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# THE MESSENGER

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## Swedenborg as a Mystic

Wilma Wake

In last months' article, "What is Mysticism?", George Dole suggested that whether or not we apply the term "mystic" to Swedenborg depends largely on how we define it. He suggested a definition of mysticism as "the direct experience of the spiritual," and a mystic as one for whom such experience is both *recurrent* and *meaningful*.

In this second article of our series, I would like to look further at the question of whether or not it is appropriate to consider Swedenborg a mystic.

Wilson Van Dusen, a clinical psychologist who has worked extensively at combining psychology and religion, has written a great deal about mysticism in general and Swedenborg's mysticism in particular. His 1988 article, "A Mystic Looks at Swedenborg," tackles the question of whether or not Swedenborg was a mystic. Van Dusen feels there has been confusion among Swedenborgians about this question because there are two definitions of mysticism." One, which comes from the experiences of mystics, is union with the Divine. The other, which he says comes from outside the mystical experience, sees mysticism as "what is occult, mysterious, unclear, or involved with spirits."<sup>1</sup>

The latter definition does NOT apply to Swedenborg. And we Swedenborgians have been concerned throughout our church history that our theologian would be seen as advocating frivolous contact with spirits or exploring occult powers for personal gain or gratification. None of this was part of Swedenborg's mysticism.

He did, in fact, have communication

with Spirits and received numerous psychic experiences which have been well-documented. But these were not his mysticism. What made Swedenborg a mystic was his ongoing, recurrent, and meaningful encounters with the Divine.

This mystical experience of the Divine is generally considered to have begun right after Easter in 1744 when he had a direct encounter with Christ. He wrote in his *Journal of Dreams*:

It was a countenance of a holy mien, and all was such that it cannot be expressed, and also smiling, so that I believe that His countenance was such while he lived in the world. He spoke to me and asked if I had a bill of health. I answered, 'Lord, Thou knowest better than I.' He said, 'well, then do.' This I found in my mind to signify 'Love me truly,' or 'Do what Thou has promised.'

Another profound encounter faced him approximately a year later where, as he described to friends, he "had the first of his open and conscious experiences of the spiritual world and conversations with its inhabitants."<sup>2</sup> At this time, the Lord appeared to him and gave him his life assignment: to explain the spiritual meaning of scripture.

Swedenborg himself told us how he viewed the mystical. He said in the

*Arcana*: "I cannot but open up to those things of the Word that are called mystical, that is, its interior things, which are the spiritual and celestial things of the Lord's kingdom." [*Arcana Coelestia*, 4923]. He also wrote: "The mystical things which some seek in the Word, are nothing else than the spiritual and celestial senses." [*Sacred Scripture*, 21].

So to Swedenborg, the mystical involved the spiritual and celestial levels. It meant developing an internal sense of the Word. Van Dusen is very clear that this internal sense to Swedenborg was

not abstract knowledge; it was an involvement with life that led to uses and charity. Swedenborg emphasized this in *Heaven and Hell* when he said that people who renounce the world to live by the spirit build up a mournful life for themselves. Heavenly joy comes from living a life of political and civic involvement. [*Heaven and Hell*, 528].

According to mystical scholar Evelyn Underhill, mysticism is a way of living life that is active and practical. She says that one of the features of Western mysticism is that the mystical experiences do not lead one into a passive life, but rather an active life in the world.<sup>4</sup>

So, in defining mysticism as spiritual experience of the

Divine—as opposed to frivolously seeking psychic powers—we can see Swedenborg as a mystic. And defining mysticism as something that must be lived out in an active community involvement—as opposed to withdraw-

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# Awakening to Santa Claus

Guest Editorial by Ken Turley

Most of us, at some point in our lives, truly believed in the existence of Santa Claus. We knew that he lived at the North Pole with his wife, Mrs. Claus, and all those elves who spend each year making the toys. We wrote letters to him and knew he read each and every one. We knew he kept watch over the world and kept track of how each one of us behaved, and that he wrote it all down in a very big book. And knowing this would keep us on our best behavior for almost the entire month of December. We knew he traveled in a sleigh pulled by flying reindeer. And while we didn't exactly know how, we knew he came down the chimney. But we did know *exactly* what he looked like with his red suit lined with white fur, his wide belt and black shiny boots. All we had to do was close our eyes and we could see his merry eyes twinkling behind wire-rim spectacles, his little round nose and rosy cheeks barely visible above that wonderful flowing white beard and moustache, his pipe clenched between his teeth and his red stocking cap with the ball at the end. He was the essence of happiness; nothing at all like the hard bodies, chiseled cheeks and tough talk of today's admired heroes, but somehow that just didn't matter, we loved him completely. We loved him for who he was and what he meant to us.

It may have been for a very short time, but most of us, at some point, truly believed. But then there came the time...it may have come suddenly when we recognized the Santa on whose lap we were sitting as someone we knew. Or when we discovered a huge pile of presents in the back of the closet, the tags all signed "from Santa." It may have come as a steadily creeping realization, as, slowly, suspicions grew about flying reindeer, about how long it would actually take to fly around the entire world and visit every single house, or about how he got down that chimney anyway, especially when there was a good hot fire going! And what about the houses that didn't have chimneys?

One way or another, the time came when we could no longer believe in Santa.

Do you remember the moment at which the realization hit you? Perhaps you experienced a period of grief or even denial, maybe a feeling of emptiness or even betrayal. Perhaps this was followed by a time of feeling foolish and then that inevitable sense of cynical superiority as you snickered at the younger children who didn't yet know.

Some people, from this, can do no more than move into the superficial and the obligatory, fulfilling the annual chores of stringing lights and endless buying of presents. They go through the rituals, they do all the "right things" but somehow it is to fulfill what is supposed to be done, doing what everybody does come Christmas, and they never quite seem to catch the "spirit" of the season. They no longer believe in Santa and so, while they celebrate Christmas, the meaning is sought in the material experience.

But for others, there comes a time when belief is transformed. Perhaps they get the chance to play Santa and watch the faces of the children as they climb onto their lap with their lists. Perhaps there comes a time when they are the ones to help create the magic for a little one, or when they are able to give to someone in a way that brings, real, shared joy. For some there comes a time when the belief in the physical Santa is replaced, or should I say renewed, with a true knowing of the joy of giving. In this lies the deep understanding of who Santa Claus really is. With this, everything about the Christmas season takes on a deeper meaning and becomes symbol for all that is good and true, and yes, Holy, about the season, and all of life. The understanding of Santa Claus as a spiritual state of being, and, oh yes, very, very real, brings about a whole new understanding of life. It brings a renewed belief in life's goodness and the power of love to bring warmth and light to the darkest winter night. It is the process of transforming and renewing



belief in the physical to a deeper, more spiritual level of understanding and love. It is not just believing in, it is becoming one with Santa Claus.

Most of us, at some point in our lives, truly believed in the existence of God....

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# Connections Between Reiki Healing and Swedenborgian Theology

Mona Conner

## Magic Words

*In the very earlies time....  
...all spoke the same language.  
That was the time when  
words were like magic.*

*The human mind had mysterious  
powers.*

*A word spoken by chance might have  
strange consequences.*

*It would suddenly come alive  
and what people wanted to  
happen could happen—  
all you had to do was say it.*

*Nobody could explain this:  
That's the way it was.*

—translated from the Eskimo (from  
"Poetry in Motion," a program of  
poetry displayed in New York City  
subway cars)

## Forgotten Truths

In discussing the period of the  
Ancient Church, Swedenborg tells us:  
"The truths possessed by the ancients  
are at this day entirely forgotten:  
...scarcely anyone knows that they ever  
existed, and that they could be other  
than those that are taught at this day;  
but they were quite different. They had  
representatives and significatives of the  
Celestial and spiritual things of the  
Lord's Kingdom; and so of the Lord  
Himself. And those that understood  
such representatives and significatives  
were called wise."<sup>1</sup>

I'd like to describe a healing method  
based on these things that represent and  
signify heaven, and share with you why  
I feel this kind of healing is bringing  
back the power of the ancient church to us.

## Hands-on Healing

There is an ancient Tibetan method  
of "hands-on" healing called Reiki,  
rediscovered in the 19th century by a  
Japanese Christian minister in ancient

writings about 2500  
years old. Likely, Reiki  
is much older than this.  
Healing methods in  
various forms have  
always existed which  
involve some kind of  
energy transfer.<sup>2</sup> We  
know that there are  
people in the world  
today who are born with  
the ability to heal with  
their hands, and some-  
times we have called this  
'faith healing,' 'the  
healing touch,' or 'the  
laying-on-of-hands.' As a  
non-invasive method of  
providing healing energy  
on the spiritual and mental, as well as  
physical levels, Reiki may be more  
appropriately described as a form of  
laying-on-of-hands than a method of  
bodywork such as massage.

