
THE MESSENGER

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January 1997

Swedenborg's Active Mysticism

Theodore Klein

In the December 1996 *Messenger* article in this series, the Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake described how Swedenborg's mysticism included experiences of the Divine and active engagement in community. For Swedenborg, connection with the Divine did not lead to a life of withdrawal, but to a transformed life of active service in the world.

Living through the intense mystical experiences that began in 1744, Swedenborg saw himself as called by God to a new vocation. This sense of call led to many important life changes. Swedenborg at first continued his work on the Board of Mines, but in 1747, he resigned to allow more time for spiritual exploration and writing. He turned his incredible writing energies from the sciences to theology, entering what he saw as a new way of serving.

While immersed in this new vocation, Swedenborg remained an active participant in the Swedish House of Nobles. He continued to contribute thoughtful and carefully worked out written recommendations. In 1755, for example, he offered proposals for reducing Sweden's very unfavorable rate of exchange.¹ In 1760, greatly concerned about harm resulting from Sweden's economic condition, he proposed measures to reverse what he saw as too heavy a reliance on paper money.² Later in 1760 and in 1761, he

was much involved in deliberations about the direction of the Swedish government. He contributed views which linked a balance of powers to freedom, and emphasized the importance of people responsibly exercising their freedom as stewards in the world.³ Very late in his life, in 1771, he reprinted, with substantial additions, a paper on currency he had first submitted to the House of Nobles almost fifty years earlier.⁴

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In his theology, Swedenborg approached a spiritual life, a life guided by awareness of God, as taking form in a fully engaged life in relationships, work, communities, and the world. He saw an active life in the world as relating to a spiritual life much like a foundation relates to its house and body to its soul (*Heaven and Hell*, n. 529).

We can live such an active spiritual life in the world if we keep turning to God, resist what is evil and harmful, and look to others for whose good we are moved (*Divine Love and Wisdom*, n. 426). In this active life of service, we would seek to do what is right and needed in every work and office (*Arcana Coelestia*, n. 8121), and in each of our connections with others (*Arcana Coelestia*, n. 8122). If we live in this way, we will become more and more embodiments of charity, but this cannot happen unless we act from God while acting from ourselves (*True Christian Religion*, n. 423). The

theology that went with Swedenborg's active mysticism joins experiencing of God, openness to God's guidance, and active responses to needs that present themselves in our relationships, work, communities, and living in the world.

Dr. Wilson Van Dusen, a modern interpreter of Swedenborg, presents a way of integrating the inner and outer in a method of *uses*.

It begins simply by looking around at what needs doing and doing it. And, in doing, look to see what is the Lord's simple, intimate gift to you. Although it is inwardly as rich and complex as all there is, it is also as simple as sweeping the floor, very well, with a certain earnest devotion.'

Our gifts and talents, channeled through uses, with God's guiding and our cooperation, can be matched with what is needed in the lives of others. Think of a parent lovingly asking a child how the first day at a new school went, and listening with full attention to the child's stories and excitement. Picture someone offering encouragement to a coworker who is discouraged about how slowly a project at work is going. Imagine a health care provider calmly and firmly engaging in a long series of phone calls in an effort to see that a client's needs are addressed. People in such situations can live in ways which join their experiencing of God, and openness to God's guidance, with their attending and responding to what is needed. A similar joining can be brought into our actions in communities and the larger world. Consider a person working to ease world hunger, responding to unjust treatment of a group, seeking to contribute in finding energy uses in

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**IN THIS
ISSUE:**

**Report from NCC: Faith and Order • Wayfarers Chapel Touched by
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Looking beyond the packaging—What you see...is what you get!

Guest Editorial by Steve Pults

Perhaps you also noticed this past Christmas morning as you opened presents advertised for weeks on television, and in sale catalogs—packaging was everything (well, almost everything). I'm thinking in particular about the toys and games I purchased for my little ones. With some exceptions the toys my children had hoped for after being exposed to powerfully produced commercials and enticing packaging on store shelves turned out to be something less than promised. Some were played with for only a few minutes. Others were cheaply made and quickly disintegrated into random pieces scattered around their room. I too had fallen victim to the expectations placed in their promotion hoping my choices would bring hours of fun and enjoyment for my children. The experience set me to thinking about how much of our time and culture is based on packaging. We buy images rather than substance. We consume products whose production costs include the packages we discard, yet remain in our consciousness (or perhaps better put—our subconscious). Ever compare the fast food meal you are actually served with the

sumptuous pictures of the same item on the menu? If presented only with the product, would we buy it? I wonder.



One of the goals of becoming a spiritual person is to recognize the difference in ourselves between the packaging and the substance. Swedenborg described entering the spiritual life as a gradual stripping away of the external facades to reveal to ourselves and others who we really are. He described heaven as a state of translucence—in other words the inside

matching the outside, actually shining through to the outer person. With that comes something very precious—freedom. With nothing to hide or to pretend, you also find safety—"What you see is what you get." There is no fear. There is no pretense. And genuine intimacy, genuine love is truly possible.

How sad when we fall prey to believing that living a spiritual life involves perfecting the package—having to look good, act nice, talk politely, never mess up or face it when we do mess up.

May we be reminded in this new year to learn to "see" beyond our packaging and "love" ourselves and others for who we really are—people learning how to love.

The Rev. Steve Pults is the former minister at the Swedenborgian Church of North America Puget Sound.

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Swedenborg's Active Mysticism

(Continued from cover)

harmony with nature, or seeking to develop alternatives to violence. Such actions can be part of how a person is living a spiritual life in the world. For a further example, think of a church group, as part of its calling, joining with people from other groups in seeking to bring more affordable housing and increased job training to a community.

Swedenborg's life is a model of active mysticism which each of us can reinterpret and reinvent for our own time and life situations. We may begin with a deep inner awareness of God, and move from that into active engagement in the world. We may begin as a person who is very active in the world, and then become open to God in increasing depth. Or the inner and outer sides may develop in very close interaction. The integration of inner and outer, which can happen in different ways with different people, is a most vital learning from Swedenborg's active mysticism.

These articles will next introduce you to a series of meetings between Swedenborg and various mystics, beginning with an article by Dr. Mary Kay Klein on Swedenborg and Hildegard.

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THE MESSENGER

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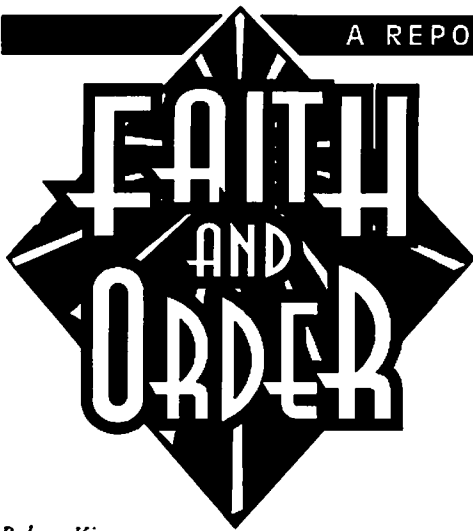
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Robert Kirven

I have to begin this report with a little personal background. In 1965, before the Swedenborgian Church joined the National Council of Churches (NCC), I began attending colloquia held by the council's Commission on Faith and Order (F&O). After we joined the NCC, I represented us on F&O for twenty-one years until I was succeeded by Jay Lee and then Horand Gutfeldt. When Horand resigned because of his illness, I have had the privilege of returning to the commission this fall.

