

THE MESSENGER

Published by the Swedenborgian Church of North America

June 1998

Heavenly Societies and the Earthly Church: A Closer Look

Andrew Dole

Each heaven... is distinguished into innumerable societies; and each society consists of many individuals, who by their harmony and unanimity constitute as it were one person; and all the societies together are as one man. The societies are distinct from one another according to the differences of mutual love, and of faith in the Lord... there is not the least of differences that is not disposed in most perfect order, so as to conspire most harmoniously to a common unity, and the common unity to unanimity of individuals, and thereby to the happiness of all from each, and of each from all.

—Arcana Coelestia

There is an aspect of Swedenborg's description of the heavenly life that I think we tend to underemphasize in our teaching and preaching. The most important fact about heavenly life is it is lived in community with others. When we read of heavenly societies being made up of those who share the same ruling love, it is all too easy to form a mental image of something like a group of people who enjoy the same hobby—model trains, say, or astronomy, gardening, or classical music. In other words, it is all too easy to imagine heavenly life as being lived side-by-side, with little genuine interaction, with others who think the same way that we do.

But if we explore the notion of a 'heavenly society,' we will find that the picture we ought to form has much more in common with present life. Heavenly societies are, after all, *societies*: they are collections of people who in-

teract with each other, take care of each other, talk and listen, agree and disagree. The fact that these individuals all share the same 'ruling love' in no way implies that they have lost their individuality, their particular opinions, or their characteristic ways of getting along with other people.

In fact, it seems to me that one's 'ruling love' is necessarily reflected in how one treats others; and if this is the case, individuals will identify with their spiritual communities in part upon the basis of how the individuals in these communities treat each other. One of the characteristics of our theology is the denial that after death God simply 'zaps' the faithful with perfect love and perfect wisdom; instead, we are taught that we will retain those imperfections that we have appropriated to ourselves by our behavior while here on earth. We have no reason to think that this will not also be the case with our ingrained ways of treating each other. If I am characteristically (i.e. willfully) impatient and insensitive in this life, I will be so in the next as well. If I refuse the Lord's efforts in this life to lead me to

be a better listener or a more caring companion, I will not be miraculously endowed with these virtues after death.

What is the significance of this observation for life in a community of faith? We believe that one function of the church is to teach individuals about the love of God and of the neighbor; that is, to teach us about, and prepare us for, heavenly life. The church ought to be a place where we learn to live together in community, and to treat each other in accordance with the love God has shown us. After all, we are in the process of forming ourselves for eternity, and the church is the place we go to learn about the heavenly life. We can, as individuals,

live a life of faith in our dealings with the world outside of the church—in the workplace, in the home, or in the public sphere—but only in church is the collective focus on the life of charity and faith with an eye

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towards preparation for eternal life. The church should above all else be a place where we can feel the love of God and of each other, so that we can learn from others how to love God and our neighbor.

It is no secret that Christian

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Guest Editorial by Rachel Rivers

Emmanuel Swedenborg often discusses how the inner, spiritual world and the outer, natural world relate, interact, and affect each other. One way of describing how what is going on inside of us makes a difference in how we experience what happens outside of us is to say that perspective alters perception; where we are coming from, what we expect, our thoughts and feelings, our fears and hopes, affect how we perceive and experience the world around us and how we respond.

I was reminded of this in a powerful way while leading a seven-week marriage enrichment class for premarital and newly-wed couples this spring. Too often, we discovered, our own negative expectations, judgements, and fears turn our interactions with

SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE ENRICHING DAILY PERCEPTIONS

one another into painful misunderstandings.

As an example, I relate the following hypothetical encounter. A woman is working hard on her wedding plans. Her fiance offers to help, but she says "no, I can do it"—thinking he really doesn't want to be bothered with it, and if he does, he will offer again. But rather than attempting another offer, he leaves the room. While she is now feeling lonely and put-upon, he is feeling lonely and inadequate: it took courage for him to offer his assistance because he feels out of his element with the wedding planning. Either

partner in the hypothetical couple just described could have saved the encounter from turning negative. She might have asked him if he really wanted to help, because she would sure appreciate it if he would. He could have told her that he wants to participate with her but hasn't offered until now due to his feelings of inadequacy. They would be keeping the encounter positive by perceiving what was happening through eyes of love and understanding, and revealing themselves to one another with care and respect.

Love and understanding are inner, spiritual realities that can help us perceive our outer, daily experiences with a new joy and freedom. We do not need to be stuck in perceiving and reacting in pre-set ways. Instead, we can seek to unite a spiritual vision, alive in love and understanding, with our day-to-day life. May God guide us on our way.

The Rev. Rachel Rivers is co-pastor and pastoral psychotherapist at the San Francisco church. Reprinted from the July-August 1996 S.F. church newsletter.



Editor's Extended Note on the Alligator Question

The '98 Convention information sent out to us from Central Office, in addition to the information on your registration form, states: "Florida in mid-summer is hot and humid. It usually rains every day for a short time. We noticed large alligators and fire ants when we visited in January suggesting that swimming in the lake and going barefoot are both bad ideas. There is no pool but I understand you could rent a canoe if you feel brave!"

So swimming in the lake is discouraged, but boating is allowed. In a canoe, which is notoriously tippy. (Remember Tippecanoe?)

Do the alligators pay heed to this subtle difference between swimmers and boaters? Are we to assume that the alligator population is operating under rigidly enforced regulations which stipulate that they can eat swimmers, but any hapless soul who has the misfortune to fall out of a boat is to be granted a short grace period

(about 3 seconds) to climb back into the canoe before he/she is considered a swimmer and therefore fair game? Did you ever watch anybody try to climb back into a canoe? Depending on who you're watching make this attempt, it can be excruciatingly entertaining or horrifying, but I've never seen it done in under ten minutes.

So picture this alligator population in this lake—as above, so below—(I need to work in a spiritual concept here in order for this to be considered inspirational): You have your law-abiding 'gators who live out their lives somewhere between the threat of extermination and peaceful coexistence with All That Is. They're all at some level of understanding that if they get too greedy and chomp down too many swimmers (referred to euphemistically as Alligator Incidents) the Powers That Be will clean out the lake and eliminate all of them. So if they are self-policing, there's something of a

THE MESSENGER

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

June 1998
Volume 219 No. 6
Whole Number 5231

Typesetting & Layout
Town & Country
Press, Plymouth, IN

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

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

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Swedenborg Meets Handsome Lake

Adam Seward

Looking at ourselves through another culture's lens can tell us something about our own culture. If we look at Swedenborgianism through the lens of American Indian cultures, we find delightful similarities and marked differences. Indians go through definable processes to become ritual specialists (medicine or holy people): They receive a call in a dream or vision, and they consult another ritual specialist to interpret the vision. This consultation includes the vision's explanation, sometimes partial, and its attending obligations. Indian people train with other ritual specialists—often for decades—to become ritual specialists. They are integrated into their communities, and those communities recognize them. My point of reference for comparison is Handsome Lake or Sganyadal:yoh (1735-1815), a political and religious leader of the Longhouse Religion in the Seneca Nation of the Iroquois Confederacy.¹

RECEIVING THE CALL

Swedenborg definitely received a vision. We know it popularly as the "Delft Vision," which occurred after midnight on April 6, 1744. He described it this way.

At the same moment, I sat in his [Christ's] bosom, and saw him face to face; it was a face of holy mien, and in all it was indescribable, and he smiled so that I believe that his face had indeed been like this when he lived on earth.²

Handsome Lake received his vision after a four-year illness complicated by alcoholism. One day he got up, went to his doorway, and collapsed. His daughter thought that he had died, and the family began to arrange his burial. Yet, Handsome Lake awoke, fell back asleep, and awoke again. In the midst of this, he received his commission.

The messengers were sent by Shongwaysdihs:on [Creator] to tell the people on Earth that they were not aware

of wrongdoing—and because the Creator had given thanksgiving and renewal to Sganyadal:yoh [Handsome Lake] after he repented of his wrongdoing, they had chosen him to be the one to bring the Good Message (or Galwi:yo) . . . (the Creator's highest code of ethics).³

The three messengers told him that there were really four of them. The fourth had crossed the Atlantic Ocean to release their prophecy to the Europeans.⁴

CONSULTING OTHER RITUAL SPECIALISTS FOR INTERPRETATION

American Indians call on ritual specialists to interpret their visions. Swedenborg's spiritual experiences were unusual for eighteenth-century Sweden. He recorded his initial doubts about these experiences in the *Journal of Dreams*, the *Spiritual Diary*, and *The Word Explained*. He wrote about these experiences in his later works, but he wrote from the perspective of having

from his mission as he later understood it? Handsome Lake

received a

vision not only

for himself, but for his nation. This may have been why he found himself relaying detailed instructions to others. Handsome Lake's obligations were clear; Swedenborg had to discover his obligations. In either case, both thus far had a vision that implied obligations.



TRAINING OR APPRENTICESHIP

Handsome Lake needed no training, unless we see his previous illness as the training. One might see Swedenborg's period before his "theological works" as "training," but I feel that he would argue with that claim. One of his earlier observations makes him seem like Handsome Lake.

Handsome Lake's obligations were clear; Swedenborg had to discover his obligations.

integrated his experiences. Handsome Lake received both his vision and its meaning simultaneously. Both men processed their visions beyond the bounds of ancient and contemporary Indian experience. Although one may inherit the medicine man's office by heredity or directly by vision, the usual pattern includes a vision or visions interpreted. Swedenborg did not have an interpreter, Handsome Lake did not need one.

