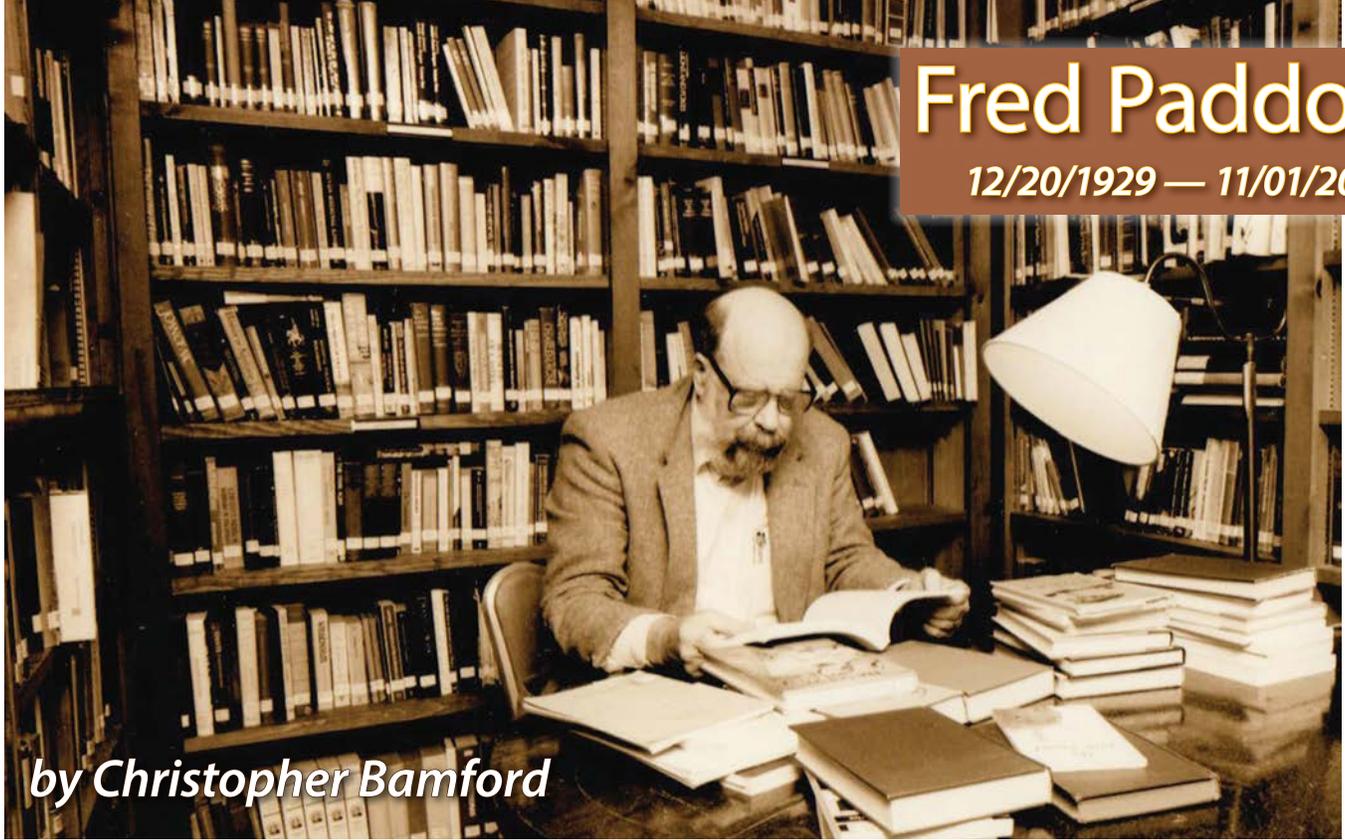


# Fred Paddock

12/20/1929 — 11/01/2012



by Christopher Bamford

I speak as a friend. We first met in the seventies, but it wasn't until the late eighties that we began our philosophical lunches together once a week, whenever we could. We shared many things—an abiding interest in thinking and how we might transform it; a love of the Judeo-Christian tradition, its teachings, spiritual practices, and theology, its troubled relations with philosophy; and above all, a passion for questions rather than answers. These were not just intellectual matters to Fred, but the one thing necessary: life-and-death matters of the heart.

Fred was a great, wise, loving, sensitive, vulnerable soul, who approached whatever he did with the profound understanding that, in Rilke's phrase, "You must change your life." And he understood, too, that to do so always involved a risk, a leap. All his conversation, all his teaching, all his vast reading and study were centered and focused on this possibility of changing one's life. He gave his life to it, and it gave his life meaning. It enthused him; and his enthusiasm was infectious. I can't remember how many books I had to read because they would change my life. As he told me, a friend at Drew University had once said to him, clapping his arm over his shoulder, "When Paddock bubbles the whole world bubbles." He had that quality.