During all my first time with the F&O I was disappointed by my failure to communicate the excitement of my being involved with it, or the importance of our church's being involved. If I do not succeed in communicating that excitement and importance this time, it won't be for not talking and writing about it!

Background

"Faith and Order" is a label for attempts by different churches—that is, different "communities" within the Christian Church—to talk and study and seek to understand the similarities and differences that unite and divide them. Participants in F&O discussions avoid all efforts to convince, convict, or convert one another: they try instead to listen, and to be clear. The goal is mutual understanding, which can be achieved only by clear and distinct knowledge of each other's traditions and theology.

This kind of non-aggressive understanding has been pursued in meet-

ings, or councils, representing many churches; so it came to be called the "Conciliar Movement," later becoming distinguished from "union movements" which sought mergers between denominations. One of the Conciliar Movement's first standing organizations was called the Commission on Faith and Order. Subsequent formations included the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the NCC, of which F&O became a part. The search for theological understanding is central to the life and purpose of all councils of churches. It is a work to which the Swedenborgian tradition has much to contribute, and from which the Swedenborgian Church has much to gain.

The business of *coming to understanding* is a really exciting enterprise. It requires a lot of effort, and provides many large and small surprises. In my first meetings, I found myself surprised to the point of confusion, because I kept anticipating what a speaker would say on the basis of his or her denomination, and my expectations were wrong *every time!* Eventually I recognized several things: my preconceptions about denominational positions were useless; both the similarities and the differences between *us* and *them* were not what I expected; and, in fact, there are greater differences *within* denominations than often exist *between* them.

After I got my bearings in this way, I began to learn some of the terminology that is necessary in discussions between people who have traditionally understood different things when hearing or speaking certain words (as, earlier in this article, I referred to *communities*, a term which avoids difficulties which accompany calling another body a *church* or a *denomination*). After I had learned my way around, the big surprise was the excitement of finding myself in a new landscape of church life, learning

a theological and ecclesiastical geography that I had not been aware of before.

Recalling now how much orientation I needed before I came to appreciate the adventure of Faith and Order, I find it easier to understand the blank stares I received when I used to try to talk about it. This time, I'll pay more attention to the background and context.

Faith and Order Report

The National Council of Churches works in four-year cycles, called "quadrennia." People are elected to offices for four-year terms, projects are planned to be initiated and completed in four years. The current quadrennium began last spring, and runs through the end of 1999. The Faith and Order Commission starts the year with a new director, the Rev. Dr. William Rush, and its chair is Paul Meyendorff (Orthodox Church in America). Three study projects are under way: the *Ecclesiology Study* examines the structures of the National Council of Churches with respect to Faith and Order; the

Christian Identity and Formation

Study looks at how different communities select and recognize their members, and see themselves in relation to the wider Christian Church; and the

Mission in a

Pluralistic World

Study investigates how

different churches

see their task in the complexities of today's

multi-cultural society with

its growing religious pluralism. I am working on the latter

study, and may have the most to

say about it as these semi-annual reports continue; but I expect to learn a lot from the other studies that I hope I can translate into interesting articles.

The Pluralism Study is co-chaired by Mark Heim (American Baptist),

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Wayfarers Chapel Touched by Many Angels

Mary Sabol

I had just spent the last week of my little brother's life with him as he was dying of lung cancer. He was six years younger than I, so I always referred to him as my baby brother. My sister Carrie is five years younger than I. We weren't that close—our lives were busy—but the previous year, my brother had been diagnosed with lung cancer. Carrie called me often during that year—to talk, to tell me what the latest was—to share her optimism that he was going to beat this thing.

We had been up all week; people were coming and going. We called in Hospice, so that he could die at home...it was time for me to leave, to get back to California, my family and my business. I hugged him...kissed him goodbye. One tear fell down his cheek.

We drove to the airport in Phoenix—Carrie, her husband Terry and I. We had dinner there and talked about what a good week it had been...to see our brother off to whatever his mission was.

As I checked in at the ticket counter, the reservationist said that there was a flight deadheading to Los Angeles with a crew and if I wanted to, I could take it and leave earlier. Of course, I said yes. I wanted to watch the Arizona sunset and then sleep across the three seats. I was exhausted. We had been like three children at a sleep-over—only our baby brother was going to another place. It wasn't sad, it was a send-off to whatever his new life might be.

As I settled into my space, a very tall man in an airline uniform walked down the aisle. He was so tall, with beautiful clear blue eyes. As he came to my row, he sat down. "Oh, great," I said to myself, "there goes my sleep time...oh, well, I'll just sleep across two seats." But he sat down right next to me. As he did, he introduced himself. Noticing my boots and jeans, he asked me if I had been to the horse show in Phoenix. I told him I had

Tara's Angels workshop, September 24: (from left) Rev. Carl Yenetchi, Chapel minister; Sandy Moore, Mary Sabol, Kirk Moore.



(from left) Allyce Bothmann, wife of Chapel board member Victor Bothmann; Flo Swiger, board member; Rev. Ted LeVan, Chapel minister; at Tara's Angels reception and book-signing.

come to Phoenix to help my baby brother, who was dying of cancer. He then shared with me that his father was also dying of cancer—but it wasn't sad. We talked about our faith in God and eternity.

As we talked, I became energized. We watched the sunset together. He told me what a beautiful place I had chosen to live—in Palos Verdes—that he flew out over my peninsula often. The time passed quickly. We landed in Los Angeles. I travel light; I had only a backpack with one carry-on, but he walked with me the entire way through the baggage claim area. I thanked him for his concern for me, and went out the door to meet my husband, Phil, who was at the curb. I was so energized, I couldn't forget this airline pilot. I told Phil all about the encounter, what a comfort he had been to me. I kept talking about him and my husband suggested I write him a letter expressing my gratitude.

However, my attempts to contact him always resulted in a dead end. They said there was no such pilot with

their airline, based in Arizona. My sister Carrie called the next morning to say that our brother had crossed over. I told her the story of the airline pilot. Her response was, "He was an angel sent to comfort you."

I have always loved angels and have been a collector for many years—so I guess it was fitting that our first workshop in the Public Relations Department at Wayfarers Chapel in 1996 be about angels. On September 24, Wayfarers Chapel presented a workshop by Kirk and Sandy Moore, of *Tara's Angels*.^{*} There were 83 in attendance. The responses were so positive on my evaluation sheet: "more on angels"... "What an awesome place to talk about angels"... "more on spirituality"... "more fun stuff..."

The second workshop, *Art, Angels, and Miracles*, was presented by Andy Lakey, author and artist. Both workshops hosted a reception and book-signing afterward. We received 216 calls on Andy's workshop, with 95 in attendance. Andy donates 30 per cent of his earnings to various charities. He has agreed to return for our fall series starting September 23, 1997. Because of his very unique painting style, we are thinking of a workshop for the visually impaired.

Our third workshop on angels is taking place January 21, 1997, with Terry Lynn Taylor, author of several

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books, the most noted being *Messengers of Light*. At this writing, we have 28 reservations. A reception and book-signing also follow this workshop.

The community response has been overwhelming. Typical comments: "I'm so happy to see that the Chapel is presenting such wonderful events..." "I thought this was only a wedding chapel."

Emanuel Swedenborg, who through a gift of our Lord Jesus Christ had decades of direct conversations with angels, also wrote about how angels interact in our lives unseen. He spoke of music in Heaven and of the ways angels take care of us and of one another. He wrote of their being present with us in our worship and in our prayer life. The Wayfarers Chapel, therefore, is constantly working with angels!

