

THE MESSENGER

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Editor's Note: Cathy Whitmire, a Quaker peace activist and author of *Plain Living: A Quaker Path to Simplicity*, was the keynote speaker at this year's convention held in Gorham, Maine. The text of her speech presented here is part of her forthcoming second book, *Practicing Peace*, which will be published in the spring of 2003. It reflects the spiritual dimensions of Friends' 350-year commitment to peacemaking. Cathy and her husband live in a farmhouse in Maine and have three grown sons. (See April 2002 *Messenger*, p. 59, for more background information.) The references and resources indicated in the text are for informational purposes, not intended to be academic, and can be furnished on request. Contact: cathywhitmire@aol.com



Living for Peace

Cathy Whitmire

Introduction

During the past 100 years the world has taken significant steps toward building a culture of peace. Since the first Hague Peace Conference in 1899, over 62,000 international treaties have been negotiated, and we have seen the establishment of the League of Nations, the United Nations, and the world courts.¹ Today in the U. S. there are anti-bullying curriculums for elementary schools, peer mediators in many high schools, conflict resolution groups springing up on college campuses, and listening circles being integrated into corporate offices.

Peace studies has become an accepted academic discipline, and mediation is now widely used in the courts system for everything from small claims and divorce to labor-management settlements. Three years ago, the United Nations, at the request of all the living Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, named the years 2001-2010 as the Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence.

However, in this same century of advances in peace, the technologies of war have become ever more deadly, and it is now possible for us to put an end to the human experiment. We have seen what we can rise to, and we now know how far we can descend. I will begin this evening by talking about peace from historical and spiritual perspectives, and I will reflect on the inner journey towards peace. I will also talk about building a culture of peace while living in a culture of violence, finding hope, and I will summarize by talking about things we can do to make living in peace a reality in our daily lives.

Peace

Down through the ages, even warrior peoples have longed for peace. As far back as we have written records, every civilization, no matter how warlike or materialistic its history, has in its literary records imagery concerning a longing for peace.² In 1656, George Fox, one of the founders of Quakerism, told the English military officer who offered him a commission that he could not serve because he "lived in the virtue of that light and power that took away the occasion for all wars."³ For Quakers, living in peace is about trying to live a life that takes away the occasion of war; it is a day by day process, the journey of a lifetime.

Today there are approximately six billion members of the human family. We live in one billion different households in 189 nation states and are represented in over 10,000 different ethnic groups and communities of various sorts.⁴ Scientists now tell us that all six billion of us come from the same genetic and ancestral roots. Native American elders have been saying for generations that we are not only part of the same family, we share the same web of life, so what befalls one of us affects us all. As a human family we face a great challenge at this moment in history: How do we rise above the identities that divide us? Maraide McGuire, the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate says that "recognizing our interconnectedness is the quantum leap the human family has to make if we are going to protect our future."⁵

There is a Hasidic tale about an old rabbi who once asked his pupils how they could tell when the night had ended and the day had begun. "Could it be," asked one of the students, "when you can see an animal in the distance and tell whether it's a sheep or a dog?" "No," Answered the rabbi. Another asked, "Is it when you can look at a tree in the distance and tell whether it's a fig tree or a peach tree?" "No," answered the rabbi. "Then when is it?" the pupils demanded. "It is when you can look on the face of any man or woman and see that it is your sister or brother. Because if you cannot see this, it is still night."⁶

We come from diverse ethnic backgrounds, profess a wide range of religious beliefs, and speak different languages. We are also all unique, and so it is no surprise that we see the

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Editor's Note: *The following email was sent out widely on October 8, 2002, by the Rev. Dr. James F. Lawrence, Dean of SHS, who prefaced it by stating:*

"I share this Open Letter from the Graduate Theological Union member seminary presidents, as I find it an eloquent and balanced statement for a time of high feeling and frustration."

An Open Letter from the Graduate Theological Union Presidents to the Leaders of Our Religious Communities

October 2002

Dear Friends:

We write to our fellow religious leaders as Presidents of the nine member schools of the Graduate Theological Union and as the President of that Union. We are diverse in our religious beliefs. We differ from one another in our political stands on many issues. But we share a sense of concern and even alarm about the political and spiritual situation as our nation seems to be preparing for war with Iraq. Given the gravity of the steps soon to be taken, significant discussion is needed in our religious communities. The ethical and spiritual witness of our faith traditions must be spoken in the public square.

Our religious traditions share a strong presumption against war, especially against a so-called "first strike" or "preemptive strike." Even those churches that allow for the possibility of just war insist that there must be adequate grounds for this resort to violence. But in addition, just-war theory requires the assurance that the war itself can be waged in an appropriate way—that the war does not target innocent civilians, especially children.

