

# THE MESSENGER

Monthly Publication, Swedenborgian Church of North America

October 1996

## A Sacred Undertaking

*My Name is Chellis and I'm in Recovery from Western Civilization*

Glendinning, Chellis. Shambhala, Boston 1994.

Reviewed by Perry Martin



Sketch of Perry Martin  
by Marion Washburn

Are you willing? Do you have the courage to turn off your television and take a clear look at where we humans have arrived at the end of this century? There is

hard going here, though not difficult to understand Glendinning's words tumble out with the power and passion of a mountain stream. But this is not a broad river to set your canoe in and float downstream. There are rapids and boulders, and rocky barren vistas on either side.

We know that the hallmark of addiction of any sort—not only alcohol and drugs, but chocolate and work, sugar, relationships and violence, and yes, television, computers, business and technology—the common ground is denial. Are you ready for the truth about what we call a developed nation and civilization?

Because, if you're not, set down this review and avoid Chellis Glendinning's book like plague, like measles, like death. Go back to your television commercials, offering you happiness through consumerism; speak comfortably of good and evil, of the good old days, or life after death.

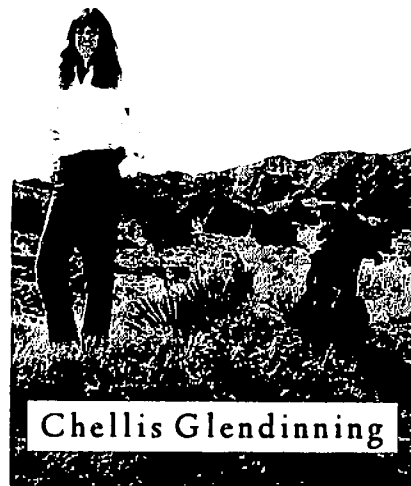
With the passion of a poet, with van Gogh colors, Glendinning paints the

picture of where our western civilization has brought us, to lives of techno-addiction and reliance on ever-increasing depletion of the earth's resources. She traces the effects of producing a page of her book (or this *Messenger* page): paper containing one of the deadliest chemicals ever produced—dioxin. At the millsite, this contaminant is released into the air and water, as much as 50 tons in a single day. Chemicals flow to "the ocean where they join with clouds, rain and sunshine, and ultimately come to reside inside tiny bird eggs, that, resting in nests above the rocky shore, will never hatch."<sup>1</sup> Bulldozers mow down the forests for woodpulp, trucks bring wood, steel and concrete to build the mill and transport the paper produced. Workers are transported from their jobs at the mill. Gas stations with leaking underground storage tanks, rusting junkyards, automotive factories (a new car every second), plastics, steel, glass, computers and microchip plants using deadly chemicals, join the interconnections to this piece of paper. For all this mechanical activity oil is necessary, and "we see armies, navies, the Scud and Patriot missiles and nuclear warheads and biological weapons poised to defend the oil fields."<sup>2</sup>

The origins of all this technology that is poisoning the human race and our earth home is traced back—not to the industrial revolution, no, to the time when humans stopped gathering and hunting and began to plant the land, erect fences, and build homes. Here also began the population explosion that creates scarcity, hunger, and the need to produce more, more.

I could not read this book all at once. I had to sit on my terrace and watch the

"My Name Is Chellis &  
I'm in Recovery from  
Western Civilization"



breeze move over the lake, smell the pine trees and revel in the orange daylilies at the water's edge, and eat my whole wheat bread produced in my bread machine. At night I went out to see the stars—does the ozone layer in Maine make them more visible, I wonder. The blue light in the window next door tells me my neighbors are watching television. How ironic that the planting of fields brings us ultimately to the loss of our connection with the earth!

Is there hope? Can we yet turn around our unecological practices that separate us from the earth and daily cause global destruction? Yes, yes, and the first step, like the first step of any 12-step addiction program is to acknowledge where we are, cut through psychic numbing and denial, and admit that our civilization is out of control.

Glendinning cites her own ability to recover from extreme childhood abuse,

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## Hanging In

In this month's *Messenger*, a theme emerges through several of the articles—the message that if we focus with love and faith and hang in with passionate tenacity—and ask for His help—God's power will shine through us and the proverbial mountains will be moved.

Perry Martin's review of *My Name is Chellis and I'm in Recovery from Western Civilization*, is titled "A Sacred Undertaking." The message is that we can turn things around if we love our earth enough to focus on our values in unity and love and pull together. Deborah Winter ("On Domestic Violence and Children") says, "We didn't know if we would ever get to perform—but we knew we wouldn't give up on these kids." And then the breakthrough: "I can only describe these moments—when the awareness spreads to the spirit—as sacred moments."

As I write this, I am a day away from taking a plane to New York to see the opening of a one-man play at the Lamb's Theater. It's called "MATTY," *An Evening with Christy Mathewson*. Christy Mathewson was a turn-of-the-century baseball great. Needless to say, I am not in the habit of flying into New York for opening nights, but this play is special. My son Kerrigan directed it. He and the actor/author, Eddie Frierson, a fellow voiceover artist, have been working on it since 1989, when Eddie agreed, if the piece was to be successful, that it needed a director.

Together they tore the script down to the spine, refining pace and rhythm, giving the piece both the dramatic and comedic tension it called for. Over the course of the next few years they put up "MATTY" in four separate venues. Finally, during a one-night performance that opened the Norris Theatre for the Performing Arts season, an audience of 450 people spontaneously rose to deliver a standing ovation. Opening in Los Angeles at the Two Roads Theater in November, 1995, it passed its 80th performance mark by May in its open-ended run, receiving excellent reviews. They decided to take it to New York. At that point, with the help of Edmund

Gaynes, the producing artistic director of Two Roads Theatre and several other Los Angeles theatres, they put on producers' hats and ploughed headlong into the man-eating monster called Mounting a Play in New York. Eighteen-hour work days commenced and didn't let up.

But the thing is, everybody connected with it believed in the project, and they had fallen in love with their subject, Christy Mathewson, who was not only a baseball Hall-of-Famer, but a true hero in every sense, a role-model for children and adults. Frierson says, "When I first stumbled across Christy Mathewson, I thought that all I had found was an interesting subject for a one-man theatrical show that I was trying to develop for myself. The 'subject' developed me instead."

In his Director's Notes, Kerry says, "I feel very fortunate to have directed 'MATTY,' because it is about so much more than a baseball player, or a period in history. It is about the stuff of a man's heart, the stuff we all struggle with in this life—our fears, our failures, our triumphs, our choices—our souls."

What I have really tried to do is help us realize that as much as things have changed in the last 100 years, the things that we are truly made of have not. St. Paul theater critic Jan Blanchard noted that 'contemporary playwrights are forsaking the cynical for matters of the spirit.'

'There is a growing search for meaning and morality,' adds David Moore, Jr., director of the Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis. I believe this trend reflects the general hunger in our society for things of the spirit, in particular the ethics and true morality that rises out of our own sense of integrity. We are living in a confused and frightened society, and now as never before we need to find, and move forth from, a certain internal strength. We need to confront ourselves and take responsibility for helping to make this world a better place. Matty, quoting the legendary Charley Faust says, 'if you are able to touch just one life in a positive manner, you have succeeded in your own.'

At one point in this lengthy, risky undertaking, Kerrigan said, "The play's

in God's hands. There's a wonderful energy around it." He seldom rested from troubleshooting, but problems had a way of straightening out, and some things came up better than they'd planned. In the midst of running errands on the West Side a few weeks ago, he and Eddie accidentally turned up 45th St. instead of 44th. They spotted a man pushing a hand truck piled with several good looking theatre seats. They had just been discussing the Lamb's Theatre seating—it was a shame the theatre had only metal convention chairs instead of the regular bolted-down, comfortable theatre seats. "You got any more of those you want to sell?" Kerry called out to the man, half joking.

