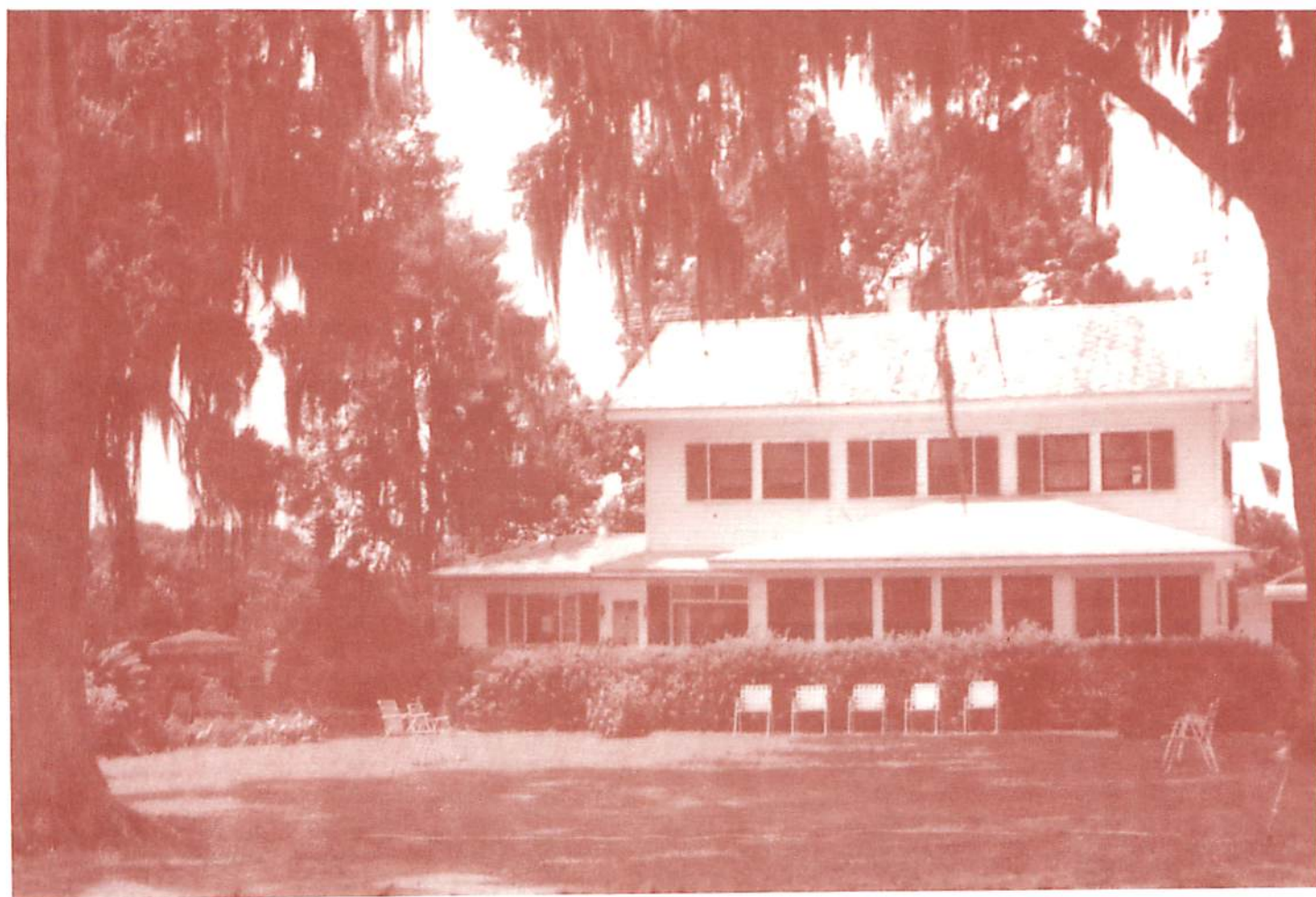


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of
North America

The Messenger

October 1991



Swedenborg House Chapel and Growth Center Deland, Florida

See "For my Church to Grow, I Need to Grow", p. 130

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Cover: Swedenborg House Chapel and Growth Center, Deland, Florida. This 100-year-old manor house has been a regional center for Swedenborgians in the southeast since the late sixties.

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Moving Toward the Light

For my Church to Grow, I Need to Grow

Guest Editorial
Skuli Thorhallsson

I saw it again today stored among some old junk I haven't been able to let go of yet, the mahogany congo drum I made at fifteen in my junior high shop class. Its sheepskin head, worn away by time and insects, flops around like the worn-out sole of an old running shoe. At the time I made it I was on the track team, the only time I would participate in competitive sports. None of my teammates were in my shop class, though; it just wasn't the cool thing to do. I don't remember my track coach, but I do remember my shop teacher, not his name but his strong, firm, reassuring presence as he guided me through the intricacies of forming a round, smooth and hollow drum out of flat slabs of rough wood.

Ten years before, I had been a little one with my little tool box following my grandfather to his boat house to help him build his fishing boat. I can still hear the sound of his sharp plane smoothing out the planks and smell the scent of fresh wood shavings, and feel the love and caring of a grandfather for his grandson. So I know it's there—the influence of strong male role models in my life. There have been others but I haven't had enough.

