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# THE MESSENGER

Monthly Publication, Swedenborgian Church of North America

April 1996

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## Spirituality and Church Growth

Renee Billings Morris

**T**his past January, Roy Oswald, a senior consultant from the Alban Institute in Washington, D.C., led a workshop sponsored by the Swedenborg School of Religion for a group of our church's lay and clergy to help further our understanding of spiritual transformation within the Swedenborgian tradition. As a newly ordained minister in our church, it was important for me to be a part of the group discussions and to listen to the experience and knowledge from an expert's point-of-view on spirituality, church growth, understanding the small church, and conflict resolution.

I learned that today people want transformation and healing. People are looking for clergy and trained laity to know *how* to help them through the sometimes difficult process of spiritual growth. Seminary training has focused on helping people to stay on the spiritual path, and now the Swedenborg School of Religion is looking at ways to be attentive to the clear and strong call for spiritual leaders to know how to be present with people as they endeavor to "turn around" and to begin the long and rewarding walk of repentance and transformation.

Leading people through transformation and healing means that as individuals and as a church, we are called to hold reverently and to share our own transformational experiences in terms that are understandable and guiding, rich in feeling and imagery. As we become familiar and comfortable with our own transformational and healing process, then from the center of our experience and relationship with God our inner vision will know how to be truly present with newcomers who may approach things somewhat differently, yet may ask of us to understand in basic human terms what it means to "turn around" and begin again.

Roy asked us to consider the fact that there are many people today who were not raised in church and do not even know which end of the Bible to open and are now seeking to belong to a spiritual community that has values in which they can share their journeys and raise their children. Although references to clergy in the Christian Church are often negative today, the Swedenborgian Church can hear this as a challenge to listen to the needs of the people and to create new expressions of our theology, as well as meaningful rituals that attend to those needs.

In the workshop, we were presented with many constructive ways that our church can be present with people in their search for transformation and healing. Our unconscious minds are a treasure and the Lord can reach us through them if we work for their expression and affirm the positive. Roy suggested, for example, that we can learn positive self-talk, that there is power in positive repetition of certain phrases and chants created from personal experiences and Scripture. There is power in listening to our self-talk and in listening to the self-talk of our church's members with the intention of understanding where we are and how we can ask in specific terms for the Lord to help us transform the negative messages into positive messages. In fact, a clear and positive mission statement is a very powerful affirmation that can be incorporated perhaps monthly into a responsive reading!

Our church can understand the transformational and healing process by examining what is valued in the classroom environment of our seminary and then examining what is valued in the hearts and minds of our people living out the process in our churches. At this workshop,

*(Continued on page 51)*

Guest Editorial by Carl Yenetchi

## Resurrection of the Seeds

Our Lord told us the price of our spiritual growth with these words: *"I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."* (John 12:24)

The seed is our life, as we have known it. It is made up of the thoughts, feelings, prejudices and values with which we have met the world. Its substance is the joy and the pain, the anger and the love, the peace and the rage of our lifetime so far lived. Its death is required as the price that we may continue to live and to grow as spiritual beings.

Our Lord's earthly life was a metaphor for this reality. Our Lord walked among us, showing us the joy, pain, anger, love, peace and rage that He was and on that Holy Thursday, so long ago and yet so new, He showed us his anguish. *In anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.* (Luke 22:44) He was now to change and therefore to relate forever with his creation in a new and deeper way. In the Garden at Gethsemane Our Lord mourned the man that He was, as He prepared to take up the Divinity that He had been and was to become.

We as His disciples, are faced with the reality of His message. To bring forth new life, to grow spiritually we must face the death of the seed that we are. We fall to the ground, die, and experience resurrection bringing forth many seeds, which in their turn must die and so the cycle goes as we grow ever closer to the Lord who has made us.

This is the price we pay but it is a small price and easily borne when we see the rewards that await us. Earthly attachments, the things and ideas that we love and which we have outgrown, pale beside the potential of all that we can have in our search for Christ's way and the fulfillment of His plan for us. In giving up our earthly attachments we find heavenly comforts and insights that fill us with a sense of being one with Christ in the experience of life. Here is true meaning and purpose.

Our Lord said, *"I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father."* (John 14:12) When the seed that we are falls to the ground and dies we may echo these words for we also are on a journey to the Lord which will bring good to all people.

There is another seed, one that we find when the person that we are has become changed. When we are so much a part of this cycle of death and resurrection that we comfortably anticipate the change. The events of Holy Week and of Easter reflect this growth of our being. *For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.* (1 Peter 1:23)

*The Rev. Carl E. Yenetchi is a minister at Wayfarers Chapel, a Swedenborgian Church and wedding center in Rancho Palos Verdes, California.*

## The Messenger

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## Letters

### Book Sought

Dear Messenger Friends:

I am trying to locate a copy of a book, which I think was published in 1915 and is now out of print. I recall the title as being *Voices Through an Open Door*, but it might be . . . *from the Open Door*. It recorded visits from dead people to loved ones or strangers still on this plane of existence. (It was a Swedenborgian philosophy/theology). Do your readers have any ideas of how I could, even temporarily, acquire a copy? I'd be willing to return it to its owner.

Thanks for any help you can offer.

Lois K. Krebs  
9917 Hillsdale Rd.  
Brecksville, OH 44141  
(216) 838-5528

### Change of Address

Rev. Edwin and Esther Capon  
P.O. Box 606  
Millville, MA 01529-0606

## Spirituality and Church Growth

(Continued from front cover)

we talked honestly about what has worked well, what has been valuable in the education of the church's leaders and also what changes need to take place as we move into the next century. We looked at an assessment grid measuring high and low self-esteem among leaders and congregations, a map of the transformational process, evaluation procedures and clergy self-care issues.

Our church can minister to the needs of people today by offering small groups, workshops and/or seminars to people in and near our local churches, spiritual growth and retreat centers and bookstores. Roy suggests offering one or more of the following:

- a meditation group
- a chanting group
- pilgrimages to spiritual places, i.e., the Holy Land
- a men's group
- a personal support group
- a need-based group—i.e. grief recovery,

breast cancer, recently divorced

- a dream analysis group.

Emanuel Swedenborg's vision of the descending Holy City New Jerusalem continues to unfold before our eyes, and our part in this unfolding as a denomination becomes clearer as each one of us strives to be transformed and healed by the light of God. Roy Oswald sent the very clear message that our church can be responsive to the needs of people today while cherishing and creating its own rich traditions as we continue to learn how to support and guide people through life-changing and transformational experiences. I am called as a new minister in our church to explore what healing means to me and to face whatever keeps me from accepting it more fully in my own life and in the life of the congregation I serve. I have—we all have—the gift of healing. Now, perhaps more than ever, it is time to explore it, learn about it and practice it!

*The Rev. Renee Billings Morris was officially installed as pastor of the Royal Oak Swedenborgian Church in Royal Oak, Michigan, on March 24, 1996, the Rev. Edwin Capon officiating. She has been minister there since September 1995, following her ordination in July.*



*Min-Heui Cheon and Wilma Wake*

## Comments from Other Participants:

"The workshop on 'Spirituality and Church Growth,' held January 19-20, 1996, was for faculty and students, local church members, local trustees, and our two American graduates from last year. Larry Conant and Merrilee Phinney of the Bridgewater church attended, as did President Edwin and Esther Capon, as members of the SSR Board of Trustees. Kit Billings and Renee Morris returned as part of our 7-1-7 program. We try to find a way for graduates to return about seven months after graduation, and again a year and seven months after graduation."