"They're givin' 'em away down the road," the man replied. Kerry and Eddie followed his directions to the Martin Beck Theater. The doors were open, they were introduced to one person after another, finally spoke with the head prop man. The theatre was giving away the seats to whoever wanted them, and taking the remainder to the dump. Kerry moved quickly, made calls to the Lamb's Theatre, and inside of 24 hours, \$6,000

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# On Domestic Violence and Children

by Deborah Winter

*Editor's Note: The following article is Deborah Winter's story presented as part of the convention theme, "Serve the Lord with Gladness," representing social concerns.*



Years ago I worked with adults using access to the inner child to help set free old constellations. Now I work with children between the ages of 10-17 and their families under the umbrella of domestic violence. Many of the adolescents are acting out—dropping out of school, doing drugs, physical and verbal abuse and abuses to themselves. People deal in different ways with their pain. These aren't bad kids—they're usually just continuing on with what they have learned through generations.

More often than not, I find families hungry for the understanding of how to do it differently—to be a family that works. I feel honored to work with families and experience their courage to change the patterns that keep them separated from themselves and each other. It's essential to remove the shame and blame—it only adds to the viciousness of the circle. Is there anyone who hasn't at sometime said, "shut up!" to another human being or to him or herself? We all have, and that's verbal abuse and it's interpersonal violence. It is that sudden shock, interruption, that slams us into another dimension of not being good enough; separated from our own integrity and belongingness. In truth, we are all in this together.

For two years I've had the pleasure of helping to facilitate an abuse project where we go into all the schools within Volusia County and put on skits demonstrating the five different abuses.

The children in the classrooms become investigators and begin to name the abuse they see and then we lay out what to do in the face of abuse. This year the project changed as we worked with second-chance kids who were to perform the skits. Essentially, they were offenders—kids living the abuse. On the first day, one of the kids leaned over the railing at the art center and spit on a woman's head. There were four of us leaders—we threw away all our agendas and met them where they were. We didn't know if we would ever get to perform—but we knew we wouldn't give up on these kids. The school wouldn't let us come in. It was too big a risk for them. So we went to treatment centers and other second-chance programs. At first the kids who put on the skits thought it no big deal to be abusive—they didn't see it as abusive. But as they acted out the parts of the abuser, the enabler, and scapegoat, hero, mascot, lost child, things changed. They didn't like it and they began to feel the reality of abuse. I can only describe these moments—when the awareness spreads to the spirit—as sacred moments.

We did perform for students in alternative programs. We invited the superintendent and those who would not let us perform in the public school. We invited judges—all came and were amazed at the successful performances of our second-chance students. It was tempting to let the powers that be know they could eat their words. I had been angry with them—seeing them as part of the problem, as a barrier to the kids' success. But then I saw an opening—a reconsideration of how the system might change in its response to a child's pain and acting out from it.

It is good that I work with children whose families take part. That makes all the difference. My job before this was as a children's therapist in a group home for severely emotionally disturbed adolescent girls. Their families had abandoned them. There were five girls. "Christine" was a child whose mother literally threw her away. She was found in a garbage dump. It was very difficult work—the consequences far more severe. I think of these five girls and of children in general and how right it feels to help them find their way. When I left, I wrote this poem.

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... I saw an opening –  
a reconsideration of  
how the system might  
change in its response  
to a child's pain and  
acting out from it.

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## AN ODE TO FIVE GIRLS

An ode to five girls  
Who imprint my heart  
and thoughts  
all surrounding  
that archetypal child.

What has the work been?

So often crisis,  
violence and whirlwind of words  
that come round to sudden  
and surprising softness.

That stone child,  
begging for her tear,  
and a breaking that  
sometimes brings her round to herself.  
I will miss each and every one.

Cheryl, like the fearful lion from Oz.

Stomping angrily  
in big black boots.  
So quick to growl,  
yet sensitive  
and sees each glitch  
of movement around her.

Angry and rude  
and to most can only say  
"piss off."  
Harsh,  
but her truth  
for today.

Cheryl,  
so creative, artful,  
one hand holding poetry by Blake  
the other hand wiping the fog  
away and away while trying to make sense  
of how an 18th century poem  
might make the difference transparent.

Christine  
"The most oppositional child."  
Ever.

The toughest of the tough.  
So sure not to let  
anyone touch her.

"My name doesn't matter....  
don't you know that....  
what difference will  
it possibly make?"

A child thrown away.  
How does one  
throw a child away?  
Still it is done.

It was done.  
Her eyes tell you  
stories of abandonment.  
So still she'll sit  
and watch the moving images.  
So still, you'd think her not breathing.  
Just watch the moving images.

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## AN ODE TO FIVE GIRLS

(Poem continued from page 123)

Fantasizing of herself  
transformed right into all  
those moving and real images.  
But still she sits  
on and on.  
Touch her and you see  
the horror  
of what she has  
seen and known.

Rosemary  
Large brown eyes  
and pouting mouth  
"I wish I was never born."  
So often her response.  
Like a stone child  
with needs that run deep.  
If she could just pass through  
another  
be another  
any other but  
herself.  
If she could just  
drink it up and  
consume  
the other identity  
then there could exist  
a short reprieve  
from yesterday's  
violence  
and betrayal of innocence  
that has left her heart  
soft and yielding  
too often leaving herself  
unsafe, unprotected.  
Still her heart is softened  
and in spite of it all  
she lets herself  
be touched  
and embraced.

Sherril  
The forgotten child  
waiting for her chance  
for a better life.  
Yet trapped within her  
victim self  
that has survived  
by striking out and  
causing harm  
and damage to her world.  
Out she goes,  
losing all control  
as if by need.  
And yet traumatized in the end.  
Powerful and strong.  
Only twelve years old  
A child  
with a smile  
that melts  
anyone who looks.

Jacky  
"what?"  
"what?" back  
"what?"  
"what?" back  
and laughter  
something shared, her opening  
and presentation.

"I still love my dad  
even though he raped me  
over and over since I was five...

I still love him?  
All her pain  
inverted in.  
To hurt herself  
makes her feel better.  
Hitting her hand against the  
wall.

Aah...finally relief settles in.

"I need to hurt myself."

"Please don't tell me

I'm important

I can't stand it."

"what?"

"what?" back

"what?"

"what?" back

and laughter.

What has the work been?

What of all the stone children  
needing warmth, safety and protection.

I am here to be part of their process

waiting for the moment

of access and entry.

It has happened.

It takes a long time  
and instinct.

If instinct is forgotten  
too much is lost.

How to warm a stone child  
who beats her teddy bear  
and rages from her core?

The stone does cry  
and when it does  
it breaks a little more  
that hard hard stone  
where inside  
lives a warm  
child.

—Deborah Winter

*The Rev. Deborah Winter is a  
Swedenborgian minister living in  
DeLand, Florida. She is a full-time  
counselor at the House Next Door in  
DeLand, and is involved with small-  
group work at the Swedenborg House  
Chapel and Growth Center.*

## A Visit at Bayside

George Dole

I visited the Korean congregation in Bayside last November, conducting morning worship, having lunch with them, and leading a Bible study group in the afternoon. I came away with very favorable impressions.

The general atmosphere was most warm and welcoming—people seemed happy to be there and at ease with each other. There was a wide age range, including a number who were apparently about high school age.

