

# THE FOUNDATION STONE MEDITATION AS THE BEING OF ISIS/SOPHIA

## SOME RESULTS FROM WORKING WITH THE FOUNDATION STONE MEDITATION

By Bill Trusiewicz

Rudolf Steiner and the sculptor Edith Marion worked together to create a 9.5 meter (approx. 31 ft.) tall wooden sculpture of Christ positioned between Lucifer and Ahriman, which is known as *The Representative of Humanity*. It is an intriguing, monumental, world-historic sculpture that stands in the building called the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, at the

hub of the Anthroposophical Society, and has been the object of no little astonishment, contemplation and study since its completion [1] in 1922. To add to the intrigue created by this work of art, Rudolf Steiner said that a spiritual being could be perceived “behind” the sculptural group; he said that with spiritual vision one could see the being Isis/Sophia there. In this paper I will put forth the idea that behind the Foundation Stone Meditation, “sculpted” in words by Rudolf Steiner, also stands the being of Isis/Sophia.

Taken on the surface this is perhaps not such a surprising idea since The Foundation Stone is widely recognized as a sort of encapsulation of the whole of Anthroposophical Spiritual Science—and Wisdom (Sophia) can easily be discerned as the foundation “standing behind” the science of the spirit. So our intention here will be to further penetrate the surface text of the Foundation Stone Meditation to unveil the BEING of Wisdom, Isis/Sophia, who must become the intimate companion of every serious student of the New Mysteries in our time.

Before addressing the Foundation Stone Meditation itself let us briefly recall some of what we know about Isis/Sophia as she was presented in the mystery school traditions of the past looking through the lens of the modern mysteries. To begin we will continue to consider the sculpture mentioned above: The Representative of Humanity.

In his presentation of a “new Isis myth” Rudolf Steiner said of this sculpture: “...the statue was in fact only the veil for an invisible statue. But the invisible statue remained unnoticed, *for it was the new Isis, the Isis of the new age.*” [2] Similar to the sculptural group depicting Christ as The Representative of Humanity, in the words of Rudolf Steiner, which “is only the veil for an invisible statue,” let us explore the idea that the Foundation Stone Meditation, recognized as the inspired *words* of the Christ, is as well *only a veil for Isis/Sophia*.

The sculptural group whose central figure is Christ has an inscription below it reading: “I am the Human Being, I am the Past, Present and Future. Every mortal should lift my veil.” We understand this inscription to be a modern version of a similar inscription that existed

in the shrine of Isis at Sais, Egypt below a veiled statue of Isis that was employed in this mystery center as part of the ritual initiation practices of antiquity. Below *this* statue one could read: “I am the All, I am the Past, Present and the Future; no mortal has yet lifted my veil.” This inscription reveals, among other things, an important link between the ancient mysteries and the modern mysteries as well as something of the advancement of human spiritual evolution since the Christ event we refer to as the Mystery of Golgotha.

Adding another image to our discussion, let us look at what is described in The Revelations of Jesus Christ to St. John, the final book in the Holy Bible. In chapter twelve we read:

“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars [...] and she being with child cried, travailing in birth [...] and she brought forth a man-child who was to rule the nations with an iron rod...”

What John saw, here described, certainly is a marvel: a being of vast proportions, reaching the stars, and with tremendous significance—bearing “a child who will rule the nations.” How can we comprehend this immense, enigmatic being of cosmic proportions?

The keys to comprehending this second image, the Isis/Sophia seen by St. John, (who, incidentally, was one of the leading inspirers of the Foundation Stone Meditation and in fact provided the esoteric foundation of the new mysteries [3] )—the keys to comprehending the Isis/Sophia, of which John speaks, are in the Foundation Stone itself, as we have been saying—invisibly hidden behind the words. Let us explore just a few of the several keys embedded in the descriptions of these two images that can unlock the door to a relationship with the being of Sophia who lives behind The Foundation Stone Meditation.

