

Service Ideals in the Rosicrucian Movement

John Nash

Summary

The Western Esoteric Tradition is known for its rich mosaic of occult studies, ritual, magic, alchemy and even mysticism; but it has never earned a reputation for service that could compete with, say, the monastic orders. Nevertheless, classical Rosicrucian texts present ideals of teaching, healing and brotherhood that continue to inspire us today.

This article explores the environment, events and writings that gave birth to the Rosicrucian movement and eventually brought it into the modern age. Special emphasis is given to the emergence of service ideals and the halting steps to practice them, both in the “classical period” and in subsequent periods of Rosicrucian history. The hope is that all of us can express these ideals more completely in today’s climate of increasing group consciousness.

Background

The Rosicrucian movement, the first significant esoteric movement to emerge from Protestant Christianity, started less than a century from the day Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. Like the Reformation itself, the Rosicrucian movement initially had a distinctively German character, although it was influenced by antecedents in England, Bohemia, Italy, Spain, and the Islamic world. It reflected Neoplatonic, Qabalistic, and Hermetic teachings as well as Protestant doctrine and practices. In particular, the movement expressed a strong sense of evangelical piety, not uncommon in early 17th-century Europe. Its own influence would spread far beyond the principality of the Rhine Palatinate in which it was born to make a major contribution to the Western Esoteric Tradition.

The movement began with the appearance of two documents which came to be known as the

Rosicrucian Manifestos. The *Fama Fraternitatis, des Loblichen Ordens des Rosenkreutzes* (“The Declaration of the Worthy Order of the Rosy Cross”), written mostly in German but with occasional Latin passages, was circulated informally as early as 1610 and published in 1614. The *Confessio Fraternitatis R.C. ad Eruditos Europea* (“Confession of the Fraternity R. C. to the Learned of Europe”), written entirely in Latin, was published a year later.

The *Confessio* was published together with an alchemical text: *Secretioris Philosophiae Consideratio Brevis a Philippo à Gabella* (“Consideration of the More Secret Philosophy by Philip à Gabella”), a paraphrase of a work by English mathematician and occultist John Dee (1527–1608).¹ Also associated with the Manifestos was a much longer alchemical allegory, *Die Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosenkreuz* (“The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreuz”) by German Protestant theologian Johann Valentin Andreae (1586–1642). It was published in 1616 but was based on a draft written when the author was only 16 years old. Authorship of the *Fama* and *Confessio* has not been established, although speculation has linked them to a variety of people, including Dee, Andreae, and even Francis Bacon (1561–1626).

The Rosicrucian Manifestos revealed a politico-religious agenda: overthrow of the papacy; initiation of a “General Reformation” in Christianity; and return to an Edenic paradise, presumably under the protection of the Elector

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Palatine, Frederick V.² The Palatinate, a jurisdiction consisting of two separate territories extending across south-central Germany, provided a fertile environment for occultism; and most of the events surrounding the Manifestos took place there.³ The *Chymical Wedding* describes the seven-day celebration of a royal wedding. The scene, a large castle, resembled the palace in the Palatine capital of Heidelberg; and the wedding is thought to have been inspired by the post-nuptial celebrations of Frederick and English Princess Elizabeth Stuart.

“Electors” were princes and kings designated to elect the Holy Roman Emperor. The Elector Palatine’s importance was reflected in the fact that he wielded seven votes. Frederick V’s power peaked in 1619 when he accepted the crown of neighboring Bohemia. However, by 1622 his army had been defeated in Prague, the Palatinate was overrun by Catholic forces, and Heidelberg lay in ruins. By then the 30-Years War was in full swing.⁴ The political objectives obviously were not achieved, and “Rosicrucianism,” as it was eventually termed, was largely suppressed during the war.

