
THE MESSENGER

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November 1997

Steve Koke

Something strange happens when a revelator comes to town. His every word is taken very seriously, lest one miss out on some divine pronouncement. His conversations quickly make the local paper, even if they are casual remarks to his barber. A statement that it looks like rain tomorrow, thrown as a helpful thought to a neighbor near the end of the day, becomes prophecy. Then, when the sun comes out as usual, he cannot walk down the street without attracting puzzled stares or looks of resentful disillusionment. The icon has erred. But he has had to bear with people who are in the grip of the highest drama within him, and without his bidding it has taken over his entire public image.


A look at the early Swedenborgian movement, as portrayed by Marguerite Block in her history, *The New Church in the New World*, draws more attention to the sometimes painful idiosyncrasies of an early revelatory movement than it does to its teacher. We took on a very heavy responsibility for everything Swedenborg wrote after 1745, published or not. Our expectations ran high, but they could then create problems. It is typical in revelatory faiths: a very Hebraic response of strict attention and obedience, alternating with sharp rebellion when disappointed, sets in. The Hebrews wandered for forty years through Sinai bouncing from one attitude to the other. If the rebellion is not allowed, a repressive dogmatism may take its place: *Believe anyway*. Both attitudes show the instability that comes from taking too simple a stand.

Although our denomination is now able to consider a larger variety of possibilities, we may still do it—put a sandwich board on Swedenborg that reads "I am a revelator, and that is all I do." That sets us up for disappointment when he fails to be properly revelatory. The result is often the mini-revolt, the little island of disagreement, over which one raises a flag of protest—and

Swedenborg's Other Job



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may then let the flag float up there without clarifying the problem or presenting a thoughtful analysis.

What is most needed to avoid this narrow, reactive space is what is called in the publishing industry the "clear reader." An editor tries to approach someone's manuscript very innocently. He wards off preconceptions of what

he is going to find, and his perceptions of what is actually happening in the manuscript can then remain fairly objective. Swedenborg then seems less the traditional prophet looking for traditional followers than a many-faceted educator, a man talking to his readers on a number of different levels, some levels very elevated and revelatory and some consisting of high-minded discussions in a more common vein.

Swedenborg evidently had two jobs. They are related, but only one required him to be a revelator. For example, he prefaces his explanations of doctrine and scripture with the statement that he received them from the Lord while reading the Word. Elsewhere, he shows signs of being the man who preaches in the campus chapel on Sundays but at other times strolls all around the intellectual campus, discussing these with various departments and negotiating a higher point of view. Besides revelation, he says, one must also teach "rational things from natural light" (*Apocalypse Revealed* 544) in order to be most convincing. He had to apply his revelatory principles to his culture in ways that would impress the common mind and inspire some kind of evolutionary change.

This other job is not trivial, and certainly not simple. Revelation is typically in the form of high principles and the trick is to give them practical application in the gray world around us. Otherwise these principles can be ignored on the grounds that they are too far from life as we know it. The

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On Gratitude, Random Acts, and . . . Re-Enchantment

Every once in a while another item for the Random Acts of Kindness shows up in this column. Here is another one: I received a Sensa pen with its handsome black case as a present last year, but it wasn't long before the pen disappeared, after I lent it to a handyman who had forgotten his pen. Some months later I came across the case with a printed note inside from the Sensa company asking that I return the case for recycling if I had no use for it, and they would reward my cooperation with a free Sensa refill. In the interest of showing support toward a company that was trying to do its part for the environment, I returned the case, explaining that someone had walked off with my pen and I wouldn't need a refill. Several weeks later a package arrived with the following note enclosed:

Dear Patricia,

On behalf of the repair department and customer service, here is a pen from us to replace the one that was taken. We know how it feels. It's not perfect, but we hope you like it anyway.

Kelly and Didi
in Repairs

I immediately wrote Kelly and Didi a note of thanks, commenting that they must be practitioners of Random Acts of Kindness. Their ebullient good will had enchanted my day.

I choose that particular descriptive word because I just received a birthday present, *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*, by Thomas Moore, author of *Care of the Soul*, which was reviewed in *The Messenger* last year. I've barely perused the book, but the title alone gives rise to musings on

things we can do, notice, see, hear, feel, encourage, to put enchantment back into our everyday life, and the lives of those around us. And it's true that far too many things in our daily lives seem to demand our attention in ways that take us in the opposite direction.

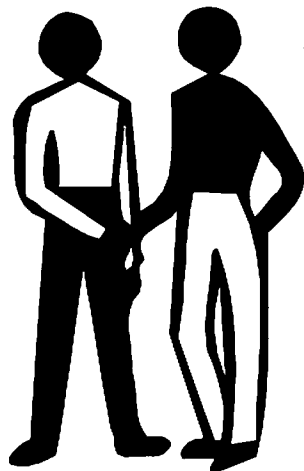
Renee Billings, in "The Neighbor to be Loved" (p. 142) mentions the simple challenge of loving someone for who they are, not what they have or what they do. We've heard this before, but it remains a challenge, because first we often must learn to see others (and ourselves as well) in the light of who they really are and then express that love to them.

A thoughtful exchange took place in the car a few weeks ago as Erni Martin, Karen Feil and I were returning to Temenos after our meetings at the Swedenborg Foundation. I don't recall the context of the conversation, but Erni mentioned a marriage ceremony he performed, after which the father of the bride came over to him and said, "You really *care* about them, don't you?" Erni said he was moved to tears that the man saw the love Erni put into the ceremony, and had chosen to express this to him. Karen said that she was recently taking a late bus home from her business day in Chicago, and was feeling especially blessed with her life and the beauty of the city. She was the only one on the bus, sitting close to the driver, a woman who turned to her and said appreciatively, "You just have the most *pleasant* face!" Karen remarked that she, too, was deeply touched that the woman had made such a comment to her.

Whether they're strangers or members of our family, when someone actually seems to *see* us in a loving way, and expresses it to us, we are touched beyond words. It is healing, and allows us to reconnect and feel strengthened in the best part of ourselves; it is the

glue of true community; it is soul food, and we all hunger for it. We are touched because it is intimate, and unfortunately, because it is rare. Eric Allison, in his article on getting and keeping volunteers, (p. 143) lays out the simple procedure of treating them like valued, individual, unique human beings, beginning with a face-to-face request. It is not surprising in this culture that we often need to attend workshops in order to learn this level of nurture, where we can begin regarding each other—as they say—as human beings instead of human doings. But the practice of seeing—really *seeing* each other in terms of our humanness on a daily basis will surely re-enchant our lives in one important area, and that may spill over to other areas, who knows?