When an Indian has received a vision and consulted a ritual specialist, the interpretation includes discovering an obligation or obligations of the vision. Swedenborg was told, "...do what thou hast promised."⁵ What had Swedenborg promised? And how did that differ

To forget nothing, it came also into the thoughts, that the Holy Spirit would show me to Jesus, and present me to him, as a work that he had so prepared; and that I ought by no means to attribute anything to myself, but that all is his; although he of grace, imputes to us the same.⁶

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION

The final question is whether they were integrated into their communities, and whether they achieved community recognition. Swedenborg could have hardly been more integrated into his community and recognized by it. He was a noble of the Swedish Riksdag and had some influence over government policy. His civil services and travels suggest that although he enjoyed a privileged position, he also appeared aware of the lower social classes. Indian ritual specialists may receive visions or calls, but the working recognition must come from an Indian community. The Seneca Nation counted Handsome Lake among its

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Children In Communion: Have You Thought About It?

Kit Billings

The winds of change have been blowing in our denomination for a while now on the issue of children participating in Communion. At least five of our parish-centered congregations are currently inviting children to participate in the Holy Supper. Traditionally, throughout most of our church's history in North America, only those confirmed into the church were invited to participate in this sacrament—the average age of confirmation is typically thirteen years old. However, both lay and clergy in recent years have started to see this practice differently. Now some children at age seven and older are taking part in the Holy Supper.

I am not writing this article to invite us to be judgmental toward people or congregations that differ from our own, but rather to explore this issue. To invite new growth by doing it, and to assist us in reviewing what our church teachings generally have to say about it.

Recently my home church where I pastor here in St. Paul, Minnesota spent over three months looking at this issue. I am very glad we did because I believe that many here have grown a great deal in our understanding of and appreciation for Communion, and how we can better involve our children here in these services.

In terms of the general religious landscape around Communion, other denominations are as widespread as we are. The Catholic Church traditionally invites children at age seven to make their First Communion, which is a lengthy process of education and commitment. The American Baptist Church gives each congregation much autonomy as we do. My wife's church (she is a minister of that church) in Minneapolis leaves this issue up to each parent(s) and their children. An ELCA Lutheran church near mine has young teenagers go through a three-year confirmation class process, culminating at age seventeen. After confirmation, these people are invited to take Communion for the first time.

Where are you on this issue and why? Have you given it much thought? Have you read what Swedenborg wrote about the Holy Supper?¹ If not, then I heartily invite you to do so, because I imagine that a lot of new growth and insight await you along the way.

I am a big fan of our Swedenborgian doctrines. While I do not see them as prescriptive, I often find them to hold a great deal of truth. Swedenborg's theological ideas typically help the guiding light of heaven to illuminate my mind, especially when it comes to finding and discerning the internal meaning of the Divine Word. First, some comments about our church's view of the sacraments.

Our church lists two sacraments: Baptism and the Holy Supper. We do so for two basic reasons. First, these were the only two prescriptive rituals that Jesus said must be done by all who would call themselves Christian. Second, they were instituted by use of correspondences!

Swedenborg describes these sacraments as two gates

through which a Christian passes in her journey into heaven while living here on earth. Baptism is the first gate. A person, regardless of her age, is welcomed into baptism. In baptizing an infant or child, we are welcoming that person into God's universal Christian Church on Earth. In essence, baptism is a sign. It is a symbol of what must happen throughout life in order for regeneration to occur—that is, repentance, reformation, and regeneration with the truths in the Word enabling this process. Water corresponds to the purifying power of these truths. For now, let us know that it does not magically effect the salvation or regeneration of a baby or child. This only happens over many years time, and a very special aspect of this is meant to occur when a person comes willingly and consciously to the Lord's Holy Supper.

The institution of the Holy Supper was recorded in *Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, while *John* alludes to it in the Lord's discourse about himself as the "living bread" which came down from heaven, and that we must eat this bread (or his flesh) and drink his blood to have eternal life.² Clearly, the internal meaning of Communion was being addressed in these passages. Each of the gospels are part of the Word, being that they contain both an internal and external (or literal) meaning and that both angels in heaven and people on earth are connected by them, gaining divine truth from them about the nature of the Lord and human spirituality.

One of the keys for me in discerning the Swedenborgian view of Communion is to be sure to examine all of the words Jesus used in the institution, and not only those involving the correspondential elements of bread and wine. So let's get into these briefly and then think again about children in Communion.

Swedenborg understood unleavened bread to correspond to God's divine love for us which is undefiled by false principles or falsified doctrines of the Word, as well as our reciprocal love for the Lord. Being a general symbol of all kinds of food, the correspondence of bread also contains our spiritual love for one another. Each person will have somewhat unique perceptions about the spiritual feelings and ideas associated with bread. Thus, during Communion the participant is guided by a minister to be in touch with these deep and wonderful truths, and how swallowing the bread symbolizes our need to internalize God's love for us and our love for God. It is clear to me that children can basically grasp the centrality of love in Communion.

Christ also said that we should "Do this in remembrance of me." Thus, the glorified Lord Jesus Christ, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is within the Holy Supper. His presence and the regeneration-boosting power of his redemption are in it, which his life and death on Earth procured. Swedenborg wrote, "That the whole of the Lord's redemption is in the holy supper . . . , since where the Lord is wholly present there also is his whole redemption . . . consequently all who approach the holy communion worthily become his

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redeemed . . . These fruits are ascribed to man . . . to the extent that man receives; and he that receives is redeemed in the degree in which he receives."³ One seven-year-old boy in my church has said that he knows that the Holy Supper is about the Lord and his meal on Earth. However, he is not able to grasp the issues around redemption as Swedenborgians define it.

Wine corresponds to the truths of the Lord's Word, which in some level of awareness are willingly desired to become evermore part of the person's life and inner growth. Christ referred to this cup as his new covenant sealed in his blood. Again there is reference to the redemption effected by his victory over all temptation through his blood and death, and also to "covenant." Swedenborg noted that covenants refer to, in part, things in life where a conscious mutual signing and seal are established—where a relationship is solidified concretely. This assumes, therefore, that a person is capable of making decisions on their own, without being overly swayed by another's view. This raises the question, "Are children capable of doing this?"

For Swedenborg, entering Communion is a deep and powerful ritual. A person needs to come to it with preparation, examining one's self to find any sinful qualities with the intent of shunning them. Also, he discussed the seriousness of the participant coming with the choice of recommitting herself to being a Christian. For when we take into us the Lord's "body" we are choosing to want His body, heaven and the church, and divine love and truth, to enter our own. Thus, there is a reference here to a person wanting a full commitment to the Lord and his church. He noted that all of the holy good and true things of heaven and the church are contained within the Holy Supper. Therefore, having some kind of grasp of such things helps one to feel the sacredness and holiness within this sacrament.

It is clear to me that Swedenborg's view on children in Communion is that they be kept from doing it until they are mature enough to deeply realize what it signifies, and the power and truth it contains. However, it is also true that he never did come out and state it unequivocally. The clearest view I have found is in *True Christian Religion* where he wrote in reference to the two universal gates of Baptism and Communion:

They may be likened also to a son born to a great inheritance, in that he first learns and is imbued with such things as pertain to the proper management of possessions and riches, and secondly takes possession and control; also to the building of a house and dwelling in it; also to the course of a

man's instruction from childhood until the period when he becomes independent and exercises his own judgment, and his subsequent rational and spiritual life. One period must needs precede, that the second may be attained; for without the former the latter is impossible.⁴

Other Swedenborgian ministers have said to me that they think Swedenborg does not come down clearly on this issue of children in Communion. Perhaps they refer to when Swedenborg wrote that not all Christians come to Communion with an awareness of the deep truths contained within its correspondences, and that even the simpleminded who see it basically as a spiritual meal, a love feast with God and others, will be regenerated by it when they come to it with unselfish intentions. In such situations, Swedenborg did suggest that such people ". . . think within...[themselves]. . . of the holy supper as the holiest thing of worship, and to call to mind Christ's passion, and his love for man's salvation . . ."⁵

I myself have been torn at times about it, and am still open to seeing it differently than I do now. At this point I believe that only those who have been confirmed into the Christian religion should be allowed to partake, and that an open invitation to people just prior to celebrating Communion conveying this view is very appropriate.

In short, I believe that God's kingdom is made up of love and truth, compassion and limits. The Holy Supper is the

Lord's crowning example of a ritual and sacrament where it seems to me that both heart and head need to be conjoining. Children are part of God's church family, and should be offered participation according to the level of their development, maturity, and comprehension. For me, the Holy Supper is the holiest aspect of worship. It represents the ultimate in our connection and commitment to the Lord. This level of connection in my mind

is too great for children to grasp. At the same time, I respect those of you who see this differently. Let me also acknowledge that, of course, we adults do not always enter Communion with holy intentions. Sometimes our spiritual preparation is substandard. One complaint I have heard about children in Communion from people in our denomination is that sometimes they do not take it very seriously. Are not we adults guilty of this sometimes too?

Another member of General Convention also brought up to me that since children are able to be in a spiritual state of innocence, shouldn't we allow them to have the opportunity to seek the Lord in their lives in this most holy of ways? Perhaps. What do you think?

I see now that children can be involved in a Communion service without being expected to partake of the elements.

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Heavenly Societies and the Earthly Church: A Closer Look

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churches, as communities, all too often fall far short of being such places. The communities which make up the Christian church as a whole are too often divided over matters of doctrine, morality, church practice, political issues, and of course personal conflicts. In spite of our vision of the heavenly community and how we are to prepare for it, our own church is no exception to the general rule. Our members agree on many things and disagree on many others—politically, ethically, socially, doctrinally, liturgically, and so on. Are we able, in spite of our differences, to learn from each other something of the heavenly life, something of charity and of faith? Is our church a place where we learn how to treat each other with loving kindness—not only learn in our heads what this involves but actually *practice* this love? Are our church council meetings, committees, administrative boards, and other bodies that are dedicated to the life of the church also mindful of the vision of the heavenly community? Is the church a place where we try our best, as we go about the business of this life, to listen to, understand, and love our neighbor—and a place where we feel listened to, understood, and loved?