He was also, despite many setbacks and difficulties, a person of deep faithfulness and faith. He called it "trust in spite of." That was the big faith, but Fred was also faithful in little ways. He was faithful to his Midwestern, Methodist origins, which, despite his shyness, gave him his sense of humor and love of people, as well as the best kind of simplicity, directness, and openheartedness—always expect-

ing the best of others and saddened and disappointed when they let him down. He was faithful to his beloved Psalms, which he first encountered as a ten-year-old in Sunday School, and returned to again and again throughout his life, and was still talking about a month ago. He was faithful to his mentors at Hamline University, Russell Compton and Keith Irwin—the first instilling in him a deep sense of personal responsibility and the ethics of pacifism, peace, and justice, the second introducing him to the Christian mystics. Meister Eckhart, de Caussade, and Kierkegaard became companions to whom he would return all his life. Indeed, perhaps he would have become a Kierkegaard scholar had not the professor who would have taught him left, leaving a hole in his life.

He remained faithful, too—and returned all his life—to the Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament, which he encountered in the deepest way at Garrett Seminary, giving him a lifelong love of the Jewish tradition and Wisdom Literature. Again, *this* might have become his vocation had another professor not abandoned him, leaving a second hole in his life.

Above all, perhaps, he remained faithful to Martin Heidegger, the philosopher he first began to study for a doctorate at Drew University, an experience that ended tragically, but left him with an abiding passion. Once he found him, he never left him. At Drew, too, he met and became the assistant to the Lutheran theologian, Friedrich Gogarten. Then avant-garde, now virtually forgotten, only last year Fred, ever faithful, still "bubbled" about Gogarten, and we had to study his book on faith together.



In many ways, Drew, for Fred, was a destiny moment. Besides Heidegger and Gogarten, there was Owen Barfield, whom he helped bring over from England; there was Rainer Maria Rilke, who became a deep love; and above all, at Drew,

Fred faced yet another great hole. A week before his orals, he was told he could not take them with Heidegger as his main topic, as had been agreed. The blow was too much: Fred left the world of academia to enter the maelstrom of the sixties, and divorce, and, finally, to find anthroposophy, as whose faithful librarian he served for many years with patience and love.

But all that is only one side of the Fred I knew. He was the most empathic person I have ever met. He had the ability to feel the pain of others as his own. If you told him of some bad news, someone's suffering, there would be swift intake of breath, a deep rumbling groan, and his face told you that he was feeling that person's burden as his own. Related to this was his deep feeling for our common humanity. He loved helping people, setting them on their way. Indeed, I think he saw it as part of teaching, which he felt was his true vocation: to work with others on what he considered the only things that mattered. He was also in his own way humble, eschewing pretension, always aware of the overwhelming mystery in all things—in a text, a piece of music, other people, or a landscape. Looking mystery in the eye, with what he called "awe and terror," always feeling inadequate to the task, he would accept himself as a little one, a laborer in the vineyards, and carry on—in spite of. He found this mystery everywhere, especially in the language of great poetry, which he always claimed not to understand. Yet, following his beloved Heidegger, he sought unremittingly to make his thinking, in fact his whole life, poetic, and he did so and so his life makes sense.

In the last months, it seems to me, that poem of his life was nearly perfectly completed. When he was in hospital with his last heart attack, he told me that he had a dream. He was approaching the pearly gates and St. Peter came out to meet him. He asked him, "What have you done with your life?" Fred answered: "I have read Heidegger." And St. Peter replied, "That's not enough." Then, in the days following, as if to complete this dream, each morning when Fred awoke, for what seemed quite

a long time, he had an extraordinary experience: he had the sense that everything was real—fully, utterly real—in a way he had never before experienced. Though this experience of reality gradually faded, he kept talking about it: how he could not really remember it, how he regretted not having written anything down, how in some sense it was the high point of his life. At the same time, he slowly began to leave behind all the philosophy that had interested him before.

Witnessing all this, I thought of Thomas Aquinas, how at the end of his life, having written his great *Summa*, he declared it all to be "straw," turned to God, and never wrote another philosophical word.

Fred, too, for me, finally, was a great God-seeker. Even though he spoke much of the absence of God, and wrestled with it constantly, what he sought all his life was really God's presence.