There is something missing. I feel isolated from other men and I need to explore what that's about. I had sensed it but I didn't start to get a grip on it until I happened to turn on PBS late one night and catch "A Gathering of Men" with Bill Moyers and Robert Bly. That led me to put together a small men's retreat here at Swedenborg House Chapel and Growth Center. Last fall I attended a men's retreat at Temenos. This summer I joined the Orlando Men's Council and read *Iron John* by Robert Bly, *Fire in the Belly* by Sam Keen, and *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover* by Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette. These join my "Hall of Mentors" whom I have come to know through their great books: Swedenborg, Van Dusen, Frankl, Ram Dass, Lawrence, Watts, Huxley, Jung, Campbell, Rolling Thunder, Hammarskjöld, King, Gandhi, Jesus, Lao Tsu, Buddha, Camus, Buber, Yogananda, Emerson, Magnusson, Fox, Kafka, James, Thoreau, Kirkegaard, Tillich, and the others. They all fill the hole in my soul that asks: *Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? What does it mean to be a man? What are my limitations? How can I help and how can I get the help I need?*

The energy of just and creative ordering (King), the energy of self-disciplined, aggressive action (Warrior), the energy of initiation and transformation (Magician), and the energy that connects men to others and world (Lover) are all there within me,

(continued on page 139)

Swedenborg's Revelations Revisited

Steve Koke

Swedenborg's revelatory claims don't show us that his teachings are true; his teachings show us that his revelatory claims are true.

In other words, we may have had it backwards. Swedenborg's revelatory claims are those statements in his books in which he tells us that the surrounding text is divinely inspired or comes from the heavens themselves. These statements have been foundations of faith for the Swedenborgian community. They often settle arguments over the importance of a book or a point of doctrine, and they mark his work as distinctly different in kind from that of other theologians. Many of us have considered Swedenborg's special claims the justification for building a church around his writings rather than just an appreciative circle of study groups and seminars.

It doesn't seem likely that these claims would raise any problems; we accept them, and if anything, they are just dramatic and unusual. But their purpose, their real place in our thinking, hasn't been clear.

First, it seems funny that we should find ourselves able to know how true an idea is before we struggle with it, think it over, and weigh it. It's a kind of unstated rule that Swedenborg can be trusted to somewhere lay the status of everything out for us; and if he says nothing, we can even take that as evidence of less serious stuff and freely downgrade it a little. Usually, we are taught that life doesn't bring such big, final answers so quickly. In fact, Swedenborg points out somewhere in the *Arcana* that an old idea shouldn't be changed until it is thoroughly re-examined.

And any claim covering a book allows us to accept it without even reading it. Should we be issued degrees in theology when we join the Swedenborgian Church?

Secondly, if we rely on his claims for these major evaluations, we can't explain why we are here in the Swedenborgian community rather than somewhere else where the same claims are made. If belief is guided by claims, then any dramatic claim can drive us into belief. It would just be fortuitous that some other revelatory church hadn't gotten us first.

Apparently, therefore, something else had to recommend Swedenborg's claims before we could use them at all. Something else has to be even more decisive than they are.

*Swedenborg's
revelatory claims
are not meant to
create faith
where it doesn't exist.*

Like many people, I entered the Swedenborgian faith after being very impressed with *Heaven and Hell*. It just seemed to be true. But then I had to consider further reading in Swedenborg's books, and a very natural question came up: are his other books based on heavenly experiences too? Spiritual inspiration is typically a sometime thing. It comes and goes. Swedenborg may have written from many different incentives. So I turned toward a rather easy solution: if Swedenborg *says* that his other books are also inspired, then that will allow me to trust them as I had learned to trust *Heaven and Hell*.

Something similar probably happens with most of us in due time. An initial love affair with Swedenborg's teachings, and some strong intuitive feelings about them, establish his high claims. But then the cart quietly goes before the horse, and

his revelatory claims are brought forward to establish his teachings. No longer may we depend entirely on the beauty and inherent reasonableness of individual ideas; the revelatory claims, fueled by our thirst of the *man*, determine what we think. We begin to believe because Swedenborg said so, not because we actually see very much anymore. An authority figure, even if of excellent reputation, replaces truth on center stage. Leaning on authorities isn't necessarily bad, but in religion it is something less than an exercise in high-minded deliberation and sensitivity. It's a retreat toward the edges of personal religious experience.

So why should Swedenborg have made any claims at all?

What his claims do is to confirm that what we feel about his books is real, objective. Through them, we learn that we are not the only ones who feel this way. Swedenborg himself tells us that we are OK, the light we are experiencing was his as well. For it takes another person's viewpoint to establish objectivity. The two together, oneself and Swedenborg, then strengthen personal vision in a way that only one of the two could not. His revelatory claims are intended to strengthen those who are already, in this sense, in faith. They aren't meant to create faith where it doesn't exist.