If we overlook the fact that the next life will be lived in community with others who will not agree with us on all points, it is too easy to imagine that our communities in this life could not possibly bear any relation to those in the next. After all, how on earth are we supposed to get along with people with whom we disagree on important points? Won't all of the problems we have with each other disappear when we all find our proper societies in heaven? Not at all. Heavenly communities, we are taught, make up a single human form when taken together. If we take this idea as seriously as I think we ought, we come to some rather surprising conclusions. It's quite possible that in the next life, in the heavenly society that is perfect for me, there will be someone who is as different from me as the right hand is from the left, or as the foot is from the eye, or the liver from the heart. The model of our relationships within the church, then, is one of respecting differences and working together for the good of the whole, to dispose our differences 'so as to aspire most harmoniously to a common unity... and thereby to the happiness of all from each, and of each from all'.

Learning how to get along when we disagree is difficult—but we should not be tempted to think that it is not religiously important. It is very much a learning process, and our church communities are places where we learn by doing. We need, for the heavenly community to become a reality, to be good listeners, careful speakers, respectful in our communications, concerned about the effects of our words, and in spite of our disagreements, concerned for each others' happiness and well-being at least as much as for our own. We may feel ourselves justified if we cause offense while trying to serve the good of the church; but justified or not, we are not serving the church's true interests by doing so. We may

feel justified in taking offense at the careless words of another, but again, the church suffers, as do our fellow church members, when we do. The church fails in its earthly and heavenly mission to the extent that relationships within it are consistently characterized by hostility and confrontation, *regardless* of the issues at hand.

My experiences in the church have been, as I suspect those of most members have been, at times tremendously inspiring and filled with the sharing of genuine love, and at times frustrating and disillusioning. Our theology teaches us that we are here to learn from both types of experience—to follow the path indicated by the first and to shun the second. May we, as children of God called to be in loving community with each other, follow his leading together as his people.

Andrew Dole is a member of the Cambridge Society of the New Jerusalem and a graduate student in Religious Studies at Yale University. ♦

*We wish all fathers a
very happy day, filled
with joy and above all a
day filled with love.*

Between friends:

**"I can't come over to your house
tomorrow. It's Father's Day and I have
to stay home and play with my Dad."**

DADS

**God made dads
for playing with,
jumping on,
talking to,
smiling up at,
getting tickled by
. . . and for
loving lots
and lots
and lots
and lots
and lots!**

*And congratulations
to all grads and newlyweds!*

Children In Communion: Have You Thought About It?

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In my church we still want children to be present as the Holy Supper happens, thereby allowing them to soak up some of the holiness happening there if they so choose. Also, the minister may offer a special blessing over and or anointing with the children as part of their own unique part in it all. Scripture does clearly tell us that Jesus blessed little children. It does not state clearly whether or not children were present at the Last Supper. If that meal was in fact a Passover meal, then theoretically children could very well have been there. Kids play an active role in Jewish Seders.

I am glad that there is enough ambiguity in Scripture, and in the ways people interpret Swedenborg, to uplift the importance of each person making up his or her own mind. I agree with Swedenborg that the Holy Supper is the most holy thing in worship, and therefore I strongly feel that every aspect of this sacrament and ritual needs to be thoroughly thought through—including what role children continue to play.

For those of you attending our annual convention in Florida this summer, I will be presenting a mini-course on the subject of the Swedenborgian view of Communion. I would be very open to discussing the role of children in it at that time or any other time convention is in session.

¹An excellent treatise may be found in Swedenborg's work, *True Christian Religion*, m. 698-752. The late Rev. Brian Kingslake wrote a nice summary of his interpretation of Swedenborg's ideas in his book, *Inner Light: Swedenborg Explores the Spiritual Dimension*, 129-138. Both works are available through the Swedenborg Foundation.

²John 6:25-58

³TCR, n 717

⁴n.721

⁵TCR n. 709

The Rev. Kit Billings is pastor of the Virginia St. Church (Swedenborgian) in St. Paul, Minnesota. ♦

Swedenborgians Online!

If you are online and want to get in touch with other Swedenborgians online, please send your email address to the Rev. Lee Woofenden at leewood@tiac.net. He maintains an informal list of (mostly) Convention email addresses that he shares with others on the list.



BRIDGEWATER STEEPLE TO BEGIN

Larry Conant, moderator of the Bridgewater church, has gotten word from Sprint PCS that the material for the Bridgewater church steeple has been ordered. Construction is expected to start June 7 and be completed by July 21.

Swedenborg Meets Handsome Lake

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sachems (leaders of chiefs), and among the leaders of the Iroquois Confederacy. He was also recognized as a religious and moral leader. He may have been responsible for the first widespread sobriety movement in Indian country. The question of community recognition does not afford an adequate basis for comparison.

Both Swedenborg and Handsome Lake partially fit the model of the person who becomes an Indian ritual specialist. Both met two of the preceding four stages of experiences. Each received a vision with obligations and were recognized by their communities. Neither consulted a ritual specialist nor underwent formal training. Naturally, they were from different cultures, so any similarity would be general. "Indian" is too abstract a term, considering the hundreds of existing Indian nations. Also, I have described the process by which a contemporary Indian becomes a ritual specialist. Further, any theoretical model is going to have some exceptions. However, I believe that there is another, if obvious, explanation. Handsome Lake and Swedenborg were innovators. They had visions of the future that they could wed to the past. They were partly successful because both

the past and the future need each other to survive. The final irony is that they did not intend to start separate religious movements. Yet, each is represented in this time by organizations that carry forward their legacies.

1. The historical background for Handsome Lake and the Longhouse Religion can be found in Anthony F. C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York: Vintage Books, 1969).
2. Emanuel Swedenborg; *Swedenborg's Journal of Dreams*, 1743-1744, trans. J. J. G. Wilkinson, ed. William Ross Woofenden (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1986). pars. 51-54.
3. Chief Jacob Thomas, *Teachings from the Longhouse*, ed. Terry Boyle (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Company, 1994), 28. This is a contemporary English version of the "Good Word," or Code of Handsome Lake.
4. Ibid., 29.
5. Swedenborg, *Journal*, ibid.
6. Swedenborg, ibid., par. 60.

Adam Seward (Cherokee/Choctaw) is in his final year at Swedenborg School of Religion. This essay may be used in Swedenborgian church newsletters and sermons without special permission. 1998.

Iceland Diary

Editor's Note: In March we promised you a full report on Muff Worden's adventures in Iceland, and how she came to be there. She sent a long letter with photos, and her letter is excerpted below.

*I*t all started when Louise and her husband, Ned Heite, old friends from my Delaware years, discovered Iceland through an archaeological dig they were on in 1988. They fell in love with the country . . . and returned to the same dig the next summer. While they were there, Lou learned of a job in Seydisfjordur in which she was interested, applied for it and got it—then, with their daughter Kitty, took up residence in this town while Ned returned to Delaware. Lou has been here since, going home twice a year for a month each time, and Ned comes here for two long visits as well, one of which is centered around the wool camp that they developed and run each May, focusing on Icelandic wool (long fibres, wonderful quality) . . . knitting and weaving techniques from the old days to the present . . .

Since then these two have been trying to get me to come over to Iceland for a visit, a job, anything, knowing that I would enjoy being here and would get hooked on it . . . I have, in a big way. When Lou returned to Iceland this past summer she found that there was a vacancy coming up at the local music school due to the incumbent's upcoming maternity leave. She e-mailed her husband to get in touch with me right away, which he did. I sent over my credentials and waited, not really thinking I had a chance, since Iceland requires that schools recruit Iceland teachers first . . .

So I was surprised when I had a phone call, mid-August, saying that I had gotten the job but that I wouldn't be needed until November 1 . . . I doled out my worldly possessions to storage or friends and family, went to Boston for the last two weeks of October to sing one last concert series with Handel & Hayden Society, did one last load of laundry at SSR, and a day after the last concert I was checking in at Icelandair at Logan Airport with three very heavy bags, my harp, and kitchen sink . . .

Yup, a real, honest-to-goodness stainless steel double kitchen sink with all the fittings, which Ned Heite shipped to me from Delaware so that I could bring it along to Lou, who is building a new kitchen in her house.

Within minutes of my arrival, Maria, the lovely and lively young Englishwoman who married the local customs agent, Johan, (and whose job I would be taking over) came visiting to

give me the lowdown on what I would be doing, which included teaching not only piano, organ and singing, but also recorder, clarinet and accordion. I would also cover her job as organist and choir director at the local church, Lutheran . . .

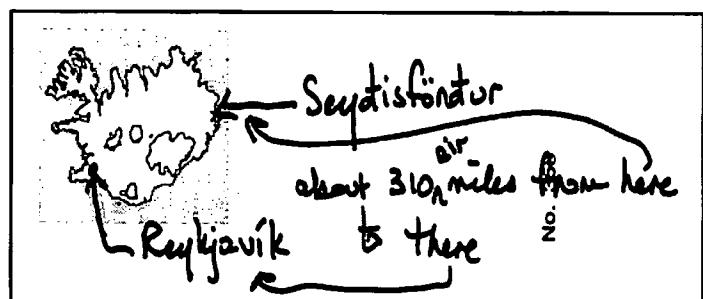
I am teaching on a fulltime schedule and have students who range in age from about 7 to the mid-40s. The church choir is wonderful, the youngest member being about 20 (though she will be joined shortly by a 15-year-old, one of my voice students) and the oldest in her 60s somewhere . . . the organ is an absolute gem of a small Baroque instrument of about 20 ranks of pipes, built in 1990 by Frobenius, an Iceland organ builder. Kristin, the priest, is also one of my voice students, for her own fun and also because the services are very liturgical, and the priest has to sing the mass! She has a very pretty voice and is very musical . . . everyone in Iceland sings at the drop of a hat, and loves to sing together . . . The people of this town are wonderful, warm and welcoming, and very patient and helpful with my attempts to learn Icelandic as fast as I can, since I need to communicate . . .