Patte LeVan



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Swedenborg and Bernardin

In God's Hands

Mary Kay Klein

article written for *Newsweek* after his death elaborates:

... the public and private man were not in spiritual sync. Pale and hugely overweight, he was the very image of the self-indulgent prelate. Sensing that something was wrong with his life, he asked a group of parish priests if he could join their prayer group. They accepted him but immediately challenged his priorities. "They asked him if his life was Christ-centered or centered on the Church Bureaucratic," says Eugene Kennedy, Bernardin's close friend and biographer. The archbishop took their challenge to heart. He lost weight and began rising each morning at 5 to devote the first hour of the day to prayer and meditation on Christ.²

Even after those years of prayer, placing himself in the hands of the Lord was very difficult for Bernardin when he was accused of sexual misconduct with a seminarian two decades before. He had fought for the rights of persons abused by priests, and did not want to discourage those who had been abused from coming forward, but he knew he had not been guilty of abuse. He made the decision that his only defense was to tell the truth, which is that he had always lived a chaste and celibate life. The inner strength he received from letting go of all else and putting himself in God's hands became clear to him as he stood before the microphones at press conferences, and when he found his reputation under scrutiny. Later, he discovered that certain

critics of his had urged on Steven Cook, who made the accusations after allegedly recovering memories under hypnosis.³

Bernardin eventually went to meet with Steven Cook, who was very ill with AIDS at the time. Cook acknowledged that he had falsely accused Bernardin. Bernardin shares that no words can describe the power of the reconciliation as "a manifestation of God's love, forgiveness, and healing."⁴

After recovering from the effects of the devastating attacks and living with the amazing healing that followed, Bernardin threw himself into his work with great fervor and enthusiasm, and with the anticipation of a period of productivity. That expectation was cut short, however, when he unexpectedly

became ill and ended up in the hospital. When he awoke from anesthesia after a crucial test, he asked about the results. "As I asked the question, a feeling of helplessness came over me. I had regained control of my life after the false accusation and here I was asking somebody else to tell me about *my* life, *my* body."⁵ He realized again that he needed to continue to let go to God.

After surgery and follow-up treatment, he had a productive year, in which he began a ministry to cancer patients, often visiting hospital wards, making

phone calls and writing notes to those he knew were in need. Then tests revealed the cancer had spread to his liver, and he knew that his time was very limited. He realized that now more than ever, he had to put himself in God's hands, and that death would ultimately be going home. He finished *The Gift of Peace* thirteen days before his death in November of 1996.

Unlike some other religious leaders who have experienced dramatic



**"God
speaks very
gently to us
when he
invites us
to make
room for
him in our
lives . . ."**



Joseph Bernardin is a contemporary activist mystic, one who succeeded by a good many external standards all his life, but who underwent an incredible transformation toward its end. In his posthumously published work, *The Gift of Peace: Personal Reflections*, Joseph Bernardin describes his life as an archbishop, his confrontation with some priests who wanted him to live a simpler lifestyle, his very difficult moments, and his final acceptance of the gift of peace during the last part of his time on earth.

Bernardin's reflections begin with his reactions to false accusations of sexual misconduct made against him in 1993, and continue through his diagnosis of pancreatic cancer, and finally the news that after a period of remission, an aggressive form of cancer had returned and would surely take his life. In his introduction, Bernardin summarizes his main theme this way:

To paraphrase Charles Dickens in *A Tale of Two Cities*, "it has been the best of times, it has been the worst of times." The *worst* because of the humiliation, physical pain, anxiety and fear. The *best* because of the reconciliation, love, pastoral sensitivity and peace that have resulted from God's grace and the support and prayers of so many people. While not denying the former, this reflection focuses on the latter, showing how, if we let him, God can write straight with crooked lines. To put it another way, this reflection is intended to help others understand how the good and the bad are always present in our human condition and, that if we "let go," if we place ourselves totally in the hands of the Lord, the good will prevail.¹

In his introduction, Bernardin also describes a crucial transition point in his life—a confrontation with some parish priests twenty years earlier, in which they had challenged his lifestyle. He had urged others to pray, but had not taken time himself. An

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Swedenborg and Bernardin In God's Hands

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encounters with the Divine, Bernardin's communication with God comes in small doses, very gently, in those places in our lives where we leave room for God. "God speaks very gently to us when he invites us to make room for him in our lives. The tension that arises comes not from him but from me as I struggle to find out *how* to offer him fuller hospitality and then to *do* it wholeheartedly."⁶

Joseph Bernardin's spiritual journey, though quite different from Swedenborg's, has some of the same characteristics. Swedenborg, too, went through an experience in middle age, when he put himself in God's hands and opened himself more fully to the spiritual life. He endured what was happening around him, including the reactions of others, and told the truth about what he had seen and heard. He grew in love of the Lord, and at the same time, progressively let go of his attachments. "Letting go," however, did not mean lack of productivity, as the many volumes of Swedenborg's writing attest.

There are lesson in the lives of both of these men which can be of help to us all.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, *The Gift of Peace: Personal Reflection* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1997), pp. ix-x.

² *Newsweek*, November 25, 1996, p. 66.

³ Bernardin, p. 32.

⁴ Ibid, p. 39.

⁵ Ibid, p. 59.

⁶ Ibid, p. 15.

Dr. Mary Kay Klein is the president of the Swedenborg School of Religion in Newton, Massachusetts.

Continuing the Swedenborg and Mysticism series, next month features Swedenborg and the Sufis, by the Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey.

Thoughts on Thanksgiving Whose Hands Are You Thankful For?

Ron Brugler

As Thanksgiving Day approached, a certain first-grade teacher asked her class to draw a picture of something for which they were thankful. She anticipated the usual assortment of masterpieces—homes, families, food and the like. And with these things in mind she prepared for the traditional discussion on thankfulness. Her assumption proved correct, except for one boy's picture.

Douglas' artwork consisted of a single hand and nothing more. That abstract image captured the imagination of the children. Whose hand could it be? One child guessed it was the hand of a farmer, because farmers grow turkeys. Another suggested it belonged to a policeman, because they keep us safe. Still another guessed it was the hand of God, for God cares for us. So lively was the discussion that the teacher forgot to ask the artist what his drawing represented.

As the children left that day, Douglas lagged behind and slowly approached the teacher's desk. Softly, he murmured "It's your hand." And with those words, he turned to leave.

Suddenly that teacher recalled the many times she had taken his hand and walked beside him here or there. She remembered the many times she had said to him, "Take my hand, Douglas, and we'll go outside." or "Let me show you how to hold your pencil." She looked at her hand, then at Douglas, and tears came to her eyes. All she could do was say "Thank you, Douglas." He smiled as she had never seen him smile before and ran out the door.

During this Thanksgiving season I ask you, whose hands are you thankful for? Picture these special people in your mind and ask that God be with them. But more importantly, may each of us give them an occasion to know the answer.

Have a blessed Thanksgiving everyone!

The Rev. Ronald Brugler is minister to the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario.

Reprinted from their October 1996 church newsletter, *The Tender* ❖

Prayer

Lord, as we go through the ups and downs of our lives, the moments of peace and sense of direction, the times of failure and doubt and uncertainty, we thank you that you are there with us and love us in all that comes our way.

Thank you for mistakes and failures from which we learn who we are and what we need. Thank you for times when we feel right with what we are doing and what is happening around us and with us, when all we can say is, "Thank you, Lord." Thank you that you are there with us in the ups and the downs, the joys and the fears, that your joy is in us, in our learning, our growing, our coming into being, our knowing your creation happening now, in our lives. Thank you, Lord.

Amen.

Dorothea Harvey

Reprinted from *Swedenborg School of Religion A Book of Prayers*, January 1997.





Letter of Thanksgiving



Editor's Note:

Dr. Janet Ashton Vernon is a semi-retired mental health therapist, writer, and fan of the Chrysalis Reader and of Swedenborg's writings, which she first discovered at the Wayfarers Chapel in the early seventies. She is also a student of Buddhism, and recent subscriber to *The Messenger*. Her present-day spiritual outlook reflects a broad ecumenical foundation of Eastern and Western religious teachings.

