

THE MESSENGER

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Theodore Klein

From several articles in this series, you can see how, for Swedenborg and others, mysticism has gone with serving in the world. This article relates Swedenborg's mysticism and theological concepts with service, the central theme being the power of service.

When people are touched by mystical experiences, some challenging issues relating to power may arise. One response is to withdraw from the world and renounce power as earthly and in conflict with what is spiritual. Another response is to look for a kind of power which is different from any power involved in living in the world. The approach of Swedenborg and a number of other mystics explored in this series is to find a kind of power which makes a difference for good in the world.

We can describe power as the capacity to act, to have an impact, and to make a difference. Power is not good or bad in itself. Depending on what kind of power is involved and how that power is used, effects are good or bad, beneficial or harmful. The power of service involves acting, having an impact, and making a difference in ways that serve or benefit others.

Swedenborg's theology emphasizes a life of use, charity, or service. Mysticism can be understood as a path to awareness, understanding, and love of God. In Swedenborg's mysticism and theology, love of God is joined with love of the neighbor. God inspires and is conjoined with people through love of the neighbor, and people then love their neighbors from love of God (*True Christian Religion*, no. 457:3). People were created to love the neigh-

Swedenborg, Mysticism, and the Power of Service

bor, and people are in the enjoyment of this love when they serve the neighbor much as parents serve their children (*Divine Providence*, no. 275). The effort of God's love is like good human love, as in acting to benefit one's partner, being a friend to one's friends, loving one's children, or practicing charity toward neighbors (*Arcana Coelestia*, no. 8573:2). The movement of God's love and good human love is to benefit others, and this is evident in the power of service.

The power of service involves using whatever power is available to serve or make a difference for good. With the power of service, people seek the good of all, desire that all be free, and love nothing more than serving others (*Heaven and Hell*, no. 564; *Arcana Coelestia*, no. 1749:3; *True Christian Religion*, no. 400:8). With this power, people approach whatever positions of power they hold as ways of service (*New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine*, no. 72). Positions of power are not avoided or renounced, but are approached as providing opportunities to serve.

The power of service is vital in a

healthy community where there is interdependence of uses, and people contribute and receive. In a heavenly community, no one seeks to rule over others, and all serve others (*Arcana Coelestia*, no. 5732:2). With communities in the world, we can view each person as having unique talents which can benefit others and the community.

The power of service must take many different forms depending on what is needed. What is needed in one situation may be that people from a community work as a team in search of a plan that would most benefit the community. Another situation may call for restraint of a person who is threatening harm to others. In still another situation, what is needed may be nurturing of a person in a vulnerable condition to bring the person back to full strength.

The power of service is illustrated by loving parents who use their parental power for the benefit and welfare of their children. Health care workers who use the influence of their positions to serve and benefit clients are engaged in the power of service.

Also involved in the power of service are police officers who fairly enforce laws and act to protect citizens.

Ministers or lay leaders are involved in the power of service when they draw on their roles and



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Babes in Cyberspace

Well, folks, it's a done deal. Your late-entry editor at last has a shiny new computer, windows, E-mail, internet, all the toys the other kids on the block have been playing with for some time. Up and running. (Has it occurred to you that there's only a one-letter difference between run and ruin?)

The man who sold it to me spent three hours getting me connected to E-Mail and the internet here in Julian, and explaining some basics. Then, it turned out I wasn't connected right, so the internet man came out and spent three more hours reconnecting everything and explaining some more basics. I complained that my mouse was too fast and skittish, so he slowed her down. Then he fixed her so she left a mousetrail. That seems only right, after all, why shouldn't she fit in with the rest of the mice around here. Then I sent my first E-mail to Lee Woofenden, in response to his FAXed question some weeks back, "When are you going to get E-mail?!"

He was delighted and immediately invited me to visit his website on which he has set up a pictorial tour through the lovely old house he and his wife Patty bought in Middleboro, Massachusetts.

I E-mailed my internet man. "How do you visit a website?" "Just get into your search engine and type in the website address in the space provided." Yahoo couldn't find him, but AltaVista did, and soon I was being welcomed to Lee and Patty's house tour. The pictures of their house, yard, and all the rooms could be enlarged full screen as I wandered through. That was fun, but it got old after a while because nobody was home. Since Lee is one of the most technologically advanced people in Convention, I kind of hoped if I hung around long enough somebody might come down the hall and offer me some refreshments. I began to feel like an

errant guest who had come to the party on the wrong evening.

The night was yet young, so I E-mailed a few other Convention folks to let them know I'm here, then did an E-mail surprise attack on certain persons who hadn't met the *Messenger* deadline with their copy. Then I E-mailed my daughters, who were also excited that Mom had made this marvelous leap into modern times. Kelly, my younger daughter, E-mailed back to complain that my E-mail was dark blue and very hard to read. Had I colored it on purpose, she asked? I was flattered that she thought I had the skill to do anything on purpose except send it out. I called and left an SOS for my internet man. He E-mailed back: "Pull down the TOOLS menu, select OPTIONS, click on the SEND tab and click the button next to PLAIN TEXT." He went on to explain that sometimes the age of the reader makes the E-mail appear colored. Good grief, I thought, she's only 35. Then I realized he was talking about the *machine*. It's important to understand they're never talking about people, they're referring to *circuitry*. I followed his directions and E-mailed her again. "It is still dark blue," she E-mailed back. But she had discovered how to highlight it.

When my internet man had left after our first three-hour tutorial, he said, "Don't worry, you can't do any real damage, but it's *very* important not to turn off the computer until it's gone through the shut-down process." I knew that, because this big orange sign appeared on a black background saying, "It's now safe to turn off your computer." The computer obviously does NOT want you to believe that you can't do any real damage. It issues dire warnings, complete with jungle sound effects and deep yellow exclamation points. The computer wants you to think you may very well have the power to blow up Texas while you're fumbling around trying to bleach the color out of your E-mail. Be careful what you click for, you may get it. The other day I was typing in the text of an E-mail and thought I had simply pulled down a window to

obtain some further instruction. Instead of what I thought I'd called forth, everything disappeared. Then it asked, in effect, ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO DO THIS? I was being asked to make a life-and-death decision about a decision I didn't know I'd made.

Cyberspace may be one of the last frontiers where neophytes and complete idiots can wander around and muck things up without causing anything worse than what falls into the broad (very broad) category of minor inconvenience. This may not last as civilization makes its inevitable encroachment. At some point we may have to take a test, get licensed, and be accountable. Then the computer police, and of course the insurance companies, will get into the act. If you are arrested for mousicular manslaughter, you can be sure your rates will go up, even if you plea-bargain to the lesser charge of reckless clicking.

But what we're told we *really* need to worry about, right now, are the mainframe computers having their

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SPIRITUAL RECOVERY, A TWELVE-STEP GUIDE

BY GRANT R. SCHNARR

Reviewed by Janet Ashton Vernon

How fortunate we are that Chrysalis Books (the Swedenborg Foundation) has published *Spiritual Recovery: A Twelve Step Guide*. Originally published as *Unlocking Your Spiritual Potential: A Twelve Step Guide*, with only one reference to Swedenborg's writings, it is now available as Grant Schnarr intended it to be. This small book speaks volumes, clearly and succinctly, as it provides through many Swedenborgian references, a foundation for the twelve-step philosophy on a spiritual level.

Adapting the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, *Spiritual Recovery's* program outlines a nonsectarian path to spiritual progress. Schnarr points out that these steps, sometimes in other forms, have existed in many religions, philosophies and psychologies throughout the ages. Based on psychological and spiritual truths, they can be effective for all who desire to grow spiritually.

Applying these guidelines on a regular basis one will not only find a new sense of freedom from the power of destructive tendencies: guilt, fear, anger, resentment, and others; but opportunities for a new way of life will emerge. Through a spiritual awakening, greater awareness of others, themselves, and their God, joy and a new life will be created.

