
THE MESSENGER

Published by the Swedenborgian Church of North America

January 1999

Swedenborg Meets the Mystics: What Have I Learned?

Wilma Wake

In the November 1996 *Messenger* George Dole wrote an article, "What is Mysticism?" In October 1998, I wrote the article, "Swedenborg Meets the New Age." In between, members of the Swedenborg School of Religion community have written articles on Swedenborg and mysticism for virtually every issue of the *Messenger*. We are now drawing this series to a close, and I am going to share some thoughts on what I have learned from this series.

The experience of doing this *Messenger* series has brought us at SSR together more as a community. We have had numerous discussions about what we want to say, how we want to say it, and what we mean by the words we use. We have shared our ideas with each other and reflected together. We have learned more about what we each think about mysticism. We have learned that there is considerable diversity among us on the subject, but there are a few themes on which we tend to have similar thoughts. I'd like to share these as well as some of my own perspectives.

What is mysticism?

We are moving toward a definition of mysticism. We had many discussions about what this word meant to us as we pulled together the first article on the topic. We like the definition George came up with for our series, "the direct experience of

the spiritual." We had different ideas on what this means. For one it brings into play the kind of mysticism that is part of every human life. When we are awed by a sunset, lost in a piece of music, kicking up fall leaves along a wooded path, we may be having a direct experience of spirituality in our lives. I can read Swedenborg's writings or other works of theology and use them to put together a theological statement in my head. But when I shuffle through the fallen leaves behind my New Hampshire home and breathe deeply of the crisp fall air, I may feel that I am experiencing spirituality in my life. I am feeling divine providence in an everyday piece of my life. I don't need a theological statement in order to feel the presence of the divine all around me.

Was Swedenborg a mystic?

We are coming to understand mysticism in Swedenborg's life. George raised a question that gets asked frequently in our church: Was Swedenborg a mystic? The answer, of course, depends on how you define mystic. The answer is *no* if we think of a mystic as "someone who drifts off onto cloud nine," [p. 147]. However, George offers us a more useful definition: "one for whom such experience is both *recurrent* and *meaningful*." [p. 147]. George and I disagree on his next statement that his definition rules out most of us. I think most of us *do* encounter spirituality on a recurrent basis, but we often don't

*I think
most of us
do encounter
spirituality on a
recurrent basis,
but we often don't
recognize our life
experiences as being
a part of our
spirituality.*

recognize our life experiences as being a part of our spirituality. And we frequently struggle with how to make those encounters with the divine meaningful in our lives. Yet I would say that the potential is there for any of us to be a mystic.

I do agree with George's further clarification of "mystic" to rule out those who play with spiritualism or a chemical high for kicks or those who use paranormal gifts in a manipulative way. *Mystic* is a term that I feel must be reserved for the ways that the divine interacts with us in our daily lives.

I looked further at the question in my December 1996 *Messenger* article: "Swedenborg as a Mystic." I turned to Wilson Van Dusen's article, "A Mystic Looks at Swedenborg." He says that

(Continued on page 10)

In This Issue:

• Happenings at Wayfarers Chapel • Johnny Appleseed Heritage Center • Reviews: *A Scientist Explores Spirit*, *Gallery of Mirrors*

Julian Diary: *Fresh Starts—A Story for the New Year*

I live just up the hill from an area of Julian called Sleepy Hollow, where rents are cheap and people dream about putting their lives back together but seldom do it. There're a lot of interesting stories about how people wound up in Sleepy Hollow. I'm told one woman who lives there is the daughter of a famous Country and Western singer. She lived in a mansion outside Memphis until she hit the drug scene. Hearing certain familiar tunes carried on the thin summer air when she's high and wailing out one of her dad's songs, you can feel haunted.

In the spring of 1995 a family moved to Sleepy Hollow, into the house next door to my friend Nina. Nina worked in the local bakery that later went out of business. I think people sometimes went into that bakery where Nina worked just to bask in her laughter and good cheer. Nina had only three live daughters out of 11 pregnancies. One of the daughters was handicapped. Nina and her husband Mike were barely making it financially. Some days she worked until her feet were swollen out over her K-Mart boots, but she never lost her good humor and her gracious ways.

The mother of the family who moved into the house next to Nina's was on drugs. There were three kids—Stacy, 14, Scott, 9, and Kristin, 7, who, I learned from Nina, had cancer. They had three different fathers, none of whom was around. One was in prison. On Stacy's 14th birthday, her mother gave her a bag of marijuana.

I bought a new hot water heater that year, and the box it came in was thick and sturdy. I carried it down the hill where Stacy's brother Scott was playing with a friend. "You guys want this for a fort?" I asked. I wondered if the jargon had changed—maybe kids didn't call them forts anymore, or maybe large cardboard boxes didn't excite their imaginations. But their eyes lit up and they shouted, "Thank you!" and immediately launched plans for it. Setting it sideways in a grove of

scrub oaks and small pines on the hill, they began elaborating new scenes with the carton taking center stage. Kristin coasted down the hill toward us on her wagon, her hair flying out behind her. I noticed ink marks on her thigh. On a closer look I saw that her leg was painted—a beautifully drawn tulip arranged above a happy face.

In the aftermath of the Holocaust, in several of the death camps, it was discovered that the children had drawn pictures of butterflies on the walls of their quarters.

In late spring, Scott rode up my road on his bicycle wearing a helmet and black tee with "Jurassic Giants" printed on the back.

"Hi," he says, stopping the bike in front of my garden.

"Hi," I say. "How come you're not in school today?"

"I missed the bus."

"Well, what can I do for you?"

"Just looking at your flowers," he says, watching me cut the overgrown yarrow away from the roses.

"You want to take some home to your mom and Stacy?" I ask him.

"Thanks," he says. He rides off with a huge armload of golden yarrow, then returns, gets off his bike, and sits on the top step by the garden. "I like your house."

"You do?"

"Yes," he says. "I wish I had one like it."

"Someday you will," I tell him firmly. "You'll have a nicer house than this."

He shakes his head, smiling gently.

"No, I won't."

There's a resignation to a way of life that's settled into that smile, an acceptance of hopelessness.

The lilacs are shimmering in the morning sun as I start out for my morning walk. Stacy is standing barefoot on Nina's sagging front porch. She asks if she can walk to the top of the hill with me. "Sure," I say. "How are things going?" I ask her, although I have some idea how they're going. Nina told me that Stacy had to

walk down the road to wake her mother at the local drug dealer's cabin one morning so her mom could get to a school conference she'd missed twice before. Her mom was later arrested downtown on drug charges. Stacy was staying with Nina, and Scott and Kristin were with Mr. Greenlea, an old handyman who stayed at their house and helped them with groceries periodically, until Child Protective Services decided what to do with their lives.

The high school principal, who lives just a half mile up our road, had told me he was concerned about Stacy, she attended school only about once a week, and when she did she got into a fight with somebody. But I don't hear any of that from Stacy.

"Are you going anywhere this summer?" I ask her. I recall from our last conversation that she has grandparents in Pasadena. They take her to Disneyland and on other expensive

(Continued on page 10)

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).

January 1999
Volume 220 No. 1
Whole Number 5236

Typesetting & Layout
Town & Country
Press, Plymouth, IN

Patte LeVan, Editor

Editorial Address:

The Messenger

P.O. Box 985

Julian, CA 92036

TEL: (760) 765-2915

FAX: (760) 765-0218

E-MAIL: Messenger@jinet.com

Business & Subscription Address:

Central Office
48 Sargent Street
Newton, MA 02458

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.