—Mary Kay Klein



*Merrilee Phinney*

"... What we all did together furthered my sense of transitioning from student to professional minister ... this workshop and transition time helped me to

feel and realize again that all of you and the school are still alive and real, that I am not alone ... that the school, my peers out there, and I have all done a lot of very good work to get me to this point. I really appreciated being able to talk with everyone about my initial six months of ministry ... This visit with all of you and Roy helped me to learn more about spirituality and small-church ministry, and it helped me reconnect with the love, companionship, and people who helped me to get out here to begin with ... I believe your 7-1-7 transition program is very worthwhile, and I appreciate the fund-raising that got Renee, Roy and me out there to enjoy it ..."

—Kit Billings



*Esther and Edwin Capon*



*Kit Billings*



*Lee Woofenden*

"Using a combination of presentation and discussion, Roy focused our attention on the importance of a church's self-image, and then introduced a 'transformational map' to illustrate how the church might help people respond to their difficulties in ways that deepen their awareness of the divine presence in their lives. He urged strongly that we develop "rituals" for the home—not necessarily anything elaborate, but regular actions to help us keep our lives in their religious context. He also took us through a very simple form of healing service attending not so much to "results" as to the value of acting out our concern for each other's well-being and our trust in the Lord's care ... As has happened every time Roy comes, we emerged both encouraged and enlightened, with new resources for the work of the church and with a fresh and constructive perspective on its gifts and needs."

—George Dole

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# ~~conflict~~ and the Church

Lorraine Sando

I recently had the privilege of attending a 5-day *Managing Conflict* workshop for churches, presented by the Alban Institute and led by Margaret Breul. The workshop was attended by 19 people representing United Methodists, Evangelical Lutheran, Presbyterian, Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ and Swedenborgian. We came from Ohio, Georgia, North Carolina, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Oklahoma, Virginia, New Jersey, Illinois and the state of Washington. We learned about levels of conflict intensity, used instruments such as check lists of influencing factors, conflict sources checklists, and evaluative choices analysis. I felt very comfortable, welcome and at home in the group. I was pleased to share my Swedenborgian philosophy. I certainly learned that there were differences in church structure—

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***The degree that I can be vulnerable is the measure of how much aliveness I can contain. Openness and trusting with purpose and discernment are necessary qualities for living meaningful lives.***

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most with an episcopal structure and fewer with a congregational structure like ours. However, our similarities far outweighed our differences. The topic itself self-selected the group. People were open to growth and change, risking and learning, willing to experience the discomfort of trying something new. We played roles in dramas of church conflict. Humor helped add fun to the learnings. For example, we played roles as the board of the Heartland Church. The board chairperson was named True Spirit and the board members were Clair Site, Bess Forall, Pastor Newvision, Jung Widdo, Olde Gard, Neva Budge and Minnie Millions.

The setting for the conference was the Bergama Center in Dayton, Ohio, a retreat center in a Marianist community. The two chapels on the campus are both of Shaker architecture. The ceiling of the barn-like structure gently

rises with structural beams joining at a central circular point. The chancel area in one is simply decorated with a bronze of Christ on the cross—a figure very vulnerable and yet very alive and compassionate. The holes in hands and feet are not apparent. The figure says to me “I am vulnerable. The degree that I can be vulnerable is the measure of how much aliveness I can contain. Openness and trusting with purpose and discernment are necessary qualities for living meaningful lives.” The walls on either side of the chancel are a vast abstract mosaic of brilliant jewel colors—blues, turquoises, reds, golds and greens. And the chapel is filled with pregnant stillness—the sounds of all who have worshipped fill this sacred place.

It was the first of November, All Saints Day and the opening of the Peace Conference at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton. We were invited to attend a 5:00 p.m. peace mass at the novitiate of the Marianist Brothers in a building across the street from the center. Three women ministers and I accepted the invitation. On our way, we walked by a large grotto made of stacked, porous rocks and crowned with native trees and plants. Meditation benches and two white statues of the Virgin Mary added to the numinousness of the scene. We moved along the path to press the doorbell at the novitiate. We were warmly welcomed by three brothers and ushered into the chapel, where comfortable, upholstered armchairs were arranged in a double semicircle. Stained glass windows, with ribbon-like flowing colored pigment connecting the glass to the walls, create a sacred container for worship. The brothers created the stained glass and frescos and the beautiful woodwork of door and entry wall and communion table. The chapel breathed love and peace and the co-creation of God and humans. I picked up a hymnal as I entered. Guitar sounds filled the air with a hymn of praise. I searched my book looking for the right song, feeling clumsy in a strange new church. The priest standing next to me gave me his open book. Readings from the Bible, one done by one of our women ministers, were followed by prayers for peace on this very significant day of peace efforts with Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia. This is an ancient conflict having its roots in the early Middle Ages. Can this possibly be a cessation of the repeatedly erupting conflicts of this area? Many people joined hands to encircle the site of the peace talks with the hope of the end to the ethnic fighting. I felt profoundly grateful to be here at this time.

I’m including in this article some material on the levels of conflict intensity. My hope is that you can use this to assess any conflict within your church and any action that needs to be taken. Perhaps you can also translate it for use in your own personal and professional lives.

*It is important that you know that our Board of Reconciliation (formerly Board of Intervention), of which I am a member, is available to churches to help you deal with conflict. Contact Rev. Edwin Capon to request help and assistance.*

## Summary of the Conflict Intensity Chart

**Level 1: Conflict**—*We have a problem to solve.* It is characterized by real disagreement around an issue, short-lived anger quickly controlled, open sharing of information, clarity and specificity and movement toward unanimous agreement, done in a win/win collaborative style.

**Level 2: Conflict Disagreement**—characterized by mixing of personalities and issues, as well as lack of definition/cloudy about issue or problem; there is some distrust beginning, less mingling with "the other side." Personalizing of the problem begins as well as shrewdness and calculation. Some information is withheld, it's more vague and general, some hostile humor and "put-downs" and a need to save face. Tendency to move toward consensus, but win/win takes a lot of effort. *In our churches, we should endeavor to keep our levels down to Level 2. When we move into Level 3, we should consider calling in a third party for help, like the Board of Reconciliation.*

**Level 3: Contest**—Characterized by win/lose, resistance to working it out, unwillingness to operate in the "presence of the enemy," or share emotions/feelings constructively. There is personal attack and threats of people leaving. Distortion is a major problem and information is shared only within factions. Overgeneralizations occur, i.e. "You always," "we never." Shifts from self-protection to winning. Objectives are complex and diffuse. Decision-making processes used are mediation, compromising, voting. It's possible that some will leave the church. When conflict moves to Levels 4 and 5, the resolvability drops markedly.

**Level 4: Fight/Flight**—Characterized by a shift from winning to getting rid of person(s). Righteousness and unwillingness to speak to the other side. Factions are solidified. Will not accept/listen to contrary information. Talk is now of principles, not issues. Goal is no longer to win, but to hurt or eliminate others from the group. There is a high probability of split with person(s) leaving. This is the last place where a third party can be useful.

**Level 5: Intractable**—It's too late. There's no longer a clear understanding of issues. Conflict is unmanageable, personalities have become the issues. Characterized by vindictiveness and no objectivity or control of emotion. Sees persons harmful to society. Words imply destruction or elimination of the other. Goal is to destroy offending party/persons and make sure person (pastor) doesn't get a job elsewhere. Outcome is highly destructive.