I began thinking about the connec-  
tions between Reiki healing and Sweden-  
borgian thought as soon as I became  
acquainted with it. I also noticed the  
number of people at my church in New  
York who gravitated to Reiki enough to  
become healers themselves. Five people  
have become healers, and two more  
women who regularly participate in our  
church's discussion group became  
interested in the church through a Reiki  
healing evening we held. They are Reiki  
healers also. Others from our church  
have received Reiki treatments and felt  
its benefit.

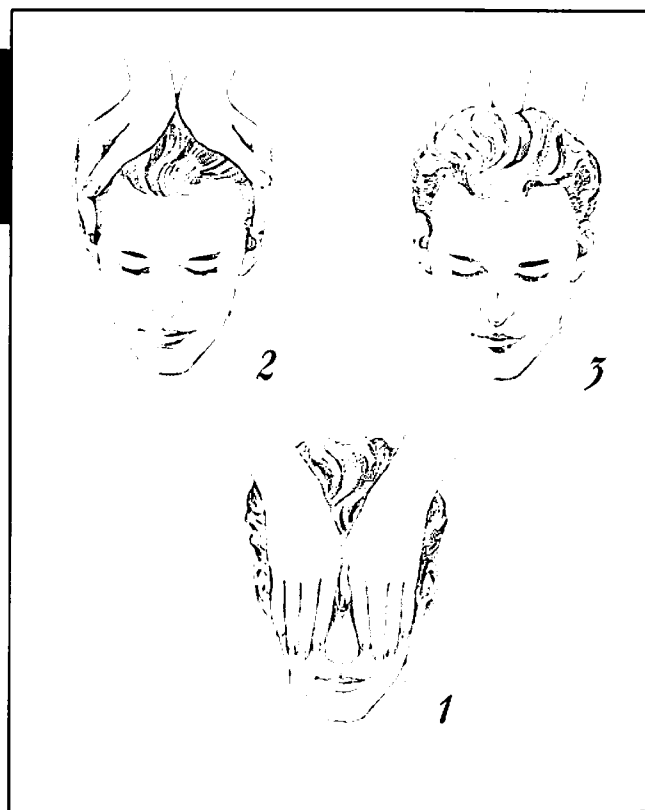
The word REIKI means "universal life  
force energy":

REI (pronounced "RAY") means  
"UNIVERSAL."

KI (pronounced "KEY") means "LIFE  
FORCE ENERGY."

## Reiki Knowledge Worldwide

Knowledge of the Reiki form of  
healing has been found with some  
variation all over the world. The



concept of "KI" or life force energy may  
correspond to:

Chi – Chinese  
Prana – Hindu  
Ka – Egyptian  
Baraka – Sufi  
Pneuma – Greek  
Wakan – Sioux  
Hasina – Madagascar  
Mana – Kahuna  
Jesod – Jewish Kabbalists (or Cabalises)  
The power of European kings to heal  
by touching  
Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit – Christians<sup>3</sup>

It is possible that somewhere toward  
the end of the time of the Most Ancient  
Church we all knew how to give  
ourselves Reiki. It probably didn't have  
a name and felt instinctively like the  
right thing to do. In the very begin-  
ning, because humans would have been  
in such a continuous state of connection  
with Heaven, little healing may have  
been needed.

## Inner Significance Gradually Forgotten

To pinpoint when things began to  
change I would single out the period of  
Enoch from the end of the Most

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## Connections Between Reiki Healing and Swedenborgian Theology

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Ancient Church. "And Enoch walked with God; and he was no more, for God took him." Genesis 5:24.

When Enoch walked with God, what had previously been part of human perception became preserved as doctrine. We needed "rules" to preserve what was good.<sup>4</sup>

With the beginning of the Ancient Church, our ability to connect with Heaven was accessed more formally, through rituals shrouded in mystery, well-guarded and preserved. We developed cryptic symbols and ceremonies which were available in their entirety only to a few spiritual leaders in each community, who in turn passed them on to a chosen few by word of mouth.<sup>5</sup>

Eventually we even began to forget the inner significance of our symbols and ceremonies, and Swedenborg tells us that,

"...then this knowledge began to perish, so that they did not know that such things were signified, and began to regard (worldly) things as holy, and to worship them with no thought of their significance, the same things were then made representative. Thus arose the Representative Church..."<sup>6</sup>

### Ancient Symbols

The Second Level of Reiki healing employs three ancient symbols in representative form. It is probably just prior to, and during the beginning of the Representative Church era of the Ancient Church that what is now known as Reiki may have come down to us in its present form, with those three ancient symbols, together with a fourth Master Level symbol; their power to heal remaining intact because of the preserving nature of representation, as described so well by Swedenborg.

One of the most interesting things I discovered when I took the Reiki course was finding out that the hand positions used are supposed to be similar to those used by Jesus, and also Buddha, for healing.

In the 1820s, Dr. Mikao Usui, the Japanese Christian minister I mentioned, was asked by his seminary students about the healing methods used by Jesus. Unable to answer the stu-

dents' question, Dr. Usui set out on a search, finally discovering an answer in a Zen monastery, after reading Sanskrit formulas and symbols in old Tibetan Buddhist sutras.<sup>7</sup>

### Hand Positions

It's exciting to know that the hand positions used to treat the human head with Reiki fit exactly over the specific areas where Swedenborg describes that the Lord and the angels flow into a person:

"The inflow of the Lord Himself into man is into his forehead, and from there into the whole face, since the forehead

*When we pray in the right way, we ask for the highest good to come about for ourselves, for others, or in any given situation.*

corresponds to love, and the face corresponds to all the more inward elements of the person (hand position #1). The inflow of the spiritual angels into man is into his head all the way across the pate (or crown) and the temples, the whole area under which the cerebrum lies, since this part of the head corresponds to intelligence (hand position #2). But the inflow of the celestial angels is into the part of the head under which the cerebellum lies, called the occiput, from the ears around to the nape of the neck, for this area corresponds to wisdom (hand position #3). All the speech of angels with man comes by these paths into his thoughts."<sup>8</sup>

What can a Reiki treatment do for you? Reiki treats simultaneously, on all levels: mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual—it is wholistic. Reiki provides deep relaxation, but also energizes and revitalizes. It adjusts itself according to the needs of the recipient. The heat of Reiki energy cannot be measured with a thermometer. It feels like physical heat, but it is not. Reiki helps the body remember how to heal itself, and

restores inner balance and equilibrium. It cleanses the body of toxins or poisons. It provides a sense of inner peace and a feeling of security, like "Being enclosed in a fine sheath of energy." Reiki therapy may cause previous illnesses to reappear and run a shortened course, a response also seen in homeopathy. This pattern can also be seen in emotional healing with Reiki. It works on animals and plants, and Level II Reiki can enhance the benefits of foods, and medicines.<sup>9</sup>

### Outside Time and Space

Level II Reiki incorporates the use of three ancient symbols, as previously mentioned. These are meant to be kept esoteric for their continued preservation, but they are universal images that you would certainly recognize throughout the world history of art. The symbols are focused on in the mind of the healer for the first few minutes of a treatment. Beyond this it does work in a similar manner to Level I, in a stronger way.

There are other wonderful aspects to Reiki Level II. We know, for instance, from Swedenborg's description of the spiritual world, that it lies outside time and space. Accordingly, Reiki Level II healing can be given to someone who is not physically present with you—in another room, another country, in the past, present, or future. This is called a "sending" or "absentee treatment."

Reiki II can be used to treat mental or emotional problems in a more specific way than Reiki Level I. Level II can also be employed to help a situation, relations between people, or even to a world situation that is troubling.

Giving and receiving Reiki provides consistent opportunities for the practical application of New Church theology:

**Use:** Through self-treatment and being a good neighbor to ourselves we increase our ability to be useful in all areas of our life and activity. Through treating others we serve as a useful vessel or channel for facilitating the healing journey of others.

**Free Will:** We know that freedom is a central aspect of Swedenborgian thought. One of the ethics of Reiki is that the person must ask to be healed on

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some level—either verbally or on the soul level. We are ultimately responsible for our own healing journey, and also for how far we want to travel on the road to regeneration.

### **The Lord Does the Healing**

Reiki energy goes where it is needed within a person. We are not extending personal energy to the healee, but universal life-force energy; divine love and wisdom. Another ethic of Reiki is that there must be an exchange of energy for service. This exchange keeps the ultimate credit for healing in the Lord's hands. The human playing field remains even. We are only the vessel, and as we often say in Swedenborgian thought, "acting as if of ourselves, knowing it all comes from the Lord."

### **Asking for the Highest Good**

When we pray in the right way, we ask for the highest good to come about for ourselves, for others, or in any given situation. When Reiki Level II is applied, it is done in the context of asking for the highest good for the person or situation. The exercise of praying for and directing healing toward the highest good and then looking behind us, and seeing divine providence in its hindsight has a way of highlighting or shining a flashlight in a dark place. We begin to appreciate and trust more that divine providence really is the best thing for us.

