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S P R I N G

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Cover: *Spring messenger visits the garden, San Francisco Swedenborgian Church.*

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Moving Toward the Light

This month, with the Lenten theme of shining light into the dark places of our souls, we once again hear the call to live our lives with courage, risk and joy, knowing that God is right there with us.

Some years ago my stepmother wrote a non-fiction "book." She did not expect to publish or sell it. It was a book that told the story of her life, of moving with her family from Pennsylvania to California in the early 1920s, establishing their farm and their little grape vineyard in the San Joaquin Valley. Girlhood, marriage, children, friends, hardships, the Depression, divorce, remarriage to my father. Whatever she chose to put in or leave out, it was a work of love, and a wonderful legacy for her family, although her siblings disputed some of the details. Memories, even those we think we hold in common with others, are so subjective and personal, filtered through whatever state of consciousness we are in at the time (of which we're usually unaware). I'm reminded of a story I once read in which the protagonist told and retold an event from her childhood, first from the point of view of herself as a young child, then from her perspective as an adolescent, a married adult, and an older woman, each decade the story changing and deepening as more insight and understanding was added. It was a powerfully moving story of integration and forgiveness.

How many times in our lives has someone close to us died, and we realized that there was not only unfinished business, but business never begun. So many things about them that we didn't know, questions we wanted to ask about their early childhood, traumas, feelings, dreams, relationships—questions they might not have been comfortable answering unless a certain level of emotional intimacy was present in the family. In most families the members did not know how to access or express their inner lives; often they were blindly operating by the "old rules," and so many interpersonal bridges had been broken, it was not safe to attempt it.

Last year's convention theme was Healing Ourselves, Healing the Planet; this year's theme is What is Home . . . and Who is Family? Put these themes together, family and healing, and we come to a creative spiritual challenge that I believe is surfacing in ever-growing numbers of persons and families who are working their recovery programs, doing their inner child work: How are we to heal the family so it is truly home, not simply a house where we continue the dance of avoidance? (What humorist Erma Bombeck refers to as "the superficial and phony family relationships we have come to know and love.")

In this smallest and most powerful unit of social change, the family, the task emerges of finding ways to daily recreate home as a place where an atmosphere of safety is provided for all of us to let go of our defenses and work through the effects of multi-generational dysfunction, to share memories, and to heal them. To get real.

(Continued on page 47)

Wayfarers Chapel Endowment Fund

D. Carl Lundberg, vice-president of the Los Angeles Society, treasurer of Friends of Wayfarers Chapel and a Swedenborgian since 1937, has established the Betty Jane Pobanz Endowment Fund at the Wayfarers Chapel in honor of his late wife. Mr. Lundberg made his presentation of the initial \$5,000 to Phyllis Bosley, chairperson of the Board of Managers of Wayfarers Chapel in September 1991. An additional \$5,000 will be contributed to the fund yearly to total \$50,000 in ten years.

Carl stated that this endowment is for the maintenance, upkeep, improvement and enhancement of the grounds and buildings of Wayfarers Chapel. All contributed funds are to be invested by the Board of Managers of the Chapel and proceeds are to be directed toward this purpose. Carl stipulated in his letter of transmittal that priority use from this income is to be directed to servicing the Reflection Pool and the Crystal Fountain at its center. He emphasized that "The waters of truth must never stop flowing." The Crystal Fountain flows continually into the receptive waters of the Reflection Pool. Together, the pool and the fountain convey a symbol of faith in our living God.

The Reflection Pool was a part of the original design of the Chapel. Nestled quietly at the major entrance, it lay as a still and tranquil pond until 1984, when a \$10,000 funds drive initiated by Friends of Wayfarers Chapel brought it to life with the addition of the Crystal Fountain. Carl was a board member of F.O.W.C. at the time and was involved in its planning and funding. Although Mr. Lundberg intends to deposit additional funds, he considers this initial contribution to be seed money that will encourage other persons to endow the Wayfarers Chapel, emphasizing that this is an open fund toward which all are encouraged to contribute whatever they can afford.

His letter of transmittal continued: "This endowment is initiated to express the devotion of my wife and myself to the purposes of the Way-

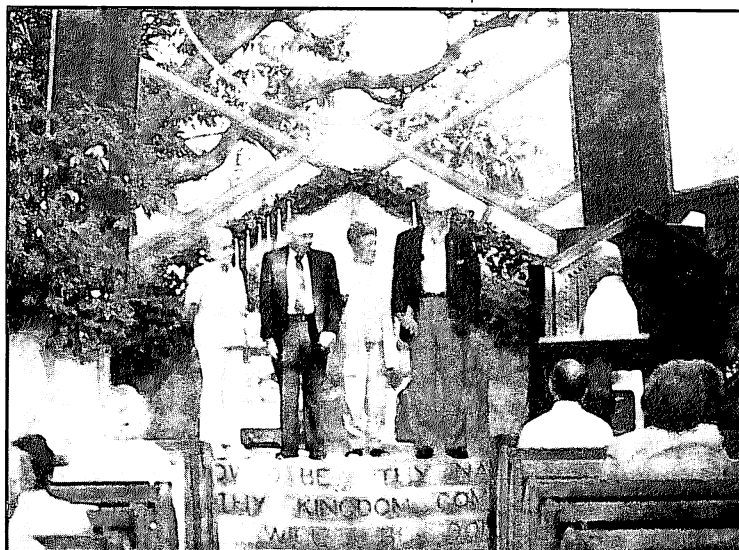
farers Chapel. It is intended to demonstrate our confidence in its Board of Managers, its administrators and the members of the Chapel staff. The Wayfarers' Chapel makes a unique contribution to the Swedenborgian Church in North America, and to the marital needs of innumerable wedding couples and their families. It makes a unique contribution to the religious lives of persons living in the immediate area and to others who dwell in all sectors of the divided world that we live in. It is a chapel that makes me feel proud to be a Swedenborgian."



Along with the funds that Carl submitted, he contributes these observations: "We of this generation owe a great debt of gratitude to those who preceded us; to those whose dreams, visions and dedication brought the Wayfarers Chapel into existence. We are deeply indebted to others who, through the years, have expressed their commitments to the Chapel in numerous ways. It is now our turn to demonstrate our beliefs, our devotions, our courage of conviction, and our commitment to the Wayfarers Chapel by establishing means whereby the future of our Chapel is assured. It is the Wayfarers Chapel, yes, but, are we not all wayfarers in this world? That is why that is my Chapel, your Chapel, our Chapel. It is everybody's Chapel. It is the Wayfarers Chapel. Let us rejoice and be glad in it."

All persons desiring to make contributions to the Betty Jane Pobanz Endowment Fund may submit them to The Wayfarers Chapel, Attn: Rev. Harvey Tafel, 5575 Palos Verdes Drive South, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90274, telephone (310) 377-2692. Please indicate that your donation is for the Betty Jane Pobanz Endowment Fund.

D. Carl Lundberg, vice-president Los Angeles Swedenborgian Church.



TOP PHOTO:
(L to R) Carl
Lundberg,
Dick Tafel,
Phyllis Bosley.
BOTTOM
PHOTO:
Members of
the Los
Angeles
Church—(L to
R) Marge
Calby, Merle
Lundberg,
Marion Court-
ney, Carl
Lundberg,
Dick Tafel

In the Presence of My Enemies

Rachel Rivers Lawrence

The Jesuit writer John Powell wrote an unpretentious little book in the Sixties that surprised both him and his publisher, eventually going through twenty printings and selling several million copies. Its title is said to have been the essential question moving that decade: *Who Am I?*

The little volume was subsequently hailed as the best book of its generation for teenagers, again because its title speaks to the essential question driving the teen years.