Ongoing Outreach

The Denner Clarinet Quartet, a local group, presented a well-received concert October 1, with 73 in attendance. They also performed a Christmas concert with the raising of the Advent wreath on November 30. We hope to make this an annual event.

On October 23, Public Relations participated in a trade show for Wedding and Special Events Association, a local networking organization.

Universal Studios did a one-day television shoot for the show "Sliders"; "Season's Greetings," their Christmas show was shown one week prior to Christmas. They were professional, fun and left our beautiful chapel and grounds intact.

The Rev. Dr. Horand Gutfeldt graced our pulpit with inspiring morning and evening services on November 17.

The Thanksgiving service, on November 24, included our annual collection of clothing, toys and food for Rainbow Services, a shelter for women and children.

Throughout the month of December, several concerts were arranged by Wendy Waring, director of music:

December 1—Heritage Woodwind String Quartet, to benefit the organ restoration fund.

December 8—Carols and Candles, special candlelight service for children.

December 15—Christmas Concert with Agostino Castagnola, tenor, and Susan Deitz, soprano.

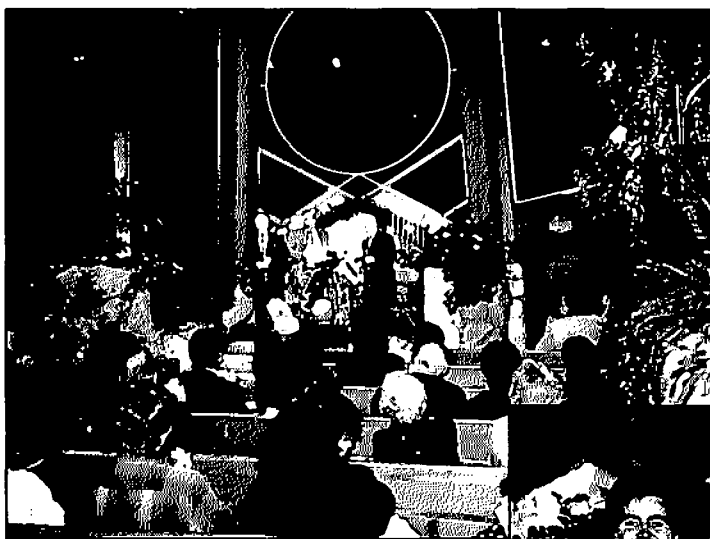
December 22—Christmas service of prayer, dedication and healing with the Chapel Gospel Quartet debuting.

December 24—Christmas Eve Candlelight Services at 7:30, 9:30, and 11:30.

amphitheater with reception and book-signing to follow.

So...was it an angel that comforted me on my journey home to Los Angeles?

I don't know...I do believe in angels and I do believe in miracles—and I believe our outreach programs at the chapel are touching lives in positive ways that we can see and also in subtle, ripple-effect ways that we may



Denner Clarinet Quartet Concert, October 1.

The Rev. Carl Yenetchi with artist-author Andy Lakey; Art, Angels, and Miracles workshop, October 29.



January 5, 1997—Lester J. Martin, local member of our congregation will present a two-hour program of poetry and music.

January 14—Public Relations Director, Mary Sabol will be making a 15-minute presentation on the Wayfarers Chapel to Wedding and Special Events Association.

On February 11, a special Valentine program with Stephanie Kaufman, harpist.

March 18—the Rev. Lee Woofenden, minister of the Bridgewater church in Massachusetts, will present a workshop on the millennium. Mr. Woofenden recently completed a new translation of *The Heavenly City: A Spiritual Guidebook*, Swedenborg's most concise outline of his major theological ideas—God, human nature, and spiritual freedom. A reception and book-signing follows.

April brings *Poetry in the Garden*, with local editor and publisher Jacquelin Bachar. All the poets are local women from the south bay area. We plan to hold this event in the

not always understand—we just feel the energy expanding and becoming more joyful.

* *Tara's Angels: One Family's Extraordinary Journey of Courage and Healing* is a book written by Kirk Moore following the untimely death of his daughter. It is also the name of the Moore family's angel shops in San Juan Capistrano and Redondo Beach, California.

Mary Sabol became director of public relations at the Wayfarers Chapel in 1996. She has lived in Rancho Palos Verdes for 30 years. She and her husband Phil, a local businessman, have one son. Mary says she was prompted to begin as a volunteer at the Chapel when her car broke down in the Chapel driveway. ♦

OPINION

TO THE EDITOR

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.

Gay Marriage

Dear Editor,

Re: the article "*Risking on the Side of Compassion*" written by the Rev. Dr. James Lawrence, in the November 1996 *Messenger*:

When does action become policy? Is policy geographically situated? The sanctioning of gay marriages, within the realm of conjugal love, is not the self-appointed risking of one individual but representative of all voices within the Swedenborgian Church. As a church member, I feel I am being shanghaied by a religious interpretation of society's mores—before I have had an opportunity to be fully informed of this issue and all the accompanying repercussions, positive as well as negative.

Rev. Lawrence's journey is part of our journey too, and we are all therefore seen as risking on the side of compassion. I humbly suggest that the issue of gay marriage has yet to be fully played out in the larger societal and political arenas, let alone at the congregational level. Cutting edge enlightenment and action demands the informed consensus of all who call themselves Swedenborgians. Will we be policy makers or policy receivers?

Nancy L. Evans
Kelowna, British Columbia

RESPONSE

Dear Editor:

The issue Ms. Evans brings up is an important one about which many people throughout the Swedenborgian Church seem unclear. She poses a question regarding our denominational policy and governing policy regarding the practice of ministry within the General Convention. We have a radical democracy in our denomination; each congregation is empowered to conduct its ministry according to its bylaws, without interference from either the Association to which it belongs or from the larger incorporated denomination. Of course, a congregation can be voted out of membership, at either the Association or denominational level, if a majority prevails in a legal vote. What one congregation promotes is not in any way assumed to be necessarily reflective of another congregation. Therefore, Ms. Evans and her congregation are no more "shanghaied" by what we do in San Francisco than we are by what they do in British Columbia.

Members of the larger Swedenborgian Church have often wished that we could have theological policy determined at some high or central level, to be distributed throughout the member congregations. Though there are indeed denominations that operate with a strong, top-down, authoritarian style of government within Christendom, we are one of many denominations that operate with what is called the "congregational form of government." Congregations "own and operate" their ministries, and my article made clear that we handled this practice of ministry as a congregation, in accordance with the governing policy of General Convention.

The Council of Ministers has articulated the understanding that individual ministers, when ordained, are empowered to conduct Christian ministry as a representative of the Church, until and unless their credentials or practices are challenged, in which case a minister's credentials could be potentially suspended. But we also articulated that an individual minister is not free to conduct minis-

try practices against the wishes of his or her congregation when those practices are being conducted under the auspices of a duly organized congregation. Their service may be terminated by congregational vote.

So, every member of General Convention is both a policy maker and a policy receiver, as long as he or she participates in a member congregation of the General Convention. Each lay member can have an impact on the larger Church's theology, just as each minister may have such an impact. We have chosen to set sail in Convention with the largest degree of freedom possible, as to church government. It does make one rather soberly aware of the enormous consequences of freedom, doesn't it?

Rev. Jim Lawrence,
San Francisco

Dear Editor:

Jim Lawrence's article, "*Risking on the Side of Compassion*" in the November *Messenger* served as a wake-up call to examine my prejudices. A decade or two ago, had I seen the headline "Gay Marriages" somewhere, I would have uttered anathema. Yet, as a student of human nature, I know that historically homosexuality has always been a part of the human experience. Sometimes it wanes, then it surfaces in larger numbers of people. Why it is seemingly on the increase in our time is a subject for debate by the biological and sociological sciences.