Firstly, we see in the statue of Isis/Sophia at Sais the same reference to time as we see in the Representative of Humanity with the words: “I am the Past, the Present and the Future.” Reflecting upon this reference to time we might say: “*Here time becomes space,*” to quote Gurnemantz speaking to the young Parsifal about entering the environs of the Grail Castle. [4] When we gaze at Isis/Sophia we see “the Past, the Present and the Future,” since she IS the past, present and future. By this we understand the majestic woman who was shown to John as a cosmic being not limited by time: immeasurably old as the stars and containing in her womb a being who calls up the distant future—“ruling the nations with an iron rod.” In this image is evoked a tableaux, a span of time reaching from eternity past to eternity future. To encounter Isis/Sophia as a tableaux of time, as a timeless being, is to take a step like Parsifal onto the “holy ground,” of the environs of the Grail Castle where, because we can see it—“time becomes space.” [5]

We will notice in these images (Rudolf Steiner's sculpture of Christ and the vision of John and Isis/Sophia at Sais) referring to time: past, present and future—what is alluded to in the Foundation Stone Meditation with the words: Practice Spirit *Recollection*, Practice Spirit *Awareness* and Practice Spirit *Beholding*. Here we see the possibility of “recollecting” the *past*; of awareness in the *present* and; “beholding” the *future*. With these words Christ beckons us to see the tableaux of the past, present and future. We can understand this tableaux to be what one must encounter at the gate of the spiritual world, which is one of the first elements one encounters on the path of initiation. One will have the experience of seeing the tableaux of one's life (past, present and future), which is a microcosmic expression of the larger tableaux that shows us the being of Isis/Sophia. These spirit visions occur simultaneously because such an experience is trans-personal. They can be seen, both when we see behind the veil of the sculptural group—The Representative of Humanity—and when we see behind the veil of the words of the Foundation Stone Meditation.

Secondly, the “woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars,” is a picture of three “worlds” that refer to “the sun sphere,” the “moon sphere,” and the sphere of the twelve living beings—“the Zodiac,” also referred to as the sphere of the “fixed stars.” These spheres are none other than the spheres of imagination, inspiration and intuition. As much as we see the cosmic spheres imaginatively depicted in Isis/Sophia existing in distant cosmic space we must also be able to see them as part of the human constitution as the basis for our will, feelings and thoughts—in our limbs, abdomen and head.

We will notice cross-references to these aspects of Isis/Sophia as pictured by St. John in the following verses of the Foundation Stone Meditation: “Thou livest in the limbs,” “Thou livest in the beat of heart and lung,” and “Thou livest in the resting head.” These references are further represented in the corresponding sections of the Meditation with the words: “in the Wielding *Will* of World Creating...thou wilt truly live;” “In balance of soul...thou wilt truly *feel*;” and “In stillness of thought...thou wilt truly *think* in human Spirit Foundations.”

So we see the references to the three parts of the human constitution identified by Rudolf Steiner: the limb system, the rhythmic system, and the head system—are found in the first three sections of the Foundation Stone Meditation. Each of these sections that begin with a call to the “Soul of Man,” correspond to one of the three spheres of cosmic life expressed in the being of Isis/Sophia who is a composite being—a unifying and harmonizing being. These three realms of Isis/Sophia are further identified as corresponding to the realms of the work of the Divine Trinity: “The *Father* Spirit of the Heights,” “The *Christ* Will in the encircling round,” and “The World Thoughts of the *Spirit*.” These realms in turn are populated by the nine hierarchies, identified also in the corresponding first three sections of the Foundation Stone Meditation: “Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones,” in the sphere of the stars; “Kyriotetes, Dynamis, Exusiai,” in the Sun sphere; and “Archai, Archangeloi and

Angeloi” in the Moon sphere. Here we see a further elaboration of the elements of the composite being of Isis/Sophia afforded by the New Mysteries found in the Foundation Stone Meditation.