Who Am I? is also the question for people of all ages during Lent—a time for self-discovery, self-inquiry, self-confrontation. To take it further, let us consider those times and those places in our lives that involve our worst fears, our most enduring spiritual struggles, what might even be called our private hells. If ever the church has something helpful to bring to us in those private hells, the forty weekdays leading up to Easter is the time to give it. "In the Presence of My Enemies" is taken from the Twenty-Third Psalm. In the October 1990 *Messenger*, an anonymous Swedenborgian minister writes of this famous line, "I will never forget the first time I realized just what this line is talking about. I was in a state of desperation and internal pain; a very real hell. I didn't know who I was. I knew parts of me—those that hurt and simmered constantly with a hidden rage. The parts of me that had once known joy, peace, and meaning had been lost somewhere along my life's journey. Every day I felt like a puzzle that was missing more and more pieces. And those pieces that remained didn't fit together. I knew I was losing my mind, and the thought of doing so was starting to seem like a pleasant alternative to my anguish. I prayed that insanity would bring relief. If it didn't, at least I knew that then I wouldn't care anymore."

The minister clearly had been losing an internal battle for a long

time. As Paul put it: he was doing the things he knew he shouldn't be doing, and he was not doing the things he knew he should—but the stakes had become so high that a resolution of his inner conflict now represented his very life. He relates that one night, after consuming three bottles of Schnapps, he managed to pick up the phone to call a hotline. That act was his turning point.

◆
*Lent is about
choosing to take hold
of a flashlight in one
hand, and God's own
hand in the other,
and walking into a
hell that still
exists in us . . .*
◆

He was talked into going to an AA meeting the next day, and he shares with *The Messenger* readers these words: "The next night was a miracle. I walked into that meeting and was greeted more warmly than I had ever been welcomed anywhere before. (After greetings and introductions and getting placed in a seat with people on both sides of me), I looked around the room and noticed a large banner on the wall that proclaimed the Twelve Steps of AA. My eyes immediately went to Step Two: "We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." I turned to a woman sitting beside me and asked, 'Is that true?' She took my hand and responded in one word. 'Yes.' I believed her."

From that point on, the anonymous clergyperson chronicles a story of gradual victory over a long-

standing inner foe, discovering that the truth declared in Step Two of AA is but another way of putting the teachings of our church that say, in effect, "The Lord does the real fighting for us. The Lord is the only force that can win our battles. Our job is to learn how to not undermine what the Lord is already doing on our behalf."

In a way that is not really any more dramatic than the inner lives of most people, this person's true story of deliverance from bondage shows the power and the promise that is available to us always. The particular focus of the Lenten process of self-examination and self-confrontation must precede the deliverance offered in the Easter event.

Alcoholism was the form that person's hell took. We all have some version of our own personal hell, whatever part of our regeneration is currently the most problematical. Many of our hells take on forms of one kind of addiction or another. While the forms vary, there are some common denominators that are shared. For one thing, when we find ourselves in the abyss of a hell, we feel more or less trapped, our life out of control, and we feel alone. Because these feelings are so painful, our first instinct is to cover up the whole mess and deny that there is any problem at all. And often the very thoughts and activities we utilize to cover up and deny move us deeper into our experience of hell.

The Christian faith brings to us the knowledge that the Lord knows these hells of ours intimately, because God put on the cloak of humanity in order to suffer all the trials of the world, in order to conquer every hell there is. And because of that, God can lead us out of any mess we get ourselves into, no matter how awful.

The Lord was continually facing temptations throughout his ministry. These are symbolized in the 40 days

he spent in the wilderness after his baptism, and of course his last temptation on earth was facing his death on the cross. Because of the work our Lord accomplished—overcoming death—we too are able to face what is life-threatening and learn from it and survive.

But even so, it isn't easy. In order to surmount our worst stumbling blocks, in order to get free of the particular traps that always seem to pull us under, we must summon both the courage and the trust to come face to face with our worst fears, with what we most want to avoid. God will see us through it, but through it we must go.

I'm talking about fear and hell not only because it is Lent, but also because lately in my work and in my life I have seen some horrific combats with what can only be called spiritual demons. I have been struck particularly with one feature of these situations, and that is the power that denial plays. So very often, we just plain won't admit an awful thing as true, no matter how obvious to anyone else, until we decide we are ready to. I'm struck with how the human mind will protect itself against something it fears by pretending that it isn't there. And what a price we pay for the cover-up.

But that, of course, is the first step of the 12-Step program: admitting that there is a problem one has no ability to handle purely on one's own resources. Lent is about choosing to take hold of a flashlight in one hand, and God's own hand in the other, and walking into a hell that still exists in us, there to learn something painful about ourselves, and then to redeem that pain by choosing another way. This is odd, because usually nobody takes a bus to hell on purpose. But that is what the most profound interpretation of Lent invites us to do.

We need to believe that no matter what we find in ourselves, God knows us and loves us. We get stopped in this process when we are not willing to see the truth about an aspect of ourselves because of what we're afraid it would mean. We judge ourselves and so are too frightened by the truth.

But it's really the "therefore" in our

own minds that can intimidate us, as in "I have this problem—therefore, I am a rotten person and if people only knew." That's why we need to remember that God knows us completely and loves us completely. The hell comes from the denial and cover-up, because by covering up the truth that we're afraid to face, we start living a lie.

Part of the necessity of Lent is to go into the dark places of our lives, where shame lives only because the lights are out and fear reigns—not because we actually deserve shame. No matter the nature of our crimes and shortcomings, if we will acknowledge them before God, God will take on our battle and we will, in time, heal.

A power greater than ourselves knows us and loves us completely. There is nothing we can find in ourselves, not even in our deepest hells, that will turn God away from us. But not bringing our inner conflicts to light can certainly turn us away from God.

"Thou preparest a table before me, even in the presence of mine enemies. Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Prayer

Lord, when we come into your presence, the hells lose their power over us, and our worst fears are conquered. You nurture and support us with your knowledge, your acceptance and your love. Help us to trust in our basic loveliness, and give us the courage to root out all that keeps us from living a life more in keeping with your loving will.

The Rev. Rachel Lawrence is co-minister with the Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church.

Opinion

To Dear Editor:

I appreciate you very much for the latest January issue of your magazine. I have been a regular subscriber of *Messenger* for some years as a Swedenborgian (of the General Church), but I have never had such a joyful moment, as I found that your Convention churches are "Moving Toward the Light", as you put in the Editorial.

You can imagine how sad one was, when he/she read some of your articles which showed a sign of impending death, especially that of your "Convention Sermon" in the September issue, which began with "Our Denomination is Dying." Nobody feels happy, when he/she sees a long-time colleague is going to die, and I feel more so, because a young Convention minister, Rev. Yuzo Noda, suddenly passed away from the Tokyo New Church. That was on October 24 last year.

It was wonderful to know, however, that "a greater commitment was made to invite the Lord into our daily spiritual lives" pointed out by Eric Allison. I can't help admiring his and PMSU's courageous remark for a step forward.

When we witness such an adamant state of communism extinguished in such a short while, no human organization, including our General Church also, can be proud of its existence. We have probably come to the time when each of us looks up to the Lord alone, Who is really the "Resurrection and Life" (John 11:25). And He invites each of us every day, by saying, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock" (Rev. 3:20).

*Tatsuya Nagashima
Fujisawa City, Japan*

P.S. I have written this letter, hoping that 1992 will be A HAPPY NEW YEAR for all of us!!!