Seydisfjordu is a lovely little town of about 700 cuddled around the head of the fjord of the same name, which makes a couple of little twists in its about-12-mile length eastward from here to the North Atlantic. We are just short of 66 degrees north latitude here (a tad farther north than the southern tip of Greenland), and are just a couple of fjords north of the eastern-most point in Iceland. The town is a working harbor for part of the Icelandic fishing fleet . . . and for the summer huge car ferry to the Faeroe Islands, Norway, Denmark and Scotland, and has several major businesses including a ship-building and repair yard, machine shop, fish freezing and fish meal plants, a salmon farm, 200-bed hospital (it has to be that large in case there might be an epidemic on the ferry), two grocery stores, several other businesses and firms, two print shops, the primary and high schools a community center, one hotel . . .

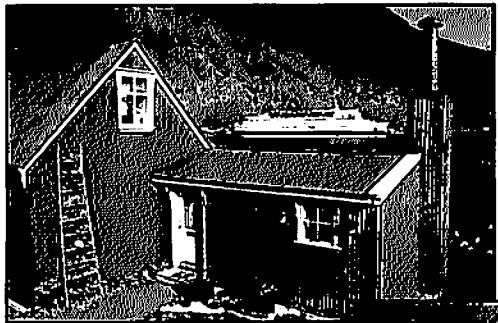
The next town, 25 kilometers away, is Egilsstadir, where the nearest airport is, as well as the "ring road" which encircles Iceland. Reykjavik is a 10-hour drive straight through-about 500 miles by car, about 300 miles as the crow flies over the interior lava desert . . . this is a very volcanic country with several active volcanoes . . . My town is surrounded by 3000-foot extinct and heavily-eroded volcanoes, with the lava dikes creating near-vertical cliffs in many places, and with lovely tall and slender cascades of water spilling over the edges. Because we are at the head of the fjord, which runs almost due north-south just here, and because the hills are so high on the south side, the town doesn't get direct sun from about the day after I arrived at the end of October, until about the middle to end of February. But we do get wondrous peachy sunlight on the snow high on the peaks of our hills, and reflected light from the water surface . . .

I am loving being immersed in music full-time once again . . . I love looking out my music school studio window across the road to the fjord, where a large harbor seal comes daily to his special rock, to belly-balance and flex his flippers as he watches for fish dinners swimming by, and keeps an eye on the gulls, ducks, geese and guillemots who are doing the same . . .

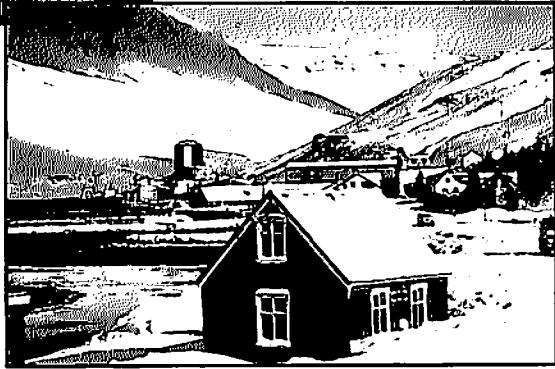
Muff's e-mail address is: muff@eldhorn.is



(Photo left) *The Norraena*, seen over Vinna Minni's roof. Houses here are so colorful! Cast iron is the material of choice, since all building wood is imported, expensive, etc.



(Photo right)
Looking down the fjord toward the fish freezing plant, town office, et al, with a 300-ft trawler in dock. "Vinna Minni" (Little Job), across from music school, in foreground.

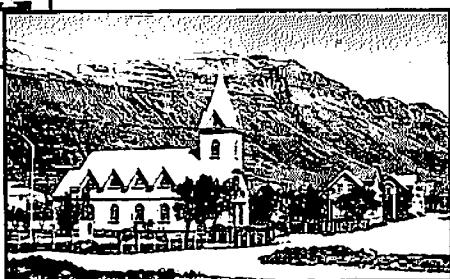


(Photo left)
The 550+ foot container ship coming into the dock for its bi-weekly visit.

(Photo right) The house I share (car too) with Louise Heite and Kara the retriever.



(Photo left) The music school (Tónlistarskóli, in Icelandic)



(Photo right) The church where I am organist, choir director - Lutheran (State Religion), with woman priest.

BOOK REVIEW

Tuesdays with Morrie

by Mitch Albom

Published by Doubleday, 1997; (192 pages)
Reviewed by Ann Graber Westermann

Although Swedenborgians have had an insider's view on the subject of death, dying, and life beyond the veil that separates the natural world from the world of spirit, it is good to see that the subject is being explored by others these days.

Tuesdays with Morrie is a beautiful little book with the subtitle: *an old man, a young man, and life's greatest lesson*. It is a chronicle of conversations between a dying man, Morrie, and his young friend, Mitch. The two had first met nearly twenty years ago when Mitch Albom was an awkward young freshman at Brandeis University and professor Morrie Schwartz took a special interest in him. They go their separate ways after graduation, but rekindle their friendship during the last months of the older man's life. The old professor shares his love and wisdom with the power that comes from an inner knowing with his young friend.

Their conversations take place on Tuesdays. The topics cover a wide range of subjects, among them: the state of the world, our culture, marriage, family, emotions, the fear of aging, how love lives on, forgiveness, saying goodbye, being ready to move on, experiencing profound peace, and wanting to cross over the bridge.

This easy-to-read book of inspired insights warms the heart and touches the spirit. The mentoring alone makes *Tuesdays with Morrie* a gem because there is so little of it in our culture: of the old passing things of lasting value on the young; and the young being receptive to it. Morrie becomes the elder, the mentor, we all wish we had had.

Ann Graber Westermann is a member of the Church of the Open Word (Swedenborgian) in St. Louis, Missouri. ♦

WASHING DISHES

eli dale

Here's my dilemma. I am a *big* fan of truth (and, not surprisingly, highly skilled in rationalizing, but that's another topic). What I believe to be true leads me to a conclusion about a certain topic or person. This conclusion feels like a truth to me, being based on truth (as perceived by me, but I'm pretty strenuous). Eventually, though, I have to wonder how true these derivatives can be, given that something is true only if it comes from an affection for good.

Examples: On the one hand, I may have a really wonderful experience with someone and, through a series of inferences, come to the conclusion that I am in the company of a saint. It goes something like: this feels good, the other person indicates this feels good, it must then be good; it must be love and the other person must be lovable. But is this true? Is it based on the affection for good or on the affection for *feeling* good?

On the other hand, I may have a really bad experience, I can say "I was hurt," and that is true. "This person hurt me intentionally"—true for me based on a careful analysis of statements and behaviors I have observed. This person hurt me by lying; therefore he/she is a liar" seems a logical conclusion. This series of logical conclusions—truths—eventually has my blood boiling in righteous anger and furious judgment. I may feel like I have the truth (and we know sometimes the truth hurts), but I feel a long way from affection for good.

So where is the line?

Every morning, my husband washes the dishes. I have commented to him that it must be a nice ritual to start the day by submerging his hands into loving (warm) truth (water) to reclaim the usefulness of the utensils which help feed our souls. Well, one day I was washing the dishes, restoring the

utensils which, in the normal course of life, become soiled. And then I looked at the wash water: *Bleaaach! Gross!*

Wha'd'ya'know. Eventually, the loving truth we apply to the tools of living gets disgusting and we need to pull the plug. And the two things happen. That spoiled truth goes through pipes (spiritual journey) to the wastewater treatment plant, where it goes through a number of processes, mostly difficult and stinky, to be restored to clean water, released into the bay, eventually to rise to the clouds, rain, and someday return to the reservoir I use for washing dishes and we'll dance the dance again. Of course, it's not the same water molecules each time. Today's water probably was in Bangladesh previously and Venezuela before that. Truth takes long and transformative journeys on its way to our tap.

The second thing that happens is: the sink is now empty. And if I want to wash more dishes, I need another filling of wash water and I have the capacity to accept it.

I think about the many times when people have hurt me. The hurts come sometimes through not knowing any better, sometimes through clumsiness, sometimes through mean-spiritedness. Whatever the cause, whatever the intention, we all get the chance to get hurt by other people. And I think about the difficulty I have in forgiving, especially when those people are people I felt I could trust deeply. And I come to the pivotal point of my realizing that washwater gets dirty. In remembering being treated cruelly, especially when it seemed an intentional betrayal, I will hold tight to that "truth" for a long time. And this water, which I bathe in a lot over the time I remember and regret and rage, becomes completely disgusting. What's worse, I am trying to bathe wounds in that water and reinfecting myself repeatedly. It's clearly past time to pull the plug and let this cold and dirty truth go on its journey to getting clean. And as I do, I perforce create capacity in my life for unpolluted

truth, which will then serve me to restore the tools of daily living. (The sink never stays empty for long.)

It is only as I release my dirty, tired truth to processing that it can return to the planetary life system and ultimately end up on someone's well (in Afghanistan). I wonder about this processing—is it my work or does God have a sewage plant operator's license? (I hope so). Back in the kitchen, I scrub the sink, cleaning the tools that clean. Everything always needs cleaning. It's like eating and breathing, restoring our utensils to usefulness is a constant necessity. I have a double sink, so I need to scrub out both my mental capacity and my emotional capacity.

I know I haven't answered my fundamental questions: how can one discern what is truly true by finding the affection for good in it? We've worked a lot on this question in our small group worship with interest and we wrestled valiantly with relative truth vs. God's truth. For the moment, though, it's enough to know that eventually even truth gets tired and eventually the love seeps out of it; and it goes from useful to dangerously unforgiving unless we periodically pull the plug.

eli dale is a member of the Portland, Maine Swedenborgian Church.



Many people have been asking us what the Swedenborg School of Religion field program is really like. Those of you who attended SSR in the 1980s or before had a very different experience from today's ordination track student.