Central to this book are the quotes by Emanuel Swedenborg beginning with:

(The angels said) that they picture wisdom . . . as a magnificent and highly ornate palace into which one mounts by twelve steps. No one arrives at even the first step, they said, except from the Lord by conjunction with him; . . . also as one ascends, one perceives that no man is wise from himself but from the Lord . . . By the twelve steps into the palace of wisdom are meant good united to truth and truth united to good. (Emanuel Swedenborg, *Divine Providence*. (36^a))

Through Swedenborg quotes, Schnarr points out the underlying philosophy of each step and why the steps are so universally helpful for personal spiritual growth.

In chapter one, Step One, "We admitted that we are powerless over our destructive tendencies and that, when we followed them, our lives became unmanageable," Schnarr, speaking from his Swedenborgian theological orientation states, ". . . that we are inclined toward destructive behaviors of every kind, but that we have stored up within us many beautiful feelings and noble inclinations. Through our choices we determine which will predominate in our lives."

Through anecdotal examples the reader is helped to see his/her own destructive emotional and behavioral patterns and how, when a spiritual bottom is reached, we have an opportunity to come to see that only a power greater than ourselves can bring us to true sanity and order in our lives.

Then in Step Two, "We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could bring us to true sanity," Schnarr, with Swedenborg, defines spiritual insanity and brings in truth and good, again, wonderfully!

Throughout, Schnarr emphasizes self-responsibility, and learning a process of self-evaluation of our motives and destructive tendencies.

In Step Three, "We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him," he makes a much-needed point in a recovery program. That is, we need to let go of old ideas, old ideas of God, and keep the mind open when God presents himself to us now. Ultimately, for the first time in our lives we begin to perceive spiritual progress, we allow a higher power to guide our lives and sustain us as we make choices, take action and live life to its fullest.

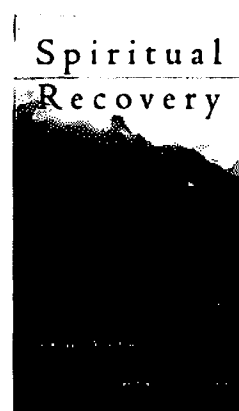
Through the twelve steps we are guided and encouraged to inventory our behavior, admit to God, ourselves and another person the exact nature of our wrongs, become entirely ready to have God remove our defects of character, remove our shortcomings and begin a new life. Also, to make amends, to do good, to be honest and faithful in all our affairs, and to walk humbly with our God.

Throughout, Schnarr emphasizes self-responsibility, and learning a process of self-evaluation of our motives and destructive tendencies. He knows what is essential, and often lacking, in a 12-step program: exercises for self-observation and group, or one on one, discussion focused on what individuals have learned from performing the exercises. At the end of each chapter are exercises specific to the steps. They are useful and usable, and if practiced on a regular basis a spiritual awakening will be experienced, and with it, a new higher power as our source of support.

A sense of total freedom, full self-determination, well-being and genuine happiness will be felt for the first time, and these new feelings will get better and better.

For readers who want to create a group to share their spiritual progress and support with others, procedural directions are provided at the end of the book.

I am grateful to have been asked to review *Spiritual Recovery*, and am admittedly biased. My path of recovery from alcoholism, which began in the early 1970s, has been one of spiritual growth opportunities. At that time a



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Preserving a Chapel

John Harrington



Swedenborg Chapel

Members of the Cambridge Society of the New Jerusalem have had reason to be concerned about the structural integrity of their house of worship, Swedenborg Chapel, for about eighteen months now. It was in September, 1996, that the Society first heard rumors that Harvard University intended to redevelop the block on which the Chapel stands. In subsequent months, these initial rumors were confirmed as representatives of Harvard communicated to municipal officials, leaders of neighborhood groups, and abutting landowners the plans for a new academic building on the site. The university stated, as a rationale for placing there a multistory structure with a total area of up to eighty thousand square feet, the need for a single center for all programs in government and international studies.

Residents from the surrounding neighborhood were not long in organizing a campaign to stop the construction of what will be called the Knafel Center (after the Harvard alumnus who has pledged fifteen million dollars towards this project). Cambridge Swedenborgians soon joined in the campaign individually and as members of the Chapel. It is not hard to see why both residents and the Cambridge Society have come together to make opposition to the Knafel Center a common cause. Both groups share a neighborhood at the edge of the Harvard campus known as Professors Row after the many period houses occupied in the past as private residences by Harvard faculty members. The Swedenborgian presence on the block where the proposed center is to stand goes back to 1889 when the Corporation of the New Church Theological School acquired most of the land as a permanent site for the denominational seminary (now called Swedenborg School of Religion). Swedenborg Chapel, properly the Church of the New Jerusalem, was erected in 1901 at one end of the new campus to serve both the seminary and the Cambridge Society. When most of the school grounds were sold to Harvard in 1966 upon relocation of SSR to its present campus in Newton, the Corporation retained ownership of the Chapel and the immediate surroundings.

The local community sees Harvard's expansion into (what's coming to be known as) the "Swedenborg Block" as destroying a residential neighborhood enviable for a high quality of life. If the Knafel Center is built, the scale of the block with its several well-preserved Greek revival houses will be destroyed along with precious open space. For the Chapel, the siting of so large a building close to existing boundaries may mean the loss of the natural light which streams so brilliantly through the high eastern windows of the sanctuary. Of course, the construction phase of the project would add greatly to the congestion and noise of this densely settled urban locale. The Chapel itself would

be subject to vibrations and other stresses emanating from underground excavation.

In light of this common threat, residents and "Chapel members have undertaken a variety of efforts to publicize the hazards that would stem from any new construction of the Swedenborg Block. Petitions and letters signed by upwards of 250 individuals have been presented to the president and other top administrators at Harvard. Local newspapers have regularly carried stories about the growing opposition. Along with increasing the visibility of neighborhood resistance, the Campaign to Stop Knafel Center as the ad hoc community group has come to be called, has also organized a committee of local attorneys. These lawyers have worked on a voluntary basis to find the appropriate legal mechanisms to prevent Harvard from receiving the necessary permits for its project from the city of Cambridge. The single most effective step to this end would probably be a citizens petition to the Cambridge City Council for a change in the current zoning map. Taking this action is under consideration at the present time.

Apart from the involvement of individual members in the Campaign as concerned residents themselves, the Cambridge Society through its council adopted by unanimous vote in January a resolution pledging support for the Campaign and its goal of preserving the block and the surrounding neighborhood from detrimental changes. The Society has implemented this resolution thus far in two ways: Swedenborg Chapel now serves as the host for the regular public meetings of the campaign, and the Society is helping to make a case for the designation of the entire Chapel, inside and out, as a local landmark. The city of Cambridge by local ordinance provides strong protection against any alteration for structures deemed historically noteworthy.

When the legal committee of the Campaign suggested that a petition be presented to the Cambridge Historical Commission for the purpose of gaining permanent protection for the Chapel as a landmark, the Society unanimously voted to support such a measure. Members of the Society have always appreciated the architectural distinction of their place of worship, combining as it does a pure English Gothic facade with a largely intact interior done in an authentic Arts and Crafts manner. Accordingly, almost all the members of the Society who qualified as registered Cambridge voters signed the petition filed with the Commission at the end of February. A preliminary public hearing on the worthiness of Swedenborg Chapel for landmark status will be held before the Commission on April 2. Lars-Erik Wiberg, president of the Society, and the Rev. F. Robert Tafel, the pastor, among others will testify in favor of the petition.

Harvard University presented a challenge to the Cambridge Society and its neighbors by proposing to build a disproportionately large building on a site suffused with significant local and New Church historical associations. For its part, the Society has turned this challenge into an opportunity to build new ties to its host community and to guarantee the continuation of the Chapel and its good works beyond the centennial observance in 2001.