Along with asking for the highest good, when we apply Reiki to a difficult situation such as a troubled relationship or conflict between individuals or groups, Reiki will instruct, clarify, inform, and bring resolution and perspective to all involved. The situation and the people are blanketed with a renewal of charity, and a shift takes place. We are assisted in going into a discussion or negotiation in this context with more equilibrium, and a more positive feeling toward the neighbor, even when resolution may not be possible. (Remember, the highest good may be a different outcome than we can picture from our limited perspective).

The concept of spirit and energy outside time and space is made more real to us as we see by the concrete example

of Reiki healing that this is so. As previously mentioned, Reiki II addresses "state" versus "space/time." This healing can be sent over a distance, and into the past, present, and future. The ramifications and potential of this are quite vast, and Reiki II provides many creative opportunities for healing.

### **Healing Our Inherited Evils**

One practical way we can address our "hereditary evils" is by sending Reiki II to the past, to heal ourselves as children, our family, even our ancestors. This will not change or interfere with history or divine providence. It will, however, have an important positive impact upon the present, as well as enhancing our understanding of our past, creating increased empathy with ourselves and our ancestors.

### **Opportunity to Become Acquainted with the Spirit Within the Person**

In *Heaven and Hell* we are reminded that "the spirit is the actual person."

*If we expect to find our way, we will have to rely on our intuition more than we have in a long time.*

*Intuition is the bridge between love and wisdom.*

One of the wonderful things about giving a Reiki healing is the opportunity, as a healer, to become acquainted with the spirit within the person. We may discover it differs from the appearance and personality of the person as we see them in the outer world. Certainly, there are aspects of spirit which remain private between the Lord and the individual, yet we are permitted a glimpse of the spirit. Great spirits can come in some pretty humble or even eccentric disguises.

During one of my first Reiki II sendings to a person after becoming a healer, I found myself humming a tune by the Beatles which, when I recalled the lyrics, described this 'glimpse' well, and with the humor that often accompanies angelic influx:

### **I'm Looking Through You**

"I'm looking through you.  
Where did you go?  
I'm looking through you.  
What did I know?  
There is a difference no one can name  
I'm looking through you  
You're not the same....!"<sup>10</sup>

### **Greater Awareness of the Subtle but Powerful Daily Work of the Spiritual Realm, and the Desire of Scores of Angels to Help Us**

When we employ spiritual practices such as Reiki, the help of the Lord through the angels comes into our foreground, and we begin to notice it more often. We also increase and develop our intuition the more we give and receive Reiki.

One of my experiences with this happened in my kitchen. I was preparing a tea with herbs, as I had been every few days all summer, in a glass pitcher. As the water was heating and I was washing the pitcher at my sink, a thought passed through my mind for the first time: 'I wonder if the water could be too hot for this pitcher?' Having this thought caused me to turn the pitcher in a different position on the counter so that handle and spout faced away from me, and also to stand back before pouring the boiling water in it. As soon as the pitcher was filled, it exploded, sending shards of glass all over the room. Had the pitcher been in its previous position, I would have been hit by the glass, as would my Grandmother's cookie jar (a very sentimental possession). Had I listened to the thought passing through my mind at the sink, the pitcher would not have exploded in the first place.

### **The Importance of Developing Our Intuition, and of Healing at the Intuitive Level**

Not only are we focused on knowledge as Swedenborgians; we are also living in the Information Age. We have too much information to have the time to access it all. So far there is no adequate map of the information highway. If we expect to find our way, we will have to rely on our intuition more than we have in a long time. Intuition is the bridge between love and

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# Between Memories and Dreams

Raymond Wong

There is a place called Mansions Hotel on Sacramento Street between Laguna and Buchanan Streets. It is a charming and unique hotel. When they come to San Francisco, many celebrities, such as Barbra Streisand, choose to stay in the Mansions Hotel instead of St. Francis or the Fairmont. Thirty some years ago, it was a boarding house and I lived there for three years. I had a room and shared the kitchen and the bathroom with other tenants. I remember when I was courting a beautiful young lady, I invited her to see the place. I made sure my room was clean and orderly—some of you probably know what a bachelor's living quarters are like. I even covered the light bulbs with light blue cellophane paper to add a romantic atmosphere to the room. More than three decades have since passed. About two months ago, again I invited that lady, who is now my wife, and our son to my old home, now a hotel, and we had dinner there. I wanted to relive a page of memory, a moment of the past. But the place has been totally redecorated; the whole interior changed. There is no trace of the room that was once mine—it belonged to yesterday: it exists only in reminiscence, like the years of my childhood I spent in Peking.

I was born in Honolulu, Hawaii; my mother died when I was a baby. My father went back to China and remarried. I lived with my aunt in Madison, Wisconsin. When I was seven years old, father sent for me. I was taken to China and lived with dad, my stepmother, and my half-sister for three years in Peking; now it is called Beijing. I remember the house where we lived, the narrow alleyway, the many unforgettable moments. Two years ago, my wife and I joined a group of other tourists and visited China. During our brief stay in Beijing, I went back to the place where I used to live when I was a little boy. But everything is changed; the house is gone, in its place is now a high-rise building; even the name of the alleyway has been changed. For a few minutes, I just stood

there, drifting back in time to those fleeting moments of my childhood days.

It is tempting to want to live in our memories and to drift in our dreams and imagination.

Once I dreamed I was floating in space, surrounded by millions of stars. There was no life anywhere but solitude

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*Then suddenly,  
the creature  
changed into a  
human form, and  
it was myself. He  
said, "I am you.  
You cannot run  
away from  
yourself."*

---

and emptiness. I heard a voice from somewhere; it told me that I was free—free from the need of any material things, free from hunger, free from disease, free from all human endeavors, free from wars; the whole universe was mine to roam, and I would live forever. But I longed for Mother Earth which I call home; I longed for the touch, the feel, the laughter, the tears of my fellow beings. I begged the master of the voice to return me to earth. He granted me my wish.

Another night, I dreamed that I encountered a strange little creature, like a little dinosaur. It crawled toward me and grew bigger. I was scared. I grabbed it by the throat and tried to choke it to death. It lay still for a moment and then stood up again. I picked it up and threw it on to the highway. A truck rolled over its body; I thought for sure it was dead. But no, the creature jumped off the highway and again crawled toward me. I was so frightened, I lit a match, started a fire, and tossed the creature into the flame. It jumped out of the

fire, and in another moment, it was on top of me. Then, suddenly, the creature changed into a human form, and it was myself. He said, "I am you. You cannot run away from yourself." I woke.

We all have memories; we all have dreams. But what about between memories and dreams? We must not forget the present, the moment at hand. There are so many things we can do, so many people need help. Life is precious, and time passes on so fast. Think about it, the earth is four-and-a-half billion years old; it is one of nine planets that travel through space around the sun. And the sun is just one of billions of stars that make up a galaxy which we call the Milky Way. The Milky Way and billions of other galaxies make up the universe. How brief is our journey on earth! Compared to the universe, how insignificant we as individuals are!

Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote: Never mistake yourself to be great, or designed for greatness, because you have been visited by an indistinct and shadowy hope that something is reserved for you beyond the common lot. It is easier to aspire than to do the deeds. The very idleness which leaves you the leisure to dream of honor is the insurmountable obstacle between you and the actual achievement worthy of the honor. Those who are fitly furnished for the weary passage from mediocrity to greatness seldom find time or appetite to indulge in that hungry and boisterous importunity for excitement which the weaker ones are prone to display. That which helps them on to eminence is in itself sufficient to engross the attention of all their powers and to occupy the aching void.

That was written in the 18th century. Today, we have far more such boisterous and greedy people, in governments, on TV commercials, who are trying to tell us how to live, where to go, what to buy. They surround us; they fill the air, they are everywhere. Sometimes I feel I am lost; I don't know who to trust, what to believe. But then, when I come to this charming, serene sanctuary, I find peace and tranquility; I find true friends and companions. The voice of God enters my heart; I hear the words from

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## Between Memories and Dreams

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the Bible which say: O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You chart the path ahead of me, and tell me where to stop and rest. You know what I am going to say before I even say it. You both precede and follow me, and place your hand of blessing on my head. I can never be lost to your spirit! I can never get away from my God! If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the place of the dead, you are there. If I ride the morning winds to the farthest oceans, your hand will guide me, your strength will support me. (Psalms 139)

It is good to have memories; it is good to have dreams; but in between, do not let the moment at hand slip by. While God is watching us in heaven, on earth we are not alone. We need each other for support, for sharing our joy, and comforting our sorrow. In John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*; Tom Joad, one of the protagonists in the novel, was a farmhand from Oklahoma; he came to California with his family looking for work during the Depression. The rich farm owners exploited the

workers, paying them only two-and-a-half cents for each bucket of fruit they picked. Casy, a preacher who was a dear friend of Tom Joad, organized a strike. The guard of the land owner killed him right in front of Tom Joad's eyes. In a burst of uncontrollable anger and grief, Tom killed the guard. He had to run. Bidding his mom good-bye at a lonely spot behind their shack, he said something like this: *A fella ain't got a soul of his own, but only a piece of a big one. If they caught me and killed me, then it wouldn't matter anymore; for I'll be all around in the dark. I'll be everywhere you look. Wherever there's a fight so hungry people can eat, I'll be there. Wherever a cop is beating up a guy, I'll be there. Wherever children laugh when they're hungry and know supper is ready, I'll be there.*

Well, of course times have changed; we are no longer in the Depression. But still, we hear the cries of the less fortunate; we should be there, if not in person, at least in our hearts and in our prayers. The world is not perfect, nor is our society; together, we can make a difference. Let memories live; keep your dreams alive; but like the poet

Henry Longfellow wrote in *A Psalm of Life*: Act—act in living Present! Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Speaking of poems, I would like to close with this one—I don't know who the author is.