A Scientist Explores Spirit

By George F. Dole and Robert H. Kirven

Published by

the Swedenborg Foundation, second edition, 1997

Reviewed by Stephen Koke

Two of our leading theologians, blessed with two of the best writing styles in Convention, produced this book in 1992. It apparently wasn't reviewed in *The Messenger*; but with the appearance of this new edition in 1997, it is time to catch up with it.

It begins with a stimulating look at Swedenborg's time and its intellectual character, written in sharp, incisive prose. The events of his life and scientific career are eloquently told, and the book brings out so many rarely seen details that it is an excellent source book on Swedenborg's life and time. In fact, there is a detailed chronology of his life near the back; it was a joy to find it. There is also a summary of his major teachings. The only thing I could find to comment on in these chapters is a claim that Swedenborg (when not yet a theologian) developed a "nebular hypothesis"—a type of theory about the creation of the solar system—before LaPlace (p. 31).

It has been a tradition of ours that Swedenborg, ignored by most modern historians, actually beat LaPlace to this turning point in scientific thought. But the two theories have nothing in common. Swedenborg's theory is not at all "nebular" but a theory of solar genesis in which the planets came from a crust-like material thrown out from the sun. LaPlace's idea was just the opposite; nebulous patches of light in the night sky, as well as peculiarities in our solar system, suggested to him that both suns and planets condense from tenuous gasses collapsing toward a common center. Hence the term, "nebular hypothesis."

In the middle chapters, where the book explains Swedenborg's complex and revolutionary career, it is evident that in our concentration on doctrine we have left his career understudied; *Scientist* gives us a collection of important events, but without a sense of pattern and process, a divine purpose, pulling them into a coherent story. Once he is commissioned by the Lord, his career is left almost entirely to a succession of turning points for which only mundane causes are presented—the opinions of others, current cultural condi-

tions, or shifts in his own feelings about his work.

At some important points the book's explanations are puzzling.

For example, we read (pp. 45, 47) that Swedenborg stopped his first published theological work, *Arcana Coelestia*, a massive explanation of the inner sense of Scripture, undoubtedly because it wasn't selling well. That idea would portray him as a great prophet who impatiently stopped a very important and revolutionary project solely because the consciousness it had to build wasn't yet there to greet it. Prophets are of course characterized by their faith in the future; eventually, good people should hear the message and embrace it. Meanwhile, the entire effort *must* be made available.

Swedenborg knew why *Arcana* wasn't selling well, and the news was not discouraging. As he explains in an early volume, the dying church had just passed through a period in which it would believe, but then profane, any new doctrines (n. 3898.3, 3398.4 see also *Spiritual Diary* n. 4422). Profanation is the worst of all evils, for it destroys all integrity of mind and heart by inextricably mixing evil with good, and truth with false beliefs. In order to prevent that, the Lord inspired Swedenborg to produce the *Arcana* only when the church moved into a period of merciful indifference to the truth. Only the "elect," the small remnant of the faithful left during any dying age, could then become interested in it. Hence his very low sales. Meanwhile, he was convinced that the turning point to new life, the Judgment, was "at hand." That belief would have blocked any sense of ultimate failure.

Scientist mentions the Last Judgment of 1757, but the event is surprisingly allowed to pass without any clear consequence to Swedenborg's work. The Judgment and the new Christian age it established had a decisive influence on whole blocks of Swedenborg's publishing. The restrictions that surrounded *Arcana Coelestia* before 1757 were imposed by a death process that anticipated the Judgment and the end of the Church. It's interesting that Swedenborg didn't know when the Judgment would occur; so *Arcana* was very improbably, and therefore very providentially, guided to a natural close at the end of a book of the Word (Exodus) in June of 1756, very suggestively for the purpose of allowing the Judgment to shift his writing toward principles of the new age when the

Judgment process started in January of 1757.

**It is evident that
in our
concentration on
doctrine we have
left
Swedenborg's
career
understudied;
Scientist gives
us a collection of
important
events, but
without a sense
of pattern and
process, a divine
purpose, pulling
them into a
coherent story.**

(Continued on page 4)

A Scientist Explores Spirit (Continued from page 3)

If *Arcana* was started by a divine act of timing and then stopped by another one, we should have a much more effective explanation for its ending. *Scientist* does observe, as a kind of afterthought, that Genesis and Exodus portray virtually all of the elements of religious history.

The Judgment continued to influence Swedenborg's career after the conclusion of the Judgment process in December of 1757. Swedenborg then launched, for the first time, a clever and energetic campaign to interest people. Excerpts from *Arcana Coelestia* appeared immediately, in 1758, as small works on basic themes that could circulate very quickly and cheaply. Included was an implied explanation of what was releasing so much new spiritual opportunity, *The Last Judgment and Babylon Destroyed*.

Swedenborg needed to quickly prime Christians with teachings they could now consider. New consciousness would grow slowly, and his first efforts had to proceed in small doses suitable to a new, but still rare and simple, spirituality. But very soon overviews of new age thought and its roots in the book of Revelation had to be in place, ready to aid any deeper development. Given the precise relationship between Swedenborg's changes of strategy and the catalytic events of 1757, the Judgment must have given his career a strong sense of direction.

He began a massive attempt to explain the book of Revelation, the one book of the Bible which prophetically describes the new age the Judgment had produced; it was to be published under the title, *Apocalypse Explained*, in two years. But *Apocalypse Explained* was stopped in midstream and left unpublished—most likely, *Scientist* theorizes, because it was awkwardly put together. Its explanation of the inner sense of Revelation was in its last chapters interrupted frequently by massive inserts on philosophy and doctrine. It was finally very distracting to read (pp. 49, 50).

The problem with this explanation is that awkward form is not a reason to quit, it is logically only a reason to edit. A work can actually be killed only by something fatal in its substance. We would also need to understand why Swedenborg would take so long to notice and respond to something so obvious and supposedly so threatening.

To fix the awkwardness, he could have removed some inserts for publication under separate cover or put them into a volume of supplementary essays in *AE*; that would have allowed the exegetical parts to lie closer together, and he could cover the surgery with new transitions. His printer would have had to wait a bit longer, but he should have seen the work on his desk. Since Swedenborg didn't try to edit it, the problem *he* saw must have been more fundamental.

The non-Swedenborgian reader may notice that Sweden-

borg now looks, on two counts, like a very gifted man who also lacked some backbone—*Scientist* leaves the impression that he was inclined to surrender a great project when facing a problem with it, even if the problem was his own creation and reversible.

A few years later, Swedenborg tried again to explain the book of Revelation, producing *Apocalypse Revealed*. It was commissioned by a voice from heaven, recounted in *Conjugal Love* n. 522. It told him to go into his room, close the door, and take up the work he had left behind on the *Apocalypse*, bringing it to a conclusion in two years.

Scientist takes this and other instructions from heaven very literally, despite Swedenborg's many explanations that the spiritual world is symbolic in its thought and experi-

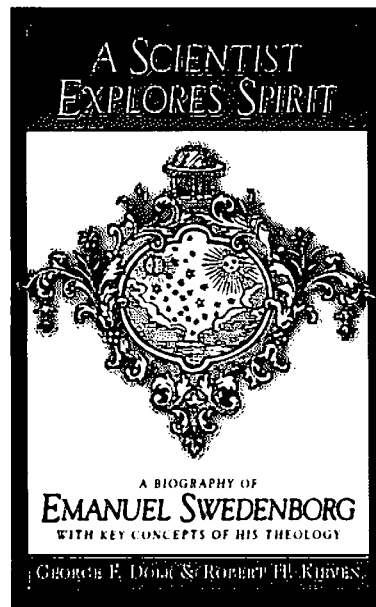
ence. That he obeyed, finishing in two years, seems to *Scientist* confirmed by his publishing date, 1766, minus the start date, 1764. But this can be deceptive confirmation. With start and stop years that have a year in between them, he could have finished in almost three years or a little more than one year. And he already knew that a complete work on the book of Revelation was a two-year job, since he had scheduled *AE* for two years. But much less than two years of work was left in the old manuscript which, in the literal reading, he was supposed to take up again. Should heaven prescribe the obvious and the mundane? The passage also needs to be taken with its context, the experiences related just beforehand.

