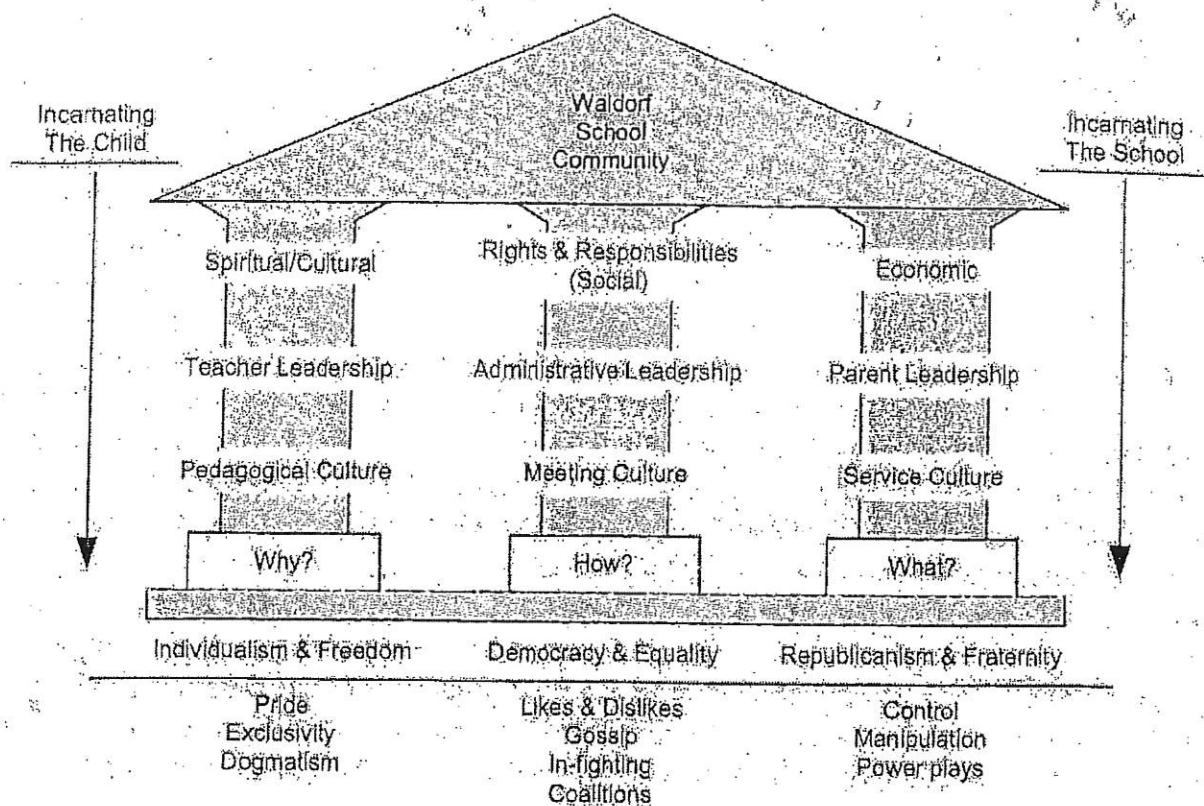


THREE-FOLD WALDORF SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Parallel to our three-fold understanding of the human (sometimes called head, heart, and hand), You will see under the diagram of the roof labeled "Waldorf School Community" three pillars Of Waldorf school culture which correlate to what Rudolf Steiner referred to as the cultivation of the three-fold social order "...in which the common good is served and the whole is balanced and healthy," and communities...are cooperatively based rather than hierarchical in nature."

"By identifying the three-fold nature of our schools-- the (1) cultural/pedagogical, (2) the social and interpersonal, and (3) the economic--we can begin to recognize in broad outlines the three spheres which need to be identified and cultivated appropriately for the good of the whole."



We can look first at the arrows on either side of the outer pillars. These describe the differing tasks of the teachers and the board: *the teachers to assist in the incarnating of the child and the board to facilitate the incarnating of the school.* The cultural/pedagogical, next to the left arrow, represents the foundation of the pedagogy and its practice which creates a pedagogical culture in the school. This is a realm of individualism and freedom needed so sthe insight necessary to educate can arise." The question at the pillar base is WHY? Indicating the striving...to acquire practical pedagogical insight." [Taken to an extreme, it can tend toward..."dogmatism, pride and exclusivity."]

"On the right side of the diagram is an arrow which represents a realm where the expertise and leadership of the parents is primary: 'the incarnation of the school.'" Standing next to that arrow is the 'economic pillar' "characterizing the work-life or service-culture of the school. This sphere is safeguarded by the maxim that those who are the most capable in a particular realm should be entrusted with the work. The question at the base of the pillar is WHAT? To identify the concrete tasks which serve to embody the school in the community... [The negative extreme can be characterized by attempts to control, power-play, and manipulation.] The goal here is efficiency and service."

However, of special importance in bringing balance to these two outer pillars is the central pillar **Where community is built in the rights sphere of collaborative working between teachers, administrators, and board.** "The question at its base is HOW? Indicating that this pillar oversees the **articulation, cultivation, and maintenance of the processes** by which we work together in our school. It is in this particular realm that the administration is active. It represents the 'meeting culture' of the school and is characterized by the striving for shared participation, fairness, and equality.... Here must live the ethic of inclusiveness and cooperation which requires transparency and clarity in HOW agreements are reached, decisions made, conflicts addressed, decisions are being carried out, as well as how a dialogue of understanding is cultivated and sustained through the individuals and bodies of the school. [This sphere in its negative extreme results in social unrest and chaos caused by unchecked gossip, a social climate dominated by likes and dislikes, distrust, and suspicion resulting in coalitions and factions.] "The goal of this sphere is cooperation and partnership."

"Like the three-fold human being, Waldorf schools are healthy when a dynamic balance can be maintained between each of the three realms. The more these three spheres can be empowered with explicit leadership competency, clear expectations, and communication procedures, the less likely will be the tendency to polarization and the more support each area can give to the others. "Waldorf schools require leadership of a new kind that is based on demonstrated capacities, trust in partnership, confidence in dialogue and the process of consensus building--and the ideal of servant leadership. The more we empower, cultivate and support cultures of leadership throughout the three spheres of our schools...the more the good spirit of Waldorf education will be enabled to work in our midst."

*All specific content and quoted material from notes taken from talk given by Robert Schiappacasse, **"THREE PILLARS OF HEALTHY WALDORF SCHOOL COMMUNITIES CULTIVATING THE PARENT-TEACHER PARTNERSHIP"** at the Healthy Waldorf School Conference, May, 1999