Don't fret about tomorrow  
Or live in yesterday.  
Be it moment of joy or sorrow.  
Do your best today.

Tomorrow lies beyond the stars,  
Beyond the sleeping sun.  
Yesterday's but a shadow in the dark,  
And it cannot be undone.

Live life in the present tense  
And wisely spend your time.  
A newborn cries, a journey ends  
As time rolls on like ocean tide.

Set your sight on a worthy goal,  
And choose the path you will trod.  
Light your torches, heighten your hope,  
As you live each day for God.

Raymond Wong is a retired engineer. He is a member and secretary on the board of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, and is currently pursuing a master of arts in creative writing at San Francisco State University.



## Connections Between Reiki Healing and Swedenborgian Theology

(Continued from page 157)

wisdom. With it we can solve psychological and spiritual dilemmas that will elude us or take years of counseling otherwise.

As Swedenborgians, we need to build a bridge between the spiritual principles Swedenborg offered us and the ways we can learn about them from direct experience, engaging them in our daily life on a regular basis. A spiritual healing practice such as Reiki is one good vehicle that can help us do this. There is no doubt in my mind that wherever we are on our healing journey we will make progress with Reiki along our spiritual path.

For a complete listing of sources, and/or to share any of your own experiences with Reiki and laying-on-of-hands, please write to Mona Conner at One Montgomery Place, apt. 38, Brooklyn, NY 11215-2364.

<sup>1</sup>Emanuel Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia* (Heavenly Secrets), Vol. IV, #3419.

<sup>2</sup>Rodo J. Baginski & Shalila Sharamon, *Reiki, Universal Life Energy*, p. 15, Life Rhythm, English Edition, 1988.

<sup>3</sup>*Reiki, Universal Life Energy*, p. 15-16.

<sup>4</sup>*Arcana Coelestia*, Vol. 1, #519-521.

<sup>5</sup>*Reiki, Universal Life Energy*, p. 15.

<sup>6</sup>*Arcana Coelestia*, Vol. II, #1409.

<sup>7</sup>Delia Brizzi, *Reiki Usui Shiki Ryoko* (First Degree Course Notes).

<sup>8</sup>Emanuel Swedenborg  
—*Heaven and Hell*, #251.

<sup>9</sup>*Reiki, Universal Life Energy*, pp. 31-32, pp. 35-37

<sup>10</sup>Beatles. "I'm Looking Through You"  
October 24, 1965.

Mona Conner is an artist and a member of the New York Swedenborgian Church. She is also a member of the Communications Support Unit.



FAITH hears the inaudible,  
sees the invisible,  
believes the incredible,  
and receives the impossible.

From *The Plains Banner*,  
October 1996





# New Vision For *Our Daily Bread*

Lee Woofenden

**O**ur *Daily Bread* has been in continuous publication since 1949—forty-six years of bringing Swedenborgian sermons and devotions to its readership. As the new editor of *ODB*, I will build on that history while moving the magazine forward into the twenty-first century.

The first things to consider in any publishing venture are audience and goal. The core of our audience will continue to be those within the church who look forward to *ODB* as a source of weekly inspiration. As editor, I will continue to serve that goal. Yet I see the Swedenborgian Church in the early stages of a new phase in its development. We are leaving behind the insularity of our earlier history and opening ourselves up to the wider world. We are focusing more than ever before on making

tion of Christian theology and his spiritual interpretation of the scriptures, we can offer a theologically steady hand both to other denominations and to individual Christians. We can provide support to those who are seeking a new form of Christian worship and life, while offering biblically based Christianity to those who are outgrowing fundamentalist thinking.

As a denomination, we are too small to offer a full parish life to all who are interested in our message. We simply do not have enough churches to cover the population centers. *Our Daily Bread* has no such geographical limitation. It can reach out to anyone, anywhere, carrying our message of a renewed Christianity. This is my vision for *Our Daily Bread*.

There will be several steps in realizing this vision. First will be looking at the format and content of the magazine itself. I plan to spend the first year clarifying the goals of the magazine and considering what would be the best format for achieving them. This will involve, among other things, a survey of the current readers asking what parts of *Our Daily Bread* they find most and least useful, and welcoming other thoughts and suggestions.

With the results of the survey in hand, and with outreach to other potential audiences in mind, we will be ready to revamp the magazine. This will be a job for a professional book and newsletter designer, resulting in a magazine that will represent our church well to potential new readers, while being easy for our regular subscribers to follow. For the sake of continuity, *ODB* will continue in its current format until we are ready with the new one.

Once the new format is in place, we will be ready to expand the readership of *Our Daily Bread*. We can do this by publicizing *ODB* both within the Swedenborgian denominations and outside the organized New Church. Within the Swedenborgian denominations, I will make a practice of regular notices in any church publication that accepts such advertising. Of course, this will include *The Messenger*, but I plan also to reach out to publications in other Swedenborgian denominations. My vision of the New Church includes friendly relationships with our sister



denominations; *ODB* can serve as an ambassador of those friendly relations. Outside the organized New Church, we will offer subscriptions to theological schools in the U.S. and Canada, and advertise in various Christian magazines and other spiritually-oriented publications. I would also like to expand the use of *ODB* as handout literature for newcomers in our local churches.

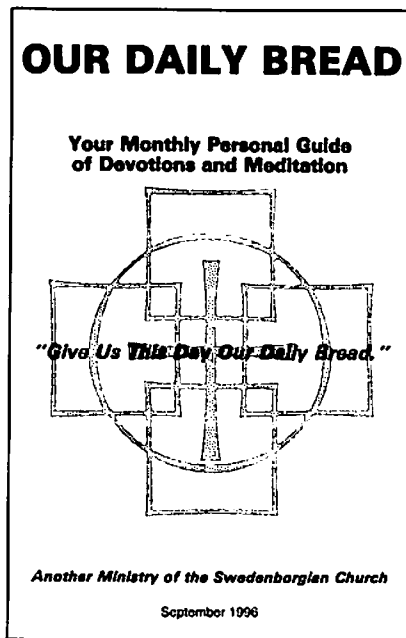
There is one other new direction for *Our Daily Bread* that I would like to mention. In my position on the Information Management Support Unit, I am currently overseeing a project to get our denomination on the Internet's Worldwide Web. Once we have a Web page set up, I plan to produce an online edition of *ODB*. In this way, we can provide a weekly Swedenborgian sermon and devotion service to the online community.

I am honored to have been selected as the new editor of

*Our Daily Bread*, and excited about the magazine's future. With the help of our readers and the support of our church, we can build on *ODB*'s long track record as a ministry of the Swedenborgian Church, bringing our message of renewed Christianity to an expanding readership.

*The Rev. Lee Woofenden is in his first year of ministry to the Bridgewater church, in Bridgewater, Massachusetts. We offer congratulations, blessings and support to his additional ministry as new editor of ODB. The transition will take place in January 1997, with former editor the Rev. Richard H. Tafel, Jr., working with Lee through the January issue; the February issue will be solely produced by Lee. ❖*

Thanks to the Rev. Richard H. Tafel, Jr., for his eleven years as editor and to Linda Tafel for her able assistance.



our church one that welcomes newcomers and invites them to join us.

I will bring this vision of a renewed and broadening Swedenborgian Church to the pages of *Our Daily Bread*. While continuing to offer the magazine to our current and new members, I will seek ways to expand its readership well beyond the boundaries of our denomination.