John Harrington is an associate member of the Cambridge Swedenborgian Church and chair of its archives committee. ♦

The Swedenborgian Church's Nominating Committee has selected the following nominees as candidates for national offices in 1998.

VICE PRESIDENT

1 -year term

Chris Laitner

Michigan, Michigan Association

My earliest association with the Swedenborgian Church was through infant baptism. Yes, I'm one of those "born and bred"... My church upbringing was through the church of the Holy City, in Detroit, Michigan, where I participated in both junior and senior youth league activities, and attended Almont Summer School. I currently live in Midland, Michigan, and teach in Gladwin, Michigan, a small community some thirty-five miles north.

I hold degrees and teaching certificates in choral music, English and Latin, and am currently in my twenty-ninth year of teaching in public schools. At this point I am enjoying my first year as a full-time high school English teacher. I have previously taught K-12 general music; junior high music appreciation; junior and senior high choirs; junior high remedial reading; and high school English and Latin. This is the very first year that I have remained entirely in one building and in one classroom; it is a wonderfully "centered" experience. I am in my fifth year as the English Department chair for Gladwin High School.

Over the years, even though I am an outstate member and rarely get to the Royal Oak Swedenborgian Church, I have remained active at the association and national levels of the church. I have served several terms as an officer of the Michigan Association of which I am currently the secretary. I have served as an executive member, secretary, vice-president and president of the Almont New Church Assembly and Retreat Center. I have been a member of several national boards and committees. I served on the Growth and Outreach Support unit for six years, acting as chair for that length of time. Currently, I am in my fourth year (the beginning of a second three-year

term) as a member of General Council and through that body, am serving as chairperson for the structure review committee.

I cannot express how honored I am to have been nominated for this position. I am looking forward to continuing my service to the church, something that I have loved to do for many years.

RECORDING SECRETARY

1-year term

Gloria Toot

Ohio, Ohio Association

Gloria Toot is a longtime member of Kemper Road Swedenborgian Church in Cincinnati. She has served at various times, on their board of directors and as program committee chair, youth/Sunday school coordinator, and other positions. In addition, the church employed her as office manager/administrative assistant for about twelve years. She was elected recording secretary of the denomination in 1991 and served through March 1995 when she moved to Japan for two years. She was reelected recording secretary at the 1997 convention. Gloria would like to continue to serve the church in this capacity.

TREASURER

1-year term

Polly Baxter

Maryland, Mid-Atlantic Association

I have been deeply involved in the finances and accounting for the denomination for the last nine years. I served as assistant to the treasurer for five years, and this past year as treasurer. In 1992, I received the President's Award to the Lay Person of the Year for the work performed in redesigning the chart of accounts and bringing the church bookkeeping into line with the

most recent generally accepted accounting practices. I am currently on the Investment Committee, the Augmentation Fund Committee, and serve as chair of the Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit. My professional background is in accounting, computer application design, strategic planning and general management practices. I view my work with the finances of the church as my personal ministry and would like to continue to serve in the capacity of treasurer.

GENERAL COUNCIL

3-year term- (1 minister, 2 laypersons)

Rev. Edwin Capon

Mass., Mass. Association

I have been nominated for the third year of a three-year term on General Council to take the place of a minister, (Rev. Susan Turley) who has resigned. I would like to serve for one year on General Council in order to make available to General Council the knowledge and experience I have acquired during the past six years as president. I fully support Convention's choice of the Rev. Ron Brugler as its next president and would like to be able to express that support in Ron's freshman year as he seeks to realize his vision for the Swedenborgian Church.

Jim Erickson

Minnesota, Illinois Association

I graduated from the University of Minnesota with a B.S. degree from the College of Education. After teaching a few years, I became the director of a private school in Minneapolis. After seven wonderful years with this school I made a career change and took a job as the Anthropology Specialist/Program Manager for the Science Museum of Minnesota.

My next career change came as a founder and partner in Isis Produc-

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tions, a video and audio tape company, which focused efforts on telling the stories of minority communities and individuals who made contributions to greater understanding among the people of Minnesota. I am proud to say I was given an award for these efforts by a Native American neighborhood organization.

I left this company to become a partner in Holographic Concepts, a company which concentrated on a design and manufacture of holograms for educational and industrial uses.

After releasing my interest in the company to a business partner I worked as a contract consultant and educator with the Science Museum of Minnesota, and public and private schools in the Minneapolis and St. Paul area.

I made this move to have the freedom to work on a project I found very exciting. As part of a research team I worked as a volunteer for the Department of Linguistics at the University of Minnesota on a new etymological dictionary of English. This is a forthcoming multi-volume dictionary which will supplement the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Recently, I have made another career change. I have a new job with the Ramsey County Historical Society in St. Paul as the Education Curator. I am currently involved in program interpretation for a living history museum.

I also am very involved in the life of the Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church. At present I am president of the Board of Trustees and have been active in a number of other ways. I consider the life of the St. Paul Society an integral and essential part of my life. I am at Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church on an almost daily basis and love every minute of it.

I feel a calling to make the life of the Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church, and the denomination it represents, part of my ministry. I have a deep affectional attraction to the Swedenborgian approach to Christianity. I am happy participating in it by sweeping floors, studying its teachings, serving in leadership roles, and participating in the stewardship of all aspects of its existence.

I firmly believe it is important for each of us to serve our church when there is an internal commitment and sense of joy in each moment of participation no matter how daunting or how small the task. This is the spirit in which I accept this nomination.

Chuck Winter
Ohio, Ohio Association

I am a member of the Swedenborg Chapel of Cleveland where I have served on council for five years, four of them as president. I am also on the Executive Council of the Ohio Association as vice-president. I have been very active in our wedding ministry at the Chapel. During 1997 I was officiator at 48 weddings. Since we have not had a minister for the last four years I take my turn at leading worship services.

This year I retired from teaching in high school, and if elected, look forward to having more time to serve my church and its members on General Council.

Duane Beougher
Missouri, Illinois Association

As a member of the St. Louis Church for almost 20 years, and having grown up in a Swedenborgian household, I have deep love and respect for the writings and teachings of our church. They have helped me find answers in a sometimes troubled, chaotic world, and have been a beacon to re-establish a course when I feared I was losing my way.

My wish is to be of service to my local church, as well as to the larger body of this denomination. I have always striven to form my own opinions and personal beliefs based on the information available and the guidance of my conscience, then to stand on that foundation while working to plan appropriate actions & activities, solve problems, and at times, attempting to reconcile divisions that normally occur when people with passionate beliefs hold opposing views.

I believe that our church, as a de-

nomination, is at a very important time. Most of us recognize that in order to survive and thrive, we face an absolute need for change. The form change should take is one of the largest issues before us, and is, unfortunately, extremely divisive. If elected to General Council, I will do my best to listen, to keep informed of the issues on all sides, and then to work towards ends that are foremost to the benefit of the denomination as a whole, and only secondly to individual interests according to merit. It is my hope that these both can coincide.

Some relevant background: I have served on the St. Louis the St. Louis church's board of trustees for more than 12 years, 9 years as its president, and am currently treasurer. On the national level, I served 5 years on Nominating Committee, and am an original member of the Committee of Inquiry (investigating allegations of clergy misconduct). I worked as an executive with a national not-for-profit organization for 9 years, and have owned my own small business for the last 7 years.

COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT UNIT (COMSU) 3-year term

Susan Poole
Delaware, Mid-Atlantic Association

Susan Poole is acquisitions editor at the Swedenborg Foundation in West Chester, Pennsylvania. She is a member of the board of Temenos Retreat Center in West Chester, and mother of Timothy (19), Aaron (16), Rachel (13). She enjoys hiking, tennis, piano, and writing.