A copy of the Conflict Intensity Chart is available by writing to the Central Office. The chart is produced by

the Alban Institute's Task Force on Pastor/Congregation Conflict which includes the following persons: Mary V. Atkinson, Margaret Bruehl, and the Revs. Alan G. Gripe, Jill Hudson, Roy W. Pneuman and Allan H. Swan.

Conflict will always be with us—it is a part of life and the state of active peace. It is the sandpaper that refines and defines us and helps us to grow and reach our highest potential. Our job is to learn to be aware of its early signs, and take early action. In other words, to become our best selves and confront our differences from a position of curiosity instead of adversity. In so doing we can become vulnerable and filled with aliveness and truly experience our profound connection with the Lord. This is an extremely difficult, worthwhile, and challenging task. Are we up to it?

*Lorraine Sando is a member of the Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound and serves as secretary of the Board of Trustees. She is a member of the Education Support Unit and the Board of Reconciliation (formerly Intervention). She is a marriage, family and individual therapist, consultant and artist.*

[Next month, we will hear from one of our churches that called in a community-building organization to help it move through its internal difficulties.]



**George Dole happily examines the "wall of envelopes" containing fund drive contributions. (The Rev. Dr. George Dole is professor of Bible, Languages and Theology at SSR).**

## SSR Fund Drive

The Swedenborg School of Religion successfully matched its \$20,000 challenge grant, for a total of \$40,000. An additional contribution of \$7,500 from the Boston church brought the total to \$47,500.

The 1995 SSR Prayer Book, a collection of prayers written by students and faculty, was sent as a gift to all donors. The Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey's 1995 graduation commencement address, "Educating People to Do a Job which is Humanly Impossible to Do" has been reprinted. Copies of both booklets are available for \$1.00 each, to cover postage and handling. To order, write or call the Swedenborg School of Religion, 48 Sargent St., Newton, MA 02158. (617) 969-4240.

# Unity in Diversity

Lee Woofenden

What separates one person from another? One culture from another? Common sense says it is our differences that separate us. Differences in language, differences in culture, differences in outlook, differences in social status, differences in religion. We do not live the same way; we do not think the same way; we do not feel the same way. Therefore we are separated from one another.

There is some truth to this. People who speak different languages do have trouble living with one another because of the communication gap. People who come from different cultures can easily misunderstand one another's actions and intentions. Common sense is common because it usually does make *some* sense.

However, Swedenborg liked to bring our attention to uncommon sense as well as common sense. While he agreed that similarities bring us closer together while differences tend to put a distance between us, he also said this about differences:

There are countless communities in heaven, and every single one of them is different from every other when it comes to what is good and true in them. Yet together they all form one heaven. It is like the different organs and parts of the human body, though they are all different, they make one person. Unity is never formed from many things that are exactly the same, but from things that are different harmoniously joined together. (*Arcana Coelestia* #3986)

Swedenborg's image of the differing parts of the human body working together harmoniously gives us a model we can use as we work to create unity within the diversity that we find in our communities and in our world. It is a model that does not attempt to erase the differences among us; rather, it *requires* differences in order for real and constructive unity to exist.

Let's bring this to a practical level. Think of an organization or commit-

tee that you belong to. When your group meets to make decisions, I am willing to bet that not everyone agrees with everyone else. One way to handle this is to find out what view is shared by the most people through a vote. In many cases, this will be the most efficient way. However, Swedenborg's human body model suggests that *every* viewpoint in the group may have something to contribute to the final decision. Each viewpoint represents part of the whole. A decision made by creatively considering all views may result in an action that is more constructive than one arrived at by the simpler method of voting.

If we expand this to the cultural and societal level, we have a blueprint for building unity from the diversity of our world. Neither the majority view nor any minority view on a particular issue is likely to give us the full picture. By creatively bringing the differing viewpoints together, we can form an organic, human unity that is fuller, richer, and more constructive than anything one person or group could have come up with themselves.

*Lee Woofenden is a fourth-year ordination-track student at the Swedenborg School of Religion. He lives with his wife and children in Sharon, Mass.*

## Opinion

In this section of *The Messenger* we are pleased to present the varied views of our readers. Letters published here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Editor, the Communications Support Unit or the General Council of the Swedenborgian Church. Published letters may be edited for brevity and clarity.

When you see an opinion with which you agree or disagree, please send your own views to the Editor so that *The Messenger* can be a forum for individual viewpoints. We welcome letters on all pertinent topics.

### Main Concern: A Service that Works

To the Editor:

In response to Alan Thomsen's letter in the

*Janaury Messenger*: Alan, as I re-read my October *Messenger* article to see what I wrote that made you think I was against the first order of worship, I realized it must be my statement that it was "encouraging that only two churches use the first order of service on most Sundays and twelve create a different service each week which is printed in a service folder."

I can see how you could misconstrue this as an attack on the first order of service, but that was not my intention. Clearly, my bias is toward creating new forms of worship. But I don't condemn those who treasure a 19th century style of worship. I think it is a wonderful and powerful service; it is indeed "high and lofty." However, I also acknowledge the axiom that the more predictable something is in worship, the less impact it has upon the worshipper. My job is to help people create things which have impact. Yes, I think it is good news when people are open to change and are trying new things. I get excited when people create different worship services which represent their own spiritual journey.

It would be tragic if the first order disappeared from the menu of services. But, I am certain that the first order of service plays a very minor role in attracting so many new people to your church. I suspect the exceptionally dynamic sermons, terrific music, gorgeous historical building, thriving wedding ministry, growing Sunday school, "coffee hour to end all coffee hours" and large number of amazingly talented and devoted people could also be factors in the growth of the San Francisco congregation. If the first order of worship were the sole reason for your church's growth, it would have outgrown its building decades ago.

It is not the style of the worship format that matters as much as how well it is presented. With a group of ten or less, the first order loses the real power it has to offer. I'm sure that a full church in San Francisco with your excellent choir does the first order the justice it deserves. One reason I encourage people to create their own worship is because people tend to be more invested in something they create themselves. Having a service "that works" for each individual church is my main concern. I urge churches to discontinue any form of worship that is not working for them.

I'm aware that there is definitely a small but increasing market for liturgical worship. Some people are going back to church in search of a more formal form of worship. Some orthodox churches are growing as a result of those leaving conservative or fundamentalist churches with informal styles of worship. However, the percentage of people who are attracted to orthodox services is much smaller than those who prefer a more informal style.

I have urged all congregations to create services which are genuinely worshipful but also appealing to the largest segment of the un-churched population. Yes, it is a marketing strategy for trying to save churches and I stand guilty as charged.

Your article also stated that our "growth and outreach efforts have been expensive failures." Money has been spent on advertising which produced little or no results. However, there have been many, many successes. Most of the advertising money spent by churches came out of their own pockets as well as from the Riverside Fund—not denomination coffers. Advertising has made a difference. Sometimes a big difference. Just ask the churches that have done

## Opinion (from page 54)

it. In some cases, advertising has virtually revived a congregation from its death bed. In Portland, Maine, there is a direct correlation between how much is spent on ads and how many visitors they have. No ads, no visitors. Small amounts of advertising have started wedding ministries which have, in turn, come to bring in over half of the churches' annual income. Would you rather have saved the advertising money? The biggest problem has not been unsuccessful advertising, but churches that advertise successfully and do little or no follow-up.

One important factor that we cannot measure is: What condition would our church be in now if we had not done any advertising or outreach efforts? We might have lost even more churches. Nearly everyone has felt empowered by efforts to let the public know we have something worthwhile to offer and by the new people the ads have attracted to the church.