Our church has a message that no other church can offer—one that the world needs now more than ever before. With Swedenborg's renewed presenta-



# Our Swedenborgian Heritage

*Twenty-sixth in a series*

## CHRISTMAS TREES

*The Rev. Arthur Wilde, British by birth but for a long time minister of the New York Society, was a prolific writer both for adults and children. The following was an editorial in the Messenger of December 21, 1933.*



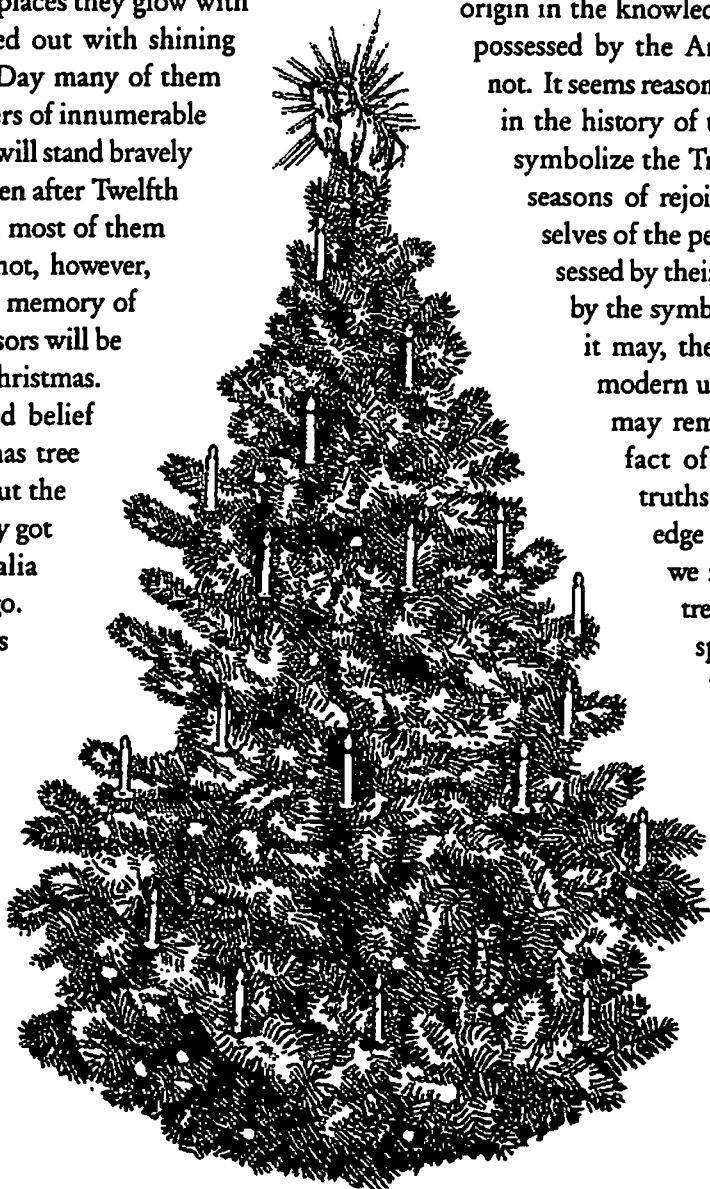
In December, Christmas trees are much in evidence. They come to markets by hundreds of thousands. They find willing purchasers; and now in homes, schools, churches and other places they glow with colored lights and are decked out with shining ornaments. On Christmas Day many of them will bear presents for members of innumerable families. For a few days they will stand bravely in their evergreen foliage. Then after Twelfth Night they are discarded and most of them go up in flames. They are not, however, forgotten. They linger in the memory of the children, and their successors will be hailed with joy at the next Christmas.

It is a commonly accepted belief that the idea of the Christmas tree came to us from Germany; but the Germans themselves probably got it from the Roman Saturnalia nearly two thousand years ago. Whence the Romans got this idea no one knows. It is interesting that the Christmas tree is older than the Christian era. The poet Virgil was born in B.C. 70, and he speaks of the festal tree with its hanging toys and manikins.

It is not fanciful to assume that in the pagan use of the decorated

tree at festivals the old Italian tribes were perpetuating a very old custom that originated in the Ancient Church. Trees correspond to the perception of truth. May not the ancients have put trees in their homes and have decorated them as a symbol of the perception given them by the Lord? By the ornaments they would denote the varied knowledges acquired by this God-given faculty of perception.

Are we stretching imagination too far in this assumption that the Christmas tree custom had its origin in the knowledge of correspondence once possessed by the Ancient Church? We think not. It seems reasonable to assume that far back in the history of the Church men sought to symbolize the Tree of Knowledge. At their seasons of rejoicing they reminded themselves of the perception of truth once possessed by their ancestors; and they did this by the symbolic use of trees. Be that as it may, the fact remains that by our modern use of the Christmas tree we may remind ourselves of the great fact of the incarnation and the truths associated with our knowledge of the divine humanity. So we may see on the myriads of trees that help to intensify the spirit of Christmas something more than mere vegetation. They become symbols of our perception of "that tender mercy of our God whereby the day-spring from on high shall visit us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, to guide our feet into the way of peace."



# The Way, the Truth, and the Life

James Lawrence

*"I am the way, the truth and the life."*

*John 14:6*

One of the most startling things Jesus ever said was, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

We might be a bit put off by the boldness of these words, in our modern pluralistic sensibilities. He does not say that he is one among many legitimate possibilities; he is the Way. He does not reassuringly aver that he brings one truth among numerous credible truths; he says he is the Truth. He offers himself not as one life to be selected among many lives, like so many sweaters on the shelf to choose or not choose, according to our taste; he says he is the Life.

In our day of flexible plurality, when we have become so accustomed to choice and diversity, and with our very wise reluctance to couch our faith in terms that might sound exclusivistic of other ways and other truths, it is natural that we might wish Jesus hadn't talked so much like this about himself. How much more comfortable we are when he sticks to easier uplifting themes, such as treating others as we would be treated, and forgiving others as we have been forgiven, and not crossing by on the other side when someone needs us, even though it will put us out. These are hard enough to live by, and we appreciate the lucidity of the gospel's moral charge. If we can make any kind of sincere go at loving our neighbor and believing in a God of love, then shouldn't that acquit us of any further spiritual demands? If only the editors at Doubleday could have had a crack at these Gospels before they rushed them into print! A lot of these problematic passages could've been queried! For instance, what is meant by "the way"—please clarify; this whole section about "being one" with the Father seems fuzzy, not to mention grandiose; consider cutting.

You know, I think whole years go by and I find that I have avoided the really tough texts. And I am ashamed,

because Swedenborg is the Shout! stain remover I put on my tough spot in my laundry: he handles everything there and shows the deeper purpose of it all.

So let me just declare at the outset that we are not going to be coming at this famed declaration of Christ in any sort of conventional, external sense. The Way, the Truth, and the Life are not going to have much to do with external affiliations or outer confessions of the tongue; I want to say right out front that a Buddhist may be much more intimately acquainted with our Lord than a Baptist, or a Zoroastrian than a Swedenborgian, and it is a good idea for us to remember that other saying of our Lord's in Matthew when he predicted that many will come saying, "Lord, Lord, we did all this in your name." And he responds, "I never knew ye."

Thomas a Kempis in the fifteenth century had this to say about these immortal words of Jesus:

*"Without the Way there is no going; without the Truth there is no knowing; without the life, there is no living. I am the Way which thou oughtest to follow; the Truth which thou oughtest to believe; the Life, which thou oughtest to hope for. I am the Way inviolable, the Truth infallible, the Life unending. I am the Way that is straightest, the Truth that is true, the Life blessed, the Life uncreated. If thou remain in my way, thou shalt know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free, and thou shalt lay hold on eternal life."*

## The Way

"Without the Way, there is no going." I agree with this, but I agree with it in a very cosmic sense, and it is the cosmic sense that is dealt with in the Advent and Christmas season. The real Christian story begins as a cosmic one. The birth of the Christ child has everything to do with a lot of things that are difficult for us to appreciate, like understanding that there was a time when the organic issue of human spirituality was in danger of turning cancerous, the effect of which was to weaken the spiritual environmental fibers within the collective human

consciousness to such a degree that the ability to even sense the existence of selfless love was getting shut out. Would you want to put your child in a totally controlled environment out of your reach wherein all the influences would be very powerful and very destructive? Wouldn't you be afraid for the worst? Such was the case in a time that we do not personally know. We are asked to believe it by understanding it. That and that reason only is why Jesus was born. It was a cosmic solution to a cosmic problem.

On other occasions we have looked at the Divine-Human paradigm and how in the highly active energy system of the spiritual-natural fusion that is this creation, the Divine-Human presence saved this world and remains as a saving active principle. But suffice it to say for today that no matter how any given individual is climbing the mountain to God, the freedom to pursue their way has been protected for all time by the life that the Lord lived among us; the Way for all climbing in a generic sense is provided courtesy of the Lord's work in his life. In that sense, the life of the Lord was analogous to the snow crews in the north, or the road repair crews anywhere after mudslides or earthquakes: there is a clearing of Ways for all future travelers, no matter their style or type of vehicle. Without diminishing, or even directly commenting upon, the efficacy of any particular philosophy or spiritual pursuit, the Swedenborgian faith holds to the validity of Jesus's declaration: "I am the Way."