In part, this is because of a survey done ten years ago among members of the Council of Ministers about what they found most useful in SSR for their ministries. The overwhelming response was that more work in the practical skills of ministry was needed. Currently SSR is undertaking a new survey that includes input from the laity.

After the survey of ten years ago, a considerable number of new programs were added in field education. Today, SSR has more required field work than most other seminaries!

You may hear SSR students throwing around lingo like "SCE's" when they talk about their field experiences, so it might be helpful to see an overview of the field education program. Let's take a hypothetical student named Mary Smith and look at her four years at SSR. In reality, many students come to SSR with considerable experience and are able to receive credit for parish work already done. But, let's assume Mary needs the full program.

YEAR ONE

During Mary's first semester, she'll meet with the Director of Field Education to assess her previous work in ministry and consider her strengths and areas where growth is needed. We encourage students to focus their field work on areas where they need to develop skills rather than those areas in which they are already strong. Mary will look at a range of parish sites in the Boston area, both from our denomination and a few select churches from other denominations. Discussions will be started with the minister of the parish involved, and a learning agreement will be put together. If the parish does not have a minister, or has one who has not been out of seminary long enough to be a supervisor [or hasn't yet gone through an approved training program], then she will also work with an off-site supervisor for theological reflection. This supervisor has been through a supervisory educational program. Mary will write a reflection each week about her work and submit it to her supervisor. They will meet for an hour to process her growth in ministry. She will also meet regularly with the on-site minister to plan services and other tasks that she will do. Starting in the fall of 1998, Mary will meet with a group of lay people, a Teaching Parish Committee, for further reflection and feedback on her work. Each week, Mary will meet for an hour with fellow students at SSR doing field work that semester for a "debriefing" during which students share their written reflections with each other. Twice during the year, written evaluations will be done by Mary, the supervisor, and the T.P.C.. These are kept in a confidential file at SSR and are shared only with the Committee on Admission to the Ministry with the student's permission.

Mary will be in this parish for ten hours a week from late fall until late spring, doing a wide variety of tasks to become familiar with the ministry role.

During the summer after the first year, Mary will be in C.P.E. [Clinical Pastoral Education]. Typically, this program is for twelve intensive weeks. Generally, it is held at a hospital under a trained C.P.E. supervisor. Mary will be a student chaplain while also being in an intensive group with her peers. The students take turns sharing "verbatims"—written dialogues they had with patients—and will be critiqued by their peers and supervisor. Usually, it is an experience of deep personal growth.

YEAR TWO

In the fall of her second year, Mary will start her Community Component. This is a local site that serves the community and is outside of the church structure. Often, students work in homeless shelters, soup kitchens, or hospice centers. This program is also for ten hours a week. Mary will continue in the field education debriefing at SSR and will be evaluated twice during the year.

The summer of her second year is a busy one. During the term of late April into June [six to ten weeks], she will be in a Swedenborg Center Experience [that well-known "SCE"!]. This is an intensive experience outside of the New England area, so that the student can gain a broader perspective on the church. Mary will have developed a learning agreement with the Director of Field Education and the local minister during the winter months. The church will provide housing for her, and she may stay with several different parishioners during her time there. She will work at least 40 hours a week, shadowing the minister and getting a feel for daily life in ministry. She'll be expected to preach sermons, attend board meetings, and do pastoral care as well. She'll write two reflections each week and have two supervisory sessions each week as well as meeting with her T.P.C. Generally, the Director of Field Education makes a visit during the time to meet with the student and supervisor.

In early June, Mary may have a couple of weeks to rest before attending the annual convention. She attends as part of her field work requirement at SSR and is expected to be present for all Council of Minister meetings as well as other major events of the convention program. She attends two debriefing sessions with the Director of Field Education and other SSR students during the week. During the rest of the summer, Mary will attend two different Swedenborgian camps, serving as a teacher or dorm parent or in whatever capacity is needed. Each camp experience requires a learning agreement, a supervisor, and a written evaluation. SSR is currently exploring the idea of offering

(Continued on page 92)

Field Education at SSR

Wilma Wake

Field Education at SSR *(Continued from page 91)*

students the option of substituting work at one youth retreat for a camp week.

YEAR THREE

When Mary returns to SSR in the fall, she begins the first of a two-year field education placement. She goes into a local parish with a learning agreement designed to hone particular ministry skills as well as give her an on going project that she can develop over two years. This program is designed to give students a feel for the pace of project development in parish life. She will work there from September until April each of two years. Again, she will write weekly reflections, meet with a TPC committee, and also meet weekly at SSR for field education debriefing. Again, she will be evaluated twice during the year and will work ten hours a week.

During the spring she will do her second SCE experience at a church center outside of New England. During the summer, SSR does not require her to attend convention, but generally the Council asks her to attend in order to present a Vision of Ministry for them to take a vote. They must approve this vision prior to ordination, and it is generally submitted at the end of the third SSR year.

YEAR FOUR

During her fourth and final year, Mary will complete her second year of the two-year field work requirement. The spring will be a busy time, since she will have taken the comprehensive exams in the late fall. Assuming she passed, she will be candidating and visiting parishes that wish to consider her as a potential minister.

In the spring, she will finally have completed her field work at SSR! She will have been doing field work during four academic years, will have done two intensive field placements outside of New England, will have done two camps [or one camp and one youth retreat], a convention experience, and an intensive experience of C.P.E.

By way of comparison, Andover Newton seminary requires only one academic year of field work and C.P.E. for graduation! Our students are given one of the most comprehensive field education programs available in modern seminary life. We are still looking for ways to improve our work, however, and need your help.

How can you participate in the field education of SSR students? First, you can fill out the questionnaire that you will soon receive in the mail to offer your thoughts on SSR programs. Secondly, you can attend the mini-course at convention on preparing for Field Education Students. The mini-course will talk about ways you can develop a teaching parish program at your center to work with SSR on field education.

So if SSR students look a bit bleary-eyed at convention, you'll have some idea of how much field work they are doing! This, of course, does not address the four years of academic work they do at the school . . . but that's another article!

The Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake is associate Professor of Practical Theology and Director of Field Education at the Swedenborg School of Religion.



Editor's extended note on the Alligator Question

(Continued from page 82)

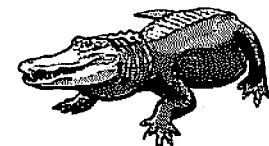
quota system operating here, enforced by the Gator Patrol (the ones with the green arm bands that say *Gator Aid*). Boaters are off-limits unless the swimmer quota hasn't been reached that year. Only two incidents a year allowed, or something like that. So the majority of them abide by that and are content. There are lots of other things to eat, but swimmers are a delicacy, the filet mignon of the food chain. Regulations state that boaters have to wear orange life jackets, which are incredibly tough to chew and indigestible. Any gator caught with a half-chomped boater in his jaws is easy to spot and is then subject to a heavy fine and possible imprisonment.

So the hard-core professional criminal element, which is always a small percentage of any population, has figured out a way to beat the regulation. They work in teams of three. One comes up under the canoe and tips it over, and the other two are waiting to take everything down. They have figured out that if everything disappears very quickly—the boat, boaters, and life jackets—nobody can prove it was an Alligator Incident. It is simply one of those Mysterious Disappearances you read about. Vanished without a trace. They're especially fond of doing this sort of thing when a large convention is going on, because often the person isn't missed for days—everybody thinks Fred (we'll call him Fred) is off with another group on another junket. Nobody realizes he's gone until it's time to leave and turn in the key. The retreat staff is pretty upset, because nobody but Fred can come up with the key or the \$50 penalty charge for losing it. Then a serious search for the culprit begins, and by that time the trail is hopelessly cold.

Now the obvious solution to all this would seem to be, Don't Go Near the Water. But if you're up to speed on your alligator lore, you know that they can travel up to 60 miles an hour on dry land. I've had reason to run very fast on numerous occasions in my life, but I don't think I ever reached 60 miles an hour. The good news is that alligators have to get very warmed up in order to attain this speed. But I imagine the fire ants help with that. This fact needs to be checked out, possibly on the internet, but it's very likely they don't have a website, only web feet.

I have asked for hazard pay for Leesburg, and suggested that a blanket insurance policy be provided for everybody, which contains, of course, an alligator claws. (Not an alligator rider, that's a whole other thing altogether). Another alternative is to just be philosophical about all this and assume the likelihood of an Alligator Incident, and let Stephen Spielberg know in advance so he can send his second unit people down to film it. Could result in some spectacular footage.

With that off my chest,
See you at convention!



Patte LeVan

How it Works

Many of the churches and other organizations that fall under the umbrella of the General Convention have chosen to make investments in the Swedenborgian Church Common Fund. Overseen by the Investment Committee, which is appointed by General Council, the Common Fund offers an opportunity for pooling resources and accessing expert financial guidance. All constituent organizations in the Swedenborgian Church are welcomed and encouraged to make investments in the Fund, which is best described as a form of private mutual fund.

The Common Fund has an interesting history. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, when Convention's presidents were Leonard Tafel and Franklin Blackmer, certificates were issued for stocks and bonds. Computer scheduling, program trading and index arbitrage were unknown terms in stock transaction. An unusually active market would occur when 20 million shares were traded in one day. Convention's investments were between \$2.5 and \$3 million. The treasurer's report in the convention *Journal of the Swedenborgian Church* listed the name of each stock, bond, or other investment, its market value, and the yearly income of each item. It was lengthy but easily understood.

These investments were under the supervision of an Investment Committee that for many years was the treasurer of Convention, Albert Carter, John Hart of New York, Winthrop Sargent and Philip Alden of Philadelphia. Sales and purchases were speedily made after consultations by telephone or letter. Certificates were issued and held by the treasurer in Boston.

