

Introduction

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This issue marks a number of changes. For several years we have wanted to switch to a more permanent format with stapled binding, but the cost seemed prohibitive. Now, with the help of our advertisers, we have been able to make the switch, and we are most grateful to them. We have also realized another dream, and that is to have a cover design that we could use for several years and which would be associated with the Kindergarten Association. Michael Howard, who designed our original logo of a child in a boat, an image of incarnation, has developed it further to put the child under the protective gaze of a loving figure. Dale Hushbeck did the calligraphy to match, and we are very grateful to both of them.

The cover image is beautifully captured in a song from the Hebrides Islands, whose words are as follows:

Michael, sea lord, shield of light,
Tonight a boat puts out to sea...

Broken keel planks strew the shore,
So frail the boat, so rough yon sea...

Michael, sea lord, shield of light,
Tonight a child puts out to sea.

One theme of this Newsletter is the richness arising from the International Waldorf Kindergarten Conferences. For many years these conferences have been held annually in May or June at Whitsun time (also known as Pentecost). When the conference had grown to 85() teachers, and the hall remained at 800, it was clear that an additional conference was needed. Thus a new series of conferences began, first in Holland last fall, then in England this past September and next summer in North America (at Pine Hill Waldorf School in New Hampshire.) In July 1997, it will move to Järna, Sweden, and in 1998 both conferences will flow together and take place at Dornach, probably at Whitsun time. These conferences have been a wonderful way for teachers from all over the world to work and meet together. (There are now about 1200 Waldorf kindergartens in 49 countries.) But they have also been a rich opportunity for deepening our understanding of the young child today. Whenever possible, we will include notes from conference lectures or workshops, as we have done in this issue.

Another theme in this issue is the life of the very young child in the first three years, and everything pertaining to home life and day care. Although these are distinct realms of research and work, there is much overlap between them, and for the moment we are carrying them as a unified theme as we try to focus more attention on the needs of children outside the traditional Waldorf kindergarten.