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# The Messenger

June 1989





## From the Editor

# Moving Toward the Light

Man wishes to be confirmed in his being by man, and wishes to have a presence in the being of the other . . . secretly and bashfully he watches for a Yes which allows him to be and which can come to him only from one human to another.  
— Martin Buber

Years ago when I was returning to college for the second time, a young woman caught my attention the first day of class, and we struck up a friendship that has lasted for 15 years. We can pick up and go to the same

deep level of sharing as though no time has elapsed, even when we have not seen each other for several years.

What caught my attention that day, I realize now, was a unique attitude of awareness and

receptivity finely balanced with healthy curiosity, humor, and a wisdom beyond her years. She was genuinely interested in my life, and the quality of her listening was contagious. When we talked, there was a mutual accepting, digesting of ideas, feelings, insights; there seemed to exist a tacit and intuitive understanding that as we explored these realms we would know more, not only about each other, but about ourselves and the universe. Her eyes would light up with recognition of a shared experience, or discovery of new ground. "Oh, I want to hear more about that," she'd say, or "How do *you* feel about this?" And she really wanted to know. And because she really wanted to know, the experience was enhanced, the moment was enhanced.

A few weeks ago I was having a wonderful, enlightening late-night phone conversation with one of my daughters. Wonderful and enlightening because the same quality of loving attention was there; we were truly listening to each other, each eager to hear and digest what the other had to impart. We were not judging, or interrupting, or jumping in with advice, or marking time with "uh-huhs" until we could say something. We gave each other, and thus ourselves, the gift of listening and hearing.

On another day, as I was conducting my weekly Saturday morning alcohol/drug education class for DWI (Driving While Intoxicated) offenders, I noticed a young man leaning forward, sitting on the edge of his chair, apparently hanging on every word. This attitude is unusual in any

class, but especially the kind of class I teach, which is in the local courthouse, and where sullen hostility is often the norm. As a result of his focused attention, I felt my lecture becoming charged with more energy. I felt more interesting, more alive, and because of this, other members of the class seemed to liven up and appear more interested. Then I glanced at my watch and realized we were one minute past the usual break time. As I called the break, the young man grabbed his cigarettes, leaped out of his chair and sprinted for the door. Belatedly I realized that what I had taken for rapt attention was simply his moving into "racing" position, readying himself to bolt for the exit. He was hanging on to my every word in order to hear those words that would liberate him. But during those moments when I *thought* he was fascinated with my message, I felt empowered, more energized, thus I became more confident and more interesting.

How many times we've all heard it said that we learn more when we're listening than when we're speaking. But it isn't just information that I receive as I really listen to you—I am enriched by a glimpse of your essence, I am enlarged by your trust, honored and blessed by your allowing me to witness your miraculous process of blossoming. I am newly opened up as I allow your opening. As I allow more of you to enter my consciousness, I see myself with more clarity and compassion.

What a powerful gift of living love, this not-so-simple art of listening.

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**On our June cover: Views of Wayfarers Chapel, Rancho Palos Verdes, California.**  
**Weddings provide a wonderful opportunity for year-round outreach at the Chapel and other Convention churches, including San Francisco, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Washington D.C. and Cambridge.**

## The Messenger

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# Christian Sexuality:

## Feasting and Fasting

*Evelyn Eaton Whitehead and James D. Whitehead*

Christians today struggle to find a more wholistic vision of sexuality. As embodied spirits we know that all our affections—for humans and for God—arise within our bodies. These stirrings, whether of friendship, compassion or devotion, are not always genital, but they are always erotic.

The word *eros* is absent from the New Testament. Nor does the word appear in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. In place of *eros* we meet another name for love: *agape*. This special vocabulary has tempted Christians to imagine that there are two very different worlds of love. One is the world of the erotic body—the realm of genital arousal and sexual passion; the domain of the animal part of us “rational animals.” The other is the disembodied world of the soul, where our spirit enjoys the pure affections of *agape*. In such a vision sexuality and spirituality part company.

A more authentic Christian vision acknowledges that *agape* is not the ad-

mon, we do not need to subjugate it. Because our affections are not essentially selfish, abstinence will not be our ordinary discipline. Instead of mastery or subjugation, we need a discipline that heals the wounds of our erotic life and

♥  
*Jesus was much  
more interested in  
feasting.*  
♥

encourages our passion to be generous.

For Christians the discipline of *eros* includes both feasting and fasting. In each we seek to follow the witness of Jesus: Jesus spent much time at meals and banquets; the wedding feast was an image he used to describe the reign of God; he celebrated the last days of his life with a special meal. Others on the scene, even his friends, seemed more interested in fasting: John the Baptist followed a rigorous discipline in the desert; Jesus himself admitted that some demons could only be cast out by fasting (Mark 9:29). But Jesus was much more interested in feasting. People challenged him on this, commenting:

“John’s disciples are always fasting and saying prayers, and the disciples of the Pharisees too, but yours go on eating and drinking” (Luke 5:33). Jesus’ reply suggests a rhythm of fasting and feasting in life:

*Surely you cannot make the bridegroom’s attendants fast while the bridegroom is still with them? But the time will come, the time for the bridegroom to be taken away from them; that will be the time when they will fast.*

In the early centuries of Christian-

ity, fasting became a regular and sometimes extreme practice in monastic life. Feasting fell out of fashion as a religious discipline, as Christians evidently judged that the “time to fast” had arrived. Even the Eucharistic banquet was turned into a highly restrained ritual. Suspicious of our pleasurable appetites—whether for food or for lovemaking—Christians started to stress fasting over feasting. The ideal of virginity and the later discipline of celibacy prescribed a strict fast from sexual activity “for those who would be perfect.” As Christians today examine their sexual lives, they see the need for both disciplines, of feasting and fasting.

When we feast, we celebrate and offer thanks. At a feast we do not just eat; we show off. We bring out new candles, special tablecloths, the best wine. We celebrate both survival and bounty. We use our food to satisfy a nutritional need, but also to nourish other famished desires—especially those for play and gratitude. In our feasts we take more time

♥  
*... feasting is a  
response to the gift  
of creation.*  
♥

than at our everyday meals. We do not eat “fast foods.” And we do not feast alone, since a major part of our delight comes in sharing.

At its best, feasting is a disciplined performance. We do it well by avoiding excess—eating too much, wasting food, excluding others. Often we fail, turning the impulse to feast into an exercise in selfish and conspicuous consumption. We learn again the limits of pleasure.

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♥  
*These stirrings are  
always erotic.*  
♥

versary of *eros*, but the fruit of a mature *eros*. When *eros* matures into *agape*, the erotic is not lost. Our ability to love becomes rich and faithful—not because we flee our arousals but because we befriend them. The desire for contact and more life floods every part of our embodied spirit. The passionate aspiration to be with, to make promises, and to bear fruit energizes both our sexuality and our spirituality. *Eros* is the gift and promise of creation itself. Because our bodily passion is not an enemy or a de-



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But the human impulse to feast remains—and may even be a discipline for our sexual lives.

