
THE MESSENGER

Monthly Publication, Swedenborgian Church of North America

November 1996

What is Mysticism?

(This is the first article in the series, Swedenborg Meets the Mystics presented by faculty and students of the Swedenborg School of Religion).

George Dole

Lurking in the background of the question that serves as my title is a history of sporadic bursts of energy devoted to argument about whether or not Swedenborg was "a mystic." If we think of the mystic as someone who drifts off onto cloud nine, certainly he was not. Nor was he one who made spiritual experience an end in itself. The whole notion of heaven as "the beatific vision," of being wholly lost in wonder at the beauty of the Divine, is alien to his teaching.

In *Heaven: A History*, Langer and McDonnell devote a full chapter to Swedenborg's descriptions of heaven, maintaining that he introduced a major shift away from the beatific vision notion and toward a view of heaven as an active human community. This meant that Swedenborg's spiritual experience constantly engaged him in human relationships. He did not retreat to some private inner world, he did not become lost in transcendent oneness, and he did not point his readers in such directions. He would welcome the company of the Zen master who told the young seeker for enlightenment to go home and wash the dishes.

To identify Swedenborg as a mystic may be to risk misunderstanding, then, but the risk may be no less if we simply reject the label. Swedenborg did have some twenty-eight years of direct experience of the spiritual world, and while the extent of that experience may

be unique, he stands in a long line of individuals who have seen beyond the physical. It would help, surely, to have a way to affirm that kinship without compromising the distinctiveness. Just because there is a noticeable difference between a St. Bernard and a Chihuahua does not mean that we should dispense with the word, "dog."

For the purposes of this series of articles, I would propose that we define "mysticism" simply as the direct experience of the spiritual, and a "mystic" as

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one for whom such experience is both *recurrent* and *meaningful*. This rules out most of us, even though many of us may have had some moments of higher consciousness. It is intended to rule out people who play with spiritualism or who explore altered states chemically or "for kicks." It is intended to rule out people who use paranormal gifts manipulatively, people on ego trips or power trips.

It still includes a lot of individuals, not all cut from the same bolt of cloth. William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* remains, after almost a century, a valuable clue to the range of differences. Here I may suggest some rudimentary sub-classifications, with the note that any given individual may stretch the boundaries in one respect or another.

The first would simply distinguish those whose experience was achieved through a deliberate discipline (with further distinctions as to the nature of the particular discipline) from those who, like Paul on the road to Damascus, were "surprised" by it. A second would distinguish those whose path was ascetic from those who remain engaged with the workaday world. Here I might note that in both Judaism and Islam, the mystic was expected to be married and to be productively employed. A third would distinguish those who gather disciples or founded communities from those who found other means of activism. There might be a classification as to specific primary focus of activity—writing, visual art, music, social reform, and healing come to mind as examples. A fourth would distinguish those who stressed the incomprehensibility of the Divine from those who focused on divine self-disclosure (in academic circles, these are known respectively as the apophatic and the cataphatic traditions or approaches). It is quite usual to identify the century, nationality, and religious tradition of a given mystic.

By way of example, let me quote a paragraph from a recent book about Meister Eckhart:

Eckhart was a Dominican prior, provincial, and vicar his entire adult life.

(Continued on page 148)

**IN THIS
ISSUE:**

**Risking on the Side of Compassion • Serve the Lord with Gladness
Why I'm a Swedenborgian • Light in my Darkness Outreach**

What am I Most Thankful for This Year?

Guest Editorial by Kit Billings

Every year just before our season of Thanksgiving in the U.S. rolls around, I enjoy discovering which particular blessing from God stands out among the rest.

Around early October, I begin slowly sensing a subtle, joyous "separating-out" process inside. This internal process finally determines, come late November, which blessing from God will "adorn itself" as what I feel most thankful for this year.

Once I likened this internal spiritual experience to a sort of "Spiritual County Fair," where the top spiritual show animals, or crafts, or local crop yield are judged (in a spirit of fun and play) to see which one gets the blue ribbon!

I am curious what some of our *Messenger* readers would list. For me, this year I feel most thankful for God's awesome (yet sometimes personally frustrating) ability to generate spiritual growth—NEW, INNER LIFE—in the

midst of human life struggle and turmoil.

Just a few examples of human pain and difficulty could be losing a baby to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, discovering one has a new physical disability which decreases work output severely, discovering one's marriage is heading for divorce, or realizing for the first time that one may be addicted to coffee, computers, TV, and red and purple Twizzlers (which presents painful growth challenges ahead if the addictions are to be healed).

When I reflect about the *hard* challenges that others and I face, some of which are routine, and then find that new inner life may be found if we try to cooperate with God, I feel moved to tears with gratitude. This one's got my blue ribbon!

The portrait of regeneration (spiritual



growth over many years) that Swedenborg painted is very challenging (sometimes very painful), deeply rewarding, sometimes mind-boggling, and for me—

at the age of twenty-nine—
WONDERFULLY MIRACULOUS!

We are promised a thorough shot at becoming *AN ANGEL*—a lifelong challenge that cannot be aborted unless we want it to (God, You are great!). This year I thank God for being a spiritual miracle-worker who maintains pathways to heavenly character and community under all circumstances. What are some of you, perhaps, most thankful for this year?

The Rev. Kit Billings is minister to the St. Paul Swedenborgian congregation (the Virginia St. church) in St. Paul, Minnesota. He was installed as their pastor October 6, 1996, the Rev. Edwin Capon officiating. Further details of this event will be reported in December.



The Guest House

This being human is a guest-house
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture.

Still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be cleaning you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

*From Say I Am You, by Rumi
Translated by John Mane and Coleman Barks*

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Publisher: The Communications Support Unit
Published monthly, except July and August, by
the Swedenborgian Church of North America
(founded 1817, incorporated 1861 as the General
Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United
States of America).

November 1996
Volume 217 No. 9
Whole Number 5214

Typesetting & Layout
Town & Country Press,
Plymouth, IN

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The opinions of the contributors do not necessarily
reflect the views of the Editor or the Communica-
tions Support Unit, or represent the position of the
church. Subscription free to members of the
Swedenborgian Church; non-members, \$12.00 a
year; foreign \$15.00 a year; gift subscription from a
member, \$5.00 a year; single copies \$1.00.

Deadline for material: Six weeks before the first
day of the month of issue.

Risking on the Side of Compassion

James Lawrence

In September 1996, President Clinton signed national legislation into law refusing recognition of gay marriages and denying legal standing and all attendant benefits to such relationships. This national legislative movement was a preemptive strike to protect states from the confusion that would arise after Hawaii takes the likely step of legalizing gay marriages. Traditionally, legal marriages in any state are recognized throughout the fifty states. So that if a gay couple were married in Hawaii, states would need separate legislation to specifically deny such status to this special category of married couples.

To my knowledge, none of the 33 member communions of the National Council of Churches has affirmed the legitimacy of gay love in a broad enough fashion to pass as denominational policy, though many communions are painfully divided on the issue. In the San Francisco Bay Area, two Lutheran and two American Baptist congregations were recently expelled from their national affiliations for openly celebrating gay "wedding" celebrations.

