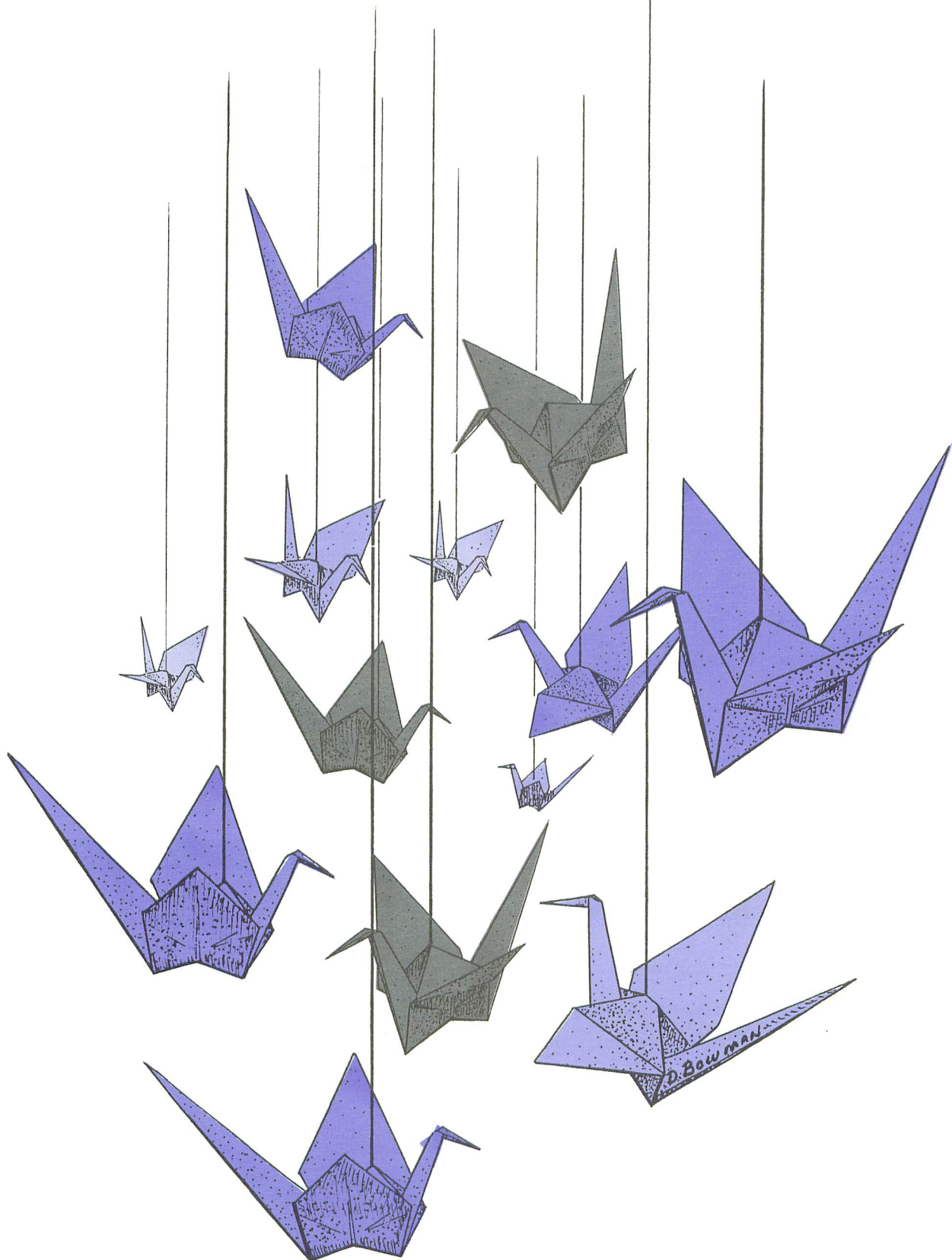


Official
Publication
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Swedenborgian Church

The Messenger

September 1989



D. Bowman

From the Editor

Uncovering Our Covers

During these past months of my new editorship, many *Messenger* readers have asked me questions about the covers of our earlier issues, so I decided to take this opportunity to clear up some lingering confusion (or add to it, as the case may be) by identifying heretofore unidentified persons and telling you a little bit about some of our cover artists and photographers.

The January cover photo was taken by Andrew Dole at the M.I.T. "Swedenborg, 18th Century Scientist" exhibit in Cambridge last November. Andrew is a student at Yale University and the son of George Dole. The people in the foreground of the photo

are Diane Seekamp, wife of John Seekamp, president of the Swedenborg Foundation, and Henry Söderberg, author of *Swedenborg's 1714 Airplane*. The portrait of Swedenborg at the left of the photo is a reproduction of an original done by artist Otto Neilsen for Scandinavian Airlines in the 1960s. The people in the background have not yet been identified. If you know who they are, please tell us. The photo was secured and sent at the eleventh hour to layout designer Lorene Lederer in San Francisco. The only person in our production chain who could identify the people was not reminded in time that she was

the one to do this. Mea culpa.

The February issue featured two children on the cover. Because two of the articles inside were about child abuse, the idea was to have children on the cover. But whose children? And if we tied the picture to the articles, would readers wonder if the children thus pictured were abused? I elected to solve the dilemma by running a 30-year-old family photo with the children unidentified. But people kept asking, "Who are those darling children?" The darling children are husband Ted's Sue and Jim LeVan, at ages five and two. Sue teaches computer programming and Jim is a truck mechanic and landscaper, recently married. Both live in Nashua, New Hampshire, and Sue's boy Jeff is the same age Sue was when the photo was taken.

The Easter (March) cover was designed by Guenther Wehrhan, whose 70 years have encompassed experiences as a member of the American Consular Staff, immigrant, milkman, award-winning book designer, mayor of a small New Jersey community, treasurer and president of the Indianapolis Humane Society and artist whose original etchings of the area architecture won admission to the Indianapolis Museum of Art. He is also a recently confirmed member of the LaPorte church. The son of a Lutheran minister, born in Poland, he was drafted into the German Army at the onset of

World War II. His subsequent desertion and capture resulted in a Nazi death sentence which was reprieved due to his value as an interpreter. The end of the war brought him an honorable discharge from the Allied High Command. He came to the U.S. in 1951 with a small daughter, becoming a citizen in 1957. The onslaught of crippling arthritis brought his work to a near-halt until an operation that replaced the knuckles on his left hand restored some mobility. But Guenther attributes much of the continuing improvement in his health to changes in attitude brought about by his attention to spiritual growth in recent years. An avid student of *A Course in Miracles*, he is currently a consulting editor for the German translation.