As with food, feasting in our sexuality both satisfies a basic need and cele-



## ... we relearn the goodness of our sensuality.



brates something more. We are reminded that sex is about more than the duty of reproduction. Feasting encourages us to enjoy the play of our sexual passion and to give thanks for it. But we must avoid feasting selfishly and feasting alone. Like food, sex can be distorted into abusive consumption. What begins as celebration can turn into compulsive misuse. As a disciplined exercise, feasting refuses both excess and denial. It does not gulp down the fast food of pornography. Nor does it dine, promiscuously, at many tables. And the feast is ruined if we use our sexuality to control or punish other people.

In the life of the erotic, feasting is not an abandonment to the flesh. Instead, as a Christian discipline, it is a response to the gift of creation. If we carry special wounds in our sexual life, feasting can be a healing exercise: With help and encouragement we relearn the goodness of our sensuality; we take time to be nourished again by music or back-rubs or even silence. When our erotic life flowers, we naturally follow this discipline. We bring a gift to a friend; we cook a special meal for our family; we spend time in physical exercise and leisure. We can feast on the wide range of our erotic lives only if we believe that pleasure is good and only if we find our passion a friend of our other hopes.

If feasting proves difficult for some of us, fasting challenges all of us. Yet fasting is an ordinary discipline of any maturing life. When we commit ourselves to a relationship or career or ideal, we say yes to it. To defend this important yes we will have to say no to many other inviting possibilities. Thus, we fast every day. We pass up wine at supper in order to be more alert for an evening meeting; we turn away from a sexual invitation to honor the yes we have pledged to our partner. The discipline

of fasting is not just for monks; it is an ordinary exercise in the taming of our passions.

Fasting developed its bad reputation in Christian history as it became a way to punish the body. But this is an abuse of the human impulse to fast. At its heart, fasting is an exercise not in deprivation but in concentration. We fast—from food or sex or conversation—in order to see more clearly and bond ourselves more surely to our best values. We do not deny our hunger, but we choose not to satisfy it in order to better taste other longings in our heart. People who fast find their senses sharpened and their minds less distracted, less buried under the routines of life. This is partly due to the simple suspension of the basic routine of eating. Physically emptying ourselves encourages other quietings and promotes an increased openness to more subtle stirrings in our heart.

Fasting, at its finest, is neither punishment nor denial. We fast not just to avoid evils but to recapture forgotten goods. Not eating food for a day helps us remember all those who do not enjoy a daily plenty. Choosing not to drink alcohol for a time reminds us of our many habits that can both pleasure and imprison us.

Fasting, like feasting, easily goes awry. Fasting can be part of our flight from frightening emotions. It can become an undisciplined compulsion, whether in the medieval monk or the anorexic teenager. But even with its dangers, this inclination to fast remains a potential resource.



## We fast to recapture forgotten goods.



We fast regularly in our erotic lives. When our spouse is ill, we learn to forego intercourse for a time. We are sexually attracted to someone, but we fast from this delightful arousal because of other goods we have chosen. Many celibate persons recognize that the discipline of fasting from genital sharing depends on a life deeply sensual and rich with genuine friendship—graced with music or art or other forms of beauty. To fast from sexual contact because *eros* is evil is not a Christian

discipline but an unholy and unhealthy flight from creation.

The no of fasting is fruitful only if we have some deeply valued yeses in our life. The arduous discipline of fasting complements our feasting: We need something *to fast for*. Without some compelling values to pursue and defend, we have no reason to hold back any stirring or impulse. Maturing Christians learn to recognize and honor the seasons of feasting and fasting in their own lives. These erotic disciplines must be integrated into the family of our passions. Fasting from fear, we learn to be courageous enough to risk loving. Fasting



## Fasting from fear, we learn to be courageous enough to risk loving.



from the impulses of jealousy and envy, we become more generous in our friendships.

Our disciplined efforts of feasting and fasting bear fruit in graceful habits. We learn when to embrace and when to withdraw. These habits, which Christians call virtues, are reliable, resident strengths within us. As these virtues befriend passion, we gradually find it easier to trust our instincts and to fast from compulsion and constraint. Our erotic life becomes more generous and fruitful. Our sexuality and our spirituality embrace.

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*Evelyn Eaton Whitehead is a developmental psychologist who writes and lectures on adult growth, the dynamics of leadership, and the social analysis of community and parish life. James D. Whitehead, is a pastoral theologian and historian of religion concerned with questions of contemporary spirituality, ministerial leadership, and theological method in ministry. Together they have formed Whitehead Associates, a ministry that serves dioceses and religious congregations nationwide.*

*They have co-authored several books; this article is adapted from their recently published work: A Sense of Sexuality: Christian Love and Intimacy (Doubleday, 1989).*

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*Submitted by Rev. Gladys Wheaton*



*Editor's Note: Rev. Sue Turley-Moore is a New Church minister working hard to help people in accepting all fellow-Christians despite differing lifestyles. She was invited to speak at the 20th-anniversary celebration of the Metropolitan Community Church. She shares with us here excerpts from that address along with a brief introduction to MCC.*

# UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

## 20<sup>TH</sup>

## ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

### *Sharing the Experience*

Susan Turley-Moore

Twenty years ago God breathed into Rev. Elder Troy Perry a vision to start a Christian church open to all, but with a special ministry to homosexuals. Since then the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Church (MCC) has grown from 12 people meeting in Elder Perry's home to over 40,000 worldwide.

In two decades MCC has succeeded in developing and providing the following services to the gay and lesbian community:

- A residence for the homeless.
- Alcoholics Anonymous and Alcoholics Together chapters.
- Crisis center and hotline.
- Samaritan College, Los Angeles.
- One third of all AIDS organizations in the U.S.
- Ministerial services in prisons.
- The first hospital in the world financed by gays and lesbians (Nigeria).
- A continuing dialogue begun with the National Council of Churches (NCC) about homosexuality and the churches' response.

Our church has maintained communication with MCC. Twenty years ago my father, Calvin E. Turley, attended Mr. Perry's first MCC services in his home. When MCC applied for membership into the NCC nearly ten years ago, among the other delegates from various denominations, I was asked to speak in response to the application. I am still remembered with affection by members of MCC because I voiced strong support for their admission.

Perhaps Swedenborgians will remember the special moment when MCC representative Rev. Roy Birchard came to our Convention session the

♦  
*... they had no  
church in which to  
do God's work*  
♦

summer after Cal's death to present a beautiful plaque to Marilyn Turley in honor and recognition of his compassionate and successful ministry to the gay and lesbian community. My father is remembered by MCC as one of the few heterosexual religious leaders who theologically and spiritually accepted the gay lifestyle and considered it to be

as much reflection of the conjugal principal as heterosexual life style. Many Swedenborgians continue to enjoy worship and fellowship with MCC as well as cooperative ministries.

I was honored with an invitation to speak at the MCC 20th-Anniversary dinner in October 1988. Several hundred people gathered at the glamorous Registry Hotel in Hollywood to celebrate a glorious evening with song, prayer, and powerful testimonials.

Many people stood before us to witness to the healing and joy of knowing God's love and acceptance. Before finding MCC they had no place to worship, no Christian family, no church in which to do God's work.