In the summer of 1992, at the ministers' urging, our local church council sent a letter to the full membership asking for feedback on the question of—at the discretion of the ministers—celebrating ceremonies in our sanctuary whose fundamental purpose would be to bless the commitment in fidelity of two people of the same sex. With the response divided but a clear majority supporting such a ministry initiative, we proceeded on the pastoral staff to work out parameters and definitions which we felt were consonant with our theology and our pastoral judgment. Since that time, we have celebrated perhaps twenty such ceremonies in our church—and I think it is fair to say that it has been a strongly positive experience from a ministry point-of-view.

One poignant experience crystallizes why my belief in the fundamental goodness in this ministry has grown

since 1992. I was puttering around the sanctuary one afternoon, when I noticed an older couple lingering around the church and garden. Finally, my tasks caused me to pass near them, and so I said hello and asked if I could be of any assistance to them. They then shared with me that their lesbian daughter had been married in a ceremony a couple of months before in our church (I remembered instantly the couple, though I did not officiate for that occasion). They had just returned again from North Carolina and had dropped by to spend some time in the church that had so deeply impressed them.

As we talked, they shared with me in voices full of emotion how their lives had been so enriched as they tried to understand their daughter better. Their friends were incapable of extending any support, and the type of ceremony

I believe the more powerful biblical witness lies upon deeper principles of truth that emerge within larger themes, and it is here that I am discovering confidence in a growing support for the possibility of gay love being rooted in divine love.

shared in our church, one that honored their daughter's life and love commitment, would have been impossible in any of the churches where they live. I doubt I can adequately convey in print the feeling that rose up in me during that conversation, but it was one of two particular epiphanic experiences in which I suddenly felt an overwhelming presence of the Lord confirming what we were doing.

I want to share, especially for the benefit of my more conservative brothers and sisters in the Swedenborgian Church, that I labored considerably over some hard-to-resolve reservations about going forward with this back in 1992. Understanding gay love has been a specialty interest of mine dating to the years before I became a Swedenborgian when I was still in training for ministry

at a Disciples of Christ seminary. I have gone out of my way to study the academic literature on the subject for fifteen years, and it is true that many years ago I became emotionally committed to supporting gay people in the face of what I felt was blatant discrimination. This bias has inspired me to find a higher theological basis that would help me understand my passionate feeling that somehow gay love "works" in the subtler byways of divine order.

But still, I could not rid myself of what I told the church council was "the final 5 percent"—a certain hard reluctance to actually create new policy in religion. I had images of myself officiating in the temple sanctuary with two men standing before me, and I felt an anxiety that I was being somehow naive and foolishly sentimental, that I was in fact allowing myself to be recruited into

a spiritually bogus sham and was actively creating an abomination in the Lord's sanctuary. This concern was no minor matter, but going with the congregation's provisional support and my colleague the Rev. Dr. Rachel Rivers' ardent commitment, I took my "95

percent" conviction into the arena of actual ministry for the first time.

My two epiphanic experiences, as well as the consistent body of experience, has only strengthened one of my two fundamental reasons for advocating church-sanctioned gay blessings. And that is the "pastoral truth" in the feeling-state of extending the church's support and blessing to people who do not experience their love as evil. I have found an almost comical similarity to heterosexual couples in the interior life of gay couples that I have been able to glimpse. In such a confusing and subtle area of human experience, I feel the church should take its risks on the side of compassion.

The second reason is theological. Only a tiny few biblical passages seem to

(Continued on page 142)

St. Louis Community Outreach through *Light in my Darkness*

Ann Graber Westermann

When members of our church, the Church of the Open Word, learned that the St. Louis Central Library in conjunction with the American Federation for the Blind planned a special Helen Keller exhibit, we saw an opportunity for greater community interaction. The library exhibit during July centered on the life-long contributions of Helen Keller that resulted in a major shift in consciousness on how handicapped and disabled persons are perceived the world over. Here was an example of how one life of courage, committed to service, relieved the plight of countless others.

In the spirit of cooperation, our church undertook a major community outreach and service project. We invited Dr. Ray Silverman, a minister in the Lord's New Church in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, who had revised and edited Helen Keller's spiritual autobiography (honoring her original plea for editorial assistance) to come to St. Louis to tell about her spiritual life. Silverman had spent years reorganizing the materials of Helen Keller's book, *My Religion* (published by Doubleday in 1927), according to her original wishes. At last, Helen Keller found an editor in Ray Silverman who grasped her mystical nature and who appreciated her lyrical style, calling her "The greatest prose poet of the century." The book was recently published under a new title, *Light in my Darkness*, by the Swedenborg Foundation.

In anticipation of Dr. Silverman's coming to give a public lecture at our church, numerous copies of *Light in my Darkness* were donated to area libraries. Complementary copies were distributed as a neighborly gesture to some nearby book stores which specialize in inspirational materials, along with invitations to the lecture presentation, "The Spiritual Journey of Helen Keller." Although the story of Helen Keller's remarkable life is well known, what is not so well known is her belief in the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg, whose spiritual visions helped her discover what she called her "light in my darkness and voice in my silence." Dr. Silverman enhanced his lecture presentation with video excerpts from Helen Keller's life and work around the world. His presentation was followed by a reception and book signing—until we ran out of books.

Ray spoke very movingly about the spiritual awakening and illumination Helen Keller experienced when she discovered the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg at age sixteen. While reading *Heaven and Hell* in braille, she stated, "I bury my fingers in this deep river of light." She understood the New Church to be a loving way of understanding the world and being of service to the world. The universal brotherhood of humankind and the immediate presence of a loving God were the great messages she found in Swedenborg's writings. Her version of Christianity



Although the story of Helen Keller's remarkable life is well known, what is not so well known is her belief in the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg, whose spiritual visions helped her discover what she called her "light in my darkness and voice in my silence."

was universal, all encompassing; she believed that every human life is unique and sacred, having great spiritual potential; that there is dignity in all true religious paths. She found confirmation for what she knew to be true in her own heart in the teachings of Swedenborg and eagerly embraced them. Helen Keller's religious faith became her steadfast strength throughout her life. Her belief was unflinching and courageous, mingling humility and nobility in a long life dedicated to the upliftment of others.

Although this community outreach endeavor was very labor-intensive, particularly for those of our congregation who organized and coordinated the event, handled the media publicity, distributed books, handed out invitations, hosted the reception, and did the inevitable clean-up, it also brought about increased cooperation and community building we would not have experienced had we not seized the opportunity to participate. May Ray Silverman's inspiring presentation aimed at "raising consciousness to live our lives in service" become a further incentive to let our light shine more brightly as a New Church and become a spiritual lighthouse in this St. Louis neighborhood—visible to all seekers of Light, Love and Wisdom.

I wish I could say the house was packed for "The Spiritual Journey of Helen Keller." (Unfortunately, there

were numerous memorial services for the victims of the downed TWA Flight 800 on that Sunday afternoon, July 21. St. Louis is a hub for TWA and there was much sorrow here connected with that tragedy). If we lacked quantity (about 30 people attended), there was no lack in quality. Ray's presentation was magnificent. The audience was very receptive and enthralled by his insights into this remarkable woman's spiritual life, sustained through the inspiration she received from the teachings of Swedenborg.

Ann Graber Westermann is a member of the Swedenborgian Church in St. Louis. She is currently serving on the board of the Church of the Open Word. ❖

SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS

[Editor's Note:] The Messenger continues our '96 Convention theme with personal anecdotes from Louise Woofenden, Robert McCluskey, and Brenda Hollweger.