The Rosicrucian Prophecy

However, the main thrust of the Rosicrucian Manifestos was more idealistic and consequently unaffected by external events. The *Fama* and *Confessio* describe a mysterious and probably mythical individual referred to simply as Father (or Brother) C. R. C. Allegedly he was born in 1378 and lived to the age of 106, remarkably longevity for the time. The *Chymical Wedding* identified him as “Christian Rosencreutz,” where *Rosencreutz* is the German for “Rose Cross.” According to the *Fama*, Father C. R. C. traveled throughout the Middle East and North Africa where he came into the possession of secret teachings, including “mathematics, physic and magic,”⁵ which, he hoped, could change the course of world history. But, after a fruitless attempt to interest

Spanish authorities in the teachings, he returned to Germany and in 1408 founded a secret brotherhood: the Fraternity of the Rose Cross. The Brothers lived together for a while but then dispersed to work in different countries. They were told to “follow the custom of the country” and not wear distinctive clothing. Moreover; “The Fraternity should remain secret for one hundred years.”⁶ Whereas the Manifestos were addressed—indeed “trumpeted”—to the “erudite of Europe,” the Fraternity kept a low profile.

The notion of secret Brotherhoods was not new. Occult and mystical movements evolved in parallel with mainstream Christianity and

Judaism, offering an alternative to the beliefs, practices and authority of exoteric religion. Secrecy was necessary because of the relentless opposition of the church and ruthless persecution both by the Inquisition and by secular authorities. Nevertheless, occult societies flourished among the aristocracy and royalty of Europe, and not surprisingly their esotericism overlapped with political interests. Such was the environment in which the Rosicrucian Manifestos were published.

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Initially, we are told, the Fraternity of the Rose Cross consisted of only four Brothers, although four others were recruited during Father C. R. C.’s lifetime. Even eight brothers might seem a very small number, considering the importance of their work. However, we recall that, with only nine members the Knights Templar took on the enormous responsibility of protecting European pilgrims traveling to the Holy Land.⁷ Several commentators have noted similarities between the Templars and the Fraternity of the Rose Cross.

However, the *Confessio* mentions a decree “to increase and enlarge the number of our Fraternity;”⁸ and men across Protestant Europe were urged to join the Brotherhood. But numerous

efforts to contact it failed. Perhaps none of the applicants met the necessary standards. The Manifestos warned against any attempt to gain the secret knowledge out of curiosity or for personal gain. The *Confessio* explains: “A thousand times the unworthy may clamour, a thousand times present themselves, yet God hath commanded our ears that they should hear none of them.”⁹ Scholars have long debated whether the Fraternity ever existed.

A plausible theory, at least for esotericists, is that the Brothers were higher beings. To quote Manly Palmer Hall (1901–1990): “[T]he true Rosicrucian Brotherhood consisted of a limited number of highly developed adepts, or initiates.”¹⁰ In other words, the Fraternity’s work—presumably including publication of the Manifestos—represented an episode in the Planetary Hierarchy’s periodic intervention in human affairs. Hall goes on to say: “[T]hose of the higher degrees were “no longer subject to the laws of mortality.” Father C. R. C.’s alleged longevity was no more remarkable than that of fellow adept, the Count of Sainte-Germain.¹¹

Paul Foster Case (1884–1954) concludes on the basis of an analysis using gematria, that “Father C. R. C.” was none other than Jesus Christ.¹² He also asserts that the Fraternity of the Rose Cross always has been an invisible order; people do not recognize the Brothers “because cause the minds behind those eyes cannot recognize the marks of a true Rosicrucian.”¹³ The Fraternity, he argues,

does not come in corporate form before the world, because by its very nature it cannot. True Rosicrucians know one another, nevertheless. Their means of recognition cannot be counterfeited nor betrayed, for these tokens are more subtle than the signs and passwords of ordinary secret societies.¹⁴

Case almost seems to be describing what the Tibetan Master Djwhal Khul calls the New Group of World Servers. This latter is a “loose linking together of all men of constructive peace aims and goodwill who lay the emphasis upon the... need of establishing right human relations.”¹⁵ The Tibetan emphasizes that the Group—like the Fraternity of the Rose

Cross—is united by the common vision of “creation of the new civilisation and of the new world order.”¹⁶ It stands apart from human institutions, including religion sects:

This group in no way interferes with the allegiance and loyalties of any man. It is a banding together of all who seek to express the spirit of Christ and who are free from the spirit of hatred and revenge. The challenge of this group to the world is to drop all antagonisms and antipathies, all hatred and racial differences, and attempt to live in terms of the one family, the one life, and the one humanity.¹⁷

Theosophist Charles Leadbeater takes a contrasting view, insisting that both the Fraternity and Father C. R. C. actually existed. He asserts boldly:

Despite the assertions of scholars and the absence of corroborating evidence, Christian Rosencreutz did indeed found the Order of the Rose Cross, and he was in fact an incarnation of mighty Master of the Wisdom who [sic] we revere today as the H.O.A.T.F. [Head of All True Freemasons].¹⁸

Teachings

According to the Manifestos, Father C. R. C. shared the secret knowledge acquired on his travels to the Brothers who, in turn, were charged with communicating the “great treasure” to hand-picked successors. The Fraternity was “divided into grades;”¹⁹ so presumably the teachings were to be given out little-by-little, as the seeker after enlightenment moved up through the initiatory ranks.