Through this elaboration of elements we are being introduced to the complex physiological structure of the cosmic Isis/Sophia. What is especially remarkable in the meditation is that no clear distinction is made between the physical human being bounded by our skin, as we know ourselves in everyday consciousness, and this stupendous universal being of Sophia who, as we said, is barely incomprehensible! This Meditation in its structure is meant to be a vehicle to experience the meaning of Anthroposophy in its entirety, which by definition seeks to “unite the spiritual in the human being with the spiritual in the cosmos.” The meeting with the spiritual in the cosmos IS the meeting with Isis/Sophia—the exalted goal of all mystery teaching and practice since ancient times.

The New Mysteries, as noted earlier, speaks of Isis/Sophia as an accessible, present reality: “I am the Human Being, I am the Past, Present and Future. *Every mortal should lift my veil.*” (emphasis mine) This is possible today as a result of the stupendous cosmic mystery-deed that occurred on Golgotha hill—as St. Paul says to Timothy: “This grace was given us in Christ Jesus [...] it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” [6]

We mentioned earlier that Sophia is a unifying and harmonizing being a being who is identified by Pavel Florensky, the renowned Russian philosopher and theologian of Sophia, as *Omnia Conjungo*: “She who unites all.” If we understand knowledge correctly, if we allow our cognition to be as profound and pervasive as it ought to be, we won’t count ourselves as real knowers until we understand ourselves and the universe in a *Sophianic* way. To accomplish this we must be able to enter into the Foundation Stone Meditation in a real and living way uniting and harmonizing all of the elements referred to: the human and cosmic elements. If we take this challenge seriously we will discover that we are “poor in spirit.” Being poor in spirit is a condition that invokes the mood of questioning, called by Rudolf Steiner “the Parsifal mood,” the key to the door of the Grail Castle, which alone can open us to the *reality* of the comprehensive science of the spirit—that consists not merely of spiritual ideas and abstractions—but the spiritual beings who are the foundation of human and cosmic existence.

The Foundation Stone Meditation is a sort of paean to Isis/Sophia—an exalted, joyful participation in her Being. It leads us directly to her from the very first words: “Soul of Man/Thou livest in the limbs/That bear thee through the world of space/ Into the spirit’s ocean of being.” As we contemplate it we are set squarely before the towering cosmic being that is Isis/Sophia with the knowledge that as we gaze upon her we are in truth also gazing upon a cosmic picture of ourselves. In this knowing, though we stand so tiny at her feet, we simultaneously expand and ascend to a greater experience—a true encounter with

Isis/Sophia. We unite with her in all her majestic beauty and nobility, feeling the grand sweeping orbits of the Earth, the Moon, the Sun and the Zodiac, spiral upon spiral—as movements in our own bodies, embraced in her bosom with the enlivening power of cosmic/human will, feeling and thinking—uniting the heights, the breadths and the depths in us. Such is the objective of this Meditation—to know the living hierarchical beings that inhabit our Pan-Wisdom, which is to say the temple of our bodies.

Let us now expand upon the correspondence of the Foundation Stone Meditation with the image of Isis/Sophia from the Revelations of St. John by examining the remainder of the text, which says, of the heavenly woman Isis/Sophia: “...and she being with child cried, travailing in birth[...]and she brought forth a man-child who was to rule the nations with an iron rod[...]” We will compare the spirit of these words with the spirit of the fourth stanza of the Foundation Stone Meditation, which begins: “At the turning point of time/The Spirit Light of Worlds/Entered the Stream of Earthly Being.”

These words describing a birth seen with spirit vision show us the fruit of the wisdom of this great being who encompasses all the wisdom of the mysteries. Out of her deep wisdom and compassion, the “grace and truth” [7] that is characteristic of the new mysteries, which are a culmination and a fulfillment of all of the hopes and aspirations of previous mystery traditions, something is born. Modern spiritual science is the culmination of the teaching of the mysteries of previous ages. Out of it, when properly applied, grows new human capacities, capacities that resemble those of the earliest initiates who were priest-kings. These priest-kings were gifted as an elite class of men and women with the cosmic wisdom to rule their nations—it was a wisdom that united heavenly with earthly knowledge. Today this heavenly and earthly knowledge is being born out of the modern mysteries in the form of human beings imbued with the reality of spiritual science—who embody both the “light that warms simple shepherds hearts” and the “light that enlightens the wise heads of kings.” (quoting from the fourth stanza of the FSM) It is the modern emergence of human beings who resemble the priest/king initiates of the past. But today they are not an elite class but rather a segment of humanity called to represent all people—representatives of humanity. In this they resemble their mother (Isis/Mary/Sophia) who is called “the mother of all peoples.”