The Feminine Voice

Leah H. Rose

Since the fall of the Most Ancient Church, when direct communication with Heaven was lost—when the will and the understanding were separated—women generally have not been understood. In most, if not *all*, cultures of the world, women have for hundreds of years been regarded as mysterious, and even dangerous or evil. In our own Western culture, descendent from Ancient Greece and Rome, we have ample evidence of this in the writings of some of our greatest thinkers and theologians—men like Aristotle, Plato, and Paul.

Though in today's society attitudes are not as blatantly hostile toward women as were those professed by earlier generations, many subtle yet negative ideas about women still quietly prevail. And these notions are not merely the result of men's ignorance about women; they are equally the result of women's ignorance about women. It is this ignorance that a study of feminine psychology seeks to dispel.

Many people are wary of the idea of focusing attention on women's issues and feminine psychology. Such a focus can be perceived as a threat to the truth that we should not look inward for happiness and fulfillment, but that we should look outward, in uses that serve our neighbor. While no one can deny that egocentricity obscures God and the neighbor from our sight, it is possible to study women's issues and feminine psychology without ignoring the Lord and His world. In fact, the entire purpose of any such study undertaken by sincere and honest people is to better equip ourselves to do the Lord's work.

Because of our culture's underlying validation of the ways of men (of "intellectual" or rational" approaches to life and reality), and because of our underlying mistrust of feminine modes (of "perceptive" or "intuitive" approaches), many women have experienced the pain of

self-doubt—of rejecting their own perceptive or intuitive ideas for the rational or logical ideas of men. And while it is true that all people endure suffering and uncertainty in their struggle for truth, this is not the same doubt and disorientation experienced so often by women. The particular pain women feel is a direct result of our cultural attitudes; it is a repercussion of the fall of the Most Ancient Church, because it stems from our lost understanding of and appreciation for the feminine mind.

◆
 “Men tend to *see*
 the truth and women
 tend to *feel* it.”
 ◆

Though we know, from doctrine and by experience, that men and women think differently—that they perceive and understand truth differently—our culture is one that values precision and objectivity. We are a society that loves exactness—we love *proof*. We like to measure, and we do it to everything, or we try to. We measure intelligence, wealth, grades, personality; we even try to measure happiness and success. And because emotions can seem arbitrary and imprecise, we esteem reason and pure logic. In them exists the capacity for exact and measurable proof. If something is truly worthwhile (we secretly believe), we can prove it with mathematical reasoning.

What this means for women is that they often are misunderstood or dismissed because their thinking operates more from the will (the receptacle of love), than from the understanding (the receptacle of wisdom). Their thought processes can appear tangential or unstructured because their minds tend less to

function according to the guidelines established and honored by society, and so their voices are ignored. Perhaps the simplest way to explain it is to say that, generally speaking, men tend to *see* the truth and women tend to *feel* it; for women it may be more like an inward gut-level “knowing,” than an out-on-the-table provable “fact.” It is like an inner voice (perhaps the voice of conscience) that says, “YES, this is *true*; this is reality.”

But our culture does not recognize “inner voices”; inner voices are not measurable, they are not provable. They are mysterious and subjective, and they are, therefore, “invalid” as a means of understanding or knowing truth. And so it is that in order to be heard and validated in our society, women must often reject what they know for what others can prove; they must abandon their inner voices to follow the dictates of logic. And many suffer feelings of guilt and alienation because of this struggle to “measure up” to society's standards of validation.

It is only recently, within the last two decades, that the psychological differences between males and females have begun to be systematically documented and explored. Indeed, the study of developmental psychology itself did not gain genuine recognition until well into the twentieth century. Even then the original paradigms were based solely on male test groups, so that the developmental process of boys-into-men was provided as the model as well for girls' development into women. Needless to say, girls were found to be generally deficient in their abilities to achieve the identities designated by these studies as “well-adjusted” or “mature.”

But with recent research, all of this is beginning to change. New approaches to psychological studies, and new theories concerning developmental processes are beginning to

emerge. There is a growing awareness of the depth and significance of gender differences in psychological development. And what is arising is a growing recognition of and respect for the differences between men and women—both psychologically and emotionally. Where women previously have been denigrated or regarded as deficient for their “clouded judgment” or “emotional thinking,” they now are being recognized and validated for their awareness and understanding of relational issues. New value is being placed on the role of intuition and perception in human relationships—on both interpersonal and occupational levels—and with this is a deepening respect and appreciation for the strengths of the feminine psychology.

Perhaps what is most exhilarating about this new research is that it so clearly corroborates, in secular terms, what Swedenborg’s writings have already stated about the differences between men and women. And where there previously has been misunderstanding or confusion regarding explanations of our teachings, these studies, given the chance, can help to illuminate for us new possibilities within his writings for a deeper and more clear understanding of the complementary natures of men and women.

What can come of all this is a new generation of women who understand themselves, who experience a genuine wholeness—an integrity of spirit—that will better allow them to focus their attention outward, in uses for their neighbor. Rather than promoting egocentrism, an understanding of feminine psychology can free women from the bonds of self-rejection. Instead of wasting their energy perpetually denying the pain of their self-doubt, or in constantly searching for relief from it, they can overcome their hurt by recognizing and claiming their selves. By becoming self-aware, they can gain freedom from egocentrism because they will, to a great extent, be healed; they will have a more solid and established identity from which to do the Lord’s will.

Far from separating or isolating women from the people they love and are loved by, the study of

women’s issues—an understanding of feminine psychology—can allow women to be more available, both emotionally and psychologically, to meet the needs of their families and friends. Rather than isolate, it can connect. Rather than separate, it can conjoin. For as the new studies have indicated, and as Swedenborg’s writings affirm, women primarily define themselves—gain their sense of self

and validation—through their relationships with those around them. And so the study of women’s issues becomes the study of human issues.

Leah H. Rose is a member of the Bryn Athyn Church of the New Jerusalem, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. Mrs. Rose has taught English and is currently assistant social director of the Academy of the New Church Girls School. She and her husband are the happy new parents of their first child, Lindsay Olivia.

The New Church Women’s Symposium

November 29 to December 1, 1991

Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania

Two hundred eighty-five women (over 80 from out of state!) attended the first-ever New Church Women’s Symposium, sponsored by The Academy of the New Church Girls School and Theta Alpha International, an Academy/General Church women’s organization. Goals for the weekend included looking at secular research on female development in the light of Swedenborg’s writings, heightening awareness of female/male differences, heightening awareness of stereotypes about women, and strengthening confidence in ourselves while having fun.

The opening address “The Distinctive Feminine” was given by Bishop Peter Buss, the only male speaker. It set a beautiful tone for a jam-packed program, which included eighteen workshops, two panels, an evening of entertainment, a banquet *served by men* who actually volunteered for the job, and a very special tableaux church service on Sunday depicting women in the Word.

The format of the weekend allowed each participant to attend three workshops, and because many leaders were willing to give their workshops three times, all attendees were able to attend the workshops they selected.*

A panel presentation on **When to Trust Your Feelings** allowed time for small discussion groups as well as stimulating large audience participation. The second panel, **Going it Alone**, moved the audience with their insights on the pain and acceptance of being unmarried, divorced or widowed. One woman said that the highlight of the whole symposium for her was seeing so many women on stage afterwards with the three speakers.

The major second address, **The Woman Clothed with the Sun**, given by Rae Friesen at the banquet, highlighted traditional prejudices and misconceptions about women and their influence on New Church thought. Her talk was based on research that we hope will be published next year.

The Symposium was not a move of separation from men—it was an enthusiastic and timely effort to heighten awareness of and evaluate present-day strengths and weaknesses as women for the purpose of becoming increasingly feminine in the truest sense of the word. (The proceedings of the symposium are being printed and will be available in the near future.)