The "leaders" own a house in which they have set up spaces for church functions. There is a sanctuary for worship in the basement which shows a great deal of care and devotion. The dais, altar, lectern drapery and shoji screens are all products of their own craftsmanship, and with a programmable keyboard and a Korean hymnal they are able to conduct a very complete worship service.

One of the most impressive achievements is the complete translation of the *Bible Study Notes* into Korean—thirty copies, I think, all very neatly duplicated and bound. Min-Heui Cheon, who is presently at SSR working toward ordination, is working on Swedenborg's Latin with a view to translating them into contemporary Korean (she says the language of the present translations, which have been done from English, is quite stilted and difficult). This seems to be very clear evidence of appreciation of our theological basis. At least two of their young men have attended or are attending the Academy in Bryn Athyn, so their preference for General Convention represents a conscious choice.

There is a considerable range of competence with the English language, generally in inverse ratio to age, as one might expect. The service was conducted in Korean, and one of their members read a translation of my sermon, paragraph by paragraph. For the afternoon session, Min-Heui did the same for my Bible presentation. The questions that followed were thoughtful and practical.

In summary, I would see the Bayside congregation as riding the energy of theological discovery, with a genuine desire to be a contributing part of our denomination. ♦

# Lifeguarding and "Life" Guarding

Susannah Lorraine Currie

I recently completed the American Red Cross Lifeguarding course in preparation for serving as a lifeguard at the Fryeburg New Church Assembly. I had no idea how rigorous or how life-changing this experience would be. For five 8-hour days I trained in CPR, first aid and lifeguarding with 29 others, most of them 15–25 year-olds. Talk about jumping into deep water! I found in lifeguard training a wealth of correspondences to ministry. The lifeguard has a "duty to act" by virtue of being in a paid position as a "professional rescuer" just as ministers have a "duty to act" in the church and in the world.

The lifeguard's job is to ensure the safety of everyone in the water. In a church, the minister's job is to care about all of the members of the congregation and respond to their calls for help during the emergencies and traumas that occur in their lives.

## A Sacred Undertaking

(from front cover)

rape and "medical" experiments on her body by her father, a doctor. How did she recover? First she had to reclaim her memories and recognize that yes, this was done to her.

And so our first step is to see what we—the human race—have wrought in the last tiny fraction of our existence. We must grieve for the earth, and we must be willing to re-establish our connection with her and the creator. To indigenous people, Glendinning points out, communicating with the creator was an accepted aspect of life; and the earth—her trees, her rivers, her animals, all spoke the language of the creator.

Swedenborgians speak fondly of the correspondences between the spiritual and natural or material world. But do we *listen*? Are we willing to risk a relationship with the world of nature and purpose as people? Can we remember the spirits of our ancestors who revered the earth and all its forms of life as gifts of the creators? "The task," Glendinning states, "is to dwell in the land of the spirits—and then return to the Earthworld, bringing back the

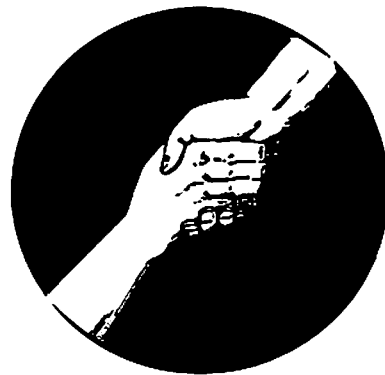
The seven general rescue procedures from the *Red Cross Lifeguarding Today* training manual are appropriate guidelines for a minister responding to a "distressed" or "drowning" parishioner.

### *Activate your facility's emergency action plan.*

If a rescue is necessary, the lifeguard first ensures the safety of all other patrons by clearing the pool. A minister would, if possible, cover other responsibilities when the need to respond to a pastoral emergency arises. An action plan could include notifying the church president if a meeting needed to be missed or calling the worship committee if there was a conflict in covering the Sunday service. The responsibility of caring for *all* parishioners has then been adequately met.

### *Enter the water.*

The lifeguard jumps into the water;



the minister must meet the person "where they're at." The minister must be flexible and open enough to immerse him or herself in the environment of the situation to see, hear and empathize with the situation that exists.

### *Approach the victim.*

Once in the water, the lifeguard approaches the person from behind to

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information and wisdom learned. The task is a sacred undertaking; it is to inform, guide, and inspire the people."<sup>3</sup>

What does it mean, she asks, to be a human being? Do we have the "capability of providing vision that could

**What does it mean, she asks, to be a human being? Do we have the "capability of providing vision that could inform, guide, and inspire us toward the creation of a sane and ecological future?"**

inform, guide, and inspire us toward the creation of a sane and ecological future?"<sup>4</sup>

It's not just a matter of giving up beef so we no longer contribute to the destruction of the forests, or a problem of where we dump our garbage. It will involve every fragment of our lives: "how we structure our communities, how we speak and make our decisions, what artifacts we create and who creates

them, what we eat, how we dream, who we think we are, how we relate to the mountains of our ancestors, how we bring our children into the world, and how all these facets of our lives fit together."<sup>5</sup>

There are daily acts each of us can perform with conscious intention: "turning off the television, gathering and eating the dandelions instead of spraying them with pesticides, playing music together, walking to work, democratizing our meetings, celebrating our family gatherings."<sup>6</sup>

As churches and individuals we can also play a part in the ceremonies we perform, the programs we offer, and our willingness to commit to our own personal development. We have the vision of a new heaven and a new earth—are we willing to do the work?

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4. P. 201 5. P. 204-5 6. P. 211

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# Lifeguarding and "Life" Guarding

(Continued from page 125)

ensure his or her own safety and to avoid unnecessarily alarming the already panicking victim. A rescue tube is kept between the rescuer and the victim to keep the rescuer from being dragged under by the victim's weight. Shouldn't ministers, too, approach persons in crisis with awareness of their own safety issues, using their ministerial skills as a "rescue tube," a buffer between minister and parishioner? The weight of the tragedy or trauma is already taking the person down. The minister, with God's help, needs to stay "above water" to be of any use to the distressed person. The minister should approach safely, putting both rescuer and sufferer into position for a successful rescue.

## *Perform an appropriate rescue.*

Techniques differ if a swimmer is unconscious or conscious; is suspected of having a spinal injury; is submerged or at the surface; is actively drowning or simply in distress. The choice of the appropriate rescue method is a judgment call based on the rescuer's training and experience. This decision-making process improves with real life experience to draw on. No amount of simulations will bring the same intense learning as the real rescue. How much more "ministerial" skill is learned in the actual doing of the job, feeling of the role and acting in the moment of need? Making the call and performing the rescue is the job of the minister. It is done time after time, and in varying degrees of crisis, over the course of the minister's career. Learning from these experiences is vital for the ongoing development of the minister's skills.

## *Move the victim to safety.*

If a swimmer is merely in "distress," the lifeguard extends the rescue tube and urges the swimmer to take hold and swim with assistance to safety. Within the crisis environment, the minister can help persons in "distress" to discover what *they* need to do to help themselves. If they cannot help themselves, moving them to "safety" can consist of taking the time to guide them to "shallower water," away from the center of trauma, where the minister can be present with

their process; whether it is to grieve, to accept, to risk, to express fears, or to search for a change in perspective towards themselves, others or the situation.

## *Remove the victim from the water.*

If unable to leave the water independently, the lifeguard must remove the victim from the water before further care can be given. A "deep" emergency can "sink" a person and remove all perspective and hope of the situation ever changing. The minister can help bring troubled persons from the "water" by going with them as they distance themselves from the situation. By offering a listening ear as they express their thoughts and feelings about separation from the source of trauma can help them feel the weight of carrying a crisis alone lifted. The sufferer can then start to surface to a new place of emotional and spiritual wellness when some of the weight of aloneness and fear is released.

