

J. Appleseed & Co.:
An Outreach Ministry of COMSU

James F. Lawrence

Last spring the Communications Support Unit accepted my resignation from *The Messenger* so that I could pursue an objective that almost every Swedenborgian understands and supports: to reach out effectively to a confused world with concise and relevant Swedenborgian messages rendered in contemporary language. My interest in this ministry springs from two vital observations, one regarding our church and one regarding modern approaches to effective public promotion.

A simple historical observation is that the Swedenborgian Church's biggest impact by far has been through the printed word. Our theology has been studied and digested by a large number of historically prominent people with a corresponding impact on our world. These impressive successes for Swedenborgian thought did not occur through our small and scattered centers (as useful as these are), but through the wide dissemination of the ideas in printed form.

One major church historian remarked that we won the prize by a wide margin in the nineteenth-century for per capita publishing. We have even been jokingly referred to as the church that believes in salvation through publication! Yet that is not altogether pure jesting. Swedenborg said that the time was ripe for the new revelations in part because the technology of printing was finally firmly established. Something inherent in the Swedenborgian vision lends itself naturally to expression through the printed word.

Unfortunately, we have slipped far behind our previous productivity in this category in the last sixty years. J. Appleseed & Co. proposes to reinvigorate the printed ministry of the Swedenborgian Church.

A second observation informing the creation of J. Appleseed & Co. is the cost-effectiveness of using the mails for the promotion of ministry materials designed for targeted audiences. An increasing percentage of Americans are buying more and more of their reading materials through the mail and less and less through retail outlets. With millions of spiritually hungry people in America, a Swedenborgian mail-order ministry that intelligently conceives its messages for carefully selected audiences may very well, in a short period of time, double the number of receivers of Swedenborgian ideas currently being served by General Convention. While all Convention ministries exist to foster the spiritual well-being

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of people, J. Appleseed & Co. has the sole objective of fostering the spiritual well-being of people who have never had the opportunity to consider the tremendous spiritual vision of Emanuel Swedenborg. To successfully meet this objective, J. Appleseed & Co. is currently setting up to pursue three strategies.

Strategy One: Mail-Order Ministry

A catalog of the most proven effective materials for first-time readers is being developed. Along with such Swedenborg classics as *Heaven and Hell* and *True Christian Religion*, the catalog will also include the perennial favorites *My Religion* by Helen Keller and *Presence of Other Worlds* by Wilson Van Dusen. In addition, recent works such as Martin Larson's *New Thought Religion* (a sustained tribute to Swedenborg) and Bruce Henderson's *Window to Eternity* (a brief and attractive presentation of life after death from the Swedenborgian perspective) will be promoted. New books by Van Dusen, Robert Kirven and George Dole are all in the works as well, and many other projects too numerous to cite here are moving forward in preparation for the first catalog of titles promoting contemporary perspectives on Swedenborgian ideas.

The crucial difference between this ministry and the efforts of the Swedenborg Foundation is that this ministry will specifically direct people to the Swedenborgian Church for further spiritual growth, which the

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Foundation is by law forbidden to do since it is a non-profit educational foundation. Every initiative by J. Appleseed & Co. will be designed so that the inquirer will be directed to our Central Office, should they be inspired to look further.

Also, the Foundation does not promote Swedenborgian literature in the same way that J. Appleseed & Co. is preparing to do. Several target groups have been identified with specific messages and mailings designed just for them. Of those who show an interest and make a purchase, they will find their way into a centralized list and receive follow-up offerings from time to time. Statistics show that a certain percentage of these will develop into regular subscribers of Swedenborgian ministry materials and some of them will even want to become members at large of General Convention; or if they live near one of our centers, they will be invited to visit the local ministry.

In short, then, the objective of this strategy is to use the mails to facilitate reading relationships with people all over the United States, hopefully creating relationships with a larger number of people than we have ever served before.

Strategy Two: Networking with Other Distributors

There are a great many large distributors of spiritual literature who would be happy to include Swedenborg among their titles. Swedenborg is generally unavailable through these outlets because no one has sowed those seeds. As the name of J. Appleseed & Co. rather directly conveys, this ministry seeks to plant just such seeds. By placing key works inside the system of other and larger distributors, J. Appleseed & Co. can further its goal of sowing Swedenborgian ideas with little capital investment.