The Biblical miracles work the same way. The basis of Christianity is not the gospel miracles or Jesus' own claims, but His individuality as it is sensed in His teachings and in His daily life. There is a divinity there, a numinous perfection of character and wisdom, that does not appear in other life stories. The miracles are meant to dialogue with that sense and confirm it, not to prove the divinity of Jesus to anyone who isn't already observing it unconsciously. (Continued on page 132)

Revelations (from page 131)

We are likely to act on our private feelings about an idea anyway. In the history of philosophy, for example, it turns out that old philosophies don't die because they have been out-gunned by superior minds or great authorities; they die because no one sees enough meaning in them anymore to keep defending them. Any way of looking at life can be defended indefinitely, if you want to do it. You can waste your entire life coddling an old idea, for life won't give you an irrefutable reason to stop. Old castles are abandoned (or just not occupied by the next generation), not overcome by the enemy.

The fact that where philosophical commitments are involved we are moved by *meaning*, and not even by a good logical case, applies especially in theology. If someone brings out one of Swedenborg's revelatory claims to settle an argument, he still uses it only to support an idea that's meaningful to him. The claim is not the real reason for pushing the idea. Similarly, the other person is likely to keep looking for some way around the claim because he finds something else meaningful.

All this applies to judgments about other people's spiritual experiences as well. It has seemed threatening to many of us when, now and then, someone comes among us and claims to have access to the spiritual world. Could Swedenborg be compromised or displaced by another revelator?

The issue actually has little to do with spiritual experience *per se*, for experiences and claims can be a dime a dozen. The question to ask is whether our sense of truth is awakened by the new material. Our sense of truth is, after all, the only thing that could have set us down here in the beginning, and we must still have it. If the new experiences do arouse our sense of truth, then they must have a relationship with Swedenborg's work which will add something to it, for truth is one. If the new experiences don't arouse that sense of reality, then we should just go on with our business. Claims and experiences are not compelling by themselves.

Steve Koke is a member of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church and serves nationally on the Information Management Support Unit (IMSU).

Visions and Priorities Update

In the second business session of Convention 1991, General Council member Peter Toot introduced the issue of prioritization of the denomination's goals and activities, recounting the efforts of Cabinet and General Council in this direction. He summarized the visions, goals and priorities identified by Cabinet last fall and by General Council last winter. The details of the priorities matched well with the goals and objectives in the "Orange Book" report of the Ad Hoc Committee. The present programs of support units and other bodies, sorted against the priorities adopted by Council, formed the basis of an interim budget on which the national body has operated for the first half of 1991. The input of convention delegates is required before General Council adopts a budget for this year.

Considerable discussion followed Toot's motion on the issue, with the motion being referred to a committee for rewording, particularly of a preamble including purpose, to be returned for further discussion at the last business session, where Toot moved (with second) the following resolution:

As a present means of fulfilling our stated purpose of fostering spiritual well-being by the effective use of our theological resources, Convention endorses the priorities of Integrating Relationships, On-going Programs to Help People, and Growth as described in the June 1991 Messenger, as appropriate to this place and time in the life of the church, and instructs the General Council, Cabinet, and officers of Convention to use these priorities for the development of programs and the allocation of resources.

Further discussion focused on the specific consequences of passing the motion. Some felt that the resolution is too general; others questioned the process and the timing; the short-form names no priorities; the resolution empowers General Council without giving it specific guidelines. Appreciation for council's attempt was expressed and applauded, but President Richard Tafel received general assent that the process needs rework and should be returned back to Council. It was voted to refer the motion, with instructions to communicate more effectively to Convention membership.

TEMENOS FALL WORKSHOPS

October 10-15

Thursday 6 p.m.
to Tuesday 2 p.m.

Cost \$695 (includes meals
& overnight accommodations)

Holotropic Breathwork Intensive, with Laurie Weaver and Jim Frazier, certified practitioners of Holotropic Breathwork. You are invited to experience an inner journey of personal healing, using breathwork, creative arts, group process, and relaxation in the natural beauty of Temenos Meadows and woods.

October 19

Saturday 9:30 a.m.
to 4:30 p.m.

Cost: \$45

Coming Home to Who I Am

Explore Your Personal Myths with the Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey, ordained Swedenborgian minister. Workshop at Sky Meadow, 692 Spruce Drive, West Chester, Pennsylvania.

October 26

Saturday 9:30 a.m.
to 4:30 p.m.

Cost \$45

Dream Symbols and Their Messages, led by artist Alice Adelman and psychotherapist Perry Martin, Ph.D., at Sky Meadow. Learn to understand and tap the wisdom of your dreams, creative messages for growth, direction and healing.

For further information, contact: Rev. Erni Martin, TEMENOS at Broad Run Retreat & Conference Center, 685 Broad Run Rd., West Chester, PA 19383. (215) 431-3883.

We Can Make It If We Try!

Pastoral Ministries Consultant's Report to Convention

By Eric Allison

For those who don't know, my job as the Pastoral Ministries consultant is to help churches grow that *want* to grow. I have just finished the first two years of on-the-job training. After reading fifty some books, attending numerous workshops and working with most of our churches, I think I have a pretty good handle on what is wrong with us and what is right with us. While some good things have been happening, what I will share with you is not all good news. Whether or not our denomination is going to make it I cannot say. Sometimes I see our survival based upon some major changes that we must make. At other times I think we may be able to continue having some growth with only minor changes.