EDUCATION SUPPORT UNIT 3-year term

Ruth Tafel
Pennsylvania, Mid-Atlantic Association

Ruth Tafel holds a BS in Elementary Education and Special Education;

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25 years teaching in public schools in Delaware and New Jersey; seven years Contact, Delaware, listener and facilitator; three years director/teacher Keepers of the Earth summer camp, Temenos; Brandywine Valley Association (conservancy group) guide; children's program coordinator, Swedenborgian Church at Temenos; president of Swedenborgian Church at Temenos; programs/teacher of T.L.C., Temenos Learning Center for Homeschoolers.

**FINANCIAL & PHYSICAL RESOURCES
SUPPORT UNIT (FPRSU)**
3-year term

Rev. Richard H. Tafel, Jr.
Florida, Southeast Association

I am standing for reelection because of the experience I bring to this support unit. Besides an understanding of how our church's fiscal system works—restricted and unrestricted accounts, our various fund-raising efforts, and capital gift appeals—I also have a working knowledge of the real estate market and its place in one's portfolio.

I have been a part of this support unit's push to get all support units to work out their five-year plans—to better enable the denomination to plan for programs several years down the road.

I see that our number one priority is to increase our general (unrestricted) funds—these funds pay for the operations of the whole church not covered by the restricted funds. I will continue to be a voice for fiscal responsibility.

**MINISTRIES SUPPORT UNIT
(MINSU)**
3-year term

Betsy Coffman
Ohio, Ohio Association

I have been an active member of the Urbana, Ohio Swedenborgian church for close to 30 years, and am

presently a lay leader candidate. I have served General Convention in the past on the former Board of Education as well as on General Council for 6 years. I am about to complete my first term on MINSU and would consider it a privilege to continue with a second term of service.

Growing up in the Kitchener Church of the Good Shepherd, I have always considered the church to be my extended family. As such, I have been involved in my local church in a number of capacities over the years, including Sunday school, leading worship services, membership on the church board (including over 10 years as board secretary).

I am also active in the Ohio Association, presently serving as president and have been on the Urbana University board of trustees since 1991.

These experiences have helped me gain a knowledge of our church organization, its multifaceted needs and challenges and has afforded me the opportunity of meeting and working with many wonderful and talented members throughout our denomination. Should you choose to elect me to this second term on MINSU, I will be honored to serve.

Esther Nicastro-Capon
Mass., Mass. Association

I would like to serve on MINSU as I believe it is important to have someone with my background to contribute to the decision process pertaining to the ministries of our church.

Educationally I have earned a BS and MS in Education, and a Doctor of Jurisprudence. When I first became acquainted with the Swedenborgian Church I attended the Swedenborg School of Religion for one year studying in courses taught by Dr. Robert Kirven, Dr. George Dole, Dr. William Woofendon and Dr. Calvin Turley. I am presently a trustee of Urbana University. Previously I served on the board of the Swedenborgian School of Reli-

gion. I also served as a member of the Growth and Outreach Support Unit and when it was The Board of Missions I served as its chairperson.

During my husband Edwin's term as president, I have aided in advising General Convention when there was a need for legal representation.

Rev. David Rienstra
Missouri, Illinois Association
(to fill remaining unexpired term of one year)

I was ordained in 1978 and served as pastor of the Fryeburg, Maine, New Church for ten years. I am presently pastor of the Church of the Open Word in St. Louis, Missouri, going on my eleventh year.

As a pastor of a congregation for twenty years plus serving on several boards and committees within General Convention for the past several years, I think I have a good working knowledge of the functions of our denomination, and the needs of our various ministries throughout the denomination.

Committees served: President, Sunday School Association; Chair, Council of Ministers; C.A.M.; and General Council.

**INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
SUPPORT UNIT (IMSU)**
3-year term

Steven Ledingham
(No biography submitted).

NOMINATING COMMITTEE
(elect 1 for 5-year term)

Stella Podmore
Alberta, Western Canada Association

I have been involved in various positions in the Edmonton church,

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church board, Sunday school, Women's Alliance, newsletter, altar committee and Girl Guides through the years.

I've been to the annual convention several times in the last few years, and have assisted with registration. I'm friendly, outgoing, conscientious and interested in this position and will do my very best.

Rev. F. Robert "F. Bob" Tafel
Mass., Mass. Association

I was ordained in 1964. I have served churches in San Diego, Cincinnati, Washington, D.C. and currently am pastor of the Cambridge Society. Elective offices I have held include General Council, Board of managers of the New Church Theological School and the Nominating Committee. I have also served on the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers as well as its secretary. I am presently chair of the Retirement Committee. Over the years, I have gotten to know many people throughout our denomination and, if elected, would bring this knowledge to the Nominating Committee.

**COMMITTEE ON ADMISSION
TO THE MINISTRY (CAM)**
(elect 2 for 1-year terms)

Minister: Rev. G. Steven Ellis
Mass., Mass. Association

It is a real joy to accept the candidacy for the Committee on Admissions to the Ministry. It is a wonderful opportunity both to worship our God and serve our beloved church in being of service to each of you.

Since my ordination in 1982, I have enthusiastically served the Boston Church of the New Jerusalem as pastor and have participated on various boards and committees both at the local and national levels. Vital and rewarding experience has been gained through serving on the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers, the Board of Directors of the

Swedenborg School of Religion, and as chaplain of the New Church Youth League, and as president and vice-president of the Massachusetts Association, involving all seven churches in our state.

I have attended 19 national conventions and served on the convention planning committee in Boston.

Co-founding the Greater Boston Interfaith Clergy Group has been a highlight of my ministry of outreach in Boston, and has afforded me with ample opportunity to work in a leadership capacity with leaders of our religious community, i.e., both Christian and non-Christian. I have organized and participated in outreach ministries involving the interaction of our churches with issues of vital interest to our city, i.e., homelessness, hunger, racism, and violence among youth. I worked to bring the uptown and downtown clergy closer together and participated in the early formation of the Ten Point Coalition. On behalf of the Massachusetts Council of Churches, I have served as a representative to the Action for Boston Community Development, Inc., the oldest social action agency in Boston. As a spiritual leader in our community, I have also worked with our civic leaders, and given invocations at our State House.

I would bring to CAM a life long involvement with the church and a working acquaintance with both parish and differentiated ministries. I feel qualified to serve and humbled by the prospect.

Minister: Rev. Skuli Thorhallsson
Florida, Southeast Association

Since my ordination and graduation from the Swedenborg School of Religion and Andover Newton (M.Div.) in 1988, I have served the church in DeLand, Florida. For the denomination I have served on the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers, the Nominating Committee, General Council (second term) and the Committee on Admission to the Ministry. I wish to continue to serve

on the Committee on Admission to the Ministry because I feel that I have the depth of experience that is needed for the very important work that this committee does on behalf of the students, the school, the council of ministers and the denomination.

Lay Person: Pat Tukos
Indiana, Illinois Association

I started attending Sunday school at the LaPorte New Church when I was in the first grade and have been actively involved ever since. I am deeply devoted to this church and have served in many capacities such as Sunday school teacher and superintendent, on the Executive Board and Women's Alliance, plus chairing various committees. Over the years I hauled van loads of children and teens to Almont and taught some classes there. On the national level, I served six years on EdSU and one year (1997) on CAM. I have attended several Cabinet and General Council meetings and the past six or seven annual convention sessions thus I feel that I have a fairly well-rounded picture of our denomination's structure and needs. Most importantly, I believe that a parish perspective is of great value to CAM and I would consider it a privilege to serve another term.

**SWEDENBORG SCHOOL OF
RELIGION (SSR) BOARD**
(elect 2 for 3-year terms)

Edward Bollander
(No biography submitted).