Among the Fraternity’s tasks was to breathe new life into European philosophy. And the *Confessio* affirmed that the secret teachings would “lay a new foundation of sciences.”²⁰ Some aspects of the teachings could be reduced to writing, but a major part was revealed by the “*Librum Naturae*,” the Book of Nature.²¹ Evidently observation and experimentation were to be encouraged, an approach to knowledge which Francis Bacon would certainly support. Importantly, we learn, Father C. R. C. had mastered “the transmutation of

metals,” although the quest for riches was of no concern to him, and he distained “all vain glory and pomp.”²² This reference to alchemy comes as no surprise since alchemical texts were published together with the Manifestos. In any event, astrology, alchemy and magic were conspicuous elements of Renaissance

Figure 1. The Invisible College.

Attributed to “Theophilus Schweighardt,” 1618.



science. But in this regard we must remember that the term “magic” was applied broadly, even to mathematics and mechanics.²³ Since the time of Pythagoras mathematics was considered not only *compatible* with esoterica but as an esoteric discipline in its own right.

The Brothers had an important teaching mission. But this mission was confined to the Fraternity itself; and membership evidently was by invitation only. The general invitation to the “erudite of Europe” to participate in the Fraternity’s work rang hollow since nobody

could find it. The combination of the teaching mission and the secrecy led to speculation that the Fraternity formed an “Invisible College,” although that term does not actually appear in the Manifestos. A famous print (Figure 1) shows a tall building equipped, among other things, with a drawbridge, wheels and wings. A scroll above the building proclaims “Collegium Fraternitatis” and bears the date: 1618.²⁴ Presumably, the drawbridge symbolizes inaccessibility, the wheels mobility, and the wings either angelic connections—one of John Dee’s favorite themes—or further mobility.

The notion of an Invisible College has experienced a modern reincarnation; more than one distance-learning program describes itself in those terms. An invisible college actually materialized a quarter-century after publication of the Manifestos—in a surprising context. In 1646 Robert Boyle (1627–1691), distinguished scientist and member of the London and Oxford groups that eventually developed into the Royal Society of London, referred to the embryonic institution thus: “The best of it is that the cornerstones of the Invisible (or as they term themselves the Philosophical) College, do now and then honour me with their company.”²⁵ Several members of the same groups also had Rosicrucian associations. The Royal Society was finally chartered in 1662, and soon became a bastion of rational science. However, its roots lay in the Renaissance science to which Raymon Lull (1225–1315), Cornelius Agrippa (1486–1535), John Dee, Robert Fludd (1574–1637), and many others all contributed. Francis Bacon, often championed as the father of empirical science and the first man to claim that “knowledge is power,”²⁶ in fact retained much of the Renaissance tradition and thus formed a connecting link with the past. In any event, the very motives for establishing the Royal Society can be linked to the quest for enlightenment heralded in the Rosicrucian Manifestos.

Healing

The *Fama* also emphasized the Fraternity’s mission of love and compassion. In the early days the Brothers “did live together above all others in... most kindness towards another.”

They tried to transcribe the teachings, we are told, but “the unspeakable concourse of the sick hindered them.” Before they departed for different countries, the Brothers committed themselves to a number of precepts, one of which was to “profess [nothing but] to cure the sick, and that gratis.” Indeed we read that “Brother I. O.,” who went to England, “cured a young Earl of Norfolk of the leprosie.”²⁷ This story may be apocryphal; there was indeed an intermittent line of Earls of Norfolk from 1075 to 1660; but historic records do not mention any of them being afflicted with leprosy.²⁸ Be that as it may, the ideal of ministering to the sick at no charge was a noble ideal previously put into practice only by monastic orders. The author of the *Fama* wishes that there were “more love and kindness” among German physicians.²⁹

Precisely what form of healing the Brothers practiced is unclear. During the period when Father C. R. C. is alleged to have lived, medical practice generally followed the classical work of Galen (c. 129–210 CE), although the “physic” he learned on his travels may have been more advanced.