April cover's Spring daisies were photographed by Shannon Mahan in Griffith Park, Los Angeles. The art which had been planned for that issue didn't work out for technical reasons, so I called Shannon and she rushed to the rescue with a packet of her black and white photos. She is a drummer currently taking music classes at Los Angeles City College, does photography for fun and occasional profit, and is working on an illustrated book about feelings. She is also involved in *A Course in Miracles*—and is, by the way, my daughter.

Would you like to be one of our cover artists? See page 158 for details.

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Our cover this month is artist Don Bowman's depiction of the folded cranes, which have become a worldwide symbol of renewed hope and peace (see Faces of Courage, page 147). Don, who built the model of the Swedenborg airplane (see January '89 Messenger) is currently completing a model of the new conference center for Temenos.

The Messenger

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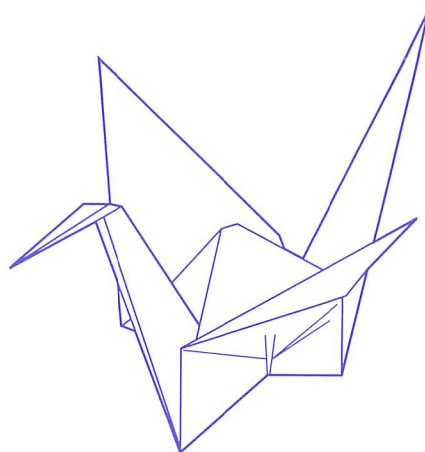
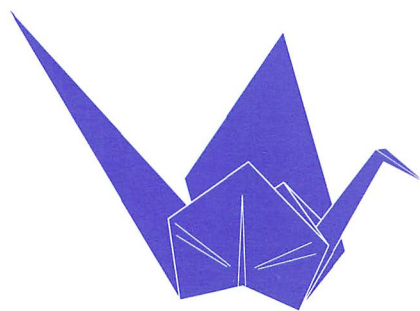
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The Faces of Courage



Rachel Rivers Lawrence

One of Jesus' dearest disciples was often afraid. And his name was Peter, which means the rock. He was afraid when Jesus called him from his fishing nets to be a fisher of men. He was afraid when he started to walk on the water toward Jesus. He was afraid when he witnessed Jesus' transfiguration on the mountain. And he was afraid when Jesus was arrested, denying even that he knew the man.

Yet Peter was a disciple of great courage. He was one of the first to dedicate his life to following Jesus, the first to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ. After the crucifixion, Peter suffered much persecution as the leader of the Christian Church in Jerusalem and ultimately died for the Lord's church.

So, Peter was courageous because he lived his life in praise to God despite his fear. Let's look at the role of fear and how courage can help us meet life's challenges.

Fear Can Be Either Destructive or Constructive

Fear is a normal, healthy feeling, and while, like pain, we do not welcome it, we know it is nevertheless necessary and important to our well-being. Like pain, it is a message that something is going on, something that needs to be paid attention to. Fear is to our soul what pain is to our body. But, just as

with pain, we often feel that fear is the enemy.

Therefore, we will often treat fear in a way similar to pain: we see it as a problem to be fixed, rather than as a source of important information. Pain is necessary to let us know how to protect ourselves. Otherwise we would keep our hand on top of the proverbial hot stove, unaware that it is

◆
***Fear is to our soul
what pain is to
our body.***
◆

burning us. In like manner, fear involves an aversion to whatever endeavors to destroy what we love, whatever we are attached to. Our fears can show us what we value, what we hold dear.

Given that fear is necessary, how can we face it with courage, so that it does not direct our lives into worry and misery?

First, we can keep it in perspective. Just as it would be best if we did not

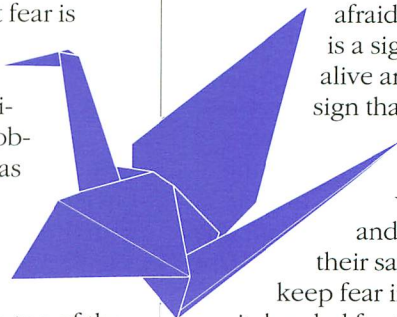
take every ache and pain we feel as a sign of cancer or AIDS, so also with fear—we can remember that it is normal and beneficial to feel

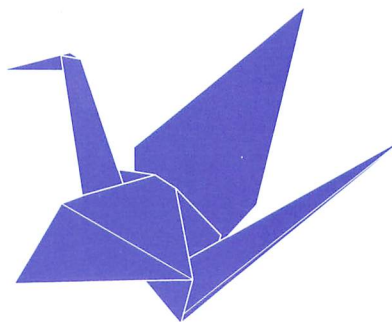
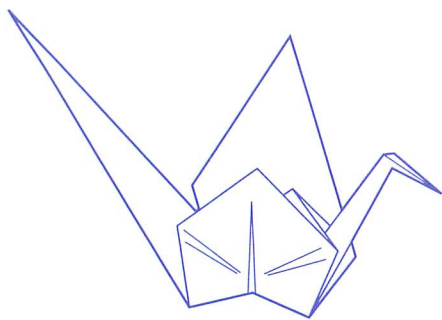
afraid sometimes. As pain is a sign that our bodies are alive and feeling, fear is a sign that we care, as when someone is walking on a slippery sidewalk and we fear and are concerned for their safety. So, we can keep fear in perspective, accept it, be glad for the caring that it holds, and go on with our day.

Second, we should not ignore fear. There are people who go to the doctor every time they bump a toe, and then there are those who won't go for help no matter how great the need. If we ignore our fears to an extreme, the chances are that we are numbing ourselves so that we can't feel the fear—but the anesthesia of our repression also blocks off our other feelings of caring and concern. Fear ignored can callous us in a way that shuts out our love as well as our fear.

Third, we can listen to and learn from our fear. With fear we often want to discount it completely or blow it up to the point where we're convinced of the reality of the worst thing we can possibly imagine. It takes courage to instead listen to what the fear is telling us, to see what kind of fear it is, to decide

(continued on next page)





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what to do, and finally to act despite the fear.

Life has pain in it, in case you haven't noticed! We can try to block out that pain by not caring; we can become overwhelmed by the pain and be miserable and paralyzed. But there is another choice: we can choose to travel this journey of life with courage as a companion. Courage is allowing ourselves to care enough to feel the pain, to feel the fear, raising our sights to a vision of life inclusive of more than the pain.

Examples of this courage are everywhere. Every time we open ourselves up more deeply in a friendship, we open ourselves to greater pain in the event of serious problems in the relationship or a loss of the friendship. The desire for deep friendship overrides the knowledge that we also open ourselves up to the possibility of deeper grief. And so we have the saying, "Better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all."

Swedenborg writes about several different kinds of fear, including a fear that comes with change. And life certainly does require change! If there is absolutely no change at all in our life, we die spiritually, for no change means stagnation. Change can mean, among other things, the unknown, and fear. Swedenborg says that this kind of fear is one of the early signs of growth and change. We might even see it like crocuses heralding the spring.

