

Working with the Dead

Meditations and spiritual content for the teacher from the work of Rudolf Steiner.

Volume 2 in the Little Series. Helmut von Kügelgen, Editor. Reviewed by Beth Knox. Published by WECAN, 2003.

There is much death and violence in the news that cannot escape our children. Where can one turn to find some deeper understanding surrounding such acts? Yes, those people all died, but then what? Very few individuals or institutions offer us insights into the journey beyond the last breath. And none have offered advice regarding how we can continue a relationship with those who have crossed over into death.

Rudolf Steiner wrote and lectured extensively on this subject. He is a breath of fresh air in contrast to the prevailing worldview of “dead and gone forever.” His insights on our life between death and birth give hope to the grieving. However, there has been a need for a small, digestible means of accessing these insights and moving toward a new relationship with our departed. The Waldorf Early Childhood Association’s recently published *Working with the Dead* is an answer to this need.

In *Working with the Dead*, some light is shed on the darkness and mystery surrounding death. What happens immediately after death? Where does our soul or etheric body go? Is there a difference between the death of a child and that of an adult? Is there anything we can do for those we love after they have died? These questions and others are answered in this small booklet. If we

Dignity of the Young Child: Care and Training for the First Three Years of Life is published by the Medical Section at the Goetheanum and the International Waldorf Kindergarten Association and is now available through the Waldorf Early Childhood Association.

Caring for the very young child, in a home program or a childcare center, is a humble yet spiritually profound task—a task that challenges us to develop a culture of love. Developing this culture of love begins with nurturing and cultivating our own inner life and powers of observation, and extends to the building of new forms of community can begin to understand the landscape beyond our sight, then perhaps we can offer comfort to our children. Children were born to earthly life more recently than we were, and so can grasp the invisible with their imaginations easily, if we but remind them.

My one concern with *Working with the Dead*, are the various references to the Christ and the Christ deed. My wish is that the understanding it offers could be universal in scope, and I fear offense for those of different spiritual persuasions. That said, *Working with the*

Dead is a wonderful place to begin one's studies of the vast realm of life after death or to remind us in a succinct manner of what we have read elsewhere. It might also lend support toward understanding and accepting the heartbreak of a loss in a community. Doing so for the sake of our children will not be the first time their needs have led us to greater wisdom.

Beth Knox is founder and Executive Director of Crossings: Caring for Our Own at Death, a national, educational, non-profit resource center for home funeral care. Crossings offers workshops across the country on caring for our own departed. For more information contact: Crossings: Caring for Our Own at Death, P.O. Box 721, Silver Spring, MD 2090, 301-593-5451, www.crossings.net.