—Sarah Headsten
Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania

*For listing of workshop titles, see October 1991 *Messenger*.

NCC: Committed to Unity

Robert McCluskey

The National Council of Churches annual General Board meeting was held in November 1991 in Indianapolis, with the Swedenborgian Church represented by the Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey and the Revs. Robert McCluskey and Richard H. Tafel, Jr.

At the opening session, General Secretary Joan Campbell addressed a critical issue in the life of the Council. During the summer, five of the nine Orthodox members of the NCC suspended their participation in the Council. They cited their concern with the loss of direction and unity within the ecumenical movement, as well as with what they perceived to be an increasingly liberal emphasis. Rev. Campbell noted that the decision to suspend participation was seen not as a schism dividing the Council, but as a struggle within the one family of faith that is the council. In the months to come, efforts will be made to achieve reconciliation through dialogue and study, appointment of a liaison committee, and encouraging personal contacts between individuals within the active member churches and those who are in suspension.

The suspension was seen by all not so much as a loss but as an opportunity. It was noted that these issues are already being debated within and among all member churches of the NCC. It is becoming increasingly critical that we make every effort, both within our denomination and among others, to discuss the issues in ways that promote unity and growth rather than division and fragmentation.

The Education, Discipleship, and Communication Program Unit (EDC) made video presentations of a conference held earlier this year entitled "Families 2000," at which the churches explored the themes of family economics, education, and sexuality. Seen also were videos of the World Council of Churches meeting in Canberra, Australia (including portions of the controversial worship offered by theologian Chung Hyun Kyung of South Korea, a mix-

ture of feminist and liberation theology that caused a stir among more conservative and orthodox members).

Rev. Dr. Dean Kelley of the Prophetic Justice Unit (PJU) gave a most convincing presentation on the importance of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, soon to be considered in Congress. We also heard an inspiring message from Dr. Ronald Meyers, a jazz musician, Baptist preacher, and medical doctor, serving in Tchula, Mississippi, one of the most impoverished towns in America. Dr. Meyers' experience underscores the link between poverty, discrimination, and health care. After viewing a video of a Connie Chung interview with Dr. Meyers, in which the leaky roof of his clinic was prominently featured, a spontaneous collection was taken up to help out. Ten minutes later, \$3,500 had been raised, and a few moments afterwards, that amount was matched by an anonymous donor!

The unit also reported on their recent trip to Daufuskie Island, off the coast of South Carolina, the scene of growing tension between island residents, a predominantly black population that has inhabited the island for many generations, and groups interested in developing the land. Their meetings, which included press conferences and on-site visitations, has already attracted an enormous amount of local and national support for the islanders' rights.

The Church Health Project provided data on how churches are involved in the health needs of children in their congregations and communities. The Swedenborgian Church was one of 17 participating churches in this project, and copies of the report will be sent to Swedenborgian churches soon. A resolution was also passed supporting the Interreligious Healthcare Access Campaign.

The Church World Service and Witness Unit (CWSW) reported on the resurgence of Christianity in Russia and Eastern Europe, and the

many opportunities available to us to reach out and be supportive. They also pointed to the need to be vigilant in the face of ongoing developments in these areas, as well as the possibility of the exploitation of these conditions by groups in our own country. Three resolutions brought by CWSW were passed: CWSW Use of Government Resources; Relations with the Conference of European Churches; and support of Haiti's National Literacy Campaign.

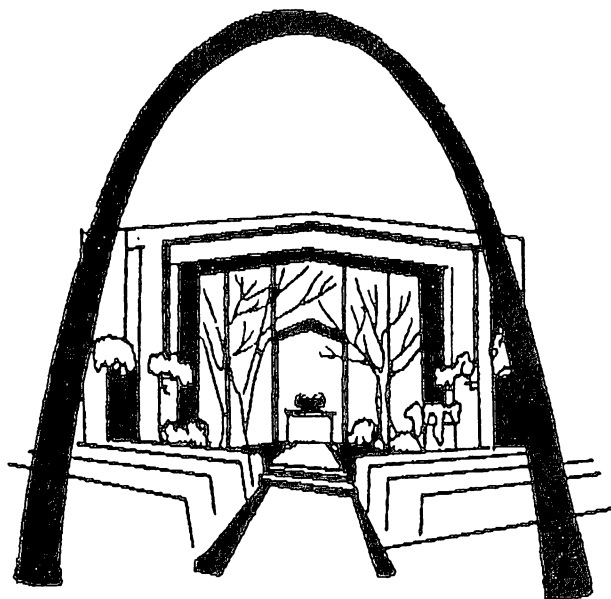
Unity and Relationships (U&R) houses the Faith and Order Commission, on which our own Rev. Dr. Horand Gutfeldt serves. They have recently released two books entitled *Faith to Creed: Ecumenical Perspectives on the Affirmation of the Apostolic Faith in the Fourth Century*, and *Women and Church: The Challenge of Ecumenical Solidarity in an Age of Alienation*. The Unit also sponsored consultations and workshops on racism, obstacles to interfaith relations, ecumenical networking, and justice issues.

The following special reports were also received:

Committee on Dialogue between the NCC and the United Federation of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC): The report noted that "the issues of sexuality in general and homosexuality in particular have gained a place of prominence in the lives of many member communions" in recent months. The committee provides a "safe place" in which open and frank discussions can take place. Recommendations and resources will be made available to General Board members at its November 1992 meetings.

Committee on Relationships with Roman Catholics, Evangelicals and Pentecostals: Some highlights of recent discussions concerned the need to transcend stereotypes, finding common ground in worship and liturgy, acknowledging the fact that "American culture stands in need of renewal," and exploring the role of

(Continued on page 44)



MEET US IN ST. LOUIS, LOUIS . . . FOR CONVENTION '92

June 24 - 28

If you meet us in St. Louis, Missouri this summer, you will find old-fashioned family fare for an old-fashioned tight budget.

Those who attend the Swedenborgian convention will stay at Washington University, nestled in the shadow of the great shade trees of Forest Park where people once strolled to explore the turn-of-the-century World's Fair.

The campus offers quiet corners to consider this year's convention theme . . . **What is home? Who is family?**

The visitor can join church people seeking answers to the same questions: how to deal with family in a busy world—the family in a neighborhood, at work, in the nation and throughout the world, the family of plants and animals on the earth and in the sea and sky.

Living space at the university offers exceptional accommodations for families. This year family suites, as well as double and single rooms, will be available. Everything, everywhere is air-conditioned, of course!

In between workshops and programs, visitors will find time to ex-

plore some St. Louis landmarks. Within a short distance of Washington University lie the St. Louis Art Museum, a new Science Center, the St. Louis Zoo, a golf course, lakes with boats and miles of hiking and biking trails.

On Saturday night visitors can climb aboard the *Belle of St. Louis* docked under the Gateway Arch for a dinner cruise along the Mississippi River. Entertainment will include a ragtime band, vaudeville show and a chance to watch the sunset and the lights of a city at night.

During the week time will be set aside for convention-goers to visit the Garden Chapel of the St. Louis church. Inside the beautiful glass and wood chapel, Mark Madsen, a local singer and guitarist, will play a brief selection of sacred music. Outside the chapel, church members have transformed the church grounds into a place to meditate. As you walk past flowers, trees and rolling hills, you may hear birds singing and water gurgling in a fountain. You also may hear the excited voices of children celebrating the return of the

warm days of summer.

So . . .