It yields more illuminating results to take the instruction non-literally. We then learn a few things about Swedenborg's attitude in *AR*, and that suggests a bit more about the failure of *AE*. (For a try at explaining his

instructions non-literally, see my "Swedenborg's Long Sunrise," Part 2, in *Studia Swedenborgiana*, October, 1995, pp. 40-45.)

Hidden behind isolated events in Swedenborg's career an Advent was taking place, a connected and seamless descent of the divine into the ordinary mind. This deeper drama should explain primarily his writing sequence, which began high overhead with Scripture and the Most Ancient Church; descending toward the ordinary mind, it generated a profound religious psychology and philosophy. It finally ended down on the level of mundane practice with polemic doctrinal works that pushed earthly institutions much more forcefully for change. The external events and confrontations *Scientist* concerns itself with fit within this descent and thereby become ordered events rather than random happenings. In other words, the descent of the Lord into the ordinary mind aroused, and faced, corresponding issues as it proceeded.

The high starting point in Scripture exegesis also gave Swedenborg great explanatory power in his subsequent



(Continued on page 7)

An Invitation to a Dialogue about Theological Education

What kinds of theological education do we need to prepare ministers who will help to propel the church forward in the twenty-first century? Several models are being proposed; in order to evaluate these interesting proposals, they need to be spelled out carefully. As well, we need an accurate and objective picture of the present program at SSR, the Swedenborg School of Religion, which has been challenged about the education it offers, about its finances and leadership. I propose that there be a dialogue about preparing people for Swedenborgian ministry and that an entire issue of *The Messenger* be devoted to giving us all an understand-

ing of issues related to choosing modes of theological education that will meet our needs as a church.

Our inquiry should be broad-based in order to take advantage of the variety of perspectives available from other theological schools wrestling with similar issues. This is clearly an era when people from many denominations disagree about what they expect from their churches as well as about effective modes of delivering education. As the senior pastor of a large Lutheran congregation in Minnesota puts it:

I've been fairly skilled at the traditional ways of 'doing church,' but I recognize that those old ways no longer work as well as they used to. New occasions are teaching us new duties. Our seminaries need to know first of all that the old church is gone, and be encouraged to try new forms of education more suited to our times . . . I do not believe that the church is going to go back to the way it was in the 50s, 60s, 70s, or even 80s, or that the seminary can continue to do business the way it always has.

[Steven McKinley in *In Trust*, a magazine for leaders in theological education. Autumn 1998, p. 9]

Carrying the dialogue a step further, Daniel O. Ayleshire, the new executive director of ATS, the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, says:

As the cultural roles of the church and of higher education have changed, these once-privileged institutions are increasingly forced to deal with questions that once weren't asked, questions about accountability, about the use of resources. Schools find themselves fielding questions like . . . Do professors do anything? What are the outcomes of education? What is the relationship of dollars expended to benefit obtained? [Ibid, p. 16]

What might be the contents of a *Messenger* about theological education? They might include an article from an observer of the current scene such as Ralph H. Elliott, a professor of Hebrew and Old Testament who has served several schools [including

Andover-Newton Theological School] as an administrator, and comments:

The popular American individualism of the twentieth century is a distortion of biblical and theological understanding. The theological school will do well to create a program that contributes to the transition from the rights of the individual to the responsible interaction of community. Only by doing so can it prepare healthy individuals who will be able to facilitate a healthy community that most closely approximates 'church'. [Ibid., p. 25]

Articles in this special issue of *The Messenger* might focus on these questions:

1. What kinds of ministries are needed for successful churches of the future?
2. What do our ministers need to know about Swedenborgian thought, and how can they best prepare to communicate it to others?
3. What skills in practical ministry do theological students need in order to be prepared for work in parishes?
4. What knowledge needed for Swedenborgian ministry can be learned in classrooms and what can be learned independently (e.g., by directed study? Or electronic communication?)
5. What are the benefits and drawbacks of preparing for Swedenborgian ministry in a Swedenborgian school?
6. What kinds of organizational relationships between church and school might help to handle issues of interdependence in an effective and cooperative way?

I hope that the dialogue in an upcoming *Messenger* will set many thinking about theological education and how to organize so our church will be prepared for a healthy future.

Alice B. Skinner
St. George, Maine

Planning

Sitting under a big elm tree
Wondering what God has planned
for me
Does God make the plans or
should we?
Or should we just sit back
and see?
Should we go out in this
big ol' world
Trying to be all that we can be?
Should we spend our time
looking
Or just wait for God to lead?
I'm so used to being in control
Telling others what to do.
It's unusual for me
To just sit back and let life be.
Oh, I know there is a plan.
But what's the part that
I'm to play?
Am I supposed to find the plan
Or just wait for it to
come my way?
And if I'm waiting patiently
When God's plan is revealed to me
What happens if
I'm so wrapped up in me
That I don't even see . . .
the glorious plan
that God has for me?

Jane Siebert

General Council Report

General Council met at Temenos on October 30 and 31 for its 1998 interim meeting.

There were reports by the president, vice-president, Council of Ministers, Temenos, Wayfarers Chapel, and Central Office. Among other items of business, the 1999 Convention was discussed and some planning done, a fund-raising idea from Eric Allison was approved—the proceeds to go to the Millennium Fund—and collecting annual appeal donations by credit card will be explored. It was voted to recommend to Convention that the name "Board of Intervention" be changed to "Board of Mediation." New nominating Committee guidelines were accepted. The proposed budget was distributed, and after several changes a balanced budget was adopted. There was lengthy discussion of concerns about the theological school, and communication was sent to the trustees. After discussion of the probability of SSR selling its building, and discussion of the relocation committee's findings and recommendations, it was voted that the Central Office be moved to the Newtonville parish hall in a timely fashion.

On Saturday evening at the end of the General Council meetings an impromptu Halloween party was enjoyed, with costumes, skits, charades, and lots of fun.

Gloria Toot, secretary



Happenings at Wayfarers Chapel

The special events season kicked off on September 29th with Carolyn Gross, founder of Creative Life Solutions, presenting an interactive angel workshop with a spiritual dancer. Fifty people were in attendance. It was covered by the local newspaper with a photographer on site. The article appeared the following Monday with three photographs of the workshop. As a result of this no-cost publicity, the phone has been ringing steadily, resulting in seven pages of addresses for our mailing list. Many said they were so happy to see Wayfarers "going in this direction." Hotai Video Productions also taped the workshop for a complimentary documentary that they will be producing for Wayfarers 50th anniversary in June.

On October 20th, author Barbara Mark presented a three-hour workshop focusing on her latest book, *Angelspeake Book of Healing and Prayer*. Fifty people attended, and Hotai Video Productions taped the event. It was another interactive workshop.

Dr. Robert Kirven presented a workshop based on his latest book, *A Book About Dying*. Fourteen people attended this healing workshop on October 27th and were very moved by Dr. Kirven's words. A reception and book-signing were held for both events.

November brought our annual Thanksgiving collection of clothing, food, and toys for Rainbow Services, a shelter for women and children in San Pedro. This is an ongoing outreach.

November 29th, our third annual Denner Clarinet Concert was presented by Kermit Welch and Friends with a reception following.

December 15th, a special Christmas concert of holiday favorites and Christmas classics, featuring Susan Dietz, Soprano; Leberta Clark, Mezzo Soprano; and Agostino Castagnola, tenor, was presented under the direction of Wendy Waring, music director at Wayfarers Chapel.