When the Manifestos were published the newer methods of Paracelsus (1493–1541) were gaining popularity; and indeed the Manifestos appear to support Paracelsus over Galen. Swiss-born Paracelsus, whose real name was Philippus Aureolus, combined the use of mineral medicines, magnetism, alchemy and magic in his medical practice.³⁰ Although his work as a physician and surgeon won wide acclaim, he invited controversy and was constantly hounded and persecuted by traditional medical authorities.³¹

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Or perhaps the Brothers employed some form of spiritual healing. It is doubtful that even Paracelsus could have cured leprosy, using nothing more than medical or magnetic therapy. Moreover, the successful use of alchemical or magic techniques would be problematic for an ordinary person. But it might be feasible for an adept. Alchemists sought to produce the Philosopher’s Stone—*Lapis Philosophicus*—that could be used to transmute base metals into gold but, more importantly, could cure disease and secure longevity. Precisely what the Philosopher’s Stone was has never

been determined, but in any event only high adepts could hope to produce it.³² The Stone may have been an expression of their higher consciousness or a channel for their superior power.

Regardless of what types of therapies were envisioned, the healing mission does not seem to have been pursued in Rosicrucian circles for more than 200 years. The healing work of the Brothers seems to have been viewed in much the same

way as early Christians viewed the healing ministry of Jesus: impressive but not intended to continue beyond its short dispensation.

Enlightenment and Utopia

The Rosicrucian Manifestos contain apocalyptic passages such as: “[T]he world is falling to decay, and near its end.”³³ However, they also have a strong utopian flavor, offering prophecies of a return to Paradisal wisdom and blessings. The *Confessio* promises

an influx of truth, light, and grandeur, such as [God] commanded should accompany

Adam from Paradise, and sweeten the misery of man. Wherefore there shall cease all falsehood, darkness, and bondage.³⁴

Leaving aside the issue of what political environment might nurture that utopia, the Manifestos proclaim considerable optimism. As a sign that a new age was imminent, new stars “appeared in the constellations Serpentarius and Cygnus.”³⁵ This remark might have had an astronomical basis, or it might have referred to the appearance of the Brothers, bringing new light into the world.

Utopian writings were not new in the 17th century; Thomas Moore (1478–1535) had published his famous work 100 years earlier. But the “Rosicrucian” period saw a number of important works of this genre. Among them were Francis Bacon’s *New Atlantis* and Thommaso Campanella’s (1568–1639) *City of the Sun*, written while its author was imprisoned in Naples. Bacon’s work—and even the Rosicrucian Manifestos themselves—are claimed to have been contributing factors in inspiring the American Revolution.³⁶

We also find the *Republicae Christianopolitanae Descriptio* by none other than Johann Andreae, author of the *Chymical Wedding*. The *Republicae* describes the utopian city of Christiopolis, center of a harmoniously ordered society structured on mathematical and scientific principles. But its science was still Renaissance science, with a Hermetic orientation, and angelic presences were once more in evidence. Importantly; there was also strong emphasis on philanthropy and on the practical matters of living.³⁷ Christiopolis was fictional, but Andreae established the Societas Christiana, a real society expressing Christian utopian principles. The Societas, formed between 1618 and 1620, foundered with the onset of war; however, Andreae made an attempt to restart it in 1628.³⁸ Other Christian Societies or Christian Unions were established on similar lines. As we have seen, the Royal Society also offered a kind of utopia, at least in the area of scientific research.

The Moravian scholar Jan Amos Comenius (1592–1670) is best known as an educational reformer and proponent of *pansophism*—a

synthesis of religion, philosophy and science—fields that were certainly consistent with Rosicrucian principles. In fact he was well-acquainted with the Manifestos and related literature. He also had the opportunity to observe the rise and fall of Frederick V closely during his travels to Heidelberg, to Prague, and then into exile as the 30-Years War raged. Comenius grew up in Bohemia in the stimulating environment created by Emperor Rudolph II (1552–1612), Catholic but strongly supportive of scholarship and the Hermetic arts.³⁹ However, in contrast to most of the “Rosicrucians,” including his teacher Andreae, Comenius’ own background was not Lutheran or Calvinist but *Unitas Fratrum*, the main branch of the Hussite reform movement that preceded Luther by more than a century.⁴⁰ An important characteristic of Unitas, as its name implied, was insistence on the unity of all Christendom and the avoidance of sectarianism that, sadly, would divide the reformed churches of the West.⁴¹