Barbara Tourangeau
(formerly Penabaker)
Michigan, Michigan Association

I would like to continue serving on the SSR Board of Trustees. Being a lifelong Swedenborgian and a member of the Detroit church, I believe I bring the parish perspective to the board.



Greeting from the ANCSSA

Greetings from the American New Church Sunday School Association! The purpose of this article is to introduce you to the officers of the SSA, to inform you of several things that your congregation might be interested in if you are currently running a Sunday school for children, or are seriously thinking about starting one.

Our officers are:

- Rev. Kit Billings, president
- Rev. Lee Woofenden, vice-president
- Lorrie Lipski, secretary
- Patricia Brewer, treasurer
- Rev. Dr. Jonathan Mitchell, chair, Outreach Committee
- Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, chair, Publications Committee
- Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake, chair, Teacher Training Committee
- Rev. Dr. Ted Klein, chair, Teaching Aids Committee
- Marie Morey, chair, Nominating Committee.

My church office address and phone number are Virginia Street Church, 170 Virginia Street, St. Paul, MN 55102, (612)224-4553. Please feel free to contact me for help or input if you have a Sunday school-related question or issue. To contact the other church officers, you can consult the church *Journal*, or you may contact me and I will forward their phone numbers on to you.

The next item I want to joyfully address is our up-and-running publications of *Five Smooth Stones* which is being edited and produced by the Rev. Eric Hoffman in LaPorte, Indiana. This is an excellent addition to the spiritual life of our children, and can be of use during the summer months for conversation and activity with Sunday school kids. Eric will be publishing four issues per year. The subscription rate is \$5.00 per year, and we are offering a lower rate for bulk mailings, which is now being determined by our Teaching Aids Committee. Any churches not currently receiving *Five Smooth Stones* and are interested in starting a subscription, please call Eric Hoffman at (219) 362-1959.

Next, I have a promotion for an SSA project that has made a lot of impact in some of our Sunday schools. The Rev. Lee Woofenden continues to write and publish Swedenborgian Supplements to The Whole People of God Sunday School curriculum. These supplements are structured in a way so that Sunday school teachers can use the helpful lesson guides and arts and crafts suggestions from Whole People while maintaining a specifically New Church theological framework and emphasis.

These Swedenborgian Supplements were originally suggested for publication a few years ago as a way for Sunday schools to be able to teach all those passages in the Bible that were not covered by Anita Dole in her *Bible Study Notes*. The SSA's hope and goal at this point is to publish three full years of supplements to the Whole People

of God curriculum because this curriculum operates on the standard lectionary used by mainline churches. At the end of this three-year cycle we hope to bind all of Lee's supplement notes into booklet form, reprint them, and offer them for sale. Currently these supplements are free of charge. However very soon we plan on implementing a subscription rate in order to help us with the publication and mailing costs.

Lastly, I have a question for all of our Sunday school teachers. Are you interested in regional teacher training seminars, which would be led by some of us Swedenborgian lay and clergy folk? The idea here would be for the Education Support Unit (EdSU) and SSA to team up in a way that specified regions or local churches might be offered helpful teaching training. In the past SSA has organized Sunday school teacher training mini-courses at our annual conventions. We discovered that there were relatively few teachers who were able to attend convention.

So now we need written input from you teachers out there about the level of interest you have for ongoing teaching training in Swedenborgian Sunday school teaching. Also: do your church budgets have any funds to spare for the cost of flying in teacher trainers? I look forward to hearing from you soon.

—Rev. Kit Billings, president ❖

Annual Conventions Through 2001

The possibility of having convention every other year has been under consideration by the General Council for several years. At its most recent meeting it was decided to carry the study no further. There were in all probability several reasons for this, not every member being moved by the same reasons. Perhaps the two most important were that the financial savings to the denomination would be quite limited and that we already have invitations for 1999, 2000 and 2001 plus an invitation with no year specified. In the evaluations we received of the Kansas convention there were several suggestions that we go to biennial conventions, but the question is not likely to be brought up again without strong grass roots support.

—Rev. Edwin Capon
President, The Swedenborgian Church



SSR Graduation Statistics



The Swedenborg School of Religion recently received an inquiry about what its recent graduates are doing. I thought it might be valuable to share with you what we learned in doing the research. Counting the two students who are projected to graduate in 1998, there are eleven ordination track graduates in the '90s.

Of the eleven, eight are or will be in parish ministries: Adam Seward in Pretty Prairie, Kansas; Mia-Heui Cheon in Edmonton, Alberta; Jonathan Mitchell in Washington D.C.; Lee Woofenden in Bridgewater, Massachusetts; Kit Billings in St. Paul; Kin'ichi Kuniyeda in Tokyo (Kin'ichi's center has multiple facets), Renee Billings in Detroit, and Eric Hoffman in LaPorte, Indiana; Wilma Wake is on the faculty of SSR after having established the Network Center in Concord, New Hampshire (The Network Center has joined the denomination as a member of the Maine Association; Wilma is one of the few General Convention ministers who has planted a church). Nadine Cotton is now at the Network Center in Concord, and Pavel Heger has developed a center in the Czech Republic.

It is interesting to note that of the 18 full-time parish ministers now active in the denomination, almost half (8) have graduated since 1992.

In addition to the ordination track graduates, Eldon Smith (San Diego) and Steve Thomas (Kitchener) have completed the lay leader program. Betsy Coffman (Urbana) is projected to complete the program in 1998.

SSR has graduated or is projected to graduate eight students from the M.A. program in Swedenborgian Studies. All are ministers or candidates for ministry. Two students have graduated with the Certificate in Swedenborgian Studies. All are ministers or candidates for ministry. Two students have graduated with the Certificate in Swedenborgian Studies. A number of students have completed correspondence courses or special programs during the '90s.

—Mary Kay Klein ❖

Swedenborg, Mysticism, and the Power of Service

(Continued from page 65)

influence to serve their parishioners and others in their communities.

A range of community groups would be engaged in the power of service when they work together in using their influence to create more affordable housing and more job training in their community. Also involved in the power of service would be efforts in a community to curb, prevent, and develop alternatives to violence. Another example of the power of service would be church members creating and working in a garden and offering produce from the garden and volunteer time to local food assistance programs. The power of service would be involved in a local government using its power and authority to hear suggestions from citizens and weigh them in efforts to serve its citizens and others beyond

the community.

Any of us can be in the power of service in bringing all that we have to really hear the person in front of us at the moment. Any of us can be in the power of service when we take seriously the responsibilities of our positions to serve. Any of us can be in the power of service when we join with others in communities in efforts to extend service somewhere in the world. Through the power of service, we can look to God and bring our understanding and love of God into connection with love of others and service to them.

The Rev. Dr. Theodore Klein is Professor of Theology and Philosophy at the Swedenborg School of Religion. His book, The Power of Service, relating Swedenborgian theology to social issues, is being published this month by J. Appleseed.

❖

Call to Future Faculty Members

In the coming years, the Swedenborg School of Religion will be needing new faculty members to replace those who retire. We are soliciting the names of anyone who thinks he or she might be interested in a faculty position in the future. We would like to know of your interest whether or not you already have the credentials for a faculty position, provided that if you do not have the credentials, you have a serious willingness to work for them. We would also be interested in hearing from you if you wish to suggest someone else as a potential faculty member.

If you think you might be interested or have someone to suggest, please send a letter to:

Dr. Mary Kay Klein, President
Swedenborg School of Religion
48 Sargent Street
Newton, MA 02158

as soon as possible.

❖

Babes in Cyberspace

(Continued from page 66)



nervous breakdown as the year 2000 approaches—what is popularly referred to as the "Y2K" problem. But that is a subject for another editorial, or perhaps several.