Meet us in St. Louis, Louis
Ninety-two's the year

We'll show you the sights that
dazzle

Join us here this year
Wash. U's the place we will gather
And promise you hot weather

If you will
Meet us in St. Louis, Louis
Ninety-two's the year

You will see the sights that dazzle
Let us name a few

The Arch, Shaw's Garden, the
Science Center
and don't forget the zoo

On the Riverboat we'll cruise
and sing the St. Louis Blues

If you will meet us in St. Louis,
Louis
Ninety-two's the year!!!

*Carole Reinstra, Brenda Hollweger and
Carolyn Bower.*

Are Men and Women Equal?

Don Rose

(PART 2 OF 2)

EDITOR'S NOTE: Part One appeared in the February Messenger, p. 25. Our apology for inadvertently omitting mention on the Contents page. All references unless otherwise designated are to the book *Marital Love*.

Swedenborg's statements are best appreciated in an atmosphere removed from emotions of rivalry. Men who "glory" in a sense of superiority over women might have a little trouble reading Swedenborg with dispassionate objectivity. A wise woman from heaven said frankly, "You men glory over us on account of your wisdom, but we do not glory over you on account of ours; and yet ours excels yours."⁵ And in another instance one said, "You think we do not know what wisdom is."⁶ The lack of awareness of the masculine sex is one of the themes in Swedenborg's book on marriage. The ignorance of the man is meant in the Biblical saying that a wife was formed *while Adam slept*⁷. In a parody of masculine notions Swedenborg said to angels, "What has a wise man to do with woman?"⁸ The indignation and laughter that greeted this question shows the great contrast of attitudes of the 18th century as compared to the perspective of heaven. "Women have an interior perception of love, and men only an exterior perception."⁹

One of the most astonishing assertions of the book *Marital Love* is the assertion that "there is no marital love with the male sex and that it is with the female sex alone, and from this sex is transferred into the male."¹⁰ This assertion has nothing to do with the notions of the 18th century, and it would be disputed in any century. Once men in the spiritual world insisted that "it is they who love." But "to settle the con-

troversy about this mystery, all the women were withdrawn from the men, and with them was removed the sphere of love of the sex. With this removed, the men came into a state altogether strange and never before perceived, at which they greatly complained."¹¹ The vivid scene of this experiment demonstrates the remarkable assertion: Women are the ones who love.

If this is true that women are the ones who love, we are left with some interesting considerations.

There are men who insist that superiority belongs to them because they are men and that "inferiority belongs to women because they are women." So says number 291 of Swedenborg's book, *Marital Love*. This was wrong thinking in Swedenborg's day, and it is wrong in any era. It was a common saying in Swedenborg's day that the husband is the head of the wife.¹² This concept was and still is mistaken.

In self defense, women, sometimes called the weaker sex, have resorted to an arsenal to which men are hardly equal. Maybe some women overdid it. "They said that they would not have entered into it had they not foreseen supreme contempt and future rejection, and hence their ruin, if they were subjugated by their husbands; thus, that they took up these their arms from necessity. To this they added, as a warning to men, that they should leave to wives their rights." They warned men further not to count wives as lower than maid-servants.¹³

Swedenborg was writing about this in 1767, and women were giving the warning that they deserve their rights. In our era we can look at the history of women gaining rights and rising from the maid-servant role (in which some would have held them)

towards their rightful status. Swedenborg refers to "rivalries familiar at this day," rivalries between men and women. The rivalries then and now have ranged from light-hearted banter to the dark and sinister. On the light-hearted side Swedenborg witnessed what he called "a pleasant discussion among men" about the female sex. This is a fun discussion to read, seeing that both sides score valid points.¹⁴ On the sinister side, Swedenborg speaks of men who are in a loathing towards the whole female sex, and by the context one can see that such men might have a pornographic interest in women in spite of their loathing.¹⁵ They "abominate marital love and the whole female sex."¹⁶

Why should we look to Swedenborg on the subject of the differences between men and woman? Should we list him among writers who by virtue of their experience or intellect can give us some valuable thoughts? One is reminded of the question: "How could Swedenborg write about marriage love, when he wasn't even married?"

If Swedenborg had experienced numerous happy wedding anniversaries and if he had years as a marriage counselor and student of interpersonal relationships, could he have written the book *Marital Love*? A suitable answer of one word is, "impossible." Concerning marital love Swedenborg says, "It is impossible to describe its supereminent felicities from any other source than the mouth of angels."¹⁷ His qualification for writing the book is announced in its opening paragraph. He had been granted to be with angels for 25 years, and more than a third of the book consists of stories or narratives in which frequently angels do the talking. The most profound and precious things he gained seem to be from angel women.

If we are not to regard this book on the basis of Swedenborg's brilliance, should we then take what it says on *authority*? That is just what the book says *not* to do. "What is written in this book," says Swedenborg emphatically, "is for rational assent rather than authority."¹⁸

There are basic matters of information that thinking minds crave.

"This information, being desired, shall be given," says Swedenborg. And when it comes to a specific question he says, "The question may be answered by me." He can answer the question by virtue of his association with angels, but he adds something vital here. He says that the answer is to be given in such a way as to appeal to reason. "The question may be answered by me, but yet in such a way that reason will also assent."¹⁹ Angels said to him, "Receive rationally what you are about to hear, and in the same way present it to the understanding."²⁰

All this has a bearing on what is said about the differences on the sexes. In Part I of this article we alluded to the revolutionary statement that "there is no marital love with the male sex and that it is with the female sex alone."²¹ This is presented as something contrary to external appearance. It was as hard to believe in Swedenborg's day as it is in the 1990s. Are we to believe it? Haven't we just said that these things are not to be taken merely on authority?

There are fundamental things revealed to us which most of us believe only *to an extent*. Ask a twenty-year-old about the saying that every bit of our strength comes from the Lord and that without Him we can do absolutely nothing. The young person may agree to the proposition. But years in the future after life's trials that same person may come to say, "Now I really do believe it." Swedenborg's writings speak of knowing something, but only knowing it in darkness or "obscurely." Do you know that the Lord is taking care of you every moment in a Providence over the minutest things? A good answer to that one is, "Sometimes." The nature of the way of regeneration is that the individual alternates between states of faith and charity. Sometimes we do *not* believe, and sometimes we believe faintly. Do we believe that the life after death is more vivid and real than the life of the body? Not while our minds are immersed in bodily things.

Swedenborg witnessed dramatic experiments in the spiritual world demonstrating the truth that we do

not live of ourselves. And it was by dramatic experiment that it was demonstrated that women are the ones who love.²² If women do love, it follows that there is something in men to love, something unique to men. We should be careful about assigning a word to this masculine quality. If we use the word "wisdom," this can very easily be misunderstood. People have wrong notions about what is meant by "wisdom."²³ There is a masculine type of intelligence, which is less elegant, less tender, and less refined than feminine intelligence.²⁴ It is really a wonder that women are attracted to it. Swedenborg marveled as he watched the unattractive behavior of boys in the streets. What surprised him was that well-behaved girls watched the boys "with pleased looks."²⁵

If it were only the bull-in-a-china-shop quality that endeared men to women we might have fewer feminine reservations about what Swedenborg says. But Swedenborg speaks of a masculine light which women do not have. But have there not been learned women authors easily equal to or superior to men? Yes, the evidence of this was convincing in Swedenborg's day, "but in the spiritual world, when the writings were explored in the presence of those authors they were found to be works, not of judgment and wisdom."²⁶

It would seem that the kind of analysis we can make of written works in this world would not bring out the difference. One is reminded that the human eye cannot detect the gender of a piece of human tissue. Only under a microscope can it be determined. "Nothing whatever in them is alike . . . in the male, the masculine is masculine in every part of his body, even the most minute, and also in every idea of his thought and in every grain of his affection; and so likewise, the feminine in the female."²⁷

Where there are differences there can be rivalries, but the rivalries are not inevitable. Those rivalries arise from a lack of appreciation of marital or conjugal love and its blessings.²⁸ The key seems to be an affirmative attitude toward love and

toward what is revealed about love. Some to whom it was revealed that they had no life of themselves were so angry that they almost breathed fire!²⁹ Others not only believe it to be so, they actually *love it to be so*.³⁰ In the contemplation of the differences of the sexes, those are most fortunate who come to rejoice in the truth that God in the beginning made them male and female and in so doing blessed them.