Rilke has a wonderful poem, called "The Man Watching," that makes me think of Fred. Writing—appropriately enough—of great storms, Rilke says:

*I can see that the storms are coming  
by the trees, which out of lukewarm days,  
beat against my anxious windows.  
And I can hear the distances say things  
one can't bear without a friend,  
can't love without a sister.*

*Then the storm, the great transformer, comes,  
through the woods and through time  
and everything is as if ageless:  
the landscape like verses of the psalter  
is weight, and ardor, and eternity.*

*How small what we wrestle with is,  
what wrestles with us, how immense.  
Were we to let ourselves be conquered,  
the way things do, by the great storm,  
we would become wide and nameless.*

*What we triumph over is the small,  
and our success itself makes us petty;  
what is eternal and unparalleled  
will not be bent by us.*

*Such is the angel, who appeared  
to the wrestlers of the Old Testament:  
when his opponents' sinews  
stretch like metal in that contest,  
he feels them beneath his fingers  
like strings making deep melodies.*

*Those whom the Angel, who  
so often declined to fight, overcomes,*

*walk upright and justified  
and great out of that hard hand  
which, as if sculpting them, nestled around them.  
Winning does not tempt them.  
Their growth is: to be the deeply defeated  
by ever greater things.*

Dear Fred, you have made the final leap. Bless you, dear friend. We love you.

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## Introduction to “Ten Ground Rules for Dialogue”

*by Fred Paddock*<sup>1</sup>

Way back at the origins of Western consciousness, at a time when imagination was still considered an integral aspect of thought, *Logos* referred to the Word that illuminated a true aspect of being, and dialogue (*dia-logos*) referred to a sharing of true aspects of being, thus allowing more aspects of being to manifest. Then a strange thing happened: imagination (in the form of *mythos*) was expurgated from thought and became the source of illusion, and *Logos* became logic, with the implication that there is *one true way* of seeing things based on the fact that there is one true structure of the world. Once one had insight into this one true way, dialogue was no longer necessary; it was no longer a way of enhancing the true, but signified uncertainty, and possibly even a willingness to compromise the truth. This transformation has had consequences that persist even today, from which none of us—including anthroposophists—is immune. It has become part of our destiny.

One could trace the results of this in an infinite number of ways, but within the framework of this short introduction I can only choose one thread, that of religion, and condense it to the point of caricature. Here, the disastrous results of this narrowing are clearly evident. If Christianity was the one true religion, then Judaism had to be seen as false, and from this, as an apparent necessity, arose the

concept of “supercessionism” (the new covenant with the church supercedes, and cancels, the old covenant with Israel), which laid the ground for centuries of persecutions, pogroms, inquisitions, and finally,



attempted genocide. It was also the basis for the brutal religious wars at the time of the Reformation. These wars had several effects: one was the division of Europe along religious lines so that the one true religion would be separated and distanced from all false religions, thus saving people from having to deal with “other truths” on a daily basis, and thus postponing a crisis in thought and consciousness.

The revulsion evoked by these religious wars led to the Enlightenment, the secularization of Europe, and the rise of science. But because at the very heart of this science lay the narrowing of the *Logos*, it in its turn became the one true method for attaining knowledge of the one true structure of the world. At the beginning of the twentieth century—fed by the thought of Goethe and the German Romantics—anthroposophy arose (as spiritual science) and challenged both the methods and results of modern science on the basis of an enlarged sense of *Logos*—a thinking that included the imagination.

Although Rudolf Steiner saw the implications of this for dialogue, the Anthroposophical Society as a whole seems not to have done so. The general belief in the Society was that anthroposophy had superceded both the old religion and the old science, and was the one true way to the one true structure of the world. That even we anthroposophists—with our enlarged sense of *Logos*—so often find ourselves thinking we have the one truth and that everyone else lives in darkness, is a clear indication that this perspective is not a simple error or a product of spiritually ignorant or malicious individuals and institutions, but is, rather, a profound malaise lying at the foundation of Western consciousness.

I have spoken of the narrowing of the concept of the *Logos* and the resultant questioning of the value of dialogue, and I have indicated that this has led to the concept of there being but one *true* way of seeing the one *true* structure of the world. Lying hidden in plain sight in all of this is the question of truth. One can think of no more fateful or difficult question: How can one question the concept

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<sup>1</sup> Fred originally introduced Professor Leonard Swidler’s *Dialogue Decalogue: Ground Rules for Interreligious, Interideological Dialogue*, in a 2002 issue of the Rudolf Steiner Library Newsletter.



of truth? It is the basis of all thought and must be presupposed for cognition to take place. Where is the Archimedean point upon which to stand in order to question the very possibility of one's questioning? In the search for

the truth about truth, what is one searching for, and how would one know if one found it?

