

Reflections

Joan Almon, Editor

As I read over this Newsletter, my first thought is that it seems an odd assortment of articles. Where is the central theme that holds them all together? But on further reflection, it seems to me they present a real picture of our times. More and more, life seems ever-changing and without a clear outline. There are no well-trod paths to follow; one is continually exploring new territory. The issues which face us today are extremely diverse. It seems to me that each year the circle of issues which demand our attention grows larger and more extensive. In this situation it is easy to feel overextended and pulled apart, particularly if we still have the idea that life should be taken in an orderly manner, one step at a time.

That picture of life no longer works as it once did. As life becomes more and more tumultuous, it is all one can do to stay in touch with the ground under one's feet, let alone walk sedately step by step. A different imagination is needed which helps make sense of our times. One that arises often is that of the dynamic between the center and the periphery. On the one hand we have the periphery, with its every widening circles of concerns, problems, issues and demands. On the other we have the center, the inner core of our being, which is capable of deep inner work and great insight into the problems of our times. Is it possible to find a rhythmic breathing between being pulled out into an ever expanding array of life's issues, and then to contract in and deepen one's relationship to one's own center? Without this inner gesture, the expanding circles of our lives can pull us off center like a top careening wildly about.

How does one work with the center and the periphery? It is most fruitful to establish a rhythm on a daily basis that allows us to enter deeply into the center and then go back out into the world. This means taking time each day, preferably in the morning and evening, to turn inwards, reviewing the activities of the day gone by and previewing the day to come. Rudolf Steiner spoke often of the need to establish such a daily time when one turns inward, even if for only five minutes. To the first Waldorf teachers he spoke of working regularly with the third hierarchy - the angels, archangels and archai. At the beginning of the courses he gave to the first Waldorf teachers, he offered a powerful imagination of how they - and we - could work with the third hierarchy to create a new type of social community for the future, one in which the Grail-like chalice is recreated through the teachers working together with the angels, archangels and archai. He returned to this thought at the end of his lecture cycles just before the school opened. He spoke of how each teacher could work with the third hierarchy on a daily basis.

Those teachers stood on the threshold of something very powerful. Rudolf Steiner reminds them of this with his closing words: "This Waldorf School must succeed. Much will depend upon its success." At times those first teachers must have felt their work to be incredibly difficult, even as our work at the end of the century can seem daunting. Rudolf Steiner's reminder to them of the good beings who guide this work can also be a reminder to us in this turbulent time.

"In the evening before your meditation
ask of the Angels, Archangels and Archai
that they might help you
in your work on the following day.

In the morning, following the meditation
may you know that you are related
to the spirits of the third hierarchy."