Meanwhile, my E-mail address is Messenger@Jinet.com. President-elect Ron Brugler just got E-mail also, and wants me to tell you his E-mail address is goodshep@golden.net (Sounds more like a support group for golden retrievers).

Patte LeVan

❖

More About the Beacon Hill Coffee House...

from Elaine Peebles:

...My husband Jamie Peebles and I started the Beacon Hill Coffee House in March of 1995. We feature traditional and contemporary folk music, and Celtic music which we found is very popular in Boston. It is very well liked by our church members, too. One Saturday a month at the church, from 8:00-10:00 pm, we offer acoustic music, food, coffees and teas in a cafe-like setting with tables, chairs and candles. We have met some wonderful people of all ages who seem to appreciate this kind of music. In February we had Irish legend Robbie O'Connell who sold the place out. On April 25, we feature Greg Greenway, a contemporary singer songwriter along with Chris & Meredith Thompson who are twins who sing and play guitars and percussion. We are having a great time doing this and people always ask about the church and Swedenborg. I have gotten into some great discussions about Emanuel and the mission of the Boston church.

Creative Services

Agape Feast Service

On Passion Sunday, the Boston church holds an Agape Feast Service, featuring art, musical instruments, and explanations of the message portrayed by the art. A variety of musical instruments are played while the work of local artists are displayed in the sanctuary. The focus of the art is on scenes in the Bible where people are fed. This is to demonstrate that the table of the Lord is big enough for everyone. Paintings show Mary and Martha being fed by the Lord, children huddled in a corner eating the bitter herbs of the Passover, the wedding feast where no one came, cripples, lepers, the feeding of the five thousand, and a boat like the one in which the Lord stood while preaching. The free flow of music, while the message of the art is explained makes for a unique worship service.

Maundy Thursday at Virginia St. Church, St. Paul

The term "Maundy" comes from the old French "mande" from the Latin "mandatum novum," 'a new commandment,' and is traditionally associated with ceremonial foot washing. Some of our churches traditionally have a candlelight communion around a table. The Rev. Kit Billings led the St. Paul church in a service similar to the Communion format started by the late Rev. Dick Baxter: Participants are invited in groups of twelve to come forward to receive communion while sitting on simple benches around a table in the chancel. Candles are the only source of illumination. The minister consecrates the elements and passes the bread and a common cup around the table. It's been expressed that this service helps participants feel as though they are really sitting at the Lord's table.

New York Church Passover Communion Supper

For the fifth year in a row, the New York New Church once again held its Passover Communion Service on Maundy Thursday (April 9 this year). Using the contemporary form of the Seder supper, friends and members join together to recreate something of the original context of the Last Supper. During the meal ("as we are eating"), the sacrament of Communion is celebrated using Matzo and wine, which are distributed to all present. Appropriate texts from the Gospels accompany the sacrament. Through brief presentations during the meal, connections are made between these two central images of God's redemption and liberation of his people, and how the principles of faith, hope, and love continue to apply to our own experience of spiritual freedom and renewal. This event has become a highlight of our church year, with attendance averaging around thirty people.



—Rev. Robert McCluskey, Pastor of NYNC

Royal Oak Synchronicity Smash Hit

Writer/lecturer Paul Calder, a friend of the Royal Oak (Detroit) church presented an exploration of Synchronicity as a Gateway to Understanding the Fundamental Nature of Reality on December 18, 1997 at the church. Pastor Renee Billings reports that his program drew 76 attendees and brought some new people into the Royal Oak fold. The lecture was advertised in the New Age magazine, *Phenomenews*, and the bulk of response was from that ad.

Some of the areas covered in Calder's presentation were:

- Real life examples of synchronistic events.
- The difference between synchronicity and coincidence.
- Jung's ideas about synchronicity.
- How the discoveries of orthodox science prove the world is not really composed of matter.
- How the theories of relativity and quantum mechanics (clearly explained in ordinary language) have already brought us to the threshold of a new world view.
- How Buddhist philosophy and western science lead to the same conclusions.
- A comprehensive picture of reality that includes synchronicity.

Paul is willing to present this program at other churches for no fee other than travel and lodging expense. It is a two-session lecture, each 2 hours long. If interested, call Rev. Renee Billings at 248-546-7583 or 248-798-8487.

Cleveland Church Sunday School Underway

Verda Winter reports that the Cleveland church did fulfill their goal to get a Sunday school going, beginning last September. Cynthia Holden is teaching children ranging in age from 4 through 13 in one room. The attendance varies from four to eight children each Sunday, but there's hope for growth.

(Continued on page 76)

Edmonton Junior Church

The Rev. Min-Heui Cheon reports that they have started a new Sunday school this year, with 14 students registered at this writing. Also acting as a junior choir, they plan to sing at the worship service the last Sunday of every month.

New board members have been elected at the Edmonton church also.

They are:

President John Sawchuk
Vice-President Stella Podmore
Secretary Lynda Haily
Treasurer Eleanor Spencer

Other board members are:

Carol Kirbyson, Audrey Hunter,
Linda Reed, and Audrey Milot.



Social Action in Cambridge

♦ The Social Action Committee at the Cambridge church continues to add new SA projects to their ongoing ones:

♦ Donated a large amount of clothing for Somali immigrant families coming into the Boston area for the first time.

♦ Ongoing support of the Children's Clothing Exchange at the Baptist Church in Cambridgeport, with 10 bags of clothing.

♦ Four bags of children's books to the Chelsea Substance Abuse program for children of mothers with substance abuse.

♦ Became member-supporter of the Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet, a human rights organization working for the exiled people of Tibet.

♦ Church Council voted for church to become an Environmental Justice Covenant Congregation of the National Council of Churches, doing worship, education, practical lifestyle changes and advocacy on ecological, spiritual and justice issues.

PCA Retreat with Perry Martin

The annual retreat, sponsored by the Pacific Coast Association, was held February 27 through March 1 at the Center for Spiritual Development in Orange, California. The theme was **Reaching for Fulfillment** and was led, as it has been since its inception, by psychotherapist Perry S. Martin, a certified Rubenfeld Synergist practicing at Temenos, the Swedenborgian Growth Center in West Chester, Pennsylvania. According to retreat chair Manon Washburn, "An excited group of 14 met with Perry for our yearly retreat in Orange. Six therapists and eight lay people (including four men) comprised the group that quickly became a loving community. As always, we worked with art materials, music and dance as we shared our life stories with one another. It was a healing, challenging and growth-producing weekend."

Network Center Presents Community Awareness Fair

The Spiritual Network Center in Concord, New Hampshire, is inviting all spiritual/wholistic members of area communities to participate in their First Annual Community Awareness Fair May 2 from 10 am to 4 pm at the Conservation Center in Concord. The Center has also recently begun offering memberships at various levels of donation, ranging from \$15 for students and seniors, to a \$1000 Saint membership that entitles the donor to a lifetime of free Friday night events, plus many other benefits.

Want to Send a Cyber News Flash?

Andrew Siebert of Pretty Prairie invites you to "send any and all announcements to:

sieberts@southwind.net

and I will forward them on to my 'subscribers.'" If you would like to receive (via e-mail) a quote every Sunday, let Andrew know and he'll put you on the list. ❖

Dedication of Rice Chapel

Last May an outdoor chapel was dedicated to the late Rev. Wilfred G. Rice and Ethel V. Rice. The chapel is on the grounds of Blairhaven Retreat Center overlooking Kingston Bay, a convention center belonging to the Massachusetts Association of the New Jerusalem. It is a beautiful setting, very peaceful, and the materials used for the pews and the pulpit are of a rustic nature, blending nicely with the surroundings.