Janet was visiting one of her children in Australia when she received the news that her father had died, just two months after she had written the following letter, which she shared with me during my recent visit with her in Orient, Washington. She has given me permission to share it with our readers.

Dear Mother and Pop,

Your telling me of your reconnection with the Neptune Society to take care of your cremation, and burial at sea, and our ability to discuss the issues of death and dying has impelled me to write a letter that has been written over and over in my head while traveling many miles of Washington highways. I appreciate our being able to be clear about where we are with these subjects.

The spiritual/church-related backgrounds of family members, recent and historic, have given me much to think about over the years and have played a part in the development of my current spirituality, which continues to evolve. Whether I learned truth or myth about the family history is not as important as my understanding of it and how that has evolved for me: the Truth, the experience, that I carry to my work this lifetime.

From my perspective, our ability to share discussions of the issues of LIVING this lifetime has been more difficult. It seems we have all, at times, played roles over the years through which our behavior has been hurtful, inconsiderate, abusive, etc. We have also played roles that have expressed feelings of love, caring, compassion, supportiveness, understanding . . . and our behavior has reflected those feelings. I want you to know that I have appreciated it all. Thank you for the emotional and psychological challenges. Thank you for surviving my anger, poor judgment, inconsiderate behavior, and alcoholism. Thank you for an education, physical comforts and needs being met, and all the practical things you helped me learn. I think of you both, and individually, when I garden, build things, and smell the fir and pine needles in the summer that remind me of camping—and so many, many other things that come to mind. Good things!

I still have "light weight" angers float to the surface now and then, but I learn something from them and they float on by quite quickly. There isn't time for dwelling on the "garbage," it gets recycled and turned to positive experience and education.

I want you to know that all the positive and negative of our lives together this lifetime is being put to good use. Because of the balance of it all, and through my experiences, I have been given the tools for the work that I do. That work has taken me to many places, many roles, where I could not be effective without the tools. It will take me to many more. I recently came across an old Nasrudin (Sufi) tale that expresses some of what I am attempting to convey.

A monk enters a teahouse (a meeting place for dervishes) and states:

"My master taught me to spread the word that mankind will never be fulfilled until the man who has NOT been wronged is as indignant about a wrong as the man who actually HAS been wronged."



The assembly is momentarily impressed. Then Nasrudin speaks:

"My master taught ME that nobody at all should become indignant about anything until he is sure that what he thinks is a wrong is in fact a wrong—and not a blessing in disguise!"

So—an early expression of Thanksgiving on this beautiful fall day. Thank you for providing the opportunity for me to make this Earth Walk, as some Native Americans would put it. And some, as I, would also thank, and be grateful for, the grandmothers and grandfathers who came before us.

Simply, with love to you both, again, thank you.

Janet Ashton Vernon, October, 1991



The Neighbor to be Loved

Renee Billings

During my summer travels to our convention in Kansas and to various vacation spots in Michigan and Ohio, I was asked quite a few times why I think people need the Christian church today—especially because so many people in our country do not attend or contribute to its life and mission anymore. Sometimes the question was qualified with the statement that there seem to be so many problems within the societies of the different denominations . . . so why go to a place with problems on our few and treasured days off!

We need each other.

We need each other to learn how to love, and learning gets messy and complicated, at times, especially in community—yet when we hang in there and show up for each other, a miraculous thing happens. The Lord is able to work for us through each other often in unexpected and subtle ways, sometimes even in spite of ourselves. When we are together prayerfully and playfully in community, we have the opportunity to see ourselves as others might see us from feedback that we get and—we have the opportunity to see God as others might see God. We are opened, then, to different dimensions of truth and love as we "bounce off" one another and mingle. We need this kind of contact with each other (some form of spiritual community contact) in order to grow well and to feel an expanded sense of belonging, I believe. Our children need this

contact, especially, to grow spiritually, to discover their own beliefs and to flourish into caring, open and responsible adults.

Emanuel Swedenborg envisioned that each one of us is the church in miniature form. True worship is a *life* of charity and faith in God. So we bring our individual lives and choices to church and then from these lessons and perspectives we create, each week anew, a larger church as we look to our Creator together. An even larger church lives and serves from this as we move out into the surrounding community and into the world to support and build programs

and opportunities for all who are in need.

Our largest neighbor is God and by loving God—all of creation is loved and cared for because we are tapping into the one Source of all that was, is and will ever be. Moving in cycles, God's love in each one of us reaches out and transforms our own lives, our individual home churches and then our cities, or country, our world and worlds beyond our world.

It sounds wonderful, doesn't it!? It is—but let's consider that when we are growing and stretching spiritually as individuals and as a church

body, it is *necessary* for chaos and problems to ensue at times so that the Lord can move in and rearrange what was out of order for the sake of an even more beautiful and useful state of being to take form. Swedenborg affirmed the value of spiritual struggles in everyday life as part of finding our internal and lasting faith



and love in the Lord.

So when we think about what we want from our church, let's continue to envision a loving, open and playful congregation. And—let's accept this community as an opportunity to work through the problems for the sake of our own growth and for the sake of the neighbor to be loved.

Do we love someone for what they do? No. Do we love someone for what they have? No. Do we love someone for who they are? YES! This is simple and very challenging. Let's begin another church year in this spirit of accepting one another for who we are and accepting the challenging times to come not as problems to avoid, but rather as a valuable part of our growth and spiritual discovery. Church, if it is growing and stretching toward the Light, will have difficulties. What matters is *how* we live with them.

The Rev. Renee Billings is pastor to the Royal Oak (Detroit) Swedenborgian Church. The foregoing is reprinted from their September/October 1997 newsletter. Her message was, of course, to the Royal Oak congregation, but it is an inspiring message for all our churches!



Volunteers

Getting Them and Keeping Them

Eric Allison

Volunteers are the steam in the church engine. Without them, a church cannot exist. Losing a volunteer or two can be a major blow to a small congregation. So, how do we find these good people, and how do they need to be treated in order to continue giving their time and talent? The cardinal rule for recruiting volunteers is to NEVER ask for volunteers in a public forum such as a newsletter or pulpit. A public plea for volunteers can have a negative impact on the entire congregation. There are of course exceptions to this rule, such as a task that needs many hands and little talent. However, a church is at its best when its programs are an expression of the God-given talents of all its individuals. No matter how large or small, in the forefront or the background, a job done well can be spiritually fulfilling for the volunteer and strengthen the whole church.

Consider the following scenario. A blanket request is made for a Sunday school teacher. A well-meaning person steps forward to teach, even though he is not able to teach. This person is actually the last person the church needs in that position. This volunteer has the purest motives, but not the talent. Eventually he becomes frustrated, because he can't teach and feels guilty about the quality of his performance and his lack of desire to continue. The attendance in his class dwindles until his own children are the only students. The parents of his former students have stopped attending church. Feeling discouraged, guilty, unworthy and embarrassed, the volunteer drops out of the church. He wasn't a bad person, he was just a bad teacher.

This scene and variations of it happen every year. It can be avoided by following a simple rule. Ask for volunteers in a face to face conversation, because you believe that the person you are asking could not only

do the job well, but would find it fulfilling. Don't ask them over the phone, ask them in person. When a person is asked in a face to face meeting, they will feel as though their talents are being valued much more than they would ever feel from reading a notice in the newsletter saying "anyone can do it." It is tragic to lose volunteers because they were in the wrong spot, when those persons could have been doing something else which they did well, and for which they were appreciated.