At the time of the Mystery of Golgotha, the fulfillment of the goals of mystery wisdom were born on Earth in an extraordinary way when Jesus of Nazareth became the Messiah, the anointed one, at the baptism by John, in the river Jordan—when the Christ being descended upon him, seen imaginatively as a dove. This was the birth of Christ on earth. St. Paul calls Jesus Christ “the first-born of many brethren.” Despite the fact that Mary did give birth to Christ Jesus, this birth, nevertheless, is not what the vision of John is referring to as a “man-child.” John’s vision points to the future—to our time when the fruits of spiritual scientific wisdom are beginning to take root, fruits that are as yet not mature. The child we are referring to is a corporate human being that is born out of a relationship with Christ and Sophia—a community. The fruit of the wisdom of the mysteries was fully

mature in Jesus Christ, mature enough to live out its life unto death—overcoming death. The wisdom that was mature in Christ is far from being mature in the children of the mysteries in our time. They will only reach a modest level of maturity in the 6th cultural epoch some 3500 years from now. These mature children will “rule the nations” when spiritual knowledge is ripe enough in a sufficient number of individuals to produce a consensus such as what exists today in the natural scientific community. [8] This consensus will be based on a science of the spirit that will embrace all the earthly sciences elevating them to the noble aims of the spirit. At this time spiritual science will replace and transform materialistic natural science.

Referring back to the Biblical text, which speaks of a “man-child” being born of Isis/Sophia, let us attempt to further penetrate the meaning of this strange being called a man-child, which we have just begun to illuminate. How can this being be both a man and a child? It is a child because it is an offspring of the *new* mysteries; it might be called the “first fruits [9]” of the cosmic wisdom that comes with the return of Christ in the etheric in our time. It is also “a child” since it has been connected to the cosmic youth forces—what Rudolf Steiner calls the “great vivifying, vitalizing power of the Nathan Jesus-child. [10] Without these forces humanity cannot rise from the old to the new mysteries. This man-child, therefore, is youthful while it possesses a mature wisdom. It possesses the strength of the wisdom of the old mysteries, which is like iron that will rule *in the future*. The man-child is not ready to rule the nations but it *will be* ready in the before-mentioned sixth cultural epoch, which the scripture refers to as the time of “Philadelphia,” the church of human love.

What does all this have to do with the Foundation Stone Meditation? If we contemplate the first three sections of the meditation, which refer to the tripartite being of Isis/Sophia made transparent to the human soul we can get a picture of the mature mysteries—of the soul of man comprehending its universal constitution—as a being of both Heaven AND Earth. In the Representative of Humanity the gesture of the arms and hands (left raised, right lowered) speaks of the middle path between Heaven and Earth. In the Foundation Stone the same gesture is intimated with the words: Stanza I: “Let there ring out from the Heights/What in the Depths is echoed”; Stanza II: “Practice Spirit Awareness/In balance of soul”; Stanza III: “Let there be prayed from the Depths/What in the Heights will be granted.

The first three stanzas are a recapitulation of the old mysteries. In antiquity, when one beheld the divine being Isis/Sophia one beheld the depths (moon forces) [11] and the heights (crown of twelve stars) in a form that at once represented unity, harmony of purpose and beauty.

If we contemplate the final (4th) section of the Foundation Stone, in the context of our discussion, we will get a picture of the NEW power, since the Mystery Golgotha, that Christ has to bestow the “priest/king” wisdom on those who can receive it.

At the turning point of time  
The Spirit Light of Worlds  
Entered the Stream of Earthly Being.  
Darkness of Night had held its sway,  
Day-radiant Light poured into the hearts of men.  
Light that warms simple Shepherds Hearts,  
Light that enlightens the wise Heads of Kings.