Here they know Jesus as their Savior and feel blessed, for they can live their lives as Christians and be fully who God created them to be without shame, and with joy. The depth of love and dedication toward God is powerful in this group. The Spirit is alive, healthy and moving in MCC!

Highlighting the evening were entertainment by the well-known feminist folksinger, Holly Near; a speech of affirmation and promise for the increasing legalization of gay rights by San Francisco's mayor, the Honorable Art Agnos; a challenging call to ministry by Episcopal priest Father Malcolm Boyd, author of the best seller, *Are You Running With Me Jesus?*; a brilliant and pas-

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sionate speech by Rev. Elder Troy Perry. My own presentation challenged MCC to expand their ministry to the youth of this country and included the following statement:

### ***A Wellspring of Living Waters***

In this world the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Church stands as a religious and moral giant delivering messages of inspiration and truth. Of these prophecies one stands out as the greatest: Our beloved Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ loves us all just as we are.

The Fellowship challenges us, as religious people, to keep our priorities in order. MCC honors family life and encourages commitment in our Holy Unions.

In this world MCC stands as a religious and moral giant. For it is you who live at the front lines being attacked and ostracized by those who deal with the AIDS epidemic by declaring war on those who are already fighting for their lives. Yet, you did not fall back, but in the spirit of Christ's love, provided education and support programs for PWAs,\* their families and friends. This responsible act of Christian faith resulted in curbing the spread of the disease within the male homosexual population. What a tremendous achievement! MCC, you can and you must be feeling proud and full of God's love.

We are all trying desperately to clear away the rubbish of society's myths and images about the human person and the family unit (called "norm") so we may truly identify and experience our unique and lovable selves. Indeed, lesbians and gays know, personally, about this process of emancipation from the so-called "cultural norm." You know what it does to a person who tries to live a lie, a lie promulgated by society. Homosexuals are confronted with the necessity to become free of these cultural bondages in order to survive, and then move beyond survival claiming your birthright to live a life of enhancement.

One of the ways in which you have broken this cultural yoke of the mythical norm is when you witness with joy, pride, and confidence to the fact that homosexuality is a good and healthy part of God's divine order and creation and you've got the Bible to back you

up: Praise God.

Indeed, UFMCC has worked miracles for adult gays and lesbians bringing self respect, hope and spiritual renewal, as well as a growing acceptance in the religious and secular world. And now, my friends, for the sake of the fu-

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***We are all trying to  
clear away the  
rubbish . . .***  
◆

ture of our world, of MCC, and most importantly, for their sake, it is time to turn your attention to the children in a much more concentrated effort than before.

I bring this concern to you because MCC is one of the few religious organizations that provides a sound theology of healthy sexuality born out of a religious/historical context of sexual tyranny and oppression. You have discussed the issues surrounding sexuality, intimacy, and religiosity. You know the joys of sexual responsibility and the consequences of sexual irresponsibility. You are aware that the youth of this country are projected to be the next high risk group for AIDS. You know about these things, and as Christians you know what to do. Therefore, the American youth need your immediate and loving attention.

It is estimated that one out of every four children is sexually molested before the age of 18. We are all too aware of who gets wrongly blamed for these molestations. It is up to MCC to continue to dismantle the myth that gay men are most likely to molest children and that sexual abuse causes homosexuality. Your work goes on.

At the top of the list of concerns for our American youth is teenage pregnancy, abortion, and childrearing. It is predicted that each year more than a million American teenagers will become pregnant. If the present trend continues, fully 40% of today's 14-year-old girls will be pregnant at least once before the age of 18. Says Sally, a 17-year-old who is struggling to raise her two-year-old son in L.A., "We are children, ourselves, having children."

How is it that our American youth lead the world in pregnancy, abortion

and childrearing, yet are no more sexually active than youth of 36 other developed countries? According to the Guttmaker study, several factors fit the U.S. profile, including a lack of openness about sex in society, inequitable income, a high degree of religiosity, and restrictions on teenage access to contraception and birth control education in schools. In other countries government actions have helped to minimize the balance of teenage pregnancy by providing sex education in schools, information about contraception through the media, and making contraception accessible to teenagers, in confidence. In 1985, a Harris poll indicated that 85% of the people wanted sex education taught in school, 78% said that TV should air messages about birth control, and 67% thought schools should establish links with family planning clinics.

It is obvious that the American people want something done in response to this problem. But we cannot afford to wait for the schools or the government to meet the need, especially when part of the religious community blocks this effort. Therefore, I present before you the challenge to develop a ministry to the youth about the nature of sexuality, the biology of sex, the elements of family living, including what the Bible does and does not say about intimacy, sex, and procreation. Bring your message of love and hope to the young people of today—give them

◆  
***... bring them the  
message of God's  
redeeming love  
and grace.***  
◆

options, a sense of responsibility, and the belief that the future holds promise for them. Most of all, bring them the message of God's redeeming love and grace.

In closure, MCC is a place where people can talk with each other freely about anything without fear of judgment, blame or shame. In a society with a no-talk rule, MCC is a well of living waters.

With an open-talk rule, MCC is a place where you can get in touch with your feelings and be free to express



those feelings. Thus healing is possible in God's love. In a society with a no-feel rule, MCC is a well of living waters.

With an open-talk and an open-feeling rule, MCC is a place where you can trust—trust each other to be responsible, caring and reliable friends, trust the process of conflict resolution, trust God's love and acceptance, just as we are. In a society with a no-trust rule, MCC is a well of living waters.

Indeed, UFMCC stands as a religious and moral giant in this world and stands as a giant wellspring of living waters for thousands who are thirsty—thirsty for open communication, for trusting relationships, for God's bountiful love. MCC chooses to activate Christian faith by truly fulfilling the words found in Scripture:

*Come to the waters all you who are thirsty.*

*Though you have no money, come!*

*For with you I will make an everlasting covenant,*

*A witness to the peoples, a leader of the nations.*

*for the sake of God, of the Holy One, who will glorify you.*

To MCC, a giant wellspring of living waters, I thank you for being who you are . . . for helping to free us all. As Jesse Jackson said, "Never surrender, my friends, keep the dream alive." And together we shall overcome. I love you and God bless you.

• People With AIDS

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Convention '89**

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Kit**

• **Counted  
Cross-Stitch  
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**of the emblem of the  
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of the New Jerusalem**

**by the  
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## Convention '89

# Reach Out, Share and Grow: *Rekindle the Flame*

The Education Support Unit (EDSU) has put together a dynamite selection of mini-courses and workshops reflecting a balanced blend of spiritual and practical fare for this year's Convention in Urbana, Ohio. (See Workshops for Convention schedule, pages 106–107)

A past practice of Convention is being reinstated: the **banner** procession, officially opening Convention by proudly proclaiming your church, society, association, or group. Resurrect an original or create a new one—or both—and "rekindle the flame"!

The pre-Convention program for this year is a guided tour through Cedar Bog Preserve Tuesday afternoon with our own naturalist, Anne B. Perry. It is located near Urbana College. The boardwalk through the bog accommodates wheel-chairs, so anyone can take the tour.

The Education Support Unit is very excited about the Convention 1989 schedule of events. We hope you are too, and have made Convention attendance a high priority in your summer plans. Come and rekindle the flame with us!