Early in the 1960s, Stewart Poole, the vice president and, fortunately for Convention, knowledgeable in investing, conceived of and recommended to General Council that the investments of Convention be managed by a bank. This recommendation was approved by General Convention and became known as the Common Fund. The

Bank of Delaware in Wilmington became the first manager of the Fund. Most changes in holdings were referred for approval to the Investment Committee.

As the Common Fund developed, it was determined that many churches in Convention were in need of financial advice when investing funds. Subsequently, an invitation was sent to each church suggesting that help was available by becoming a participant in Convention's Common Fund. Pittsburgh was the first church to apply.

Later developments included a move from the Bank of Delaware to Mellon Bank as custodian, and the employment of Peirce Park Group to monitor the performance of the fund relative to standard benchmarks and to advise on other matters. With the help of Jerry Poole, an advisor to the Investment Committee, and Peirce Park, a more diverse group of fund managers was selected. The Investment Committee developed a policy which emphasized an asset allocation mix of domestic equities, fixed income investments, real estate, and international equities. Diversification also includes both growth and value management styles, and investments in various sectors. The diversification among investments protects the fund against major downturns in any one type of investment.

To participate in the Common Fund, an organization buys Common Fund units. These units can be bought and sold at the beginning of each quarter. At the end of each quarter, the market value for the entire fund is computed and a new unit value is established. A participating group can calculate the market value of its investment by multiplying the number of units held by the unit value.

Each participating group in the Common Fund receives a quarterly cash distribution. A recent change in policy established the rate that will be paid out for the year to allow organizations to more easily anticipate the cash flow they will be receiving rather than have it go up and down with changes in the stock and bond markets. The new distribution rate for 1998, expressed in

dollars per unit, is .30 per unit per quarter. The amount of the quarterly distribution can easily be determined by multiplying the number of units held by this figure. This distribution rate is used to compute the amounts received in January, April, July, and October of 1998. A 5.5% rate is higher than usual for funds similar to ours. Most foundations and pension plans limit distribution to 4.5% to 5%. A 5.5% distribution rate decreases the growth in market value of the Common Fund. It was set at this high rate because of the income needs of most of the participants. Participants needing additional funds can sell units each quarter by making arrangements through the Investment Committee.

In addition to the 5.5% distribution, the holders of units in the Common Fund have received growth in the amount of their investment. Combining the increase in the market value of the Common Fund with the 5.5% distribution results in the total return of the fund.

The Common Fund has sometimes been criticized for not performing well. This has usually been because people have been looking either at the 5.5% distribution or at the change in market value. Either one of those factors alone is not enough to evaluate the performance of the Common Fund. While there have been other investment opportunities from time to time that have out-performed the Common Fund it has consistently performed well, and has protected investors in the more difficult periods. The total returns for each of the last five years were: 1997 : 17.8%; 1996 : 14.7%; 1995 : 16.0%; 1994 : -5.3%; 1993 : 15.8%.

For more information on the Common Fund, please contact any member of the investment Committee (John Perry, chair; Polly Baxter, Barb Boxwell, Larry Conant, Ad Liebert, Mary Kay Klein), or Jerry Poole, advisor to the Committee.

The Investment Committee

OPINION

Inclusive Language

To the Editor:

The major outcome of these discussions is that it is really very hard for the writers to let go of the idea that *he*, *him*, and *his* are always masculine pronouns just stretched to do some extra duty with mixed groups. Every letter in response to my defense of standard usage (November 1997 *Messenger*), indicates that a second, independent rule for these pronouns is actually unknown. Only one rule is known, the one that makes *he*, *him*, and *his* masculine. If that is the only rule for these pronouns, then there is no alternative - we must try to find ways to not use these pronouns at all except when we need to refer to males.

But all the efforts to do that, to invent new pronouns that refer without gender implications to just anyone, show how awkward the language can become when it is driven to the edge. People have thought of using plurals that remain neutral toward gender, even when the subject is singular. New expressions have been invented, such as the laborious *he or she*, or *he/she*, which mention the male first and do not suggest gender equality, *she or he*, or even *she/he*, which look like a mild form of reverse discrimination. Some solutions are more palatable but are then acceptable mainly on technical grounds. After all this, an aesthetic English style becomes more difficult to achieve. The movement is long on intentions and ideals, but still short on solutions, the things that would actually have to go into a publication like the Library Edition of Swedenborg and would affect its destiny.

An easy way to resolve the problem would be to open our dictionaries to the meanings of the root pronoun, *he*. There are two meanings for it and the related *him* and *his*. One is masculine; but the other refers to anyone, and that actually denies the use of these pronouns to refer to males only. That is, the two uses are mutually exclusive. To adopt one is to deny the other. Not all

TO THE EDITOR

of us have grammars, but a dictionary is just as useful in this case because the presence of more than one meaning for *he* is at the core of the issue, and dictionaries must list multiple meanings, if any. They must also cite rules that may be needed to clarify their definitions. All of the following dictionaries agree on the two major meanings for *he*, *him*, and *his*:

1. *Random House Dictionary of the English Language*.
2. *Random House Webster's College Dictionary*.
3. *Oxford English Dictionary*.
4. *American Heritage Dictionary*.
5. *Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary*.

These are the major popular dictionaries, except for the Oxford, which is very scholarly. The dates for the editions I could get my hands on range all the way from the sixties to 1997. I found no exceptions to the double use for *he* and its derivatives. In two instances a comment was appended that there is some criticism that these pronouns in general contexts are sexist, but these dictionaries don't take a stand or evaluate the claim. From their point of view, the inclusive language movement had evidently become strong enough to be noted, but not strong enough to change the rules. We should look at the most modern editions in order to be more certain, but sanctioned usage does seem to remain traditional.

There are also some popularly written but privately produced grammars and style guides that do recommend "inclusive" language, but they will also overlook the other rule for the use of *he* and its related pronouns.

People who use standard English are just as often as the rest of us defenders of gender equality. They merely see no

masculine implications in conventional references to mixed company, and they are then reluctant to join the inclusive language movement. There is no argument with the values in the movement. No one can quarrel with those values. The only arguments would be aimed at its concept of the situation and/or its own revisions.

When these pronouns revert to general applications, they change their meaning and no longer imply gender. The reader who knows about both rules naturally switches hats and recalls no masculine images. When people complain that some masculine imagery is being carried over, they are undoubtedly still thinking of just the one rule, that the pronouns are masculine, but that it is being stretched (illegitimately) to cover mixed company. That will sabotage the general rule and make these pronouns look like a masculine bias actually built into the language.

Context determines which rule should be applied. But Jonathan Rose quotes a passage in Swedenborg that seems to him to leave the context indecisive.

To reason about divine things, whether they are so or not comes from the reasoner's not seeing them from the Lord, but wanting to see them from himself (n. 219.3).

Does "himself" have enough context to determine which rule we should attribute to it in English? Yes, for the quote only makes a point about a type of reasoner. Anyone who is found conforming to that type would be the subject, unless the text adds more information about gender elsewhere.

Rose theorizes that our language emerged from a time when men dominated public life and that *he*, *him*, and *his* began as a bow toward males. But such theories ignore the second rule, which does not trade on gender. The biggest problem seems to have been early schooling.

Our concepts of English begin in grammar school, and it looks as though varied teaching in the early grades has been responsible for how we think about pronouns. It can be tempting for a teacher to repeatedly refer to *he*, *him*,

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OPINION

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and *his* as masculine pronouns in order to point them out in a quick and casual way. But that is not to put up a formal rule, and it can give a false impression. As is implied by the uniformity of our dictionaries, most people do notice the two rules.

The Library Edition of Swedenborg's works will be aimed at very sophisticated audiences who will be committed mainly to standard English. If we show the still rough styles of the inclusive language movement, we will shoot ourselves in the foot in the act of presenting it to them. The danger the Library Edition now faces is that it needs to be traditional enough to look scholarly and enduring at first impression so that it can more readily attract serious research by scholars; but it could be compromised instead by too many uncoordinated causes, each pushing it in a different direction.

Steve Koke



Inclusive Language

Dear Editor:

I completely agree with Ken Turley (Opinion, April 1998 *Messenger*) that we must use inclusive language in our translations of Swedenborg. Contrary to Steve Koke's views expressed in earlier letters, the use of commonly male pronouns to refer to both men and women is already helping to make most of our Swedenborg translations sound archaic. Beyond cultural practicalities, though, it is simply a matter of respect to include both women and men in the teachings of our church—just as Swedenborg originally intended. However, even though I would be willing to break the rules of grammar if it were necessary in order to include women in our translations, in my own translating of Swedenborg I have never needed to. Though English does not have third person singular inclusive pronoun (*he*, *she*, and *it*, in their various forms, are the possibilities) all the rest of the pronouns in English are inclusive: *I*, *we*, *you* (singular), *you* (plural), *they*. This gives us some choices.

The simplest way to make our trans-

lations of Swedenborg inclusive is to put his references to people into the third person plural. In a more modern translation, Ken's sample passage from *Arcana Coelestia* #6313 would come out something like this:

When people are being lifted upward to deeper levels, they move from crude sensory light into a softer light . . . They can be raised even farther inward, and the deeper they go, the clearer is the light they experience.

This avoids forcing "person" (singular) to agree with "they" (plural), which may become standard English in the future, but in the present still grates on many people's ears. This translation also avoids the impersonal "one."

In my own translations, I favor making Swedenborg even *more* personal by using the first person plural when translating his references to people:

When we are being lifted upward to deeper levels, we move from crude sensory light into a softer light . . . We can be raised even farther inward, and the deeper we go, the clearer is the light we experience.