Last January I phoned the ministers in most of our churches in North America and asked them 45 questions about their churches so we could have a basic survey of the church. The survey reports facts from about 28 churches. On any given Sunday during the church year an average of about 800 Swedenborgians attend worship. The total number of children in Sunday school on the average Sunday is 164. The average number of adults in Sunday school is only 124. While the league program has over two hundred on its mailing list and regularly has successful retreats, only 51 teenagers are actively involved in the life of their local churches. Eleven of our churches have no Sunday school at all. Eleven have Sunday schools with attendance of 10 or less; five have Sunday schools with attendance of 11 to 20 and one has a Sunday school with attendance as high as forty. Five churches have adult worship attendance over 30 with three of those churches having

as many as 70 adults in church. Eleven of our churches have attendance between 11 and 20, 11 have between 21 and 30 adults.

The facts indicate that we are in trouble as a denomination. Convention is operating at a large deficit budget and most of our churches are dependent upon convention's financial support. We are running out of time and money. We have no church that has an operating budget from contributions alone. Seventy-nine percent of our existing churches were founded prior to 1900. If we are to survive we must make some important changes.

It is a completely different world today. Every denomination in the United States and Canada that has more than three thousand churches is declining except the Southern Baptists and the Assemblies of God. These churches are growing because they are very good at meeting the needs of the baby boomers (those born after 1964 who are now adults). There are individual liberal congregations of every denominational stripe growing because they are meeting the needs of these age groups without compromising their principals. When the baby boomers and the baby busters start looking for a church the first two questions they ask are:

- What kind of child care and Sunday school program do you have?
- What type of music do you have?

Less than three percent of baby boomers and baby busters chose organ music as their first choice of music, and only 18% like organ music in church. What do we play? We play organ music in most of our churches most of the time. Most baby boomers and baby busters (86%) would like to have "music

with a beat" in church. Our style of worship service needs to change and change soon.

We have some real bright spots. Cleveland has tripled its worship attendance in the last eighteen months. They moved away from the organ music format and are doing contemporary worship. Our churches in Portland, Maine and Redmond, Washington also follow a contemporary format and are both growing. Portland has more than doubled its worship attendance during the last year. Fryeburg has enriched its worship format with changes such as intercessory prayer and a growing choir. While following the traditional format it continues to grow because the people are excited about its message and its ministry.

An informal survey of members attending this convention showed that the largest number of those present were born into the church. The next largest number is those who were invited to come to church by a friend, relative or family member. Those who came into the church through marriage, finding a book about Swedenborg, or through the minister are a very small number. Many of our churches are so small that advertising will have to be used to get some new people to come into the door for the first time. Advertising has worked in Cleveland, Portland, Seattle, Cincinnati, Deland and Wilmington.

In May of this year, I had lunch with Carl George. Carl is the director of the Fuller Institute and likely the world's leading church growth expert. He is familiar with our church's teachings and organizational structure and history. He said that he is convinced that for any church to

(Continued on page 136)

Book Review

Inner Light

by Brian Kingslake

Most *Messenger* readers will warmly remember Brian and Jill Kingslake, who during their stay in the U.S. some years ago ministered with distinction in the Philadelphia, Washington and Cleveland Swedenborgian Churches. In 1989 this reviewer enjoyed an all-too-brief visit with the Kingslakes at their retirement home in Bath, England; though somewhat infirm, they were both still keenly interested in church affairs.

Brian is one of the few clergy-persons I know who excels both as a preacher and as a writer. He has been one of the most prolific Swedenborgian writers on the scene over the past half-century, with quality matching quantity. Translating pure Swedenborgian thought into down-to-earth, readable, user-friendly language is a difficult task. The challenge is to retain the original meaning and spirit, then reword it into a more palatable style for present-day readers. Brian Kingslake does this superbly in his many books, articles and correspondence lessons.

J. Appleseed & Co. has just reprinted Kingslake's *Swedenborg Explores the Spiritual Dimension* under a new title, *Inner Light*. Editor Jim Lawrence explains in the preface that this is a "revised and updated edition of Brian Kingslake's masterful introduction to the Swedenborgian Church and its teachings, first published in 1981." This version is slightly abridged, and where appropriate it has been modernized in the area of gender-based language.

Generally speaking, I would say this 175-page paperback is the best book I have read explaining basic Swedenborgian theology in practical,

understandable English. Virtually all of the major New Church doctrines are brought to our attention, clearly and briefly: the nature of God; the Trinity; Life after Death; Sex and Marriage; Salvation; Divine Providence; Prayer; the Sacraments; the Second Coming; the Church; and the Word. There are also chapters on Why a New Church?; Swedenborg's Life; and Swedenborgian Organizations. Everything you ever wanted to know about the Swedenborgian life and faith!