Harvard Square Meal Program: Then and Now

Robert McCluskey

In 1982, as part of my field education work for the Swedenborg School of Religion, I assumed the administration of the Cambridge Chapel (which was at that time without a full-time pastor). During a meeting of the Harvard Square Clergy Association in 1982, in which I was participating, the pastor of the Lutheran Church asked if anyone else had noticed an increase of people "knocking on our doors" in search of food or shelter. After exploring the political causes of such an increase, we turned to the practical concern of dealing with the effects. Although this issue had not been on our agenda, and the different member churches came with different viewpoints and resources, by the end of the meeting we had agreed to create a shelter space at the Lutheran Church, and to initiate a weekly meal program in Harvard Square.

Along with other volunteers, I became involved in the meal program. Christ Church (Episcopal) offered the use of its community room to prepare and serve meals; member churches were contacted about supplying monthly volunteers, potential food suppliers were contacted. Because of my "dual status" at the time, students from SSR and members of the Cambridge Society both responded with faithful and useful presence.

About two months later, the Harvard Square Meal Program served its first meal to about 60 homeless, elderly, and lower income families and individuals. To this day, the philosophy of this program is one of mutual support: volunteers sit and eat with those who come in need; clean up is shared by all; a resource table and committee was soon developed to respond to the many and complex needs of people beyond a good meal. Friendships were formed across social and economic divides.

For me, the greatest thrill of this whole process came one evening about

10 years later, when I found myself in Harvard Square on a Thursday night, and wondered what, if anything, was going on. Sure enough, Christ Church was buzzing with activity, filled with people who were either helping out or being helped, and often both. I was greeted by old friends, introduced to new ones, and reminded, in the most concrete terms imaginable, of the goodness of the Lord's Providence to those who honor it.

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



God Working through the Artist

Louise Woofenden

Back in 1981 when I was putting out *Five Smooth Stones*, I took a drawing course to enable me to do a better job of illustrating the magazine. In this course we were introduced to pencil, charcoal, conte crayon, pastel, sumi ink, and in the last two sessions, watercolor. I had no idea that I would fall in love with this last medium and take watercolor workshops for the next 14 years. This was to become my recreation, my "therapy." If someone liked or bought a painting, it was a peripheral bonus for me.

Whenever we develop the abilities we have, our work becomes more than a source of personal pleasure, however. God gives each of us particular aptitudes so that we can be useful in our own unique way. Every sincere artist works constantly to perfect technique, to experiment, to learn new methods. But in talking about how a really satisfying work has been achieved, the artists I

know agree that we can not always tell you just what we did to make a painting "work," but that "the good ones paint themselves." In other words, the vision becomes embodied because of a force working through the artist. If we are awake to spiritual reality, we must attribute this force to God. As a result our work will be a happy expression of the way God works through us.

Louise Woofenden is a member of the Swedenborgian Church in Elmwood, Mass. She has served the denomination in many capacities and is a former archivist at the Swedenborg School of Religion.



Facing New Challenges

Brenda Hollweger

During the last year much has happened in my life including a move to southern Maryland from Missouri to live on the Chesapeake within the sound of waves upon the shore—a reminder of my life in England nineteen years ago.

There are a number of "uses" I feel I have contributed towards in the past year, the principle one being a loving support to David, my husband, while in the process of making his decision to accept a new job offer on the East Coast. It was particularly hard to make the three-year transfer from the Midwest where he had lived for over thirty years, and where we had made our first connection in the mid-eighties at the St. Louis church with our loving Swedenborgian family. Prospects of early retirement were put on hold as he looked at working on another lengthy project with McDonnell Douglas, although it would be much more challenging and fun than the work he had been currently involved with.

The second "use" where I felt a sense of gladness was volunteering as a

(Continued on page 142)

Serve The Lord With Gladness

(Continued from page 141)



storyteller reading stories to children from first to fifth grades at The Delmar Harvard school in University City in St. Louis just before first class one day a week for a couple of months in the spring of '95. The rapt attention on some of their faces was a joy and I felt I had helped start their school day with something that was fun.

Thirdly, I continued some volunteering in January of '95 with "Room at the Inn" an organization set up to house and feed homeless women and their children in different churches for each night of the month when needed. I was called in when they wanted someone to stay for the evening or overnight at the convent where their headquarters were, and when no church was able to house them. I would help prepare their evening meal and sleep the night in a sleeping bag on a mattress on the floor, as did the clients. This was the hardest part, as I found myself in the minority;

also a little scary, as one of the kids was a tall black sixteen-year-old, and I had never been in such a situation before. However, I comforted myself that I was doing the Christian thing and that at least Jesus might approve of what I was doing—my theory being that to follow in his teachings of charity to those in need, was what being a Christian was all about. I would then take one of the young girls to school the next morning while her mother went to work. The greatest joy was seeing this woman and her two children eventually find a small home for her family with a garden, and to later visit her in the early summer in order to give her my old power lawn mower, so that the same sixteen year old I had been afraid of before (her son), could mow their lawn.

Brenda Hollweiger is a member of the St. Louis Swedenborgian Church and the 2nd vice-president in the Alliance of New Church Women. ❖

Risking on the Side of Compassion

(Continued from page 139)

condemn homosexual expression, but for a Swedenborgian, there are big problems with all of them on the literal level. None of them are to me persuasive or in any way compellingly authoritative. I believe the more powerful biblical witness lies upon deeper principles of truth that emerge within larger themes, and it is here that I am discovering confidence in a growing support for the possibility of gay love being rooted in divine love.

In our explicit theology, Swedenborg describes conjugal love as the universal and mysterious power of attraction that always encompasses a complementarity between masculine and feminine principles (and, of course, it is abundantly clear in *Conjugal Love* that every person has both principles active within themselves). In the gay community, this complementarity is not absent, but is instead very widespread—perhaps even universal. The conjugal principle, as in the rest of nature, seems to be abidingly present and doing its magic in

homosexual attractions everywhere. Since both masculine and feminine principles already exist within our individual psychic structure as a necessary inner soil for merging with another person, the possibilities within the conjugal attraction dynamic is considerably wider than the broad center (heterosexuality) has frequently assumed.

In real life I can find no genuinely persuasive differences in the spiritual conjugality in gays and heterosexuals. When you add the dramatic factor that the vast majority of gays have never had any other attraction dynamic within them, even as small children, and when you witness time and again gay relationships as being creative, giving, and supportive of the larger social fabric, then for me a very secure platform exists for conducting a ministry both supporting, affirming, and journeying with the gay community.

Conjugal relationships are a most mysterious matter, even when dealing

solely with heterosexuality. I profess no final answers. By request of the editor, I am simply sharing my journey with this complex but extremely important issue. I continue to pray for guidance as we all together seek insight and wisdom into the full nature of conjugal love.

[Editors Note:] The above article is an expansion of James Lawrence's editorial published in the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church's newsletter of May 1996. At the time I read it, I asked him to share some version of his thoughts with Messenger readers, with the understanding that gay marriage is an important spiritual / human issue that warrants a thoughtful and well-articulated discussion. Readers, as always, are encouraged to respond.