Strategy Three: Keeping the Church Visible through the Media

This former editor knows how gratefully news releases and well-written informative pieces are

received by many publications. The Swedenborgian Church plays a quiet, but critical role in the religious scene in America and Canada. We don't want that role to get too quiet! Part of my time will be taken up with the development and sometimes writing of articles to be submitted to carefully chosen publications. In addition, as a member denomination of the National Council of Churches, the Swedenborgian Church is accorded enough respect to be reported upon in the major religious news organs. This strategy basically involves public relations and is therefore a natural part of a ministry that is trying to "get the word out" about the Good News of the New Church.

I hope that this brief presentation will answer some of the questions that many have had about the objectives and strategies of this new ministry. I would like to invite any of *The Messenger's* readers to respond to the objectives and strategies outlined here. At the Communications Support Unit, we are always on the lookout for another good idea. ■

Rev. Jim Lawrence
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NCC Urges Church Action on South Africa

NCC Executive Committee asks "All Possible U.S. Church Action" On South Africa

The National Council of Churches Executive Committee called for "all possible action" by American churches in response to the crisis in South Africa.

William Logan, director of the NCC's Africa Office, pointed to the August 31 bomb blast at Khotso House, where the South African Council of Churches has its headquarters; to threats against top church leadership, including Archbishop Desmond Tutu, SACC General Secretary Frank Chikane, and Reformed Church leader Allan Boesak; to the banning earlier this year of most anti-apartheid groups, and to the continuing state of emergency, and said, "The situation in South Africa is deteriorating by the hour."

"People are at risk. The churches in South Africa are being persecuted because of their understanding of the Gospel. They remain among the last organized bodies in that society to oppose apartheid. It's the most opportune time for the world's churches to really take the lead in the fight against apartheid. Over the past 15 years or so, we have said about everything we can say. The critical situation in South Africa calls us beyond resolutions at this point. It calls for action."

Logan noted intensive work by the NCC and its churches in favor of U.S. legislation that would impose heavy economic sanctions against South Africa, and NCC and other churches' endorsement of the Shell boycott, also designed to pressure South Africa to end its apartheid system.

Those efforts must continue, Logan said, but he added, "With all we have done it's simply not enough." He challenged U.S. churches by quoting an interview in which Frank Chikane said, "It seems the international community doesn't respond unless we die in great numbers" ■

*From the Office of Information
of the National Council of
Churches in Christ*



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Volunteer News

Volunteers are like Ford—
they have better ideas.
Volunteers are like Coke—
they make the going good.
Volunteers are like Pepsi—
they've got a lot to give.
Volunteers are like Standard Oil—
you expect more and you get it.
Volunteers are like VO-5 hairspray—
they hold out in all kinds of weather.
Volunteers are like Hallmark Cards—
they care enough to give their very best.
But most of all, volunteers are like Frosted Flakes—
they're Grrrrrrrrreat!!

*Author Unknown
Sent in by Annella Smith
San Diego, CA*

SSR Faculty Post Open

The SSR Board of Trustees has approved a search for a full-time faculty member in Practical Theology. The position will be open in September, 1989. The ideal candidate would have at least ten years of pastoral experience, and a Ph.D. or D.Min. in a relevant field. Courses to be taught would include pastoral care, church administration, religious education, and possibly counseling. The position may involve field education supervision, depending on the candidate's qualifications and interest

Inquiries and applications should be sent to Mrs. Mary Bryant, Secretary, Faculty Search Committee, Swedenborg School of Religion, 48 Sargent Street, Newton, MA 02158. ■

Television— Getting the Word Out

Eric Allison

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A great tool for letting the public know what our church teaches is television. In Canada Cable TV is more common than in the U.S., so there is a greater audience to be reached. In both the U.S. and Canada, every Cable Station is licensed to use the air waves with the provision that they have one channel devoted to local programming. The fact is that these Cable channels are often desperate for local programming. Each station is required to broadcast a certain number of hours of local programs each week. The result of this rule is that a half-hour show you do may be shown as many as five times.