January rings in the new year with television producer Barry Anthony and Friends presenting a concert of original meditative music focusing on the Wayfarer's journey to his true home. Reception and CD-signing to follow.

Black History month will be celebrated February 2nd, with Hope Foyes' offering of black history through music, poetry, and drama. Ms. Foyes has sung with Paul Robeson and had her own radio program. Reception to follow.

February 9th, Stephanie Osborne will present a Musical Valentine Harp Concert. She will be performing romantic classics on her magical harp to celebrate love! Reception and CD-signing to follow.

March blows in with a seminar presented by Artista of Artista's Nutrition, and Pat Power. Both are RN's and Reiki masters. They will discuss healing with natural medicines and Women's Wisdom.

It has been such a pleasure to hear from the community by letters and phone calls of appreciation!

*Mary Sabol
Director of Public Relations and
Outreach
Wayfarers Chapel*

(Continued on page 7)



Photo Above: Friday, November 13th, 1998 holiday dinner at the Hilton Hotel in San Pedro. Board and Staff (L-R) Mary Sabol, Pete Toot, Flo Swiger, Ron Brugler, Edwin Capon, Esther Capon.

Happenings at Wayfarers Chapel

(Continued from page 6)

Note: Following are excerpted comments from letters written to the Chapel about the angel workshop:

"My daughter and I attended the Angel workshop at your beautiful Wayfarers Chapel on October 20. Thank you so very much for presenting it. We felt so much love and peace just sitting there waiting for the workshop to begin.

"I have lived in Palos Verdes for 38 years and other than bringing out-of-town guests to view the Chapel, have never attended anything there.

This certainly will change. I plan on going to Dr. Robert Kirven's workshop next Tuesday, and already have November 29 circled on my calendar for the Clarinet Quartet.

What a lovely thing you are doing for the community. Thanks again!"

Sincerely,
Wanda M.

"... I am so happy that you are beginning to have this type of workshop. It fills a need in all our hearts and souls. In this time of unsettling events, it is very reassuring to know we can ask for and receive guidance and love when we need it.

These workshops can help provide us with the resources to move ahead in our lives with less stress!"

Many thanks,
Linda F.



Photo above: The Rev. Marlene Laughlin, Rev. Dr. Robert Kirven, Phyllis Bosley—Dr. Kirven's workshop October 27th, 1998, *A Book About Dying*.



Photo above: Sunday worship services with the Rev. Marlene Laughlin and the Rev. Robert Kirven.



Photo above: Angelspeake Workshop led by Author Barbara Mark October 20, 1998.

Photo right: Carols and Candles, children's service held in December.



A Scientist Explores Spirit

(Continued from page 4)

work. When he was not doing exegetical writing, Scripture was not left behind; he saw the Lord in Scripture, and it became the inner core of his thinking, while his books adapted its inspirations more and more to external and contemporary subjects (TCR n. 779-80).

You may announce an Advent at its beginning or its end; Swedenborg announced this one near its end, when he wrote on two copies of *Brief Exposition*, "This book is the Lord's Advent, written by command." In heaven, he saw this declaration on all of his books. *Brief Exposition* was the first work to touch earth and directly challenge the religious establishment; it also gave us a preliminary list of topics for an anticipated large doctrinal work (called simply "the work") that would become *True Christian Religion* (see BE n. 1, 16).

The function of *TCR* noted in *Scientist* is that it defended Swedenborg's doctrines to the Swedish Lutheran Church, which was threatening to call Swedenborg on the carpet for heresy. But after *TCR* appeared, the Lord sent his disciples throughout the spiritual world to declare that the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns. Apparently the Advent was completed by *BE* and *TCR*, which explains the latter more deeply. We need both kinds of explanation, the temporal and the more theological, to complete Swedenborg's story.

Stephen Koke is the chair of the Communications Support Unit and the author of *Hidden Millennium: The Doomsday Fallacy*, published by the Swedenborg Foundation, October 1998. (Reviewed in December 1998 *Messenger*.) ❖

Ohio Association Hosts Johnny Appleseed Presentation

The Ohio Association held its 145th annual meeting at the Radisson Hotel in Cleveland October 2-4. There were 48 members and friends attending from Pittsburgh, Urbana, Cincinnati, and Cleveland. Invitations had been extended to these societies to come to Cleveland to connect, learn, and participate in this exciting spiritual community of Swedenborgians.

On Saturday morning after breakfast, the children were taken to the Cleveland Children's Museum. The museum was featuring an exhibit about "The Magic Schoolbus." Then they had lunch at McDonalds, and afterwards the children watched a movie at a member's home.

After the children left, we had our first lecture-workshop which was conducted by the Rev. Robert McCluskey, pastor of the New York church. The title of this workshop was "Paradigms of Unity: The Individual in Creation." Robert wrote the following in regard to his workshop:

Central to the task of regeneration is the call to unity and wholeness, within ourselves, our personal relationships, and our environment. This workshop will explore ways in which the Lord has provided us with images and models for this divine unity in four distinct areas of our lives; our bodies, our minds, the world of nature, and God's Word. We will learn how to read these models of unity in ways that bear fruit for our own spiritual journeys.

After lunch at the hotel we conducted the Ohio Association business meeting, then began our second workshop of the day, a talk and slide presentation by William Jones of the Johnny Appleseed Heritage Center and Outdoor Historical Drama. This is a non-profit organization featuring a 1500-seat outdoor amphitheater now being built for an enactment of the life and historical times of Johnny Appleseed. Saturday evening we had our annual banquet at the hotel.

The next day, which was World-wide Communion Sunday, the Revs. Robert McCluskey and John Billings conducted the worship service at the Cleveland Chapel. McCluskey's sermon was titled *The Dream of Christian Unity*. After this beautiful service, we all enjoyed a pot luck luncheon before heading home.

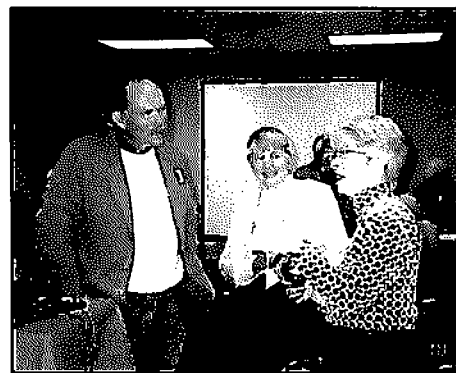


Photo above: Bill Jones speaking with Lois Krebs (R) of the Cleveland Swedenborgian Church at the 1998 150th anniversary of the Ohio Association of Swedenborgian churches. (Note that Lois and the lady in the middle of the photo are holding Jonathan apples, which were given to all present at Bill's presentation).



Photo above: Bill Jones speaking at an historic block house used by early settlers. Film producer recording talk at left. Tour bus used to visit various Appleseed venues in background.



Photo above: (L-R) The Rev. Robert McCluskey, Pete and Gloria Toot, Sharon Billings, Steve Ozeba.

Chuck Winter, president
Swedenborg Chapel,
Cleveland ♦



Photo right: Sunday church service; Verda Winter talking with the children.

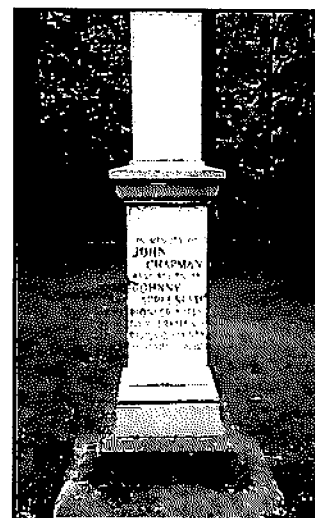


Photo left: One of the many monuments to Johnny Appleseed in the Ashland and Richland Counties of northcentral Ohio.