The Rev. Donald Rose is pastor of the Bryn Athyn Church of the New Jerusalem, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania.

Notes

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (Part One) | ¹⁵ 453, 504-508 |
| ¹ 335 | ¹⁶ Spiritual Diary 3453 |
| ² 37 | ¹⁷ 69 |
| ³ 56 | ¹⁸ 295 |
| ⁴ 331 | ¹⁹ 45 |
| (Part Two) | ²⁰ 42 |
| ⁵ 208 | ²¹ 223 |
| ⁶ 293 | ²² 161 |
| ⁷ 194 | ²³ 130 |
| ⁸ 56 | ²⁴ 218 |
| ⁹ 48a | ²⁵ (Ibid) |
| ¹⁰ 223 | ²⁶ 175 |
| ¹¹ 161 | ²⁷ 33 |
| ¹² 325 | ²⁸ 291 |
| ¹³ 292 | ²⁹ Divine Providence 309 |
| ¹⁴ 330, 331 | ³⁰ Divine Providence 158 |

Me, a Minister?

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NCC (Continued from page 40) the Christian church in addressing this need.

One final note: there was a special worship service to install the newly elected officers of the council. This service had it all: a beautiful church, an ecumenical Korean choir, a moving meditation on Scripture by outgoing President Father Leonid Kishkovsky, inspiring hymns and a packed house. But what made the service truly memorable was the sermon delivered by the newly-elected president, Rev. Dr. Syngman Rhee. Blending hardship with humor, and reality with theology, Rev. Rhee offered a truly poignant message. He told of his separation from his family as he escaped from North Korea in the 1950s; of his mishaps as he tried to adjust to American culture; of his involvement with the civil rights movement of the 1960s, and the label of "yellow nigger" that he received. He spoke of how during all his travels and flights to freedom, he had always found a home in the church. Representatives from the North and South Korean churches had been expected four days before to honor Rev. Rhee in his new position. They had been delayed for several days in China, and it was uncertain if they would arrive at all. Midway through the sermon, they were ushered into the church, and a joyous and emotional greeting was shared. Afterwards, Rev. Rhee introduced members of his family, some of whom he had not seen for many years. Hugs and handshakes—flashbulbs—everywhere. Finally, all that can really be said is, *you had to be there!*

* * *

The restructuring of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. was a long and complex process. It was officially inaugurated at the May, 1990 General Board meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. As part of this new structure, the four new Support Units developed mission and function statements, as did the Council itself. Below is the new Mission Statement of the NCC. (Mission Statements of the individual Support Units will be featured in subsequent issues of The Messenger.)

Mission Statement of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA

The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., as a sign and instrument of the churches' ecumenical witness, is a community through which the churches are seeking to make visible their unity given in Christ, and to live responsibly in mutual accountability, witness and service. Within the Council, the churches, in their own lives and together, are:

- to receive, nurture and embody unity;
- to witness to and celebrate God's gifts of grace; and
- to join in solidarity with oppressed and troubled peoples, serving God's vision of love, justice, peace and the stewardship of creation.

As Article II of the Council's Constitution indicates, "this purpose is served as the churches living together as the Council in the United States of America:

- further their vocation to proclaim Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord;
- engage in ecumenical worship and in biblical and theological study;
- challenge and counsel one another in mutual accountability as a witness to the unity of the church;
- share resources for unity and mission;
- strive for peace and justice in the social, political and economic order;
- advocate careful stewardship of God's creation;
- act as responsible servants to people in need;
- foster education about and for ecumenism, and engage in all educational efforts from an ecumenical perspective;
- nurture ecumenical life through relationships with local, regional, national and world ecumenical bodies, and groups and movements of Christians seeking renewal and unity.
- cultivate relationships and dialogue with people of other faiths and ideologies."

The Rev. Robert McCluskey is pastor of the New York Swedenborgian Church.

Proposed Amendments to the Constitution and By-laws Alliance of New Church Women

Article I of the Constitution now reads:

The name of this organization shall be ALLIANCE OF NEW CHURCH WOMEN.

Article I of the Constitution proposed amendment:

The name of this organization shall be ALLIANCE OF NEW CHURCH WOMEN commonly known as ALLIANCE OF SWEDEN-

BORGIAN WOMEN.

Article VI of the Constitution now reads:

This Constitution may be amended at any Annual Meeting of the Alliance by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting provided that notice of the proposed amendment has been given in writing at the previous Annual Meeting, that it has been considered by the Executive Board, and that the substance thereof has been published in the New Church Messenger in March previous to the meeting at which it is to be voted upon.

Article VI of the Constitution proposed amendment:

Delete the word New Church from New Church Messenger.

Article 1 Sec. 3 of the By-Laws now reads:

The Secretary shall keep accurate records of the sessions of the Alliance and its Executive Board and shall keep a file of the records and reports connected with these sessions. She shall issue the call for all meetings, and for the annual reports of the officers and committees. She shall conduct the usual correspondence incident to the office. She shall keep accurate list of the Secretaries of the member organizations. Periodically, she shall request information regarding their activities and incorporate information of interest thus obtained into her annual report, as well as using the pages of the Alliance Bulletin to share this information with others.

Article 1 Sec. 3 proposed amendment:

Delete Alliance Bulletin and use Messenger.

Article VI Sec. 1.1) of the By-Laws now reads:

A Mite Box Committee—to consist of a chairman and as many additional members and the chairman may desire. This Committee shall distribute Mite Boxes to members of the Alliance for the purpose of collecting Thank Offerings for the use of a home or foreign mission project chosen by Alliance members in consultation with the Board of Missions.

Article VI Sec. 1.1) of the By-Laws proposed amendment:

A Mite Box Committee—to consist of a chairman and as many additional members as the chairman may desire. This committee shall promote and advertise in *The Messenger* each year's recipient of the Mite Box collection of Thank Offerings for use of a home or foreign mission project chosen by the Executive Board in consultation with the Growth and Outreach Support Unit.

Article VI Sec. 1.2) of the By-Laws now reads:

A Religious Committee—to consist of a chairman who shall be chaplain of the Alliance, and two (2) additional members. This committee shall foster and develop the devotional life of the Alliance.

Article VI Sec. 1.2) of the By-Laws proposed amendment:

A Religious Committee—to consist of a chairman, who shall be Chaplain of the Alliance, and as many additional members as the chairman may desire. This committee shall foster and develop the devotional life of the Alliance.

Article VI Sec. 1.3) of the By-Laws now reads:

A Round Robin Committee—to consist of a chairman and two (2) additional members. This committee shall endeavor to draw isolated women of the Church together in a spirit of fellowship by means of Round Robin letters.

Article VI Sec. 1.3) of the By-Laws proposed amendment:

A Round Robin Committee—to consist of a chairman and as many other additional members as the chairman may desire. This committee shall endeavor to draw the isolated women of the church together in a spirit of fellowship by means of Round Robin letters.