You may say, "But, what can we do?" At the Church of the Good Shepherd we have put together 8 different shows. It really is not that difficult, it just takes a little time to plan what you want to say. There are two suggestions which will give the public a very positive impression of what the New Church is about:

1. Borrow a 3/4 inch video tape of "Images of Knowing." It is only fifteen minutes long, so all you need to do is come up with a very brief but interesting introduction to the film. After the film is over the eyes of the audience are upon you (two to four people). You may explain in simple terms the Doctrine of Correspondences and say a little about your church. Nothing to it, but a rehearsal before going to the studio is advisable. Remember, you're on TV and you want to look as professional as possible.

2. A great idea for a one hour show is to use the film "Swedenborg: The Man Who Had To Know." With two or three people hosting the show you give a brief introduction to the film and tell your audience that the theme of the program is "Life After Death." You may have in hand a copy of "Heaven and Hell" and have the church phone number on the screen for those who might like to purchase a copy at "this special offer." You

will also explain that this is a live, phone-in show. After the film, the audience may phone in with their questions (It's a good idea to have some of your own people ready to call in if other calls do not start coming in right away.). After the film be prepared to talk for a few minutes and remind the audience to call in. Paul Zacharias and I did this and it was a lot of fun. We answered 14 calls in 28 minutes and people were still phoning when the show went off the air. These are two examples of how to put a good show on TV with a minimum of preparation. For some of you it may seem like a lot of work and a whole new adventure, but that's what it takes to:

GET THE WORD OUT. ■

Eric Allison

Religious Poetry Contest

The American Poetry Association is sponsoring a new poetry contest that awards \$11,000 worth of prizes to undiscovered poets. The Grand Prize is a Trip to Hawaii for Two, the First Prize is \$1,000, and 150 other winning poets will receive cash, certificate and book awards. Contest entry is free. Everyone is welcome to enter.

Poets may send up to five poems, no more than 20 lines each, with name and address on each page to American Poetry Association, Dept. CN-70, 250 A Potrero Street, P.O. Box 1803, Santa Cruz, CA 95061.

Poems are judged on originality and sincerity. Every poem is also considered for publication.

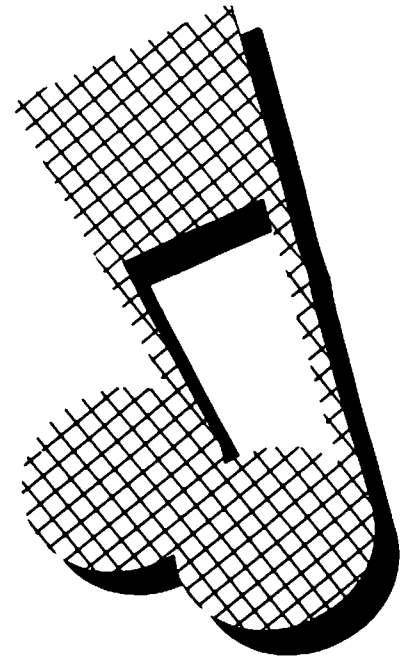
In the last six years the American Poetry Association has sponsored 27 contests and awarded \$101,000 to 2,700 winning poets.