All this is far beyond my capacities and the limits of this introduction. I can say that some of the greatest minds in the West have wrestled with this question and have risked vertigo, as well as condemnation and ridicule. Think of Meister Eckhart and the danger he faced from church authorities.

And recall Martin Heidegger in our own time, who spent his life wrestling with the question of what truth is, which clearly caused him to suffer at times from a vertigo that led him into dark and morally murky places, and also caused him to be the butt of ridicule from other philosophers.

And, of course, we are led back to Rudolf Steiner, who has been marginalized by our culture and misunderstood and failed by his followers—precisely at the point of his wrestling with the concept of truth. One thinks of the lecture series *Human and Cosmic Thought*, where he speaks of the twelve—surely a symbolic figure—different ways that reality can be interpreted. One looks in vain for commentaries on this, or effects of it on the ethos of the Society. Another example is the great series, *The Bhagavad Gita and the Epistles of Paul*, where Steiner makes the startling contrast between the West, where the *truth* cannot be held complete by any one person, but only emerges as the invisible center pointed to by the convergence of many spokes (representing the many different individual takes on reality), and is thus by its very nature dialogical, and the East, where the whole truth is held to be available to the individual sage. I don't recall these ideas being taken up in any serious, philosophical way.

But as I said above, our not pursuing these indications doesn't imply that we, among all the people on Earth, are uniquely dense and obtuse. Quite the contrary! That we have not struggled in depth with the question of the nature of truth or even with what a valid criterion would be—a

problem that even a Wittgenstein couldn't resolve—just shows how mysterious and perplexing this question is. (The fact that a few anthroposophists answer this question concerning the criterion of truth with a simple: *The criterion of truth is "did Steiner say it?"* should not be taken as representative of anthroposophists as a whole.)

Where does all this lead? "Time is long but the truth happens in it" (Hölderlin). The common (to the West, at least) concept of truth developed over a long period of time, and we can assume that the overcoming of it—which has indeed already begun—will take a long time. It has clearly started not only in the few thinkers I mentioned who have struggled in a deeply philosophical way with the question of truth, but in the questions, doubts, and vague sense of unease in huge numbers of ordinary folk, largely because they find themselves in contact with different religions—different claims to truth—in the form of friends, family members, acquaintances, and shelves of books in bookstores and libraries—including the national library of the Anthroposophical Society in America. This pluralistic world is not the product of a person or persons sitting down and planning it, but is rather the result of mysterious movements, multitudes of them, some stretching back centuries; some of them economic, some political, some brought about unwittingly by religious institutions—in other words, this situation is the result of higher forces beyond our ordinary thoughts or our control.

So it has started, this slow movement toward a new understanding of truth, and we are in the midst of it, and can either try to go along with it or struggle against it. I would like to suggest that one of the best ways to move into the *risk* in which spiritual forces are *risking* us, and to trustingly use what insights into the spiritual world we have been given and have developed through exercise—and here, finally, is the point of this introduction—is to enter into dialogue with other claimants to the truth. How better to *actively* wait for a new concept of truth to emerge? How better to enter into the risk that we *are* as human beings than to risk ourselves in dialogue? What if in this time—a time that is "between the times"—through the use of our imagination we picture ourselves not as incarnating within our individual selves the whole truth, the one truth outside of which there is nothing but degrees of error, but rather as embodying *a* truth, a truth that must be preserved and made known to other truths so that the whole truth, which is beyond all individual truths, can emerge? What if we could feel both called by *the truth* to be responsible for *our* truth while somehow at the same

time, and as part of the same call of *truth*, being responsive to other truths? Would this not be true dialogue? Would not dialogue then be an integral part of truth? Would not Logos and dia-logos be brought together again?

*From the book Toward a Universal Theology of Religion, Leonard Swidler, editor, Orbis Books, 1987, part of the "Faith Meets Faith" series. Also available from the Rudolf Steiner Library: After the Absolute: The Dialogical Future of Religious Reflection, Leonard Swidler. Fortress Press, 1990.*

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## Gratitude for Fred Paddock

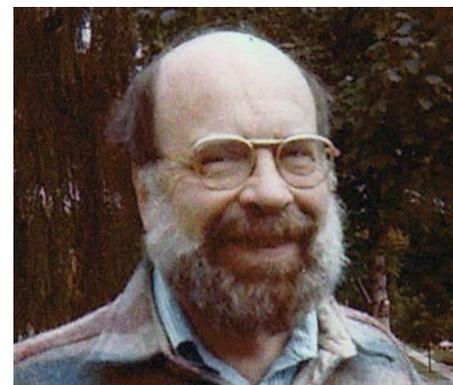
by Douglas Sloan

Fred was a dear, best friend—a conviction that I am sure is shared by many, many others in many different places, because Fred took a genuine interest in others and connected deeply with many persons in the course of his life.