The Rev. Dr. James F. Lawrence is co-minister with the Rev. Dr. Rachel Rivers at the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church. ❖

Spiritual Growth Within Community SSR Retreat



*In Tree: Susannah Currie, Ted Klein.
Foreground: George Dole, Bill Shakalis*

*Front: Adam Seward, Wilma Wake, Nadine Cotton, Ellen Shaw, Jonathan Mitchell.
Middle: Andy Stinson, Bill Shakalis, Carl Blenkin
Back: Ted Klein, Minheui Cheon, George Dole*



Led by Wilma Wake, the Swedenborg School of Religion Fall Retreat was held on September 6 and 7 in Framingham, Mass. Nine of the ten on-campus students attended: Minheui Cheon, Nadine Cotton, Susannah Currie, Jun-chol Lee, Jonathan Mitchell, Adam Seward, Bill Shakalis, Ellen Shaw, and Andy Stinson. Young Min Kim was not able to attend because of his duties as pastor of the Church of the Little Grain in Brooklyn. Faculty and family of students were also invited.

The theme of the retreat was "spiritual growth within community." Each of the participants had the opportunity to relate something about his or her spiritual journey over the summer, and to begin a journal in response to a number of questions and thoughts outlined by Wilma. We reflected on

what each of us could contribute to the community this year. The retreat was a wonderful way to come together after a busy summer, during which many of the students had worked at church camps, churches, and other centers, and to welcome Jun-chol Lee to the community. Faculty had also been busy over the summer with attendance at the annual convention and various other functions, and with working on manuscripts for publication.

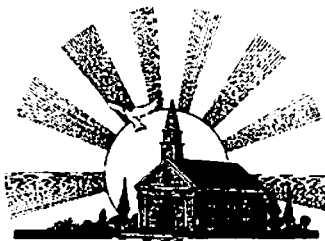
In addition to the ten on-campus students, there are two ministers working to complete M.A. degrees, five students in the lay leader program, two doing study toward worship leadership, and five students actively working on correspondence courses, for a total of 24 students. ❖

SSR Workshop Hosted by Urbana Church

Bob Kirven led a workshop on worship and Wilma Wake led a workshop on pastoral care for lay and worship leader candidates from August 25 to 29. The Urbana Society hosted the workshops, which were attended by Betsy Coffman and Dick Sommer of Urbana, and Sharon Billings and Juliet Hadden of Kemper Road Swedenborgian Church.

Participants were given an opportunity to practice skills and exchange ideas with faculty and the other students within a local church setting. Next summer's topics will be religious education and church administration. SSR hopes to do more workshops like this in local church settings.

—Mary Kay Klein, President SSR



*Left to Right:
Betsy Coffman,
Juliet Hadden,
Sharon Billings,
Wilma Wake*



*Left to Right:
Dick Sommer,
Sharon Billings,
Juliet Hadden,
Betsy Coffman*

WHY I'M A SWEDENBORGIAN

[Editor's Note:] Swedenborgian ministers Steve Pults and Ron Brugler share with Leaguers how and why they became Swedenborgians. Reprinted from Clear Blue Sky, the official publication of the Swedenborgian Church Youth League, June 1996.

Steve Pults

Recently, a number of you have said things like, "what is our church about anyway?" Or "I would really like to know what our church teaches. I don't know much about it." So, we thought we would include an article from your ministers in each issue of *Clear Blue Sky*, taking a shot at answering those questions.

When Kristin and Ari asked me to write something for February's edition, I found myself thinking about what attracted me to this church in the first place. I guess two words would say it best: acceptance and understanding.

I grew up in a religious environment that said, "Don't question, have faith." Or "The Bible says God created the world in seven days and that's the way it

I... found people who were open, caring, and who encouraged me to search and explore rather than telling me what to think or believe.

is. Don't believe those atheist scientists who say we come from apes." Or my personal favorite (I'm being cynical here), "If we don't convert people and 'save' them, they will go to hell." (But what about people born in China who have never heard of Jesus?) "Well, you see now why it's so important to send missionaries into the world." I just couldn't buy into it and at about age seventeen blew off religion completely.

When I came across Swedenborg's books, I read something very different—that God loves everyone and doesn't send anyone to hell (we can make our own without any help, thank you). That we are intended for heaven. That regardless if someone is Hindu, Muslim, Jew, Christian, or has no faith tradition, if

they are seeking to live the highest good they know, they can know heaven. "I can get into this," I remember thinking to myself. Swedenborg also wrote that the Bible was not a science book, but about you and me coming to life. That the creation story speaks in symbols and images of our own growth and change, not about some planet orbiting the sun. I first came into contact with the Swedenborgian Church in Seattle and found people who were open, caring, and who encouraged me to search and explore rather than telling me what to think or believe. And part of what I'm about is wanting to give you a safe place at our retreats where you can do the same.

When we first become aware there is more to life than perhaps some 70 to 90 orbits around the sun; when we first question what is the meaning of our lives, we are experiencing a light being turned on in us, "Let there be light!" As we sort out what gives us meaning (kind of like water is vital to our physical life), we are sorting the waters above from the waters below. As we start to understand and make connections, we experience ourselves "branching out" and "bearing fruit." When we realize indeed our lives do have meaning and we are loved, we experience that greater light by day and follow the lesser lights by night even when the feelings aren't there. We can bring all kinds of life into the world from the "birds of the air" to the "fish of the sea" to "every living creature" as we learn to create, invent, care, understand, and just be ourselves. I've said it a lot but it's really true. I love to watch you grow up. Each of you has so many gifts to offer in your own unique ways. And part of what this church, the League, is about for me is to give you the space, the acceptance and the understanding to let you do what you do so very well.

The Rev. Steve Pults is the minister of the Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound, Washington and is the SCYL minister.

Ron Brugler

In 1969, I was a high-school senior in Zanesfield, Ohio. Although I wanted to be an elementary school teacher, I really didn't give it much thought because my family had little money. I was one of seven children. My father had been injured in a car accident and couldn't work. We lived primarily on what my mother earned cleaning houses and doing other odd jobs. A college education was something I knew we couldn't afford. I remember sending away for information on VISTA and the Peace Corps. Like any high-school senior, I longed to know what I wanted to do with my life. Most of all, I wanted to serve people.

I might also add that I was quite active in the Methodist Church. I was president of our youth group, and always seemed to be doing different things around the church. My minister suggested that I think about ministry. That gave me quite a laugh—at least until it came time to register for the draft lottery. You see, the Vietnam war was nearing its peak and the United States needed soldiers. Since few of us were volunteering, they held a lottery by drawing out various birth dates from those turning 18. The winners, those in the upper 100 dates or so, went to Vietnam. What a prize. I had a relatively low number, so I didn't worry about it much.

One day my high-school counselor called me in and suggested that I apply for scholarships. I did and received one to Findlay College. It was not enough to pay my full tuition, so it was useless. Then, during my senior year we had a student teacher from Urbana College. She was incredible. We spent hours talking. She seemed to open up a whole new world for me. She suggested that I go talk to someone at Urbana to see if I could attend classes there.

The first day I went to Urbana I knew it was the place for me. I'll never forget the financial aid officer telling me that there was no money for scholarships. I

(Continued on page 146)

Our Swedenborgian Heritage

Twenty-fifth in a series

Yet Another Heresy Trial!

