

Jörgen Smit

## The Forces of Spiritual Community in Anthroposophy

When we reflect on the situation facing us in the last quarter of this century, we note above all the great tasks given mankind. And Anthroposophy rises up in our consciousness, its nature bound up with man's deepest existential problems. Without more of Anthroposophy we won't be able to achieve anything. At the forefront of these most burning problems stands the social question. And it is here that the key role of the General Anthroposophical Society appears. Indispensable to the Anthroposophical Movement is an active, effective General Anthroposophical Society, holding itself in a state of becoming, so that it will always have the capacity for real achievement in the various fields on earth.

To build such a vessel for the Anthroposophical Movement, the General Anthroposophical Society must be a gathering place where forces belonging to the future – and these are social forces – can, as in a great mystery drama, gradually be tested and brought to ripeness. If we give this matter our full attention, we see that the foremost task of the General Anthroposophical Society is to cultivate the life of the soul in individuals and in human society, on the basis of a true knowledge of the spiritual world. This at once becomes a question of conscience, when we ask ourselves, what would the Anthroposophical Movement be able to achieve if we were to fail in this first area, in this most central social task of the General Anthroposophical Society? What would the Movement be able to accomplish for mankind at all? Once we grasp this, we can pull ourselves together and behold, through all the imperfections, difficulties and defeats, the forces that are coming into being within the General Anthroposophical Society. Then we can muster all our forces and mesh our efforts with the inexhaustible impulse of the Christmas Conference given us by Rudolf Steiner.

Throughout my life the General Anthroposophical Society has been a central concern of mine, both in head and heart. And I have lived through its long and painful – but also promising – history in all its details and sufferings. And this – though this may sound strange – from early childhood and youth, mirrored in the souls of the grownups. When I became older, I entered at once into this destiny.

I would like to place before you the following as one of the basic experiences of my life. If one comes to know these rifts, divisions and contradictions – not retrospectively and by report but by having lived through these matters oneself – then there emerges in all clarity this deeply gripping experience: one sees people – myself and others – splitting apart at certain times, leaving such deep clefts between that one could say at the time, "The cleft seems hopeless, unbridgeable, at least this side of death."

But then the experience I have gathered over decades has shown me that there is something in the General Anthroposophical Society that unites us much more deeply than could possibly be achieved by any outward institution, namely the deepest bonds of destiny that work between us. Such bonds, formed in the spiritual world before birth, play a role here. And now here on earth come all these splits and contradictions. Can we say they were not necessary at all? No, we certainly cannot. For what is at stake is the greatest thing of all: the future forces of community-building out of the individual. And this task is of such magnitude, that this birth – the forming of future community – can only be brought about by going through the greatest of suffering. We have to take all the contradictions seriously, but take them as tasks for the future. Then we can learn from them, and by learning waken new forces in ourselves. I would like to place this before you as a fact won out of my own life-experience. When we sunder, then observe please how life moves on. And when we have turned the next corner, we are all at once together again for what needs doing. For the spiritual task is unchanged: it rises out of mankind, out of Anthroposophy, out of the General Anthroposophical Society, out of the never-diminishing Christmas Conference. In this light may I hope to have a share in tasks done in common with all who would commit themselves to Anthroposophy.

---

The speech given by Jörgen Smit in 1975 at his induction into the Goetheanum Vorstand

[www.joergensmit.org](http://www.joergensmit.org) is the address of the website focussed on life and work of Jörgen Smit. Biography, books, lectures, fotos etc., published by Rembert Biemond.