I first met Fred in the early 1970s on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, at what were then the national offices of the Anthroposophical Society of North America and the Rudolf Steiner Library. At the time I had just come upon the name of Rudolf Steiner in my reading and had the desire to learn more. So I decided to visit the odd little storefront building on 211 Madison Avenue that had in its windows a display of books by Rudolf Steiner and others about aspects of anthroposophy—a number of them with intriguing, and, for me at the time, somewhat strange, even perplexing titles. Trying to maintain what I considered then to be a proper, critical academic attitude, I entered the building with some trepidation about what I might find, and full of questions and doubts.

The first person I met was Fred Paddock. He was not only the head of the Rudolf Steiner Library but was also in many ways the main organizer of the various activities carried out by the library and by the Society in New York—lectures, study groups, concerts, and so forth. He was also the main person to first meet and converse with individual inquirers like me. I was a total newcomer to Rudolf Steiner's work. From the beginning, it was talking with Fred that assured me it would be well worth my efforts to learn more. Fred's openness, his knowl-

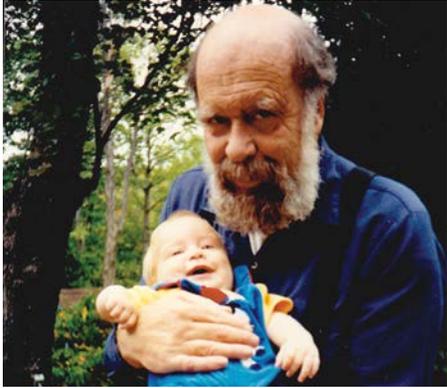
edge in many fields, his good humor, his willingness to be questioned, and to ask questions of his own—all showed me in a living way that if Steiner's work and anthroposophy could capture the respect and imagination of a



man like this, they would be truly worth exploring. That first and subsequent meetings with Fred, and, of course, our friendship and conversations that followed, were the main influence that enabled me to begin to explore seriously the work of Steiner and his contributions to the world. Many, many people I am sure have had a similar relationship with Fred. The life and health of anthroposophy in North America owe a deep debt of gratitude for the presence and influence of Fred.

In 1982, the Anthroposophical Society moved the national library to Harlemville, New York, and Fred came with it as head librarian. I want to underscore two of Fred's central contributions to the development of the Rudolf Steiner Library. The first is his vision of what an anthroposophical library can and should be. Fred was convinced, with Steiner, that anthroposophy should always entail an active engagement with the world—with the world's needs and conditions, and with the thought and work of others in the world. He tried to build the library such that the collection of Steiner's and other anthroposophical works would be organized to reflect directly this "conversation" with the world. I also want to mention Fred's individual and indispensable presence in the library as a skilled and wise resource for countless persons seeking help and guidance in pursuing their own questions and research in Steiner's work and related areas.

On hearing of Fred's death, Arthur Zajonc, formerly General Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in North America, wrote to me of Fred that he was "so learned, so passionate about the life of the mind and of the spirit." This learning, this passion, constituted a central core of Fred's life. He was deeply knowledgeable in many areas—philosophy, religion, literature, theology, the arts, and many different spiritual paths. He wore this learning lightly, but, in pursuing a question or topic in conversation with Fred, one quickly sensed the depth of his learning and the passion that fueled it. Nor was he narrowly



intellectualistic, for Fred was highly cultured, with a love for music, art, poetry, and literature—and he enjoyed exploring many different forms and expressions in all these areas. Perhaps especially worth mentioning was Fred’s

deep interest in and love for the work of the 20th-century German philosopher, Martin Heidegger. Not too long before he died, I asked Fred what it was about Heidegger that so captivated and engaged him. His answer was not what I expected. Fred replied, “He helps me learn to think.” More than the content of the philosopher’s ideas, which, of course, Fred highly valued, of most importance for him was what he considered to be the philosopher’s help in developing his own capacities for thinking, and for understanding his own thinking.

No one who knew Fred can forget his sense of humor and, especially, his unique and engaging chuckle—a chuckle that would often end in a burst of full-bodied laughter from the depths.

Many years ago, Fred wrote an essay simply entitled “Death.” I will close with the concluding paragraphs from this essay:

Death is so old. It seems to have been there from the beginning. *Beginning* and *end* are poor ways of speaking about that which has always been growing with us, even as children.