## The Truth

So we are all travelers now on some way, and free to be so, but now comes all the figuring of the plentiful maps that lie around giving directional help on the way. Not only must we be travelers, but we must be discerners as well. We must be able to recognize truth, or our Way won't be much of a way. We only have to look at new children to know that we are designed for truth: to see them drinking in so

*(Continued on page 163)*

(Continued from page 162)

thirstily all they can, to see the delight in their eyes when they understand something new, to hear their gleeful laughs and excited claps of their hands when they see something new that makes sense to them.

We respond with joy to truth; understanding things tends to make a pretty big difference in the quality of our living! When we are lost and confused about some matter, truth and only the truth of the matter can set us free, whether it is figuring out why the 'fridge is on the fritz or what is undermining an important relationship.

Swedenborg refers to John 14:6 often. Nearly one hundred brief or lengthier commentaries exist throughout the writing on the arcanum within this beautiful declaration that the Lord is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Very simply, the truth spoken of is the truth of love—any truth that leads to actual goodness in some way.

Any time the Father is spoken of by Jesus, the arcanum therein is referring to the divine that was in the Lord from conception. (I want to say parenthetically, that a couple of times a year we deal with the feminine and mother aspect of the divine, in order to prevent a skewed understanding of God's gender, which is fully both human genders and transcendent of gender altogether. But in the ancient world when correspondences were spoken through the terminology of that era, Father carries the correspondence to the Divine within the Human of the Lord). So in the Lord was the sufficient presence of the absolute divine, and in that sense divine truth itself was embodied by the Lord. And this truth has no existence except in relation to love, so that the truth that the Lord was even while walking the earth was the liberating truth of love. All truth that liberates us to love is the Lord's truth, seeking its expression countless ways. It is the Truth that encompasses all truths. As the embodiment of forgiving,

compassionate, sacrificial love—the Divine-Human event—Christ contains all Truth.

## *The Life*

But it all has to come together in the life. With life, it gets really personal. Life is life; there is no other word by which we can get more fundamental. John's gospel loves this word, "life." He is forever talking about *real* life, eternal life. John can't wait to bring the message to us: he pops the secret in the fourth verse of the first chapter: "In him was life, and the life was the light of all people." And again near the end of his gospel, after he tells the most beautiful story ever told, he sounds the message again: "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that believing you may have life."

And that life happens through one exquisite channel: our ability to be in relationship.

When God tells us about who we are throughout the Bible, it is always in terms of relationship. We belong to God, and we belong to one another. Our spiritual responsibilities are to God and to one another.

A frequent correction Swedenborgian theologian George Dole has been making recently goes to this point. He responds to the common modern tendency to describe the spiritual path in terms of attaining higher consciousness by suggesting that this is off the mark, at least as far as Swedenborgian theology goes. Higher consciousness often sounds like something you can do with yourself. But Swedenborg's stories of heaven reveal a more beautiful picture of life: heavenly consciousness is all about the capacity for constructive relationships, with growing in wisdom in how to love others. It has very little to do with personal inner prowess to venture in interesting intra-psychic spaces. Spiritual growth must ultimately be relational, or it is not the life or the consciousness that Christ exists to give.

*The Rev. Dr. James F. Lawrence is co-minister at the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church. Reprinted from the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church Newsletter, December 1995.*



# Picking Up the Cues

*Carol Anne Fusco*

Since acting was my first Mystery School, I find the theatrical metaphor particularly useful. Let's say you're on stage, reading a newspaper. You're acutely aware of your surroundings, filtering out everything irrelevant until you hear your cue. Absorbed in your character's life, you also have your radar on so that you don't miss it. Everything that's happened in the play up to this point has served to set you up for that cue.

Though I don't generally think of myself as suicidal, I have noticed that from time to time the Universe presents me with the opportunity to "check out," which is also always an opportunity to check in.

One of those "choice points" came in my early 30s. My motto was "seek first the kingdom of God," hoping that everything else would come in good time. My system for doing this was to check in with God for my marching orders; if nothing comes, wait. Pick up the cues when they come. I was 34, unmarried, no relationship, no job that meant anything, no money. It was a very hard time in my life and I was often close to despair.

While visiting my sister in Brooklyn, she proceeded to lambast me for being an irresponsible, flighty, good for nothing screwup. As she went up and down her list of accusations, she was confirming every negative thought I'd ever had about myself. I was devastated. I had come home for comfort and instead my sister smacked me with my own sense of worthlessness.

Later, admiring the view of the Manhattan skyline from the roof of her apartment building, I found myself looking over the edge, wondering what it would be like to jump. I remembered other times when I had wanted out—being a little kid, wanting to hurry up and die so I could go home; feeling weird as a teen, thinking I was the only

(Continued on Page 165)

# New York New Church Public Relations Committee Holds Summer Workshop

On August 3, 1996, Charlotte Klein and Betty Travis, friends of the New York New Church, graciously shared their years of professional public relations knowledge and experience with the newly formed Public Relations Committee when they gathered at the home of Mona Conner for a day of sharing information and ideas about improving public relations for the church. To meet their goal of facilitating church growth, the P.R. Committee is working toward presenting a more consistent and professional looking image for the church, such as designing a press kit, revising and creating new pamphlets, and regularly informing local media of the church's activities.



(From left) Rev. Robert McCluskey, Pamela Selensky, Tiffany Hendry, Charlotte Klein, Shirl Alston, Linda Seligman, and Betty Travis.

## PCA Annual Meeting

Hosted by the San Francisco church, the 85th annual meeting of the Pacific Coast Association was held August 30 to September 1 at the Marconi Conference Center in Marshall, California.

Friday night opened with a mixer led by the Rev. Dr. James Lawrence. He divided everyone into groups of 4 or 5 and assigned a biblical passage or parable to be acted out and guessed by the other group members. This helped newcomers get acquainted and oldtimers get reacquainted.

Stan and Karen Conger celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary with a reaffirmation service Saturday morning, followed by a meditation led by Jean Treash and Elizabeth Gutfeldt at Lookout Point overlooking Tomales Bay. The group participated in Lorraine Sando's mini-course, "Growing and Celebrating our Spiritual Community," followed by the business meeting after lunch.

Officers elected were: Margaret Culver, secretary (San Francisco); Stan

Conger, treasurer (Bishop, California); board members Merle Lundberg (Los Angeles); Charles Bush (Seattle). Other officers are: Rev. Dr. James Lawrence, president (San Francisco); Pam Brown, vice-president (Lynwood, Washington); board members Dan Bonawitz (Rancho Palos Verdes); Rev. Dr. Horand Gutfeldt (Berkeley); Rev. Ted LeVan (Julian, California). Karen Nielsen Conger was thanked for her six years' service as secretary.

At the Pacific Coast Alliance meeting, the new officers elected were: Rianne Boell, president (El Cerrito, California); Jean Treash, vice-president (San Diego); Nancy Freestone, secretary (San Francisco); Merle Lundberg, treasurer (Los Angeles).

Saturday night's entertainment, hosted by Phyllis Bosley, opened with a sing-along, followed by Ray Wong playing his harmonica. Later line dancing was taught and led by Country Western DJ Bobby Curtis.

The liturgy and communion was led on Sunday morning by the Rev. Dr.

James Lawrence, with the Rev. Dr. Horand Gutfeldt delivering the sermon, and special music provided by Julie Hiryak. The final event of the weekend was an open house for everyone at the home of the Rev. Dr. Rachel Rivers.

Next year's meeting will once again be over Labor Day, 1997, at the Mater Delorosa Retreat Center in Sierra Madre, California. ❖

## Memorandum

The Library of Congress has asked us to help them complete their collection of General Convention *Journals*. They are missing the following issues:

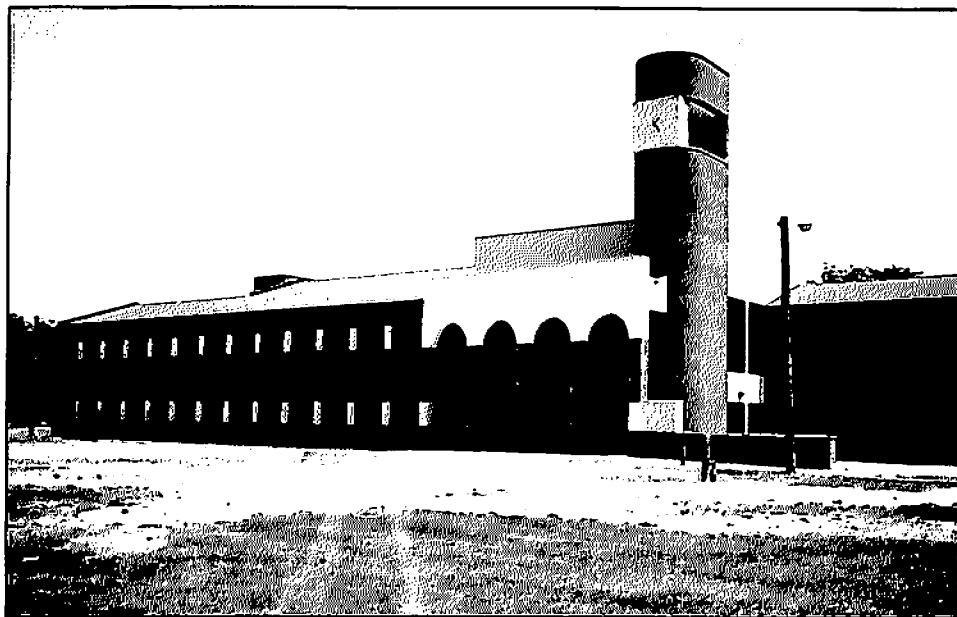
Numbers 1-8, 1826  
Number 12, 1830  
Number 16-17, 1834/1835  
No. 125, 1946

If anyone has a collection of old *Journals* and can provide any of these missing volumes, please contact the Central Office at (617) 969-4240.