Comenius emerged as one of the most effective commentators on early Rosicrucianism. In *The Labyrinth of the World* he described the excitement created by the Manifestos and the promise of new learning and then the disillusionment when seekers found that they were unable to acquire and exploit the new knowledge.⁴² In retrospect we can see that the disillusionment stemmed from the naïve assumption that higher wisdom could be obtained without the long years of training and effort characteristic of the initiatory path. The expectation of “instant enlightenment” was as common in the 17th century as it is today. The Manifestos held out the promise of what could be achieved—either by individuals or by the larger society—only if timeless principles of self-development were followed. There are no short-cuts. For people who had not conquered ego, materialism or greed, possession of higher knowledge would be as dangerous as possession of the Philosopher’s Stone.

Comenius finally achieved enlightenment after a long search. He found it, not in the secular institutions, the churches or popular cults and fads but in his own heart. “[W]here God is,” he exclaims, “there is heaven; where heaven is,

there is eternal joy.”⁴³ In contrast, he adds wryly, “All worldly joy is but a shadow, a joke, a mockery.” Comenius insisted that one should not give offense, do harm to one’s neighbor, or “seize the property of others.”⁴⁴ His vision of tolerance was ahead of its time. Still, he mentioned “service” only in connection with one’s relationship with God.

The Rosicrucian Heritage

“Rosicrucian” groups were formed in the early-to-mid 17th century, some of them fraudulently claiming to be the true Fraternity of the Rose Cross. However, there was little activity for several decades, partly because of disillusionment at the collapse of the Palatinate and partly because of widespread witch hunts provoked by the 30-Years War and Counterreformation.⁴⁵ Since that time numerous fraternal orders have been established in imitation of the Rose Cross; some have used the name “Rosicrucian,” although none can claim unbroken lineage from the early 17th century. Much larger numbers of people have been inspired by the Manifestos and their teachings. The Rosicrucian message could not be extinguished.

One of the first modern Rosicrucian bodies was the *Fraternitas Rosae Crucis*, founded in the United States in 1858 by Pascal Beverly Randolph (1825–1875). And the *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia* was founded in the United Kingdom in 1865 by Robert Wentworth Little (1840–1878) and six other Freemasons. Still in existence, it describes itself as “an independent Christian Society.”⁴⁶ All of its members are stated to be Master Masons; however, the *Societas* emphasizes that “It is something beyond and outside Freemasonry.”

In 1888, three senior members of the *Societas*: William Wynn Westcott (1865–1928), William Robert Woodman (1828–1891), and Samuel Liddell “MacGregor” Mathers (1854–1918), formed the Hermetic Society of the Golden Dawn.⁴⁷ Its charter called for preservation of “the body of knowledge known as Hermeticism or the Western Esoteric Tradition.”⁴⁸ The Golden Dawn was dedicated to the philosophical, spiritual, and psychic evolution of humanity. Another stated goal was tolerance for all

religious beliefs.⁴⁹ The Society’s initiatory oath required members to swear: “I will not abuse the great power entrusted to me.”⁵⁰ The Golden Dawn was intended to be a secret society, but its members published a substantial number of occult books, bringing esoteric teachings to a wide audience for the first time. Often they were criticized for violating their oaths; whether or not this is strictly true, they nevertheless performed a major act of service.

The original Society of the Golden Dawn did not last long into the 20th century, but derivative organizations still exist, including the Builders of the Adytum founded by Paul Foster Case. Another Golden-Dawn initiate, Dion Fortune (1890–1946), founded the Society for the Inner Light in 1924. Its stated mission is “the expansion of consciousness... not regarded as an end in itself, or a means to personal power or knowledge, but as a way of dedicated service to God and all evolving life.”