(Continued on page 9)

Johnny Appleseed Heritage Center

A Johnny Appleseed Heritage Center & Outdoor Historical Drama is scheduled to be built soon in northcentral Ohio, with a target date of June 2000 for the opening of the 1500-seat wooden amphitheater. Last June, Bill Jones, founder, president, and producer gave a one-week seminar on the project. The Rev. Eric Allison gave a talk to some fifty people, describing the New Church faith which Johnny's life so lovingly exemplified and shared with settlers. (This past September, Eric also conducted a worship service at the Ft. Wayne, Indiana Appleseed Festival—see "A Swedenborgian First"). The Ohio seminar was held in conjunction with the Mohican School in the Out-of-Doors (a children and youth oriented environmental organization), Johnny Appleseed Heritage Center, and Ashland University, which gave two credit hours for attendance. In his talk, Bill made favorable reference to the Swedenborgian faith.

Focusing on Johnny Appleseed as a unique national hero, the Johnny Appleseed Heritage Center, Inc., exists to promote, support, and nurture his legacy as a humanitarian, philanthropist and naturalist through family-oriented cultural, educational, and historical venues such as outdoor drama, museums, and related programs. The Center was incorporated November 14, 1994, and has been designated as a nonprofit corporation. A volunteer board of trustees, representing private, state, horticultural, historical, educational, and philanthropic interests is guiding the Center's future.

Although John Chapman was born in Leominster, Massachusetts, September 26, 1774, and died near Ft. Wayne, Indiana, March 18, 1845, he primarily lived in and traveled throughout Ohio during the largest portion of his adult life. He spent a great deal of time in old Richland county and, in particular, on the Black and Rocky forks of the Mohican River. The site chosen for the Center is 45 acres in beautifully wooded hills east of Charles Mill Reservoir Dam and recreation area, on property owned by the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District.

On October 3, the Ohio Association enjoyed a talk and slide presentation by Bill Jones. The event was written up in the Garden section of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, which resulted in about twenty visitors to the Cleveland Swedenborgian Church. General Council has agreed to schedule Bill's appearance at our 1999 annual convention in Los Angeles, California, with a mini-course to follow, if possible. ❖

—PWL



Photo left: (L-R) Tom Neuenfeldt, Eric Allison, Bob Leas, Marjorie Leas, Judy Zehr, B.J. Neuenfeldt

Photo right: A brief informal enactment of Johnny Appleseed and pioneers at Hemlock Falls, scene of an Indian massacre.



A SWEDENBORGIAN FIRST

Eric Allison

On Saturday, September 19th, Betty Jean and Tom Neuenfeldt and I met at the home of Marjie and Bob Leas in Ft. Wayne, Indiana to make final arrangements for leading the graveside worship service the next morning at the 24th annual Johnny Appleseed Festival. Marjie moved to Ft. Wayne three years ago and discovered that those running the Johnny Appleseed Festival did not know that there were still any Swedenborgians around. Marjie volunteered to have Swedenborgians lead the thirty-minute outdoor service, and Festival chairperson Judy Zehr accepted the offer. The fair is held at Johnny Appleseed Park. Bob opened the service and introduced the Swedenborgian connection. Marjie and Betty Jean read selections from the Word, and Tom read from the writings. I gave a brief sermon which focused on the internal sense of the passages. For an offering, instead of asking for money, Marjie and Betty Jean passed out apples to the 74 people attending. While the apples were being given away, the correspondence of an apple was explained. We closed the service by leading the congregation in all three verses of the Johnny Appleseed song.

The Johnny Appleseed Festival draws over 60,000 people for the two-day event. The response to our service was enthusiastic. We left over three hundred copies of handouts about Johnny's faith on the pews (hay bales). In response to a leaflet, one person e-mailed Lee Woofenden to order a subscription to *Our Daily Bread*. We were invited to come back next year and are already planning changes for next year's service.

Copies of the service and the handouts "The Faith of Johnny Appleseed," are available at no charge from the Rev. Eric Allison, 240 Black Walnut Pl., Kitchener, ON, N2P1T5, Canada. ❖

Swedenborg Meets the Mystics: What Have I Learned?

(Continued from page 1)

we Swedenborgians get confused about Swedenborg and mysticism because we sometimes see the mystical as involving the occult or spirit communication. However, he says a more typical definition from mystics involves union with the divine. By this definition, I think most of us would agree that Swedenborg was, in fact, a mystic.

Ted Klein's article in the January 1997 *Messenger*, "Swedenborg's Active Mysticism" further clarified the sense in which Swedenborg was a mystic. Ted points out that Swedenborg's connection with the divine led him into commitment to active life within community. He continued his work for a time on the Board of Mines, then focused on exploration and writing. He was an active participant in the Swedish House of Nobles and wrote numerous monographs addressing a range of Swedish economic, political, and social issues. In his article, Ted brings community connection into the discussion on the nature of mysticism and sees Swedenborg as an active mystic. I believe the community

connection is an important dimension of living out mysticism in one's life.

How does Swedenborg compare with other mystics?

Through most of our series, we've looked at Swedenborg in relation to other mystics of various traditions and historical periods. We've had articles on Hildegard, Eckhart, Rufus Jones, Teresa of Avila, Nicholas Black Elk, Bernádin, Thomas Merton, the Buddha, Confucius, the Sufis, the Beguines, and others. In all cases, we found many, many ways in which Swedenborg's mysticism had some similarity to that of another mystic. As the Rev. Adam Seward said: "I found that the statements of both Black Elk and Swedenborg could have been made by either, if we just change the wording." [October, 1997]. Yet we also found many differences between Swedenborg and other mystics. As Mary Kay Klein said of Thomas Merton: "I can well imagine that Swedenborg and Merton would have much to discuss, includ-

ing their divergent views on monasticism." [March, 1998 "Swedenborg Meets Thomas Merton."]

So, all in all, it seems clear to me that Swedenborg is a mystic and that he is included within a universal group of people for whom mysticism has been a deeply significant part of their lives, and for whom aspects of their spirituality have been left to history. Mystics span all religious traditions, cultures, and historical periods. Yet, Swedenborg's mysticism was his own; the unique way in which the Divine connected with him. And his writings, inspired by that connection, live on in our libraries. By allowing his writings to also live in our hearts, we can each open ourselves to experiencing the Lord's influx in our lives. We do not need to seek for or expect life-shattering visions and voices in order to find the divine in the sunlight, the rain drops, the fall leaves, or the snowflakes of winter. We can experience spirituality through our music, our art, our relationships with each other, and our active involvement in the life of our community. In my mind, mysticism is part of life and available to any of us in our personal connections with the Lord that guide our daily steps. ❖

MOVING TOWARD THE LIGHT

Julian Diary: *Fresh Starts* —A Story for the New Year

(Continued from page 2)

outings. Yes, she says, her grandfather has promised to pay for her acting classes. She's going to get an agent and become a famous actress. I mention the current high school production, *Steel Magnolias*. She hasn't seen it. "You might want to audition for one of the school plays," I suggest. "It's a good way to get known, gain confidence." When her family first moved to the neighborhood, she was looking forward to starting high school, but now her face tightens at the mention of school. "I'm sure you're very good," I encourage her.

"I know I am," she says, "I just feel it." She moved the conversation back to her visits in Pasadena. She had to

take her dreams out of town.

When Stacy's family was evicted following her mother's arrest, Stacy wanted to live with Nina's family, and Nina took her in. During the first year, Stacy often woke screaming with nightmares about being molested. She began to call Nina and Mike Mom and Dad. She got drunk a few times, and thought she had to compete with Nina's kids for attention. But Nina patiently worked with her until Stacy learned there was enough love to go around.