# Math and Science Building Dedicated at Urbana University

The Lewis and Jean Moore Mathematics and Science building, the first new building to be erected on the Urbana University campus in 25 years, was dedicated October 25, 1996. Attending the dedication were Swedenborgian trustees the Rev. Edwin G. Capon, Esther Nicastro-Capon, Betsy Coffman, Frank G. Doyle, III, August Ebel and the Rev. Richard H. Tafel, Jr. Following the dedication in front of the new building, a dinner was served in Grimes Center for donors, trustees, faculty and alumni.

The new math and science building fills a long-felt need of the university. The next major campus project scheduled is the renovation of Barclay and Bailey Halls, the two oldest buildings on campus. Urbana's current enrollment, full and part time, is 1,181, with five Swedenborgian students this year.



*New Mathematics and Science Building, Urbana University*

## Picking Up the Cues

*(Continued from Page 163)*

one who had a crazy childhood, the only one who had never gotten those important lessons in how to be a person; as a young woman, feeling like a failure because I didn't know what I wanted to do. As I stood there imagining what it would be like before I hit the pavement (would it feel like flying? would my life flash before me?) I realized that I was seriously thinking about it. A major choice point. At the time, I was doing a lot of exploration in the realm of reincarnation. Uh oh!! If I jumped, that would end the current pain as Carol Fusco, but it wouldn't lead to oblivion. I would not only have to come back and deal with the same lessons again, I would also have to deal with the penalty clause: inappropriate premature checking out leads to more difficulties than it solves. Rats! The only way out of this life was through. But how do I do that? I prayed a desperate cry for divine help and went for a walk.

A New York City street is rife with sensory overload. How does a person see the one relevant thing in the midst

of so much? It's the Actor within, listening for the next cue that does it. Glancing at the pavement I saw a matchbook. Something inside me said "Pick it up." On one side was a picture of a beautiful sunset and the words "Peace of Mind." I turned it over. The words printed on the other side were "ALTERNATIVE FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS." I burst into tears and laughter. It was the answer I'd prayed for. Seek peace of mind, the kingdom of God, as an alternative to making funeral arrangements. My despair melted. I knew that no matter what my sister or my own doubts said, the Universe approved of me.

The signs of GOD's love are everywhere. It's a matter of getting good at noticing and then picking up the cue...what a way to welcome the Holy days.

*Carol Anne Fusco is an active member of the Swedenborgian Church in Portland, Maine. ❖*

Reprinted with permission from the author from the Portland Swedenborgian Church Newsletter, December 1994.

## *Journey of Life* New Swedenborg Video Available

*Journey of Life* is a video for Swedenborgians and others who wish to understand more about the Swedenborgian view of human life and death, heaven, and how angels and other spirits interact with us. In this 40-minute pageant, the Rev. Don Rose narrates from a selection of Swedenborg's writings which have been chosen to provide the viewer with an overview of Swedenborg's main concepts, while a dance ensemble presents a well-choreographed pantomime of the stages of life, accompanied by music.

*Journey of Life* is \$20.00 including postage, and is available from the

General Church book Center  
P.O. Box 743  
Bryn Athyn, PA 19009  
(215) 947-3920

## New Foundation Publications

### *The Last Judgement In Retrospect*

(Continued from Back Page)

on earth, the triumph of good, and eternal salvation. By understanding the universal application of his visionary insights, readers from other spiritual traditions can appreciate Swedenborg's writings for the truth they convey."

131 pages. (pb) \$7.95

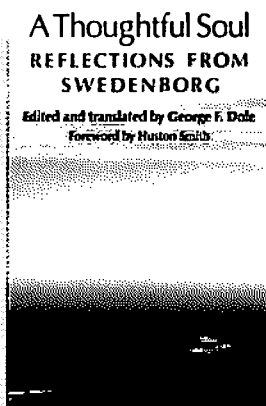


### *A Thoughtful Soul: Reflections from Swedenborg*

edited and translated by George F. Dole, foreword by Huston Smith.

"Using selections from the writing of Emanuel Swedenborg, recently translated for the modern reader, George Dole presents Swedenborg's ideas in a logical, understandable manner. Dole has constructed the work particularly for the reader unfamiliar with these writings and provides an explanatory essay to introduce each chapter. The book can be read either as an overview of Swedenborgian philosophy or as a series of thoughtful meditations, both enjoyable ways to read Swedenborg."

184 pages. (pb) \$11.95



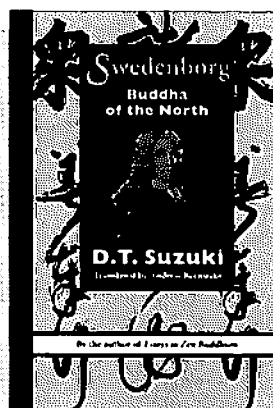
*Swedenborg, Buddha of the North*, by D.T. Suzuki, translated by Andrew Bernstein.

"In the summer of 1954, while meeting with religion scholars Henry Corbin and Mircea Eliade, D.T. Suzuki was asked what resemblances he found between Mahayana Buddhism and the theology of Emanuel Swedenborg. According to Corbin, Suzuki suddenly brandished a spoon and declared, "This spoon *now* exists in Paradise...we are *now* in Heaven." During the ensuing conversation, Suzuki went on to say that Swedenborg was "your Buddha of the North."

—From the introduction.

(See November *Messenger*, p. 152, for expanded description).

168 pages. (pb) \$11.95, (cloth) \$16.95



## *Hot Off The Press!*

### *The Power of Play: New Visions of Creativity*

Edited by Carol S. Lawson. A new Chrysalis Reader anthology.

#### From the Preface:

"The mystics who had made the great journey described in the Upanishads...came back with this news: it is all play. The world was and is created playfully."—*Wilson Van Dusen*.

"This creative, attractive anthology on the power of play tops the Chrysalis Reader series, and should reach a broad audience. Through readable anecdote, parable, and image, the contributors personify the wisdom of playfulness...as a reminder of the importance of magical play as a primary impulse of human nature, in relationships and in culture, these testimonials bring a joyful balance even before we take them to heartfelt practice. An impressive roundup of writing talent and visual-arts editing, it's also a reference-shelf keeper for professionals—quick pieces that wonderfully open real-life domains for creativity, play, and health."

—*Don Eulert, Professor of Cultural Psychology, California School of Professional Psychology, San Diego*.

"Play crosses boundaries, tearing down walls...if you have resolved in the past to play more, and have let the resolution slip, keep this book handy. It is a powerful reminder."

—*John L. Hitchcock, author: The Web of the Universe: Jung, the New Physics and Human Spirituality*.

160 pages. (pb) \$12.95 (Available November 15, 1996).

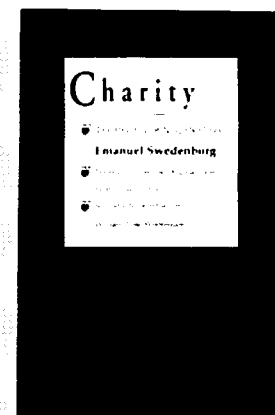


### *Charity: The Practice of Neighborliness*

by Emanuel Swedenborg, translated from the Original Latin by William F. Wunsch, second edition by William Ross Woofenden.

"This is a practical and inspiring hand book for compassionate living, providing the tools for responsible service. Emanuel Swedenborg...uses the term "charity" to mean a spirit of caring or disinterested service, a heartfelt delight in doing good without thought of return."

96 pages. (pb) \$6.95



For ordering or other information, call 1-800-355-3222.

## DEATHS

Jones—Lois K. Jones, longtime member of the San Diego Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world September 13, 1996, after a lengthy illness. Lois is survived by her husband, Reese, of Salem, Ohio, and two sisters, Doris and Jean.