Outreach money usually refers to programs that the local church sponsors which directly benefit the community. Of the money spent on advertising and outreach, *more than half was spent on outreach; mostly programs which literally feed and clothe local people.* I know that you would not want to have our churches stop helping the unfortunate.

Has the growth of the San Francisco church been so dramatic that it made the denomination appear to be growing when it has not? This is a cruel accusation which is simply not true. Perhaps the following breakdown will help. In 1990, 12 churches listed their attendance at less than 20 adults. In 1995, seven churches listed adult attendance as fewer than 20 adults. In 1990 nine churches listed adult attendance at 20-30. In 1995, fourteen churches listed adult attendance at 20-30. In 1990, three churches list attendance between 30-40 adults. In 1995 four churches list attendance between 30-40 adults. In 1990 there were four churches with attendance over forty. That figure remains the same. It is true that the increase in the San Francisco congregation helped to increase the overall average for the churches. However, if your congregation is removed entirely from the statistics, the denomination still shows an increase in attendance.

During the years I have made mistakes. Looking back at some articles I wrote, I am embarrassed by what I read. This is regeneration as I understand it. Sometimes painful, sometimes stepping backward, but eventually forward. I believe our church is repenting, regenerating and reforming all at the same time and I feel honored to have been selected to play a part in its leadership.

Yes, we can do much better. We have done much better than in any other year in my memory, not because of numbers, but because of a growing feeling that we will make it.

Eric Allison  
Pastoral Ministries Support Unit  
Church Growth Consultant  
Kitchener, Ontario

### Correction

To the Editor:

Regarding my review of *The Chess Garden* (Messenger, February 1996): I am writing in the unlikely event that readers will be confused by the description of the Antipodes as an "unchanged land." (p. 24, column 2, line 14). The phrase should read, "an uncharted land." As the book makes clear, the Antipodes is indeed a place of great and constant change, a fact that becomes self-evident to all those who choose to personally chart the land for themselves.

Robert McCluskey  
New York, NY

## Archival Gold: Our Swedenborgian Heritage

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# The Voyage of Life

Louise Woofenden

The following letter, from the New Jerusalem Magazine of August, 1857, was written to a Lady Blois by Mrs. Elizabeth Duché, wife of the Rev. Mr. Jacob Duché. Though she does not give a date for this experience, it is probable that the sea voyage referred to was that on which the Duchés returned to America after their self-imposed exile in England during the American Revolution.

June 20, 1791

MY DEAR FRIEND,

... being more timorous of the sea than I can express, and [being] in so weak a state, I had little reason to expect to live through the voyage, especially as I had no appetite; and both my physician and apothecary gave it as their opinion that my strength for the voyage depended on receiving such food as was most nourishing. Therefore I took the utmost pains to eat, by removing from my thoughts and sight every thing that might set me against my food. And, in the first place, I laid aside my spectacles; fearing I might see such dirt as might set me against it. Thus I was not only preserved from sea-sickness, but had an uncommon appetite. Upon observing this, I was led to the following reflections: That, as there is no such thing as arriving to the heavenly life without love to our neighbor, we should be as anxious to preserve that love as I was to preserve my appetite; therefore should endeavor to shut our eyes and ears to every thing that might impede that love, and only keep them fixed on that in them, be it ever so little, that we can or may love; for there is nobody but has something we may innocently unite with. But if we look through the spectacles of a reasoning spirit, we shall always see such specks of dirt as will entirely remove every inclination to love even the best of people.

Another reflection was occasioned by comparing our ship to a little world, and the passengers to the inhabitants of it, all of whom were on their way to a better [world], ardently desiring to arrive at it; but that did not prevent them from enjoying what they could enjoy of each other's company, and the blessings around them—such as a fine day on deck, an agreeable conversation, a good dinner. Neither did these enjoyments retard or obstruct their passage, for when they thought the least of it, they were going on the fastest. Sometimes in a violent storm, when we appeared to be going on very fast, and thought we should make a great way in our voyage, we hardly got on a mile; and when we appeared scarcely to move, we went eight or ten miles an hour. ... I have learnt by this analogy that the intentions and desires of the heart being wholly in the pursuit of good, bringing it forward into actions whenever occasion offers is never obstructed by any enjoyment of temporal things, provided we do not let them rise above it in our affections. Therefore we need not be anxious whether we go on fast or slow towards that good; for when we are most warm and zealous, and think we are going on very fast, as I did in the storm, we are perhaps going on more slowly. And when going on innocently in the duties and pleasures of life, enjoying them with thankfulness and without reasonings and anxieties, we are not only going on fastest, but in a straight course toward that haven of rest toward which we set out in pursuit.

Louise Woofenden is a writer and former archivist at the Swedenborg School of Religion.

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# From a Treestand

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*Just here in the little patch of woods where I sit,  
there is an entire universe that exists completely  
independent of the culture we so blithely  
assume to be the essential pinnacle of life.*

*Ken Turley*

It is here, above the ground sitting among the branches of a tree, that I most notice the effect of sunlight. Looking down at squirrels scampering over the ground in their endless search for things to cache away, seeing the tops of bushes and the backs of birds as they fly under my feet, this is a unique perspective. And somehow, being above and still and somewhat removed from the continuous activity of the woods, gives a very different view of things and brings a different kind of awareness. Up here it is more obvious how a cloud over the sun turns the woods cave-like and shadowed and causes the birds to quiet their chirping.

It is easier to see how the sun re-emerging brings the birds into their flitting flurry of exploration, chirping their happiness all the while and sets the squirrels to chasing each other just for fun; how the light turns leaves to green and gold satin and moss to sparkling velvet. And here, high among the leaves, when I look up through the tops of the trees, I am able to gaze deeply into the miraculous blue of the sky framed by the few curved and shimmering leafy boughs that are above me.

It is beyond words to describe the way light plays among the leaves, the way it sends beams of gold angling down through the branches to the ground; how looking farther off into the woods, you can see patches of light

splattered all over the forest floor, on the sides of bushes and the trunks of trees. Lacy shadows made by the raised arms, crossed legs and spindly fingers of tree branches are overlaid across everything. Things are always what they are, and yet their appearance is so dramatically transformed by the energy of the sun. If the metaphor for the effect of God on creation is not obvious in the play of light, perhaps you too could benefit from a little quiet time in the woods.

It is beauty beyond measure, but only if you take the time to really look at it and appreciate its subtleties. With the speed and inner preoccupation with which we so often live life, it is all too easy to walk through the woods and not really let the intensity and meaning of what you are seeing sink into your awareness. But being quiet for any length of time will, sooner or later, bring you to noticing what is around you. First the breath and then the mind slows and calms and becomes quiet. Then, when there is room for something else, slowly, a new understanding begins to dawn.

Beyond ourselves, beyond our things and the culture that made them and has come to believe them to be necessary, a culture in which we live and rarely see beyond, there exists an entire universe of life. Just here in the little patch of woods where I sit, there is an entire universe that exists com-

pletely independent of the culture we so blithely assume to be the essential pinnacle of life. In fact, as you move into smaller and smaller ecosystems, there exist countless universes. And these universes of life, vital and complete unto themselves, have absolutely nothing to do with us and even less need of us. The life in the woods has entirely no awareness and even less concern for our lives and our world. To know that it has existed and is existing and will exist just fine without us, that such richness of life goes on with no dependence on human invention at all, is such a lesson in humility. As long as we, and our kind, do not totally destroy this universe, this process, this immense amount of life energy, this tiny portion of God's creation will survive and even thrive, with beauty human invention cannot even approach.