If we knew death we would know life. Life, though, just as death, may not be a *what* that we get to know, but rather a call: the sound of the violin singing, and asking us to listen; the voice of a woman—mother, daughter, wife—saying, “I was afraid you were not coming.”

Love and death have always been so close. The ancient Etruscans used to picture this in the image of the burning lamp. The more passionately the flame burned, the more quickly it extinguished itself. This wisdom stands at the center of the world of antiquity. But we are here saying something different. Death, we are saying, indicates to us what love and passion were all about in the first place. Perhaps the exercised heart, the glowing eyes, the walk in the garden, the spring evening out of doors, were not for our pleasure alone, but rather the first call of life and death to us to help in creation; the

first practice in turning the visible world into the feelingful invisible world, where things come to shine in a glory which the deathless angels could never give them. Thank you Fred for your presence, your wisdom, your caring.

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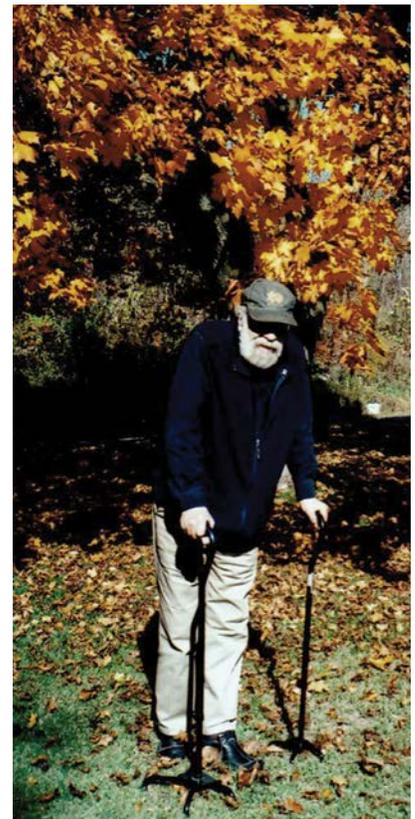
## A Memory

by William Hunt

Those of us who knew Fred Paddock over time learned that he embodied a special combination of learnedness and modesty. Throughout the thirty years of our friendship I encountered this aspect of learnedness, but always in the context of great modesty. His modesty veiled the extent of his learning. His modesty often functioned as a kindness that might or might not draw a person to speak to him from the heart, to speak without hesitating to consider how speaking from one’s heart is not always welcomed by people. Fred always welcomed a person who spoke from the heart.

He always spoke from the heart and to illustrate this I want to tell a story that he once told me—the story is both deeply sad and yet amusing because of its setting.

A friend of Fred’s, a man that he knew when they both attended university and seminary, grew disappointed with religion and after a time joined an ethical society. Years later, the friend contracted a terminal illness and the ethical society scheduled a farewell event for him, a kind of celebratory roast. Fred was invited along with others to speak words of upbeat praise about the character, ambition, and societal



utility of the dying friend who was to be present on stage propped up in a portable sickbed alongside the various speakers. Several people spoke and their remarks were greeted with cheers and laughter.

Fred's turn to speak came. In telling about the event, he said that he was unable to speak in the manner of the others. "I couldn't do that. I knew I would miss my friend and that a broader and deeper note needed to be struck."

Fred had to speak from the heart and so he had prepared remarks about the sorrow he felt about the imminent loss of his friend. He had also sharpened his remarks with quotes from the poets Rilke, Shakespeare, Hölderlin, and others. But the audience interrupted him. Their interruption began as a hissing and then broadened into loud booing. Fred stepped back from the podium, left the stage, and then the hall.

I told Fred that what he had experienced was both deeply sad and excruciatingly funny. I can't recall his reaction to my reaction. He told the truth. He spoke from the heart. That is how I want to remember him today at this moment.

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## Yiddishe Kop

by Fred Paddock (2004)

Many know that Steiner felt that Judaism has even today a mission toward Christianity, namely, to spiritualize it. But what is hardly known at all is that this task was to be accomplished through teaching Yiddishe Kop! You ask, what in the world is that? Yiddishe Kop is one of the great pearls to come out of Judaism—thanks to generations of Christian persecution. It is a way of thinking "outside the box," a proclivity to observe reality with caution, to see many facets of reality rather than just the normal one, a way of "reframing" situations in new and surprising ways, a way of seeing amazing options where others see none, a capacity to see possibility where it seems like there is only impossibility. A good illustration of Yiddishe Kop comes from the Middle Ages:

A child was found dead in a village. A Jew was immediately accused of committing the crime and of using the victim in some macabre ritual. Thrown in prison the man knew he was a scapegoat and stood no chance at the forthcoming trial. He asked to see a rabbi and was granted his request.