But just because we are going through a transition and we feel afraid, a positive outcome is not guaranteed. Fears go with change, with transition, with growth, because this kind of fear

has to do with uncertainty. It is by being uncertain that we can rise to a higher level of faith, of understanding. This is why fear does not always indicate a

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***Courage is
allowing ourselves
to care enough to
feel the pain.***
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lack of faith. It *can* signify lack of faith, but it can also be a sign of deepening faith. It is often simply a sign of change,

and we have an awful lot to do with helping that inner change be positive.

Let's look briefly at how uncertainty and change combine with fear and courage to bring about the opportunity for growth.

When what we believe and how we behave are actually in harmony, we tend to feel good, and be relatively at peace. This is because there is a union between the faith and charity within us.

While this feels good for a while, we get restless, partly because in this state we can't really reflect on our thoughts and actions. As faith and charity are one, the one is not really able to look at and evaluate the other.

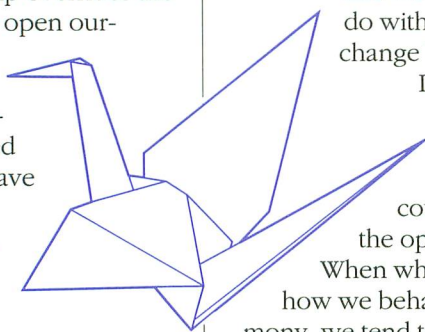
And so there is the need for change. It is like walking up the stairs: as long as the two feet are stuck together, we can't take the step. Similarly, we need to stand on one foot some-



**Rev. Rachel Lawrence
admires the thousand-
cranes mobile outside the
Fryeburg Church, Maine.**

what uncertainly in order to move up a step: and the uncertainty brings with it fear, because it opens us up to different possibilities. In that unstable condition of climbing we could fall, or we could move up another step in growth and development. And as we move up, we gain a higher perception, a deeper trust, in God.

Courage is not the absence of fear. Simon Peter shows us that. Rather, courage is connecting with something larger when fear comes upon us. And contrary to popularization, courage never acts alone. Fear is lonely, and shrinking, and hiding under the bed, but courage has to do with reaching out and connecting: it is connecting with what is really going on, and it is connecting with God.



The Thousand Cranes

In closing, I have a story to tell. It's about a Japanese girl named Sadaco. She was a baby living on the island of Nagasaki when the bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. She survived the bombing, and grew up to become a very likeable, active, spunky young girl, and she won the hearts of all who met her. She espe-

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***The crane became
 a living symbol
 of hope.***
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cially loved sports, and running in particular. When she was 12 years old, instead of growing stronger, Sadaco grew weaker and weaker. It came to the point that she could not run any more at all. Sadaco was dying of leukemia.

There is an ancient Japanese belief that if you fold a thousand cranes, using the old technique of origami—Japanese paper folding—your greatest wish will come true. After Sadaco became ill, she started folding a thousand cranes. But when she finally died, she had folded just over six hundred. Her classmates folded the rest in honor of her life, her hope, her courage.

And then something else happened. The crane, an ancient symbol of hope, became renewed as a living symbol for hope for humanity, for hope that we can all learn to live with one an-

other on this globe in peace. There is a big monument in Nagasaki so that people will not forget the pain of war, and people come to that monument now with their folded cranes, and place them at its base.

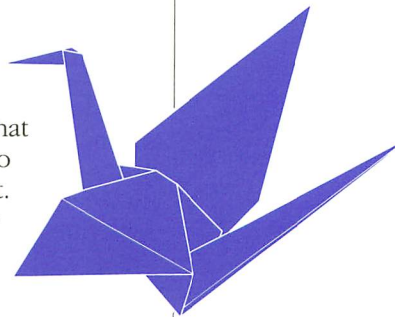
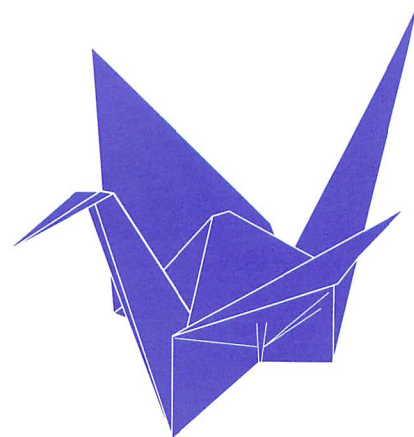
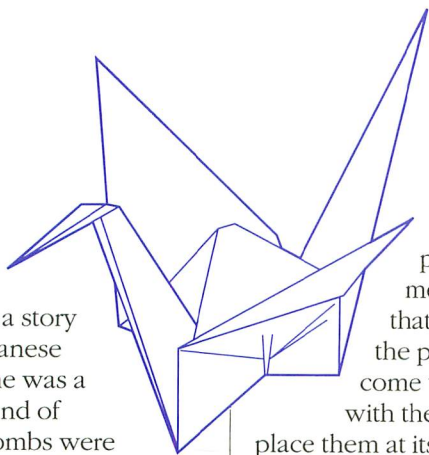
People are folding cranes now, all over the world. Last year school children from all over America folded forty thousand cranes for Sadaco, so that they could remember and hope for peace, and pray that they can do their part. These forty thousand cranes were gathered together at a sister-city conference in Seattle, and then they were spread to forty different parts of this country. One thousand cranes went to Brownfield, and they have spent the fall in the Brownfield Church. The cranes are now in the foyer of our church. As we admire their striking beauty, their splashing color, let us feel the courage they would have us feel, even in the face of our fears.

Prayer

Lord God, help us to fear that which needs fearing, and to trust that which merits trust. May we be empowered by courage to help us act wisely and lovingly for peace in our hearts and in our world. Amen.

Biblical reference for readers: Psalm 19;
 Luke 5:1-11

Rev. Rachel Lawrence is co-pastor with spouse James Lawrence at Fryeburg Church, Maine.



(Editor's Note: Since "Joy's Journey" first appeared in the January and February issues, Joy reports that over 30 Messenger readers have responded with personal letters of encouragement and sharing sent directly to her. Once again in these pages she expresses spiritual insights gained from her sojourn as a prisoner, as well as her appreciation of the ever-widening, caring circle of friends on the outside.)

Joy's Journey

April 19, 1989

During the past nine years I have been privileged to work at some of life's most menial jobs. This was not exactly by choice since those of you who have read other pieces I have written know that I have spent the better part of a decade as a prisoner of the State of Indiana. I have worked in an institutional laundry . . . a hot, wet, heavy job on its best day. Then there was the yard work which in part consisted of digging, mowing, raking, shoveling dirt or snow, weeding, spraying and most any imaginable thing needed. For four years, I operated a beauty shop for the other female prisoners and was the sole hairdresser permitted to service the up-to-240 women located there. Last year I was assigned to the kitchen at this institution where I worked as cleaner, dishwasher and occasionally cook. Every job had an element of futility to it . . . the knowing that regardless of how well the job was performed, it would have to be repeated again the next day or at least very soon. So in addition to the monotonous character of the jobs, there was this feeling that one would never make progress . . . never accomplish much or be finished with anything.

