



# Slavery & Freedom in the Michael Age

~Shining Waters~  
St. John's Festival Edition

Corps de Michael at Stonehaven Farms (Founded 1737)

Saturday, 18<sup>st</sup> July, 4:00pm, Hershey, USA

*The spirit has become the slave of matter.*

--Rudolf Steiner\*

*Freedom exists and is set within the darkness, and over against the dark desire is yet the desire for the light, it seizes the darkness with the eternal will; and the darkness aspires after the light of freedom...*

--Jacob Boehme\*\*

*Freedom...is the cause of the light. And the impression made of the desire is the cause of darkness and painful torment. So there arises now in this two eternal points of departure, as two principles: one in freedom in the light, the other in the impression made in the pain and torment of the darkness; each living in itself.*

--Jacob Boehme\*\*

*Saint John's Tide Greetings from Corps de Michael!*

The Sweetest Michaelites on Earth cordially invite you to join us in Hershey on Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> July for a St. John's Festival culminating in a St. John's Bonfire on the Loganbrook Meadow. Please see p. 6 for festival Program. *Above Stonehaven bonfire pic courtesy of Jennifer Lopez.*

We open with a summary presentation and group study of "The Christ Impulse as the Conqueror of Matter". The gems of wisdom offered in this lecture by Rudolf Steiner will

enable us to consider two contrasting possibilities for social life in the present Michael Age: **slavery and freedom**. Please see below audio and online reading links to the study published in the cycle, *Egyptian Myths*. We also consider ideal communities in the Light of Summer dreams.



Susquehanna Corps de Michael  
Anthroposophical Society in Hershey

Recently, on the fourth of July friends and members celebrated the birth of American Freedom. Per the research of Virginia Sease, Goetheanum Executive Council Emerita, we know that the 'Spirit of 1776' was inspired in large measure by spiritual freedoms experienced since 1682 in William Penn's *Holy Experiment*. Virginia Sease astutely traces the transition of a Rosicrucian ideal, freedom—born of a new form of initiation knowledge—into a practical aspect of everyday life. This transition begins with Jacob Boehme, continues with Cambridge Platonists, George Fox, and William Penn before culminating in the *Holy Experiment* as precursor to the 'Spirit of 1776'. Described by a Pennsylvania State University professor as “the greatest utopian experiment the world has ever known”, the *Holy Experiment* afforded Pennsylvania colonists a rare opportunity to freely follow the spiritual path of their choice.

A radical and novel social concept in the seventeenth century, spiritual freedom was codified in the *Holy Experiment* as the “Great Law” of Provincial Pennsylvania. This tremendous work, completed prior to Penn's famous Treaty with the Native Americans at Shackamaxon (part of present day Philadelphia) inspired Thomas Jefferson to refer to William Penn as “the greatest law-giver the world has ever known.” Penn planned to execute this Treaty with Susquehannock Chieftains whose capital, Connandongo on the banks of the Susquehanna River (not far from Stonehaven), was reportedly the only Native American settlement fortified with cannon. During the early seventeenth century, the Susquehannaocks traded with four European powers (French, English, Dutch, and Swedish) rising to prominence through the superior quality of furs harvested from their hunting grounds. An expansive nation, the Susquehannocks soon became the recognized owners of the vast Susquehanna and Delaware Valleys in Central and Eastern Pennsylvania, as well as all the lands surrounding Chesapeake Bay in Maryland.



Additionally, their imposing stature, sonorous voices, and immense bodily proportions led John Smith of Virginia to describe the Susquehannocks as “the goodliest men I ever saw.” Smith met a party of Susquehannock warriors near the mouth of the Susquehanna in present day Maryland. These first hand reports, together with characterizations of the Susquehanna Valley as a 'natural paradise' by J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur in his *Letters from an American Farmer: Sketches of Eighteenth Century America*, may have helped inspire Rousseau's concept of the 'Noble Savage' and 'return to Nature' movement. They were undoubtedly the inspiration of the 1794 plan by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the noted English essayist, to try “the experiment of human perfectibility on the banks of the Susquehanna.”