How Can a Congregation Know What its Talents Are?

A great tool for helping an entire congregation discover its gifts and talents is the Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire. Like our churches in Bridgewater, Massachusetts and Cincinnati, Ohio, have everyone in the congregation fill out the simple questionnaire and score his or her own results. A listing of everyone's results shows the untapped talents and those needed. This gives the minister and board members a clear idea of what individual church members would find satisfying. When people see the results of their own questionnaire, it is often enough encouragement to step into a different role. The test can also validate a long-standing desire of a church member to create new programs they have always wanted to offer. The only pay that volunteers are given is the satisfaction they receive. Even the busiest people will cancel a regular part of their schedule to do something that feeds their souls. (Copies of the questionnaire are available for only the cost of the paper and postage).

Be Nice to Volunteers, Very Nice.

The first time I gave blood a smiling nurse put a simple metal pin on my shirt that said "Be nice to me, I gave

blood today." I wore the pin for three days and saved it for years after. I thought I deserved it.

Perhaps the most overlooked aspect of church life is acknowledging the importance of the volunteers. Not only do they need to be thanked, but they need to have regular contact from the minister and other church leaders. Everyone likes to know that others value them and are interested in what they are doing. Regular checking in with anyone in the church who is helping is another way of saying thank you.

Norm Whan of Church Development International says that he calls every single one of his two hundred parishioners every month just to thank them for being part of the church. Most calls are obviously very brief, but those who really need to talk are especially glad to hear their pastor's voice.

Some churches have an annual awards banquet when virtually everyone gets an award for something. These can be lots of fun, as well as being a demonstration of the sheer volume of hours put in by so many people. It also shows the diversity of gifts that keep the church going. It's a great idea to cap off a year with thank you's, but it's not a replacement for contact and appreciation throughout the year.

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The Earth is the Lord's and the Fullness Thereof

Editor's Note: Continuing pieces on the convention theme, the following article is the Rev. Dr. Theodore Klein's response to convention keynote speaker Richard Killmer's speech, which appeared in the September Messenger. The October Messenger carried the Environmental Justice Covenant Congregation Program, rewritten by the Rev. Dr. George Dole to align with our Swedenborgian perspective. In addition to Dr. Klein's remarks, the suggestions for implementing the covenant, which were sent out to congregations, are printed here.

Theodore Klein

Richard Killmer speaks of a calling from God to us. We are called to be stewards in creation, to join with God in protecting and healing creation.

Swedenborg's theology is in harmony with the biblical accounts of creation as good. Out of love and through wisdom, God creates and sustains the earth, us, and all other beings on the earth. Creation, as pictured by Swedenborg, is a oneness of wonderfully different but connected parts, all continually sustained and loved by God. In creation all parts contribute and participate in uses.

The idea of "having dominion" which appears in Genesis might be taken to mean that humans are to seek to dominate and control the earth and other creatures. In contrast to that interpretation, Richard reminds us that the Bible speaks of the earth as the Lord's. Our role in creation, our unique uses in creation, include stewardship in creation or participation with God in caring for the rest of creation.

Sometimes Swedenborg speaks of the purpose or goal of creation as a heaven from the human race. This might be taken as elevating humans above nature. But a life of heaven is a life of loving service. In this world, our life of loving service needs to include humans now alive and future generations, the earth, and the other created beings on the earth. We are interdependent with other created life forms and the earth. Swedenborg describes a spiritual freedom and rationality as unique gifts to humans. We can use these gifts as God wants us to use them, for service and stewardship. But we can also misuse them in harming other humans, other creatures, and the earth.

Stewardship involves actions to protect and actions to restore where we have caused harm. Now we are called to slow down, reverse, and contribute to healing where pollution has poisoned. Instead of destroying forest, soil, and other parts of creation, we can protect, preserve, and conserve. Actions of protecting and restoring we can undertake as being dependent on God and interdependent with the rest of creation.

Here are a few suggestions about what congregations and their members can do. Congregations can seek to conserve energy—using, for example, only what heat and electricity they truly need. Members can take steps to conserve

energy in homes and workplaces. With congregational activities, there can be planning which maximizes walking, car pooling, use of public transportation, or other ways to reduce polluting emissions. Congregations and members can do much to draw on reusable resources rather than anything used once and thrown away.

If a congregation is in a community where there is no recycling program, members could join or help to initiate an effort to create one. Where there are recycling programs, some members could perhaps work as volunteers if volunteers are needed. Congregations and members could maximize their recycling, and encourage others to recycle.

Congregations and members can do much in educating themselves, and in drawing care for the earth into worship. More and more resources on stewardship and caring for creation are becoming available. One recent example of a good resource is *It's God's World*, a National Council of Churches booklet on global warming. There are resources available through the National Council of Churches and other groups that can be used for worship, education, and action in congregations.

Efforts in congregations can combine a sensitivity to what is needed in care for the earth locally and ways to participate in broader stewardship movements. For all efforts, we can look to God as the source of all creation, of which we are a part, and seek to cooperate with God's movement to sustain, protect, and heal. In this way, we can recognize the earth as God's, and let the earth rejoice.

The Rev. Dr. Ted Klein is professor of theology and philosophy at the Swedenborg School of Religion, and a co-chair of the Social Concerns Education Committee. Contact NCC or SCEC at addresses below for further information.

Eco-Justice Working Group, c/o Rev. Richard Killmer, National Council of Churches, Room 812, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115. Phone 212-870-2385; fax 212-870-2265

Social Concerns Education Committee

Co-Chairs, Esther Fyk, Garland, Manitoba, Canada ROL 0W0. 204-742-3793.

Bill Shakalis, 74 Dana Street, Cambridge, MA 02138-4309. 617-661-1143.

Rev. Dr. Ted Klein, 48 Sargent Street, Newton, MA 02158. 617-244-0504 or 617-325-1214.

(Continued on page 145)

Actions of protecting and restoring we can undertake as beings dependent on God and interdependent with the rest of creation.

(Continued from page 144)

WORSHIP

- Use worship materials which point to the reality that God created and redeems creation and calls the church to the task of healing and defending it. Worship materials are found in *God's Earth: Our Home*.

- Include the goodness of God's creation regularly in music, prayer, and congregational worship, as well as during Earth Day and other special services. Consider environmental ethics in a sermon or a series of sermons. Hold your worship service outside occasionally at a camp or park or on the church grounds instead of in the church building.

- For each person baptized, plant a tree in the church yard or community. Suggest that church members contribute trees as a living memorial to loved ones who have died. Appoint a committee to oversee the selection and planting of the trees.

- Become a congregation committed to celebrating God's Sabbath by taking time for rest, community building, enjoying God's creation together and giving rest to nature. Remember that the Sabbath is for all of creation, not just for human beings.

- Confess to God as individuals and a congregation your own involvement in exploiting and neglecting the world that God created and called good.

- Create a series of banners for your church sanctuary that portrays creation themes. Display them often as reminders of our call to protect and heal the creation.

- Produce an environmental awareness drama as part of a worship service.