The Rosicrucian Fellowship, founded in 1908 by Max Heindel (1865–1919), claims to be “An International Association of Christian Mystics for the Aquarian Age.” When he sought to build a center of healing and a sanitarium, Heindel reported being warned in words that echo the *Fama*: “If ever you make these priceless teachings subservient to mammon, the light will fade and the movement will fail.”⁵¹ The Ancient Mystical Order Rosae Crucis (AMORC) was founded in 1915 by businessman and inventor Harvey Spencer Lewis (1883–1939). Its mission statement affirms: “The Rosicrucian teachings allow individuals to direct their own lives, experience inner peace, and leave their mark on humanity.”⁵² Emphasis is placed on “mastery of life,” awakening one’s innate potential for higher knowledge and experiencing an aware union with Divine or Cosmic Consciousness. With his inventions, which included the “Color Organ” and “Sympathetic Vibration Harp,” Spencer Lewis would have been very much at home during the Renaissance. However, there is no clear directive in AMORC or the other Rosicrucian organizations, to engage in major acts of service.

Some Rosicrucian principles were absorbed by Masonic orders. The origins of Freemasonry

are as murky as those of the Rose Cross. Legend links it to Hiram Abiff and construction of Solomon's temple and, more plausibly, to the craft guilds (operative masons) of the Middle Ages; but lodges of speculative Masonry were certainly in existence soon after the Rosicrucian Manifestos were published. In fact one of the earliest members was Elias Ashmole (1617–1692), who was also an alchemist and founding member of the Royal Society. Significantly, he hand-copied English translations of the *Fama* and the *Confessio*.⁵³ Ashmole was initiated into a Masonic lodge in Lancashire in 1646 and into a London lodge in 1682.⁵⁴

It would be a gross oversimplification to say that Freemasonry is the successor of the Rose Cross. Nevertheless, Rosicrucian symbols and rituals are still preserved in some branches of Freemasonry, and the discussion of Rosicrucian influence has become more common. Masonic organizations largely exist to serve their own members; however, they also perform an important outreach function. The Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine ("Shriners") commit themselves to "Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth" and undertake major works of philanthropy.

Concluding Remarks

Rosicrucian ideals include the enlightenment of humanity, reform of philosophy and religion, healing, and a general demeanor of inclusiveness and compassion. Some of these have been put to good use, while others remain to be expressed. This kind of delay should come as no surprise. To a significant degree the Rosicrucian Manifestos restated the message of the Christ, delivered 16 centuries earlier, and key aspects of the latter still await full expression.

The Rosicrucian movement promoted the advancement of knowledge and particularly the

awakening of higher levels of consciousness. Its main heritage has been the creation of institutions of learning, ranging from the purely rational and secular, like the Royal Society of London, to esoteric schools that continue to offer programs in spiritual development. Rosicrucian teachings continue to inspire and inform large numbers of people today. Ritual and ceremonial magic received major emphasis in the Golden Dawn and in Masonic organizations, but they were not stressed in the Manifestos and cannot be considered a major element of the Rosicrucian heritage.

Rosicrucianism—to use that term to categorize

The service ideals enshrined in the Rosicrucian Manifestos were clear. Now that group consciousness is finally taking hold in the world, these ideals can provide a strong basis for service—service on a much larger scale than has either been possible or even encouraged in the past.

the many institutions that have drawn inspiration from the Manifestos—has traditionally focused on individual spiritual development. That was the norm in both esoteric and exoteric religion during the Piscean Age. Significantly, spiritual development in Rosicrucian institutions was en-

visioned to occur in ways other than dedication to a life of service. Perhaps that was understandable for an esoteric movement under the influence of Luther's axiom of salvation by faith alone.

Be that as it may, compared to organized religion, whose monastic orders and church-sponsored welfare agencies fed the hungry, healed the sick and gave shelter to the homeless,⁵⁵ Rosicrucianism and its offshoots have not earned a conspicuous service record aside from the teaching mission. To use the language of Theosophy, the first, sixth and seventh rays have all found strong expression in Rosicrucianism, but the second ray of Love-Wisdom has remained dim.⁵⁶

Rosicrucianism, like the larger Western Esoteric Tradition to which it belongs, has appealed to exceptional people rather than the masses. Typically it has offered an elite spiri-

tual path, focusing on the enlightenment of those willing to make the necessary commitment and enjoying the ability to do so. At times—understandably, in view of the pervasive climate of persecution—its activities have been pursued within occult societies and its teachings protected by initiatory oaths. More recently, Rosicrucian teachings have been disseminated through numerous books and programs addressed to a wider audience. New opportunities for outreach have opened up, and the response has been commendable. Esoteric schools are still needed to train advanced students, but they must draw from a general population already informed and inspired by esoteric teachings presented at a level the ordinary person can understand. Importantly, the schools' focus must be on service, not on self-interest or even on spiritual ambition.