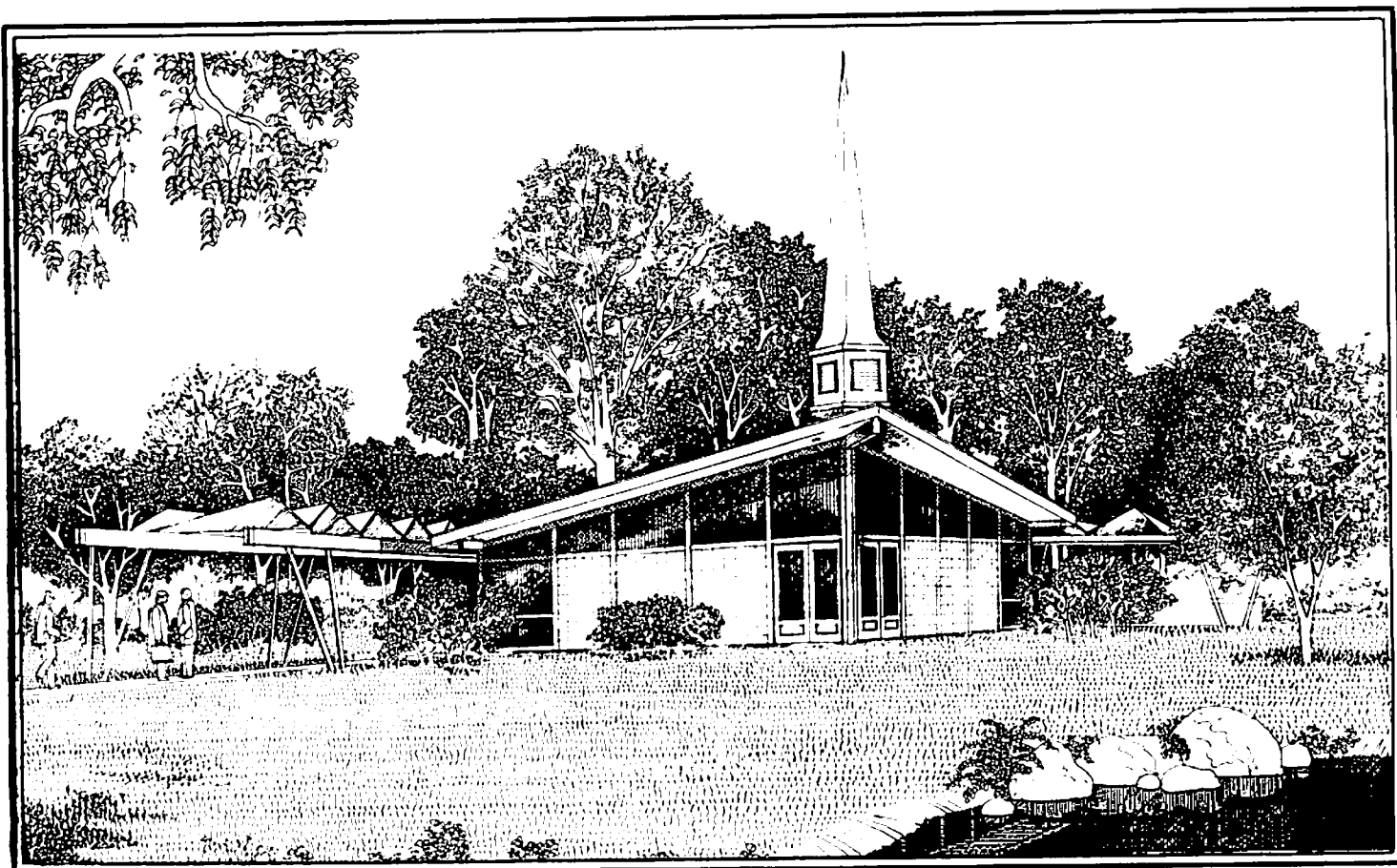
Poems postmarked by December 31 are eligible to win. Prizes will be awarded by February 28, 1989. ■

Suggestions for Song Book Requested

I am in the process of putting together a song book appropriate for camps, small groups, and worship in most churches. I am looking for easy-to-sing modern Christian songs with folk and popular melodies. The theology should be compatible with the New Church. I invite all interested parties to contribute ideas, favorite songs, and sheet music with piano scores, if possible. ■

Rev. James Lawrence
8 Elm St.
Fryeburg, Maine 04037





Harvey Chapel Honors Career of Faculty Member

Urbana University President Dr. Paul G. Bunnell surprised well-wishers at Baccalaureate and Commencement exercises in June when he announced that Center Hall will become Harvey Chapel this fall in honor of retired faculty member Dr. Dorothea Harvey.

Dr. Harvey, now Professor Emerita, first joined the faculty here in 1968. The former Urbana College Chaplain was the first woman ordained by the General Convention of the Swedenborgian Church. At the University, she taught a number of subjects, most notably religion and philosophy.