By the mid seventeenth century, however, the once legendary Susquehannocks had been



ravaged by smallpox and thirty years of war with their rivals, the Iroquois Confederacy. As a result of vastly reduced population and the release of the subjugated Delaware Tribe from Susquehannock sovereignty, William Penn met with Delaware Chieftains (rather than Susquehannocks) to negotiate a Treaty in peace, brotherhood, and friendship. The Treaty was executed without bloodshed or theft inspiring various artistic depictions of “The Peaceable Kingdom”. Nevertheless, the Susquehanna Valley remained in the mind's eye of the founder. He envisioned a city similar to Philadelphia on the Susquehanna and noted the ideal 'utopian' life of regional Natives. Due to the fertile soil, some of the richest in the world, and plentiful game, the Susquehannocks' principal labor, hunting, was reserved as a leisure activity for the affluent families of England. 'Our leisure is their only toil', observed Penn.

At a world historic moment *The Holy Experiment* inaugurated a “Peaceable Kingdom”. Brought to fruition was the unlikely possibility of the lion lying down with the lamb. Founded on the



Rosicrucian ideal of Freedom, the far reaching experiment became a cosmopolitan Michaelic community by uniting in harmony colonists from a diverse patchwork of Europe's spiritually persecuted with Native Americans. Living together as one unbroken chain, there were no forts or garrisons in the early years of the *Holy Experiment*. Moreover, during William Penn's lifetime, not one drop of blood was shed between the colonists of Pennsylvania and the Native Americans, who affectionately referred to Penn as “Brother Onas” or “The Great Onas”.

*The Holy Experiment* was born of Penn's vision and willful deed to provide a practical yet ideal utopian solution to the spiritual persecution he experienced during student days at Oxford. At a time when royal subjects were required to attend the Church of their sovereign ruler, Penn was imprisoned in the prime of youth for participating in Quaker Meetings where his soul found affinity with certain Rosicrucian ideals. Per the research of Virginia Sease, ideals such as Freedom and the Inner Light found their way into George Fox's Quakerism through the Cambridge Platonists. These ideals can be traced to the works of Jacob Boehme (1575-1624), also known as *Teutonicus Philosophus* (The Great Theosopher).

Another student of Jacob Boehme was Conrad Beissel (1691-1768), who was imprisoned in the Old World for studying the works of Boehme rather than fulfilling attendance requirements at Lutheran services. Beissel may have participated in study groups devoted to the work of Jacob Boehme. Seeking spiritual asylum, Beissel first emigrated to the Rosicrucian community by the Wissahickon Creek in Philadelphia. Finding this group largely disbanded upon his arrival, Beissel ultimately settled



near Lancaster in the Susquehanna Valley. After seeking solitude in a humble cabin on the banks of the Cocalico Creek, like minded souls joined Beissel in 1732 to establish what ultimately became the largest Rosicrucian commune in Colonial America, the Ephrata Cloisters. (see Ephrata pic prior page)



Today, the Ephrata Cloisters (near Stonehaven) is a national historic monument with many original buildings surprisingly extant. Displays in the Visitors' Center feature a prominent portrait of Jacob Boehme similar to the one here (see left). In 2003 Dr. Virginia Sease was pleased to visit Ephrata as a guest of the Spiritual Geography Tour conducted by Susquehanna Corps de Michael—*Anthroposophical Society in Hershey*. The Tour was organized in conjunction with the Anthroposophical Society's Second National Group and Branch Conference hosted by Corps de Michael on the banks of the Susquehanna at Harrisburg. Nicholas Berdyaev refers to Jacob Boehme as the first human in history to posit freedom at the primal foundation of Being. Furthermore, Berdyaev states that Boehme's voluntarism is a new principle that renders a philosophy of freedom possible. We can begin to appreciate the groundbreaking inspiration of *Teutonicus Philosophus* (Jacob Boehme) on Rudolf Steiner's principal work, *The Philosophy of Freedom*, as well as William Penn's *Holy Experiment* (the spirit-seed of American Freedom), and Conrad Beissel's Rosicrucian commune at Ephrata.