As the beauty of nature is all around us to inspire us if we will only let it, so too is the beauty and power of God: It is there and waiting to be taken in and made the fuel for spiritual inspiration. It is the ever-present source of vitality and life. And what does it ask? Only that you do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with your God. So simple and so rarely done.

*The Rev. Ken Turley is minister of the Swedenborgian Church in Portland, Maine. Reprinted from the Swedenborgian Church newsletter, November 1995.*



# Advance Convention '96 Registration

Urbana University  
Urbana, Ohio  
June 26 - 30, 1996  
"SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS"

<p><b>Please complete in full - one application per family</b></p>	<p>Last Name _____ First Name _____          Last Name _____ First Name _____          Address _____          City, State, Province _____ Zip _____          Phone _____          Accompanied by _____          Children:              1. Name _____ Age _____              2. Name _____ Age _____              3. Name _____ Age _____</p>
<p><i>SCYL Members between the ages of 13 and 18 please complete.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> My parents will attend convention. They are _____  <input type="checkbox"/> My guardian at Convention (if no parent is present) will be _____</p>
<p><b>Arrivals and departures</b>  <i>Shuttle service is available to/from Columbus International Airport and Urbana University. There will be a moderate charge for this service.</i></p>	<p>I/We will arrive on the Urbana University campus on:          Date: _____ Time: _____          My/Our first meal on campus will be: Date _____          Breakfast <input type="checkbox"/> Lunch <input type="checkbox"/> Dinner <input type="checkbox"/>          My/Our last meal on campus will be: Date _____          Breakfast <input type="checkbox"/> Lunch <input type="checkbox"/> Dinner <input type="checkbox"/>          (Last meal served will be breakfast on June 30)</p>
<p><b>Special Needs</b></p>	<p>I am not able to climb stairs or walk very far. _____          I have these medical requirements _____          _____          I am <input type="checkbox"/> diabetic <input type="checkbox"/> a heart patient          Other health problem _____          Other physical/dietary/special needs: _____          _____</p>
<p><b>Children:</b> <i>The children's program will begin on Wednesday evening, June 26 and end at lunch on Saturday so that children can accompany their parents on outings. There will be an optional children's program on Saturday night for those children not attending the performance of "Blue Jacket" with their parents.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> My child/children will be participating in the Children's Program for ages 4 to 12 beginning on: _____          Names: _____ Ages: _____  <input type="checkbox"/> I will need child care for age 3 and under beginning: _____          Names: _____ Ages: _____          Special needs: _____          Have your children attended pre-school? _____</p>

<p><b>Rates for 1996 Convention Room &amp; Board</b></p> <p><i>Please note that there are two types of accommodations on campus.</i></p> <p><i>There are also various hotel and/or bed and breakfasts available locally. Information and telephone numbers will be available on request.</i></p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Board (3 meals a day, refreshments, etc.)</td> <td>\$20 per person per day.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Board for children 5 and under</td> <td>FREE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dorm Room (Single bed, no A/C)</td> <td>\$10 per person per day</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Suite Room* (Single or double)</td> <td>\$30 per day</td> </tr> </table> <p>*Suites contain 3 double bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and an unfurnished common room. Suites are airconditioned and are suitable for families, congenial couples, etc. Children under 12 may sleep on the floor (sleeping bags or mattresses) in parents' room at NO CHARGE. Children older than 5 years will still be charged for board and registration fee. But, our goal is to make this an affordable family experience.</p> <p><i>All prices are in US dollars.</i></p> <p><i>Some financial assistance is available for teens and children. Please ask for more information if you would like to apply.</i></p>	Board (3 meals a day, refreshments, etc.)	\$20 per person per day.	Board for children 5 and under	FREE	Dorm Room (Single bed, no A/C)	\$10 per person per day	Suite Room* (Single or double)	\$30 per day		
Board (3 meals a day, refreshments, etc.)	\$20 per person per day.										
Board for children 5 and under	FREE										
Dorm Room (Single bed, no A/C)	\$10 per person per day										
Suite Room* (Single or double)	\$30 per day										
<p><b>Accommodations</b></p> <p><i>All accommodations are on a first come, first served basis. Early registration before April 30 should ensure your first choice. All room &amp; board charges must be paid in advance and received in the Central Office before 6/17/96.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> I/We would like a suite. I/We would like to share a suite with _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I would like a dorm room. I would like a room near _____</p> <p>I/We would like information on: <input type="checkbox"/> Hotels    <input type="checkbox"/> Bed &amp; Breakfasts</p>										
<p><b>Registration</b></p> <p><i>All prices are in US dollars.</i></p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Children under 12 .....</td> <td>\$20.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Teen League (SCYL participant 13-18) .....</td> <td>\$35.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Teens and Adults .....</td> <td>\$60.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Family maximum (Parents and children) .....</td> <td>\$150.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Late fee if received after 5/1/96 .....</td> <td>\$10.00</td> </tr> </table> <p>Registration is per person and covers some special costs and events. No registration refunds after June 1. Please mail this form with your check, made out to The Swedenborgian Church to:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Central Office The Swedenborgian Church 48 Sargent Street Newton, MA 02158</p>	Children under 12 .....	\$20.00	Teen League (SCYL participant 13-18) .....	\$35.00	Other Teens and Adults .....	\$60.00	Family maximum (Parents and children) .....	\$150.00	Late fee if received after 5/1/96 .....	\$10.00
Children under 12 .....	\$20.00										
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Other Teens and Adults .....	\$60.00										
Family maximum (Parents and children) .....	\$150.00										
Late fee if received after 5/1/96 .....	\$10.00										
<p><b>Early Arrivals and Delayed Departures</b></p>	<p><i>Urbana University will allow a limited number of convention attendees to come early and/or stay after convention if arrangements are made in advance. Please let us know if you wish to take advantage of this opportunity.</i></p>										
<p><b>Financial Assistance</b></p>	<p>For children and young people, please contact the Central Office 48 Sargent St., Newton, MA 02158</p>										

## Ministerial Employment Opportunity

*Church of the Holy City  
(Swedenborgian), Edmonton*

The Edmonton church is presently looking for a minister to take over for the Rev. Henry Korsten. Mr. Korsten is presently with our church but is looking to step down. He has agreed to stay on, hopefully, until we can find a replacement.

Edmonton is the capital of Alberta, located centrally in the province and is approximately 300 miles north of the Montana/Alberta border. Edmonton's four distinct seasons of weather make it a nature-lover's playground. Edmonton is known for having the world's largest mall but also boasts as Canada's festival city with the world-famous arts festival "The Fringe" being the jewel.

Forward all replies to:

The Church of the Holy City  
— Swedenborgian  
9119-128A Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta  
Canada  
T5E 0J6

Attention: Ms. Irene Dzeryk,  
president

If you have any questions,  
please call Irene at  
403-455-3610 or Ted Duffy at  
403-456-3545.