"One is struck in studying the history of the New Church with the fact that most fruitful growth has come not from deliberate efforts to build up a church, but in very indirect ways."

—Frederick Crownfield



Two of Swedenborg's contemporaries, Drs. Beyer and Rosen, were tried in Sweden for heresy, for holding the New Church doctrines (the case was dropped in 1773). There have been lawsuits to invalidate wills, based on the charge that the maker of the will was insane because he or she held the doctrines of the New Church. The following account is adapted from a letter by Mary E. Goddard, dated November 19, 1981 (SSR archives), and an article by Frederick Crownfield in the July 2, 1930 Messenger.

The Rev. Holland Weeks, fifty years old, minister of the First Congregational Church in Abington, Massachusetts, was well versed in the Bible and orthodox Christianity. He preached only what he believed from the heart, studying, pondering and praying over points of doctrine, ceasing to promulgate each one as he ceased to believe it. In the process, says his granddaughter, Mary Goddard, he discarded belief after belief, until "he found he was in the awful position of a minister almost without a creed."

In this theological evolution Weeks had been aware of Swedenborg's teachings for twenty years, but had not been strongly influenced by them. In 1818 he read seriously and

became a convert.

Without acknowledging the source, he began preaching his new faith. He was still highly esteemed by his congregation, and his sermons were said to be the work of a master. But when it became known in 1820 that Weeks got his ideas from Swedenborg, the teachings were immediately scorned by the same people who had praised them. He was changed overnight from a revered member of the church to a pariah. A brother minister greeted Weeks with the words, "Mr. Weeks, I wish you were dead."

A council of ministers and lay people from seven churches was summoned for a heresy trial. Presiding was Dr. Samuel Worcester of Salem, uncle of our Thomas Worcester, but not a New Churchman. Present at the trial was a close New Church friend, the Rev. Warren Goddard.

The first charge was "Mr. Weeks denies the belief of the church that the world will be destroyed or burned." Weeks answered, "I believe that 'one generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth forever'" (Ecclesiastes 1:4). There was a dead pause, Goddard says, and he saw the corners of Dr. Worcester's mouth twitch as he covered his mouth with his hand.

Numerous other charges followed. Weeks openly affirmed that he did not hold the orthodox doctrines on the resurrection of the body, the Trinity, or the second coming of the Lord. To each charge he replied with a quote from the Bible. He was not unwilling to debate the charges, but discussion

was damped by his calm assurance and by the uncontrovertible Bible quotes.

When the jury returned, it said that while Mr. weeks' character was not to be maligned, "the writings and sentiments in question. . .are anti-scriptural and dangerous." The verdict was excommunication.

Widespread publicity caused a furor. People investigated New Church teachings, and the result was not quite what the jury had anticipated. The New Churches in Abington, Brockton, Bridgewater, and Elmwood Massachusetts sprang up in response to the trial. A number of members of the First Congregational Church transferred their membership to these churches.

Mr. Weeks, however, soon left Massachusetts, and after a missionary journey through the South settled on a farm he owned in Henderson, New York. He established a New Church society there. He also owned land in Vermont, and had close friends there, among whom we may assume he spread the doctrines. He died in 1843.

Weeks' legacy continues to this day through the three (of the four) remaining societies, and through the presence in the church of many people descended from him, including Goddards and Burnhams and their descendants.



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

WHY I'M A SWEDENBORGIAN

(Continued from page 144)

started to cry. But you know what he said? He told me to be there for the start of the fall quarter. He would work something out.

Well, I went to Urbana that September, still wanting to be a school teacher. I forgot all about the draft and having no money. I just went to classes and did what was then normal for college students to do (I won't say any more about that!). One day I happened to read a newspaper. I learned that my draft number was approaching the top of the list. I decided to apply for what is known as Conscientious Objector, and went home to ask my minister to help me. Basically he told me that service to one's country is a wonderful learning opportunity and that there is no nobler way to die. He didn't use those words, but

In these classes I first learned about Swedenborg. I learned that he didn't believe in the God that I didn't believe in either.

that is what he meant. I never saw him again.

Eventually I went to see Dorothea Harvey, who taught religion at Urbana College. I had been told she could help me. I had never met her before, as she didn't teach any of my classes. Meeting her changed my life. She asked me about God, faith, and the meaning and purpose of life. Such simple questions. Most importantly, she listened to my answers. She didn't turn me away, and she helped me to receive my CO status with the draft board.

Several weeks later she called me into her office to ask me if I would take one of her religion courses. I thought this was funny, because with the war and all, I wasn't even sure that I believed in God anymore, and that's exactly what I told her. And do you know what she said? She said, "Ron, that's why I want you to take my courses." I did.

In these classes I first learned about Swedenborg. I learned that he didn't believe in the God that I didn't believe in either. But he offered an alternative that I did believe in. I learned about Providence and how God takes care of us and leads us through life. I thought "Wow! That's what has been at work in my life!" I also learned about respecting differences of opinion, of trusting God's presence in other people, and finding our meaning in life from *use*. Everything I learned about Swedenborg I already knew, because I had experienced it. It was real.

Never once did I decide to enter ministry. That may sound strange, but it's true. I just knew that I was meant to be a part of this loving, caring church. It was my home.

The Rev. Ron Brugler is pastor of the Swedenborgian Church in Kitchener, Ontario. ❖

Send Those Stamps!

Trevor Woofenden

For the past 50 or 60 years, denomination members have been raising money for missionary purposes by collecting used postage stamps. According to the previous administrator, Phillip Alden, Sr., the Stamp Program was begun by the Rev. Leslie Marshall "sometime in the 30s." People would send Mr. Marshall their used stamps and he would, in turn, sell them in bulk to stamp dealers who used them in introductory packets for beginning philatelists. The money raised was then turned over to the former Board of Missions to support our missionary efforts.

In a recent interview, Mr. Alden recalled that Mr. Marshall became more and more involved in the program as the years went by. Eventually it got to the point where he was actually putting together the packets and selling them himself. More time consuming, but it produced more money for the missions that way.

In later years, when Mr. Alden took over the program, it continued to produce a steady trickle of income for outreach under his able guidance.

So here we are in the 90s, and the Stamp Program is still actively raising funds (be they ever so small) to help support our current missions: the Living Waters HIV Ministry and the Stone House aka the Swedenborgian Spiritual Growth Center. These two vital outreach programs, honestly, could use every penny we can send, and all you have to do is save your used stamps and send them in.

Currently there are about two dozen participating members who regularly send in stamps, some of them several times a year. Special thanks go out to: Alvena Unruh, Lillian How, Elizabeth Hudnall, Mrs. H.T. Smailer, Patte LeVan, the Rev. Gertrude Tremblay, L. Greer, Doris Francis, the Rev. Kathleen Easton-Gilhooly, the Women's Alliance of the Virginia St. church, Louise Woofenden, Nan Paget, Adrienne Frank, and the late Carl Lundberg, who sent his entire stamp collection. Thanks to all of you. (And apologies to any contributor whose name I omitted). Stamps have come in from all over the map, from Edmonton to Dallas, from California to Mauritius.

After polling a few participants (it's a relative thing!), here's a simple 3-step process to make it easy for anyone to get involved.