An elite spiritual path does not necessarily imply indifference to the needs of the larger human family. The enlightenment of a single individual cannot fail to raise the general consciousness. On the other hand, the very privilege of an elite path gives rise to significant responsibilities to serve in more tangible ways. Hermeticist René Schwaller de Lubicz (1887–1961) recognized these responsibilities: “To be of the Elite is to want to give and to be able to give . . . to draw on the inexhaustible source and give this food to those who are hungry and thirsty.”⁵⁷ With the exception of Max Heindel's work, and the distantly related work of the Shriners, healing has been the Rosicrucian ideal most neglected.

The service ideals enshrined in the Rosicrucian Manifestos were clear. Now that group consciousness is finally taking hold in the world, these ideals can provide a strong basis for service—service on a much larger scale than has either been possible or even encouraged in the past. Rosicrucianism can at last find full expression on the second ray. Moreover, all of us who are stirred by its ideals can participate, mindful that tardiness in responding to service opportunities has never been confined to a single esoteric tradition. This article is not intended to criticize but to encourage greater focus on service by all seekers.

The Fraternity of the Rose Cross was imitated by exclusive fraternal orders; now it can be expressed through an inclusive brother-sisterhood extending to the whole of humankind. We are fond of saying that earthly life is a school. When enlightenment comes within the reach of a substantial segment of the world's population, perhaps the *Collegium Fraternitatis* will become a reality.

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- ¹ “Philip à Gabella” seems to have been a fictional character. No one of that name has been identified in the historical record.
 - ² Frances A. Yates. *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972, pp. 75ff.
 - ³ However, the *Fama* and *Confessio* were published in the town of Cassel (now Kassel), in the principality of Hesse-Cassel, some 140 miles northeast of Heidelberg.
 - ⁴ Many nations took part in the 30-Years War. Ostensibly it was a Catholic-Protestant confrontation; but it also offered rich opportunities for territorial expansion. When the war ended in 1648 much of Germany was devastated. Frederick V's son recovered part of the Palatinate, but its power was spent. Frederick himself died in exile.
 - ⁵ *Fama Fraternitatis*. (Transl. publ. by Thomas Vaughn, 1652.)
 - ⁶ *Ibid*.
 - ⁷ For a fairly complete account of the Templars see: Stephen Howarth. *The Knights Templar*. Barnes & Noble, 1982.
 - ⁸ *Confessio Fraternitatis*, ch. IV. (Transl. publ. by Thomas Vaughn, 1652.)
 - ⁹ *Ibid*, ch. V.
 - ¹⁰ Manly P. Hall. *Secret Teachings of All Ages*. Philosophical Research Society, 1977, ch. 140.
 - ¹¹ The Count of Sainte-Germain reportedly appeared in Venice sometime around 1710, “looking about forty-five years of age.” But 50 years later he looked no different. He is said to have died in 1788. Theosophists associate Sainte-Germain with the Master Rakoczy.
 - ¹² Paul F. Case. *The True and Invisible Rosicrucian Order*. Weiser, 1985, pp. 37-64.
 - ¹³ *Ibid*, p. 5.
 - ¹⁴ *Ibid*.
 - ¹⁵ Alice A. Bailey. *Externalization of the Hierarchy*. Lucis, 1957, p. 205.
 - ¹⁶ Alice A. Bailey. *Discipleship in the New Age*, II. Lucis, 1955, p. 212.
 - ¹⁷ Alice A. Bailey. *Externalization of the Hierarchy*. Lucis, 1957, p. 205.