- In the autumn, hold a special worship service of thanksgiving for the harvest. Have gardeners from the congregation bring an offering of vegetables or fruit from their gardens. Other people can contribute canned goods. Make arrangements ahead of time with a local food bank or soup kitchen to receive a donation of the food contributions. (Some food banks do not have the facilities to receive fresh food, so make sure you check ahead of time.)

- The service should emphasize thanksgiving for all the bounty of God's provision. A cornucopia of vegetables could replace the traditional altar flowers for the service. Remind the congregation that Christians in many parts of the developing world bring an offering each Sabbath which includes gifts that come directly from the land. By having a similar offering once a year, we acknowledge our dependence on God's creation, recognize the faithfulness of these brothers and sisters in Christ, and affirm our common call to feed the hungry.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

- Purchase books and videos for the church library that deal with protecting and healing God's creation. A list of books and other resources can be found in *God's Earth, Our Home*. A *Resource List of Environmental Justice Materials* is available from Environmental Justice Resources.

- Plan a church-wide vacation Bible school for all ages using the theme of celebrating God's world. Use learning materials contained in *God's Earth, Our Home* and in your denomina-

tional Christian education resources. Invite members of the community to join with your congregation in the program.

- Visit a neighborhood of your region where there is a high level of contamination. Find out who lives near the contamination and what effects it has on those who live close by. See how often these are neighborhoods of the poor and people of color. Join the efforts to end the contamination.

- Hold church school classes outside whenever possible. Discover ways that you can learn from nature.

- Offer a workshop for gardeners on composting, organic gardening, and indigenous plants. Teach about using alternatives to pesticides and artificial fertilizers in the garden.

- Take a field trip. Tour your town's garbage dump, water, supply, sewage treatment plant, recycling center, and power plant. Learn more about what happens to the waste your community produces. Prepare questions to ask the guides who show you around. Follow up on the tours by writing a report for your church newsletter or your community newspaper to share the information you have gained.

- Choose a book or article from "Resources for Ecology and Justice," *God's Earth, Our Home*. Study it together as part of an adult education class. Ask people from your congregation representing diverse points of view to form a panel that responds to the book.

- Sponsor a contest design for a poster, T-shirt, button, or bumper sticker with an environmental theme.

- Take high school students or college students on a four-day backpacking trip. As you spend time in the wilderness together, study the Exodus story emphasizing the Israelites' dependence on God during their journey. Pray together the Psalms that speak of the wonder and awe of God's creation.

LIFESTYLE

Personal Lifestyle

- At Christmas time, give a birthday gift to Jesus by sharing 25% of your Christmas budget with the needy. Use recycled paper for Christmas cards and gift wrap. Respect the environment in the gifts you select. Give gifts of your time or skills instead of expensive things.

- Look for ways of saving energy (and money!) in your home. Turn down the thermostat in the winter and turn it up in the summer. Weather strip windows and doors. Insulate the walls and ceiling. Install storm windows.

- Use a push or electric-powered mower instead of a gas-powered mower to cut your lawn. Or, better yet, turn part of your yard into a meadow of indigenous wild flowers.

- When purchasing appliances, look for low-energy, high-efficiency models.

- Leave your car at home whenever possible. Instead, choose public transportation, car pooling, walking, bicycling, or staying at home. When purchasing a new car, look for the most fuel-efficient model you can find. You may be able to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by over 5,000 pounds per year!

(Continued on page 146)

The Earth is the Lord's and the Fullness Thereof

(Continued from page 145)

Congregational Lifestyle

- Conduct a thorough audit of the energy use in your church buildings and programs. Look for ways that energy can be saved.
- Turn off lights, fans, and air conditioners when not in use. Turn down the heat and water heaters at night and on days that the church is not in use.
- Study your church grounds. How many pesticides, herbicides, and artificial fertilizers, and how much watering and mowing are necessary to keep the church grounds attractive and healthy? Are there indigenous strains of flowers, trees, and bushes that would be more hardy and insect resistant? Are there areas that could be converted to wild flower meadows to reduce the need for mowing? Is there an area that could be used for an organic vegetable garden to help supply healthy vegetables to a local food pantry? What compromises would your church community be willing to make on appearances in order to create an earth-friendly environment?
- Make a commitment as a church to cut back on or eliminate the use of disposable cups, plates, and utensils. Take an inventory of the number of paper or styrofoam cups the church uses in a month and then look for ways to gradually reduce the number by asking people to carry their own coffee mugs to meetings and coffee hour. Ask people to supply their own dishes and utensils for church dinners and then take them home to wash them.

COMMUNITY, NATIONAL AND GLOBAL INVOLVEMENT

- Learn about environmental racism, the disproportionate impact of environmental contamination on communities of color. Bring practices of racial discrimination in environmental policy to public attention through letters to the editor of your local newspaper and through letters to legislators and industry leaders.
- Keep track of how your governmental leaders vote on environmental issues. Your national denominational offices or the Eco-Justice working Group of the National Council of Churches can provide you with this information. Make your congregation aware of the voting records through a regular column in your church newsletter. Ask people to consider this information when voting.
- Hold an offering of letters. Choose an environmental issue that concerns the people of your congregation. It might be an issue confronting your town or community or a situation of national or international significance. Plan an educational campaign through which the members of your congregation are made aware of the issue and why it hurts God's creation.

Ask people to write letters to your legislators about the issue. You might wish to provide a model letter. Suggest that people describe in the letter how their faith has led them to be concerned about the issue.

At the next worship service, ask worshippers to place their letters in the offering plate. Dedicate the letters. Mail them after worship.

- Encourage members of the congregation to write letters to the president asking him to raise the automobile fuel economy standards. The president is authorized to make these changes

without the approval of congress. The standards have not been raised since 1986, and the technology for fuel efficiency has improved significantly since then.

- Explore ways of getting media coverage for an issue that concerns you. Letters to the editor, paid advertisements, and public service announcements are avenues open to everyone. Public policy makers are far more likely to respond to an issue that has generated public concern.
- Do you know which agencies in your community, city, county, or state have responsibilities for environmental issues and how to contact them? You might consider issues such as: soil contamination, air and water pollution and endangered species. After gathering this information, make it available to church members. Invite officials from these agencies to speak at your church. ❖

ISTI National Conference in Collegeville

After Awareness: Preventing Abuse by
Creating Healthy Communities

**Monday ~Tuesday ~ Wednesday
June 8-10, 1998 - (MSP airport)
Call 800.436.8431**

Interfaith Sexual Trauma Institute
Saint John's Abbey and University
Campus, Collegeville MN 56321 USA

This conference is for those who work especially in positions of trust and leadership in churches, synagogues and all communities of faith, as well as those people in the educational and professional communities who address issues of intervention, justice, healing, understanding and prevention of power abuse by trusted leaders in communities of faith.

The conference focus is on the future. Some topics include: What are good policies and how do we make them work? What are strategies for a spiritual and emotional transformation from the crisis in individuals, congregations and entire traditions? How do healthy communities thrive where abuse cannot hide? What is healthy sexuality, and how do we support it theologically, emotionally, and within whole congregations? How do we train pastoral and religious workers in boundaries, gender issues and prevention? What is important in the selection and training of seminarians? What are the components of curriculum and training for future rabbis, clergy and other church leaders?

For more information and registration, contact Maureen Otremba, The Collegeville Pastoral Institute, 800.436.8431.