Jordan—the Rev. John Haskell Jordan of Fryeburg, Maine, age 79, entered the spiritual world September 28, 1996, at Bridgton Health Care Center. A memorial service was conducted October 12, 1996, at Bradley Memorial Church, Fryeburg Harbor, Maine, the Revs. James Lundin and Ken Turley officiating. While living in Fryeburg, Mr. Jordan met the Rev. Louis Dole, who greatly influenced and encouraged him to become a Swedenborgian minister. He was subsequently ordained in 1945 and served General Convention churches in Bridgewater, Mass., Providence, Rhode Island, and Wilmington, Delaware.

## CHANGE OF MEMBERSHIP

Bentley—Al and Evelyn Bentley were welcomed into the membership of the San Diego Swedenborgian Church October 13, 1996. Since their church in Riverside closed some time ago, they had been members-at-large of the Pacific Coast Association. However, they recently decided they would prefer having a membership in one of our churches, and since they live close enough to attend services and activities at the San Diego church, they requested membership, and were "welcomed with open arms."

## Swedenborg as a Mystic

(Continued from cover)

ing from others to pursue spirit in isolation—also makes Swedenborg a mystic.

In next month's article, Dr. Ted Klein will explore further the ways in which Swedenborg lived in community as an "activist" mystic.

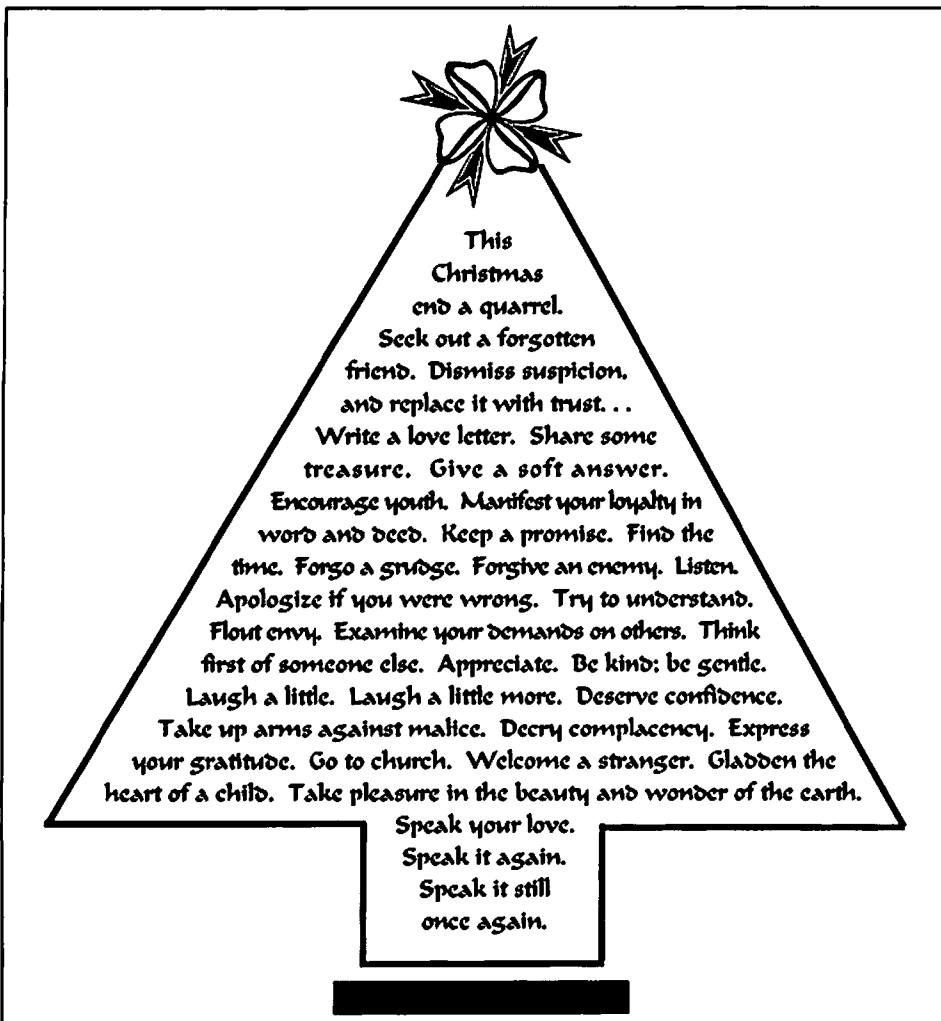
<sup>1</sup>Wilson Van Dusen, *The Country of Spirit* [San Francisco: J. Appleseed, 1992], p. 16.


<sup>2</sup>Emanuel Swedenborg, *Journal of Dreams* (Byrn Athyn, Pa: Academy Book Room, 1918), 53-54.

<sup>3</sup>George F. Dole and Robert H. Kirven, *A Scientist Explores Spirit*. (West Chester, Pa: Swedenborg Foundation 1992), p. 42.

<sup>4</sup>Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*.

*The Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake is Associate Professor of Practical Theology at the Swedenborg School of Religion, and director of NET\*WORK, Center for Spiritual Growth in Concord, New Hampshire.* ❖






## Mite Box Time

This year's collection will go toward the gazebo to be built in the garden of the Church of the Open Word in St. Louis. The gazebo will be built in memory of Carol Rienstra.

Contributions can be sent through May 1, 1997 to:

Margaret Kraus  
Box 264,  
Pretty Prairie  
KS 67570





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.

## Conversations with Angels, New Foundation Publication

Among the latest offerings from the Swedenborg Foundation is *Conversations with Angels: What Swedenborg Heard in Heaven*, edited by Leonard Fox and Donald L. Rose, translated by David Gladish and Jonathan Rose.

*It has pleased the Lord to...open the interiors of my mind or spirit, whereby I have been permitted to be in the spiritual world with angels, and at the same time in the natural world with people, and this now [has happened for] twenty-seven years.*

"This remarkable declaration by Emanuel Swedenborg...sets the stage for this collection of angelic encounters. Throughout the final twenty-seven years of his life, Swedenborg explored the realms of heaven and hell and spoke with angels about the nature of life after death, discussed with newly arrived spirits their misconceptions about the afterlife, and debated with devils or spirits from hell. As an Enlightenment scholar, Sweden-

borg recorded these encounters, attesting to God's will that humanity might know the truth of eternal life.

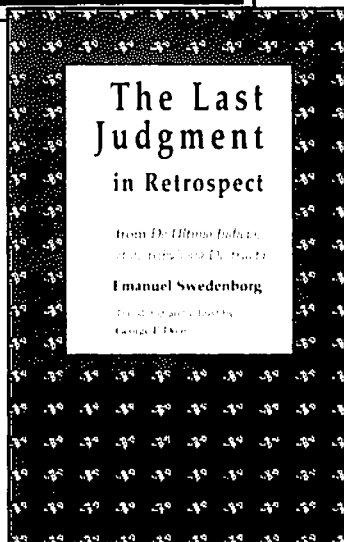
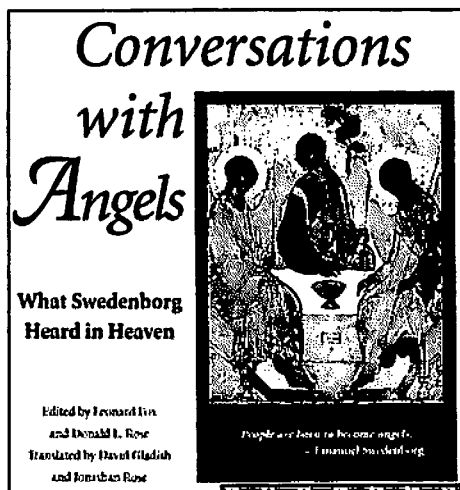
The narratives, translated by Swedenborgian scholars David Gladish and Jonathan Rose, have been selected from three of Swedenborg's works, *Conjugal Love*, *Apocalypse Revealed*, and *True Christian Religion*, and have been arranged by theme. Swedenborg's conversations with angels startle the reader with insights into the reality of the spiritual world." 158 pages, (pb) \$12.95

### Other Recent Publications

*The Last Judgment in Retrospect*, by Emanuel Swedenborg, translated and edited by George F. Dole.

"A slender, anonymously published volume announced in 1758 the startling news that the "last judgment" prophesied in the Bible had taken place in the spiritual world during the year 1757...when God saw that the "church" had lost its true identity, which is compassion and charity. Swedenborg's view of the Last Judgment stresses God's love and mercy and combats the fearful prophecies of fiery destruction and eternal damnation that have characterized this subject for so long. He asserts that biblical prophecies must be read on a symbolic level to understand their true or internal meaning. As the end of this millennium approaches, this short work offers hope for the continuation of life

(Continued Inside on Page 166)



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