During the June 5 ceremonies, President Bunnell cited Dr. Harvey's years of service to the school and the community.

"The Board of Trustees takes this action in recognition of and with deep appreciation for Dr. Harvey's commitment to Urbana University and to new church education in Urbana."

Harvey Chapel will serve as an interdenominational, on-campus meeting place for students and faculty.

Renovation of Center Hall includes redecoration of the building's interior and the addition of a steeple and carillon outside. Chimes in the spire will ring each quarter hour, according to Rev. Carl Yenetchi.

The renovation is being funded through a \$25,000 grant from the Ohio Association of the Swedenborgian Church.

The chapel will be officially dedicated at the time of the February Board Meeting. ■

Advice for a Lifetime

An Ann Landers clipping sent by a reader is worth sharing:

"Dear Ann Landers,

My grandmother never went to school, but she was very wise. Before she died sixty years ago, she handed me a slip of paper with 'all the advice you'll ever need to have a good life.'

"Here's what she wrote: 'Wash what is dirty. Water what is dry. Heal what is wounded. Warm what is cold. Guide what goes off the road. Love people who are least lovable because they need it most'." ■

The Upper Room

The Lord's Servant

Leon C. Le Van

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(The Rev. Leon Le Van published his column, *The Upper Room*, for many years in these pages. After a very long and fruitful ministry as a parish minister, as well as his numerous contributions to New Church publications, Mr. Le Van entered the spiritual world in late summer (see *Commencements*, October issue). As a tribute to a much-beloved toiler in the Swedenborgian vineyard, we publish here his final column, which he had already filed with *The Messenger* office. We feel its title is especially appropriate.)

The Editor

Emanuel Swedenborg, son of a Lutheran bishop, lived just before the time of the American Revolution and is identified by his followers with the coming of the New Age of which men now speak with confidence and hope. The tributes of many in the learned world to the genius of the Christian Prophet and Seer make a testament of remarkable splendor. Swedenborg himself would wish to disclaim all testimonials and all tributes. "I am nothing," he would say, "and the Lord is all"; and the New Church normally honors that desire for humility and lowliness of heart and does not often mention him in its public services.

In the Universe described by Swedenborg we find not only the earths, stars, and galaxies known to astronomers and scientists, but we find much more. Swedenborg shows that the material Universe known to scientists is only part of the great Universe as a whole. The material plane of reality with which science is familiar Swedenborg identifies as only the outermost garment of God's creative activity, within which is the whole wonderfully complex anatomy of the Eternal World. The Universe described by Swedenborg is not a self-activating mechanism as some philosophers teach, originating no one knows where and operating for no one knows what ends. In the Universe described by Swedenborg we learn how the world originated,

how it is maintained, of what ultimate substance it consists, and to what fulfillment it moves.

But great as is Swedenborg's interest in the Cosmos, his still-greater interest is in the natural and spiritual *Word of God*. The Bible, he maintains, is the outmost expression of the Divine Wisdom; and he gives many of the truths of its inner light. Because of our human imperfections, the Divine Wisdom of God must be largely withheld from us, awaiting our further regeneration. But in the Bible we see as much of the Divine Wisdom as our minds can bear at any given time. Swedenborg shows that only by using such truths as we already possess can we receive more. Material thinking (that is, thinking by material-minded men) describes the Bible as compounded of more unscientific statements than any other book. But in Swedenborg men make the transforming discovery that within and beyond both the perfections and imperfections of the literal sense there arise glories of spiritual meaning so far-reaching that they illuminate the very Angelic Heaven and open our minds to the soul of the *Word of God*.

Swedenborg outlines the scope of Heaven and the Spiritual world. Heaven, he declares, is no myth. The Kingdom of Heaven is more real, more permanent, more substantial, and more replete with activities than our transitory experiences on earth can ever be. Yet so great is the darkness of men in the present Age that many who are supposed to be the most enlightened confess their ignorance of those spiritual realities that are more real than the sun and stars. Swedenborg's writings make such darkness unnecessary and obsolete. The Lord did not create men to abide in spiritual darkness. "Let there be light," God declared at the creation. And Swedenborg's writings are bearers of a great flood of light for the New Spiritual age.