Martha Richardson, Chair  
Mary Kay Klein

Betsy Young  
Nina Tafel

Jacqui Skinner Light,  
Executive Secretary  
Education Support Unit

## Cedar Bog Preserve Tour *with Naturalist Anne B. Perry*

Cedar Bog is a leftover bit of what Ohio looked like thousands of years ago; the only alkaline bog remaining in Ohio; a unique experience and opportunity to examine rare and unusual animals and plants, a wealth of wildflowers, ferns, trees, and other bits of nature. Look for the endangered spotted turtle and massasauga (swamp) rattlesnake, milbert's tortoise shell butterflies, the fringed gentian, grass-of-parnassus, clumps of shrubby cinquefoil, the dwarf birch, to name a few. Over 100 species of birds were observed in one year!

I have made recent visits to bogs in arctic Norway and in my home state of Maine and have been impressed with their fragile beauty. On our walk through Cedar Bog we will experience the bog on a level of scientific knowledge, and we will explore the nature correspondences to be found there—or as Emanuel Swedenborg says, "the parallelism between the spiritual things which are the environment of the spirit, and the natural things which are the environment of the body." (*True Christian Religion*)

## Operational Handbook to be Introduced at Convention

A new small booklet will be introduced at this summer's Convention that answers many of the basic questions regarding methods and procedures in our denomination.

Prepared jointly by the Information Management and Communications Support Units, it is designed to be light, easy reading with concise answers to questions that are most often asked by newer members of the church. It will also include an up-to-date list of more well-known church offices, such as the General Council, the support units, and others. For this reason, the "official" version of the handbook will be produced in July, to include updated election results.

Ministers will be asked if they wish to have a quantity made available to them. There will be no charge for small orders. It is hoped that ministers or lay leaders will in turn make them available to local church members.



## The Family Connection

# Family Ministry

*Ted Klein*

What is family ministry? Are there ways family ministry can aid you? What can you contribute to family ministries? These are questions you can help to answer, for family ministry is what people make it. It grows out of people perceiving needs and responding to those needs.

My work in family ministry involves planning mini-courses for Convention or writing articles in *The Messenger*. I work at building communication and networks, learning about what people need in family ministry and what potential ministries, both inside and outside of Convention, are available.

Is it possible to define family ministry? Here is an attempt: family ministry is **ministering to the spiri-**

**tual growth of people as they are involved with close relationships.** This includes, but is not limited to, biological families.

Family ministry or close relationship ministry includes people of all ages, people who are single and people who have partners, people who are parents and people who are not parents. Some needs for family ministry are common to many situations, such as those involved with feelings that affect close relationships. Others call for specialized programs, such as needs in parent-child communication, single parenting, recovery from abusive situations, impacts of aging on relationships, and partners communication.

The patterns and forms family ministry can take are

diverse. There is one-to-one relating between a client and a person who ministers, and there are many kinds of available support groups. Workshops, courses, and retreats can be found. There is also much literature available which can help people to teach or help themselves. Many programs are available both inside and outside of Convention.

If you are part of a local church group, you might help in beginning family ministry programs or building on programs already functioning. Some questions that can be asked locally are these: What are our family ministry needs? Do we have ministries that are addressing these needs? Can we develop new ministries from the local group? What programs from outside

the local group could help in addressing our needs?

If you are not part of local church group or your group is not able to develop family ministry programs, there are other avenues open. Perhaps there are other people in Convention who could join with you in a program. Perhaps you can locate ongoing programs outside of Convention that are near where you live.

Please share ideas, suggestions, information, or feelings relating to family ministry. Please let me know of family ministries you see happening and of areas where you think family ministries are needed. The more I know about these situations, the more I can do in encouraging and building communication.

## Feelings, Relationships, and Family

# What Can You Do When You Feel Hurt?

An earlier article in this series described some outlets for anger. One cause of anger is feeling hurt. If you feel hurt about something someone said or did, being angry with the person who triggered those feelings is natural. You can seek outlets for the anger and for the hurt feelings.

Some relationships cause hurt because the relationships themselves are destructive. With that kind of hurt the only solution may be to end the destructive relationship. Yet many hurts come in relationships that are healthy, or have the potential to be healthy relationships, and it is

confronting these hurts that will be explored in this article.

In many situations hurt feelings are triggered by what another person has done or said. A child feels a question is urgent, and keeps asking a parent that question. The parent, feeling under pressure, loses patience and yells at the child. The child is left feeling hurt and rejected. In another situation someone is expecting to spend time with a partner, but the partner has made other plans. The person, left alone, may feel abandoned and hurt. Another situation is when a person makes a great

effort to do something nice for someone close, and receives no appreciation. In that situation, as in the others, it is natural to feel hurt. These situations may sometimes occur even in the best of relationships and the best of families.

When you find yourself feeling hurt, what can you do? A beginning is to seek a balance which neither denies the hurt nor immerses you in it. It does not work to try forcing the hurt to go away, or to tell yourself you do not feel hurt. The feeling is there, needing a positive outlet. Yet immersing yourself in the feeling can

make it much more dominant than it needs to be, and you can become stuck in it.

In many situations the best thing to do may be to approach the other person. When doing that you can explain what has caused you to feel hurt. This can be done without blaming the other person as you share feelings but do not pass judgment. Such sharing can benefit both the other person and you.

It may help, before approaching the other person, to imagine being the other person, and thinking of what the other person might have been feeling. In situations



# We Are Responsible

*Ina Hughes—Charlotte, N.C.*

We are responsible for children  
who put chocolate fingers everywhere,  
who like to be tickled,  
who stomp in puddles and ruin their pants,  
who sneak Popsicles before supper,  
who erase holes in math workbooks,  
who can never find their shoes.

And we are responsible for those  
who stare at photographers from behind barbed wire,  
who can't bound down the street in a new pair of sneakers,  
who never "counted potatoes,"  
who are born in places we wouldn't be caught dead,  
who never got to the circus,  
who live in an x-rated world.

We are responsible for children  
who give us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions,  
who sleep with the dog and bury goldfish,  
who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch money,  
who cover themselves with Band-aids and sing off-key,  
who squeeze toothpaste all over the sink,  
who slurp their soup.

And we are responsible for those  
who never get dessert,  
who have no safe blanket to drag behind them,  
who watch their parents watch them die,  
who can't find any bread to steal,  
who don't have any rooms to clean up,  
whose pictures aren't on anybody's dresser,  
whose monsters are real.

where approaching the other person is not possible or does not feel right, imagining being the other person can still be helpful. Often it can help make understandable what the other person did or failed to do.

If you find the hurt clings to you, you can try times of temporarily setting it aside without denying it. You can recognize and acknowledge the hurt, and then mentally move away from it as you become involved in activities which engage your full attention. After a few times of doing this, you may find the hurt's impact fading.

You can let go of the hurt—recognizing it, but leaving room for it to go. Letting go is not something you can make happen, but you can find a state of readiness to let go. With that readiness you can do your part and leave the rest to God.