What impressed me in Jim's thoughtfully written article was how the San Francisco church handled a situation when it showed up on its doorstep that did not have a precedent. It is one thing to open the First Order of Worship and follow the outline, but quite another matter when one has to grapple with a situation that tradition has not addressed—except by ignoring it in the hope that it will go away. I thought it courageous of the San Francisco pastors to take the issue before their local church

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council, who in turn poled the entire membership on whether or not to support such a ministry initiative. This shows visionary leadership that invites member participation in policy shaping.

Reading of the pastor's personal inner struggle in the process I could appreciate that the decision "to bless the commitment in fidelity of two people of the same sex" was not lightly made. By "extending the church's support...to people who do not experience their love as evil" a vital need is being met: The basic human need to belong to the human community, to be affirmed in their human dignity, to be accepted.

Not too many decades ago Helen Keller did much to draw public attention to this very need and to improve the lot of the handicapped and disabled who were largely kept out of sight and shunned by society. Is it time now for us to accept a phenomenon of human nature which the majority deems objectionable?

We know enough about the dynamic of homosexuality to know that we cannot change it. For some members of the human family, attraction to persons of the same gender is innate. The creator must love diversity or he would not have made us so colorfully different, yet each one of us unique. Is it not our task to create unity with diversity?

After a week's pondering of Jim's article, I came to the awareness that whenever I have "risked on the side of compassion" on any controversial issue, I have come closer to feeling the Lord's presence than when I have "cast the first stone."

Ann Graber Westermann
St. Louis



To the Editor:

I have read the argument for the admission of performing homosexual marriages by the Rev. Dr. James Lawrence ("Risking on the Side of Compassion," November, 1996). I am dismayed at its clear message.

In the Writings for the New Church, Swedenborg describes the four states of perversion of what is good and true that occur within a church. The last of these exists "when good and truth are made profane (AC 3754)." I believe that the argument set forth in Rev. Lawrence's article represents this fourth stage of devolution. By mixing truths with falsity in a doctrinal matter of this magnitude (the conjugal principle, which represents the very nature of the Lord Himself), his logic is dead wrong. I choose these words carefully.

Mixing spiritual truths with falsity is serious business, "for the profanation of that which is holy leads to eternal death, a death far more serious than that to which any other states of evil lead, and which is all the more serious insofar as they are interior goods and truths which are made profane (AC 3755)." Profanation has disregard for what is true, and contempt for what is good, and it has the disruptive power of the hells behind it, because "to one in whom evil and falsity are present, the removal of good and truth, and consequently of angels, is not apparent, for at that time he is convinced that evil is good and falsity is truth (AC 3402)." It is the hells who whisper to us that we are gods, to define our own truth and good.

We are not at liberty to alter the Lord's truths to fit the desires of our natural inclinations. This is made abundantly clear to anyone who examines the doctrines for the New Church. And for those who may not view these teachings as authoritative, the Word itself does not equivocate on this matter. Isaiah made it quite plain when he warned Judah of the same dangerous error:

5:20

"Woe to those who call evil good,
and good evil;
Who put darkness for light
and light for darkness;
Who put bitter for sweet,
and sweet for bitter!"

5:21

Woe to those who are wise
in their own eyes,
And prudent in their own sight!

5:24

Therefore, as the fire devours
the stubble,
And the flame consumes the chaff,
So their root will be as rottenness,
And their blossom will ascend like
dust;
Because they have rejected
the law of the Lord of hosts,
And despised the Word of the
Holy One of Israel."

I sincerely pray that "Risking on the Side of Compassion" represents an aberration within the spiritual thinking of my many friends in the General Convention of the New Jerusalem.

Dr. Reuben P. Bell
Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania



To The Messenger:

Congratulations to the Rev. James Lawrence for his courage to write "Risking on the Side of Compassion." We call ourselves "The New Church," and it is gratifying to see one of our ministers taking a stand of compassion and support for those whose expression of their sexuality is not yet accepted by mainstream America.

Perry S. Martin, Ph.D.
West Chester, Pennsylvania



To the Editor:

I wish to thank Jim Lawrence and the San Francisco Society for risking on the side of charity, and I commend *The Messenger* for publishing Jim's fine article on their decision.

It seems to me that the question of whether or not to perform marriage rites for homosexual couples is, indeed, very much an individual choice for a minister and his congregation. Such decisions are in the category of those that cannot be legislated by an institution or a government and must be judged by each person in his or her heart in prayerful dialogue with the Lord. Such decision-making is surely part of an individual's path toward regeneration.

Carol S. Lawson
Dillwyn, Virginia

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MINSU Experience Exhausting and Exhilarating

Ken Turley

[The Rev. Ken Turley submitted these personal observations following the September meeting of Ministries Support Unit in Seattle].

MINSU is a six-member committee that is a blending of the former GOSU (Growth and Outreach Support Unit) and PMSU (Pastoral Ministries Support Unit). MINSU is currently made up of Linda Tafel, Lon Elmer, Betsy Coffman, the Revs. Ken Turley and Paul Martin, and chaired by the Rev. Carl Yenetchi. The Rev. Edwin Capon is *ex officio* by virtue of being president of the denomination and Betty Yenetchi serves as secretary.

We met for three days, including attending worship services at the Church of Puget Sound and meetings with board members of both the church and the Stone House Bookstore. Over the course of the three days, we looked briefly at the state of all the churches in General Convention and in depth at those ministries requesting financial aid from the denomination either through Augmentation Fund and/or through monies approved by Cabinet and General Council for growth and outreach (missions). All in all it was exhilarating and exhausting, but most of all enlightening.

It was enlightening because it provided a birds-eye view of the ministerial landscape of the denomination as a whole. All the strengths and weaknesses of individual churches and our denomination were put into perspective and context.

For the first time I saw clearly how all the individual pieces, the congregations, groups and even isolated members, fit together to form the whole. That was enlightening. It was exhausting to see the number of churches that are in a state of such financial need. It was exhilarating to see the kinds of progress, growth and development that are taking place in a number of churches throughout the denomination.

The goal of the MINSU is to help

individual churches move into self-sufficiency. This is beginning to happen in several ways.

1.) A number of churches operate on the basis of already established resources such as paid-for buildings and endowments.

2.) A number of churches operate effective business endeavors such as intense use of their building by other groups for donations, managing an urban parking lot, a downtown apartment building, a food booth at the local county fair and a number of wedding ministries. These "business" endeavors in some cases provide the majority of the annual budget for a church.

3.) Most churches engage in a variety of small-scale fund raisers that contribute not only to the financial treasury but the sense of spirit and unity within the people of the congregation.

4.) Most churches have some sort of organized pledging/stewardship program and all churches of course receive income from collections during worship services.

These efforts are listed in the order of effectiveness, consistency and amount of income.

The first category, while it is secure and dependable, is only about money, old money, that has, for the most part, been provided by someone else and simply inherited. It asks nothing of members and returns nothing except money. There is, without ongoing creative use, a danger of the complacency and lack of self-esteem manifested in the lethargy and lack of thankfulness often demonstrated by a person living off the resources of others.

In terms of the ongoing life of the church and a spirit of vitality, hope and committed and caring relationships among the members, including the

attractiveness to visitors and newcomers, numbers 2 and 3 are far and away the most effective forms of church stewardship. This is because they are not just about money. They involve stewardship at many levels and bring returns at many levels, both financially and spiritually.