(Continued on page 96)

THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH - STATISTICS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 1997

Associations	Churches		Ordained ministers			Authorized Lay Leaders	Members			# of delegates
	active	inactive	active	inactive	retired		active	inactive	total	
Canada	1	0	2	0	1	1	137	41	178	15
Connecticut	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	7	17	3
Illinois	5	1	4	0	0	0	137	61	198	15
Kansas	2	0	0	0	2	0	107	0	107	12
Maine	3	0	3	1	0	0	127	170	297	14
Massachusetts	5	2	8	3	1	0	201	45	248	22
Michigan	1	0	1	0	0	0	71	13	84	9
Middle Atlantic	3	0	4	0	0	0	120	49	169	14
New York	1	0	1	0	0	0	19	39	58	3
Ohio	3	2	1	0	0	0	62	30	92	8
Pacific Coast	5	1	5	3	3	1	268	0	268	28
Southeast	2	1	3	0	0	0	69	0	69	8
Western Canada	5	3	1	1	4	0	115	40	155	13
Societies										
Georgetown, Guyana	1	0	0	0	1	0	57	13	70	7
Bayside, NY	Did Not Report									
Church of the Little Grain										
Totals	37	10	33	8	12	2	1521	508	2029	175

OPINION

(Continued from page 95)

Now we're not just talking about "they"—those indefinite, spiritually enlightened people who must be out there somewhere. We're talking about *me*, the reader! I can be lifted up to deeper and deeper levels, and experience that clear light that lies deep within!

Though some people may say this is taking liberties with what Swedenborg wrote, I think it goes right to the heart of it. After all, if Swedenborg wasn't trying to reach out to us, his readers, and inspire each of us in our own spiritual growth, I have no idea why he wrote all those books. I firmly believe that when Swedenborg wrote about "a person" ("a man" in the old translations), he was primarily talking about the person (woman or man) who is now reading his book.

In my view, using inclusive language where Swedenborg refers to people is not even controversial anymore. In 99% of the passages in Swedenborg it is easy to do, it is standard English usage, it improves the readability of the translation, and it is closer to Swedenborg's original intent. When it comes to gender inclusivity, the most controversial and difficult area is translating Swedenborg's references to God. These would be much harder to make inclusive—and if we succeeded, we would risk the anachronism of making Swedenborg seem farther ahead of his time culturally than he actually was.

Lee Woofenden
Middleboro, Massachusetts



Rare Book Sought

I am trying to locate a rare book: *Voices from the Open Door*, by Margaret Scott Houts. If you have this book and are willing to sell it to me, please call Linda at (870) 933-0322. I have an answering machine.

Linda T. Thompson
531 E. Oak Street #7
Jonesboro, Arkansas 72401



Reiki Healing AT URBANA

On Easter Sunday, we were fortunate to have Wilma Wake officiate at the Easter Sunday service. Prior to that, Missy Sommer, Betsy Coffman, and I led a sunrise service outside the Harvey Chapel at Urbana University. Then followed the traditional potluck brunch at the church. Prior to the Sunday service, Wilma performed a baptism for Eric Hoffman's nephew, Christian. At the service, including children, we had 31 people.

The week after Easter, I was privileged to lead a Native American service which seemed to be well received.

Last week, Pat Sommer, Angie Studer, Carolyn Salyer (all of the Urbana church) and Susan Conner (a friend of Pat's from Yellow Springs) led us in a healing service. A part of that service involved the above-mentioned women offering Reiki treatments to everyone present. Angie is a Master, Pat & Susan are Level II and Carolyn is a Level I. The Reiki was well received by everyone and we feel that this may take place two or three times a year.

—Dick Sommer,
Urbana Church ♦



When Facing Medical Challenges

The following are some excellent and thoughtful guideposts for journeying through a medical crisis, written by Episcopal priest, the Rev. Thomas C.H. Scott, after a personal ordeal in his family:

1) Pray for grace and strength to face what's ahead in the way that's best for the patient.

2) Ask questions. It is better to know than not to know. Make sure you feel as confident as you can in the doctor's office. Express your interest and concerns and seek full explanations.

3) It is better to be together than alone. Ask for help from friends and family, and also be clear about what would be helpful now and what might be better later on.

4) Take things one day at a time. What you know is limited and for the moment.

5) Be kind to yourself. These times are both anxious and boring. And stressful—so take care of yourself. Eat well, keep clean, get regular exercise and rest.

6) Find helpful advisors. It is good to talk and sort things through. Make use of chaplains, parish ministers, and each other.

7) Express your feelings. Everyone feels frustration, guilt, and anger. These are human. Express them among the healthy, not the ill or injured.

8) Patience. Healing and restoration take their own time and cannot be hurried. Don't set timetables or raise your hopes based on "best possible outcomes."

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Who Was Lydia S. Rotch?

Alice B. Skinner

When Lydia S. Rotch died in 1863, she left \$15,000 "for the benefit of the General Convention of the receivers of the doctrines of the New Jerusalem in the United States." Her will directed that the legacy be administered by four trustees: John H. Wilkins, Sampson Reed, and Peleg W. Chandler of Boston; and Theophilus Parsons of Cambridge. Because Mr. Wilkins died before Mrs. Rotch, three trustees took up the duties of directing the use of the Rotch Legacy and appointing their successors. Several generations later we three trustees, Walter Chapin, Gardiner Perry, and Alice Skinner, are their successors.

Realizing that we knew almost nothing about the donor of the fund we administer, we decided to see what we could find out about Lydia S. Rotch. We knew only that she died in Boston at the age of 80 and that she was blind in her later years. How did she happen to have such a large sum of money at her disposal? How did she learn about Swedenborg?

"It would help if you knew what the S. stood for," said my librarian brother, Hugh Blackmer, who discovered two books about a Rotch family. Would they be about Lydia's Rotch family, I wondered as I waited for the books in the Boston Public Library? *The House of Rotch: Massachusetts Whaling Merchants, 1734-1828*, suggested a possible source of Lydia's money but did not mention her. However she did appear in *The Rotches* by John M. Bullard, where I learned that the S stands for Scott and that Lydia Scott Rotch was the second wife of William R. Rotch, Jr. [1759-1850], a merchant and banker who lived in New Bedford, Massachusetts and left almost a million dollars when he died at the age of 91. We don't know how much Rotch money Lydia inherited; possibly most of it was left to the three children living at the time of William Rotch's death, for they were involved in funding such venerable Massachusetts institutions as the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, the Blue Hill Observatory, and a Rotch library at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

From Bullard's book I learned that Lydia, born in 1782 in North Providence, Rhode Island, was a daughter of Job Scott, a Quaker preacher. When I had to spend a few hours at the Rhode Island Historical Society, I learned that Job Scott married Eunice Anthony in 1780. After she died in 1791 the Scott children lived with their Anthony grandparents, for their father was an itinerant preacher who traveled around Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and as far as Philadelphia. Along with many Quakers, he advocated the abolition of slavery. Was

that the cause that took Job to England and Ireland in 1792? There he met with Quaker groups and died of smallpox in Ireland in 1793. Job Scott must have been known and admired by many Quakers, for his journal was printed in New York after his death. It mentions his deathbed wish that his children have "a little more learning than some of them are in the way of; and although I do not wish much of this world's polish, yet it is ... my desire that they not be brought up with much rusticity, for this I believe has not very often contributed either to civil or religious usefulness." That the Quaker Meeting undertook to educate Lydia and her siblings is shown by records at the Rhode Island Historical Society of payments to schoolmasters by three trustees, William S. Rotch, William S. Rotch, Jr., and Moses Brown.

So it turns out that Lydia knew her future husband most of her life! Her obituary in the *New Jerusalem Magazine* says that she was invited to become a member of the family of William Rotch, senior, when she was 19. The only thing we know about her life until she married at the age of 47 is Bullard's description of her as a housekeeper for the family of Micah Ruggles in Fall River, Massachusetts.

William Rotch Junior's four living children had all left home and married by the time of his wife's death in 1828. Bullard says that Lydia Scott became his housekeeper and married him in 1829. At the time both she and her husband were affiliated with the Unitarian Church in New Bedford, Massachusetts for, according to Bullard, William Rotch, junior, had been expelled from the Quaker meeting for being "religiously liberal."

Dorothy Young found records showing that Lydia S. Rotch joined the Boston Swedenborgian Church in 1846. But how and when did she discover Swedenborg? Liz Balcom, archivist at SSR, found an answer to this question in Mrs. Rotch's obituary in the *New Jerusalem Magazine* for September 1863. Lydia learned about Swedenborg from her brother, James Scott, who discovered *Heaven and Hell* in a library and became so interested that he shared it with his sister. In 1835 James Scott joined the Bridgewater, Massachusetts Society which sponsored the church in Providence. Lydia was baptized in 1836, and joined the Bridgewater church in 1837. In 1842 James moved to Boston and transferred his membership to the Boston church, thus providing an explanation for why his sister Lydia felt connected to Boston.

I hope to learn more about Lydia S. Rotch. What was she like as a person? I imagine that progressing from being a Quaker to being a Swedenborgian indicated a degree of religious restlessness. Was her religious quest similar

(Continued on page 98)

I'LL NEVER FORGET WHAT'S-HIS-NAME

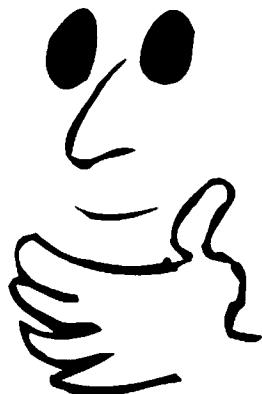
Eric Zacharias

One of the most fascinating features of our humanness is the facility for remembering. The reading that I have done related to this gift still leaves me puzzled. Why do we remember some happenings, for instance, and not others? What kind of gymnastics does the mind perform in this act of storing information?

How is it possible that we remember at all? This is the real enigma. How is it possible for the gray tissue that is brain, the blood vessels, the nervous system—all of which are material matter—to store for some future recall informational details, dates, a whole series of events—all of which are nonphysical?