First, address an envelope to:

Stamp Program
P.O. Box 463
Haydenville MA 01039
USA

Keep this envelope at your desk, mail table, or wherever you usually open your mail.

Second, each day when the mail comes in, simply cut or tear off the stamps leaving about 1/4" margin around them and drop them in the Stamp Program envelope. Please note that

(Continued on page 149)

A THANKSGIVING SHAGGY CHICKEN STORY



Patte LeVan

The chicken appeared in my garden one morning as though she'd been painted into the landscape, pecking and scratching and making contented little cluck noises. I had no idea where she came from. Our neighborhood has a lot of barking dogs running around, variously referred to as loose canines, the salivation army, and "@#* +@!". But nobody around here keeps chickens. I called several neighbors to ask if they knew anyone who might have lost a small black chicken. No clue, but one of them speculated that she might have crossed the highway. I viewed her with new respect. Not only was she a survivor, she could be walking around with the definitive answer to why the chicken crossed the road.

She was still around the next day, and the next, pecking the young leaves off my strawberry plants and destroying other edibles in the garden. Amazing how much damage one chicken can do. I called Vee Lumpkin, a woman who writes a weekly column in the *Julian News* called, "The Joys of Country Living." I explained my predicament and she offered, as I had hoped, to add chicken adoption to her other joys. "It isn't a rooster, is it?" she asked. "I really don't want any more roosters."

I scratched around in my mind for scraps of old chicken lore. "I don't think so," I said. "It doesn't crow." On the other hand, I hadn't seen any eggs lying about, either.

"Well," she said, "if you have a box you can put her in, why don't you bring her on over to the Town Hall? I'm here every day till 5."

"Sure," I said, "I've got a cat carrier. I'll be over shortly."

I took the cat carrier out to the garden and set it down where the chicken was pecking away at the now very ragged strawberry plants. She seemed to take no notice of the proceedings until I was within a few feet of her. Then she skittered out of reach and continued her pecking. This little dance step was repeated an embarrassing number of times, as she adroitly eluded all my attempts to capture her. What made me think I could just walk over to her, pick her up and shove her into the carrier as I would my aging cat?

I tried talking to her. "This is for your own good," I said. "You're going to a nice place where you'll be with other chickens." She walked away faster. It was apparently the wrong thing to say. For all I knew she could have been a loner, with the mindset that hell was other chickens.

My young neighbor's boyfriend walked by as I was finishing my speech. "Can you help me catch this chicken?" I asked.

He looked dubious. "Does it bite?"

"No, no," I assured him, "just a little peck here and there, nothing serious."

"I gotta go see about a job," he said. "Why don't you put some food in the cat carrier, then she'll walk in and start eating and you can just shut the door." Of course, why hadn't I thought of that. A dish of bird seed in the back of the carrier.

Three days later, I had lost count of how many times I tried to sneak up and close the door of the cat carrier while the chicken was inside eating the birdseed. No matter how quiet I was she executed this astonishing series of helicopter moves—back out, straight up and away, all very quick and simultaneous accompanied by horrendous squawks.

By now there were several messages on my machine from Vee, wondering if I might be having a problem catching the chicken. I was too mortified to answer.

When my friend across the road came home from work, I confessed to her that I'd been outsmarted by a chicken. "Hey, I just remembered," she said, "we caught a pheasant once with a sheet."

"Was it flat or fitted?" I asked.

"Are you serious?"

"I don't know," I said broodingly. "I'm not sure of anything anymore."

The next afternoon my neighbor's boyfriend came by again with his friend Steve, who is multi-skilled but as elusive in his way as the chicken (but that's obviously another story). They asked if I had some work for them. "Wait," I said. I ran inside and snatched the sheet off the guest bed. "Take this sheet," I told them, "and catch the chicken. Don't hurt her, I want her taken alive, but be alert, she's incredibly clever. And hurry. We're losing the light." (In a crisis, I tend to sound like a bad director of a B-movie. In the three years I've been here, I've grown accustomed to those sidelong glances which remarks of this kind seem to elicit).

They set about the business at hand, and in a very few minutes, bloodcurdling squawks spelled success at last. They eased her into the cat carrier, then into the trunk of my car. I sped up to Town Hall, but Vee had already left. I cruised around town until I found somebody who knew where she lives. "I have to get this chicken out of my trunk as soon as possible," I explained, "Because, you know, it's hot." The young woman said, "I'll go with you, you'll never find it alone."

That's one of the things I love about living in a town the size of Julian. Somebody can usually find whoever you're looking for, and folks respond to a real emergency when they see one. The young woman never even questioned whether "hot" was referring to the weather or the cloudy status of the chicken's ownership. We drove up Vee's fabled dirt road and

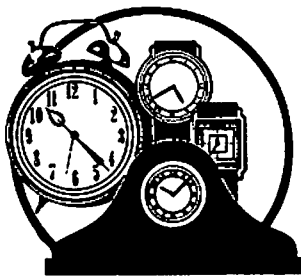
(Continued on page 151)

Time

Paul Zacharias

Time is indeed a fascinating subject; countless books, poems and songs have been written about it. And certainly we've all thought about it, from "time to time." We can well remember how, in childhood, time crawled in the weeks before Christmas, and how time raced by during the summer holidays. We've all experienced events during which time seems to be stalled, while in other happenings we are almost oblivious to the passage of time. And as we move into our senior years time takes on a whole new dimension: we no longer punch the "time clock"; there are fewer external demands on our time; we have more time to fulfill our heart's desires.

Swedenborg's concept of time is extremely helpful, as these two brief passages from *Arcana Coelestia* illustrate: "When anyone enters a state of love or heavenly affection he enters an angelic state; that is to say, it is as though time does not exist." (AC 3827) "That time equals state, is because there is no time in the other life. The progression of the life



of spirits and angels appears as if in time, but they have no notion of time, but rather, a notion of state and its progression." (AC 4901)

Swedenborg is telling us that in the spiritual world there is no such thing as time as we know it, though there is the definite perception of time and space. But instead of days, weeks and years, people in heaven are keenly aware of changing inner states of consciousness. And, ideally, this is God's intention for us in this life too. In AC 3356 we read, "Even (in this world) man is not in time insofar as he is in a state of affections."

All of this suggests to me that perhaps we need to rethink our personal gift of time. What does time really mean to us? How do we use it? As we know only too well, "The moving finger, having writ, moves on." Can we begin to think of time as being all of one piece, one seamless fabric? That is, where we treasure past memories (we can build upon the best from our past); we also look forward to what lies ahead with enthusiasm and wonderment; and all the while we are fully alive in the present here and now. . . the ETERNAL NOW. This is difficult for us to do because we are so conditioned by physical time and space. Difficult, but by no means impossible. Always the choice is ours. In so many places Swedenborg reminds

us to take the "time" to reflect on these grand themes. As with everything else in life, time is a two-edged sword: we can be enslaved by it, or freed by it. That choice is ours.

When we stop and think about time in this light, we realize that time has only one purpose or meaning: it serves us as the process whereby we can evolve, change and grow spiritually. . . drawing ever closer to God and becoming more truly ourselves. This is why we are gifted with time, and this is how God makes angels. Time has only one objective and that is: to what extent have we grown, developed, improved as children of God over the past 40, 50, 60, 70 years of our lives!