The fourth category is perhaps the most controversial and paradoxical. It is what receives the most attention and yet is, by in large, the least effective. When it is the only or predominant form of income, it is easily in danger of becoming only about money. The constant demand for giving is aimed at the place where people often

have the least to give: their personal and individual finances. When this giving is done in isolation, while it can serve to deepen an individual's commitment to God and the institution (see below), it does little to strengthen the relationships between, and commitment to, the other people in the church community.

However, it can have very different results when the people together make a commitment to energize individual stewardship and monitor it as a community. Even though not as effective as areas 2 and 3, and the least likely to solve the financial problems of the small church, 4 is an essential area of stewardship exactly because of the personal aspect. It is significant to know that as a denomination and as individual congregations the Swedenborgian church asks for, and receives, about average, maybe a little above, what is found in other Christian denominations. While we may take pride in our "freedom" from the lack of oppressive demands for personal giving, the results are not all that inspiring.

The weekly contribution of the

Churches and ministers that are not attractive and inviting and engaging and continually providing ongoing opportunities for meaningful spiritual growth and the developing of friendships simply will not survive.

(Continued on page 9)



Ministerial Support Unit Meeting Report

The new Ministerial Support Unit (MINSU), a

combination of the former PMSU and GOSU, met for the first time September 13, 1996, in Seattle. Following is a summary of key actions taken:

- It was decided that the Rev. Carl Yenetchi would continue formally as the chair, with Linda Tafel acting as the second chair. Betty Yenetchi will also continue as the secretary.

- The relationship between the former Pastoral Ministries Support Unit and the Growth and Outreach Support Unit (PMSU and GOSU) and the plan for operating was discussed in detail: It was felt that within this merger there were different areas of concentration that needed clarification: Subcommittees and areas of concentration needed to be established, so no duplication of effort would take place.

- It was decided to divide the minis-

tries among the six members on MINSU and have each person become the primary support person for a particular ministry, with two MINSU members being paired so to act as support for each other. Discussion also followed concerning the Rev. Eric Allison and his role with the ministries. It was decided that MINSU would remain involved with Eric and the ministries he serves. The Rev. Ken Turley agreed to work with Eric in determining areas of education which will be offered to members of MINSU.

(Continued on page 11)

MINSU Experience Exhausting and Exhilarating

(Continued from page 8)

average Swedenborgian is about \$5.00. We routinely spend twice that on pizza for dinner. We spend more to go see a movie, to take an aerobics class. I dare say most of us spend more for cable TV and satellite hook-ups than we spend for the privilege of going to church and receiving the pastoral and congregational care that is part of being a congregation. Until we as individuals are willing to raise our level of giving, which implies, if not demands, a restructuring of our personal priorities, personal stewardship will not be a significant factor in either securing our church's future or in deepening our individual and collective spiritual regeneration. With this in mind, I invite you to sit down with your families and discuss the implications of your personal stewardship for the life of your church and your spiritual growth. Seriously consider beginning the joyful and willing practice of tithing of the first and best fruits of your labor. It is plain and simply a matter of putting God and your church first and foremost in your financial life. You may find yourself reacting with anger and defensiveness, but I ask you to consider carefully why.

In serving on MINSU, it is exhausting having to observe and respond to the resistance, inability and/or unwillingness of churches, and the individuals that make them what they are, to engage and follow through on prac-

tices that have proven themselves effective in bringing new people into the church community and helping them establish meaningful and long-lasting personal commitment. We live in an age of consumerism. That means that people, in spite of how much they complain, expect to pay for what they want. And if they are happy with what they are getting, then they will be loyal patrons. If they are not happy with what they are getting, or are not getting what they want, they simply go somewhere else. Churches and ministers that are not attractive and inviting and engaging and continually providing ongoing opportunities for meaningful spiritual growth and the developing of friendships simply will not survive. And MinSU, as a policy, can no longer provide financial assistance to prolong the inevitable. On the other hand, churches and ministers that are showing the willingness and ability to develop the kinds of practices and programs that attract, welcome and engage both new and old people will be supported and even rewarded in the process of moving toward financial self-sufficiency. And this is exhilarating!

If we use the metaphor of parent and children in looking at our denomination and congregations, it is time for the offspring to leave the nest and learn how to make it as free, independent and self-sufficient individuals, for there will soon come a time when the "parent" will need the care and support

of the "children." The separation process is hard and scary and painful. And while most parents and offspring learn to thrive on their own and develop healthy and interdependent relationships as equals, some are unable to make the adjustment and remain in an unhealthy and codependent relationship or, in some cases, simply do not survive. The failure to survive of some individuals is something we neither want nor expect but at the same time are prepared to endure. The ongoing codependent relationship, however, is simply not an option.

The most common result of the maturing and separation process is an extended family of equals in loving and caring interrelationship. It results in a family of adults not only able to take care of themselves but able to contribute to the growing well-being of the whole and, in time, give birth to offspring of their own. (When was the last time we had a church so successful it divided into two more churches that went on to thrive?) This kind of propagation of the Swedenborgian church is what we long to see. And we will do all that is loving and wise within our power to see it come to pass. And it will continue to be both exhausting and exhilarating. ❖

The Rev. Ken Turley is the minister of the Swedenborgian Church in Fryeburg, Maine, and is a member of MinSU.

THANK YOU

The Messenger and the Communications Support Unit thank the following individuals and groups for subscriptions and donations to *The Messenger* from January 30 through October 31, 1996. We are most grateful for your supportive comments and enthusiastic response to *The Messenger's* annual fund appeal. We have received \$4,700 so far in '96 with approximately two thirds of the monies designated for the *Messenger* Endowment Fund. Building up the Endowment Fund will eventually allow *The Messenger* to become self-supporting. We hope no contributor has been omitted from this list, but if you were, let us know!

Academy of the New Church
Theological School
Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania

Rev. Eric Allison
Kitchener, Ontario

Philip Alden
Lititz, Pennsylvania

Jean Bestor
Bay Village, Ohio

Mrs. Roger Blackmer
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Frances Boyle
Mansfield, Mass.

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Ukiah, California

Ruth Wagoner
Washington, DC

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Hockessin, Delaware

Betty and Lars-Erik Wiberg
Rockport, Massachusetts

Mrs. Thomas Williams
Pigeon Cove, Massachusetts

Raymond and Olive Wong
San Francisco, California

Dorothy DeB Young
S. Easton, Massachusetts

Ministerial Support Unit Meeting Report

(Continued from page 9)

- Linda Tafel mentioned that she and Dick had been approached many times to begin a Swedenborgian Church in Ft. Meyers, Florida, and the Rev. Dick Tafel had submitted a letter to the old GOSU asking for support. In line with this, it was voted that Eric call and visit Dick and develop a plan for planting a church and following through in its development. The plan was to be submitted to MINSU in early November. If this plan was approved by MINSU, then it will be submitted to General Council.

- Much discussion ensued concerning the moneys requested from the different ministries. It was decided by MINSU that letters would be written to each of the ministries telling them what MINSU's recommendations would be concerning their ministries. ❖

Betty Yenetchi, Secretary

Nine Disciplines of Discovery

A place of one's own

Meditation

Inspirational reading

Physical exercise

Repetition of word or phrase throughout the day

Friends who understand and are engaged in this process

Slowing Down

Doing one thing at a time

Being of service (without being a doormat)

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(Continued from page 3)

professor of Theology at Andover Newton Theological School, and Mary Ann Donovan (Roman Catholic), who teaches at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, California. Other members represent Wesleyan, Mennonite, Episcopal, Presbyterian (and Swedenborgian) churches. Its work is focused on theological underpinnings and implications of Christian relations with no-Christian faiths, and it meets occasionally with another National Council study committee, the Interfaith Working Group, which is more concerned with facilitating and monitoring dialogs between Christians and other religious bodies.