(Continued on page 47)

Survival— For What?

Steve Koke

You find it all over—survival thinking. It occurs in people's plans for their lives and in their thoughts about their marriages; you find it in churches and even in the sciences: *we have to survive*. Nothing could be more obvious as a legitimate and understandable matter of concern; nothing could seem more immediately serious. And yet, few ideas are more incomplete or more seductive, more able to stop us from thinking further.

Take the biological sciences for a moment, just to illustrate the point. It is common in evolutionary theories to explain everything that a species does by its need to survive. We are told that the fight for survival rules nature and determines its character and history ("the survival of the fittest"). A common survival technique among animals is the proliferation of as many offspring as possible so that any catastrophe can be offset by its survivors.

Applying this thinking to human affairs has provided the young field of sociobiology with an explanation for the adventurous and indiscriminate "sowing of wild oats," and the taking of many wives by the human male, especially in ancient times. For purely statistical reasons, it was better as a survival technique for the human race than either monogamy or bigamy. What remains of this today is supposedly only some scattered impulses, but it is said to be buried in our genes and therefore in our nature (a fact which, incidentally, allows it to be excused).

But survival theories only beg the question: survival for what?

Survival is not a goal. It can't be, for it postulates a means—additional time on the planet—for no stated end. It's like a torso without a head.

There is in the idea no ultimate purpose, no futuristic vision. It is merely obsessive, desperate to overcome the current threat. As a result, it has much less explanatory power in the sciences, or anywhere else, than it would appear to have. It aims at nothing in particular except just failing to die, and it thereby leaves the larger interests of Life unknown. It doesn't explain why a species, including ours, came into existence in the first place, unless just by chance. And evolution by chance is often just a roundabout way in which biology betrays the fact that it has not arrived at a deep understanding of Life.

What would complete the idea in biology is some consideration of what the survival of a species does in the overall balance of nature, or what the existence of a species does to prepare for something else in some ascending chain of uses. But that would (one suspects) bring the sciences perilously close to religion, for

could make a lot of money selling them.

We don't usually question thinking like this, for being a financial "success" is a very fashionable goal. But it doesn't distinguish itself very clearly from the effort just to survive; and if you survive in style, so much the better. But survival doesn't answer any ultimate questions. So what if you do survive?

Churches are typically objects of worry about their survival. Survival, looking like a complete and self-justifying goal, then spawns a frantic search for new programs, new advertising ideas, new techniques for interesting and holding people, anything that may work. There are so many of these techniques and ideas out there that what can easily drop out is any concrete idea of what a particular church should be once it has guaranteed its survival.

That in turn raises the question of what the church is for in the first place. The race to survive can react

STAY WITH YOUR BEST DREAMS, ... DOORS WILL OPEN

any attempt to answer the *for what?* leads on to more *for whats* until one arrives at a completely spiritual answer. Only a spiritual answer, one featuring some relationship with the Lord, the ultimate Purpose, the ultimate driving Force, will finally stop the question.

Ask someone, "What do you want to do with your life?" and you will probably get a recitation of his or her vocational plans. Typically the answer runs toward money-making schemes. I asked a woman this question recently, and she told me she wanted to work for the Marine Corps because she could retire by the time she is forty-one. An attractive prospect, but she also had no further idea of what she wanted. Further questions only brought out a plan to market a computerized version of the old photo booth in which you sat and had a camera take your picture and develop it for you automatically. She saw one of these more glamorous versions work and thought she

against a church's personality, leaving it excessively self-concerned and distracted by all the new things it now has to do for itself. Creativity, on the other hand, has a frustrating alliance with *self-forgetfulness*. Programs aimed merely at surviving create more self-consciousness and self-absorption. They encourage any tendency to use survival techniques indiscriminately if only they successfully manipulate the public to come in and give the church more time on the planet. Suddenly the church, supposedly the local center of spiritual service, is using people to service itself. When the crisis is over, its members may say to each other, "We made it! But what are we now? The social engineers of the neighborhood?"

Marriages are supposed to survive. We worry enormously over their welfare. The divorce rate is much too high. But is the goal survival or realignment behind a truly spiritual

(Continued on page 46)

Survival—For What?

(Continued from page 45)

purpose? Nothing is more capable of moving the entire personality than the spiritual will; and a problem that is more basic than mere survival against divorce is the fact that although we marry because we are temperamentally compatible, make a good team, and are romantically attracted, a spiritual vision for the marriage appears only in some cases. Later on, one partner may change, letting a stronger spiritual life emerge, while the other will lag behind or resist. The resulting accommodation may be a planned forgetfulness of spiritual differences, an arrangement of useful compromises that guarantees the relationship more time but still doesn't answer any questions about why it ought to be

here in the first place.

All of these things are the travails of means without ends. The trick is to realize that once we know what vision is to be achieved by surviving, we can also see *what* is to survive—if anything—and that grants some awareness of *how* to survive, in what direction a more spiritually oriented survival is most likely to be, and what we may need to do that is different from what anyone else is doing.

In these dangerous economic times, survival is a very big personal issue, and the extremes of survival thinking are now most likely to show up. If you are out of a job, the great temptation is to throw all plans and dreams to the winds and take whatever comes up first to bring in more money. You may soon find that everyone else is doing the same thing, and some quiet little job

opening you were looking at is quickly overwhelmed with applications. There is no pat answer to the dilemmas that creates.

But there is a path through all this. It can be found by staying with your best dreams, not ignoring them, for they still set the direction in which to move and in which the Lord can take the best care of you. As the late Joseph Campbell put it, "Follow your bliss . . . doors will open where you didn't know they were going to be." Survival is of concern, but it is not so much the thing to dwell on as is the vision ahead and any signs of guidance towards it that the Lord may put before us day by day.

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

TEMENOS SPRING PROGRAMS 1992

March 14-15

Life Planning; Setting Goals For A More Fulfilling Life
Take time to focus on what nourishes you and what you most value.
Leader: Suzanne Drury, Ph.D.
Cost: \$85, includes overnight, dinner, and breakfast. Bring a bag lunch.

March 21

Finding Your Voice
Tune your body to free your voice and find yourself.
Leader: Bob Chapra
Cost: \$75 — Bring a bag lunch. Beverages will be provided.

March 24

First A Man, Then A Clergyman: Being Men Together
Come together with other pastors for a day of awakening, sorting out, and discovering some new possibilities for being both men and clergymen.
Leader: The Rev. Bruce W. Barth, Ph.D.
Cost: \$65 — Includes lunch.

March 28

Creation Spirituality; A Playshop
Creation spirituality, as developed by Matthew Fox, offers liberating gifts for the people of the world; connectedness in all spiritual traditions, with the earth, and the empowerment of all beings, human and non-human.
Leader: Doug Hunt, M.S., M.Div.
Cost \$40 — Bring a bag lunch. Fruit and beverages will be provided.

March 30-31

Sacred Space Retreat for Clergy and Other Helping Professionals

April 3-5

Proprioceptive Writing Spring Retreat
A time for deep personal work, an opportunity to relax and nurture yourself and experience authentic intimacy.
Leader: Mary Bok
Cost: \$125 — Includes meals and 2 overnights.

April 11

Changing Our Patterns of Anger; A Workshop for Women
Anger is energy; learn to use your anger energy to create positive changes in your relationships with family, friends, co-workers, and yourself.
Leaders: Betsy Friend and Perry Martin
Cost: \$45 — Bring a bag lunch. Fruit & beverages will be provided.

April 25

Spring Trails Day and Herb Garden Planting
We will work on the trails to repair winter damage, improve markings, and prepare for summer use. The herb garden will be cleaned up and planted; bring herb plants if you like.
Free, includes lunch.

