, it is natural to question them and fall back on old ways of thinking and working. During the past decades this has happened to schools as they have increasingly been forced to choose between their ideals and the realities of modern life. But Rudolf Steiner exhorted us to change our thinking and to develop new ways of working that take the spirit into account. Waldorf education allows us to put this exhortation into practice. We have not finished finding our way; we have barely begun our journey.

Waldorf education is still very young—only 100 years old. It has approximately another 1450 years to develop. If we think about Waldorf education in terms of a human lifetime, it is like a young child who is shedding her inherited model body and replacing it with a body of her own creation in light of her chosen destiny. Given Waldorf education's youth, let us refrain from prematurely judging Rudolf Steiner's "child of care."

The seeds of Waldorf education were planted over a century ago, but its fruits remain to be harvested far in the future. However much we think this education has already fulfilled—or failed to fulfill—its promise, we will not know whether it has succeeded for centuries to come.



Having struggled for many years with the ideas and ideals that I have presented in this book, I am left with two major questions:

Can the ideal of the College of Teachers be realized?
Do we, as individuals and as groups, have the qualities and capacities to serve on a College?

Can the ideal of the College of Teachers be realized? I hope so. I hope that we can figure out what we need to do together in our groups to manifest the spirit on the earth. How can we do this? Perhaps it's not meant to be as complicated as we might expect. Perhaps it comes down to the main reason we were brought to earth.

In his poem "Birches," Robert Frost describes a boy living far from town who climbs birch trees and swings himself back down to earth. When he feels that life is too much like a pathless wood, the poet says:

I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.
May no fate willfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.

Earth *is* the right place for love. It is the only place for love. As Rudolf Steiner said, “Human beings are born to have the possibility of doing what they cannot do in the spiritual world.” In the spiritual world we do not have the freedom to experience or express love; we need to be human to do so. As spiritual beings we come to earth, take on physical bodies, and live in the material realm because the earth is the right place to be human; it is the right place for love. And it is the only place where, as colleagues, we can embrace our task: to work together in love for the further development of humanity and of the earth.

Do we have the qualities and capacities to serve in a College? I hope so. And if we don’t, we are privileged to be on earth to learn. When I was a young anthroposophist, I tried to find someone who would talk to me about meditation, but no one was willing to do so. It seemed that it was too private a matter, and everyone I asked was reluctant to offer guidance beyond what Rudolf Steiner provided. I did, however, get one answer that has stayed with me. It was from Jorgen Smit, then the leader of the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum. At a meeting with colleagues from our school, I asked Jorgen Smit, “How does one meditate?” and he answered, “I don’t know; but I try to learn every day.” That is our task: to face our ignorance, our weaknesses and doubts, and to try to learn every day. Every day.

I cannot imagine how the ideal of the College of Teachers will unfold during the coming millennia, but I pray that even from beyond the threshold, I will be able to serve its destiny: to help God’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

ENDNOTE

- 1 Rudolf Steiner. *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner*. Anthroposophic Press: Hudson, NY, 1998. p. 55

Appendix

The Opening Address

given on the eve of the Teachers' Seminar, Stuttgart

August 20, 1919

This evening I wish to make some preliminary remarks. To achieve a renewal of modern spiritual life, The Waldorf School must be a true cultural deed. We must reckon with change in everything; the ultimate foundation of the whole social movement is in the spiritual realm and the question of education is one of the burning spiritual questions of modern times. We must take advantage of the possibilities presented by The Waldorf School to reform and revolutionize the educational system. The success of this cultural deed is in your hands. Thus, you have much responsibility in working to create an example. So much depends upon the success of this deed. The Waldorf School will be living proof of the effectiveness of the anthroposophical orientation toward life. It will be a unified school in the sense that it only considers how to teach in the way demanded by the human being, by the totality of the human essence. We must put everything at the service of achieving this goal.

However, it is necessary that we make compromises, because we are not yet so far developed that we can accomplish a truly free deed. The state imposes terrible learning goals and terrible standards, the worst imaginable, but people will imagine them to be the best. Today's policies and political activity treat people

like pawns. More than ever before, attempts will be made to use people like cogs in a wheel. People will be handled like puppets on a string, and everyone will think that this reflects the greatest progress imaginable. Things like institutions of learning will be created incompetently and with the greatest arrogance. We have a foretaste of this in the design of the Russian Bolshevik schools, which are graves for everything that represents true teaching.