Years ago the Rev. Anthony Regamey said that when John wrote in Rev. 21:5 "Behold, I make all things new," he meant that God has made life in such a way that every moment, as it comes to us, contains our entire past history. . . our endless future. . . and all the glories of the eternal now. Life really is completely new and fresh every moment. The challenge is—to live accordingly.

The Rev. Paul Zacharias is a retired Swedenborgian minister who serves the church in many capacities. He lives in Kitchener, Ontario. ❖

What is Mysticism?

(Continued from front cover)

Though at times he served as a professor in Paris and probably in Cologne, the bulk of his energies were devoted to preaching and directing the monks and nuns in his charge. Above everything else, the Meister Eckhart who has come down to us was a preacher and a spiritual master. Whatever his philosophical and theological presuppositions, his primary role in the sermons and the tractates, which taken together are the writings for which he is renowned, is that of a leader of souls. He led, he cajoled, he taught, and he exhorted his listeners toward what he knew as the ultimate salvific experiences.¹

In other words, to identify someone as

a mystic is no more than a rudimentary beginning of a description. It is one of those labels that can mean different things to different people; and whether we apply it to Swedenborg or reject it depends largely on what we take it to mean. At issue is the matter of how the Divine communicates with us, and surely we should be on guard against oversimplifications. Swedenborg has little use for people who proceeded "from terms to thought" instead of "from thought to terms" (*Arcana Coelestia* 4658). I suspect that the better we understand the nature and extent of his experience, the less we will be inclined to depend on a single term to

categorize it. There are too many possible answers to the question, "What is mysticism?"

Next Month: *Swedenborg's Mystical Experiences*, by Wilma Wake will appear in the December *Messenger*.

❖

¹ Robert K. C. Forman, *Meister Eckhart: The Mystic as Theologian: An Experiment in Methodology* (Rockport, MA: Element, 1991), p. 3.

The Rev. Dr. George F. Dole is professor of Bible, Language and Theology at the Swedenborg School of Religion in Newton, Mass. ❖

Cabinet Meeting Report

The Cabinet met August 18 thru 21, in the beautifully situated main building of the Fryeburg New Church Assembly. People were present representing all of the support units, the Council of Ministers and General Council. The Rev. Eric Allison met with the Cabinet for a day-and-a-half helping them to establish priorities as well as looking at ways to grow as a denomination.

A memo presented at the '96 Convention by the New York Association essentially regarding structure and personnel policies, was read by President Capon and discussed. After considerable discussion parts of it were referred to the Ad Hoc Committee for further consideration. The memo will also be before General Council in November.

A report from the chairperson of the Council of Ministers included the information that the Council is still looking for a new editor for *Our Daily Bread*,¹ that there will be no ministers' and spouses' retreat this year and that continuing training will be available for ministers, especially new ministers. A training program for ministers who wish to qualify to supervise field work for theological students will be held in January.

Consideration was given to the whole question of how funds are allotted to

churches and special ministries. Among the suggestions made was the inclusion of the Augmentation Fund with the Cabinet and General Council in the budgeting process. It was recommended that MINSU² and AFC review their criteria regarding grants to churches and present them to the Council of Ministers, General Council, and convention delegates for discussion and response at the 1997 convention in Kansas.

Other matters discussed included the need to increase the denomination's income, the matter of foreign ministries (which was referred to MINSU for appropriate action), any suggestions for improving our annual convention, including the Sunday morning service. President Capon always welcomes suggestions that might make our conventions more meaningful and enjoyable.

1. At this writing, the Council of Ministers Executive Committee has approved the search committee's recommendation for the new *Our Daily Bread* editor. An announcement and further details will appear in the December *Messenger*.

2. Ministries Support Unit (MINSU) is the name of the newly merged Pastoral Ministries and Growth and Outreach Support Units (PMSU and GOSU). MINSU held its first meeting September 12-15, in Seattle. A report on this meeting will appear in the December *Messenger*.

Betty Yenetchi, Secretary (Summarized by President Elwin Capon and annotated by the editor).

Send Those Stamps

(Continued from page 146)

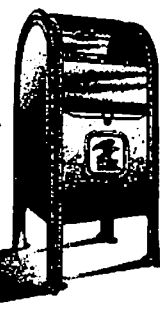
torn, taped, or otherwise marred stamps are unusable. Also, we don't need the full postmark unless it is very rare or unique, like a First Day of Issue, in which case we need the entire envelope.

Third, when it looks like there's enough in there, simply seal it and mail it. Remember, it may need a little extra postage, but that, too, will go to the same great cause!

So it's easy as 1-2-3 to become a part of a half-century long fund raiser and we would like to invite you to help continue the tradition. Everyone repeat after me: "I will start saving stamps for the Swedenborgian Church's Missions Stamp Program today."

With your help, our valuable outreach programs will have a few extra dollars in their budget. Thank you!

Trevor Woofenden is a third-generation Swedenborgian who has been collecting stamps for a long time. He is involved in a recently formed Swedenborgian group in Northampton, Mass. ❖



IMPORTANT CHURCH CALENDAR DATES

October	18-20	SSR Trustees—Boston area
October	20-22	Retirement Committee—Central Office
October	25-26	Urbana U. Trustees—Urbana, OH
November	8-9	Wayfarers Chapel Trustees
November	10-15	National Council of Churches—Chicago
November	16	Investment Committee—Newton
November	17	FPRSU—Newton
November	20-22	CAM—Newton
November	22-24	General Council—Newton

January	24-26	COM ExCom—Deland
January	27-31	SSR Supervisors training—Deland
February	21-22	Urbana Trustees
March	2-4	CAM—Newton
April	10-13	SSR Board—LaPorte, IN
June	6-7	Urbana Trustees
July	5-8	Council of Ministers—Hutchinson, KS
July	9-13	1997 Convention—Hutchinson, KS

TO THE EDITOR

LETTERS

Johnny Appleseed Sighting in Texas

Dear Editor:

I have been performing character storytelling of Johnny Appleseed in costume for several years at festivals, conference centers, schools and libraries. I am the official Johnny Appleseed for the Texas International Apple Festival held each July in Medina, Texas and I have also performed for three years at the Texas State Fair in Dallas. I believe that presenting the life of John Chapman to children and adults offers a good role model not available on TV, movies or video games.

My research on John Chapman led me to the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. I quickly discovered that Swedenborgian churches do not exist in Texas to my knowledge. However, I did discover a small collection of Swedenborg's writings available in our local library. I would like to offer my address for *The Messenger* subscribers who might like to correspond with Johnny Appleseed in Texas. Being isolated down here makes it difficult to learn more and have support from folks interested in Swedenborg.

Just wanted to let your readers know that Johnny Appleseed is alive and well in the Texas Hill Country and Emanuel Swedenborg is frequently introduced to audiences across the region!

Isolated in Texas.

Bill Mallory
Johnny Appleseed Storytelling
P.O. Box 229
Kerrville, TX 78029

World Community Day 1996

World Community Day is an annual event of Church Women United,

observed on the first Friday of November, that brings together Protestant, Roman Catholic, Orthodox and other Christian women in a worship experience traditionally focusing on issues of justice and peace. This year's service deals with violence against women, a national issue that impacts on our communities and has global implications.