At last spring's meeting, before I had rejoined the commission, the group adopted a preliminary working statement of its goals and purposes. I'm told that several hours were required for all to agree on the precise wording, so I would rather quote it than try to paraphrase it!

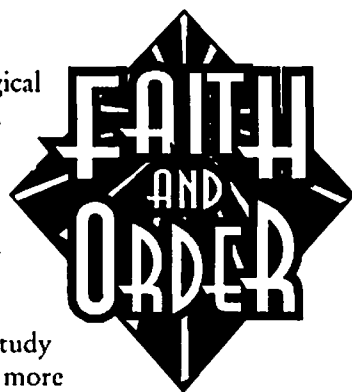
As we approach the third millennium, seeking understandings of Christian identity and ecclesiology, we ask, in cooperation with the Interfaith Working Group, what does it mean, in this pluralistic world to confess the gospel of Jesus Christ? Our group intends to explore theological issues and problems which arise in the church growing out of our contemporary situation in a pluralistic world. We want to explore various models of mission and the possibilities for convergence among communions in model for mission. We intend to develop theologically grounded resources to help people as they struggle with basic issues of faith in our pluralistic world. We will be mindful of the context of the ongoing discussion in the church on issues of mission, unity and pluralism.

"Mission" is a word not frequently used in Swedenborgian circles, so I should point out that it has a wider meaning than "establishing missions" and "converting the heathen." Teaching, healing, and a half dozen other kinds of church activities can be among the other "models of mission" the group want to explore. The contemporary situation of churches "in pluralistic world" includes the cultural "disestablishment" of Christianity: Christians no longer can think of themselves as the dominant religious body or major religious influence in the world.

My contributions from a Swedenborgian perspective, formulated as best I can to be clear in the variety of theological vocabularies around the committee table, will include Swedenborg's teaching that good people of all religions—people who do good as an expression of their love of God, however they have been taught to understand God—can be saved (*Divine Providence*, *True Christian Religion* 325 & 536), the Word of God is the supreme arbiter of truth (*Arcana Coelestia* 6047), and differences between understanding and truth can be corrected in the world of spirits after death for people who love their neighbor and do good (*Heaven and Hell* 5506, 512).

During a discussion in New Orleans, one man agreed that people do not have to accept his formulation of the gospel to be saved, adding that he feels called to testify to his faith without regard for how it might be received: the Lord may use that testimony in ways he could not imagine to move a listener who did not agree with a word he said! There should be a lot of interesting and thought-provoking exchanges, and I'll be reporting some of them after other meetings. The next one is in Berkeley, California, in March.

The Rev. Dr. Robert H. Kirven a retired professor of the Swedenborg School of Religion. He is living in Glendale, Arizona and is the author of *Angels in Action; What Swedenborg Saw and Heard* and other Swedenborgian publications. ❖



Discovering 'a good life without work'

Carolyn Lewis

When this incorrigible workaholic quit her job for early retirement last year, friends and family were surprised and shocked. They predicted I would quickly become bored, and that my normally interesting life would lose its luster. Worse, they found they no longer knew who I was.

Uncogged from the great work-machine, where does a retiree fit into the scheme of things? If your daily life is visibly nonproductive, how is the world to measure your value?

I am now the same person I was before, shorn of the conceits of title, position and pay. I've discovered there is life after work, and there is a good life to be had without work. By work, of course, I mean the paid, structured kind that brings status and rootedness to the early and middle years.

Now I have more time than money. But having free time, I can fill the hours with endeavors more stimulating and rewarding than any my employers allowed. I rise early, listen to the chatter of birds beyond my windows and the strains of Beethoven and Brahms on the CD player.

Long aware of—and haunted by—how little I know, I now can lay aside the reading required for my former job and go wherever my fancy takes me, whether Nietzsche or Steinbeck, Pascal or Balzac.

I can write about what interest me. I'm working on essays and a memoir. I've also tried short stories, but suspect I have little talent for that.

I walk on the beach and have lunch with friends, I have time for the grandchildren—more time for them than I had for the children who grew up during the workaholic years.

I'm not in retreat from the world, I'm merely redeploying my energies. I am relishing the Epicurean "stillness of the soul." I'm puffing gently on the divine spark dimmed by years of frenetic getting, going and doing.

Some people think this is an unseemly way to live. I am forever trying to answer the question "But what do you do?" It seems almost un-American to be doing whatever I'm doing inside my head—with not much to show for it on the outside.

This is a different dimension of existence. There is nothing subversive about standing and staring. It may not be productive in the economic sense, but in terms of wonder, delight and the opportunity to become fully human, I am producing riches beyond measure. I'm a veritable Klondike, awash in gold—and perhaps a more valuable member of society than I ever was before. ❖

Carolyn Lewis is a former reporter and associate dean of Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.

Reprinted with author's permission from AARP Bulletin, October 1994.

God's Backyard



In God's backyard, there is a caressing breeze. Not a wind, just enough to lift a few strands of hair and tickle your nose. The air is breathing. This is God's backyard.

In God's backyard, there is late summer sunlight. Autumn aura halo glowing flush and lush without apparent origin or aim. All essence, everywhere, carried on the breathing air. Bright, bountiful blessing. This is God's backyard.

In God's backyard, the ground is covered with moss. Startlingly rich color and texture. And fragrant! Mmm. The air that is breathing carries the spongy aroma of moss through every pore. The air is covered with moss. The ground is covered with flavor. This is God's backyard.

In God's backyard, a tree anchors the sky to the ground and teaches its roots about heaven. A ga-jillion leaves giggle the sky, a mile high, then rest and wait for the air to breathe again. Lunatic lace of leaves and sensible sturdy stem cycle and cycle through season after season. Testimony to transformation, continuation. This is God's backyard.

In God's backyard, more acorns pepper the earth than you can possibly cram into both your fists. Still you try to pick up more. Tiny packets of potential. Orbs of promise. Trees you can hold by the dozen in your hands. Affirmation of abundance. Beyond wonder—just plain truth. This is God's backyard.

In God's backyard, the air, moss, sunlight, fragrance, tree, seeds and hands of longing, of belonging, just are. Justifiable being. Just so right. Each belonging to other, oblivious of synthesis or separation. At once fully conscious and beyond consciousness. Without question, at home—in God's backyard.

—Eli Dale, 4/96

Report From Pavel Heger

Here I am, sitting at my desk, watching my youngest—19 months old daughter Pavla, sleeping—and trying to put things into order. I should mention that I am in the Czech Republic but in a different place than last year.

This whole past year I was working very hard to get a loan which would enable us to buy an older farmhouse with a piece of land in the woods. I succeeded! We have got a loan and we even found the place we liked. Then we spent the entire summer adjusting the old house to the needs of a family with five kids. Of course, we are not finished yet. We have made a garden to grow some vegetables, and we started to raise rabbits. We still have a lot of land—a piece of forest and a big meadow which we hope to use for New Church purposes; camps, meetings of the New Church people, etc. The first gathering of the New Church people on our farm happened in August. Last week our farm welcomed the Rev. Ian Arnold from Australia and the Rev. Christopher Hasler from England. They were travelling from our regular Czech New Church seminar in Vysoké Mýto (there were four lecturing ministers this year: the Revs. Arnold, Hasler, Martin Krejza from Czech Republic and myself).