I mean the fact that John, King of England, signed the Magna Carta on the plains at Runnymead in the year 1215 is something out of history class of more than 50 years ago. How is it that this piece of information—which, by the way, is not of much use anyway—is still locked up in my memory bank? A fellow by the name of Lessing asks, "How can such deep, imprinted images sleep in us at times, till a word, a sound, awake them?" How indeed!

Psychologists tell us that our memories go deep in the human psyche—into the subconscious. Emanuel Swedenborg writes, "...for every smallest moment of man's life involves a series of consequences extending to eternity." The English poet, Thackeray, agrees when he writes, "It is an old saying that we forget nothing... so we are stricken by memory sometimes,



and old affections rush back on us as vivid as in the time when they were our daily talk... they are part of our souls and so eternal."

The prophet Jeremiah of the Old Testament in recalling the calamities which have befallen him writes, "My soul has them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me.

This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope."

There surely can be little doubt that we might liken memory to a vast underground storehouse of "feeling" from which there flows a constant stream of influence that forms and shapes our personality.

At times we may be profoundly aware of the presence of this influence—responding openly to its joys and to its pain. Most often, perhaps, this influence may be more subtle, a kind of silent partner that shadows us as we walk our paths.

A philosopher whose name has escaped me wrote, "Memory is the cabinet of imagination, the treasury of reason, the registry of conscience, and the council chamber of thought."

Now, if I can just remember where I put the car keys.

The Rev. Eric Zacharies is pastor of the Swedenborgian Church in Pretty Prairie, Kansas, and editor of The Plains Banner.

Reprinted from the January 1998
Plains Banner.

❖

When Facing Medical Challenges

(Continued from page 96)

9) Tell the truth and listen to it. The ill and injured need to talk about what's happened and what is happening. These things are scary. So explain what you know, even to children (though on their level), and listen to what they say with an ear for their concerns.

10) Medicine is an art, not a science. Pray for doctors, nurses, and all those called to wait upon the sick and injured. They aren't God, and they don't do magic.

Reprinted from the San Francisco church newsletter, November 1996. ♦

Who Was Lydia S. Rotchi?

(Continued from page 97)

to that of other women of her era? What portion of the inheritance from her husband went into the fund we administer today?

Readers of *The Messenger* do not have to wait until these questions are answered to apply for funds from the Rotch Legacy. The income is available for programs concerned with ministries and with presentations of Swedenborgian thought. Funds may be used for conferences, research or publications which aim to make Swedenborgian ideas accessible through ministries, libraries, performances, conferences, exhibits, or other means. Talk to any of the trustees, or ask Alice Skinner to send you a copy of the guidelines for uses of the Rotch Legacy. Write to her at

HC61, Box 282-B,
Saint George, Maine, 04857

Alice B. Skinner is the president of the Swedenborg Foundation and is on the board of trustees of the Swedenborg School of Religion.

MINI-COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

(Continued from back)

Connections Between Reiki Healing and Swedenborgian Theology

Mona Diane Conner and Pamela Selensky, Level 2 Reiki Healers

What does an ancient Tibetan method of hands-on healing have in common with the Christian focus of Swedenborgian theology? What are the implications of this healing method, known as Reiki for us in the modern world? Join us as we discuss the spiritual qualities of Reiki healing, its possible connections with the Ancient Church, and what it can teach us about Divine Providence, prayer, and developing the intuitive side of our spiritual nature.

Those who have attended the Reiki mini-course previously are invited back for further discussion, and, especially if you have since been trained in Reiki, to share in administering the hands-on Reiki mini-treatments which all participants will have an opportunity to sample.

[Format: lecture/experiential]

Programs for Spiritual Growth

Resource People:

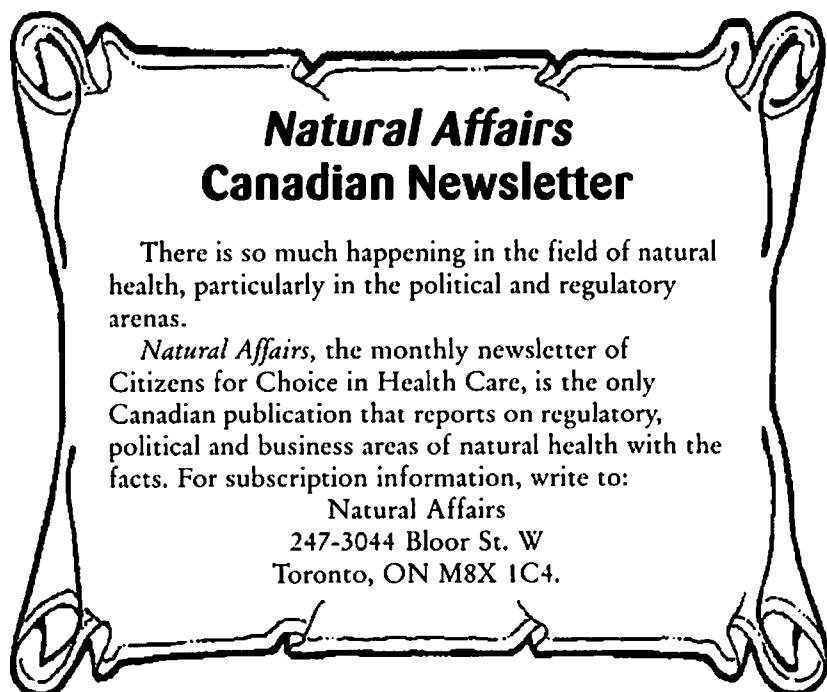
Rev. Paul Martin, Stone House (Swedenborgian Spiritual Growth Center), Redmond, Washington.

Rev. Nadine Cotton, Network, Center for Spirituality, Concord, New Hampshire.

Rev. Skuli Thorhallsson, Chrysalis Retreat Center & Garden Chapel, DeLand, Florida.

Rev. Ernest Martin, Temenos Retreat & Conference Center, West Chester, Pennsylvania.

[Format: Dialogue and Discussion] ♦



Natural Affairs
Canadian Newsletter

There is so much happening in the field of natural health, particularly in the political and regulatory arenas.

Natural Affairs, the monthly newsletter of Citizens for Choice in Health Care, is the only Canadian publication that reports on regulatory, political and business areas of natural health with the facts. For subscription information, write to:

Natural Affairs
247-3044 Bloor St. W
Toronto, ON M8X 1C4.

PASSAGES

BAPTISM

Wales—Campbell Reed Wales, infant son of Paige V. Carrier and Jason A. Wales was baptized into the Christian faith March 21, 1998, at the Fryeburg New Church in Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Ken Turley officiating. Godparents are Greyson Carrier and Kristen Stacy.

CONFIRMATIONS

Kartechner, Reid, Spiller, Thorpe—Bonnie Kartechner, Jim and Pat Reid, Sheila Spiller, and Sue Abson Thorpe were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church April 5, 1998, at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario, the Rev. Ron Brugler officiating.

Lowe, Rienstra—Jeff and Laurie Lowe, and Diane Rienstra were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church April 5, 1998, at the Church of the Open Word, in St. Louis, Missouri, the Rev. David Rienstra officiating. (The Rev. David and Diane were married at Church of the Open Word November 22, 1997. See *Passages*, February, 1998).

MARRIAGE

Latremouille & Egan—Tanya Latremouille and Peter Egan, both of East Bridgewater, Mass., were united in marriage March 28, 1998, at the Church of the New Jerusalem in Bridgewater, Mass., the Rev. Lee Woofenden officiating.

DEATH

Small—Bernice B. Small, 93, longtime member of the Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church in St. Paul, widow of the late Lewis S. Small, entered the spiritual world April 22, 1998 at Abbott Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis, Minnesota. A resurrection service was conducted at the Jones-Harrison Residence chapel April 27, 1998, the Rev. Kit Billings co-officiating with the Rev. Trevor Housske. Mrs. Small is survived by her grandnephew, Harold Yost.

Watt—Elaine Muriel Watt, a member of the Calgary New Church Society, entered the spiritual world February 6, 1998. She had been active in the church for the past five years. A memorial service was conducted February 12, 1998, by Sharon Reddekopp. Elaine is survived by her children, Robert, Jan, Gary, Georgina and Shelly. ♦



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.

MINI-COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

CONVENTION 1998 ~ LEESBURG, FLORIDA ~ JUNE 24-28

The Power of Service

Rev. Dr. Ted Klein

This course will relate Swedenborgian concepts to social issues, emphasizing a kind of power that can be called "the power of service."

[Format: Lecture/Discussion]

The New Church and the "New World"

Adam Seward

Brief overview of possible connections between Swedenborgianism and Native American religions.

[Format: Lecture/Discussion]

Mystery Play: The Christ Journey

Rev. Deborah Winter & Betsy Coffman

Experiential group enactment based on Jean Houston's book, GODSEED: THE JOURNEY OF CHRIST. Participants experience together "stories of Jesus' life, sharing as a "sacred journey."

[Format: Experiential/Sharing]

Images of Spirituality

Alice Skinner

We will focus on everyday spirituality and the images we use to deepen our experiences of relationship to the divine.

[Format: Sharing]

Organizing Your Congregation In Eco-spirituality and Eco-Justice

Bill Shakalis

What eco-spirituality and eco-justice is in theological perspective; how congregations can build involvement in worship, education, life-style changes and advocacy in ecological and religious issues; what the Environmental Justice Covenant Congregation Program of the National Council of Churches is all about.

[Format: Lecture/Discussion]

The Swedenborgian View of Communion: The Second Gateway into Heaven

Rev. Kit Billings

After looking first at the definition of "Sacrament" we will explore the roots of Communion in Scripture. Then the symbolism and correspondences will be explored at length.

[Format: Lecture/Discussion]

Preparing for Field Education Students

Wilma Wake

SRR Director of Field Education will provide information on how to prepare your center to be an official teaching parish with SSR for educating field education students. Don't miss this exciting opportunity for deepening your commitment to theological reflection!

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of North America
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