When the rabbi arrived, he found the man in despair over the death sentence that surely awaited him. The rabbi comforted him: "Don't ever believe there is no way out. The Evil One, God forbid, will tempt you with that thought."

"But what shall I do?" asked the anguished man.

"Just don't give up, and you will be shown a way out."

When the day of the trial arrived, the judge wanted to pretend that the accused would be allowed a fair trial and a chance to prove his innocence, so he said to the prisoner, "Since you Jews have faith, I will let the Lord decide this matter. On one piece of paper I will write the word 'innocent' and on another one, 'guilty.' You will pick one, and the Lord will decide your destiny."

As the Jew guessed, the judge prepared two pieces of paper with the word "guilty" on both of them. Normally we would say that the chances of the accused had dropped from fifty to zero percent—there was no way he could select the piece of paper saying "innocent" since there was no such paper.

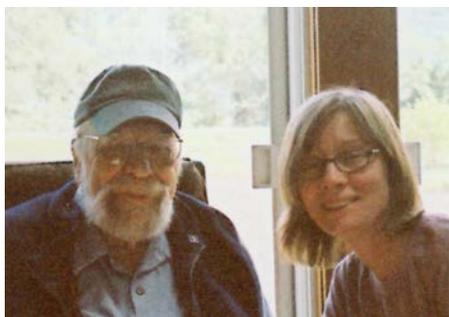
Recalling the rabbi's words, the prisoner meditated for a moment. Suddenly his eyes lit up with a new spark. He grabbed one of the pieces of paper and swallowed it in a gulp. The witnesses were upset: "Why did you do that? How will we know your destiny now?"

"Easy," answered the Jew, "Just read what it says on the other paper, and you will know that I chose the opposite."

From this illustration, one can see how important it can be to be able at times to think with *Yiddishe Kop*. For anthroposophists to learn *Yiddishe Kop* would mean that we could think well not only within and according to the basic principles of anthroposophy, but also "outside the box" in new and surprising ways. We would become "lighter," countering our proclivity toward heaviness—a tendency that even the library newsletter is not immune from. This lightness would extend into our conversation, which would become permeated with humor and unpredictability; it would leap, flash, and dart like fireflies. We would become true Goethean conversationalists, amazing our friends and confounding our enemies.

Oh, *felix culpa!* Oh, great mystery! The very result of centuries of Christian persecution of the Jews becomes the means for spiritualizing Christianity. Who but Ru-





dolf Steiner could have discerned that?

Sadly, this great tradition, this finely honed way of thinking, is hardly known today—even within Jewish circles. Fortunately, there is in the

library a wonderful book by Rabbi Nilton Bonder called *Yiddishe Kop: Creative Problem Solving in Jewish Learning, Lore and Humor* (Shambhala Press, 1999, 101 pgs.).

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## The Rudolf Steiner Library

# A [Very] Short History, 1972-2002

by Fred Paddock

This is the story of my thirty-year quest to conceive a true anthroposophical library, one that in its structure and operation would reflect the nature and tasks of living anthroposophy. It is a tale of transformation: the evolution of a 2,000-volume library into the collection of 25,000 volumes that we know today, when an average of 3,000 books circulates to a growing list of readers. Evolution is the operative term here; the library developed organically before I truly recognized its design.

My work at the library commenced with a part-time job in 1972 or 1973; I took on full responsibility in 1974 at age 44. My background gives clues as to the direction I was to take building and structuring the library: an undergraduate degree, with a major in philosophy and minor in literature; five years in a Methodist seminary majoring in philosophy and Hebrew Scriptures; four years of graduate studies (Drew University) in philosophy, literature, and depth psychology (ABD). It was at Drew that I became acquainted with the works of Owen Barfield (and also with him personally), which led me to anthroposophy and 211 Madison Avenue in New York City (home to the library and the Society for many years).

Most of my time was spent taking care of the bookstore; keeping up with address changes (you can't imagine how primitive our system for doing this was); and

explaining what anthroposophy was to the large number of people who would come up the stairs at 211 out of curiosity. (I should mention that a certain amount of time was also spent just watching suspicious people who would come up the stairs and hang out for no apparent reason. Not only were books stolen at an alarming rate, but also... things like cash boxes, typewriters, calculators, and so on—very cleverly and right under our noses.)