The priestly and kingly wisdom spoken of here, is what was represented in the *shepherds* that beheld the newborn Jesus of the Nathan lineage (in Luke), and the three *kings* from the East that brought gifts to the Jesus child from the Solomon line (in Matthew). This wisdom pours forth from Christ at the event of the Mystery of Golgotha. And it pours forth with renewed strength in the words we are contemplating, with the founding of the new mysteries by Rudolf Steiner—through the Foundation Stone Meditation. What is born out of the Foundation Stone, behind the veil of the language, what is born of Isis/Sophia, is a *young* child of the *mature* mysteries: a child who will eventually bear a scepter or staff of iron. The Greek word used for “staff” or “rod,” which we have quoted from Revelations 12, is the same word that is used in Revelations chapter 11, verse 1, for a measuring device to measure the temple of God. In John’s own words: “And was given to me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood saying: Rise and measure the temple of God...” So this staff of iron can indicate both a *scepter* and a *ruler* or measuring device, giving a special meaning to the phrase: “who will *rule* the nations.” [12]

Students of spiritual science will recognize in the reference to “a rod of iron” the strength that Archangel Michael bestows upon those who are schooled by him. Archangel Michael is the *ruler* of cosmic intelligence who stands at the right hand of Christ and is the exalted inspirer of Anthroposophical Spiritual Science. He is the leading messenger of the Christ being in the spiritual world. The content of spiritual science, we might say, is built up from spiritual iron, the strength of initiation wisdom. It is a wisdom this is not like ordinary earthly wisdom: it is wisdom that has fallen to earth to die and be reborn in the human “I” as love. [13] It is divine wisdom and love made human—the stuff out of which the Temple of Humanity is built which is why Rudolf Steiner sometimes called the Foundation Stone—the “Foundation Stone of Love.”

And this “Stone of Love” is founded in good deeds, which are the building blocks for the new grail temple that is being established on Earth. Therefore the meditation ends with this  
prayer:

O light Divine,  
O Sun of Christ,  
Warm thou our hearts  
Enlighten thou our heads,  
That good may become  
What we from our hearts do found  
And our heads direct  
With single purpose.

Finally, we see the intended issue of the Foundation Stone laid in the hearts of men and women for the building of the new Temple of Humanity—proceeding from deeds of wisdom and love born by those who are the children of Isis/Sophia. These deeds of wisdom and love are the result of the “light” and “warmth” bestowed by Christ, which refer to *personal* human feeling and will raised to *impersonal*, universal, living “thought” and “meaning.” These later lay hidden behind the light and warmth since “the Fall” of humanity through the influence of Luciferic powers. Living thought and meaning are the feminine counterparts of the light and warmth ethers representing the higher feeling and will forces that were withdrawn, as the Divine Mother had been forced to withdraw, remaining in the background, largely unreachable in the Golden Land of Shambhala, in the core of the Earth.

With the deed of Christ the “tree of life,” which is another name for the higher counterparts of the warmth and light ethers, are restored to humanity since their removal at the Fall. [14] It is through Christ uniting with Isis/Sophia when he descended into the depths of the Earth that our own meeting with Isis/Sophia becomes possible. Herein Christ has opened the path to Shambhala—the path to the Mother where comes the higher light and warmth ethers. Here the secret, hidden power of the Foundation Stone Meditation is revealed.

A foundation stone is a stone laid as a cornerstone in a building that is meant to prefigure the higher purpose of the building, and the quality of the substance of its structure, which is soul/spiritual in nature. The quality and substance of the children of Isis/Sophia are that they are young in the wisdom of the *new* mysteries that streamed in through the youthful etheric forces of the Christ [15] but bear the *ancient* wisdom, the manly iron-strong wisdom of spiritual science, and may therefore be called a “man-child.” If we ponder the last stanza (4th) of the Foundation Stone Meditation (quoted above) we will see that it is dedicated to birthing this “man child” out of the cosmic being of Isis/Sophia.

