



Newsletter of the Medical Section

Whitsun 2020

Whitsun verse

Where sensory knowledge ends,
That is where the gateway is located
Which opens the realities of life
To soul existence;
The soul creates the key
When it grows strong
In the battle which cosmic powers
Fight on their own ground
With human forces;
When through itself it drives out
The sleep which envelops forces of knowledge
With the night of the spirit
At the limits of its senses.

Rudolf Steiner, GA 40, p. 87



From left to right: Advance notice of the international annual conference "Crossing Bridges – Being Human!" (12–20 September 2020); webinars have become a new form of communication in recent weeks, here a backstage scene from the webinar of the Society of Anthroposophical Physicians in Germany (GAÄD) on the COVID-19 pandemic; rehearsal scene from Faust which will have its premiere from 10–12 July 2020 (photo: Lucia Hunziker).

Dear co-workers and friends of the Medical Section!

The present health and social situation worldwide makes one thing clear: humanity is standing at the threshold. With the loss of their ordinary daily occupation, many people have lost tasks and meaning central to their lives, others have directly lost their livelihood. The worldwide pandemic is experienced in very different ways, depending on country, social situation and personal circumstances. In Germany, another anthroposophic physician, Dr Andreas Hagemann, has crossed the threshold as the result of COVID-19.

Many people in regular employment initially welcomed the option to work from home and spend more time with the family. But soon the desire also returned to be able to pursue their occupation in the usual way and leave the house again. Children experienced weeks of isolation and massive restrictions on their movement; the elderly and those in need of care are suffering under the restrictions, experience loneliness because of social distancing and are losing the familiar support which comes from our relationships with other people. Instead, a global atmosphere of anxiety and fear is developing. It extends from the direct anxiety about losing our livelihood, about the un-

sustainable economic consequences, to the fear of infection.

Medically there is uncertainty as to how the protection of those at risk can best be combined with a salutogenic perspective. The latter requires the maintenance of relationships and active movement, a community, educational and cultural life that in turn has had to accept restrictions from the pathogenic perspective of potential infection and disease. In the process, political instructions encroach to an hitherto unprecedented extent on basic human rights. Many feel that what is needed is an appropriate dialogue between the human rights of the individual and the common good which cannot be undertaken by the virological advisors of governments alone but has to include civil society. Here it is necessary to listen to many voices, both from the various medical specialisms and from all the fields of societal life.

In this connection we would like to refer to the [article by Prof Dr Harald Matthes](#) from the Havelhöhe community hospital in Berlin which appeared in the weekly *Das Goetheanum* No. 19 of 8 May 2020.

A further uncertainty lies in the question about a potential vaccine for SARS-CoV-2 which is effective

and safe in the long term and which will probably not be available for some time. The virus belongs to the group of rapidly mutating viruses which make the development of a vaccine very much more difficult.

Alongside these current medical and social questions, the issue is also about future perspectives. Last year, we celebrated the 250th anniversary of the birth of Alexander von Humboldt. His far-reaching views about the earth as a living being also point the way ahead for the present time and demand a spiritual understanding of ecological relationships. Then there is the issue of interpersonal relationships because the maintenance of health requires the deepened relationship with the other person. Against this background, the way social circumstances are shaped becomes very important. Lastly, existential need demands active support and help for those suffering, particularly also children. We can support organisations which provide urgently needed help and also support the children and families who have been hit particularly hard. Spiritual and meaningful perspectives, a deepened relationship with the other person, and lived brotherhood and sisterhood are three ideals described by Rudolf Steiner as "angelic ideals" (GA 182, lecture of 9 October 1918) which also present themselves as developmental perspectives from out of the situation of our time.

In the hundredth anniversary year of the birth of Anthroposophic Medicine, which has gone so differently from intended, many activities have shifted into the virtual space. Thus a well-attended webinar (approx. 700 participants) of the Society of Anthroposophical Physicians in Germany (GAÄD) was held on the COVID-19 pandemic. Various experts reported about the way the disease is understood, its virological basis and the therapeutic possibilities offered by Anthroposophic Medicine. Many different connections between fear and the immune system were discussed and the spiritual scientific understanding of the disposition as well as future perspectives – also from the social policy field – were described. Contributions from the Youth Section as well as young colleagues provided a living picture of their experiences.

The English Training in Anthroposophic Medicine with participants from Australia, China, Thailand, several European countries, South America and the USA was held electronically over the course of almost a week. Alongside the content of the course, participants were also offered painting therapy and eurythmy which they performed in front of the screen. Despite meeting virtually, they experienced an atmosphere of togetherness spanning the earth which allowed for a deeper exchange of views also on the subject of the meditative path of knowledge.