So as the years went by, I had to find a purpose in work that transcended the obvious, for even a beautifully finished project or a glowing compliment

lasted so brief a time that it seldom outweighed the drudgery of it. As a consequence, the first two things I had to give up were the desire for durable results and the desire for the approval of

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*I learned to "speak"
through work . . .*
◆

others as a motivation to excel at the task.

Once that was out of the way . . . or I should say, once I was out of my own way, work began to gain new dimensions. The prophet Khalil Gibran wrote that "Work is love made visible", and I used that as a goal to learn to love all the lowly tasks I had to endure.

I found that I began to take pleasure in the simple physicality of hard work . . . the being able to require my muscles to lift, pull, or stretch to their maximum capacity. I learned to "speak" through work as a way to show others that my inner progress was beginning to result in a cheerful, peaceful, caring attitude . . . a subject difficult to broach with anyone, especially other prisoners. As a person who tends to rely on words in most every situation, learning to "give" work to those around me to "say" how connected to them I felt gradually became an act of worship. And very few things beat action for expressing sincerity. It doesn't matter if one is articulate or wise or intellectual, it's doing the job and doing it as a way to help others that counts. This certainly is not an original idea, but so many of us have

to learn easy lessons in difficult ways. I have learned that any task done with a mindful attitude and a caring approach does create a gift of love.

I have been in unusual circumstances (shoveling excrement from overflowed sewers), and difficult situations (trying to lift more than my own weight and expected to do so as a prisoner) only to have someone remark that if I continue to work hard, someday after I get out of prison, I may actually "amount to something."

Will I ever amount to anything?

Well, yes, these years of menial labor, silent servitude and unpraised drudgery have given me great instruction. I have learned that all jobs have dignity because all life is of value. As a college graduate with few previous jobs that required heavy labor, I have learned to deeply respect the working person who performs such jobs his or her whole life and does not look forward to a release date for "freedom" from the "sentence" of hard labor. I have discovered that most people avoid eye-to-eye contact with the performer of a lowly job, although few hesitate to ask for further service. By taking the initiative of looking others in the eye while doing a "demeaning" task, I have found yet another way of raising both of us to a higher, and perhaps a more divine, level.

It has been these things that have speeded my inner growth and capacity

to love . . . these once-dreaded, "insulting, undignified" duties forced on me by my keepers have provided opportunities mere money couldn't buy.

May 11, 1989

Due to events not connected to my immediate world, I have recently been given new challenges, new tests. Like ripples in a pond, we are affected by the thoughts, intentions and actions of others. This is all the more reason to inventory and adjust our own values so we touch each other's lives in gentle ways rather than with harm. So, due to the violent act of a male prisoner while on an eight-hour pass, most honor

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*all problems arrive
bearing gifts . . .*
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camps are now being phased out or experiencing dramatic cutbacks, and I was transferred back into a maximum/medium security prison setting along with many others.

But there are always many blessings to be found in most turns of events, and I believe the teaching that all problems arrive bearing gifts. There are several opportunities in this new situation and several gifts, but the one I rejoice in most is the chance to enroll in a college-level course of study.

Another thing I have had to be thankful for is the outpouring of accep-

tance and affection after excerpts from some of my letters were printed in earlier issues of *The Messenger*. The letters I received were kind and sharing, many writers telling me of similar spiritual insights or how their own personal circumstances had transformed their inner lives. Some who wrote had not given much thought to those in our jails and prisons or had accepted only the prevailing stereotypes provided in melodramatic television programs. Rehabilitated prisoners are not popular anywhere; not in the media, in most segments of society, and especially not in prison where they remain sometimes years after they are ready for re-entry into the world outside. Ours is still a generally fearful society and fear discourages assessing each case and each person on his own merits.

It's the path of peace which dissolves fear—and almost one in every three who wrote to me enclosed *Peace Pilgrim's Steps Toward Inner Peace* booklet. As one very familiar with her writings, I am pleased to meet so many others who study her words and strive to walk a path of peace.

I thank those of you who wrote and treasure your graciousness, your comments, and the spirit of love which came through each letter. My life is richer and my spirit strengthened because of your response.

Joy Henderson
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About Peace Pilgrim

Mildred Norman, a woman known only as the Peace Pilgrim from 1953 to 1981, walked more than 25,000 miles across the United States spreading her message—*This is the way of peace: Overcome evil with good, falsehood with truth, and hatred with love.* She vowed, “I shall remain a wanderer until mankind has learned the way of peace, walking until given shelter and fasting until given food.”

Her message was that if world peace ever was to come, we must first attain inner, personal peace. Her only possessions were a blue work shirt and trousers, cheap tennis shoes and a cotton tunic with PEACE PILGRIM lettered on the front, and, 25,000 MILES ON FOOT FOR PEACE on the back. (She had passed the 25,000-mile mark in 1964 and stopped counting.) In the pockets of the tunic she carried a toothbrush, a comb, correspondence from admirers across the nation, and copies of her aphorisms, which are capsulized principles for spiritual growth and harmonious living. She talked with people on country roads and city streets, to church, college, civic groups, on TV and radio. Her life, work, and message were congruent, an inspiring example of one person’s inner peace making a significant contribution to world peace. She radiated and exemplified what she taught, having spent 15 years in spiritual growth preparation before she embarked on her pilgrimage, which she referred to humbly as her “retirement project.”

Her journey began in 1953, when she set out on foot from the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade. It ended in 1981, in Indiana, in the midst of her seventh U.S. crossing. While visiting her friend Gertrude Ward, a former member of LaPorte New Church (now deceased) who sewed Peace’s tunics for her, Peace made plans to give a talk at a school some distance away. Mark Roser (now a member of the LaPorte church) was to drive her there, but he fell and broke his hip when a railing gave way at his home. It was agreed that Gertrude’s husband Euell would drive Peace instead. In 1983, Mrs. Ward related to Rev. Ted LeVan that the night before Euell was to drive Peace to her destination, both her husband and Peace had similar dreams that, when revealed the next morning at breakfast, were considered to be premonitions of a disaster that would prevent them from completing their trip. Upon confirming and interpreting their dreams, they discussed whether or not they should make the trip. They prayed together and concluded that they should go ahead as planned.

Peace Pilgrim and Euell Ward were killed in a head-on collision near Knox, Indiana, when an inebriated driver crossed to their side of the road and struck their car. Peace was 73.