The ceremony took place after the annual meeting of the Association—which was very well attended—and a superb celebratory meal. The president of our denomination, the Rev. Edwin Capon, officiated at the dedication ceremony during which several people spoke about how wonderful both the Rices had been in their service to the church, having served several societies: Chicago, Illinois; Fryeburg, Maine; St. Paul, Minnesota; Elmwood, Brockton and Cambridge, Massachusetts. Mrs. Rice serving as recording secretary of the General Convention as well.

Later in the year a grandchild, Joshua Rice, was married at the Chapel, putting a fitting seal on the dedication. ❖



(L-R) Rafael Guin, treasurer, Mass. Association; Ethel V. Rice; the Rev. F. Robert Tafel, pastor Cambridge church; the Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey, general pastor, Mass. Association.

The following was written by Gladys Tolliver in honor of her mother's 80th birthday.

My Mother

Today we are celebrating our Mother's 80th birthday. I would like to tell you a little bit about Mother. She claims she had 12 of us children but none of us can remember her being pregnant. We had never heard of the word "pregnant." She always looked the same in a cotton dress and apron. I know that we were ordered from the Sears and Roebuck catalog and if they were out of stock we were ordered from Montgomery Wards. I think Mom and Dad had some recalls on those of us from Montgomery Wards and Dad never took the time to take us in and that is why we are like we are today.

Mother could perform miracles but she needed us kids to help. Sometimes we had no food in the house. Mother would line us up like soldiers and send the oldest to chop off the head of a chicken, the next to chop wood, one to the barn to milk the cow, one to the cellar for potatoes and carrots, one to pick asparagus, and one to the chicken house for eggs. In no time we would be sitting around the table eating a supper that tasted a lot better than pizza and hamburgers.

Mother could take a dishpan of flour and water and put up wall paper, then add sour cream and baking soda and make hotcakes. After breakfast she would add sugar, eggs and baking cocoa and make brownies.

Mother never wasted a thing. If we couldn't wear it or eat it she would make it into something useful. When we were real young we had a car seat for a daveno, now they call them love seats. She made a baby walker from 2-by-2s and four casters, a baby seat from a padded horse collar. She could take a square of material and make a skirt or shirt without a pattern. She could look at a pic-

ture and create a crocheted tablecloth or bedspread.

Mother had a decorating touch all her own. Twice she did the kitchen ceiling in textured cream-of-corn using the pressure cooker. The living room ceiling was done in end-of-broom indentation. She achieved this by pounding on the ceiling every morning with the broom handle to wake us up.

Mother would be rich today if she had hung out her shingle as a veterinarian. She has sewn up baby fawns and put splints on their broken legs. She did mouth-to-mouth resuscitation on baby chickens, brought lambs, baby pigs, baby ducks and geese back to life. She raised two cougar kittens, fed hotcakes to a wild turkey and raised a Canadian goose we called honker.

Mother took such good care of the animals by practicing on us. We didn't dare get sick enough or hurt ourselves bad enough to have to go to the doctor. We couldn't afford doctor bills. At the sight of blood, out would come the turpentine bottle. A cold and cough was treated with Vicks, mustard plasters and cough drops made out of powdered sugar and Watkins liniment. A stomach ache instantly disappeared at the sight of the hot water bottle and the castor oil bottle.

Life changed for Mother when she decided she needed to get away once in a while and taught herself to drive. That was a period of time when every one of us and all the animals stayed out of her path. Once Mother found out that there was a world outside of the area around Little Boulder Creek, she became involved in a social life and made all us kids little Grangers and 4-H'ers. She tried her best to give us some culture and social graces.

Gladys Tolliver, mother of four and grandmother of 12, grew up on a farm in Northeast Washington with 11 siblings. She worked for 20 years as a substitute postmistress, six years as a school secretary, and 10 years as a medical assistant. She enjoys writing, especially poetry, painting in oils and watercolors. Her articles and poems have been published in many area newspapers around Colville and Spokane.

Reprinted from the *Christina Lake News*, May 20, 1997. ❖

My Mama



Violets for

When I was a little girl like you,
Five or four or three or two,
One thing in spring I'd always do—
Pick violets for my Mama!

I'd wait for the snow to melt away
Through March and April till early May
When suddenly, near Mother's Day
There'd be violets for my Mama!

I'd run and pick the bits of sky
Fallen in patches far and nigh,
Wondering why they made her cry,
These violets for my Mama.

She'd hold them in her hands quite still
While I filled a cup for the window sill,
And always hidden tears would spill
On violets picked for Mama!

But now I know . . . she remembered, too—
Because it's a thing all little girls do—
Once she'd been a child like me, like you,
Picking violets for her Mama!

So, Renee, look—are the fields still bare?

Has the blue sky fallen anywhere?
Run quick to pick! Kneel . . . say a prayer
For violets and for mamas!

*author unknown
submitted by Holly Stranger*

Reprinted from the May 1997 Portland, Maine, church newsletter.



Check it Out!

The Warner Brothers' *Seventh Heaven* is a family TV show in its second season now. They've moved it around quite a bit, but at least it's still on. The program stars Stephen Collins and Catherine Hicks as a minister and his wife who face all the challenges of raising five children ranging in age from 6 to 17. The program features some rarities on network television—loving and nurturing relationships between husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters. *Seventh Heaven* has received high marks in the third annual *Family Guide to Prime Time Television*, compiled by the Los Angeles-based Parents Television Council. I've watched it a few times and have been quite impressed with it, except that it strains one's credulity that a family of seven can live in a house and neighborhood that looks like theirs on a minister's salary when the wife isn't working outside the home. But I like the way they grapple with family and community problems, with honesty and depth and caring—and humor—avoiding the saccharine. If you haven't yet seen it, you might want to take a look.

Overnight or Short Stay at Religious Houses Around the World is a directory "to a warm welcome at over 2202 houses in 65 countries by 25 denominations." According to the literature sent to me, costs per person per day range from \$30 to \$65, most including three meals. Colonel James J. Hughes, (Ret.) and his late wife Victoria started putting the directory together 10 years ago, and the listings are world-wide. People of all faiths are welcome at all houses. Guest houses are for overnight or short stays while visiting area sites. Retreat houses offer short stays of three or more days of complete withdrawal for physical rest, mental review, emotional reflection or spiritual renewal. Houses provide fine meals, safe and attractively furnished rooms and surroundings. Sounds like something to investigate. There are also, of course, written testimonials from many happy and satisfied travelers. For more information or to order a directory, write to Huguenot Press, POB 2286, Bloomfield, NJ 07003-0998, or call Colonel Hughes at 973-743-9285.

—PWL ♦

Correction:

In the list of contributors to the Swedenborgian Church acknowledged in the April *Messenger*, p. 60, *Vivan Keller* is an error, it should be *Vivian Kelley*.

Inclusive Language Discussion:

The inclusive language discussion will be continued in the June *Messenger*, with letters from Steve Koke and the Rev. Lee Woofenden that arrived too late to be included in the May *Messenger*. If anyone else wishes to speak to this issue, please get your letters in immediately.

TEMENOS LEARNING CENTER

Ruth Tafel

T.L.C. (Temenos Learning Center), offers innovative programs geared toward homeschoolers. Our purpose is to provide resources and leadership of creative units of learning to use the natural learning setting of the woods, fields and stream of Temenos, as well as the wisdom of the Native Americans to understand our interdependence with nature; to explore ideas without fear of rejection; and to explore the values found in our culture that are also found in other cultures. T.L.C. programs are based around themes and lean heavily on good children's literature, hands-on projects, and journals (no writing skills necessary).

Ongoing TLC Programs for Homeschoolers:

Great Literature Series, Thursdays, 9:00–11:00 a.m.
Science or Social Studies, Wednesdays, 9:00–11:00 a.m.
TRACKS!, Wednesdays, 1:00–4:00 p.m.
Kids Care Club, second Saturday each month, 9:00–11:30 a.m.

Cost: \$8.00 per session. For further information or for series prices please call Ruth Tafel at 610-593-2933.