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*The lifeguard is on the  
frontline when aquatic  
emergencies arise. The  
minister is the one  
performing "surveillance"  
over the congregation and  
responding to their calls for  
help during the emergencies  
and traumas that occur in  
their lives.*

---

## *Provide emergency care as needed.*

Depending on the person's condition, you may need to use CPR to keep the breath and circulation going until professional help arrives. The ABC's of CPR have a strong correspondence to our relationship with the Divine: the inhalation and exhalation of the breath of life corresponding to what is our part and what is God's part in our acceptance of relationship with God.

## *CPR's ABC: Airway, Breathing and Circulation.*

Breathing oxygen is what keeps our bodies alive in the natural world. It is

the distribution of oxygen to the cells of the body that sustains our life. The first step in the ABC's is to check that a person has an open *airway* for breath to go in. The second step is to check if the person is *breathing*. If the person is not breathing, two breaths of "rescue breathing" are given. Third, if the breaths go in, the person's pulse is checked. If there is no pulse, CPR compressions are begun in order to *circulate* the oxygen. Thus the airway, breathing and circulation are checked and assisted.

## *Airway.*

If a minister becomes aware that a person is in need of emergency care, should he or she not first investigate if the person has a clear "airway"? Is there a connection to God that can be cleared for the breath of life to enter? Is there a loved one who can be notified of the emergency? Is there an activity that helps the person release tension—walking, reading, crying, writing? Is there a method of communication with others that the person is most comfortable with—a telephone call, a personal visit, a letter? There are as many ways to be in relationship to God as there are people. Part of the minister's job is to attempt to help parishioners know their own way to God. If these pathways are known, the minister can use this knowledge to help a person in crisis. We can all use this awareness of ourselves and those around us in our loving and caring.

## *Breathing.*

When persons are in crisis, there is often an upset in their breathing. They may be holding their breath, taking short sudden breaths, sobbing, or gasping for air. This physical response seems to correspond to an upset in their relationship to God. A traumatic experience can shake up our faith and put our thoughts into doubt. If a person is still breathing, however erratic, simply sitting with her can be the minister's way of allowing her to reconnect with God on her own. If a person is not able to breathe himself we can assist him by giving "rescue breaths." We can offer a "breath," a human connection, by taking a walk together, offering a shoulder to cry on, reading a poem or through

(Continued on page 127)



# TEMENOS PROGRAM CALENDAR

## FALL ❖ WINTER ❖ 1996

**From the Path of Fear to the Path of Love**  
September 18 - December 11

**Holistic Health: The Mind, Body, Spirit Connection**  
September 22

**Writing from Within the Self**  
**Proprioceptive Writing Fall Weekend**  
September 27, 28, 29

**Praying with the Body Yoga**  
**Postures as Prayers**  
September 29

**Transforming Your Life Story**  
**Through Animal Imagery**  
October 6

**Healing Circle Second Thursdays**  
October 10, November 14, December 12

**Storytelling Workshop**  
October 13

**Chakra Anatomy: An Exploration of the Physical and Energetic Anatomy of the Chakras**  
October 19, 20

**Sacred Space Retreat**  
October 20, 21

**Shamanic Awareness and Practice**  
October 25, 26

**Healing Power of Breath and Breathwork Processing**  
October 26, 27

**Shadow Boxing in the Light**  
October 27

**The New Millennium**  
October 27

**Reiki Level 1 Training**  
November 2, 3

**Dreams - A Compass of the Emotions Pointing to the Soul**  
November 9

**Peace of Mind via Yogic Breathing**  
November 10

**Motherless Daughters**  
November 16

**Exploring Deep Stillness with Mindfulness Meditation**  
December 7

**Dances of Universal Peace**  
December 8

**Healing Power of Breath and Breathwork Processing**  
January 18, 19, 1997

*For further information, call 610-696-8145, or contact Director Rev. Ernest Martin  
TEMENOS Conference & Retreat Center 685 Broad Run Road, West Chester, PA 19382*

### Lifeguarding and "Life" Guarding

*(Continued from page 126)*

any of the "airways" mentioned above. The goal is to help the person who is not breathing on his own to recover his relationship to God, to become open to receive the breath of life regularly again.

#### **Circulation.**

If a person is not breathing and the heart is not pumping, CPR can sometimes keep them alive until professional help arrives. It is important to remember that the parish minister is the front-line helping professional. Advanced professional help should be called whenever a person is not breathing—disconnected from the "breath," the sustainer of life. In addition, if the heart has stopped, the circulation of loving and receiving love from God and others is not circulating. The relationship to God, the spiritual "blood" has been hindered in its natural course of flowing through us and out to others through our expressions and acceptance of love. Love is not reaching us; we are unable to love or feel love. The correspondence of the stopping of the "heart" could be manifested in becoming lost in thoughts and feelings

that don't "circulate" or engage us in any nurturing or growing way. Disconnection could be expressed by unrelenting anger, fear or feelings of alienation from others. When our breath circulates, replenishing oxygen feeds our cells; they live and grow and develop. When the breath of life, God's love, "circulates" within us, all parts of us—physical, emotional, rational and spiritual—are nourished in their processes, individually and in concert. As with CPR chest compressions, we can only artificially assist this "circulation" in another person temporarily. Professional help and treatment is indicated and the minister's job then is to witness the person making the transition to the environment where help is available. The frontline "rescuer" has then completed the "duty to act" and the emergency has been effectively handled. When the troubled person is well, or in the hands of professional help, and everyone is back in the water, the rescuer's job is finished...for now! ❖

*Susannah Lorraine Currie is a member of the Portland, Maine Swedenborgian Church and a ministerial student at the Swedenborg School of Religion.*

### COMING SOON!

#### *Swedenborg Meets the Mystics*

Starting next month, *The Messenger* will feature a series of articles by members of the Swedenborg School of Religion faculty and student body on the subject of mysticism as it relates to Swedenborg. We will address questions such as: What is mysticism? Where does Swedenborg fit in with the history of world mysticism? With the history of Christian mysticism? How would Swedenborg get along with some of the famous mystics of history, such as St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, Hildegard of Bingen?

If you have questions you want addressed in this series, contact the school at: (617) 244-0504 or at 48 Sargent Street Newton, MA 02158.

# A New Church Planting

by Dick Tafel

Ever since our move to Florida in 1990, a number of people have urged me to start a Swedenborgian Church in the greater Fort Myers Beach area. Those of you who have attended church board meetings or institutes, either in the Florida Keys or here in Fort Myers Beach, know about the warm weather, especially when it is cold up north. You also know about the influx of winter visitors seeking the desirability of the greater Fort Myers area. Money Magazine recently listed the Fort Myers area as the sixth best place to live in the whole United States.

With the search for a new editor for Our Daily Bread underway, the timing for starting a new church is now right. We are going to do it! We are going to plant a new Swedenborgian Church from scratch in the Fort Myers Beach, Bonita, Fort Myers area. This is an exciting time for me as we begin to undertake this gigantic challenge. There is no congregation here nor any remnants of one, no building nor bank account. This is both bad news and good news. The bad news is that we have to develop everything from scratch. The good news is that we are not automatically locked into something because of tradition, mindset or fear.

We have already laid some groundwork and are beginning to attend to the million and one behind-the-scenes details necessary to get a new church started. We have had several face to face meetings with the Growth & Outreach Support Unit as well as with Eric Allison, the Pastoral Ministries Consultant. Together we have mapped out a preliminary plan of action. As soon as we have raised some funds for our initial operating budget, we will order a "Percept Study" (demographic, mediagraphic, praxiographic and ethnographic data on the area). This study was used by our Swedenborgian Church in St. Louis and highly recommended by Eric Allison. It will show us the character and needs of our area and help us to better plan programs to minister to those needs.