Roman Paur PHD, Executive Director ISTI

Pacific Coast Association Meeting

The Los Angeles church hosted the annual meeting of the Pacific Coast Association over Labor Day weekend (August 29-31, 1997) at the Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center in Sierra Madre, California. Susan Ziemer-Brenner, a health care professional, skillfully interwove her sessions on humor, spirituality and healing with Alliance and business meetings. The retreat setting was comfortable and restful with gardens, fountains and the spectacular San Gabriel mountains in the immediate background.

At the business meeting, it was voted to return the Rev. Harvey Tafel and the Rev. Dr. Horand Gutfeldt to the PCA Board of Directors. (Sadly, Horand passed away September 26th. Please see "Passages.") The Alliance luncheon, arranged by Jessie Rado aided by the other nine L.A. church members, was a delightful experience for all.

The Sunday morning worship service was conducted at the Wayfarers Chapel in Palos Verdes, California, with the Rev. Edwin Capon as guest preacher. A sumptuous outdoor luncheon followed the service. Mareta Tafel comments, "A true Southern California experience from the mountains to the sea helped us all to feel blessed that we live in an area of



Above: Mareta Saul, Los Angeles church.

Top Right: Phyllis Bosley and Margaret Culver from San Francisco, at Wayfarers Chapel. Pat Lundberg and Harvey Tafel in background.

the world like no other. Much thanks goes to Manon Washburn and Mary Sabol of the Los Angeles and Palos Verdes groups, respectively, for organizing our meetings. We look forward to getting together next year in the Seattle area and in 1999 in San Diego (two other places blessed by God and Mother Nature)."

The big news to come out of the business sessions is that PCA will be hosts to our national convention in 1999 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the dedication of the cornerstone at the Wayfarers Chapel. ❖



George Henry, 16, a new and enthusiastic member of the Puget Sound church and first-time PCA attendee, with the Rev. Paul Martin, Washington.

Cabinet Meeting

The Cabinet met August 17-20 at Fryeberg, Maine. The main item of business was to develop the 1998 budget to recommend to General Council. Reports of the Support Units and Council of Ministers were made and discussion of various items took place.

The following motions were among those passed during the meetings: Cabinet voted to support the goal of FPRSU to work in developing new sources of income for the denomination and further urged that this work be expanded to include offering development assistance to our

churches. Cabinet voted to recommend an increase in EDSU's budget to fund a 1998 youth workers conference. Cabinet adopted the motion to recommend that General Council require a Support Unit establish specific goals and measurable objectives, and then follow through to see that these stated goals and objectives are met within the time frame allotted. FPRSU cannot stress enough the importance in this change of philosophy if the denomination is going to be viable or even able to operate financially in years to come.

The issue of biennial conventions

was discussed. There was consensus of Cabinet to recommend General Council establish a committee to study details of biennial conventions such as terms of office, ordination, meeting schedules, etc. "Trusting the Promise" was chosen for 1998 convention theme.

There was much discussion of the preliminary report of the Structure Review Committee and discussion of multiple-year budgeting.

The Cabinet will meet next on December 4-5, preceding the General Council meeting at Wayfarers Chapel.

❖

Swedenborg's Other Job

(Continued from cover)

common ideas they must circulate with, so that they can do that, are on the other hand not necessarily true. They depend on the current state of knowledge, where for many people any higher vision must first be seen. People and their ideas can be changed only step by step, starting very close to where they are, in recognition of a thesis we do acknowledge on the side: There is no such thing as instantaneous salvation.

For example, a classic instance in Swedenborg of non-revelatory work with a body of current ideas is his statements about life on other planets in our solar system. The first chapter of *Earths in the Universe* consists of arguments for life everywhere that were based on the cosmology and the much smaller solar system accepted at the time. These arguments have been inadvertently documented by Steven Dick, of the U.S. Naval Observatory, in his history, *Plurality of Worlds, the Origins of the Extraterrestrial Life Debate from Democritus to Kant*, as arguments advanced as much as a century and a half before *Earths in the Universe*. Swedenborg merely reminded people of them.

Furthermore, he makes no revelatory claim for his assertions about the solar system. He does say that whoever considers these arguments cannot but believe that where there is a sun there are planets with men on them (par. 3); but this is clearly an attempt to play logician with his readers. Just use your head with our science, he suggests, and you will see reflected in it a divine principle, that the universe was created to grow a heaven from the human race. Yet this statement has been treated as a revelatory claim for his cosmology, evidently in the old fear of underestimating a prophet's intentions.

Paragraph 42—surprisingly unnoticed in decades of published discussions—shows us that even the angels accepted the current

solar system; they could not predict the discovery of more planets, which began as early as 1781 when Uranus was discovered. Angels evidently cannot see the solar system themselves, so they use our astronomy. The only way Swedenborg could identify the home planets of people in the spiritual world was to build conceptual bridges between his experiences and the simple astronomy of the time. It didn't work, but at the time it looked like the reasonable thing to do. A science will not show any shortcomings except in contrast to a later, more developed science.

Another clue to Swedenborg's strategy lies in *Conjugal Love*. In paragraphs 42 and 43 he tells us how the book was commissioned. There follows a very interesting drama. A celestial angel lets down to him a parchment on which are written secrets of conjugal love. But then an angelic spirit intercepts the parchment, locks it away, and hands the key to Swedenborg with the command, "Write."

An angelic spirit is an apprentice angel and therefore has not been in the spiritual world very long. This one was probably a contemporary of Swedenborg's and, in the symbolic logic of that world, represents the current state of the religious mind, a level that the better Christians of the time had reached. This consciousness advises caution: keep the pure truths in the back of your mind, as it were locked away as a reference, but write for the age in ways that will be relevant to its outlook and help it to change.

Contrary to traditional Christian preaching, he never pushes us to vault immediately into heaven. In any case it can't be done. He always advises the plodding approach, because it is the most stable in the long run. Just start to put one foot in front of the other. You can in this way walk out of hell. It is another way to honor who and where you are now so that you can grow safely without the possibility of a type of profanation, the sudden miscarriage of new life.

There is evidence as well that Swedenborg, like the angels, was not given any scientific revelations. Science is evidently something we must carry on by ourselves, for it is

our study of our own realm, and we are perhaps best left in freedom to pursue it, make our own mistakes, and learn. It is in things above ourselves, that we cannot derive from our own thinking, where we need revelation.

In accordance with the current scientific philosophy, Swedenborg did believe that all planets are inhabited. He also believed in the spontaneous generation of living forms from piles of garbage or other organic materials, a thesis disproven by Louis Pasteur near the turn of our century. But he advances his science without claiming revelation for it. He leaves his trips outside the pulpit and across the intellectual campus clearly marked. His arguments for lesser theses are clearly scientific or philosophical only. When he is in much higher regions, he says so.

In short, he knew what he was doing. When he was in the chapel, he knew it, and he knew when he was roaming around campus on more sensitive exchanges with his culture. The clear reader can pick this up just by looking at his arguments and seeing what they lean on. Every argument assumes a common body of ideas and beliefs in order to make its point. Those who would share the same body of ideas will define his audience and therefore his approach. Clear readers in his time, who knew the context he was operating in, probably detected his various audiences naturally.

Now, two-and-a-half centuries later, we have lost sight of that culture; some generations ago we substituted for real historical intimacy a fear of offending God if we should ever doubt anything Swedenborg wrote. It felt safe. We thereby made him a revelator only and produced a narrow tradition. But to recent generations it brought on an old squeeze—either believe everything anyway or raise flags of disappointment here and there. It seems we did buy the tradition.