## Nominating Committee Report

Vice President — Phyllis Bosley

Secretary — Betty Yenetchi

Treasurer — John Perry

General Council (2 lay, 1 minister)  
Sharon Reddekopp  
Lawrence Conant  
Rev. Steve Pults

Communications Support Unit (1)  
Mona Connor

Education Support Unit (1)  
Nancy McBride

Financial & Physical Resources  
Support Unit (1)  
Polly Baxter

Growth and Outreach Support Unit (1)  
Rev. Carl Yenetchi

Information Management  
Support Unit (1)  
Fred Hille

Pastoral Ministries Support Unit (1)  
—

Nominating Committee  
(1 elected, 2 nominated)  
Barb Penabaker  
Marge Runka

Swedenborg School of Religion (2)  
Rev. Dr. Horand Gurfeldt  
Rev. Jerry Poole

Committee on Admission to the Ministry  
(1 lay, 1 minister)  
Marilyn Turley  
Rev. Deborah Winter

—Sharon Reddekopp, chair,  
Nominating Committee

## Proposed Bylaw Amendments

*The following items are for the required advance notice for amendment of our bylaws. Two are very simple, and are offered in their proposed wording. The third, concerning the merger of GOSU and PMSU, is offered in substance only.*

(1) General Council recommends that Article IX of the Bylaws be amended to read as follows:

The Cabinet shall meet at least once yearly and at the call of the President as required and shall have the duties and powers set forth in Article III, Section 4, of the Constitution.

The current Bylaws require two yearly meetings, which have resulted in expenditures that could sometimes reasonably have been avoided.

(2) General Council recommends the amendment of the last sentence of Article X, Section 2, (Education Support Unit) of the Bylaws to read as follows:

The president of the Swedenborg School of Religion and the president of the Sunday School Association, or their designated representatives, shall be ex-officio members of this support unit.

This guarantees representation on the Education Support Unit of the interests of our Sunday schools.

(3) General Council anticipates recommending the merger of the Pastoral Ministries Support Unit and the Growth and Outreach Support Unit. These units have found it beneficial to hold joint meetings and have felt hampered by the formal separation of their interests. Details concerning the size and constitution of the proposed support unit and concerning the description of its responsibilities have been referred back to the present support units for further consideration. If there are to be more than three elected members, amendment of Article II, Section 4 of the Constitution will also be required.

—George F. Dole  
Committee on Amendments

## CONVENTION '96

Urbana University  
Urbana, Ohio

June 26 – June 30, 1996

"A Family Affair"

"Serve the Lord with Gladness"



# Creating Inner Sacred Spaces

\* 1996 Pre-Convention Workshop — June 23-26 — Urbana, Ohio

The Educational Support Unit is presenting a 1996 Pre-Convention workshop. This workshop will offer creativity, small group sharing, meditation, prayer and approaches for healing mind, body and spirit. Through exploring and expanding ourselves, we awaken to "SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS." (Convention theme). It will also include ways of using the workshop learning in one's personal and church life. This workshop will begin at 7:00 p.m. June 23 and conclude June 26 at noon. COST: \$75.00 per person.

## ART, MEDITATION AND PRAYER

Lorraine Sando

Facilitator LORRAINE SANDO, from the Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound, has 15 years experience as a marriage, family and individual therapist. She is also an artist and art therapist. She has led pre and post-convention conferences within the church since 1973. She is a member of the Educational Support Unit. Lorraine will use art, meditation, prayer and healing therapies to build community and sacred spaces.

## SELF-HELP JIN SHIN JYUTSU

Jean Treash

JEAN TREASH, from the San Diego church has a B.S. in nursing, public health and holistic health. She worked 15 years as a school nurse and has been involved with Jin Shin Jyutsu for the past 19 years. She will guide us in this healing art of Jin Shin Jyutsu.

## WATERCOLOR PAINTING

Manon Washburn

MANON WASHBURN, from the Los Angeles Society, worked for 50 years in motion pictures as a screen cartoonist and since retirement has been painting and teaching watercolor painting.

## BRAIN GYM

Nancy Peterson

NANCY PETERSON, from LaPorte, Indiana, is an educational consultant. She teaches people how to move *with* their challenges, dreams and goals through a process called "Brain Gym."™ She will teach simple body movements to promote mental fitness.

## THERAPEUTIC TOUCH

Sue Frid, Carolyn Buchanan

SUE FRID and CAROLYN BUCHANAN are both from the Swedenborgian Church in Kitchener, Ontario. Sue comes from a nursing background. She became involved in Therapeutic Touch while recovering from a chronic illness. Carolyn operated her own business and has worked as a consultant and facilitator in the motivational field. Together they have been practicing and teaching Therapeutic Touch since 1993. Therapeutic Touch is a consciously directed process of energy exchange. The Therapeutic Touch practitioner uses the hands as a focus to enable people to change their energy glow in the direction of health.

## MEDITATION AND CLAY

Nancy McBride

NANCY McBRIDE, from the British Columbia New Church Society, is a member of the Educational Support Unit. She has a degree in fine art and will lead us in a meditation and hand building with clay to create and explore inner sacred spaces.

## COME JOIN US IN THIS EXCITING GATHERING OF SWEDENBORGIANS EXPLORING THE ARTS, HEALING, COMMUNITY BUILDING AND SPIRITUALITY.

\*This workshop will be taking place at the same time as the Council of Ministers meeting and Ministers' Spouses meeting.

Registration forms will be available in the April and May issues of *The Messenger*.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL LORRAINE SANDO AT (206) 242-7354.

## REGISTRATION

### Pre-Convention Workshop — "Creating Inner Sacred Spaces"

June 23, 7:00 P.M. to June 26, 12:00 P.M. — Urbana University, Urbana, Ohio

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, PROVINCE: \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

All workshop fees to be paid in full by June 1, 1996.

Accommodations: (Please check one)

- ☐ Dorm room (single bed, no A/C) \$10. per person per day.  
☐ Suite room (single or double) \$30. per day.

(Please see Convention Registration for more accommodation details.)

Special Needs: (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Registration: \$75.00 per person  
(by May 1)  
\$85.00 per person  
(after May 1)

Board:  
(3 meals a day, refreshments, etc.)  
\$20. per person per day  
Board for children 5 & under — FREE

Please mail this form with your check, made out  
to THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH to:

Central Office  
The Swedenborgian Church  
48 Sargent Street  
Newton, MA 02158

— CHILD CARE AVAILABLE —

# Why We Garden

Tony Dunn

During the Thanksgiving Retreat we started an organic heritage vegetable garden here at Manzanita Village. The garden currently consists of three vegetable beds planted with broccoli, garlic, onions, and bok choy. Six more beds and a greenhouse are planned. It is a modest beginning, but by next summer the garden will be full of life.

Everyone who sees the garden thinks that it is wonderful, but no one asks *why* we are doing it. Gardening is fun, of course, and the food we grow tastes better than anything you can buy in the store. But there are deeper reasons why a garden is central to the work of Manzanita Village.

When we garden, we actively participate in a great and enduring relationship—the triangle of caring for the health of *ourselves*, the *Earth* and the *crops* that we grow and eat. By growing our own food we disengage ourselves from the petrochemical agriculture industry which “heedlessly endangers the lives, well-being and diversity of species, environments and cultures” by replacing thousands of years of accumulated agricultural wisdom, crop diversity, and intimacy with the earth with diesel tractors, toxic chemicals, soil erosion, short-term profit and genetic uniformity.

By growing our own food, we *reengage* ourselves in a 10,000-year-old human tradition, one that we are on the verge of losing altogether. For the past 400 generations, our ancestors have experienced firsthand their relationships with their food and the Earth. It is only in the last four or five generations—since the encroachment of the industrial revolution into agriculture—that we, as a society, have begun to lose those

relationships. Today, less than 1% of the population is involved in the production of all the food we consume—and we call it progress. Ask a child where tomatoes come from, and she may respond, “From the store.”