There are several people here already greatly interested in Swedenborg and the church. One became interested through

his reading in Emerson; another became interested after reading several books on angels, including Bob Kirven's *Angels in Action*, which I lent her. Linda and I have made numerous contacts here through work and the different service organizations to which we belong. These are proving to be prime contacts for us.

How does one develop and grow a new congregation? Fortunately, we do not have to have all the answers, nor proceed with the trial and error method. We will be relying heavily on the advice and hands-on experience of our denomination's pastoral ministries' consultant. And, of course, we will draw on our own parish ministry experience in Cincinnati. This includes, you may recall, the successful planning, relocation and construction of a new multi-purpose church building there due to the state taking our property for an interstate highway. We will also be drawing on our experience in developing new programs such as the wedding ministry and small group experiences. We are convinced that answers and directions will emerge over the coming months as we meet together, pray together, share our visions and dreams for this ministry, learn about our church teachings, seek denominational guidance and raise funds together.

We know we have to be patient and take one step at a time. To be successful here, we know we have to develop a good plan for both programming and stewardship. We need to have publicity and community involvement. Every step needs to be double checked and done well. We have worked hard in developing a preliminary seven-year plan. However, only three things are etched in stone at this point: 1) This is a Swedenborgian Church; 2) This church will follow the small group system and not the minister-centered model; 3) The three-part stewardship model of time, talent and treasure will be instituted from the beginning.

The practical reality of starting a new congregation from scratch means raising our own operating funds AND monies for an endowment fund, interest only to

be used, to assist us in meeting our financial obligations in the years to come. We know from studies done that in order to be self sufficient, a congregation needs to have three hundred fifty or so members, OR an endowment fund to help. We intend to be self sufficient!

At this point in our very young life here, we need some financial help. And so we come to you. We know that you are probably very active in your own church, and that your own church probably needs your every dollar. However, we feel this new church planting is worthy of your consideration. The trivia question of the day: When and where was the last new Swedenborgian Church started completely from scratch?

We need both small and large gifts for our operating budget and for our endowment fund. Your gift would do at least two of three things: help us get up and running; add to our small endowment fund; and, perhaps most important of all, show new people here that other Swedenborgians want our denominations to grow.

We have established the following categories for donor recognition:

\$100 .....	Friend
\$500 .....	Helper
\$1000 .....	Partner
\$2500 .....	Leader
\$5000 .....	Benefactor
\$10,000 .....	Founder

Smaller gifts are also encouraged; larger ones are of course most welcome. Many times appreciated real estate, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, etc. are an appropriate gift as tax advantages may offset the cost of the gift. We would be most happy to pursue this avenue with you. We will let you know of our progress; and in the meantime, please remember us in your prayers.

Send your gift to  
**THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH**  
c/o Rev. Dick Tafel  
8065 Lagoon Road  
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931-5018.

*Make your check payable to "The Swedenborgian Church" and indicate whether your donation is for operating funds or endowment. For further information, write us at the above address or call (941) 463-5030. ♦*



# Our Swedenborgian Heritage

Twenty-fourth in a series

## Whose Side Are You On?

(Conclusion. Part 1 appeared in June 1996 *Messenger*.)

*In the previous article we have seen how Jacob Duché, rector of Christ Church, Philadelphia, by his ambivalence about British rule in the American colonies, see-sawed in his loyalties, and finally was declared a traitor.*



Finding himself dishonored, Jacob Duché sailed for England in December, two months after his night in prison. The Pennsylvania Assembly declared Duché guilty of high treason if he did not appear before them by April 20, 1778. As he did not appear, his property was confiscated. Because of ill health, Mrs. Duché had not accompanied her husband, but had moved to New York with their son and two daughters. In June, 1779, she got permission from the Executive Council of Pennsylvania to return to Philadelphia, where she must have occupied their old house, because after she finally joined her husband in England in 1780, the Assembly resolved that Thomas McKean, Chief Justice of the commonwealth, was permitted to "occupy and possess" the property formerly belonging to the Duchés.

In England Duché at first busied himself with writing and guest preaching, being warmly received. He began by publishing sermons he had preached in Philadelphia. He says in the preface to one volume that the revising of these sermons had saved him from dejection over his absence from his church and family. The work went through three editions, and the 23-page subscription list included the names of William Blake, Samuel Johnson, Hannah More, and Benjamin West. (In the early 1900s a magnificently bound

copy marked in pencil "Queen's copy" was offered for sale in London.)

In 1782 Duché became chaplain and secretary of the Female Orphan's Asylum in London, where he had preached at fund-raising meetings. It was apparently at this time that he met John Clowes, an Anglican minister who is said to have introduced him to the writings of Swedenborg, though several of the Asylum board members were also Swedenborgians. (One writer, who claimed that George Washington was the first reader of Swedenborg in America, claimed that the general had previously introduced him to Swedenborg's works, but Duché's daughter said that though her father had a set of the writings in his library in Philadelphia, he had not read them.) In any case, by 1785 Duché, having completely accepted Swedenborg's doctrines, was holding New Church services at the Asylum. In 1786 he wrote a preface (anonymous) to Clowes' translation of Swedenborg's *Doctrine of Life*.

Peace was declared between Britain and the U.S. in 1783, and Duché immediately wrote two letters: one a petition that he be allowed to return to this country, and one to General Washington begging forgiveness for his error. Washington was said to have been in favor of his return, but others thought that some time must elapse before he would be welcomed by his former friends.

So it was not until 1792 that the family returned. Mr. Duché visited President Washington and was warmly received, perhaps, according to a friend, because Washington observed with pity that Mr. Duché was palsied from a slight stroke suffered in England.

In his professional life he was not received as well. He had expected to be rehired as rector of Christ Church. However, the man who had been his assistant had been installed as rector and the position was not to be his. The remaining few years of his life were spent in almost total seclusion, though he and his daughter did make contacts with Swedenborgians in Philadelphia.

Duché brought a number of people to New Church belief, among them the Rev. William Hill, of Liverpool, an Anglican who, like Clowes, did not join the organized New Church, and like Duché, moved back and forth from England to America. In 1797 Hill married Duché's daughter Esther, in what is thought to be the first New Church wedding in the New World.

Esther wrote that one day that same year she was sitting in the parlor, meditating on death, when she heard a bustle upstairs. Her mother, in pulling open the top drawer of a chest, had brought a sand bag (why was it there?) on top of her head. She was knocked unconscious, and died within twenty-four hours. A few months later, in 1798, at the age of 59, Mr. Duché, devoted to his wife, followed her to the grave. Charles Higham, in the *New Church Review* (April and July, 1915) remarks that time furnishes perspective on persons as well as events, and that "Jacob Duché, the shortsighted and feeble-kneed politician, may be pardoned, if not acquitted. Of Jacob Duché the Christian man, contemporary verdicts, unanimously favorable, need neither reversal nor modification."

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

## Worden Celtic Concert LAUNCHES SEASON

**E**thelwyn (Muff) Worden, former Central Office director, presented Geneva Point Center's first concert in its 1996 summer concert series beginning July 13 in the Center's chapel in Center Harbor. Geneva Point Center is an ecumenical retreat and conference center on Moultonboro Neck, New Hampshire.