We have a difficult struggle ahead of us, but, nevertheless, we must do this cultural deed. We must bring two contradictory forces into harmony. On the one hand, we must know what our ideals are, and, on the other hand, we must have the flexibility to conform to what lies far from our ideals. It will be difficult for each of you to find how to bring these two forces into harmony. This will be possible to achieve only when each of you enters into this work with your full strength. Everyone must use his or her full strength from the very beginning.

Therefore, we will organize the school not bureaucratically, but collegially, and will administer it in a republican way. In a true teachers' republic we will not have the comfort of receiving directions from the Board of Education. Rather, we must bring to our work what gives each of us the possibility and the full responsibility for what we have to do. Each one of us must be completely responsible.

We can create a replacement for the supervision of the School Board as we form this preparatory course and, through the work, receive what unifies the school. We can achieve that sense of unity through this course if we work with all diligence. The course will be held as a continuing discussion of general pedagogical questions, as a discussion of the special methods concerning the most important areas of instruction, and as a seminar to practice teaching. We will practice teaching and critique it through discourse.

We will take up the more theoretical aspects in the morning and the seminar in the afternoon on each day. We will begin at 9:00am with general pedagogy, then undertake instruction concerning special methods at 11:30, and in the afternoon do seminar exercises from 3:00 until 6:00.

We must be completely conscious that we have to accomplish a great cultural deed in every sense of the word. Here in The Waldorf School we do not wish to create a parochial school. The Waldorf School will not propagate a particular point of view by filling the children with anthroposophical dogma. We do not wish to teach anthroposophical dogma; anthroposophy is not the content of the instruction. What we want is a practical utilization of anthroposophy. We want to transform what we can gain through anthroposophy into truly practical instruction.

The anthroposophical content of instruction is much less important than the practical utilization of what we can create out of anthroposophy, generally in pedagogy and particularly in the special methods; in other words, how we can bring anthroposophy into teaching practice.

Representatives of the confessions will give religious instruction. We will use anthroposophy only in the method of instruction. Therefore, we will divide the children among the religion teachers according to their confession. This is another part of the compromise. Through justifiable compromises we can accelerate our cultural deed.

We must be conscious of the great tasks before us. We dare not be simply educators; we must be people of culture in the highest sense of the word. We must have a living interest in everything happening today; otherwise we will be bad teachers for this school. We dare not have enthusiasm only for our special tasks. We can be good teachers only when we have a living interest in everything happening in the world. Through that interest in

the world, we must obtain the enthusiasm that we need for the school and for our tasks. Flexibility of spirit and devotion to our tasks are necessary. Only from that can we draw out what can be achieved today when we devote our interest to the great needs and tasks of the times, both of which are unimaginably large.

The College Founding

*given at the beginning of the Preparatory Course, Stuttgart
August 21, 1919*

We can accomplish our work only if we do not see it as simply a matter of intellect or feeling, but, in the highest sense, as a moral spiritual task. Therefore, you will understand why, as we begin this work today, we first reflect on the connection we wish to create from the very beginning between our activity and the spiritual worlds. With such a task, we must be conscious that we do not work only in the physical plane of living human beings. In the last centuries, this way of viewing work has increasingly gained such acceptance that it is virtually the only way people see it. This understanding of tasks has made teaching what it is now and what the work before us should improve. Thus, we wish to begin our preparation by first reflecting upon how we connect with the spiritual powers in whose service and in whose name each one of us must work. I ask you to understand these introductory words as a kind of prayer to those powers who stand behind us with Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition as we take up this task.

*[The words that followed were not recorded by the stenographer.
See the Notes from Three Participants at the end of this section.]*

It is our duty to see the importance of our work. We will do this if we know that this school is charged with a particular task. We need to make our thoughts very concrete; we need to form our thoughts so that we can be conscious that this school fulfills something special. We can do this only when we do not view the founding of this school as an everyday occurrence, but instead regard it as a ceremony held within Cosmic Order.

In this sense, I wish, in the name of the good spirit whose task it is to lead humanity out of suffering and misery, in the name of this good spirit whose task it is to lead humanity to a higher level of development in education, I wish to give the most heartfelt thanks to this good spirit who has given our dear friend Mr. Molt the good thoughts to do what he has done for the further development of humanity at this time and in this place, and what he has done for the Waldorf School. I know that he is aware that what can be done in this work now can only be done with weakened strength. He sees things in this way. However, because we are united with him in feeling the greatness of the task and of the moment in which it is begun, and in feeling that this is a festive moment in Cosmic Order, he will be able to work in our midst with the necessary strength.

We wish to begin our work with this in mind. We wish to see each other as human beings brought together by karma, who will bring about, not something common, but something that, for those doing this work, will include the feeling of a festive Cosmic moment. At the end of our course I will say what I would like to say following today's festive commencement of our preparation. Then much will have been clarified, and we will be able to stand before our task much more concretely than we can today.