Last year I had spent a lot of time translating English books. I had started to translate already in the USA, in Bryn Athyn, where I spent a year studying at the theological school (after ordination by the General Convention in 1994). My most important translations are *The Summary of the New Church Teaching* by Janet H. Doering, *The Lord's Prayer* by the Rev. Ch. Hasler and *The Shorter Heaven and Hell* by the Revs. J. Duckworth and T. Moffat. It is not an easy work for me to translate since I do not have a computer and I have to retype a lot of pages after their improvement or correction. I can see how much time a computer saves!

For translation of *The Shorter Heaven and Hell* I had found a publisher but unfortunately they got into financial problems and had to stop publishing books. Now I will have to try to find a new publisher but I still have not gathered enough money yet. Here I would like to mention gratefully that the Swedenborg Foundation contributed a certain amount for this purpose. From the Swedenborg Foundation I have also received several boxes of various English New Church books which I am distributing successfully, mainly through my mother's SOS center for needy people. I am also distributing my translation of *The Summary of the New Church* at the center. I have talked with a lot of people about the New Church and written several articles about it. I have good feelings about my missionary work here in the Czech Republic. People I have met are not looking for a new church for themselves but they are looking for new ideas, for answers to their questions, for the real meaning of the Bible. There are a lot of seekers around. I am trying to serve them. I am however also trying to feed my family, and that is not easy for me. Officially I have



Pavel Heger with his family at his ordination in 1994

three licenses—one as a psychologist and a graphologist, second one as a translator and an interpreter and third one as a private farmer; but actually I am doing mainly missionary work which I consider to be the most important. To be a missionary is not easy but very joyful work.

I am very happy to get *The Messenger* regularly so I can be in touch with all of you in America.

I am wondering—would somebody be able to send me any of the New Church books or magazines (even old ones). People here would enjoy them. My address:

Rev. Pavel Heger,
Rooseveltova 9, 779 00
Olomouc, Czech Republic.

OPINION

(Continued from page 7)

Re: "Risking on the Side of Compassion" by James Lawrence, November 1996

To Jim,

Your action of celebrating ceremonies of commitment between same-sex partners in your sanctuary is deeply meaningful.

The more we as human beings love, honor, respect, and accept each other's differences, the more divine love and wisdom is manifest in our world. Thanks for risking with compassion.

Lorraine Sando, *Marriage and Family Therapist,*
Seattle, Washington



Experiences of a Female Divine-Human Sought

The Committee on Worship is very interested in receiving in writing, or by phone, any first hand encounter/experiences of God in the form of the feminine divine-human, like the masculine divine-human that people have experienced and said it was Jesus. That is, God in the feminine form of a woman who was, in fact, God and not a female angel (or any other kind of female being) communicating a message from God. In short, a feminine God in human form. Perhaps she would have a face, arms, or other aspects to her. Please send responses to:

Committee on Worship
% John Billings, chair
5602 Betty Lane
Milford, OH 45150

Or, if you prefer, call 513-248-0636

We are also interested in receiving in writing or by phone any first-hand encounters/experiences of a feminine presence of God, but a feminine presence that was not in human bodily form but one which nevertheless, you were certain was God only—not an angel or some other messenger. Send responses to address above.

Songbook Materials

The Committee on Worship is asking for contemporary children and adult songs or hymns to be sent to the Rev. Renee Billings for consideration to be compiled in a supplemental songbook for churches, camps, and retreats.

Send material to:

Rev. Renee Billings
Committee on Worship
Royal Oak Swedenborgian Church
1026 East 11 Mile Road
Royal Oak, MI 48067

Bible Activities

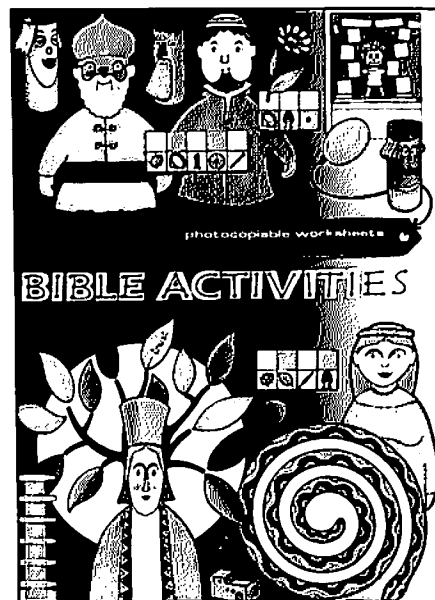
Ruth and Julian Duckworth *Bible Activities*. Edited and augmented by Bethany Elphick and G. Roland Smith. Published by Seminar Books, Swedenborg House, 20-21 Bloomsbury Way, London, England. WCIA 2TH. First edition, 1996.

This recently published book from Great Britain could be a valuable aid in exploring the Bible with children. Permission is granted to copy pages for use, and the large type and clearly illustrated activities enhance the potential usefulness. The book includes fifteen sections, each one introducing a theme and providing concrete activities connected with the theme. Some of the themes included are journeys, joy, flowers, rivers, friendship, and growing.

The section on journeys for example, includes reflections on journeys in our lives, distance in this life and heaven, and journeys in the Bible. Activities include working with words about journeys and place names in the bible, making a bag of surprises which could entertain a person on a journey, and making finger puppets of travellers. Each lesson, like this one, provides a variety of activities integrated around a theme that is important in the Bible and our lives.

This book could be especially helpful to teachers in the early years of Sunday school, and others may also find it useful. ♦

Reviewed by Rev. Dr. Theodore Klein, Swedenborg School of Religion



Johnny Appleseed Museum Launched at Urbana University

(Continued from page 16)

said. The men said they have learned a lot about Chapman but they still have a lot more to discover. They know he never married, but understand there are still a lot of descendants of the Chapman family living in Ohio. "...There's so much to learn," Besecker said. "He was all over the place. It's hard to imagine how he touched as many lives as he did."

In addition, the Johnny Appleseed Foundation has relocated to the university from the Dawes Arboretum, near Newark, Ohio. The Foundation was created in 1979 to perpetuate Chapman's unique role in Ohio history.

For more information or to offer memorabilia to the museum, call or write Hugh Durbin, Library Director, Urbana University, Urbana, OH 43078, Phone (513) 484-1301.

Abridged text of article by Margo Rutledge reprinted with permission from the Springfield News-Sun (Ohio) August 4, 1996.

♦♦♦

Editor's Johnny Appleseed Postscript

Readers may recall Bill Mallory, the Johnny Appleseed storyteller living in Kerrville, Texas, whose letter was published in the November *Messenger*. He expressed a growing interest in Swedenborg's writings and requested that his address be printed so that Swedenborgians could correspond with him.

He called me a couple of weeks ago to happily report that not only have several people written to him but Mary Siebert, who is chair of the Kansas Convention '97 committee in Pretty Prairie, has asked him to perform at next year's convention. We look forward to meeting you, Bill! ♦

BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

Gallagher, Leach and Snow—Lura E. Gallagher, Edith W. Leach and Doris F. Snow were baptized into the Christian church and confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church November 17, 1996, at the Fryeburg New Church in Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Ken Turley officiating.