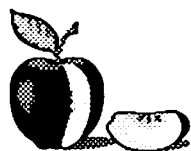
Muff, a specialist in Celtic music who has lived in Limerick, Maine for several years, performs as singer/storyteller throughout New England and across the United States in concert halls, Elderhostels, libraries, inns, Scottish Highland games and festivals, schools, and Celtic gatherings of all sorts. She uses guitar, Celtic harp, bodhran and pennywhistles for accompaniment or as solo instruments, and tells stories out of Irish, Scottish and Welsh history and legend.

Trained as a classical singer, Muff Worden has taught choral and vocal music and music history at college level, and has performed as choral and solo singer with many groups on the East Coast including Singing City Choir, Philadelphia Orchestra, Shippensburg Festival Chorus, and the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston, (with whom she toured various cities in the U.S. last spring).

There was always folk music in Muff's family, all of whom sing and play on some instrument. (Her mother trained for opera). As a very young child, Muff learned of the Scottish and British connections of the family through songs and stories from those countries. Many of us who attended the San Francisco convention in 1995 were fortunate to participate in a delightful vocal mini-course she gave there. (She is also a formidable Uno player, one of her lesser-known but nonetheless awe-inspiring talents). She was missed sorely at Convention '96, and we hope she will be able to blow into Kansas next year.

*Abridged text from article in The Laker, July 8, 1996, Moultonboro, New Hampshire.*

**W**alt Disney Studios is now re-releasing many of its earlier animated features. As a result of a letter the Rev. Ken Turley sent, among those being considered is the story of Johnny Appleseed. Their decision is in part based on public interest. If enough people express interest they will respond and make it available (it is currently out of print and not available anywhere!) To communicate your interest in having the animated film about Johnny Appleseed entitled Melody Time re-released, write and / or call:



Tania Moloney, VP  
Publicity and Event Marketing  
350 South Buena Vista St.  
Burbank, CA 91521  
(818) 560-1000



## WOMEN'S LIVES IN STORY

In the September *Messenger*, we published SSR student Ellen Shaw's opening editorial from *Mary and Martha*, the Swedenborgian Women's Newsletter she launched this year. We are pleased to reprint another story from the newsletter in this issue, again with the hope that it will inspire some of our readers to participate or contribute in some way to this new venture.

Ellen writes, "The stories of our lives really convey the essence of who we are and the events and values that have influenced us most. Because we are such a diverse congregation it would be fruitful and fun to highlight the story of one of us in each edition of our newsletter. We are varied in age, race, healthy, sexual orientation and general life experiences. Some of us were born and raised on Swedenborg's writings, while others of us found our church family later in life. Our experiences of God and worship may be quite different. Yet we are all drawn together by a common love—the desire to live an ever-deepening spirituality as illuminated by Emanuel Swedenborg. Swedenborg's works are vast enough to bring light to our broad range of life experiences, in ways unique to each of us. As we come to know and be known in our stories we may be surprised to find that grace has warmed us in a new way. We may find that we have served and been fed at God's holy table.

"For our first issue I thought it appropriate to choose someone from the "heartland," at the center of our country. Someone that I know lives a very deep, yet down-to-earth spirituality. Our first story is about Jane Siebert of Pretty Prairie, Kansas, as told in her own words . . ."

*(Jane's Story begins on next page)*

Readers who wish to subscribe or contribute material to *Mary and Martha* may contact:

Ellen Shaw  
12 Heritage Road  
Hanscom AFB, MA 01731  
(617) 274-9664

*At this time the newsletter is planned as a quarterly. A donation of \$5.00 for the year is greatly appreciated, but not required.*



# Jane's Story



*What God and the New Jerusalem Church mean to me . . . Who am I and why am I who I am . . .*

Jane Ann Siebert. I used to hate my name. It was so plain, *Jane Ann*. When I was growing up the Tony Permanent commercials used to go on constantly about being a plain Jane. But you know, I kinda am a 'plain Jane' and that's OK. When Ellen asked to interview me for her latest project, I thought, how boring . . . but any of you who know Ellen, know how persistent she can be, so . . .

Who am I? A mom, a wife, a pharmacist, a businesswoman and the part that makes it all worthwhile, a friend of God's. (That possessive form of 'God' was intentional).

We live on a farm outside of Pretty Prairie, Kansas . . . kinda plain too, huh. But it's where our family should be right now and I love it. And we are near a great New Jerusalem Church with a wonderful retired minister and a strong knowledgeable congregation. I am one of the members of our group who married into the church. I was raised Baptist and my parents dropped me off at Sunday school, but rarely attended themselves. We were farmers and there always seemed to be work somewhere that needed to be done on Sunday, too. Ray and I met at college and shared the dream of someday going off to some foreign country to join the Peace Corps. After Ray's degree in mechanical engineering and my degree in psychology, we headed to Zaire for two years of the Peace Corps experience. It was good and probably had more impact on my life than any other experience. In fact after two more years in the States, and another degree in pharmacy for me, we re-upped for a year in Guatemala and a year in Sierra Leone. Again, it was good.

When we came back we settled in Ray's home town, Pretty Prairie, and refurbished the farm house on the land originally homesteaded by Ray's great grandparents. We told everyone that we had searched the world over and couldn't find a place as good as Pretty Prairie.

I was pregnant with our daughter when we came home and although Casana was born in the States, she was conceived in Africa. We often tell her that is what caused her wander lust. She is headed for Uruguay in July as an exchange student for six months of her junior year of high school. The program is Youth for Understanding. It is much easier to be the one going than the mother seeing her daughter leave for parts unknown. But I am excited for her and it will be good. Andrew, our son, has entered the teen years. He loves our church and computers. He is trying to talk Eric Zacharius into putting his sermons on the Web. He is talking about being a minister and a computer programmer. Fits for him. I bet it would fit for God, too.

When we came back from Africa we searched for a church for a while. We attended Baptist, Methodist, non-denominational churches and the New Jerusalem Church. Truthfully, I found

with two small children to keep quiet, I didn't get much out of any church service. But I felt the need to attend . . . probably my Baptist guilt. It wasn't until the kids were about eight and five that we started to regularly attend the New Jerusalem Church where Ray grew up. Ray chose not to attend except on special occasions. This bothered me at first because I had this picture in my mind of the ideal family, always going to church together. But finally God helped me realize that these pictures I sometimes have about the perfect way things should be are often way off base and can cause a lot of unnecessary friction.

The New Jerusalem Church is right for me. Through Swedenborg's writings I have been able to enjoy reading the Word. Developing an understanding of the correspondences has helped me through the stumbling blocks that I used to encounter when I tried to read the Word. I would get stuck on something that just didn't make sense when I was reading it on the literal plane and I couldn't get past it. Now I am hungry for more knowledge about God. I want to know God better and to be God's friend. I've quit making religion such hard work. As the Lord says 'My yoke is easy and my burden is light.'

I love the Doctrine of Uses. I am the director of pharmacy operations for a chain of 47 pharmacies. I have spent a lot of time questioning if I am in the right job. Maybe I should be a social worker, or a psychologist or a minister . . . I am a pharmacist, but actually I am not practicing pharmacy anymore. I am a businesswoman.

And it was not until I understood more about the Doctrine of Uses that I found peace in the realization that I am where I should be for now. God has given me many opportunities to be of use in my secular job. Some independent pharmacy owners have had to close down because of economic conditions in the health care field. I have had the opportunity to help them close out their businesses in a way that does not destroy their self-esteem. I can offer them employment with us so that they can continue to serve their patients that they have known and cared for for many years. I have made several dear friends, not only with the pharmacists but their families too. I also came to realize that by creating a good place for pharmacists and their staff to work, I have the unique opportunity to touch many lives and indirectly care for many people. Someday God may want me to do more, but for now God has shown me this is where I should be.