Notes from Three Participants

Participants in the course: Berta Molt, Emil Molt, Caroline von Heydebrand, E.A. Karl Stockmeyer, Leonie von Mirbach, Elfriede Herrmann, Rudolf Treichler, Hertha Koegel, Paul Baumann, Rudolf Meyer, Johannes Geyer, Herbert Hahn, Friedrich Oehlschlegel, Marie Steiner, Elisabeth Dollfus-Baumann, Hannah Lang, Ludwig Noll, Mieta Waller-Pyle, Hermann Heisler.

Invited guests were: Andreas Körner, Luise Kieser, Walter Johannes Stein, Alexander Strakosch, Karl Emil Wolfer.

The invitation to participate as a guest was only given to those members of the Anthroposophical Society who had already indicated a desire to create a similar school in other locations. In addition, educators from the Ministry of Education were invited. K.E. Wolfer and A. Körner were invited for reasons of public relations.

Finally, Ida and Maria Uhland were invited. They were, however, unable to attend because they were unable to obtain leave from their school.

The spoken text was not retained stenographically at this point. Two participants in the seminar, Caroline von Heydebrand (1886–1938) and Herbert Hahn (1890–1970) have written from memory the content of Rudolf Steiner's spoken words. In addition to these notes, an entry exists from the diary of Walter Johannes Stein (1891–1957) who also participated in the course.

Notes from Caroline von Heydebrand:

“We want to form our thoughts so that we can be conscious of the following: Behind each of us stands our Angel gently laying hands upon our head. This Angel gives each of you the strength you need. Above your heads hovers a ring of Archangels. They convey from one to the other of you what each of you has to give to the other. They connect your souls. Thus you receive the courage you require. (From this courage, the Archangels form a

vessel.) The Light of Wisdom is given to us by the Higher Beings of the Archai, who do not form themselves into a ring, but come from the beginning of time, reveal themselves and disappear into primordial distances. They project into this space only as a drop. (A drop of Time Light falls into the vessel of courage from the active Time Spirit.)”



Notes from Herbert Hahn:

“In that we actively turn to the pedagogy of this fifth cultural epoch, and in that we wish to be active as teachers, we may carry in consciousness the fact that the Beings of the Third Hierarchy are now moving to connect themselves with our work.

Behind each individual member of the now-forming faculty, we see an Angel standing. He lays both hands upon the head of the earthly being entrusted to him, and in this position and with this gesture allows *strength* to flow over to the human. It is the strength that provides the Imaginations necessary for the deed to be completed. Creatively Imagining, awakening powerful Imaginations, the Angel thus stands behind each individual.

Raising our view higher, we see hovering above the heads of this forming faculty a host of Archangels. Circling again and again, they carry from each of us to the other what results from our spiritual encounter with our own Angel. And they carry it, enriched by the strength of all the others, back to us. In this circle, which acts like an activity of spiritual formation, a vessel is formed above the heads of those united in this common striving. This vessel is formed from a specific substance—Courage. At the same time, these circling, connecting Archangels allow creatively Inspirational forces to enter into their movements. The

Archangels open the source for those Inspirations necessary for our work.

Raising our view still higher, it rises up to the realm of the Archai. They are not represented in their entirety. However, from their realm, the Realm of Light, they let a drop descend into the vessel of Courage. We feel that this drop of Light is given to us from the good Spirit of our Time, who stands behind the Founder and the Founding of this new school. It is the creative forces of Intuition at work in this drop of Light. The Archai want to awaken the necessary Intuition in those now entering this new pedagogical work.

Giving Strength, Courage and Light, beings of the third Hierarchy take part in what is now being founded. Imaginatively, Inspiringly, Intuitively, they wish to connect with our earthly deeds.”

From early, undated notes by Herbert Hahn:

“Imagine, how behind each of you stands your Angel. The Angel wishes to give Strength.

Circling above all of you, carrying the fruit of your work and your experiences from one to another, is a ring of Archangels. From their circling and carrying, the Archangels form a vessel of Courage.

From the heights, the good Spirit of the Time, who is one of the Archai, allows a drop of Light to fall into the vessel. In this manner, the Archai give a drop of Light.”

Diary entry from August 21, 1919, by Walter Johannes Stein:

“Beginning of the Course. Opened by Dr. Steiner at 9:00 A.M.

Strength	–	Angel
Courage	–	Archangel
Light	–	Archai

Thank the...[good Spirits] who gave Molt the idea. The Gods will work further with what our Deed will become.”