In summary, behind the words of Christ given through the Foundation Stone, we can see the being of Isis/Sophia giving birth to the children of the Age of Light, the Satya Yuga, that will have a certain fulfillment in the sixth cultural epoch some 2500-3500 years from now. Sophia gives birth to these children in our time under the guardianship of Archangel



Michael who is himself an offspring of Isis/Sophia, [16] and is therefore our companion and brother in the work—opening the path to Shambhala. In light of this, may our work with the Foundation Stone Meditation lead us to a meeting with the invisible Isis/Sophia, the Isis of the new age, who alone can inspire us to envision the future when out of the mature wisdom of the mysteries a “man-child will rule the nations” bringing peace and healing to our world [17] through the common knowledge of the living being of Wisdom, the Pan-Wisdom who unites all, and who, dwelling in human beings, we refer to as Anthroposophia.

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[1] Having survived the fire that destroyed the first Goetheanum, the sculpture stands today—actually incomplete.

[2] Rudolf Steiner, *The Legend of the New Isis*, Dornach, January 6, 1918

[3] In a later incarnation as the founder of the Brotherhood of the Rose Cross he laid the esoteric groundwork for Anthroposophical Spiritual Science.

[4] In Richard Wagner’s libretto for the opera Parsifal, which Rudolf Steiner called significant by the fact that it adds to our understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha.

[5] For a further elaboration and explanation of this concept see the authors article entitled:

*Archangel Michael, How Can We Know Him: Part III, Spiritualizing the Knowledge of Space*, which may be found at:

[https://www.academia.edu/4738460/Archangel\\_Michael\\_How\\_Can\\_We\\_Know\\_Him\\_Part\\_I\\_II\\_Spiritualizing\\_the\\_Knowledge\\_of\\_Space](https://www.academia.edu/4738460/Archangel_Michael_How_Can_We_Know_Him_Part_I_II_Spiritualizing_the_Knowledge_of_Space) or at: <http://www.anthroposophy.org/articles/>

[6] New Testament, II Timothy 1:9-10

[7] We are referring to the characterization St. John gave to “the Word made flesh” that “dwelt among us.” John says: “...the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” The law was truth without grace. Therefore the new mysteries are a reflection of both truth and grace or wisdom and compassion. Quotations from *The Gospel of John*, chapter 1.

[8] For more on this subject see the pamphlet: *Preparing for the Sixth Epoch*, a lecture by Rudolf Steiner given in Dusseldorf, June 15, 1915, GA 159. Available in the Rudolf Steiner Archive: [wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/19150615p01.html](http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/19150615p01.html), or at [www.SteinerBooks.com](http://www.SteinerBooks.com)

[9] See *The Holy Bible*, Revelation 14:4 for characteristics of the “firstfruits.”

[10] Rudolf Steiner: *Gospel of Luke cycle*, Lecture IV; GA 114.

[11] The moon forces despite their appearance above the Earth represent the greatest depths of Earth since, because of the density of its substance it was removed from the Earth during the Lemurian Period of the Earth’s development.

[12] While rarely used in this sense today, the original meaning of “ruler” had this same connotation.

[13] For a more lengthy discussion of the quality and strength of initiation wisdom see the author’s article entitled: *Archangel Michael: How Can We Know Him? Part III, Spiritualizing the Knowledge of Space*. This article may be found at:

<https://independent.academia.edu/BillTrusiewicz> or  
at: <http://www.anthroposophy.org/articles/>

[14] For a more thorough explanation of the four ethers and the tree of life see: *According to Luke, Christ the Great Mystery of Earth Evolution*, Chapter 7, Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophic Press.

[15] Who restored to humanity the “tree of life”—the sound and meaning ethers, the source of life for human hearts and heads.

[16] See: *The Heavenly Sophia and the Being Anthroposophia*, Chapter 7, The Sophia and the Archangel Michael; by Sergei O. Prokofieff; Temple Lodge.

[17] It is believed that a widespread knowledge of Christ will bring in an era of peace, which students of the Bible refer to as “The Millennium.”

Bill Trusiewicz  
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