CONFIRMATIONS

Almquist, Brenninger, Carr, Gough, Gray, Hinrichs, LoPinto, McRea, Melander, Moore, Morrill, Roca, Wayne—Russ Almquist, Nancy Brenninger, Robert Carr, Katy and Mel Gough, Kimberly Gray, Bob and Kim Hinrichs, Andrea LoPinto, Carolyn McRea, Karen Melander, Lori and Ren Moore, Bob and Mia Morrill, Maria Luz Roca, and Gillian and Tony Wayne were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church November 17, 1996, at the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, the Revs. James Lawrence and Rachel Rivers officiating.

Rienstra—Alice F. Rienstra Decker, sister of the Rev. David Rienstra, was confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church October 27, 1996, at the Church of the Open Word in St. Louis, Missouri, the Rev. David Rienstra officiating.

DEATHS

Casey—Robert Casey, Jr., entered the spiritual world October 15, 1996, in St. Louis, Missouri. Robert was the son of Robert and Jane Casey, devoted church friends. A memorial service was conducted October 18, 1996, at the Church of the Open Word, the Rev. David Rienstra officiating.

Jordan—The Rev. John (Jack) Jordan entered the spiritual world September 28, 1996. Jack was ordained in 1945 and served the Bridgewater church for several years. For many years after that he served in Methodist churches in Maine, his home state. At Jack's own request his name had been placed on the role of former ministers in 1987. During his retirement years Jack lived in Fryeburg and attended services when his health permitted. A memorial service was conducted at the Fryeburg Harbor Methodist Church with the Revs. Ken Turley and James Lundin officiating.

Lewis—Veronica E. Lewis, age 67, longtime participant at the Fryeburg New Church, entered the spiritual world November 2, 1996, at her home in West Fryeburg, Maine. A resurrection service was conducted November 6, 1996, the Rev. Ken Turley officiating.

Mason—Mrs. Eldon W. Mason (Alice J. Jacobson), 94, oldest member of the Church of the Open Word in St. Louis, entered the spiritual world September 18, 1996. A memorial service was conducted September 29, 1996, the Rev. David Rienstra officiating. Alice is survived by her two daughters, Jean Lutz and Martha Mason.

"Alice's father died when she was three years old, and that was her first exposure to the New Church under the Rev. Edward Craig Mitchell of the Virginia Street Church in St. Paul, Minnesota. She and Eldon, who died in 1990, were married in the Virginia St. Church."

Robertson—Ruth Robertson of Victoria, British Columbia, entered the spiritual world October 21, 1996, following a courageous battle with cancer. A funeral service was conducted in Victoria October 25, 1996, the Rev. David Sonmor officiating. She is survived by four children and three grandchildren. She emigrated to Canada from Lancashire, England in 1957 with her husband George, and was a lifelong student of the New Church teachings.

Swanson—Joseph Elmer Swanson, 72, entered the spiritual world November 1, 1996, in Kelowna, B.C. A resurrection service was conducted November 5, 1996, and a service of interment at the Lakeview Memorial Gardens, the Rev. Erwin Reddekopp officiating. Joseph is survived by his mother, a sister, six nephews and one niece.

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

On November 3, 1996, the opening of the worship service in the San Diego Swedenborgian Church was conducted on the front lawn for the dedication of two Italian Cypress trees which had been planted in the church garden, with a plaque given in loving memory of Henry A. Swanton, Bertha F. Berran, Lois K. Jones and Jean Garber.

Swedenborg's Active Mysticism

(Continued from page 2)

NOTES:

¹*Documents Concerning the Life and Character of Emanuel Swedenborg*, collected, translated, and annotated by R. L. Tafel, Volume 1 (London: Swedenborg Society, 1875), pp. 494-495.

²Emanuel Swedenborg, *Memorial to the Swedish Diet in Favor of a Return to a Pure Metallic Currency*, in Tafel, I, pp. 498-503.

³Emanuel Swedenborg, *Memorial to the Houses of the Diet in Response to the book by Nordencrantz*, in Tafel, I, pp. 512-514; Emanuel Swedenborg, "Frank Views Concerning the Maintenance of the

Country and the Preservation of its Freedom," in Tafel I, pp. 538-539.

⁴George F. Dole and Robert H. Kirven, *A Scientist Explores Spirit* (West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation, 1992), p. 26.

⁵Wilson Van Dusen, *Uses: A Way of Personal and Spiritual Growth* (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1983), p. 90.

The Rev. Dr. Theodore Klein is Professor of Theology and Philosophy at the Swedenborg School of Religion. ❖

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.

Johnny Appleseed Museum Launched at Urbana University

For 50 years, John Chapman preached and distributed apple seeds during his travels throughout the Midwest. Now, officials at Ohio's Urbana University have opened a museum this past September to honor the folk hero most people know as Johnny Appleseed.

Though now independent, Urbana University was founded in 1850 by followers of Emanuel Swedenborg. Chapman, who died in 1845 at age 71, was a Swedenborgian missionary.

The museum is housed inside Bailey Hall, named after Francis Bailey, the man credited with bringing the Swedenborgian religion to this country. Chapman had known Bailey, as well as Col. John James, who later provided the land for the university, and Milo Williams, who went on to become the college's first president.

Joe Besecker, an instructor in the math and sciences division, said he has been interested in seeing the university develop the connection with Chapman for quite some time, but the seeds for the museum weren't sown until last year when he mentioned his idea to Hugh Durbin, the university's library director. Durbin told him that the library basement housed a box of Johnny Appleseed memorabilia the university had received several years ago from Florence Murdoch, secretary at the former Swedenborgian Church in Cincinnati.

"She collected things about Johnny Appleseed through the years and when the interstate in Cincinnati went through, they tore down that church and, at that time, all of her collection was

sent up here to this university," Durbin recalled. The items have been categorized and will be used for research and curriculum purposes. Besecker said the university intends to offer a workshop on Johnny Appleseed next summer for elementary school teachers in Ohio. He commented on how multifaceted Chapman was, noting that he was not only a pioneer, missionary and naturalist, but also a businessman, peace maker, medical man and war hero.

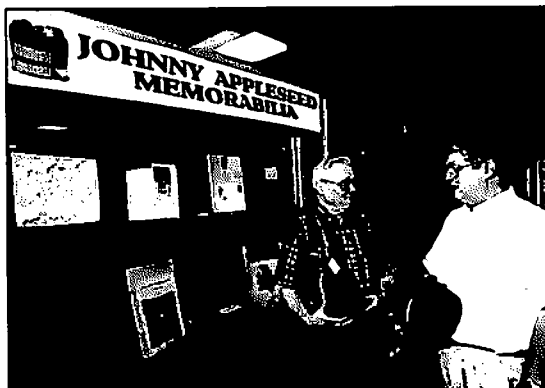
Museum organizers have already traveled to Ft. Wayne, Indiana, where Chapman is buried, and throughout Ohio to gather more information about him. Durbin said he would like to set up a clearing-house of information about Johnny Appleseed and is interested in putting the word out that

he is looking for all sorts of material related to the folk hero. He's already received a commemorative plate from the first Johnny Appleseed festival that was held in Springfield, Massachusetts. It will go into a display that already includes a Johnny Appleseed doll that was crafted in Dexter City, various postage stamps, and a figurine of him produced by Sebastian Industries in Massachusetts.

Durbin also has some sheet music from a musical about Johnny Appleseed performed at Ashland College and said he would love to get his hands on a mock coin that was pressed years ago commemorating him.

"There is just a lot of memorabilia and there needs to be one place where it's collected," he

(Continued inside on page 14)



*Hugh Durbin, left, and Joe Besecker discuss plans for the Johnny Appleseed Museum.
Photo courtesy of Marshall Gorby, Springfield News-Sun (Ohio)*

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