Brian stresses the importance of being candid and honest in all matters, so here are a few bricks to accompany the bouquets. First a small wonderment: why is New Church sometimes hyphenated, sometimes not? Usually, but not always, New Church refers to the organization, and New Church to the broader, universal concept. Consistency would have been helpful here. The main reservation I have about the book (and this says more about me than it does about the author) is that too often essential ideas are presented in an overly simplistic, absolutist manner, and this may turn off some readers, especially those who are relatively new to Swedenborgian thought. For example: "We must learn to be thankful for our misfortunes, and welcome the strokes that fall upon us . . ." (p. 97) How many Jobs do you know? This may be the ideal response to affliction, but how would this sound to the one billion people in the world today who are on the brink of starvation? Again, on p. 99 we read, "Thus from constant obedience over a considerable time, we become so aligned with providence that we *always* (italics mine) act in harmony with him (God)." Do we ever reach the state

when we always act in accordance with God's will? I rather doubt it. If our spiritual evolution is an eternal process, it would seem that we will never fully understand and follow God's will for us. Endless growth implies endless separation; hopefully a gradual narrowing between the seeker and the One sought, but never total harmony.

A few more examples that caught my eye: "Before the days of Jesus Christ, there was no direct link or bridge between the divine and the human, between the infinite and the finite." What do you think? My sense is that we find in the Old Testament a number of passages that would challenge this statement. And outside of the Hebrew world, in ancient India, Persia, Egypt and elsewhere, were there not some pretty strong bridges between the divine and the human? It's only been in relatively recent times that we have begun to appreciate the power and the beauty of ancient religions; I believe much more study needs to be done in this area. An unfortunate wording appears on p. 68. "At the time we are considering, two thousand years ago, the human race was enslaved by the devil." In one sense this is true because the hells, or the powers of darkness, can be imaged as a "devil", but for some readers this usage might pose an unnecessary problem.

A broader question comes to mind, not only as it applies to this book, but to our understanding and acceptance of Swedenborgian thought in general. Brian Kingslake writes about life in the spiritual world very literally, as described in *Heaven and Hell*. Thus, "Children are cared for by foster mothers; women angels who, when on earth,

loved children dearly." Is there no masculine presence in those homes? Does Swedenborg literally mean that children in heaven are raised only by women? Or that children in heaven learn only in the form of games and play? What about travel by chariot in the spiritual world? This is how it was done in the 18th century, but are these images still valid today? How about giving these questions some thought and sending your views to *The Messenger*?

These are minor points that caught my attention, and they in no way detract from the overall importance of this excellent new publication. Confirmed Swedenborgians and new readers alike should find great wisdom and power in *Inner Light*.

—Reviewed by Paul Zacharias

The Rev. Paul Zacharias is a former pastor of the Kitchener, Ontario Swedenborgian Church, executive secretary for the Pastoral Ministries Support Unit and a member of the Committee for Admission to the Ministry (CAM).

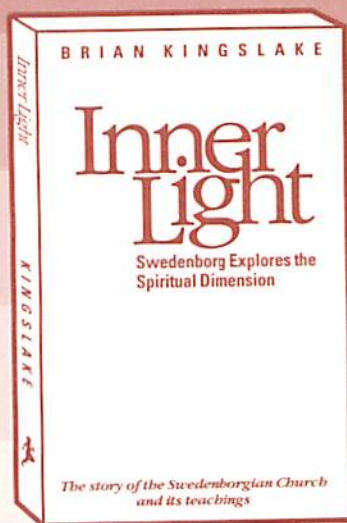
1000 New Readers Exposed to Swedenborg

Acting as the Canadian representative for Swedenborg Publishers worldwide, New Christian Books, the Swedenborg Outreach Book Distribution Centre in Toronto, currently supplies 15 commercial bookstores across Canada with 30 Swedenborg and collateral titles. NCB's mail order operation sold nearly 1,000 books to new readers of Swedenborg this year. New Christian Books also participated in the huge "Word on the Street" bookfair held in September in downtown Toronto, continuing to give Swedenborg and his ideas greater public exposure.

As of September 1, Folkert Nater of The Hague took over from Vera Coodenough Dyck as manager of NCB, which is currently funded by the Olivet Church Society, but works

closely with Information Swedenborg Inc. (ISI). ISI is a legal charity separate from any church organization, whose goals are to promote the theological writings of Swedenborg and establish study groups and bookstores for this purpose. Recently there has been serious thought in the Olivet Society of turning over the funding and management of the distribution centre to ISI. Now, more than ever, ISI is looking for increased membership and contributions to carry on its work of spreading the truths of the New Christianity to the whole world. For more information about their purposes, current and past projects, and membership, please write to: New Christian Books, 4939B Dundas St. West, Etobicoke, Ontario M9A 1B6, Canada.

JUST PUBLISHED



Inner Light

Swedenborg Explores the
Spiritual Dimension

by Brian Kingslake

J. Appleseed & Co.

3200 Washington Street, San Francisco, CA 94115



A lively and readable introduction very likely to become the most widely used overview of the teachings of the Swedenborgian Church. As always, Kingslake's clarity and wit sparkle.

List Price: \$5.95 plus postage

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San Francisco, Ca 94115

We Can Make It...

(Continued from page 133)

grow it must reframe its past. That we must look back at the time of great vitality and see what unique Christian message we have left behind and reclaim that message.