Swedenborg takes us from angel to angel, from one part of Heaven to another. He describes what he sees with his opened faculties. He records the words he hears. He guides us through the great vestibule of Eternity (the introductory World of Spirits) where we all first awaken after death. The late Dr. Joseph Fort Newton declared: "Swedenborg's experiences in the Spiritual World were indisputable. His mind was prepared by God Himself. He attained to great spiritual growth. He was a high soul. He was entrusted with powers beyond all others, yet he used those powers scrupulously and carefully in the service of Him above."

It is a known thing that the great "trail-blazers" of Humanity are given to mankind when the world most needs them. In most cases that means they stand ahead of their times. Some become more illustrious as time goes by, some less. Swedenborg is still largely a man of the future. The world in general still does not know that he has come. It may be decades (or centuries) before the world advances to the point where it will discover the great prophet of the New Age standing ahead and pointing the way to the still more glorious future of the new heaven and new earth. He shows us the Spiritual World with a great amount of detail. In no other writings can that world be better put before us than in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. "Such a mind," Dr. Newton adds, "shows us the Divinity that dwells in our mortal dust. Such a character is the consecration of our Race." Swedenborg subscribed himself simply "Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ." ■

Baptism

Chaplin—Alyssa Michelle Chaplin, daughter of Jeffrey and Diane (Swett) Chaplin, was baptised into the Christian faith on September 18, 1988, at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Rachel Rivers Lawrence officiating.

Dissette—Joshua Dissette, son of Dion and Mary Dissette, was baptised into the Christian faith at Swedenborg House, Deland, FL on September 11, 1988, the Revs. Skuli Thorhallsson and Deborah Winter officiating.

Patterson—Tessa Rachele Patterson, daughter of Greg and Tonya Patterson of Rozell, Kansas, was baptised into the Christian faith on June 12, 1988, at Pawnee Rock, Kansas, the Rev. John Bennett officiating.

Robock—Jason Daniel Robock, son of Dennis and Diane Robock, was baptised into the Christian faith on October 9, 1988, at the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, the Rev. Henry Korsten officiating.

Strange—Joshua Raymond Strange, daughter of Mark and Holly (Hatch) Strange, was baptised into the Christian faith on September 11, 1988, at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. James F. Lawrence officiating.

Confirmations

Dissette—Dion and Mary Dissette were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church on September 25, 1988 at Swedenborg House, Deland, FL, the Revs. Deborah Winter and Skuli Thorhallsson officiating.

Marriages

Brown-Swett—Patricia J. Brown and Douglas M. Swett were united in Christian marriage on October 6, 1988 at the Fryeburg New Church Parsonage, Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. James F. Lawrence officiating.

Dzeryk-Casemore—Julie-Ann Dzeryk and Rod Casemore were united in Christian marriage on October 1, 1988 at the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, the Rev. Henry Korsten of-

ficiating. Julie-Ann is the granddaughter of Rev. Erwin and Lisa Reddekopp

Gale-Bullard—Marion R. Gale and David Bullard were united in Christian marriage on September 17, 1988 at the Swedenborg Chapel, Cambridge, Massachusetts, the Rev. David Rienstra officiating.

Houk-Marley—Susan Houk and Robert Marley were united in Christian marriage on August 6, 1988 at the Pawnee Rock Church, Pawnee Rock, Kansas, the Rev. John Bennett officiating.

Kraus-Anderson—Anne S. Kraus and David E. Anderson were united in Christian marriage on September 24, 1988 at the Church of the Holy City, Wilmington, Delaware, the Rev. Ernest O. Martin officiating.

Rowe-Kleinstuber—Dorian Rowe and John Kleinstuber were united in Christian marriage on September 24, 1988 at the Church of the Holy City, Wilmington, Delaware, the Rev. Randall E. Laakko officiating.