Eight years after her death, Peace Pilgrim’s work is carried on and has gained momentum under the stewardship of Ann and John Rush, a Quaker couple in Hemet, California, who helped compile *The Peace Pilgrim: Her Life and Work in Her Own Words*. The book contains excerpts from her talks and writings. The Rushes have filled requests for many thousands of copies of the book, as well as the booklet, *Steps to Inner Peace*. They are committed to distributing the book as freely as Peace Pilgrim shared her philosophy, and will send a copy without charge to anyone who requests one. It sells in bookstores for \$6. The address is Peace Pilgrim Center, 43480 Cedar Avenue, Hemet, CA 92344. (714) 927-7678.

Peace Pilgrim's Steps Toward Inner Peace:

Summary

—FOUR PREPARATIONS—

1. *Assume right attitudes toward life.*

Stop being an escapist or a surface-liver as these attitudes can only cause inharmony in your life. Face life squarely and get down below the froth on its surface to discover its verities and realities. Solve the problems that life sets before you, and you will find that solving them contributes to your inner growth. Helping to solve collective problems contributes also to your growth, and these problems should never be avoided.

2. *Live good beliefs.*

The laws governing human conduct apply as rigidly as the law of gravity. Obedience to these laws pushes us toward harmony; disobedience pushes us toward inharmony. Since many of these laws are already common belief, you can begin by putting into practice all the good things you believe. No life can be in harmony unless belief and practice are in harmony.

3. *Find your place in the Life Pattern.*

You have a part in the scheme of things. What that part is you can know only from within yourself. You can seek it in receptive silence. You can begin to live in accordance with it by doing all the good things you are motivated toward and giving these things priority in your life over all the superficial things that customarily occupy human lives.

4. *Simplify life to bring inner and outer well-being into harmony.*

Unnecessary possessions are unnecessary burdens. Many lives are cluttered not only with unnecessary possessions but also with meaningless activities. Cluttered lives are out-of-harmony

lives and require simplification. Wants and needs can become the same in a human life and, when this is accomplished, there will be a sense of harmony between inner and outer well-being. Such harmony is needful not only in the individual life but in the collective life too.

—FOUR PURIFICATIONS—

1. *Purification of the bodily temple.*

Are you free from all bad habits? In your diet do you stress the vital foods—the fruits, whole grains, vegetables and nuts? Do you get to bed early and get enough sleep? Do you get plenty of fresh air, sunshine, exercise and contact with nature? If you can answer “Yes” to all of these questions, you have gone a long way toward purification of the bodily temple.

2. *Purification of the thoughts.*

It is not enough to do right things and say right things. You must also *think* right things. Positive thoughts can be powerful influences for good. Negative thoughts can make you physically ill. Be sure there is no unpeaceful situation between yourself and any other human being, for only when you have ceased to harbor unkind thoughts can you attain inner harmony.

3. *Purification of the desires.*

Since you are here to get yourself into harmony with the laws that govern human conduct and with your part in the scheme of things, your desires should be focused in this direction.

4. *Purification of motives.*

Obviously your motive should never be greed or self-seeking, or the wish for self-glorification. You shouldn't even have the selfish motive of attaining inner peace for yourself. To be of service to your fellow humans must be your motive before your life can come into harmony.

—FOUR RELINQUISHMENTS—

1. *Relinquishment of self-will.*

You have, or it's as though you have, *two selves*: the lower self that usually governs you selfishly, and the higher self which stands ready to use you gloriously. You must subordinate the lower self by refraining from doing the not-good things you are motivated toward, not suppressing them but transforming them so that the higher self can take over your life.

2. *Relinquishment of the feeling of separateness.*

All of us, all over the world, are cells in the body of humanity. You are not separate from your fellow humans, and you cannot find harmony for yourself alone. You can only find harmony when you realize the oneness of all and work for the good of all.

3. *Relinquishment of attachments.*

Only when you have relinquished all attachments can you be really free. Material things are here for use, and anything you cannot relinquish when it has outlived its usefulness possesses you. You can only live in harmony with your fellow humans if you have no feeling that you possess them, and therefore do not try to run their lives.

4. *Relinquishment of all negative feelings.*

Work on relinquishing negative feelings. If you live in the present moment, which is really the only moment you have to live, you will be less apt to worry. If you realize that those who do mean things are psychologically ill, your feelings of anger will turn to feelings of pity. If you recognize that all of your inner hurts are caused by your own wrong actions or your own wrong reactions or your own wrong inaction, then you will stop hurting yourself.

(Reprinted from *Steps Toward Inner Peace*, Hemet, California.)

The Family Connection

Sunday School A Warm Loving Environment

Patte LeVan

By 8:30 a.m. on Sundays, the sounds of noisy exuberance are rising from the LaPorte New Church basement as the three-woman teaching team completes final preparations for class and exchanges greetings and jokes with the dozen or so children, whose ages range from six through 15. The atmosphere of warmth and cheer is greatly enhanced by the large seasonal posters crafted by teachers Pat and Gail, which not only depict scenes from the Bible but often feature photos of the individual children's faces.

Pat Tukos, Superintendent of LaPorte New Church Sunday school, has been teaching for 18 years, ably assisted by Gail Holmes who has taught for 15 years, and Pat's mother Daisy Halle who took over teaching the younger children two years ago. The team's combined time adds up to 35

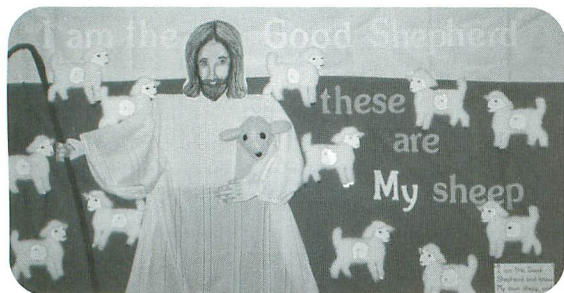
years of helping youngsters to direct their spiritual growth. Just a few minutes watching the three in action reveals a fine balance of super-conscientiousness, high energy, and the ultimate requisite for any successful educator—a working sense of humor. They enjoy the children, they have great rapport with each other, and it shows.