I gave this a lot of thought and talked with Bob Kirven about our history. What we came up with was that during the last century our thirty-year rub with spiritualism had caused us to overreact. We denied mysticism innate to Swedenborgianism. After that time we did everything we could to appear as "normal" as possible. In fact, we became so normal in our worship and our style of living our faith that no one could tell us apart from any other traditional Christian church. We denied our uniqueness. We have hidden our lamp under a bushel.

We are a unique expression of the Christian faith and it is time we proclaim it, not hide it.

We do not even pray together. In the nearly twenty years that I have been in the Swedenborgian church I can think of only two occasions when I have been invited to take part in a devotion or prayer time. Not just grace at meals but a time of prayer together.

We are great at talking about the theology and what Swedenborg said. We do so much talking and so little praying that we stay on the intellectual level and we leave the Lord out of our decisions. I actually think that we quote Swedenborg more often than we quote the Lord. Have we left the Lord out of the church?

We want to do the right thing and we often say that we should do this or that *for* the Lord. I believe that we need to do things *with* the Lord. I can recall attending only one meeting where, when we had reached an impasse, we stopped to pray and ask the Lord to guide us.

We attend convention where the theme is healing. But *we* don't do much healing. It doesn't seem to get through to us that a major part of the Lord's ministry was healing. During convention someone told me they had a terrible headache. I offered to sit down with that person and use my hands in offering a com-

bination of Japanese and Christian healing to take the headache away. The person jumped away saying, "no, no, it's not *that* bad."

So, we need to reclaim and reframe the Christian mysticism of our church. I would encourage all of you to have a daily discipline of prayer for the healing of our world and our church. If we are going to grow we must include the Lord in our plans and we cannot do that unless we regularly talk with Him and open our hearts to Him.

As a denomination and on the local level we all want to grow but we do not have strategy. If we do not have a strategy that tries to reach the group of one hundred and twenty million unchurched people, we will likely not survive. In the coming year I have several suggestions which any church can follow.

- Begin all of your meetings with a longer prayer time. Don't just have the brief opening prayer, take the plunge and learn to pray more openly together. A board meeting doesn't have to be a bored meeting. It can be a time to build your faith, as a group and as individuals.
- Spend 30% of every board meeting talking about and planning for growth. This does not mean getting new people so that you have a larger number of people. Getting new people means letting people know that you have something that can fill a spiritual emptiness that can change their lives.
- Most baby boomers and baby busters don't go to church because they assume that churches are boring and irrelevant. They are usually right. They want programs that can make a difference in their lives. If churches are to grow they have to advertise and deliver programs that meet current needs. Our informal survey of those at convention showed that some of the biggest issues facing these people today are stress, environment, relationships, and day care.

- You cannot do everything fast. Pick out two things that you think your church could do well this year, that would help the community, and let them know that your church cares. It might be advertising in the newspaper one day each week when "mother's time out" (one half day of free baby sitting) is offered to the community. It might be a special prayer or healing service for those with AIDS. Whatever it is needs to be something that you can do well.
- One of our church's major problems is that we rarely look outside of our organization for ideas and answers. Visit the successful churches in your community and see what they are doing. Their theology may be miles apart from ours but they are doing something well which can give you ideas about what you can do.
- Hardly any of our leaders, either on the denominational level or on the local level, have any training in church growth or management. The Fuller Institute (1-800-999-9578), the Alban Institute (1-800-457-8893), and Church Growth Inc. (1-818-447-2112) offer workshops all year. These workshops can give you lots of specific ideas. *Go!* PMSU offers financial assistance.

Our church can make it. Some of our churches are growing. There is hope. *But* big changes need to be made. We need to think boldly. I would urge you to read *Dying for Change*, by Leith Anderson; *44 Ways to Increase Church Attendance*, by Lyle Schaller; and *Attracting New Members*, by Robert Bast. And for your own growth a must book is *The Spirit of the Disciplines* by Dallas Willard.

JUST FOR FUN!



Prospective new members? Incoming SSR students? Nope. They're Garden Trolls, sculpted by Eric Allison. All profits on sales go to Preservation of the Rain Forest. Happy Halloween!

Highlights from Post-convention General Council Meeting

General Council accepted Urbana University's proposed repayment schedule with the hope of having a more regular payback of the university's outstanding loans.

Being unable to identify sufficient funds to match the Philadelphia church grant offer, General Council authorized the president to appoint a committee to work with the Temenos board and the Philadelphia church in looking into alternative ways to proceed with the development of Temenos.*

Stone House and the Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound presented a "Vision of Growth." It was decided to return the proposal to the church for further development with the directive that any resubmission be made through the Growth and Outreach Support Unit (GOSU). The Executive Committee was charged with addressing the current crisis at Stone House that included burnout, their lease running out, etc.*

Discussion in regard to work/study grants at the Swedenborg School of Religion (SSR) resulted in General Council's request that the

Augmentation Fund Committee develop policy guidelines to deal with this.

Riverside Church Growth fund, a restricted free fund, was established according to the wishes of the Riverside church from the proceeds of the sale of the church. Grants from this fund will be made by General Council to the Pastoral Ministries Support Unit (PMSU).

Funds from the sale of a portion of the St. Louis Church's property were returned to them for use in their church building improvements.