The 1996 World Community Day service will be observed November 1. It was written for CWU by the Rev. Marie Fortune, Founder and Executive Director, and the Rev. Thelma B. Burgonio-Watson, Staff, respectively, for the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, Seattle, Washington. The Center has been a leader in working with judicatories, congregations, clergy and victims of violence against women, including violence that occurs within church congregations.

The worship names and describes situations where violence has been committed against women in many parts of the world, both in Biblical times and today. The writers call on us as Christians to remember, confess, name and respond to the violence in our lives. They raise questions about the individual's and the church's response to the problem of violence against women. In powerful dramatic fashion—through Biblical and present day stories, poems and songs—women's experiences of violence are recounted. Participants will recite a litany based on the Psalmist's cries to God for help and reassurance (Chpt. 22). Those attending are invited to bring a candle or flower to remember a victim of violence.

Offerings from "Women and Violence and the Church" will support the women's ecumenical ministries of Church Women United for peace and justice, including its commitments to advancing the social and economic power of women.



Additional resource materials and background information on the 1996 World Community Day may be obtained by contacting the national offices of:

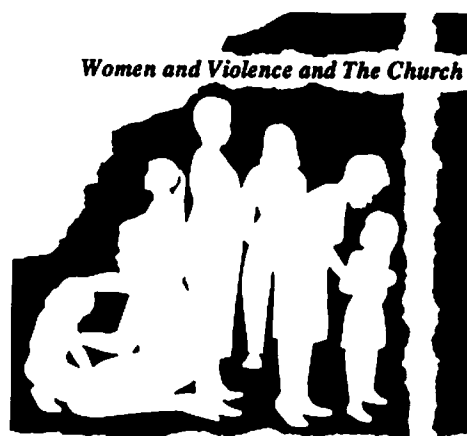


Church Women United
475 Riverside Drive, Room 812,
New York, NY 10115

(800) CWU-5551, ext. 3339.



Women and Violence and The Church



BAPTISMS

Dzeryk—Shynabreann Irene Dzeryk, daughter of Kenneth and Deborah Dzeryk, born August 23, 1994, was baptized into the Christian faith August 25, 1996, at their home in Legal, Alberta. The Rev. Erwin Reddekopp officiated. Irene Dzeryk, editor of the *Western Canada Conference Magazine*, is the grandmother.

Chapman—Adam John Chapman, son of John and Kim Chapman of Portland, Maine, was baptized into the Christian faith September 1, 1996, in South Hiram, Maine (at their camp), the Rev. Ken Turley officiating.

CONFIRMATIONS

Hoerz—Rick and Gail Hoerz were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church May 5, 1996, the Rev. David Rienstra officiating. (Rick and Gail came to our church through the Rev. Dick and Linda Tafel. Rick's parents live on the same street in Ft. Myers Beach, Florida, and have become dedicated friends of the church.)

Lodato—Donna Lodato was confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church May 5, 1996, the Rev. David Rienstra officiating. (Donna found our church through Carole Rienstra at a Wellness group. They discovered that they had a love of gardening in common and Donna has helped immensely in caring for our gardens).

MARRIAGE

Dow and Scribner—Michelle Lee Dow and Stephen Paul Scribner were united in marriage September 7, 1996, at the Church of the New Jerusalem in Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Ken Turley officiating.

DEATH

Mooki—Mrs. Obed Mooki entered the spiritual world September 3, 1996, in Johannesburg, South Africa.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Rev. Lee and Patty Woofenden, 14 Seascapes Lane
North Falmouth, MA 02556, Phone (508) 564-7644

A Thanksgiving Shaggy Chicken Story

(Continued from page 147)

completed delivery of one live but very nervous chicken. Vee asked if she could return the cat carrier later, as she wanted to ease the chicken gradually into its new environs.

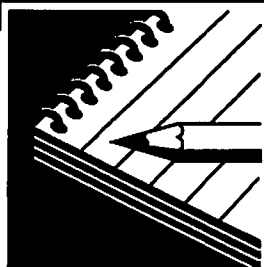
"NO PROBLEM," I assured her. Several days later, I asked her how the adoptee was getting on. "Adjusting very nicely," Vee replied. "I named her Alice. . .you know, for *Alice in Wonderland*." Of course, very appropriate. And for *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*. As Thanksgiving approaches, many of us will be thankful for, among other blessings, the presence of turkey. I shall also be grateful for the absence of chicken. ❖

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!



RE M I N D E R !

SSA PUBLISHERS OF THE NEW PHILOSOPHY *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.

Essays:

◆ 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
PO Box 717
Bryn Athyn PA 19009 USA.

General:

- ◆ All entries will be judged by 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.

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.

Zen Scholar D.T. Suzuki's Book on Emanuel Swedenborg

Available for the first time in English

D.T. Suzuki not only brought Zen to the West, he introduced the Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg and his writings to the Japanese. Newly translated and published in English for the first time, *Swedenborg: Buddha of the North* presents a general introduction to Swedenborg and then details parallels between Swedenborg's mystical insights and those of Buddhism. Suzuki found Swedenborg, who investigated the spiritual world with scientific care and intellect, to be a universally worthy example: "For you Westerners, it is Swedenborg who is your Buddha, it is he who should be read and followed!"

The book was written after Suzuki had translated several of Swedenborg's writings into Japanese. Suzuki admired Swedenborg's message that spirituality is not a retreat from the world, but an engagement of it, and that death is a transition which is not to be feared.

Both the preface about Suzuki by the translator Andrew Bernstein and the foreword by Tatsuya Nagashima, a Japanese Swedenborgian, stress the importance of Swedenborg's spiritual insights. An afterword by Zen scholar David Loy draws parallels between the world views of Buddhism and Swedenborg.

"Revolutionary in theology, traveler of heaven and hell, great man of the spiritual world, great king of the mystical realm, clairvoyant unique in history, scholar of incomparable vigor, scientist of penetrating intellect, gentleman free of worldly taint: all of these combined into one make a Swedenborg.... Those who wish to cultivate their spirit, those who bemoan the times, must absolutely know of this person. This is the reason for this book."

—from the preface to *Swedenborg* by D.T. Suzuki: 1913

D.T. Suzuki is credited with bringing Zen Buddhism to the West. Born in 1870 in Tokyo, Suzuki pursued his religious and philosophical studies at Tokyo University. He worked as an editor of *Oriental Studies* for Open Court Press in the United States before returning to his native Japan where he translated Swedenborg's works into Japanese. Throughout his long life (Suzuki died in 1966, at the age of 96), he taught at such universities as Columbia, Yale, Harvard, Oxford and Cambridge. His works are collected in the 32-volume *Suzuki Daisetsu Zenshu* (Tokyo: 1982). Among his works available in English are *Living by Zen* and *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist, the Eastern and Western Way*.

Swedenborg, Buddha of the North

Suzuki, D.T.

Swedenborg Foundation, West Chester, Pennsylvania.

1996. 168 pages. (pb) \$11.95, (cloth) \$16.95).

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

(Other Foundation publications available this month are *The Last Judgment in Retrospect*, by Emanuel Swedenborg, translated and edited by George F. Dole, and a new Chrysalis Reader, *The Power of Play: New Visions of Creativity*, edited by Carol S. Lawson, which will be released in mid-November. Reviews of these and other Foundation offerings will appear in forthcoming issues of *The Messenger*).

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