We are looking forward to showing everyone about our little community here in Pretty Prairie at the '97 Convention in Kansas. We joke that our theme should be "See a Bit of Heaven in '97." The Convention Committee, headed by my mother-in-law, Mary Siebert, even managed to line up the Pretty Prairie Night rodeo (Largest night rodeo in Kansas) to fall on the same days as Convention. Plan on a buffalo roast and a fun night of Western entertainment. We will make you all feel welcome! ♦

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*Developing an understanding of the correspondences has helped me through the stumbling blocks I used to encounter when I tried to read the Word.*

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

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

## OPINION

### Male Exclusive Pronouns in *Twelve Gates* Questioned

To the Editor:

About Forster Freeman's review of *Twelve Gates to the City* (Chrysalis Reader) in the May *Messenger*, Freeman's statement that author Tony Mitton used "male-exclusive pronouns" in a passage needs more clarification.

The use of "his" in two places there merely takes advantage of the ability of "he," "him," and "his" to be genderless pronouns when referring to groups composed of both men and women, as in "He who hesitates is lost." To think of them only as masculine pronouns isn't justified under the rules of English; we should declare the language innocent. Dictionaries and English grammars provide for this shift. Homonyms, which work the same way and would include "he," "him," and "his," are words that look the same, sound the same, but shift meaning radically depending on context; they are very common (e.g., "jam"), and we have no trouble with them. Their use in a particular context does not bring in echoes or images of their other meanings, for the mind recognizes the presence of a different word in each instance.

## TO THE EDITOR

If there were any actual confusion over what these shifting words intend, we would have had the rules changed long ago, for we would have been producing statements that were materially misleading, hobbling the language in every subject area.

Steve Koke  
Rough 'n Ready, California

## LETTERS

### Experiences with Interactive Prayer Sought

To the Editor:

I came upon your lovely magazine in the Graduate Theological Union Library in Berkeley, California. May I ask your readers to help me with a project?

I am researching human experience with interactive prayer. Have you had any experience with conversations with God? Have you heard, seen, or otherwise received a message from Him, guiding you to do something, say something to someone, or perform any kind of action? Have you then asked Him for clarification, for further guidance or help, or told Him the reasons why you would prefer not to perform the action? Have you argued with Him? What happened? As I said, I am looking for concrete experiences of divine-human interaction, conversations or communication with God, with input from both sides.

I am an Episcopalian with a deep interest in prayer and hope to share what you and others tell me in a book. If you are willing to share your experiences with me, please write to me at Box 4608, Walnut Creek, California 94596.

Thank you and bless you.

Elizabeth Walter  
P.O. Box 4608  
Walnut Creek, California 94596  
510-932-4969



### Burned Churches

Dear Friends:

Many, many thanks for your gift of \$1,239.19 received on July 16, 1996 for the Burned Churches Fund. The caring that your gift expresses will make healing possible.

The Burned Churches Fund has drawn support from people all across our land. It is a uniquely gratifying response.

The fund will allow the victimized and desecrated churches to be restored. We hope that each church building will be better equipped for ministry than before it was struck.

Also, the Burned Churches Fund will allow us to challenge the racism that continues to fuel hurt and hate among us. We need a deeper healing if there is to be a lasting end to the epidemic of violence.

Thank you again for being a partner with the National Council of Churches, its Church World Service Unit and all its program activities, in seeking to challenge and to bring new health to all, to God's honor and glory. Please continue to remember us and our work in your prayers.

Gratefully, in Christian faithfulness,

(Rev. Dr.) Joan Brown Campbell  
General Secretary,  
National Council of Churches

## IMPORTANT CHURCH CALENDAR DATES

October	11-14	EdSU—LaPorte, IN
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 Ministries—Hutchinson, KS
July	9-13	1997 Convention Ministers—Hutchinson, KS

# The Warmth of Friends when the Heat is On

Reneé Billings

The Lord said in Matthew 5:13: "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot."

We all have moments of high pressure when we feel like the "heat is on." I believe at these times it is helpful to ask ourselves: "To whom or what do I turn in these high pressure moments? Where is my Source of strength?"

During the last week of August, I felt pressure to get a lot done in a short amount of time. After returning from a busy vacation month of working at a children's camp in New Mexico, embarking on a Vision Quest and then spending time with my family at a cabin on Ford Lake near Ludington, Michigan, I returned home to face a week of moving from my apartment in Southfield to my new pad in Birmingham.

I felt the pressure that perhaps many single working women who live alone have felt who are charged with the overwhelming task of moving. Many differ-

ent aspects of my life needed attention all at once and I couldn't shake the feeling that I was alone and that I had to do it on my own. For a while at first, I didn't ask anyone for help. But with a friend's support and encouragement, I did.

I called some of my friends in the church who I thought could help—Sandy, Ray, Steve, Rob and, of course, Ed. They helped me move throughout the week—and without them, I would not have made it out in time and I would have been a wreck at the office. I can look back on this hectic week and give thanks. Yes, give thanks. For I see that my friends were the Lord's way of sending help and strength.

We all have moments of high pressure when we feel like the "heat is on." To whom or what do we turn in these moments? I turned to my friends and they were there for me. When they were tired and hot, yet playful and supportive...I saw the Lord in their eyes and I was changed inside because my need was answered.

Friends are visible messengers of the Lord's loving response and presence

when the "heat is on." Friends season our lives with support, laughter and perspective, and God is the Source to turn to when we need to ask for a friend. God is our friend.

I have been reminded once again in my life that asking the Lord to help with the pressures of life produces good and lasting things; results come. With our willingness, God can create in us a tasty, healthy character. God is the salt that gives flavor to our lives. When we push God away, we are diluted and, to some degree, dull and ineffective. We are born with the freedom to acquire all the goodness and truth that we desire and we become "seasoned and tasty" to the degree that we allow God to be with us and work for us in our lives.

*The Rev. Reneé Billings is pastor of the Detroit Swedenborgian Church in Royal Oak, Michigan. Reprinted from The Royal Oak Swedenborgian Church Newsletter, September 1996.*



## Gutfeldt Visits St. Thomas Missionary Branch

The Rev. Dr. Horand Gutfeldt was invited on July 3, 1996 to visit a synod of a section of the St. Thomas church in Los Gatos, California. The St. Thomas church has accepted Swedenborg as a saint and teacher upon the recommendation of the Rev. Dr. J. Vredenburg, their archbishop, who was a guest at our last annual convention in San Francisco.

It was a meeting of their missionary branch, mainly featuring a young minister who developed a motorcycle ministry in Flagstaff, Arizona, officiating at services, weddings and many occasions of motorcycle groups that work together with him on a regular basis. This occasion offered an interesting insight into the structure and running of a church organization that has many similarities with our own, and yet exhibits many important differences as well. Not a great convention that makes all decisions, but a number of smaller conferences under the gentle leadership of their bishop. It is to be hoped that more cooperation develops between our organizations in the future, yet maintaining the uniqueness of each in the way that the Lord has led us. ◆

## N C C U P D A T E S

### New Name and New Look for VISN

The Faith & Values Channel, known as VISN or VISON/ACT announced on July 15, 1996, that it will have a new name, ODYSSEY, along with a new logo and on air look beginning September 29, the start of the fall season. According to Dave Pomeroy, Director of Electronic Media on the Communication Commission of the NCC, the name change will better accomplish the National Interfaith Cable Coalition's mission of "making faith visible on TV." (NICC, the parent body of the Faith & Values Channel, is a consortium of 64 Protestant, Jewish, Catholic and Eastern Orthodox faith groups and evangelical traditions).