It was moved to forgive the Edmonton church's mortgage upon Convention's receipt of a valid, recorded deed of the church and its land.

The 1991 budget and the 1991 preliminary budget were adopted, and the audits of Convention, Wayfarers Chapel and Temenos were accepted.

Gloria Toot, Recording Secretary

**See The President Reports, September 1991 Messenger.*

The New Church Women's Symposium 1991

A Women's Symposium is being offered November 29—December 1, 1991, sponsored by the Girls School of the Academy of the New Church and Theta Alpha International in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania.

The symposium goals are:

- To explore the experience of being female in the Church and in Western culture.
- To examine, in the light of the Writings, the findings of recent secular research into female development.
- To encourage women to assume responsibility for unfolding the complexities of the female mind, and to strengthen their confidence in their ability to do this.
- To become aware of the ways that cultural stereotypes may have clouded our thinking from doctrine about feminine uses.
- To heighten awareness of the true differences between masculine and feminine minds.
- To laugh together, have some fun, and celebrate the joys of being women.

Workshop titles include:

- Single Parenting: Challenges and Rewards
- Aging as an Opportunity for Growth
- Women of Influence in Western Culture
- Feminine Archetypes: The Mythic Journey Within
- Feminine Issues on a University Campus
- Becoming a Whole Person (Before or After Marriage)
- Women in Business—a view of the feminine influence on traditional values in the workplace.

Registration is \$40 plus \$20 for three meals. A special \$10 fee plus meals is available for anyone unable to pay the full amount. Full-time students pay only \$15 for registration and meals, and housing is free in private homes and dorms. Some child-care provided. For further registration information, contact: Judy Hyatt, P.O. Box 277, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009. (215)946-4133 (1—11 p.m.)



Invitation to International Youth Camp

Australia may sound like the other end of the world, but it's only 24 hours away. So we reach out to you, with an invitation to come join us for a special gathering of young people with New Church connections from December 28, 1991 through January 4, 1992. Everyone between the ages of 15 and 25 (we're prepared to give some ground at either end of the age range) is welcome.

This gathering is called "An International Youth Camp."

From the original concept we have developed a few points, which we feel should be used as criteria for the overall success of this Camp.

- Traveling costs for overseas visitors would require subsidizing.
 - The content of lesson time together would need to be, as far as possible, uniquely Australian.
 - There must be ample opportunity for visitors to see as much as possible of the Australian lifestyle.
- To fulfill the criteria we have taken the following action.

- Our small but active youth groups have busily set about fundraising through sponsored rides and walks, meal preparation for congregations, the collection of aluminum drink cans and bottles, garage sales (household jumble), car wash days, and anything else they could think up. To date this totals over \$3,000 (AUS).
- We settled on Jumbuk Park as the camp site. Jumbuk Park is only two hours drive out of Melbourne (Victoria) in the southeastern corner of Australia, and has facilities which provide fully catered accommodation with cabin units of six and ten beds each. It has a first-rate initiative course and challenges for people of varying

ability.

The park covers an area of 150 hectares of some of the most beautiful mountain scenery (Strzelecki Mountains) in Victoria. Fern gullies, forests, sparkling mountain creeks, cascading waterfalls; there's a superabundance of native birds and animals, including lyrebirds, rosellas, kangaroos and wombats.

Bushwalks abound in and around Jumbuk Park, some are short and some long, some are hard and some easy, and all take the camper through a wide variety of Australian "bushland". The park is surrounded by national parks such as the Tarra-Bulga Park which is well known for its pristine tall timbers and fern gullies; and Wilson's Promontory National Reserve which abounds, excuse the pun, with wildlife such as kangaroos and wallabies.

Local Attractions

A short drive from Jumbuk Park is Coal Creek, an historical township which has been restored to its pioneer pride and the community functions as it was in the 1850s!

Down the road from Coal Creek is the Philip Island Penguin Reserve where, each night at sunset, some 2,000 fairy penguins come ashore. The new Penguin Experience Centre and specially built observation platforms provide great insights into the wonders of nature.

Learning and Sharing

Discussion time will remain as informal as possible and there will be a number of sessions aimed at building up an awareness of each others' needs along with a sense of team spirit. Rangers from the National Parks and the staff of Jumbuk Park

will offer instruction in wildlife of the area (understanding the environment). Old Bush customs such as 'Billy Tea' and cooking 'Damper' over an open fire will also be demonstrated by the park staff.

We shall have the fun of dancing through New Year's Eve to the strains of a traditional 'Bush Band'.

Things to Do After the Camp

Arrangements shall be made for those who want to stay in Melbourne for up to a week after the camp, to enjoy a more relaxed atmosphere. Our members in the distant societies of Adelaide, Brisbane, and Perth have been asked to open their homes for overseas travelers wishing to visit those centres.

How to Book?

Cost: \$210 (AUS)
Reduced to \$180 Aus. if paid by
15 October '91.

Bookings Open Now!

*Staff: Rev. Dick Keyworth and
Trevor Moffat*

*Members of Jumbuk Park Staff:
Mr. and Mrs. C. Zarb*

*Send your applications/
enquiries to:*

*Rev. Trevor Moffat
426 High Street Road
Mt. Waverley, 3149
Victoria, Australia.*

This should be an exciting time together, a time of sharing, a time of learning, and a time to give thanks to the Lord.