Pat and Gail both grew up in the LaPorte Sunday school and church. For some years after that, there was no Sunday school, then Pat started it up so that her two girls would be able to benefit as she had. "When I first began teaching," Pat reports, "I would spend at least five hours a week in preparation, getting into a lot of details on correspondences. Now I feel it's more important to provide a warm and loving environment. We want these children to feel a great reverence and respect for the

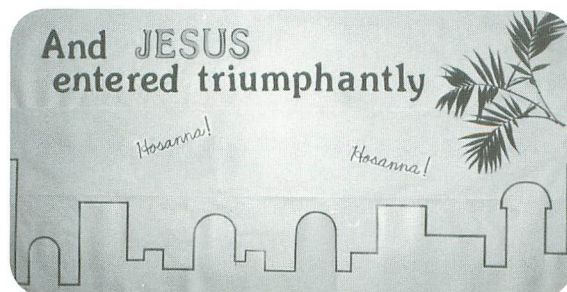
the main characters, know where to find the Commandments, the Blessings, the stories about Jesus. We want them to know what our church teaches about the creation, the crucifixion, Revelation. We want them to understand that the Bible is not just a history lesson about the people of that time—it shows us good and bad examples, teaches us right from wrong. An example might be David and Uriah¹ We make terrible mistakes and cause others hurt when we think only of our own wants and needs. Instead of trying to defend or excuse our mistakes, we need to admit to them, say we are sorry, and do all we can to make amends. We want them to realize that it is by the choices we all make every day that we choose where we spend eternity."

With a current enrollment of 16, there are quite a few younger children who spend the hour in Daisy Halle's capable charge. Daisy, a retired supervisor currently working in her son's florist business, is also a grandmother of seven. She spends several hours a week preparing activities for her class, making sure that they always have something to take home to their parents after service.

The team makes extensive use of the *Dole Notes*, Sunday school lessons in book form that cover the Bible and are arranged with specific lesson material for parent, primary, junior, intermediate, senior and adult.² Pat and Gail both state that a source of their own enrichment, aside from the satisfaction of participating in the children's spiritual growth, is the quiet time they take to become immersed in the study material each week, which they admit might not have happened if they had not committed to teach Sunday school. Both women work full time in addition to homemaking and church activities. "The Dole Notes make teaching so much easier," says Pat, "and Ted Klein³ has been very helpful with ideas from the other Sunday schools and suggested resources."



Pictured here are just a few of the many posters made by Pat and Gail over the years.



Explaining Conscience

Evelyn Witter

Gail Holmes says she has been less active this past year, concentrating mainly on helping Pat with the artwork and special activities which include several parties they give for the children each year. "I got a little tired and needed to take a breather," she explains. Both women have taken an active role at Almont Camp for the past eight years, accompanying groups of children who might not otherwise have gotten the benefit of a camp or retreat experience. Gail's 15-year-old daughter Rena, confirmed in the church this year, attended Almont for her tenth straight year in July. Pat and Gail feel that the camp experience helps keep the church ties alive when teens feel they're too old for Sunday school and not yet ready for a full commitment to adult church. For the past year, the children have been coming into the main sanctuary once a month for a quarter hour of interaction with the adult congregation, which usually consists of special stories or songs, with the recently confirmed teens often reading the scripture lesson.

Minister of the LaPorte church Rev. Ted LeVan comments, "It has been my desire for many years to have the children involved in our services, not only for the benefit of the adults who love to see them in the sanctuary, but so that they will feel at home there, and look forward to worshipping with us for the full hour when their Sunday school years are completed."

1. 2 Samuel II

2. Anita Dole completed the six-age-level four-year cycle of Bible Study Notes in the 1950s. They were put in bound form in the late 1970s, totaling six volumes.

3. Rev. Dr. Ted Klein, Children and Family Ministry.

(Editor's Note: This marks the first of several profiles we hope to run on the men and women throughout the denomination who are working with our children and youth.)

I have found conscience best explained by the story of the oyster and the crab. The lesson is illustrated by several empty oyster shells which children can handle as the story is being told.

The oyster lives in the water at the bottom of the bay. On some bright, warm days when the sun is shining, the oyster opens his shell and lets the cool water move through his house, just as we open the doors and windows of our houses on warm days to let the air circulate. But sometimes when the oyster is lying there with his shell open, a hungry fish comes along. He sees the oyster, but the oyster doesn't see him for the oyster has no eyes. He can't hear either, for he has no ears.

The little crab who lives in the same neighborhood as the oyster is different. He has eyes. He also has legs on which to run. But the little crab is no better off with his eyes and legs than the oyster who has neither.

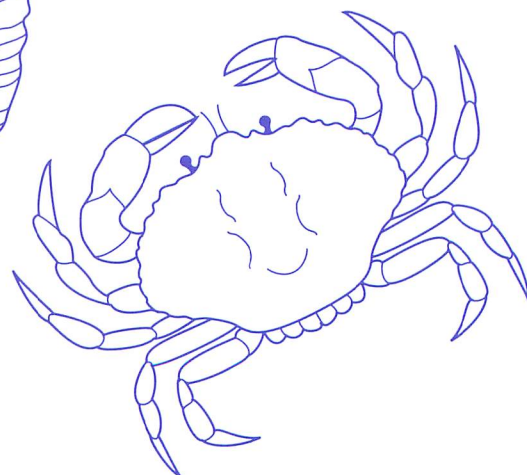
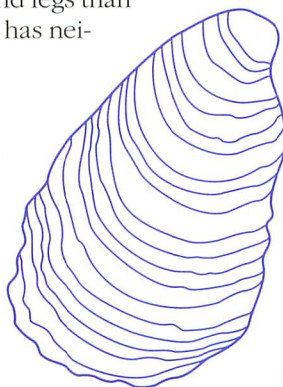
These two creatures have found a way to solve their problems. The crab

creeps into the shell with the oyster, and the oyster and the crab enter a partnership. When the oyster opens his shell, the little crab uses his eyes to look for hungry fish. If he sees one coming, he pinches his partner, who immediately closes his shell very tightly, and the oyster and the crab are both safe.

You and I are something like the oyster. We are sometimes in danger of doing wrong. We can't see wrong, we can't hear wrong, and we can't tell wrong by our other senses either. So God gave us a conscience—something inside us that pinches us when wrong comes our way.

Haven't you been tempted to do something and then felt a little twinge inside which let you know that what you were thinking, or what you were about to do, was not right? That little twinge is called "conscience."

(Editor's Note: Evelyn Witter first appeared in The Messenger, May 1989 with "Search Me, O God.")



Patricia Bowen Joins SSR Staff

The Rev. Dr. Patricia Bowen has accepted the position of Associate Professor of Practical Theology at the Swedenborg School of Religion, effective September 1, 1989.

Pat has had long-term experience in parish ministry, and has expertise in pastoral care, pastoral counseling, church administration, stewardship, and religious education. She also has served as a field education supervisor at Harvard Divinity School, and is the author of the UUA Internship Manual for supervisors, students, and congregations, *Internship: A Mutual Challenge, To Be Made Strong For The Task*.

Pat has served the First Unitarian



Church in South Bend, Indiana and the Unitarian Universalist Area Church at

First Parish in Sherborn, Massachusetts. She is currently an Interim Minister at the Fairfax Unitarian Church in Oakton, Virginia, and has made interim ministry a specialty.