*The Philosophy of Freedom* articulates a systematic method for the observation of consciousness in order to transform thinking. But it also shows that untransformed intellectual thinking is a form of enslavement and hence, unfree. In *The Philosophy's* process of self-observation I ask, "In which of my actions am I free?" (*The Philosophy*, Chapter Nine) To what extent do the chains of slavery continue today in human cognition and consciousness over one hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation? Ironically, in point of time sequence, just as the free individuality comes to birth in the stream of human evolution, one sided intellectual thinking gradually completes the enslavement of everyday consciousness to matter—a process that began in the ancient Egyptian epoch.

In the weeks leading up to Independence Day America and the world experienced widespread upheaval, protest, rioting, and looting. Calls for change seek to eradicate vestiges of slavery and systemic racism. And yet, slavery is alive and well today in human consciousness! As a first step towards positive real change, the invisible chains of enslavement to sense perceptions must be confronted from within and exposed. In our St. John's study we examine a culture and consciousness characterized by a lofty spiritual knowledge that included a practical knowledge of healing herbs. In ancient Egypt the spirit was not yet enslaved by matter. To help break the chains of modern enslavement as a first step towards intuitive thinking, let us examine the slavery of matter over spirit in modern culture and in individual intellectual consciousness.



Our St. John's study asks how and when modern enslavement began? Additionally, it offers gems of wisdom and spiritual experiences largely lost over time as the free individuality was born at the behest of emerging science and technology. How can modernity recover the fonts of spiritual knowledge in objective clarity, breaking the chains of modern materialism? May these gems afford a springboard to to the individual transformation of consciousness and the attainment of Michaelic Freedom in the present Michaelic Age!

***With warm St. John's Tide wishes from the Sweetest Place on Earth,***

David Lenker  
(for the)



Please click the following link to **LISTEN** to an audio recording of the study for 18<sup>th</sup> July:  
<http://www.rudolfsteinaudio.com/egyptianmythsmysteries1908/12egyptianmythsmysteries.mp3>

Please click the following link to **READ** the study online:  
<https://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA106/English/AP1971/19080914p01.html>

Please click the following link for an online version of Shining Waters: Whitsun Edition  
<https://www.corpsdemichael.org/SWCorona.pdf>

***Special thanks to Utahna Rayes of Austin, Texas for Whitsun Festival photo on this page and Michaelmas Festival photo on program page 6.***

*\*Rudolf Steiner quote on page one from Egyptian Myths and Mysteries, Lecture XII*

*\*\*Jacob Boehme quotes on page one quoted in Nicholas Berdyaev essay on Jacob Boehme reprinted in article by Stephen Connelly, "Jacob Boehme: The Tragedy of Freedom and the Curse of the Law".*

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# St. John's Festival Program

4:00pm Arrive

4:15pm Eurythmy: "I think speech"

Opening Verse: *Michaelic Courage*

Summary Presentation--"Christ Impulse as the Conqueror of Matter"

Conversation on Festival Theme—Slavery and Freedom in the Michael Age

5:50pm Break / Set-up Potluck

6:15pm Community Potluck—*The Stonehaven Festival Grace* (written by Krishna Wooby)

7:45pm Nature Walk and/or Community Circle: **"What is my Concept of Freedom; What is my Vision and Goal(s) for the Coming Year?"** *Note: just as the Holy Nights afford the human soul its most inward experience of the year, the Saint John's Tide Festival is conducive to dreams and vision. Historically, it was the largest annual gathering of the Knights Templars, known for both their lofty spiritual ideals and practical impulses.*

8:45pm Break

9:00pm Procession to Bonfire on Loganbrook Meadow

9:15pm St. John's Bonfire on the Meadow



*The wolf shall live with the lamb,  
the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together,  
and a little child shall lead them.*

*The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.*

*The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,  
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.*

*They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain;  
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.*

"The Peaceable Kingdom", Isaiah 11: 6-10

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