Please send contributions and suggestions for the "Feelings, Relationships, and Family" series to:

Rev. Dr. Ted Klein  
Children's and Family Ministry  
273 Perham Street  
Roxbury, MA 02132.



We are responsible for children  
who spend all their allowance before Tuesday,  
who throw tantrums in the grocery store and pick at their food,  
who like ghost stories,  
who shove dirty clothes under the bed,  
and never rinse the tub,  
who get visits from the tooth fairy,  
who don't like to be kissed in front of the carpool,  
who squirm in church and scream in the phone,  
whose tears we sometimes laugh at  
and whose smiles can make us cry.

And we are responsible for those  
whose nightmares come in the daytime,  
who will eat anything,  
who have never seen a dentist,  
who aren't spoiled by anybody,  
who go to bed hungry and cry themselves to sleep,  
who live and move, but have no being.

We are responsible for children who want to be carried,  
and for those who must.  
For those we never give up on  
and for those who don't get a second chance.  
For those we smother . . .  
and for those who will grab the hand of anybody  
kind enough to offer it.

*Reprinted with permission from PRIME TIME Exchange, Vol. 4, Number 2, Indiana Department of Education.*

Drawing by Tina Glandera, age 15. Tina is a long-time Sunday school attendee and recently-confirmed member of the LaPorte New Church, LaPorte, Indiana



## Convention '89

## Workshops for Convention '89

This year there will be four time slots during Convention to attend mini-courses and workshops: one on Wednesday, two on Thursday, and one on Friday. Each course will last one and one-half hours. Schedules may change, however, so watch for updates in the mail, and last-minute changes will be posted at Convention.

## June 28

Wednesday  
2:00-4:00 PM

**Child Abuse/Neglect 1989: What Can We Do?**

Patte LeVan<sup>1</sup>

Overview of detection of abuse; intervention; the alcohol-drug connection; current prevention effort/resources, and how we can "plug in."

**Teaching Sunday School**

Panel of Teachers<sup>2</sup>

"Hands-on" workshop focusing on how to design activities for class; methods effective in promoting lesson content while holding interest and attention; and using inexpensive materials readily at hand. Projects will be completed.

**An Overview of Church Growth & Advertising Techniques - Part I**

Eric Allison

Examine methods with a proven track record for increasing membership, recognize those which simply don't fly, and maximize your advertising dollar.

**New Age Spirituality - Part I**

Dorothea Harvey and  
Betsy Ledingham<sup>4</sup>

Growing up in a human family—the spiritual resources we need and the spiritual resources we have—in a world aware of co-dependency.

**Re-Membering the Body as Our Tool for Transformation - Part I**

Perry S. Martin<sup>5</sup>

We will treat ourselves to the beauties available to our five senses; learn some grounding exercises, remember the nature communication we had with our

bodies as children; touch, using simple non-threatening massage; breathe into chakra energy centers and have fun.

**STAIRS**

IMSU—To be Announced<sup>6</sup>

STAIRS (Swedenborg Automated Information Retrieval System) is a method of using the personal computer to search for information among Swedenborg's works.

**The Newsletter as Ministry**

Stephen J. Pults<sup>6</sup>

Look at the newsletter with a nuts-'n'-bolts approach and get step-by-step how-tos. We will discuss the importance of this ministry. *You can do it.*

**The Message of the Myth**

Joseph Campbell film and discussion.<sup>7</sup>

**Ethics: A Focus for Spiritual Living**

James F. Lawrence

A guided discussion on several facets of ethical issues and dimensions in our everyday lives.

## June 29

Thursday  
1:00-2:30 PM

**Recovery for Adult Children of Abuse**

Sue Weiss<sup>1</sup>

Using the 12-step model, Sue will explore the recovery process of people who were abused as children.

**Parenting**

Ted Klein<sup>2</sup>

Explore helpful and important skills needed in the parenting process and address the dynamics of how parents feel about themselves as people.

**A New-Church Look at the Methods Used by the Fuller Institute - Part II**

Jaikoo Lee<sup>3</sup>

Examine tried and true methods for growing that other churches find successful and adapting these methods to our needs.

**New Age Spirituality - Part II**

Dorothea Harvey and  
Betsy Ledingham<sup>4</sup>

**Re-Membering the Body as our Tool for Transformation - Part II**

Perry S. Martin<sup>5</sup>

**Introduction to Word Processing**

Robert H. Kirven<sup>6</sup>

This workshop assumes no prior knowledge of word processing, although beginners might still find this course useful.

**The First Storytellers**

Joseph Campbell film and discussion.<sup>7</sup>

**Humor in Healing:****A Clown Ministry**

Millie Laako and Betsy Piorkowski

He who sits in the heavens laughs—  
*Psalms 2:4*

A cheerful heart is a good medicine,  
but a downcast spirit dries up the  
bones.—*Prov. 17:22*

This playshop will be a potpourri of a clown's arts: mime, balloon sculpture, merriment, simple tricks, and playing with toys (both real and imaginary). The (magic) skills you'll learn can help you minister to others and yourself. Make-up instruction available; bring a mirror if possible.

**Our World of Beauty Inside and Out**

Stephen Eric Levine

Did you know: our inner beauty is a mirror of the beauty surrounding us and the beauty around us is a gateway to discovering our own beauty?

## June 29

Thursday  
3:00-4:30 PM

**Feelings, Family, and Relationships**

Ted Klein<sup>2</sup>

Explore how our ways of dealing with feelings constructively and not-so-constructively impact our relationships—anger, frustration, doling out responsibility, autonomy vs. letting go. Participants will determine the agenda.



### Getting New Members and Keeping them! - Part III

Bob Bossdorf<sup>3</sup>

It's not enough to get people in the door! A discussion of specific areas to address to integrate new people into the life of an existing church.

### New Age Spirituality - Part III

Dorothea Harvey and  
Betsy Ledingham<sup>4</sup>

### Re-Membering the Body as Our Tool for Transformation - Part III

Perry S. Martin<sup>5</sup>

### Advanced Word Processing

Bill Etue<sup>6</sup>

A demonstration using an IBM computer of "mail-merging" and "macros" techniques.

### Putting 'Uses' to Use

Alice B. Skinner

Participants will consider Swedenborg's ideas about Uses in relation to the activities and interactions of everyday life.

### NCYL—New Church Youth League

Katie Rienstra

Meet the "Leaguers"; get to know what they are all about as an organization and as individuals and the issues and concerns they have and deal with.

## June 30

Friday

9:00–11:00 AM

### Abuse and Healing

Patte LeVan<sup>2</sup>

A workshop exploring different types of abuse occurring in families, the impact of such abuse and ways to move towards healing.

### How to Raise Funds to Serve the Local Church, SSR, and Convention - Part IV

Jerry Poole<sup>3</sup>

Work together to develop ways of raising funds to benefit churches, SSR and Convention. It's *fun* and *useful* to share in the process of fundraising.

### New Age Spirituality - Part IV

Dorothea Harvey and  
Betsy Ledingham<sup>4</sup>

### Re-Membering the Body as Our Tool for Transformation - Part IV

Perry S. Martin<sup>5</sup>

### Sacrifice and Bliss

Joseph Campbell film and discussion.<sup>2</sup>

### Introduction to Our Nine Chakras

Stephen Eric Levine

Discover the profound effect chakras have on our entire lives. I have a gift for seeing the chakras, their openness or blockage, and the emotional content therein. "One-on-one" during workshop.