A native of Harlingen, Texas, Pat was accredited as a Director of Religious Education in 1972, and received her D.Min. from Meadville/Lombard Theological School. Her continuing education since that time has included a number of Alban Institute programs

and Lyle Schaller workshops. Pat was ordained at the First Parish in Framingham, Mass., June 25, 1978. She completed her C.P.E. at the University of Virginia Medical Center at Charlot-

tesville. In every area in which she has served, she has participated in ecumenical and community activities. She has taught at the New England Leadership School, and led a growth workshop for the Snowbelt Cluster.

Her two children are Barbara, 27, who lives in Brighton, Mass. and is a floor director for TV news Channel 4; and Jonathan, 19, attending school in Texas.

Pat has always found teaching to be an exciting learning experience, so she is enthusiastic about being a part of the SSR community and sharing in its hopes and dreams. She is looking forward to finding ways in which she can best contribute to making those dreams reality and discovering what her own hopes are for SSR and herself. In reflecting on her appointment, she smiles and says, "I'm starting off on a new adventure, and I enjoy the challenge of that."

Updated RSV Bible is Authorized for Churches by NCC

After 15 years of scholarly work on the ancient texts, the Governing Board of the National Council of Churches has "authorized and endorsed" a new revision of the authoritative Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

Acting at its recent Lexington, Kentucky meeting in May the board gave its unanimous stamp of approval to the work of the 30 Protestant, Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Jewish scriptures specialists.

The new Bible, to be known as the New Revised Standard Version, is expected to be available in the bookstores in the summer of 1990.

What the new translation has done is to make use of more than 30 years of discoveries and scholarship since the original Revised Standard Version—

considered the most accurate of all translations—was done in 1952, including manuscripts unearthed as part of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Bruce Metzger, the Princeton University professor who headed the translation effort, stressed that the NRSV is not an effort to create a "unisex" Bible nor a special effort to draw on more gender inclusive language, such as the controversial lectionary—Bible readings for public worship—also produced by the National Council and its Division of Education and Ministry.

"We are not tampering with the gender of the deity," Metzger said. "God remains Our Father, and Jesus Christ is still the Son of God."

At the same time, according to Arthur Van Eck, associate general sec-

retary for the Division of Education and Ministry, the NRSV seeks to retain a precise translation of the English language.

"The committee of scholars noted, however, that there is a 'male-bias' in the English language that is not present in the biblical languages," he said.

For example, the current Revised Standard Version translates Matthew 6:30 as "O men of little faith," although the original text does not include a reference to men. The more accurate, new translation says "you of little faith."

Similarly, the RSV translates Romans 16:7 as "They are men of note among the apostles." A more precise rendering of the original language, according to the scholars, is: "They are prominent among the apostles."

Thanksgiving Survey

Submitted by Bill Etue

Public awareness in recent years of both homelessness and hunger have inspired a number of our churches to find ways to respond to less fortunate people, particularly during Thanksgiving and Christmas. So that we can help share ideas among all our churches, the Social Action Concerns Committee is offering this brief survey form for you to provide us with information about such programs at your church.

If your church has a Thanksgiving project which collects food for the needy, we would like to hear from you and find out more about what you're doing. If you have not had programs in the past, but are considering some kind

of response this year, we would also like to hear about such future plans.

In a few months a story will appear in *The Messenger* titled "The Sharing Spirit." We'll talk about what projects are being done, and who's doing them. We'd like to hear about both successful projects and projects that did not do as well as hoped. Share your views with us on what you think could be done to help our churches respond better.

Perhaps the most customary procedure is to simply set up a box at church in late October, in which contributions of canned goods are received for several weeks. Then just before Thanksgiving the food is picked up by, or brought to, distribution centers. Local social service agencies can usually put you in touch with

organizations that are happy to receive such contributions.

If you have not had such a program in the past, then this would be a good year to start, and be counted among Convention churches in this survey. If your church is doing other projects of a similar nature we would like to hear about them also.

Anyone can respond to this survey. If you would prefer to have your minister, church secretary, or lay leader respond, please show them this form and see if they would be willing to write to us.



Please cut on dotted line:

- ☐ We have a program like the food collection box you described.
- ☐ We do not have a program at this time, but plan to have one this Thanksgiving.
- ☐ We have a different type of program. (*Please describe below*).
- ☐ We are not interested in having such a program this year.

(*If you would like to tell us why, please comment below*).

Any Comments: _____

Send responses to: Rev. Sue Turley-Moore, Church of the New Jerusalem, 2107 Lyon Street, San Francisco, CA 94115 (415) 346-6466



Theology and Philosophy Position Opening at SSR

The Swedenborg School of Religion announces a full-time position in Theology and Philosophy to start September 1, 1990. The new faculty member will replace the Rev. Dr. William Woofenden, who will be retiring from full-time teaching.

SSR seeks someone to teach courses in Swedenborg Theology, applications of Swedenborgian theology to ministry, practical applications of Swedenborgian theology, ethics, and philosophy. Possible field education supervision. Prefer candidates with ten years teaching experience in higher education, experience in curriculum development and a substantial record of professional activity. Ph.D. required.

Closing date for applications is December 31, 1989. Send cover letter, curriculum vitae, and three letters of recommendation to Mrs. Mary Bryant, Secretary, Faculty Search Committee, Swedenborg School of Religion, 48 Sargent Street, Newton, MA 02158.

Newsletter Available

The Social Action Concerns Committee currently prints a small newsletter a few times per year called *Loaves and Fishes*. Those interested in the work of SACC may receive the newsletter free by writing to:

Rev. Susan Turley-Moore
Church of the New Jerusalem
2107 Lyon Street
San Francisco, CA 94115

Cover Art, Photos, Ideas Wanted for The Messenger

I know we have lots of talented people out there. We need your help! If you have (or can take) good, professional-quality *black and white* photos, or drawings, or if you have a creative idea or two about what you would like to see on the cover of upcoming issues of *The Messenger*, we would like to hear from you and see your work.

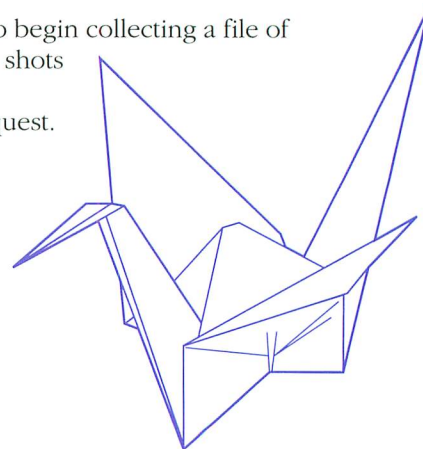
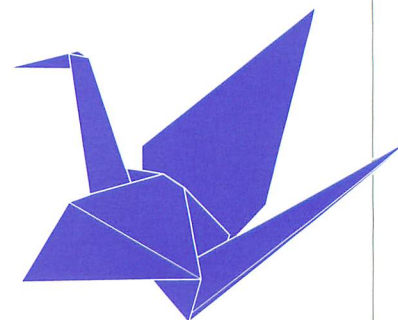
Drawings should be square, at least 12" x 12", good contrast (pen and ink preferable), suitable for reproduction. Drawings may be done in color but black and white is preferable. Photos must be black and white.