In 1996 Nina and her family moved, along with Stacy, to a large old trailer in Warner Springs, about an hour's drive away. Nina works as a cook at a local camp. I call her every few months to see how things are going.

Stacy will be 18 in March. She is secretary of the student body and is getting A's and B's in school. She writes letters and talks on the phone

regularly with Kristin and Scott, and has been writing to people trying to find the other four siblings that her mother adopted out. She works part time as a waitress in order to help the family. She's getting applications from college and wants to be a psychologist. Nina says she's been completely accepted into their extended family.

Nina took an extra child into her family at a point in their lives when the only way she could be sure there would be food on the table was when she brought leftovers from the bakery, and later from the camp. "You've been so wonderful for that girl," I tell her.

"Well," she says, "she's been a good addition to the family. She brings laughter into the house that we wouldn't have had otherwise. She has a lot of courage."

I think of that line from *Jane Eyre*. *She is tenacious of life.* ❖

The Experience of God

Dear Editor,

I am wholly in accord with the Rev. Eric Allison's piece on the Pentecostals (November *Messenger*). For the most part, the Swedenborgian churches seem to have lost the way to God. "We have concentrated on understanding the information given to us as the result of Swedenborg's experiences, and felt it was inappropriate or dangerous to have our own." I saw this in Convention's reactions to a Swedenborgian writing on ways to spiritual experience (*Returning to the Source*).^{*} There was everything but appreciating the experience of God as the key to everything. Even a minister, who shortly thereafter entered the spiritual world, said *Source* would require our whole church to be changed. Not really. Each just needs to add his or her own consistent spiritual practice. This is not anti-doctrine, but this is doctrine of the life, retained forever because it is of the life.

Once I was hired by the State of California to search for effective drug abuse treatment programs. I found one fabulously effective in a Pentecostal group. Basically they were Christian activists who searched for down-and-out drug abusers and took them into their deeply Christian community. They gave them Christian support throughout their drug withdrawal. All the community members had their own experience of God, and their belief and enthusiasm induced it in others. An incident will illustrate: A recent heroin addict was incredulous when he saw his own hands throw heroin down a toilet. He then knew Christ ruled in him. Though I am of a very different background I would enjoy working with them. They seemed like Swedenborg's description of himself shortly after entering the spiritual. He said he felt like a child in the spiritual. They were like teenagers in the spiritual.

To the next Swedenborgian who asks me how to make the church grow I will say, "You yourself must find God. If you are to help the church, that will be the very basis of help." It is paradoxical. Swedenborgians want members, but members must rest on one at a time, for each person is the church in the least form. And when one finds God, he or she has God's power to aid others. But without it, we are not much. My commendations, Rev. Allison.

Wilson Van Dusen
Ukiah, California

^{*}*Returning to the Source, The Way to the Experience of God*, by Wilson Van Dusen. Real People Press, 1997.

TO THE EDITOR

Dear Patte,

I was highly impressed with the November *Messenger*. Eric Allison's article "A New Pentecost in the New Church," was particularly valuable to me personally, and I hope others in the Church will read it and "get it." Further, I found the articles about near-death of special interest. I am among those who have had a near-death experience.

Ron Siddell
Lynnwood, Washington

The New Age Minus One

To the Editor:

I would like to make a comment on the interesting article by Wilma Wake in the October 1998 *Messenger*. Certainly, some of Swedenborg's ideas have permeated our present New Age culture, and one could go on adding to the list—the concept of correspondences has influenced many new healing methods such as reflexology, aromatherapy, and color therapies, though I doubt that the Writings themselves had such direct influence on these as Wilma Wake suggests.

However, if we ask what it was that Swedenborg really wanted to make widely known, then it was for sure his central theological teaching on the oneness of God as explained in his last major work, *True Christian Religion*. Referring to this work he wrote, "I have decided to bring to light the doctrine of the New Church in its fullness, thus as a whole." (*Brief Exposition* 1) Indeed, he believed that he would be spared until this work was completed. We are a long way from the thoughts which expound the unity of God as dwelling within the incarnate and risen Jesus Christ. Such an idea is not acceptable to the older Christian churches. Popular culture sees Jesus as a powerful healer, inspired teacher, as one of the many buddhas, or a son of God in the same sense that we are all God's children.

Because Swedenborg's doctrine of the oneness of God is not readily acceptable, the members of the New Church themselves refrain from mentioning it too often during our Angel seminars or articles on the same subject. I do believe that we in the New Church should not identify with the liberal New Age movement too readily without recognizing that it often caters for superficial and pseudo-spiritual tastes. A quiet relaxation in an aroma-filled room may give a sense of security and greater control of our stressed lives, but it does not discover for us the Savior. In fact, it can make us feel that we do not need more than just such a sense of well-being, and the often painful process of regeneration seems quite unnecessary. Swedenborg was not

(Continued on page 12)



Ken Turley

Well, it is the beginning of a new year, at least according to the calendar. And I'm wondering how many of us actually made New Year's resolutions this time around. As I think back over past years, I'm noticing how many of my resolutions were about giving up something or changing some aspect of how I behave. This kind of spiritual weeding, culling the bad fruit, so to speak, is important to do. I notice also that rarely have my

resolutions been about preserving something or developing some aspect of how I behave. What is there about who we are that is worth preserving? What is there about what we do that is worth developing? What would we be willing to expend on giving up some bad habit? Are not our good traits and characteristics worth as much attention and nurturance as our bad traits deserving to be eliminated? I think so. In fact I think they are worth far more attention.

Swedenborg suggests that it is sufficient for a person to do serious self-examination and repentance once or twice a year. He suggests also that the developing of our capacity for love and wisdom is an ongoing, never-ending, day-by-day process.

With that in mind, I would like to suggest that, as we enter this New Year, we each take a serious look at

ourselves. Examine closely who we are and what we are becoming. Having done that, we make a list of the things about ourselves that we really like! Next we take that list and narrow it down to the two or three that are most important to us. Then we make a commitment, a New Year's resolution if you will, to do everything we can to preserve, nurture, and develop those aspects of ourselves that we want to carry with us into the New Year. In fact we might even want to consider them the aspects of ourselves that we will carry with us into the hereafter and present as gifts to the One who waits.

The Rev. Ken Turley is pastor of the Fryeburg New Church in Fryeburg, Maine.

Reprinted from their January 1996 Swedenborgian Church Newsletter. ❖

OPINION

(Continued from page 11)

a popularizer of spirituality, even though many of his ideas titillate human curiosity before a more sensational subject enters the bestseller list. I do not imagine he rejoices that some of his ideas attract superficial attention for a while, but ignore the really essential truths, which, alas, are still strongly resisted by many.

We should not be seduced into believing that the acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as manifested in the Divine Human—the true God/Man—is only just round the corner, nor to expect the New Age movement to be the first to embrace it. We simply do not know where, when and how the New Church will take root. We just have to make sure we do not present only those ideas which are popular at the moment and keep the cardinal truths out of sight in case they might lower our popularity in the eyes of the world. It is that one idea which matters more than anything.

Christopher Hasler

The Rev. Christopher Hasler is a retired minister of the General Conference of the New Church in Great Britain. ❖

LACHEAH'S JOURNEY

Kay and Don Fox

This is the story of one little girl in Northern Thailand who was given a chance and grabbed it with both hands!