Steve Koke is a member of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, chair of the Communications Support Unit, and an editor for Blue Dolphin Press in northern California. He is currently completing a book for the Swedenborg Foundation titled *The Hidden Millennium*. ❖

World Community Day: Gathering Seed from a Medieval Mother Root

Gathering Seed From A Medieval Mother Root" is the topic for the 1997 World Community Day, November 7, an annual national worship service of Church Women United. Developed by the Celebrations Committee of Church Women United, this year's service carries out the "seed" theme begun with the World Day of Prayer in March, "Like a Seed Which Grows Into a Tree," written by Christian women of Korea, and applied as well to the May Fellowship Day. The WCD theme was selected because of the relevance of the work and writings of women mystics of the Middle Ages to causes of justice for women and the world today. The suppression of their art, ideas and spirituality was a prelude to the domination and colonialism that would increasingly subjugate people of color, labeling our/their religion as pagan, denying our/their humanity as persons with souls. These early Christian foremothers planted seeds that are flowering even now. Attendees at this

deeply spiritual service will be immersed in the music, poetry, art and writings of these mystics. Candles and incense will contribute to the contemplative atmosphere.

The mystics whose lives are recalled in this service are Julian of Norwich, Teresa of Avila, Mechtilde of Magdeburg, Catherine of Siena, Joan of Arc and, most especially, Hildegard of Bingen. Recently, there has been a resurgence of interest in Hildegard of Bingen, whose 900th birthday will be celebrated in 1998. Some of her original canticles have been recorded. A Hildegard monologue written by the committee tells the story of her life, visions and revelations. She was a woman of remarkable accomplishments and ideas for an age when women had very little learning, power or influence. She was a healer, artist, composer, administrator, teacher and student. Her theology of "original blessing" as opposed to "original sin" was startling at that time. Participants will have an opportunity to be creative



in coloring one of her mandalas, symbolic circle drawings.

Offerings from "Gathering Seed From A Medieval Mother Root" help support the women's ecumenical ministries of Church Women United for peace and justice, including its commitments to advancing the social and economic power of women.

Additional resource materials and background information on the 1997 World Community Day may be obtained by contacting the national offices of Church Women United at 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 500, New York, NY 10115 (800) CWU-5551.



LETTERS

Live-in Help Needed

Dear Friends:

Is there a single lady (senior citizen type) who would like to move to Southern California to be a live-in companion to help Mary and Mac McCormick in their day to day activities?

Southern California is a great place to live and you would be helping a couple of fellow Swedenborgians.

If you would be interested, please call them at 619/931-9280, or write to:

Mary and Charles McCormick,
2289 Morgan Road,
Carlsbad, California 92008.

A. Smith
San Diego, California

TO THE EDITOR

A Search for old New Church Collateral Works

Friends:

My name is Mark Perry, and I reside in Atlanta, Georgia. I have a great interest in New Church collateral material, particularly New Church expositional writing.

If you have an unused collection of New Church books which you are willing to trade or sell, you might be able to help me. I am looking for expositional works by the Revs. William Bruce, Henry Maclagan, Robert S. Fischer, Edward Seddon and

John Clowes.

I believe most of these men were ministers in Britain in the early 1900s. They wrote a number of expositional works of the Gospels and Revelation as well as some of the books of the Old Testament. In particular I am looking for *Three Kings of Israel*. However if you are willing to part with any of these works kindly contact me. I am happy to pay the cost of all shipping.

Address:

Mark Perry
2119 Seaman Circle
Chamblee GA, 30341

E-Mail: markperry@mindspring.com

Tel: (770) 936-8696

I look forward to hearing from you.
Thank you in advance.

Mark Perry

The Rev. Dr. Horand Gutfeldt

December 1, 1922 – September 26, 1997

Husband, father, pastor, teacher, counselor, philosopher, church leader, world traveler, good man, and friend to many in many parts of the world, Horand Gutfeldt has died. Horand's intense involvement with seemingly every issue and moment displayed his love of living in all the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of being fully human. From his birthplace in the town of Libau in Latvia, to the cities of Berlin and Vienna, to America (in its New England, West Coast, and Middle West variations), and in long or short visit to almost every part of the globe, he made himself at home in many cultures—and brought to his friends in each new home the broadening vision of his cosmopolitan experience. Horand loved living, and lived enthusiastically, even to the end of his life—indeed, especially at the end of his life.

In the Council of Ministers of the Swedenborgian Church, few if any could speak with as well-qualified authority regarding the church's place in the international scene, of Swedenborgian theology, philosophy, psychology, ecumenism, and other fields. Horand's pastoral affections have enriched the lives of parishioners and students in Vienna, Urbana, and El Cerrito. His extensive studies in Egyptian hieroglyphics gave him unparalleled insight into the deeper implications of Swedenborg's teaching on correspondence, and his magisterial—though unfortunately unfinished—work on psychology may already constitute a significant contribution to the field of knowledge.

He ministered to Swedenborgian churches in Berlin, Germany; Vienna, Austria; Prague, Czechoslovakia; and in this country, Urbana, Ohio; and El Cerrito, California. While in Urbana, he organized a spiritual growth group built around six commitments—personal commitments to read, to practice the presence of God, and to ongoing self-examination; and group commitments to meet weekly for prayer, to seek out a spiritual counselor within the group, and to keep a spiritual diary. One participant, more than twenty years later, remembers it as a life-shaping experience.

With a master's degree from Harvard and a Ph.D. from the University of Vienna, he served as assistant professor at Urbana University, and has taught courses at J.F. Kennedy University in Orinda, California, and Swedenborg School of Religion in Newton, Massachusetts. He has held elected offices in the European Council of New Church Ministers; the denomination's Council of Ministers and Board of Missions; the SSR Board of Managers,

Pacific Coast Association, and Berkeley Area Interfaith Council; and represented the Swedenborgian Church on the Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches.

Although many remember Horand for these professional accomplishments, most of those who knew him best recall him lovingly as a husband, father, and—to many, including this author—friend. Attentive to others, even while enthusiastically absorbed in his intellectual pursuits, he was selflessly devoted to Elizabeth, his wife, and their sons Theodor, Michael, and Erik. Beyond that closest circle, he was deeply and consistently committed to his friends.

A wholistic perspective on human nature's intertwined physical and spiritual aspects characterized the psychology, philosophy, and theology of Horand Gutfeldt the theorist.

That perspective, and the intensely vigorous engagement with all of life, characteristic of Horand Gutfeldt the man, came together in a remarkable way in the ending of his physical life. That story can be told fully—and we may hope it soon will be told—by his wife, Elizabeth; but some suggestion of it is

necessary to conclude this memorial.

After exploratory surgery five years ago, Horand was diagnosed with inoperable cancer that had metastasized widely, and given from a few weeks to perhaps as much as six months to live. Unafraid of death, but loving life, he embarked upon a dietary regimen made possible by extraordinary efforts on Elizabeth's part. The program extended his life by well over four years beyond the rosiest medical prognosis, and relieved (even removed for long periods) the pain associated with his disease. He used the extension of his life span to continue his writing, to enjoy his relationships with family and friends, and to deliver a wise and moving convention sermon in Urbana in 1996.