### Pastor-less Churches

Patrick Cushman

Learn what it's like being part of a church without a minister; creatively coping until a leader is found; and the forces at work in these situations.

### Using the Macintosh Computer

Steve Ledingham<sup>6</sup>

(Details not available at this time.)

### The Swedenborg Board: Convention's Computer Bulletin Board

Steve Koke<sup>6</sup>

Meet with Swedenborgians from anywhere without hopping a plane. The 'Board' is limited to Convention, but

may go international. Learn what it does now and how international communication will work.

### Resource Entertainment Center

Coordinated by F. Robert Tafel

Videos, tapes, films, and possibly games will be available for use by those not interested in workshops. The REC will also be available during "off-hours," and a snack bar available.

1 The Social Concerns/Action Committee workshops were coordinated by Rev. Sue Turley-Moore with a focus on child abuse. Workshops are individually complete and any number may be attended.

2 The Children's & Family Ministry workshops were coordinated by Ted Klein and are individually complete so that any number may be attended.

3 The Church Renewal & Growth sessions were coordinated by Eric Allison. They are designed so that the content of each builds on the preceding one. Those who attend are encouraged to come to all sessions of the workshop.

4 The content of each "New Age Spirituality" session builds on the preceding one.

5 Any number of sessions of the "Re-Membering the Body as Our Tool . . ." workshop may be attended.

6 Information Management Support Unit (IMSU) workshops were coordinated by Bill Etue. The content of each is separate and any number may be attended.

7 The showings of three of the Joseph Campbell "Power of the Myth" with Bill Moyers films were coordinated by Rev. David P. Johnson. Following each film, people will be divided into smaller units to discuss the films with individuals familiar with the material of the films.

## Don't Miss the Bookworm Special At Convention Only !

1-year subscription to *Our Daily Bread* (a \$10 value)  
*New Church in a New World* (Hardbound, a \$15 value)

**A \$25 value for \$12.50 !!**



*Editors Note: Rhett Billings is a parishioner at the Urbana University Chapel, a junior at Urbana University, Ohio, and, by the way, the oldest son of Rev. John Billings and wife Sharon, Brookings Church, Oregon.*

# Tnafni

*Rhett Billings*

There once was a man named Tnafni (pronounced: tin-off-knee), who lived while Jesus was walking on the earth. Tnafni was in his mid-twenties and lived with his wife in a small town many miles from where Jesus was living. Everyone in the town thought very highly of Tnafni. Each week, Tnafni

◆  
... she was  
startled to see a  
figure standing  
there.  
◆

would take his flute to the city square and serenade the passers-by with the loveliest songs anyone had ever heard. Shoppers would put down their goods, rest, and bathe in a stream of notes that made them feel as though they were floating. After the songs were ended, people would walk over to Tnafni and try to express the happiness they had experienced. But Tnafni, every week, would drop his head, turn his back to the crowd, and walk on home. The people were terribly saddened by this. They couldn't figure out how someone with such divine talent could be so troubled. Finally, someone decided to do something. News had spread that Jesus was very near to the little town. So Tnafni's wife went to the synagogue, lit her favorite candle, and prayed that Jesus would make a stop in her town. When her prayer was finished, she blew out her candle, and turned toward the door. Looking down the aisle, she was startled to see a figure standing there. A voice came to her saying, "Take me to Tnafni." Suddenly, tears poured from her eyes as she ran toward the person

she knew could only be Jesus. He embraced her and kissed her saying, "Your faith will heal your husband, today."

Tnafni was sitting near the fireplace when Jesus and Tnafni's wife arrived. But Tnafni was feeling so low that he didn't even notice the bright yellow aura about the Lord's head. Tnafni said, "Who are you?" And Jesus replied "I am the answer to your prayer." "What prayer?" Tnafni asked. "The prayer you put out each week in the city square." Tnafni did not understand, so he asked the man to sit with him by the fireplace and talk for awhile.

Jesus asked, "Why are you so sad?" And Tnafni said defeatedly, "I don't know. I . . . it's hard to explain. I feel so empty inside, so hopeless. I feel that I have God on my side, and that He has lots of good plans in store for me . . . but I make *so many* mistakes. Sometimes, I perform an act of charity for a neighbor and I feel *great!* Then . . . something happens. I start to feel a sourness inside because my stupid ego

◆  
Tnafni experienced  
a peace so real  
it almost felt  
like liquid  
◆

gets in the way and I start to feel like "I am God. I am so ashamed. Then, I decide that I am not pure enough for God's holy purposes. I try to live my life according to the scriptures, but I don't think I'm good enough."

At this point, Jesus gently reached forth and put his fingers on Tnafni's eyes, causing them to both see and feel His Holy aura. In an instant, Tnafni experienced a *deep* peace; a peace so *real* it almost felt like liquid, which then

warmly began to pump through his whole body. He put his head on the chest of Jesus and Jesus began to speak.

"How old are you, Tnafni?"

"Twenty-four."

"And how old am I?"

"Eternally . . . old."

"Do you know what your name is backward, Tnafni?"

"Infant. . . ?"

"That's right," Jesus replied softly.

◆  
"Stop stoning  
yourself.  
Where are  
your accusers?"  
◆

"Stop stoning yourself. Where are your accusers? I do not accuse you. You are stoning yourself because you are not allowing yourself to see you as I see you; as an infant. Tnafni, you have *eternity* to live . . . learn . . . and grow. Slow down, my child. Let yourself make mistakes. Let yourself be an infant.

"I see, my Lord. I see."

"Tnafni, one more thing. Your wife is very lonely. She misses you. You have spent so much time stoning yourself that you have not really been living with her. **Live** your life with your wife and with your neighbors!"

This story is about myself. Yesterday, my wife, Anna Maria, helped me to hear this lesson from the Lord. I am so thankful to have received it. I think, perhaps, it's one of the most important lessons I've ever learned. To think of myself as an infant takes so much pressure off me, because I know the Lord does not expect me to always behave as a sensible, wise, calculating adult. I feel more free to simply wade through life as a curious three-year-old; sticking my fingers in the mysteries of life regularly and not being so concerned with



whether or not I *respond* correctly. My gosh, that's nice. I feel more free to just be me.

I'd like to change the subject, now, for awhile, and talk about something else—something related to all this. Three hundred and one years ago, an infant was born in Stockholm, Sweden. His name was Emanuel Swedenborg. As a middle-aged man, Emanuel played his own kind of tune on his own kind of flute. Whereas Tnafni's talent was in the playing of his flute, Swedenborg's was in the awesome strength of his mind. Emanuel had, quite probably, the most powerful intellect of his time. By age 56, he had not only investigated, but *mastered* all known natural science. One hundred fifty books were published in his name. *Here* was a man with an ego big enough to fill every pew in this whole church; an ego which eventually caused him to stone himself just as Tnafni's did. Like Tnafni, and like each one of us, Swedenborg was talented in his own special way, but the size of his ego clouded his inner perception and caused him to be confused about what life, love, and God are really all about. However, like Tnafni again, he had that secret, saving grace . . . he had a burning desire to *serve* people.