In October 1992, we were visiting Musseekee in Northern Thailand. Don had opened the new Centre for Hill Tribes Development & Resource Centre and the Fox family was ready to return to Chiangmai. A man and his 13-year-old daughter arrived. They had walked all day through the jungle to enroll her at the Centre. Siami, director of the Centre, asked the man if he would like to go to Chiang-mai. She knew he had never been to the city. He responded, "No, please take my daughter!" Lacheah was given no option. She climbed into the back of the covered pick up truck carrying a shoulder bag. Tasi, our daughter who cares about all details, said, "Where is her suitcase?" She was going to be there for a week! Siami replied, "She's carrying everything she owns!" Tasi, who has a considerable wardrobe, was "floored." In Chiangmai, Tasi's allowance paid for a complete outfit, blouse, skirt and jacket. (This was less than \$20, but a huge gift for

Lacheah.) She was frightened and shy the whole week in town.

In 1995 we again arrived in Musseekee. Lacheah had graduated school and was constantly at the pedal sewing machines. She could whip up a bag, vest, or jacket in no time. She worked long hours to cover her board and save for college. She wanted an education and saw that hard work would get her there. No frills for Lacheah.

In 1997 she was not there to greet us! She was in Phayao Bible College. Mr. and Mrs. Don Doyle of Dinuba, California began to sponsor her in 1996. With scholarship, hard work and a will to win, Lacheah has become an honor student at the college of her choice. It may be difficult for your children to attend USC, but it is impossible for these girls and boys to receive any education without our help. Lacheah's dad could only bring her over the mountains to Hill Tribes Centre; God used Handclasp to do the rest.

Don Fox is president of Handclasp, and husband to Kay Fox, a wedding director at the Wayfarers Chapel. The article above is an update on the mission work Don and Kay have been doing for many years. (See March 1998 *Messenger*, "Weaving a Village into Community.") ❖

Editor's note: The following talk was given by the author on the occasion of Swedenborg's birthday celebration (January 29) last year at the Church of the Open Word in St. Louis.

Spiritual Birthday Cake

Ed Sylvia

Two thousand years ago our Lord said to his disciples that he would return and make *all things new*. I say two thousand years ago, because he also promised these things would happen within one generation.

Two thousand years? One generation? So what happened? Does the world not still wait for a second coming? . . . for a new world to be created?

If one could do that, wouldn't one find a whole new world opened to him or her?

Is this not the Lord's promise to us all?

Anyone who has contemplated the question of, "Is the glass half empty or half full," knows it is not what we see but how we see it that determines the kind of world we find ourselves in. It colors everything.

Since humankind has come to look at spiritual things materialistically, they wait for a time when the Lord will furnish us all with a new *physical* earth. They expect the big change to happen *outside* of them.

Thanks to the Lord's providence, and the man whose birthday we are celebrating today, we have, in *this* church, the opportunity to see things differently—in fact, see the world in a whole new way. How?

We just have to change, be reborn, and this process indeed can take place *within one generation!*

What is it to see the extraordinary in the ordinary? . . . to see God returning in his full glory! To see God not with our eyes but with a new understanding.

Swedenborg's writings teach us how to look at material things spiritually. To find or unlock the spiritual processes that take place in even the most mundane of things.

If this is true, something as silly and mundane as a birthday cake can reveal to us some of the most profound of all spiritual mysteries.

How?

We merely take note of what goes into the making of a birthday cake, and find its spiritual or psychological equivalent. And like magic, we will actually discover the recipe for nothing less than our spiritual salvation.

So let's build a spiritual birthday cake together, to celebrate this happy occasion—on a deeper level.



First of all, a birthday cake is made to be enjoyed on someone's date of birth—the day one was born. But a

spiritual birthday cake is made to celebrate a state of rebirth.

The recipe for a spiritual cake can be found on the back of any cake box. Again, we just substitute for the worldly ingredients their spiritual counterpart.

For instance, one of the main ingredients is flour. To that, we add eggs, butter and various flavorings.

These things which go into the "batch" represent all the qualities we have within us—all our loves, thoughts, desires, etc. Everything that we are. Because when we make a cake, we put everything of ourselves into it—for we do it out of love. And the final cake will become a form of that love.

Now, water must also be added to this mixture.

Water is an element that comes from the heavens. Something that is above where we are. Like Swedenborg's writings. Water represents the higher ideals we wish to bring into our lives—to stir us up into adopting higher motives in all our endeavors.

So we stir this into the mix of what we are—the water into the flour mix.

We stir this all up because we want spiritual ideals to reach every aspect of our lives. If we keep spiritual ideals out of some aspects of our lives we end up with blind spots, logs in our eye. These are like dry lumps in the batter.

But no matter how hard we stir this water into the batter, we still don't have cake! Similarly, no matter how much we read Swedenborg or listen to sermons, we still won't have a spiritual cake.

We are merely a heterogeneous mixture of our actions and our knowledge. If things don't progress beyond this point, they can actually get worse.

All we've managed to do is to create a mess in the kitchen. Because when we know what's right, but don't do it, or fall short, that's when we really feel that our lives are in a mess. No inner peace.

Then, something else happens—the batter hardens and begins to crumble. The water evaporates from the dough. Just as truth evaporates from our lives when we become cynical, hardened.

This is what happens when we don't use the things we've learned throughout life. They separate themselves from us. Evaporate.

You see, what we know and what we are have to be brought together in a special way as to create a completely new texture. Or the water and dough will separate.

This problem is remedied in the earthly kitchen by putting the batter in the oven, and turning the dial to the appropriate temperature.

Baking, or heat, brings the flour mix and water together. Only then will the result be cake.

The tests in life are the oven in which a spiritual cake is baked. Where what we know to be true is fused with what we are. These are our trials by fire. Our tests of will.

One of the tests God gives us is to love the neighbor. The neighbor can be anybody who crosses our paths or who just plain crosses us. Because at that precise moment, what we know to be right meets up with what we are.

(Continued on page 14)

10 Ways

An Organization Can Become Involved with Church World Service

1. Sponsor a CROP WALK.
2. Support the CWS Blanket Programs by holding a Blanket Day.
3. Share in a hope-filled tomorrow by having a Tools of Hope program in your congregation.
4. Have Sunday School classes and other groups join in the Gift of the Heart Kits Program and assemble CWS Health Kits, School Kits and layettes.
5. Show a free loan video or other audiovisual (from our free catalogue).
6. Buy CROP WALK T-Shirts for the youth group (or better yet, for everyone in your congregation who is young at heart).
7. Check out our website:
www.nccusa.org/cws
8. Buy copies of the devotional booklet *For the Healing of Nations*. For a free list of global education materials, call 410-727-6106.
9. Sponsor a refugee.
10. Order free materials from Church World Service to learn more about these and other ways you can get involved. Call 1-800-297-1516.

Reprinted from *Corletter*, National Council of Churches of Christ.

Pretty Prairie, Kansas

Update on Adam Seward's Condition

I am writing this to update as many as possible about my current condition.

On my installation day (October 4), unknown to most of us, I was becoming ill. My health deteriorated, and I was hospitalized on October 14 with congestive heart failure. This means that my heart is not currently strong enough to pump as it should.

The response from Convention's people has been phenomenal. If I had ever had any doubt that I was loved, that doubt would have been swept away. Lynn and I continue to receive cards and letters from people who are praying for us. This response, combined with the continuing care that we have received from our own congregation, has helped us to walk this difficult path.

Several people have asked how to

help. I can't receive phone calls now. They exhaust me, and I have been instructed to rest and avoid any hint of stress. However, I do gratefully accept your cards and letters. If you are a pastor or newsletter editor, you might consider putting me on your mailing list.

My future now contains much uncertainty. It may be months before the doctors here work toward a more accurate diagnosis. My physical health is equally unpredictable now. I know many of you would like more specific information. Lynn and I do not have it, and are not likely to have it in the near future.

More than anything else, this situation reminds me of the book inscription at the end of the movie *It's A Wonderful Life*—no one is poor who has friends.