A huge turning point came in 1982 [when the library moved from] New York City to Harlemville, New York. Several things that happened as a result of this move were decisive in the development of the library. Foremost was that we moved into a space where the library could expand. There was no more space left for any growth in the library at 211. I was already piling books and journals from floor to ceiling in our one closet.

The move allowed me to turn all my time and attention to the library. At the very beginning I had to install shelves, unpack boxes, decide how to arrange space; get packages to a post office six miles away and so on. Then there was, for whatever reason, a big jump in use of the library—part but not all of which could be attributed to the fact that the library was now in the middle of the largest anthroposophical community in America. One must also take into account that by the mid-80s, the Anthroposophical Society had doubled from what it was in the early seventies. And probably most important in terms of library usage is that in this period, the number of Waldorf schools had grown tremendously, and more and more teachers were discovering the library.

I don't want to give the impression that I could see from the beginning what the final structure of the library would ultimately become: I really had no idea. It would be years and many events later before the final structure of the library took shape in my mind. [Eventually] I divided the library into about 26 sections. My hope was



that this “shape” would actually mirror the anthroposophical movement of which it is a part: a living, creating anthroposophy, embedded in the world, receiving from it and interpreting it—thus transmuting, transfiguring, and giving it back. The categories are the library’s chief bulwark against the Ahrimanic tendencies built into libraries. They also make us unique among all anthroposophical libraries in the world.

As I slowly filled out the different sections of the library, I began to notice something; over time, these sections began to call out for particular books that they seemed to need. When you apply the concept of “life,”

**I began to see that within the different sections, a conversation was going on.**

of “livingness,” to texts, what you are really referring to is “conversation.” I began to see that within the different sections, a conversation was going on. I noticed this first in the philosophy section. Descartes was carrying on a conversation with Scholasticism (and ultimately, with Thomas Aquinas). Aquinas was carrying on a conversation with Augustine and Aristotle; Aristotle was carrying on a conversation with Plato and Plato with

Socrates, the pre-Socratics, and the poets. Proceeding from Descartes we hear the British empiricists, especially Hume, carrying on a conversation with Descartes, and hear Kant being “awakened from his dogmatic slumbers” by Hume. We then experience Hegel in deep conversation with Kant, and Marx conversing with Hegel. Nietzsche (as well as Montaigne and Pascal) can’t be understood outside his conversation with the great Stoic thinkers. And today, Heidegger can’t be grasped outside his struggles with Nietzsche, Kant, and the Greek thinkers. This is a simplistic one-line account—for each of these thinkers was conversing with dozens of contemporaries and predecessors. But I wanted to emphasize the historical timeline, because this is what I noticed first. The ancient texts remained alive because those who came after them, right up to our contemporaries, kept conversing (struggling, arguing) with them—interpreting them. It was the living conversing with the dead that gave the dead life. And the dead (the earlier texts) gave the living “understanding” (the pre-knowing that makes thinking possible) as well as “freedom” (freedom from the confines of their contemporary culture). If the conversation ceases, not only the current, most topical texts will be missing, but the early texts will begin to die because they depend upon the living to keep them alive through conversation. It was almost as if when I walked into the library, if I could only lis-

ten with the ear of my soul, I could hear the thousand murmurings of the living texts conversing with each other. In listening carefully to the different conversations

and trying to discern who might be missing, I felt I was part of a living process, caring for a living spiritual entity that spanned the centuries—a living entity that like all living entities desired to continue living and flourishing. And like all living entities it needed to be cared for and nurtured—to be loved—ultimately, as something alive.

The library stands as a witness to the fact that as a human race we are a single conversation. It is living libraries that preserve texts in such a way that they can become a conversation; and very special libraries, indeed, that preserve these texts as parts of a single conversation.

*Gently abridged by Fred Paddock’s successor, current library director Judith Soleil.*



**PHOTOS** of Fred Paddock courtesy of Winslow Eliot. On pages 31-33 respectively Fred is seen with his wife May, daughter Rachel, and son Paul.

## **“CONTINUING THE CONVERSATIONS”**

As previously reported, the Rudolf Steiner Library is evolving in order to engage members and friends of the Anthroposophical Society in 21st-century extensions of the “living conversations” Fred Paddock describes above.

The Society’s new database will make it possible to share your interests and to collaborate with others in developing them. As you explore the library’s physical and online resources, you’ll be invited to further enliven the conversations by suggesting additions from your experience and from your searches on the internet.

**Visit [anthroposophy.org](http://anthroposophy.org) this summer to help launch these extended conversations, and please respond generously to the ongoing library appeal that supports this evolution!**