In late summer of this year, he and Elizabeth enjoyed a van-camping tour of the Pacific northwest. His sensitivity to the beauty of the physical world and our life in it, heightened (if that is possible for a soul as eager as his) by impending physical death, found rapturous beauty in the woods and waters of that scenic land. The happy couple



Horand Gutfeldt, Wayfarers Chapel, August 31, 1997.



L-R: Elizabeth and Horand Gutfeldt with Manon Washburn, president of Los Angeles church, at PCA meeting.

(Continued on page 151)

CONFIRMATIONS

Buchanan, Justy—Carolyn Buchanan and Catherine Justy were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church May 4, 1997, at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario, the Rev. Ron Brugler officiating.

Ezzy, King, Lloyd, Paradis—Simone Fizzy, Marie King, Jenifer Lloyd and Robert Paradis were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church June 1, 1997, at the Portland Swedenborgian Church in Portland, Maine.

Stinson, Thorne—Andrew Stinson and Michelle Thorne were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church June 4, 1997, at the Portland Swedenborgian Church in Portland, Maine.

MARRIAGES

Carlson and Leslie—Michael Eugene Carlson and Kelli Marie Leslie were united in marriage June 29, 1997, at Longview Mansion in Lee Summit, Missouri, the Rev. Eric Hoffman officiating.

DEATHS

Gutfeldt—the Rev. Dr. Horand Gutfeldt, 74, entered the spiritual world September 26, 1997, at his home in Berkeley, California. His wife Elizabeth was with him. (See memorial, p. 150). Horand is survived by his wife and three sons, Theodor, Michael, and Erik. The memorial service was held October 11, 1997, at the El Cerrito church.

Swanton—Louise May Swanton, 85, community volunteer and author, entered the spiritual world September 9, 1997, in Bath, Maine. She is survived by her husband John R. Swanton, Jr., five children and eight grandchildren. Mrs. Swanton is a past member of the Newtonville, Massachusetts Swedenborgian Church and sister-in-law of Henry Swanton (deceased).



Memorial ~The Rev. Dr. Horand Gutfeldt

(Continued from page 150)

enjoyed a kind of spiritual honeymoon.

Returning home, he enjoyed one last opportunity to teach—his subject this time: spiritual aspects of marriage (he may have been the world's leading authority at that moment!)—at a couples' retreat organized by a Catholic priest. Shortly after that, he entered into a physical decline which he recognized as the penultimate phase of his life. Persuading his body to surrender willingly to the dissolution of its bonds with his spirit, he soon passed beyond pain, and came into a couple of weeks of peaceful weakening of the body, and of inner experiences of heaven. Waking physically after one such experience, he spoke to Elizabeth of "two more days of class, and then I graduate!" Two days later, the lifelong learner passed quietly into the spiritual world!

*Rev. Dr. Robert Kirven
September 30, 1997
Glendale, Arizona*



Happy Endings

1960s arithmetic test: "A logger cuts and sells a truckload of lumber for \$100. His cost of production is four-fifths of that amount. What is his profit?"

1970s new-math test: "A logger exchanges a set (L) of lumber for a set (M) of money. The cardinality of Set M is 100. The Set C of production costs contains 20 fewer points. What is the cardinality of Set P of profits?"

1980s version: "A logger cuts and sells a truckload of lumber for \$100. His cost is \$80, his profit is \$20. Find and circle the number 20."

1990s version: "An unenlightened logger cuts down a beautiful stand of 100 trees in order to make a \$20 profit. Write an essay explaining how you feel about this as a way to make money. Topic for discussion: How did the forest birds and squirrels feel?"

—Anon.

IMPORTANT CHURCH CALENDAR DATES

November 1	Investment Committee	Temenos, West Chester, PA
November 2-3	FPRSU/AFC	Temenos, West Chester, PA
November 21-23	Retirement Committee	Central Office, Newton, MA
December 4-5	Cabinet	Redondo Beach, CA
December 6-7	Cabinet/General Council	Redondo Beach, CA and Wayfarers Chapel
January 14-16	Exec. Com. Council of Ministers	Leesburg, FL
January 17-18	SSR Field Ed Training	Leesburg, FL
April 1-3	Committee on Admission to the Ministry	SSR
June 24-28	Convention 1998	Leesburg, FL

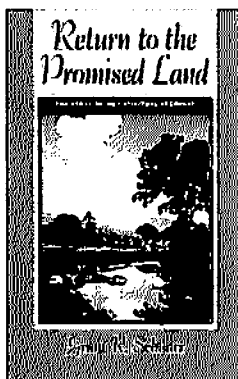
Emanuel Swedenborg was born January 29, 1688, in Stockholm, Sweden. Although he never intended a church denomination to be founded or named after him, a society was formed in London 15 years after his death. This 1787 organization eventually spawned the present General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches.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

Swedenborg Foundation Books

Holiday Special

It's Time to go Home

Grant Schnarr's *Return to the Promised Land: The Story of Our Spiritual Recovery* lights the path of the souls' journey home by applying the insights of the twelve-step program to the symbolic meaning of the Exodus story.



Schnarr examines one biblical episode in each chapter comparing the plight or progress of the Israelites to present-day setbacks or successes in overcoming psychological and behavioral compulsions and addictions. Universal issues—escaping from the tyranny of the ego, holding onto hope in painful times, and accepting problems—are addressed. Schnarr recounts his own progress through darkness: his steadfast quest to recover his rugged and joy-filled spirit assure us that the journey is worth taking. Practical exercises help readers survive their own wilderness times to find the promised land of spiritual recovery.

"I invite you to come with me on a journey. The path we will travel is not new. In many ways this is an ancient journey first taken thousands of years ago by a group of people searching for a home. But every person—of whatever time, and background, and religious orientation—is called to this journey on a spiritual level. God, as we understand him, calls you and me out of the slavery of egotism, and mistaken wants, out of addiction . . . to freedom. I ask you to adventure with me, to leave the old ways behind, and to search for a new and promised way of life."

—from the Introduction

212 pages, paper, \$12.95
Pub. April, 1997

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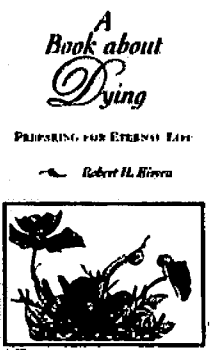
Heaven: We're Dying to Get There

In *A Book About Dying: Preparing for Eternal Life*, Robert Kirven gives to the dying and their loved ones gentle assurance of life after death. Detailing the Swedenborgian view of the afterlife, Kirven explains that all are born to become angels and heaven is denied to none who seeks it. The spiritual wisdom of the ages, from Augustine to the Tibetan Book of the Dead, broadens this vision of life after death.

Simcha Paull Raphael in the foreword calls *A Book about Dying* "a manual for conscious living and dying." Kirven explains that we choose how we live our lives, and that our choices impact how we will die and how we will live after death. He suggests practical ways to alter our decisions and actions to better prepare for the next world.

Advice and expectations about dying, caregiving, hospice, funerals, grieving, and dealing with family and friends are outlined; the writing of such experts as Sherwin Nuland are explored. Drawing on his lifelong study of dying and the afterlife as well as on personal experience with the death of his wife Marian, Kirven concludes that "for patient and survivor alike, living really does continue after dying."

170 pages, paper, \$12.95 Pub. April, 1997



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