So what did he do with his confusion? He put his microscope away, and began to investigate the human soul. What he stumbled upon he couldn't possibly have been prepared for. He ran smack dab into his highest calling. The Lord wanted him to enter heaven and hell, in spirit, and report certain hidden things to the world. But this meant, of course, that ol' Emanuel had to learn to trust in a power infinitely more powerful and wise than his own. In short, he had to suffer himself to be humbled. So much so, that his ego would eventually fill only a single pew or so.

As you might well imagine, this humbling process led Swedenborg to stone himself *a lot*. In fact, in 1743, when the Lord first began calling Emanuel to his new post, Swedenborg kept a

journal of his dreams. I've read this journal, and his dreams strongly suggest that he did, indeed, experience very much of what Tnafni experienced; a whole lot of self-stoning.

◆  
*... he would talk  
 to us about  
 healing the child  
 within us.*  
 ◆

Swedenborg has been in the spiritual world now for two hundred seventeen years, not counting the twenty-six years he spent there, off and on, while he was still on earth. If he could come back to the earth, just for a little while and visit with us, I wonder what helpful advise he would offer us. Well, all we can do is guess. And my guess is that he would talk to us about *healing the child within us*. Swedenborg wrote in one of his books that the highest and wisest angels appear to others at a distance, not as young adults, not even as children . . . but as *infants*.

Part of the New Age movement seems to be heading toward an awareness—a *tender* awareness—of this infant view of ourselves. Authors Shakti Gawain and particularly Louise Hay have done much to uncover the value of this imagery.

What I'd like to do now is have you close your eyes, and take part in a special, guided visualization. Take a deep . . . cleansing breath . . . relax, and see yourself at the base of a lengthy stairway made of *ice*. As you look up toward the top of this stairway, you see an infant shivering . . . afraid . . . naked . . . and crying. See yourself walking up the staircase. And now . . . arriving at the top step. The infant is at your feet, and although cold and crying, it is *beautiful*,

*soft*, and in every way, *perfect*. Now, gently lean down and pick the infant up and hold it close, very close to your chest. *Feel* the warmth of your body flowing into the infant, as it quickly stops crying and falls peacefully asleep in your arms. And finally, in the privacy of your own mind, say hello to your infant nature by calling it by your own name.

And now, open your eyes and hear from the Lord's own Word, his feelings about children. Read from all of Psalm 127; Psalm 147 (verses 12–14); Matthew, Chapter 18 (verses 1–5); John, Chapter 1 (verses 12 & 13).

◆  
*The highest and  
 wisest angels  
 appear as  
 infants*  
 ◆

### Prayer

Lord, how *pleasant* it is for us to know that, as You cast Your living gaze upon us, You see *babies* sitting here. How *comforting* that is. Lord, in the coming week, help us to see that no one can really stone us, but ourselves. Remind us to *cuddle*, to *comfort*, and to *nurture* ourselves, let us seek to remember the experience today, when we held communion with our tender selves. And Lord . . . if it should please You to do so, thank Emanuel for doing his part in listening to Your call, and giving us those useful writings by which we may understand, just a little bit more, this beautiful and sometimes very complex creation of Yours. We love You, Lord. Amen.



## On Fundraising

# The Call to Nourish

Mary Kay Klein

**W**hen God created the universe—and all of us with it—we were commissioned to be responsible for the earth, to be stewards of all that we are and have. In Genesis I we read:

*Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."*

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Gen 1:26-27)*

We received no precise instructions on how to be "masters;" we are left to exercise our freedom and creativity to care for the earth and one another as best we can. Clearly, humanity has made some mistakes: too often we have taken from the earth without thought as to the consequences of pollution and destruction of earth with other living creatures; too often we have taken for granted people and relationships which are important to us and overlooked our responsibility to nurture and love one another.

On the other hand, the call to care for the earth and for other human beings is the basis for Christian life in this world; as Swedenborg says;

*We have presented these matters to let people know that a heaven-bound life is not a life withdrawn from the world but a life involved in the world, that a life of piety without a life of charity (which occurs only in this world) does not lead to heaven. Rather, it is a life of charity, a life of behaving hon-*

*estly and fairly in every task, every transaction, every work, from a more inward source, hence a heavenly one. This source is present in that life when a person behaves honestly and fairly because it is in keeping with Divine laws. (Heaven and Hell 535)*

One area in which we have the opportunity to exercise freedom and take responsibility is the stewardship of our church and our seminary. Our vision of the future, as our response to the Lord's leading, is ours to live and articulate. We have the opportunity

*to help people be open to the Lord's presence and leading, especially by fostering personal and ordained ministries which facilitate the spiritual well-being of people, and which have in common a working for the Lord in bringing in the New Age, the descent of the Holy City, New Jerusalem.*

(Convention Constitution, Sec. 1, Art. 2.)

Stewardship is not simply deciding what our resources can support, nor even creating a vision of the future, and then seeking the resources to support that vision. Stewardship means taking responsibility for our church and seminary, and nourishing every aspect of the life of these two institutions.

Over the past several years, General Convention and SSR have each developed a vision of their potential for future service, both to church members and those outside the church. Convention is seeking to shape programs that will attract new participants in the life of the church, support local initiatives, develop conference centers and camps, and minister to churches and young people. Convention also needs support for Temenos, its new worship, conference, and retreat center. SSR is concerned about upgrading faculty salaries and opportunities for professional development, improving students' preparation for practical minis-

try, preserving archival material and enlarging the library collection, and extending its services through correspondence courses, workshops and publications.

At this year's Convention, there will be programs aimed at supporting and articulating the vision of the future. Both Convention and SSR have accepted the responsibility to move forward and to create a community in which the Lord is becoming more fully present. One part of this move toward the future is a stewardship campaign which emphasizes communication about the future, sharing ideas and excitement, asking for commitment and pulling together the resources necessary to support the vision.

During the Convention session, there will be a one-hour presentation on stewardship, emphasizing both the vision, and ways of developing resources, particularly through planned giving, which enables individuals and Convention and SSR to share assets to maximum advantage. A mini-course will offer more information for those who want it.

A stewardship workshop, to be held on the Sunday evening and Monday after Convention, will address in more depth the practical side of stewardship as well as its theological base. If you are interested in joining those who are actively working to be stewards of Convention and SSR, please contact a member of the Steering Committee—Hampton Schoch or Peter Toot, Convention representatives, or Jerry Poole or Mary Kay Klein, SSR representatives—or Convention President Randall Laakko.

*Dr. Mary Kay Klein is president of the Swedenborg School of Religion (SSR), 48 Sargent St., Newton, MA. 02158.*



# Where There's A Will

Jerome Poole

A will may be the simplest and surest way to benefit the charity(ies) of your choice. Just as you can divide the various assets of your estate among your children, nephews and nieces, and friends, you can make provision for a charity to receive a share. It's even possible to designate a specific piece of property, be it real estate or stocks and bonds or a certificate of deposit to several institutions that mean a lot to you.