In this sense, growing our own food is no small act, but instead a very serious part of our practice of reconnecting to who we really are, where we really are and how we really are. How can we be *who* we really are if we are not eating food from *where* we really are? Our disconnection from ourselves is reflected in our disconnection from our food and from our land. Yet despite this sense of disconnection, we remain part of the inescapable inter-connectedness of all life. If we spray poison on the earth, it poisons our food which in turn poisons us. Poisoned in mind, body and spirit, we find it normal and acceptable to poison the earth.

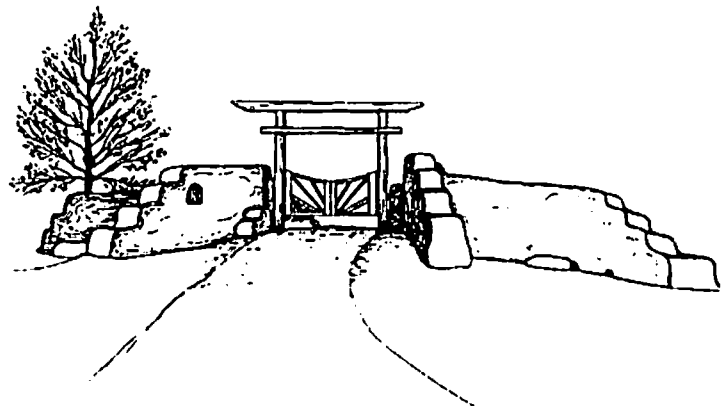
Our garden is one step toward breaking the chain of disconnection and rebuilding our links with our food, our land and ourselves. Our garden is *organic* (free of pesticides and chemical fertilizers)

because we realize that to be nourished and to live we must nourish the soil with life. We must consider that this garden may last a hundred years, and care for its health (and the health of those who may till it after us) accordingly. Our garden is a *heritage* garden (growing only old heirloom, noncommercial crop varieties) because we know that agri-business and its use of sterile hybrid varieties is wiping out our genetic crop heritage at a pace that makes the destruction of the rain forest look like a slow waltz. *In just the past three years, 20% of all varieties of vegetables available in the U.S. have become extinct.* To pass on our heritage to future generations, we accept the responsibility of preserving something to pass on.

To be sustained by the earth we must act sustainably, and we recognize that in nourishing the soil and preserving our crops, we can only nourish and preserve ourselves.

*Tony Dunn has been an organic gardener and plant-ecologist involved in heritage gardens since 1979. He is a resident at Manzanita Village, a Buddhist retreat and community center at Warner Springs in the hills of San Diego County, California.*

Reprinted with author's permission from *Ordinary Mind* newsletter, Winter-Spring 1996.



## Swedenborg Scientific Association Essay Contest

### PURPOSE:

- To encourage use of Swedenborg's works in a relevant and substantial way on an issue of general academic interest, and
- To recognize and thereby promote quality scholarship among full-time undergraduate and graduate students.

### AWARDS: One each for undergraduate and graduate entries.

- \$100 certificate to be presented at the annual meeting of the SSA, toward the purchase of SSA publications, and
- \$100 cash.
- Consideration of the prize essay for publication in *The New Philosophy*. Qualified essays will be subject to the usual review and editorial procedures. If the essay is published, the author will, in addition, receive an honorarium of \$100 cash.

### ESSAY:

- Explore some aspect of Swedenborg's work, as found in any of his scientific, philosophical and theological writings, and relate it to modern science or philosophy.

### LENGTH:

- Not less than 2000 and not more than 4000 words (in English).

### DEADLINE:

- Entries submitted by **January 1, 1997** for 1997 contest. (Marked graduate or undergraduate.)

### WHERE:

- SSA Award Essay, c/o E.E. Sandstrom, P.O. Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009 USA.

### GENERAL:

- All entries will be judged by a committee of SSA board members and the editor of *The New Philosophy*. All decisions of this committee are final and not subject to review. No author may win the prize more than once in each category.

Swedenborg Scientific Association  
Box 757 • Bryn Athyn, PA 19009  
Phone: 215-947-4200 Fax: 215-938-1056

## Foundation News

(continued from back page)

### Church Discounts

Church organizations may purchase titles from the Foundation on the same basis as a bookstore. These books may be for resale, given as gifts, used as a part of a church's school program, or placed in the church library. The discount schedule is:

1-4 copies	20 percent
5-25 copies	40 percent
26-99 copies	42 percent

For quantities of 100 or more, contact Joanna Hill at the Foundation offices. Book titles may be combined for the best discount. A maximum discount of 20 percent is available on Standard Edition titles.

This discount policy on purchases

should not be confused with the Regional Associates program. This program provides for the free distribution of selected titles to new readers of Swedenborg. For further information or to place an order, call 1-800-355-3222.

### Story of Swedenborg in Second Printing

The fourth and latest edition (1992) of *The Story of Swedenborg and the Swedenborgian Church*, published by the Communications Support Unit and edited by Jim Lawrence, has been reprinted. The 20-page pamphlet is available free from the Central Office, but recipients will be billed for postage. Churches and ministers may ask for as many copies as they need. Individuals may have up to 25 copies per order.

## Random Acts of Kindness Institutionalized

The practice of Random Acts of Kindness, some readers may recall, was mentioned in the September 1992 *Messenger* in my editorial, "Guerillas of Goodness." It was one of those positive, joyful "underground" movements that appeared to be spreading informally throughout the country; nobody seemed to know quite where or when it started, or with whom, but it was wonderfully contagious.

Now I've learned that Conari Press, a publishing house in Berkeley, California, initiated a "Random Acts of Kindness" week last year (February 12-18), in honor of its book series, *Random Acts of Kindness*. I called the publisher and was told there are four books—two of them consist of stories of Random Acts of Kindness; the third is on the practice of kindness, and the fourth is a children's book.

And that's not all—there is a Random Acts of Kindness Foundation in Fairfax, California. The goal of the designated week is "to heighten our awareness that making the world a better place begins with each of us reaching into our hearts every day and showing kindness for others." In a separate article, I read that Unity School of Christianity joined the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation as a major player in the special week, and Unity churches throughout the country were presumably uncovering innovative ways to bring the kindness message to the community. (One came up with the idea of sponsoring a Teddy Bear campaign. Congregants would bring teddy bears to the church in January; bears would be kept in the church to be loved by the congregants, then given to the police department on February 16 so that officers could have them in squad cars to give to children traumatized by accidents). Other denominations may be working with the Foundation as well. More details will be reported next month.

—P. W. L.

## In Memoriam

Marian J. Kirven

February 1, 1928-January 19, 1996

Marian Justine Heinrich was born in Barrington, Illinois, the first child of John F. and Virginia (Herren) Heinrich, and grew up in and near Chicago.

She married Robert Hoover Kirven on December 26, 1947, and lived with him in St. Louis, Missouri, where they bought their first home; Quincy, Illinois, where Diana was born March 28, 1950; Davenport, Iowa, where Margaret was born March 28, 1952; again in St. Louis; and for thirty-four years at nine addresses in and around Boston, Massachusetts; in Phoenix, and finally at Glencroft in Glendale, Arizona.

She received her Twelfth Grade Certificate from the Combined High School and College Program of the University of Chicago ('46), a diploma from Perry Normal School ('61), Bachelor of Science in Education from Tufts University ('63), diploma from Swedenborg School of Religion ('68), Master of Arts from Andover Newton Theological School ('68). She studied Library Science at Simmons College and Northeastern University, and was graduated from the three-year course in fashion design at the School of Fashion Design in Boston ('77).