Seasonal themes for fall, Christmas, Easter, etc. are always welcome. Or, if you just want to let me know of your interest so that I can call on you for specific issues, that would be helpful.

In regard to photos, I would also like to begin collecting a file of all members as well as exterior and interior shots of all our churches.

All submissions will be returned on request.

Send to:
Patte LeVan, Editor
The Messenger
1592 N 400 W
LaPorte, IN 46350



Commencements

Baptism

Fiske—James Alan Fiske, son of James K. and Mary J. (Wheaton) Fiske was baptized into the Christian faith May 28, 1989, at the Fryeburg New Church, the Rev. Rachel Lawrence officiating.

Fleming—Brittany Anna Fleming, daughter of Neil and Joy Fleming, and granddaughter of John and Joyce Fekete, was baptized into the Christian faith June 11, 1989, at the Royal Oak Swedenborgian Church, Michigan, the Rev. Stephen Pults officiating.

Lorenzen—Daniel Bruce Lorenzen, son of Debbie and Jack Lorenzen, was baptized into the Christian faith March 26, 1989, at the Church of the Holy City in Edmonton, the Rev. Henry Korsten officiating.

Confirmation

Laster, Feyen, Basu—Ed and Dottie Laster, Pat and Michele Feyen, and Pat Basu were confirmed into the life of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches June 4, 1989, at Royal Oak Swedenborgian Church, Michigan, the Rev. Stephen Pults officiating. They were welcomed into membership by vote of board of trustees.

Penabaker and Fekete—Scott Penabaker and Kurt Fekete were confirmed into the life of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches May 14, 1989, at Royal Oak Swedenborgian Church, Michigan, the Rev. Stephen Pults officiating. They were welcomed into membership by vote of board of trustees.

Tiedeman—Mrs. Gloria Tiedeman was confirmed into the life of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches April 9, 1989, at the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, the Rev. Henry Korsten officiating.

Deaths

McNutt—Olive Fletcher McNutt entered the spiritual world March 22, 1989. Memorial services were conducted at the Glenview New Church, Chicago, on April 30, 1989, the Rev. Grant R. Schnarr officiating. Ms. McNutt was a life-long member of the New Church in Chicago, and is also the sister of Eva Grage, Colorado.

Opinion

Dear Editor:

With all due respect to George Dole (April *Messenger*, "Ask Swedenborg"), I must point out that man *does* learn from the bad experiences he has, caused by disobedience to laws of God, to obey them. I do not feel this is in any way a mindless or meaningless method of our Parent God's tough love teaching. When we begin to obey even artificially at first to escape the bad consequences, we find our new behavior more acceptable to others which in turn causes us to become obedient in genuine fashion.

Jesus taught (John 5: 1-14) that disobedience to God causes illness and warned the man he healed to sin no more lest he become ill again. We are as little children touching the hot stove to learn that in order not to be burned we must refrain. It is a learning process, a corrective behavioral psychology—of a responsible father.

Merry Browne
Louisville, Kentucky

To the Editor:

Why do bad things happen to good people? For all the reasons given by George Dole ("Ask Swedenborg," April) plus at least one more: Man indirectly produces random events and many disturbing things in nature from the spiritual world.

Why bad things should happen to good people in a world created and ruled by a loving God is an old philosophical puzzle. But I think that it makes a mistake by assuming, right off the bat, that man causes only those things that he directly sets in motion by his hands or his technology. The rest, natural events and calamities, destructive timing of events, and just poor luck, then become God's responsibility by default. We don't control those things, so God must.

But if God really is in sole control of all those things, the question becomes very difficult to answer, for God has to have had a good reason for *any* event that at first looks capricious. But capricious events vary wildly and sometimes look like scenes from a horror movie. Theologians are automatically put into a difficult defensive position when they have to find some good reason for them.

On facing some really dark puzzles in my own experience, I have often felt driven to the wall, and I now think that Man must take larger account of his own indirect influence on things

through the spiritual world. We are actually spirits residing in the spiritual world, although we seem to ourselves to be immersed in the natural world. God does oversee the natural world, but as Swedenborg points out, much of God's power moves down through the heavens, then through man, before it reaches nature. Quite a few man-made things can therefore descend upon nature and skew the pattern of events. Only the illusion that we are in a purely natural environment, where we must physically push things to happen, prevents us from seeing how unconsciously influential we are as spirits.

The natural world seems to be an arena which is designed to reflect back to us whatever we visit upon it. God controls the way in which this arena can be used as a teaching device, and He keeps it intact as a vast stage in which we can play out our dramas. But He doesn't design all that impinges on us. For example, the boulder that rolls down a hill and smashes a school bus isn't necessarily an act of God and therefore isn't a theological problem. We can learn from things like this by finding unconscious aspects of ourselves in them, just as we have had to look for deep insights in our dreams or our feelings.

Sincerely yours,
Steve Koke
Rough and Ready, California

NCC Concern Expressed for Children

In resolutions that emerged from the May meeting in Lexington, Kentucky, the National Council of Churches Governing Board expressed its concern for health and day care for children with the following actions:

☛ **Directed** the attention of the churches to the inadequacy of current child care systems, and supported efforts to enact federal legislations that will create a comprehensive child care system in this country, "Guaranteeing good quality, affordable child care for all low and moderate income families who need such child care."

☛ **Approved** a resolution in support of high quality health care for children. It directs the attention of the churches to the problem of poor child health, particularly among poor children in this country. It recommends churches' support for the Ecumenical Child Health Project of the NCC's Child Advocacy Office and asks advocacy for relevant national policy.

☛ **Supported** the Bread for the World 1989 Offering of Letters to Congress urging full funding of the Women, Infants and Children Special Supplemental Food Program (WIC). As a result, NCC member communions will be asked to encourage their congregations to be a part of the Offering of Letters.

☛ **Voted** to organize a constituency education campaign of global food self-reliance as it relates to agricultural trade. As a result, the NCC's Rural Crisis Issue Team will develop a resource kit of materials related to global food self-reliance and agricultural trade. The kits will be developed for congregational educational seminars.

☛ **Expressed** its concern about the crack cocaine epidemic in the U.S.A. and called on NCC member communions, other religious organizations and non-profit and government agencies to respond to this emergency and work toward the eradication of crack cocaine through education and action. In the action, the board urged the President of the United States to organize a White House Conference on the Drug Crisis and its relationship to unemployment, education and family and neighborhood disintegration.

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