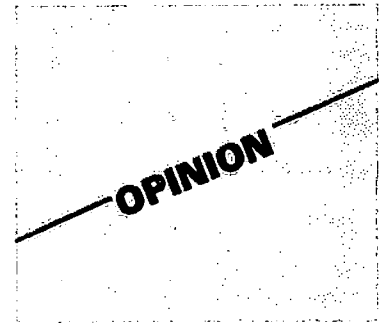
Wiens-de Bruyn—Janice D. Wiens and Gordon W. de Bruyn were united in Christian marriage on August 27, 1988 at St. Stephens Anglican Church in Summerland, B.C., the Rev. Erwin D. Reddekopp officiating.

Deaths

Kalmbacher—Helen Kalmbacher, longtime member of the Church of the Holy City, Wilmington, Delaware, entered the spiritual world on July 18, 1988. A memorial service was held at the church on July 21, 1988, the Rev. Randall E. Laakko officiating.

Schneider—Ethel Scheider, longtime member of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, entered the spiritual world on September 23, 1988. A memorial service was held at the Schreiter Sandrock funeral home on September 26, 1988, the Rev. Eric Allison officiating.

Schutz—George Schutz, longtime member of the Church of the Holy City, Wilmington, Delaware, entered the spiritual world on February 1, 1988. A memorial service was held at the church on February 5, 1988, the Rev. Randall E. Laakko officiating.



Rush Not to Judgment

Dear Editor:

Reverend Carl Yenetchi's letter in the August issue of *The Messenger* contains important insight, and spurs me to voice my own concern about some of the attitudes expressed since the February article, "Replacing Ignorance and Hate with Knowledge and Compassion."

Mr. Yenetchi reminds us that the Bible was not written for us to judge each other with. If anything, most will agree, it was written to increase our capacity to empathize, understand, love.

The most vital question raised by Mr. Yenetchi is, "I agree with Mr. Rose that homosexuality is not God's mistake, but can we be sure it is not His blessed Creation?" One thing we can be sure of is that *we cannot be sure about anything* regarding God's plan for each of us except that it will be designed in a manner conducive to our spiritual growth. "... the order by which a person is led while being regenerated is known to no man and not

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even to the angels, except obscurely, but to the Lord alone" (Swedenborg). Growth of this kind is never easy. We need to be very patient and 'quiet' within to receive it, and realize that it may come to us in surprising ways.

Movements like Aesthetic Realism which Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman writes of in the June *Messenger* frighten me, because they appear to be based on the need to de-program or rescue the individual from a presumed state of contempt. If, indeed, someone is feeling contemptuous about the world and is helped through Aesthetic Realism to see the world as a more beautiful, loving place, then Aesthetic Realism may have a positive influence. But one does not have to be gay in order to be contemptuous about the world, nor does one need to be contemptuous about the world in order to be gay.

When we get preoccupied theologically in a struggle of whether to categorize homosexuality as perversion, as part of the law of permissions, or as Divine Providence, we

may be missing the salient point that regardless of our opinion, it *exists*, for probably a variety of reasons, and God is waiting to see how we will live with it.

Rather than presuming to know and judge what is not fully understood, what happens when we shift our focus? How does the way we respond to this perplexing issue have an impact on our spiritual lives? In what way does the acknowledgment of other sexual orientations in the world increase our capacity for understanding and our search for truth? Understanding, for society might mean an acceptance of those with a different sexual orientation as no less qualified for Heaven or entitled to God's love. Truth for the homosexual person might mean accepting what is different within him/herself rather than spending a lifetime trying to follow external dictates of acceptableness.

We can read the Bible, we can theorize, but ultimately we must face each life situation by asking ourselves what is in our innermost heart. Swedenborg said, "Truth is

what prays in a person, and a person is continually at prayer when he lives according to truth." And, respecting good and truth, "... nothing is more necessary for a person than to know what good is and what truth is, in what way they have respect to each other, and in what way they are conjoined to each other."

Truth is always there for us to perceive, but it can be ever so elusive, both in scripture and in life, and thankfully God is loving us all the while we engage in our search for it.

Mona Conner
Brooklyn, NY

Book Hunt

Dear Editor,

I am hoping that a reader out there will be able to help me in my search for Fisher's commentaries on the gospels of John and Matthew.

Boman Brackin
4919-18th Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 54117