SPIRITUAL RECOVERY, A TWELVE-STEP GUIDE

(Continued from page 67)

group of us started an A.A. meeting focused on spiritual awareness and weekly positive discussion that would have welcomed the guidance of this book. At this time, *Spiritual Recovery* has reminded me of our need for self-forgiveness as we accept our destructive tendencies, and our willingness to accept God's forgiveness by a change of lifestyle. God is there for us, to empower us, as we proceed step-by-step making responsible choices.

Attesting to the potential impact *Spiritual Recovery* can have on the reader, I experienced two wonderful/useful dreams while reading it for this review. The subject of one is related to my own spiritual journey. The other: I was awakened in the night by a firm yet gentle voice that declared, "When God answers, don't hang up."

Also, since my copy arrived it has been shared with many clients and colleagues with an enthusiastic reception. I have placed my order for more.

Janet Ashton Vernon, Ph.D., is a semi-retired therapist and adherent to Swedenborgian concepts. She lives in Orient, Washington.

36* Emanuel Swedenborg, *Angelic Wisdom concerning Divine Providence* tr. W.F. Wunsch, 2nd ed. (West Chester, Pennsylvania: Swedenborg Foundation, 1996). ♦

A Little Extra Makes a Big Difference

Eric Allison

Most of our churches need money. Wouldn't it be great if you could afford to give your church twenty, thirty, fifty or even a hundred thousand dollars in one check? Most of you reading this can afford to do just that. Have I lost my mind? Perhaps, but the facts offered here are very sane.

Last spring my friend Morgan Numekvor called to talk with me about making the Church of the Good Shepherd the beneficiary of a life insurance policy. He explained that I would be able to deduct my monthly payment as a regular contribution to the church and if I died anytime during the next ten years, the church would

get \$50,000. If I lived longer than ten years, the church would receive investment income in addition to the \$50,000. I loved the idea because it meant that if I prematurely entered the spiritual world, the Kitchener church would receive a pile of cash to help ensure its future.

If the money I put into this policy increased at a rate of only 6% a year and I lived to 82, the church would receive approximately \$82,000. If I lived to 95 the church will receive over \$100,000. That's a deal I could live with, or die with. So, I signed on the dotted line. How much do I pay? I pay \$64.50 per month to the church and they pay the insurance company. In effect, the church owns the policy, and I pay the church. Is it legal? Of course.

What about my regular contribution to the church? Doesn't the church need the money now? Yes, the church needs money now; that's why my monthly payment of \$64.50 is in addition to what I already give. Not instead

of my regular giving. If you say, "I'd like to do this but I just can't afford to give \$64.50 more each month," then set your sights a bit lower. You can give as little as \$20.00 per month. The death benefit may only be \$20,000, but the longer you live, the more the church will receive when you die.

So what happens if you decide you want to stop giving or cannot afford to make monthly payments? If you stop making payments anytime within the first eight years, you are simply out the money you paid in. At eight years or after, the church can cash in the policy, but the redeemable value is low. If you decided to stop paying, the church could continue to pay for you instead of cashing in the policy. When you die, the church would receive the same large pile of money. The only difference would be that the church had to pay for your policy.

This is the type of thing Jerry Poole and others have been talking about during the last several years. There are many ways to leave something behind to your local church, General Convention, SSR or Urbana University. If you are past retirement age, it may be too late for a life insurance policy like the one I have described, but there are ways to leave your house to the church and receive tax benefits and income for it now.

Every year people across our denomination die without remembering the church in their will. Often they are people who would have liked to leave something behind. If just a few people in all of our churches took some kind of action to give toward the church's long-term future, we would be literally reaching into the next century with gifts that we would otherwise not be capable of giving.

The Rev. Eric Allison is the denomination's church growth consultant. He lives in Kitchener, Ontario.

Reprinted from the February 1998 What's Happening Now newsletter. ❖



P A S S A G E S

CONFIRMATIONS

Adair, Canny, Henn, Kaplan—Nanci W. Adair, Paul F. Canny, Gretchen Henn, and Joann S. Kaplan were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church February 22, 1998, and received into membership at the Portland, Maine, Swedenborgian Church. (Deane Currie and Betsy Dunfey were masters-of-ceremony and the new members were welcomed by the congregation with a shower of soap bubbles).

Needle—Jeffrey P. Needle was welcomed into the membership of the Swedenborgian Church of San Diego March 1, 1998.

DEATHS

Martin—Olive Buck Martin, 94, a lifelong Swedenborgian, of South Easton, Massachusetts, entered the spiritual world February 20, 1998. She had been active in the Swedenborgian Church all her life, in the Mansfield, Brockton, and Elmwood churches. A memorial service was conducted in the Bridgewater church February

25, led by the Rev. Lee Woofenden. Her son, the Rev. Ernest O. Martin, shared his reflections on his mother's life in a personal tribute. Olive is survived by five children, thirteen grandchildren, and seventeen great-grandchildren. Her grandchildren include the Rev. Paul Martin, director of the Stonehouse Growth Center in Redmond, Washington, and the Rev. Dr. Rachel Rivers, associate pastor of the Swedenborgian Church in San Francisco.

Robock—Frank Ian Robock, 43, a member of the Edmonton church, entered the spiritual world February 10, 1988, due to a heart attack. A memorial service was conducted February 14, 1998, at the Church of the Holy City (Swedenborgian) in Edmonton, Alberta, the Rev. Min-Heui Cheon officiating. Mr. Robock is survived by his wife and three teenage children.

Runka—Harry Runka, age 86, a member of the Edmonton church, entered the spiritual world February 18, 1998. A memorial service was conducted February 22, 1998, at the Church of the Holy City (Swedenborgian) in Edmonton, Alberta, the Rev. Min-Heui Cheon officiating. ❖

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.

TEMENOS PROGRAM OFFERINGS ~ MARCH THROUGH JULY 1998

ONGOING

Support Groups for Men or Women
Learning Center for Homeschoolers
The Sanctuary: A Coffee House
First Sundays in Central America
Yoga Series

MARCH

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction
Introduction to Yoga
Reiki Support Group
Journey of the Heart:
An Event for Couples
Circle of Song
Women, Wisdom and Power
The Animal of the Outer Self and
the Animal of the Inner Self

APRIL

Soul's Journey - Fire's Breath
Reiki: Level I Training
The Spirit of Zen and
Everyday Western Life
Communication and Connection

MAY

Proprioceptive Writing@
Ritual for Healing Grievances of Birthing
Virginia Satir's Parts Party
My Family, Myself
A Celebration of Mothering
Women Who Run with the Wolves
Your Body Can Talk!
Reiki Support Group
Yoga for Chronic Pain Management

JUNE

A Day of Re-Collection
Keepers of the Earth:
A Summer Camp for Children
Summer Mini-Camp for Women
Soul Searching for Inner Peace,
Outer Harmony

JULY

Soul's Journey - Fire's Breath
When Life Gives You Lemons,
Make Lemonade!

TEMENOS was established as a service of the Swedenborgian Church to foster the renewal, upbuilding and transformation of human lives.

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**for adults
and teens**

THE SANCTUARY: A Coffee House

at the
Temenos Farm House
Second Thursday
of the month,
March 12, April 9,
May 14, June 11.
8:00 to 10:00 p.m.

Need a place to relax, hear new music as well as old favorites, and share some of your latest poetry or song writing efforts? Enjoy coffees and teas, assorted goodies, and an intimate atmosphere as local musicians John Scardina and Rich Aldred (of the band *Works in Progress*) put together evenings you'll love to share with family and friends. Open mike from 8:00 to 9:00. Performances by John Scardina, Rich Aldred, and others from 9:00 to 10:00.

Cost:
\$5.00 cover charge.

The Swedenborgian Church
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