Anthroposophy in Finland

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The Finnish Anthroposophical Society

The Finnish section of the Anthroposophical Society was founded in 1923 by Uno Donner (1872–1958), at Steiner’s own request. Donner acted as the chairman from the founding of the society in Finland until 1932. The society was officially registered on 16 April 1970, and is today run by a board of directors consisting of eight people.

The activities of the society are diverse, and take a holistic approach where religious issues are treated in conjunction with themes from philosophy, art, science, and so forth. Consequently, the activities include everything from lectures and seminars to various artistic performances. The society is based in Helsinki, where an Anthroposophical library is maintained, but activities are arranged in thirty-two other regions in the country. In addition, Swedish-language activities are organised in several Finnish cities. The society also publishes Anthroposophical literature and the journal Takoja four times annually. Dues-paying members receive the journal Kirjokansi. The membership was approximately 730 people according to information available in October 2009.

The Christian Community in Finland

Suomen Kristiyhteisö is the Finnish section of the Christian Community founded in Germany in 1922. The community is based on Anthroposophical interpretations of Protestant Christianity. The Finnish section was founded in 1967 by Steiner school teacher Helmer Knutar (1926–1991), who was ordained at the Christian Community seminar in Stuttgart in the early 1960s. The society was registered as a religious community on 5 September 1969.

In the beginning the community was based in Helsinki, but in 1983 its centre was moved to Tampere. Congregations exist in Helsinki, Tampere, Lahti, and Tammisaari, and activities are organised in nine other regions in Finland. The Community has four ordained priests in Finland. Since 1980 the journal Kristiyhteisö (Christian Community) has been published in four issues per year. There were 251 members in 2008, which is a significant growth since the early to mid-2000s, when the Community had less than one hundred members.
Anthroposophical Medicine

Antroposofisen lääketieteen yhdistys/Föreningen för antroposofisk medicin (The Association for Anthroposophical Medicine) is a Finnish association with the aim of supporting and promoting the school of holistic healing created by Rudolf Steiner and Ita Wegman. The association was officially registered on 18 November 1987. It also works as an expert body in dealings with government officials, assesses research done on Anthroposophical medicine, publishes material, and in general provides information.

In addition, a professional association – Antroposofisen lääketieteen lääkäri-yhdistys (ALLY, the Medical Professional Association for Anthroposophical Medicine) – was founded in 1993. The membership is divided into regular members – who need to be certified medical doctors, dentists, or veterinarians, or people who have a bachelor degree in one of these areas, and who are members of the international association for Anthropological medicine, Internationale Vereinigung anthroposophischer Ärztegesellschaften – and extraordinary members – who are medical professionals or students, but are not members of the international association.

There are no Anthroposophical hospitals in Finland – the closest one is in Järna, Sweden – nor are there any educational institutions for Anthropological medicine – the closest location also in this regard is in Sweden. Facilities for Anthroposophical treatment pedagogy do, however, exist in thirteen locations in Finland. These are special needs schools and nursing homes for mentally disabled youths and adults, operating according to the Anthroposophical Camphill philosophy developed in the 1940s by Austrian paediatrician Karl König (1902–1966). Facilities operating with this philosophy are the Myylälähde yhteisö in Hämeenkoski, the Sylvia-koti yhteisö in Lahti (founded 1956 in Jorvas, moved to Hyvinkää in 1962, and finally to Lahti in 1970), and Tapolan kyläyhteisö in Niinikoski (founded 1974).

Waldorf Education

Waldorf schools – locally called Steiner schools (Steinerkoulu) – have existed in Finland since 1955 when the first school was opened in Helsinki. Twenty-four Steiner schools – two of which are Swedish-language schools – and three special needs schools operate in Finland, and the website Steinerkoulu.fi claims that more than 5,000 children were enrolled in the Waldorf system in the fall of 2007. Education is provided from elementary school-level (age seven) all the way to secondary education (until age nineteen). In addition forty-five Steiner