The Goetheanum has been open again for visitors since 11 May. The conference "The dignity of the child"

has been postponed until 19–22 May 2021. According to current information, bigger events will be possible at the Goetheanum again from July onwards. We warmly invite German-speaking visitors to the first *Faust* performance at the Goetheanum since the shutdown! It will take place from 10–12 July with the topical title: "Crises, precipices and development – the human being and medicine today" (<https://bit.ly/2yLjaFi>), accompanied by lectures from Michaela Glöckler, Matthias Girke and Georg Soldner.

Many people have asked us whether the world conference "Crossing Bridges – Being Human!" will take place. Our answer right now is: yes, we want to carry out this event for the hundredth anniversary of Anthroposophic Medicine from 12–20 September! In doing so, we are conscious that many people worldwide are not yet certain whether they can travel to Dornach in September. It is also clear to us that the exceptional world situation simultaneously demands presence of mind, resolve and caution of us. At the same time we experience through the video conferences and online courses what it means to be able to meet directly as people and as a community. As things stand, it will be possible to carry out larger cultural events in Switzerland in September again.

Registration is therefore possible as of now (www.crossingbridges.care)!

We will regularly report on the website about news and the current situation. Cancellation will be possible at any time free of charge up to the start of the conference.

Every registration gives us backing in the endeavour to realise this carefully prepared conference in the form possible in September. In this context we will include experiences and perspectives from dealing with the current pandemic in the programme. The inner arc of this anniversary conference can lead us to experience the bridge to a thinking anchored in life, to an inner connection between science and morality, to a sustainable and human system of medicine. This perspective supports us. We will keep you informed about the conference preparations and shortly also send out once more possible ways in which the content can be prepared together. We look forward to this great event with much pleasure!

Matthias Girke and Georg Soldner

NOTICES

Request for participation in a survey on fever management: the two paediatricians Prof Dr David Martin (DE) and Dr Henrik Szóke PhD (HU) invite you to answer ten short questions (in English) as part of a research project on rectal rehydration in children: <https://bit.ly/35QhPsU>. Thank you very much for your participation!

Successful graduation at Pécs University: despite more arduous external conditions, fourteen colleagues took their exams in Anthroposophic Medicine, Anthroposophic Pharmacy and Anthroposophic Clinical Psychotherapy on 8 May and with their newly acquired certificate can apply for and obtain authorisation to work with the additional designation. We congratulate the graduates and are pleased about this active addition to Anthroposophic Medicine in Hungary!

External treatments for COVID-19: video guidance can be found at <https://bit.ly/2LNzYhS> for various compresses which can be used as supporting treatments for COVID-19 (currently in German, English, French and Spanish).

Food for soul and spirit: every so often we refer to works from the publisher Marie Steiner Verlag; on occasion of Whitsun this year we do so to the language art card "Trost": <https://bit.ly/35QpBTH>.

You can find the whole publishing programme at: <https://bit.ly/35POA9A>

RESEARCH

Berg S, Schneider K, Weißkircher A. *Eurythmietherapie, Einzelfallstudie bei Bandscheibenprolaps und Tubertendinose*. Posterabstract. Der Merkurstab 2020;73(2):122.

Güthlin C, Bartsch HH, Joos S, Längler A, Lampert C, Ritter C, Schildmann J, Weis J, Wilhelm M, Witt CM, Horneber M. *KOKON: A Germany-Wide Collaborative Research Project to Identify Needs, Provide Information, Foster Communication and Support Decision-Making About Complementary and Alternative Medicine in Oncology*. *Complementary Medicine Research* 2020;27(2):105-111. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1159/000502945>.

Matthes H, Thronicke A, Hofheinz RD, Baars E, Martin D, Huber R, Breitzkreuz T, Bar-Sela G, Galun D, Schad F. *Statement to an Insufficient Systematic Review on *Viscum album* L. Therapy*. *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine* 2020; Article ID 7091039. Article is freely available at <https://doi.org/10.1155/2020/7091039>.

RECOMMENDED LITERATURE

Michaela Glöckler. *What is Anthroposophic Medicine. Scientific basis – Therapeutic potential – Prospects for development*. Rudolf Steiner Press 2020. ISBN 978-1-85584-573-2

Rudolf Steiner. *Memory. Remembering and Forgetting*. Rudolf Steiner Press 2020. ISBN 978-1-85584-574-9

Rudolf Steiner. *The imaginative life tableau. The spiritually-perceived story of our life between birth and death. Meditative knowledge out of childhood forces*. Rudolf Steiner Press 2020. ISBN 978-1-85584-572-5

EVENTS & DATES

As per our calendar of events: <https://bit.ly/3bQAqGG>