Recently I talked with my father, Stewart, about his plan for estate distribution and learned he wanted to benefit his church. Church to my Dad is all areas of the Swedenborgian church, from his local Church of the Holy City in Wilmington, to the larger organization of Convention with its broad services to the many local churches and its own specified programs, to the Swedenborg School of Religion where our ordained leadership is trained. He well knew the needs of his local church and suspected Convention could use his support. As we talked, he became increasingly aware of the special needs of Convention and how greatly his commitment to the Swedenborg School of Religion would be valued.

Several weeks after we talked, Dad let me know he had altered his will leaving a gift to his church to be paid following both his and Mary's deaths. Since his church is composed of three separate corporate bodies, he has stipulated a percentage to each entity; all will benefit.

If you don't have a will, it's probably wise to have one drafted and put into effect. If you have a desire to financially benefit your church, include your wish in your will; better yet, include all your church; the local body, Convention and SSR.

## Commencements

### Baptism

**Riha**—Ellen Ann Riha was baptized into the Christian faith April 7, 1989, in Fallbrook (Riverside church), the Rev. Dr. Ivan D. Franklin officiating.

### Confirmation

**Bisset, Collins, Dullien, Grant, Hamilton, Hilt, Kennedy and Humphrey**—Peter Bisset, Ann Collins, Francis Dullien, Jim Grant, Wendy Hamilton, Bruce and Edith Hilt, Tom Kennedy and Charles Humphreys were confirmed into the life of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches March 19, 1989, at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, the Rev. Eric Allison officiating.

**Dissette**—Ian and Eric Dissette, children of Dion and Mary Dissette, were confirmed into the life of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches March 26, 1989, at Swedenborg House, the Revs. Skuli Thorhallsson and Deborah Winter officiating.

### Deaths

**Allen**—Eleanor Spiers Allen entered the spiritual world March 5, 1989. A resurrection service was conducted at the Riverside church, Riverside, California, the Rev. Ivan D. Franklin officiating.

**Hartford**—H. Allen (Slick) Hartford entered the spiritual world April 7, 1989. Mr. Hartford resided in Hiram, Maine. A resurrection service was conducted April 11, 1989, at the Hiram Community Church, the Rev. Danabeth Wells-Goodwin officiating.

## Correction

The March issue incorrectly stated that the Rev. Robert McClusky performed the memorial service for Jessie Selee. The service was held April 2 at the New York Society of the New Church, with the Rev. Clayton Priestnal, Pastor Emeritus, officiating.

## Opinion

Dear Editor:

I am writing to commend the March 1989 issue of *The Messenger*. Although not a member of the Swedenborgian Church, I do find complete empathy with so many of its teaching and philosophies. What a joy to discover your wonderful magazine with its uplifting, motivating and challenging content. The design is excellent and gives such a luxuriant feeling for the wise use of white space.

In particular I enjoyed "Moving Toward the Light." As one who is working very hard to get closer to that light, I found truth and understanding in Patte's descriptions of her inner life.

Wonders never cease—in one publication—more goodies. Deborah Winter's retreat became my retreat as I stepped into the dancing circle.

Ethelwyn Worden speaks volumes about the "black hole" my own Methodist Church is dealing with at present. As

a lay leader and lay speaker, it gives me peace to learn that our problems are not denominational.

The personal changes my spouse and I have made in response to a life-threatening heart attack with several cardiac arrests plus a myriad of other medical problems gave new meaning to "Diet for A New America."

Then comes Patte LeVan back again with a connective story about the spider web in her life. We all have spiders weaving webs of distress, frustration and difficulty in our lives. Knowing and sharing the webs of others gives me great comfort. As a writer, I find great affinity with authors of *The Messenger*. They seem to be tuned into the realities of spiritual searching.

Thanks to *The Messenger*. I look forward to reading each and every page.

Sincerely,  
Marcia C. Porter  
Rolling Prairie, Indiana



## Ask Swedenborg!

by George Dole

**Q:** How does Swedenborg deal with the negative and positive aspects of power?

**A:** The negative side is quite vividly imaged in his identification of Babylon as the love of dominion, and especially "those who want to domineer through religion" (*The Last Judgment* 54). This is one of the most destructive of evils, and one of the last to be completely defeated (cf. Revelation 18). On a more earthly level, but in the same spirit, Swedenborg contrasts the king who regards himself as above the law and the king who regards the law as above himself in *The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine* n. 322. He adds in n.324, *The king who has absolute power, who believes that his subjects are slaves and that he has a right to their possessions and their lives, if he exercises that "right," is not a king but a tyrant. This kind of lust for power emerges in hell as the desire to be God.*

The positive side is nicely portrayed in *Heaven and Hell* n. 218:

*(In heaven, the people in positions of responsibility) are the ones of greater love and wisdom than others. They are therefore the ones who intend good to everyone, and who in their wisdom know how to provide for it. People like this do not domineer and give orders, but minister and serve . . . They do not make themselves greater than others, but less, because they place the good of the community and the neighbor ahead of their own . . . They accept*

# "Revelation" Performed in Boston

The Arlington Street Church in Boston was the setting for the January 29th premiere performance of the long-awaited oratorio, "Revelation," by Rev. Kenneth Turley and his wife Laurie Turley of the Elmwood church, Mass.

The 90-minute composition, based on the Book of Revelation, was begun as a tribute to Emanuel Swedenborg's three-hundredth birthday and has taken the two young composer-musicians four years to complete. Sponsored by the Massachusetts Association, the performance drew approximately 150 people and a good deal of media attention. "The audience response was generally very enthusiastic," Ken reports. "Two people said they were inspired to re-read the Book of Revelations, and one person reported that she was moved to re-examine the role of spirituality in her life." About the music itself, he says, "It is dynamic and contemporary. The Book of Revelation seemed like a natural source for artistic inspiration. It is filled with drama and conflict, immense suffering and exquisite tenderness. It contains images more weird and fantastic than Saturday cartoons and as

natural and simple as a tree bearing fruit."

If all goes well, the Turleys hope to have professional-quality cassette tapes of the oratorio available at this year's Convention in Urbana. Eventually they expect to make sheet music available as well as scaled-down versions that average church choirs and piano could perform.

The Turleys will be moving to the Portland, Maine church in September, where they plan to make music central to the worship services and develop programs that focus on music as a tool for spiritual growth. Ken's current (and lifetime) project is setting the Psalms to music. Ken and Laurie also made a cassette tape several years ago, "A Time for Birth," which consists of meditative instrumental and vocal selections to aid new and expectant parents and infants in the bonding process. It is accompanied by a booklet of meditations, written by Rev. Ron Brugler, which explains how to use the tape. Both are available from the Swedenborg Foundation, 139 E. 23rd St., New York, NY 10010.

*glory and honor not for their own sakes but for the sake of service.*

Most simply put, there is one kind of power that we ought to seek, and that is the power to help each other ef-

fectively. This desire for power emerges in heaven as the desire to serve God.

*Please send your questions to the editor or to George Dole, Swedenborg School of Religion, 48 Sargent Street, Newton, MA. 02158.*

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