Teachers' Meditations

I.

*Im Schein des Sinnewesens,
Da lebt des Geistes Wille,
Als Weisheitslicht sich gebend,
Und innere Kraft verbergend;*

*Im Ich des eignen Wesens,
Da scheint Menschenwille,
Als Denkens Offenbarung,
Auf eigne Kraft sich stützend;*

*Und eigne Kraft dem Lichte
Der Weltenweisheit machtvoll
Geeinet zu dem Selbst:
Gestaltet mich, der ich mich
Zum Göttlich-Hohen wende
Erleuchtungskräfte suchend.*

I.

In shine of sense-world weaving,
There lives the spirit’s will,
As wisdom’s light outpouring
And inner power concealing.

In the “I” of my own being,
There shines the human will,
As thinking’s revelation
By its own power supported.

And my own power,
With light of cosmic wisdom
Mightfully united,
To selfhood shapes me,
I, who turn myself to high divinity
Seeking powers of illumination.

(Trans. by Arvia Mackaye Ege)

I.

In the semblance of sense being
There lives the Spirit’s Will,
Giving itself as wisdom’s light
And concealing inner strength.

In the “I” of one’s own being
There shines forth human will,
As thinking’s revelation,
Supporting itself on its own strength.

And its own strength,
Powerfully united
With the light of world wisdom,
To the Self forms me,
Who turn to the Divine-High
Seeking powers of enlightenment.

II.

*Geistiges Blicken,
Wende dich schauend nach Innen;
Herzliches Tasten
Rühre am zarten Seelen-Sein;
Im ahnenden Geistes-Blicken,
Im herzhaften Seelen-Tasten,
Da webt sich Bewusst-Sein.
Bewusst-Sein, das aus dem Oben
Und dem Unten des Menschen-Wesens
Bindet Welten-Helle
An das Erden-Dunkel.*

*Geistiges Blicken
Herzliches Tasten
Erblicke, Ertaste
Im Menschen-Innern
Webende Welten-Helle
In waltendem Erdendunkel:
Mein eigenes
Menschen-Bilde-Kraft
Zeugendes
Krafterschaffendes
Willenträgendes Selbst.*

II.

Spirit beholding
Turn deeply seeing within.
Heart-warm touching
Touch upon tender soul being.
In expectant spirit beholding,
In strong-hearted fine soul touching,
There is woven consciousness.
Conscious-being, Wwhich from the above
And the below of the human being
Binds cosmic brightness
To earthly darkness.

Spirit beholding,
Heart-warm touching,
Behold and touch
Within man's inner being
Weaving cosmic brightness
In reigning earthly darkness:
My own
Human-formative-force
Engendering,
Power-creating,
Will-sustaining Self.

(Trans. by Arvia Mackaye Ege)

II.

Spiritual looking,
Turn inwards, perceiving;
Heart's apprehending,
Touch the soul's tender being;
In the spirit's intuitive looking,
In the soul's heart-felt apprehending
Consciousness Being weaves itself
Consciousness, which from the upper
And the lower of Man's being,
Binds the brightness of worlds
To the darkness of earth.

Spiritual looking,
Hearts' apprehending,
Perceive and grasp
In Man's inner being,
Weaving brightness of worlds
Within the sway of earth's darkness:
My own
Human formative force
Engendering
Strength creating
Will-bearing Self.

(Translation by Roland Everett)

Roberto Trostli has been active in Waldorf education since 1981 as a class teacher, high school teacher, adult educator, author, and lecturer.

Roberto received his BA from Columbia University and his MA from the University of Cambridge, England. After working as a violin-maker, Roberto was a class teacher for 10 years at the Rudolf Steiner School in New York City, which he had attended as a child. He then moved to Hadley MA, where he worked for 18 years, taking a class from grades 1–8 and founding and teaching at the Hartsbrook High School. In 2009, Roberto moved to Richmond, VA, where he became a class teacher at the Richmond Waldorf School.

Roberto has worked as a pedagogical consultant and lecturer throughout the United States and abroad. He co-directed the part-time teacher training at Sunbridge College, NY, and served as the Director of the Waldorf Research Institute. Roberto was a member of the Pedagogical Section Council for 10 years and helped with the re-structuring of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America.



Roberto's written works include numerous articles and 18 plays. Early in his career, he became interested in science teaching, and he wrote *Physics Is Fun!*, which has been revised and republished as *Physics the Waldorf Way*. He edited and introduced *Rhythms of Learning; Teaching Language Arts in the Waldorf School*; and *Creating a Circle of Collaborative Spiritual Leadership*.

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