We would like to hear from you and, more importantly, see you on December 28.

Moving Toward the Light

(Continued from page 130)

some stronger than others, as well as their opposites plotting coups in my unconscious. But out of the seeming chaos, death, and surrender, something new is born. I celebrate my manhood as if for the first time.

And just as I am discarding the old skin off my drum and stretching on a new one so am I shedding the old skin of boyhood (immature masculine) and stretching on the new skin of manhood (mature masculine). As I face the challenges in my life, my inner wise little boy takes me by the hand and leads me into the Mystery and rejoices at the love and wonder of it all!

As a grateful response to the women's movement and not a defensive reaction to it, the men's movement is just one piece of the wholeness I need in my life. Another piece is my church. For it to grow, I need to grow. For that to happen I need less of the "how" and more of the "why," less technique and more vision. For more vision I need to break through the "curse of normalcy, characterized by the mediocre" and dare to be open to my active religious imagination and be empowered to act upon it. That is what the men's movement is helping me to do and for that I am grateful.

The Rev. Skuli Thorhallsson is co-minister with his wife Deborah Winter at the Swedenborg House in Deland, Florida.

Thinking About Retirement?

*Join Us in Exploring
the Idea of a New Church
Retirement Community
in Fryeburg, Maine.*

*Your inquiries and
suggestions invited.*

Please write:

*Mrs. W. G. Rice
31 Poole Street
Brockton, MA 02401*

Commencements

Baptism

Brock—Jeremiah Roland Brock, son of Roland and Debra (Murphy) Brock, was baptized into the Christian faith August 4, 1991, at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Gardiner Perry officiating.

Buzzell—Gregory Mark Buzzell, son of Mark and Jody (Murphy) Buzzell, was baptized into the Christian faith August 4, 1991, at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Gardiner Perry officiating.

Frizzola—Jilliam Catherine Frizzola, daughter of Robert and Teresa (Walker) Frizzola, was baptized into the Christian faith August 11, 1991, at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Gardiner Perry officiating.

Confirmation

Hughes—Barbara Hughes was confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church July 21, 1991, at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Gardiner Perry officiating.

Death

Gass—Harriet Cobb Gass, a long-time member of the Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world January 1, 1991. A resurrection service was conducted January 4, followed by a reception at the Portland, Maine Swedenborgian Church, the Rev. Kenneth Turley officiating. Mrs. Gass is survived by her husband, Robert Gass, and grandnephew, Robert Rumrill.

Gillings—Lorena Lane Gillings, 85, a lifelong member of the Riverside, California Swedenborgian Church and the Pacific Coast Association, entered the spiritual world July 15, 1991, in Safford, Arizona. She is survived by a son, Jim Gillings, of Prescott, Arizona.

Resignation

Dear Editor,

Praise the Lord! I am writing to tell you that after much personal prayer and study of the Word, I am resigning from the ministry of General Convention.

I have prayed with other Christians, searched my heart to understand the Providence of the Lord with respect to my outer life and have come to believe through the guidance of the Holy Spirit that like Abraham, I am being called by the Lord "... to get up out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee ..."

Also my understanding of the Word and the Heavenly Doctrines and the application of these to life no longer find shelter under the "umbrella of Convention". Nevertheless, the "bottom line" is that the Lord's Providence is not supporting my connection with the organization. Praise the Lord, Amen.

For those who want to keep in touch, my address is still 1563 Solano Ave., #214, Berkeley, CA 94707. Phone is (415) 970-9729. The Peace of the Lord be with you all.

Sincerely, Gladys Wheaton

The President Reports

Our church's summer camps continue to provide opportunities to learn more about what our church teaches. Each of our summer camps, Camp Paulhaven in Western Canada, Almont Summer School in Michigan, Camp Beside-the-Point in Ohio, Camp Blairhaven in Massachusetts, and Fryeburg New Church Assembly in Maine, has a history of tradition all its own.

Linda and I spent long weekends this summer at two of these camps, Almont and Fryeburg. We made many new friends and had numerous conversations about the church. There were more small fry than I can remember from past years, a good omen for the future.

Almont Camp went to a different format this year. The first week was unstructured and geared toward getting jobs done, like repairing the front porch, painting the doors of the dorms, installing new showers and the like. The dining room addition was finished in time for the second week of camp, and it was needed!

Over 100 campers, young and old, participated in the second week. This session was the "usual" camp session with classes, lectures and the like.

Fryeburg's two weeks of camp are less structured, providing ample time for "doing your own thing" in a church community atmosphere. For the second week, Fryeburg was filled up. It seemed like old home week

Memorial Day Retreat, May 1991, Blairhaven Camp, Duxbury, Mass.



—Photo by Tom Hawley

when a contingent from Almont showed up at Fryeburg.

We did not visit the camps at Blairhaven, Beside-the-Point and Paulhaven. However, I understand that these camps had good sessions too. Perhaps next summer I can visit them and report to you what's hap-

pening there.

The cup is half full! Love and peace,

Richard H. Tafel, Jr., President

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