With affection,

Adam

Reprinted from November 1998 *Plains Banner*. ❖

Spiritual Birthday Cake

(Continued from page 13)

You know what they say: "if we can't take the heat, get out of the kitchen." But as we succeed with this or any other commandment, the spiritual cake begins to take form—our lives take on a *whole new texture*.

By the way, these are not simply amusing metaphors, or a poet's fancy—but at most perfect science! This process is the same one that created the entire universe.

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are exactly represented by the trinity of flour, water and oven. The active, the passive, and the holy reconciling forces which take place in all events—big and small.

From the cosmos back to the cake.

Finally we must add the icing and colorful decorations. Why? Because

these are the anticipated joys of doing something sweet for others. Just as the worldly birthday cake is made to be cut up and shared, so is the spiritual cake.

In other words, we have become such that other people actually begin to taste a certain sweetness in all our actions towards others. They delight from what we have to offer.

So I would like to end this small talk to honor the very special birthday of Emanuel Swedenborg. A birthday which can help us all to celebrate the greatest birthday we could ever have—our spiritual birthdays.

Ed Sylvia is a member of the St. Louis Swedenborgian Church, the Church of the Open Word. ❖

MARRIAGE

Carrier & Wales—Paige V. Carrier and Jason A. Wales were united in marriage October 24, 1998, at the First Congregational Church in Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Ken Turley officiating.

DEATHS

Burnett—Arthur L. Burnett, Jr., age 75, entered the spiritual world November 6, 1998. Art was a longtime friend of the Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church, sang in the church choir, and was close friends with the late Roger Paulson. His resurrection service was conducted November 13 at the Virginia Street church in St. Paul, the Rev. Kit Billings officiating.

Heath—Ruby Y. Heath, age 80, lifelong member of the Fryeburg church, entered the spiritual world October 22, 1998. Ruby taught Sunday school for 42 years, was a trustee and treasurer of the Sunday school, and was active in the Fryeburg community. She is survived by a son, three daughters, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Her resurrection service was conducted October 25 at the Fryeburg New Church, the Rev. Ken Turley officiating.

Rockenbach—Glenn H. Rockenbach, age 82, lifelong active member of the Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church since age six, entered the spiritual world October 25, 1998. His resurrection service was conducted October 30 at the Virginia Street church in St. Paul, the Rev. Kit Billings officiating. Glenn served as church treasurer for many years. He is survived by his daughter, Patricia Bearup, a brother and sister and several nieces and nephews.

Winston—Bev Winston of Williamston, Michigan, a member of the Royal Oak Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world November 4, 1998. A funeral service was conducted November 8 in



East Lansing, the Revs. Renee Billings, pastor of Royal Oak church, and Glen Litchfield from Chapel Hill United Methodist Church officiating.

CORRECTION:

The late Louis Wheaton, whose death was reported in the November *Messenger*, is survived by three daughters: Andrea, Susan and Mary Jane, one son, Elwyn, and five grandchildren. We apologize for the error.

OOPS!

Our apologies for the accidental listing of Trevor Woofenden and Nancy Little's marriage under **BAPTISMS** in the December *Messenger*. (On the other hand, I suppose one could argue that all marriages are baptisms—of fire!)

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

Gladys Wheaton
1770 Massachusetts Ave., #151
Cambridge, MA 02140

SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH MEETING DATES

1999

Feb. 8–14 Council of Ministers
EdFest
Tucson, Arizona

Feb. 19–20 Urbana Trustees
Urbana, Ohio

Apr. 17–18 Wayfarers Chapel Board
Wayfarers Chapel,
California

Apr. 23–24 SSR Board of Trustees
Newton, Massachusetts

May 1 Investment Committee
Temenos

June 20–27 Pre-Convention and
Convention 1999
Pepperdine College
Malibu, California

Gallery of Mirrors: Reflections of Swedenborgian Thought

(Continued from back)

knowledge and impeccable scholarship. He has given lectures and poetry readings throughout Europe, the United States, Canada, China, and Russia. Hallengren was both a visiting fellow (1980) and a research affiliate in history (1987) at Harvard University, and he spoke at the international meeting of P.E.N. in Belgrade in 1990.

President of the Stockholm Association of Humanities, Hallengren is also a lecturer on the history of literature at Stockholm University and the managing editor of the literary journal *Parnass*. Hallengren's publications include

Detente and Disruption (1991), *The Puritan Mind and the Modern Self* (1991), *Deciphering Reality* (1992), *The Code of Concord* (1994), and *What Is National Literature?* (1995).

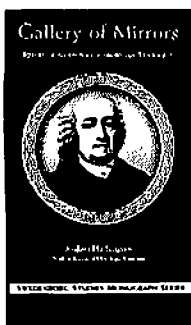
Dr. Hallengren has been on a round-the-world tour, lecturing on the influence of Swedenborgian thought, in Philadelphia, Chicago, Honolulu, and New Delhi, India, from November 20 to December 14.

To order, call Swedenborg Foundation at 1-(800) 355-3222. Hardcover \$24.95, paperback, \$16.95.



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.

Gallery of Mirrors: Reflections of Swedenborgian Thought



The Swedenborg Foundation is pleased to announce the publication of *Gallery of Mirrors: Reflections of Swedenborgian Thought* by the eminent Swedish scholar Anders Hallengren, Ph. D., Stockholm University.

In these compelling essays, Anders Hallengren shows the reflection of the poetic, metaphysical, and ideological character of Emanuel Swedenborg's writings, interpreted by various thinkers, on the spiritual world of humanity. Hallengren's meticulous research from long-neglected archival sources demonstrates the influence of Swedenborgian thought on literature, art, music, philosophy, religion and politics. Swedenborg's works had profound effect on such diverse thinkers as playwright August Strindberg, novelist Honoré de Balzac, poet Walt Whitman, philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson, and musician Arnold Schönberg. Hallengren also looks at the impact of Swedenborg's followers on social issues, such as the abolition of slavery in the West Indies and the liberation of the serfs in Tsarist Russia. The essays, taken as a whole, shed light on the question Hallengren poses in his introduction: "What, or rather *why*, is influence?"

"Anders Hallengren's instructive and lively reflections on the mind and influence of Emanuel Swedenborg help to explain why this far-ranging scientist-theologian touched so many writers, artist, and philosophers over the past two centuries."

—Daniel Aaron, *Harvard University*

"Reading this beautiful collection of well-researched essays, one cannot but be amazed at the phenomenon of Swedenborg and his influence. Could the Swedish scientist have predicted that his visionary writings . . . would profoundly affect the history of modern literature, art, and music? The wanderer through this *Gallery of Mirrors* will find in Anders Hallengren a reliable guide."

—Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Utrecht University, the Netherlands*

"... Receptivity is a necessary condition for influence, but is not enough for effect. The ground must be prepared for the seed. But the human being is not mere soil, nor is the mind a pistil. Man is both the garden and the gardener. 'Influence' implies that you open yourself up to receive an effect, since there is an imminent attraction or an immanent affinity: it belongs to you and has already domiciliary rights in the world of your mind. In another way this may also be explained in Jacques Derrida's words in 'Cogito and the History of Madness': 'The disciple must break the glass, or better the mirror, the reflection, his infinite speculation on the master. And start to speak.'"

—Introduction, *Gallery of Mirrors: Reflections of Swedenborgian Thought*

Anders Hallengren, author, editor, historian, and foreign-affairs journalist, is a captivating speaker whose audiences respond as much to his engaging manner as to his breadth of

(Continued on page 15)

The Swedenborgian Church
of North America
The Messenger
48 Sargent Street
Newton, MA 02458

Forwarding Address
Correction Requested

CENTRAL OFFICE
48 SARGENT ST
NEWTON MA 02458-2399

Non-profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Plymouth, IN
Permit No. 105