- ¹⁸ Charles W. Leadbeater. *Glimpses of Masonic History*. Theosophical Publishing House, 1926, p. 296. One Masonic order associates the H.O.A.T.F. with the Count of Sainte-Germain, but this association is rejected by others.
- ¹⁹ *Confessio Fraternitatis*, ch. V.
- ²⁰ *Confessio Fraternitatis*, ch. IV.
- ²¹ *Fama Fraternitatis*.
- ²² *Ibid*.
- ²³ In the eyes of the church there was “good” and “bad magic.” In the preface to his translation of Euclid, John Dee had to defend himself against charges of being a conjurer.
- ²⁴ The print appeared in a work by Theophilus Schweighardt (probably a *nom de plume*): *Speculum Sopicum Rhodostauroticum* (“Mirror of Wisdom.”). A colored version is currently available at www.alchemywebsite.com/emb_angels.htm.
- ²⁵ T. Birch (ed.). *The Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle*, 1744. See also: R. Lomas. *The Invisible College: The Royal Society, Freemasonry and the Birth of Modern Science*. Headline, 2003. Parenthesis in original.
- ²⁶ Francis Bacon. “Nam et ipsa scientia potestas est.” *Meditationes Sacrae de Hæresibus*, 1597. Bacon may have been inspired by *Proverbs* 24:5.
- ²⁷ *Fama Fraternitatis*.
- ²⁸ “Earls of Norfolk” tended to hold office during periods of waning royal favor, and “Dukes” when favor increased. During the period of possible Rose Cross activity, “Earls” held office from 1399 to 1425 and from 1477 to 1660. The last significant outbreak of leprosy among the English aristocracy occurred in the 13th century.
- ²⁹ *Fama Fraternitatis*.
- ³⁰ Paracelsus’ pioneering work on magnetic healing preceded the better-known work of Anton Mesmer (1734–1815) by more than 200 years.
- ³¹ See for example: Manly P. Hall. *Pathways of Philosophy*. Philosophical Research Society, 1947, pp. 72-99.
- ³² See Comenius’ vivid description written in 1623: Jan A. Comenius. *Labyrinth of the World*. (Transl: Howard Louthan & Andrea Sterk.) Paulist Press, 1998, pp. 102ff.
- ³³ *Confessio Fraternitatis*, ch. I.
- ³⁴ *Ibid*, ch. VII.
- ³⁵ *Ibid*, ch. VIII.
- ³⁶ Manly P. Hall. *The Secret Destiny of America*. Philosophical Research Society, 1944, pp. 108ff. Also: *Secret Teachings of All Ages*, ch. 143.
- ³⁷ Yates. *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, pp. 186ff.
- ³⁸ Yates. *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, p. 197.
- ³⁹ A number of famous alchemists worked in Prague, and Rudolph himself is alleged to have possessed the Philosopher’s Stone.
- ⁴⁰ Jan Huss, Catholic priest, scholar, and rector of the University of Prague, was charged with heresy and burned at the stake in 1415.
- ⁴¹ Comenius’ vision of a united Christendom found an echo 300 years later in the work of the Russian philosopher Vladimir Soloviev.
- ⁴² Comenius. *Labyrinth of the World*, pp. 114-117.
- ⁴³ Jan A. Comenius. *Paradise of the Heart*. (Transl: Howard Louthan & Andrea Sterk.) Paulist Press, 1998, p. 217
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 204.
- ⁴⁵ Yates. *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, pp. 139ff.
- ⁴⁶ Source: Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia.
- ⁴⁷ Mary K. Greer. *Women of the Golden Dawn*. Park Street Press, 1995. See also: W. Wynn Westcott. “Historic Lecture.” Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.
- ⁴⁸ See for example: Israel Regardie. *The Golden Dawn*. Llewellyn Publications, 1940/1971.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid*.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid*, Publisher’s Preface.
- ⁵¹ Max Heindel. *Echoes from Mount Ecclesia*, June & July 1913, pp. 1-2.
- ⁵² Source: *Mastery of Life*. Ancient Mystical Order Rosae Crucis.
- ⁵³ Yates. *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, p. 249.
- ⁵⁴ Charles W. Leadbeater. *Glimpses of Masonic History*. Theosophical Publishing House, 1926, p. 246.
- ⁵⁵ Revered as the “Patron of charitable work,” Vincent de Paul (1580–1660), began his service work precisely one year before the first recorded appearance of the *Fama*. He was canonized in 1737. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul and the Sisters of Charity were founded to continue his ministry to the poor, sick and oppressed.
- ⁵⁶ The seven rays are discussed at great length in the teachings of the Tibetan Master Djwhal Khul, recorded in the books of Alice A. Bailey.
- ⁵⁷ René Schwaller de Lubicz. *Nature Word*. West Lindisfarne, 1982, p. 102.