April 26

Ritual for Healing Grief
Those who have suffered losses are invited to join in an afternoon's healing journey that will include talk and quiet, comfort and ritual.
Leader: Dr. Kathleen Gajdos *Cost: \$10*

May 2

Spiritual Light as Healing Energy
We will explore through imagery and touch the use of healing energy present in all people and things.
Leader: The Rev. Randall E. Laakko, M. Div., D.H.L.
Cost: \$40 — Bring a bag lunch. Fruit & beverages will be provided.

May 3

May Festival Picnic
Celebrate spring at the second annual gathering of kindred spirits. *Free*

May 8-9

Reconstructing Your Family; See the Past with New Eyes
Understand and heal your family memories and develop more satisfying ways to be than you learned in the family where you grew up.
Leader: Lorraine Sando, M.A.
Cost: \$85 — Overnight accommodations are available for \$25 per person, double occupancy, breakfast provided.

For further information and full brochure, call (215) 696-8145, or write to: Temenos, 685 Broad Run Road, West Chester, PA 19383.

Proposed Amendments

(continued from page 44)

Article VI Sec. 1:4) of the By-Laws now reads:

A Publication Committee—to consist of a chairman and four additional members. This committee shall issue the Alliance Bulletin and any other printed matter authorized by the Alliance.

Article VI Sec. 1.4) of the By-Laws proposed amendment:

A Publication Committee—to consist of a chairman and as many additional members as the chairman may desire. This committee shall issue any printed matter authorized by the Alliance and submit it to the *Messenger* for publication.

Article VIII of the By-Laws now reads:

The annual dues shall be a per capita tax of one dollar. Any member, who so wishes and whose per capita tax is paid, may be a Contributing Member by paying five dollars (\$5.00) annually. All dues and contributions shall be paid to the Alliance Treasurer by March 1 of the current fiscal year.

Article VIII of the By-Laws proposed amendment:

Change per capita tax to two dollars (\$2.00).

Article XII of the By-Laws now reads:

These By-Laws may be amended at any Annual Meeting of the Alliance by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting provided that the proposed amendment has been considered by the Executive Board and substance thereof published in the *New Church Messenger* in March previous to the meeting at which it is to be voted upon.

Article XII of the By-Laws proposed amendment:

Delete the words New Church from New Church *Messenger*.

Barbara Penabaker, President, Alliance of New Church Women

Moving Toward the Light

(continued from page 34)

A grown daughter 2,000 miles away is embarking once again on the all-important work. She phones and tells me that she is looking at a photo of me taken over 50 years ago, and she wants to know who was that little girl, what was happening in your life then, how did all these things come about? There is anger, and compassion, and a need to understand, and a willingness to hear. The question underlying *Who Are You?* is *Who Am I?*

And so I begin my book, for the family, filling up pages every night in a journal of early childhood memories, family, impressions, dreams, socio-cultural detail, people, places, things, the endless human struggle out of ignorance toward wisdom, as unvarnished as I can make it. When I die, I don't want them to be left with the usual puzzling patchwork of old snapshots, letters, and vaguely-remembered anecdotes. But more important, I see this family book as a nucleus, a living, changing work, the beginning of a joint venture in creative healing, that moves and evolves as we all grow and gain more insight over the years, as our own hero's journey strengthens and inspires us to *carpe diem*, to seize the day and follow our bliss, to discover and rediscover who we really are.

—Patte LeVan

Commencements

Baptisms

Ingard—Kristian Paul Ingard, son of Eric and Desna Ingard, was baptized into the Christian faith November 10, 1991, at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, the Rev. Ron Brugler officiating.

Lasso—Cory Robert Lasso, son of Kelly Ann and Brock Lasso, was baptized into the Christian faith November 17, 1991, at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, the Rev. Ron Brugler officiating.

Link—Jon Quinton Link, son of Victor and Anita Link, was baptized into the Christian faith December 24, 1991, at the New Jerusalem Church, Pawnee Rock, Kansas, the Rev. John Bennett officiating.

Schneider—Lija Aleksandra Schneider, daughter of Inta and Eric Schneider, was baptized into the Christian faith December 8, 1991, at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, the Rev. Ron Brugler officiating.

Baptism Confirmation

Groleau—Anna (Dueck) Groleau was baptized into the Christian faith and Scott and Anna Groleau were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church November 10, 1991, at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, the Rev. Ron Brugler officiating.

Confirmations

Amatruda, Brunton, Charters—Paul Amatruda, Linda and Doug Brunton, and Anita Charters were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church November 10, 1991, at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, the Rev. Ron Brugler officiating.

Hille and Weldy—Jeannette and Frederick Hille, and Ann and Rodney Weldy were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church December 1, 1991, at the Virginia Street Church, St. Paul, Minnesota, the Rev. Edwin G. Capon of San Francisco officiating.

Marriage

Baxley and Swiger—June R. Baxley and Edmund G. Swiger were united in marriage December 21, 1991, at the Hiland Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the Rev. Dr. Helsel R. Marsh, Jr., officiating.

Deaths

Vigerstad—Alice Vigerstad, lifelong Swedenborgian, entered the spiritual world October 22, 1991. Alice was treasurer of the Orange, New Jersey New Church for many years and was also active in the New York church. She was the granddaughter of Albinus Finney Frost, minister of the Fryeburg church for many years. A memorial service was conducted at the New York church October 27, the Rev. Robert McCluskey officiating.

Vigerstad—Josef Vigerstad entered the spiritual world August 18, 1991. Joe was an active member of the Orange, New Jersey New Church for many years, and had attended the New York church for the last several years. A memorial service was conducted September 29, the Rev. Robert McCluskey officiating.

Church Family News

The Rev. Dr. Robert Kirven, professor of theology and church history at the Swedenborg School of Religion, was admitted to the Lahey Clinic in January for treatment of double pneumonia. At this writing he has resumed a few of his classes and is recovering nicely at home, 160 Bigelow Street, Brighton, MA 02135. Prayers and expressions of care are much appreciated.

The President Reports

General Council mid-winter meetings, with the Cabinet participating, were highlighted by workshops on "What Makes an Effective Board?" "Growth and Outreach!" and "Stewardship and Fund Raising." Other agenda items included work on the five-year plan, both programming and financial, and a revised plan for Temenos.

General Council approved the recommendations of the Temenos board and the Philadelphia Swedenborgian Church:

To have the Philadelphia church pay for the construction, up to \$600,000, of roads, entrances, septic fields, utilities, and parking lots in order to begin building the first unit on the site at the top plateau. This will be a housing unit for up to sixteen people with meeting and kitchen space. The construction of the main center building will be delayed

until funds are raised. The denomination will be responsible for the costs of the housing unit, to a maximum of \$500,000. These funds are to come from an active capital funds drive, possible sale of some parcels of Temenos land, and finally by obtaining a mortgage, thereby taking some of the church's money out of the land and into construction.



A number of positive things have happened in the past year. Membership is up in some of our churches and their respective communities. The Annual Appeal raised over \$17,000 for 1991 expenses. This is more than recent years' appeals. The 1992 Annual Appeal is off and running—the goal is \$25,000. With more people responding, we can attain this goal.

Finally, another bit of good news: There has been strong interest expressed from Houston, Texas, in starting a new Swedenborgian group. A worship leader is in place and ready to go. Please keep this new church planting in your thoughts and prayers.

If you have any comments, suggestions, ideas for our church, please let us know. Your involvement in the ministry of our church can fill the cup to overflowing.

Love and peace,



Richard H. Tafel, Jr., President

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