The changes are designed to insure the continued growth of the channel by making it attractive to the broadest audience possible, while maintaining its core audience. The planned changes will enhance the channel's long-standing commitment to bring viewers the most diverse range of religious, faith and values-based programs on television. It is believed that ODYSSEY and the new tag line, "Exploring Life's Journey," better convey the breadth of their program offerings and better meet the ever-increasing demands for programming that both inspires and entertains. Average audiences watching the Faith & Values Channel have increased by 129 percent over the last two years, and the number of viewers sampling F & V programs is up 44 percent. The channel is now available in more than 25 million households nationwide via cable and the Primestar direct-to-home satellite service.

### HUNGER

*Hunger: Causes and Solutions* by the CWS/Office on Global Education, Baltimore, MD and Bread for the World, is a four-page study/action guide that examines the roots of hunger and highlights successful efforts of U.S. churches and other groups to respond to this fundamental injustice—both in the U.S. and around the world.

\$.30 (4/\$1.00), Order No. ED 9659 CWS, PO Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515

## ON THE LIGHTER SIDE...

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Bill:  
"There is  
definitely  
something out  
there"...



Bob:  
"Awesome.  
Could it be...  
Angels?"



George:  
"According to  
my calculations,  
they should be  
friendly."



Dorotbea:  
"Trust me,  
everything's in  
Divine Order."



Paul:  
"They're  
about this  
big..."



Eric:  
"I'm not  
buying  
it."



Betty:  
"I'm  
neutral."

## Prairie Fires

some seed falls on hard ground  
some seed falls in weeds  
some seed won't sprout until it's been embraced by fire

all seed dies on the way to becoming the something new  
most seed soaks in water,  
softens,  
swells  
ripens,  
bursts into yearning updown

prairie grass must burn first  
prairie grass cannot die into the something new by softening in water  
prairie grass quickens in fire

ah, we were  
enjoying the sustaining sun  
overburdened with seeds  
ready to give each seed a home in rich earth  
laughing under the weight of our treasure, our gift to the garden

we sensed it before we heard it  
we heard it before we felt it

sucking away the oxygen  
changing our colors  
pulling  
we are trapped in place  
we stand in horror and submission as fire descends and rises  
unstoppable  
unavoidable  
unholy

the flames rush on and away  
and all is ashes, ashes, we all fall down  
our scorched seeds, tumbling from our scorched bodies as we  
all fall down

and that is the planting of the something new,  
the promise, the transforming out of heat into ashes into the something new

whatever it may be.

©Sidney Blackhawk, 1996



## BAPTISMS

**Bingham**—Courtney Renee and Lindsay Nicole Bingham, twin infant daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Bingham, were baptized into the Christian faith April 7, 1996, at the Pawnee Rock, Kansas Swedenborgian Church, the Rev. Galen Unruh (great-grandfather) officiating. Grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Howard Bourman.

**Foster**—Benjamin Lee Foster, son of Theresa and David Foster, was baptized into the Christian faith April 14, 1996, at the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, the Rev. Rachel Rivers officiating.

**Heller**—Alexandra and Makim Heller, daughter and son of Josie Conte and Nick Heller of the Portland, Maine Swedenborgian Church, were baptized into the Christian faith July 26, 1996, at Ferry Beach, Scarborough, Maine, the Rev. Ken Turley officiating.

**Joseph**—Troy Adam Joseph, born March 22, 1995, son of John and Myrna Poissant of Sundre, Alberta, was baptized into the Christian faith May 12, 1996, at Airdrie, Alberta (Calgary New Church Society), the Rev. Erwin Reddekopp, great-great-uncle, officiating.

## CONFIRMATIONS

**Banaszak and Legenc**—Ray Banaszak and Steven Legenc were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church June 16, 1996, at the Swedenborgian Church in Royal Oak, Michigan, the Rev. Renee Billings officiating.

**Buck**—Roger C. Buck was confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church, in Portland, Maine, April 21, 1996, the Rev. Ken Turley officiating.

**Kalinowski**—Tony Kalinowski was confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church June 9, 1996, at the LaPorte New Church in LaPorte, Indiana, the Rev. Eric Hoffman officiating.

## MARRIAGE

**Ridley and Wiens**—Tracy Sharon Ridley and Peter John Wiens were united in marriage August 3, 1996, at the home of Harold and Thelma Wiens of Summerland, British Columbia, the Rev. Erwin Reddekopp officiating.

## DEATHS

**Eaton**—Casindania Pratt Eaton, age 89, entered the spiritual world June 12, 1996, in New York. Cas had a long career in the New York Public Library, retiring in 1972 as coordinator of all the Manhattan branches. Her uncle, Russell Eaton, was a New Church minister serving as pastor of the Urbana, Brockton, and Kitchener churches and as president of Urbana University. A burial service was conducted July 13 at the South Street Cemetery in Bridgewater, Mass., the Rev. Lee Woofenden officiating. A memorial service was conducted at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in New York, July 15. Cas is survived by her sister, Marion Washburn Turner, her brother, Amherst Eaton, two nephews and one niece, and many grand-nephews and nieces.

**Rankin**—Helen E. Rankin (Mrs. Herbert Rankin) longtime Swedenborgian and lifelong resident of Fryeburg, Maine, entered the spiritual world July 18, 1996, in Bridgton, Maine. A graveside service was conducted at Pine Grove Cemetery July 22, 1996, the Rev. Ken Turley officiating. Helen served the Fryeburg church in many capacities until limited by ill health.

## NEW HOME ADDRESS

\*Rev. Ken and Laurie Turley  
8 Elm Street  
Fryeburg, ME 04037  
(207) 935-4500

*\*Last month we printed the Turleys' church address, but neglected to add the home address & phone number.*

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Rev. Kit Billings  
1607 Carroll Avenue, #1  
St. Paul, MN 55104

Rev. Renee Billings  
359 Ferndale Rd.  
Birmingham, MI 48009  
(810)-594-7682

## *Cry Not For Me*

When I shall die and  
Leave behind this  
earth I love,  
These trees,  
This sky,  
The ever pounding sea,  
The yearly hope  
of spring,  
Cry not for me.  
Rejoice!  
My soul has wings  
and in its  
Freedom  
Sings.

—J. Milton, Jr.

*(poem read at Helen Rankin's Service)*

## MOVING TOWARD THE LIGHT Hanging In

*(Continued from page 122)*

the Lamb's and bolted into place.

Another of those "coincidences" that happen when we're in the flow. This life can be magical indeed—we just need to hang in there!

*Postscript as we go to press:* The opening was a great success. I stayed with Virginia Branston in New York. Virginia was not only a wonderful host, she was extremely helpful in spreading word of the play to all her friends in New York, and she has many! I met her daughter Joan, who, it turns out, is Lee Dyer's mother-in-law. Robert McCluskey, Mona Conner and several other members of the New York church attended and enjoyed it immensely. "MATTY" got solid reviews in the *New York Times*, the *Newark Star Ledger*, and a rave in the *New York Post*.

For readers in the area who would like to see "MATTY," the Lamb's Theatre is located at 130 W. 44 St. (212) 239-6200.

—Patte LeVan

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.

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*Sermon Tapes from the Rev. Ken Turley are also available from Fryeburg New Church at \$3.00 each, including shipping and handling.*

The lecture series from the 1996 Fryeburg Assembly is available on cassette tape. This year we have greatly improved the quality of the recordings, especially the question and answer periods at the end of each lecture. The cost is \$3.00 per tape (2 lectures) or \$15.00 for one week (10 lectures) or \$30.00 for both weeks (20 lectures). The lecture themes and titles are listed to the left. Please add \$1.00 for individual tapes or \$2.00 for each week of tapes for shipping costs and order from:

The Fryeburg New Church  
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