Marian enjoyed travel with her family. Visiting church conventions and camps, friends, her parents and her brother, she traveled through the forty-eight contiguous states and four Canadian provinces. A sea voyage, and a visit to Hawaii, remained unfulfilled desires.

Providing a comfortable and nurturing home for her family was a priority and pleasure, serving as a "hobby" between part-time jobs and schools. She played cello during high school, and had a life-long love of music. She was dancing to TV music less than three weeks before she died.

While her girls were growing up, she made many of their clothes and her own; and after completing her academic education, she studied fashion design, pattern-making, and tailoring. Sewing remained her characteristic hobby for as long as she was able to control her fingers.

She worked for the telephone company in St. Louis and Quincy before raising her family, and was the librarian of the Swedenborg School of Religion for twenty years.

Her love of living beings, especially little ones (some winters she fed the field mice seeking shelter in our basement) also was characteristic of her, as was her joy in laughing and amusing others with a sense of humor by turns ironic, whimsical, and affectionate.

She navigated her long decline into helplessness with dignity and grace, and with continuing care for her family. She is survived by her father, her husband, two daughters, five grandchildren, her brother and his wife, and their four children and five grandchildren.

Robert H. Kirven  
February 18, 1996  
Glendale, Arizona

## Passages

### Confirmation

Hamilton and Seligman—Christopher Hamilton and Linda Seligman were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church January 28, 1996, at the New York New Church, the Rev. Robert McCluskey officiating.

### Death

Allan—Jean Allan, long-time member of the Connecticut Association, entered the spiritual world September 3, 1995. Ms. Allan was living in a retirement home in Pennsylvania and had been inactive for many years.

### Church Family News

Over 150 friends and relatives from Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts gathered in Fryeburg, Maine, to honor Calvin and Sally Harnden on December 2, 1995, in celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary. Sally Harnden has been volunteer secretary for the Swedenborgian Church in Fryeburg for many years.

## A Lucky Man

George Avery

Lou Gehrig stood at home plate in Yankee Stadium and declared that he felt like the luckiest man on the face of the earth. This young, strong, super athlete faced his impending death from a disease which robbed him of his athletic prowess, his strength and his endurance; yet he felt like the luckiest man on earth. Mr. Gehrig died shortly after his speech at the age of thirty-seven. I have now come to understand how he perceived his fate.

Nathan, my twenty-one-year-old son, died in a car accident last September. He was brilliant and strong, yet perplexed by the world in which he was trying to find his place. Nathan read extensively, played chess, and loved baseball. Nathan loved children and spent many hours at play with his little brother. His love for nature found him in the forests near Bloomington, Indiana as often as possible. At the time of his accident, he was working in carpentry to save money for either going back to school or a possible trip out west. He, like most people his age, had unresolved issues. I choose to focus on his ability to live life fully with exuberance and naiveté.

I do not understand why my son died. I can only accept what has happened as part of God's plan for him. I do miss him with all my heart. My tears have not stopped; however, I choose to focus on how grateful I am that Nathan was and is

my son. His being will surround me like a hug from heaven throughout the rest of my earthly life.

At Nathan's funeral, I was moved to let everyone there know how blessed I felt, despite this overwhelming loss. I repeated Gehrig's message of gratefulness often. The capacity to reach inside one's soul for the strength to celebrate life in times of death may be the lesson to be learned. Mr. Gehrig was overcome with gratitude for his wonderful life even though his death was imminent. As I was greeting everyone at the funeral home, I was attempting to show my gratitude for Nathan. I will always be grateful for Nathan, for my life, for having Nathan's spirit with me now, and for all of God's abundant blessings. I realize that I am truly 'the luckiest man on the face of the earth.'

George Avery is a member of the LaPorte New Church (Swedenborgian) in LaPorte, Indiana (See "Passages," December 1995 Messenger).

### Important Church Calendar Dates

April 20	Investment Committee - Temenos
April 21	Augmentation Fund Committee - Temenos
April 22-23	Executive Committee of General Council - Temenos
April 25	COMSU - Temenos
April 28-30	East Coast Peer Supervision - Blairhaven
May 20-21	Retirement Committee - Newton, MA
June 26-30	Convention 1996 - Urbana, Ohio
August 18-21	Cabinet - Fryeburg
August 23-24	PMSU/AFC - Fryeburg

Emanuel Swedenborg was born January 29, 1688, in Stockholm, Sweden. Although he never intended a church denomination to be founded or named after him, a society was formed in London 15 years after his death. This 1787 organization eventually spawned the present General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches. As a result of Swedenborg's own spiritual questionings and insights, we as a church today exist to encourage that same spirit of inquiry and personal growth, to respect differences in views, and to accept others who may have different traditions. Swedenborg shared in his theological writings a view of God as infinitely loving and at the very center of our beings, a view of life as a spiritual birthing as we participate in our own creation, and a view of Scripture as a story of inner-life stages as we learn and grow. Swedenborg would conclude, "All religion relates to life, and the life of religion is to do good." He also felt that the sincerest form of worship is a useful life.

# Swedenborg Foundation News

## Redesigned Standard Edition Project Receives Major Grants

In January of 1995, the Swedenborg Foundation set a goal of raising \$70,000 in special gifts during the year to ensure continued printing of the Standard Edition\* in the new, redesigned format. Several volumes were out of stock and needed to be printed as soon as possible. Two gifts have significantly moved their fundraising efforts toward this goal. The Glencairn Foundation awarded \$30,000 and the Lydia S. Rotch Legacy, \$8,500, to this project. Other gifts were received from the Boston church, the Connecticut Association, and several individuals. The total received for the redesigned Standard Edition project through the end of 1995 was \$68,350.

Under the careful direction of Dr. William R. Woofenden, the redesigned Standard Edition project continues to make steady progress. Complete and in the warehouse are *Apocalypse Explained 3*, *Apocalypse Explained 5*, *Arcana Coelestia 8*, *Arcana Coelestia 10*, *Apocalypse Explained 4*, *Heaven and Hell*, *Divine Providence*, *Divine Love and Wisdom*. *Posthumous Theological Works 1 and 2*, and *Miscellaneous Theological Works* are in the preparation stage at this writing. The board hopes to complete all 30 volumes in the new format by 1999.

\*Thirty volumes of detailed biblical analysis and spiritual insights by Emanuel Swedenborg.

## National Book Distribution Agreement Signed with SCB

For many years the Foundation has struggled with the problem of how to get its books into retail bookstores. As of June 1, 1995, a major step toward this goal has been taken through a distribution agreement with SCB Distributors based in Gardena, California. SCB represents new and backlist titles of more than thirty independent publishers to the book trade. With twenty-two sales representatives across the country, SCB sells directly to bookstores nationwide. Last May, Executive Director David Eller and Marketing Manager Joanna Hill attended the SCB spring sales conference in New York for sales reps and presented six new Foundation titles: *Light in My Darkness*, *Angels in Action*, *Swedenborg and Esoteric Islam*, *Gold from Aspirin*, *Charity*, and *Testimony to the Invisible*.

The arrangement with SCB provides the Foundation with national exposure and a system for national distribution. Bookstores will be able to hear about new publications from sales reps, examine sample copies, and order directly from SCB's warehouse.

Estelle Giamboi, the Foundation's customer service representative, will still take and process orders from members and friends, libraries, churches, and church bookrooms. However, you might wish to take a current foundation catalog to your favorite bookstore and show its staff the featured books. The inside back cover provides ordering information through SBC and all major wholesalers. Offering quality publications to the book trade is the beginning of an exciting new era for the Swedenborg Foundation.

(Continued on page 62)

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