We do not think the American people have heard enough in detail to argue that war is the only solution for dealing with the threat that Iraq may pose to other nations. Nor have we heard discussion from our leaders about how such a war could be waged that will not target civilians in bombing

or other offensive actions. Our allies have been more badgered to "fall in line" than been offered a chance to give their counsel.

When wars are waged, it must be with more than a patriotic sense of support for our nation. People need to be aware of the violence that will ensue and sober about the cost of such a war and the casualties that our own troops may experience. We have heard nothing about how our leaders intend to deal with a defeated Iraq or what kind of government would be installed to follow Saddam Hussein. We should not put our hand to the plow until we are confident that we are planting seeds of lasting peace.

We GTU Presidents grieved with all Americans at the attacks on New York and Washington one year ago. In the aftermath of September 11, we welcomed the fresh stirrings of concern for the common good. Yet now we fear that the broad support for our national leadership in that earlier crisis has preempted religious communities from asking the hard questions that people of faith who love their country must always be free to ask.

For the many signs of leadership on this issue in our religious communities we give thanks. We know that you are preaching, and teaching, and praying. We urgently need good teaching and wise preaching that can create a climate for moral discernment in which the many questions about this war can be explored.

We urge you to use your leadership to seek the things that make for peace. We urge you to use your voice and your influence to make our local religious communities places of prayer for peace and of lively discussion about the right course for our country to take. We urge deeper understanding of the peoples and religions of the Middle East—and that the religious communities take a leading role in creating such a climate.

Many of our faculty and students are signing statements voicing their concerns. We are gathering our communities and our whole consortium for several events that will better inform us and allow ethical discernment and theological deliberation to take place here. We offer our willing-

ness and the resources of our schools to work with you to help such activities flourish in our churches. As our country deliberates, may it be guided by an informed and reflective citizenry rather than an intimidated or indifferent people.

With respect and deep concern,

The Rev. Dr. Philip W. Butin,
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world differently. Last summer I went with a friend to a watercolor class where everyone was painting the same beach, and as I walked from easel to easel some people had painted the beach in bright yellows and oranges, others had painted it in dark purples and greens, and still others had covered their paper with an almost transparent glaze so that the paper remained basically white. Given that we see the world so differently, it is not surprising that we have conflict.

It is a challenge for us to recognize one another as brothers and sisters, but God encourages us in this endeavor by always extending the boundaries of our hearts outwards. In the years immediately following the First World War, the Quakers worked in Europe distributing food and clothing to victims of war, for which they were later to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. One of the workers who served a cluster of villages in Poland became ill with typhus, and in twenty-four hours he was dead. In this village there was only a Roman Catholic cemetery, and by canonical law it was impossible to bury one not of that confession in its consecrated ground. So the Quakers laid the young aid worker in a grave they dug just outside the fence of the Roman Catholic cemetery. They woke up the next morning to discover that during the night the villagers had moved the fence, so that it now embraced the grave.⁷

Peace is not about doing away with conflict. It is about learning how to handle conflict creatively. Conflict is intrinsic to our experience of being human. We are each born with two basic conflicting needs: the need for bonding and the need for autonomy.⁸ As children, bonding is a necessity; we cannot survive without it. We need closeness and intimacy to thrive. However, in order to grow fully into the people we were meant to be, we also need independence and autonomy.

In my experience, peaceful living requires not only learning how to balance our needs for bonding and autonomy, but engaging in the creative

management of conflict. It takes practice. We are not born knowing how to practice peace, it is something we have to learn. As children we can be taught to intimidate, belittle, and hit adversaries or we can be taught to work out our differences through negotiation and mediation. Like playing the piano, or learning to speak Spanish, we become better at peacemaking the more we practice.

Peace Begins as an Inward Journey

The practice of peace begins with an inward journey. And I quote from the Sufi mystic poet Bayazid:

I was a revolutionary when I was young and all my prayer to God was "Lord, give me the energy to change the world."

As I approached middle age and realized that half my life was gone without my changing a single soul, I changed my prayer to "Lord, give me the grace to change all those who come in contact with me. Just my family and friends, and I shall be satisfied."

Now that I am an old man and my days are numbered, my one prayer is, "Lord, give me the grace to change myself." If I had prayed for this right from the start I should not have wasted my life."

The practice of peace begins with an inward journey, because it is said that "Wars ultimately start—or stop—in the mysterious places of the human heart."⁹ Whatever we are fighting about in the outer world is often reflective of battles taking place within our own hearts, and our resistance to acknowledging our inner struggles can limit our ability to deal effectively with our own inclinations towards violence. Alexander Solzhenitsyn wrote, "If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds and it were necessary only to separate them. But, the dividing line between good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being, and who is willing to destroy a piece of their own heart?"¹⁰ But the God who illumines the evil and violence in our hearts leads us towards the good and is patient with us, knowing that "it takes a lifetime to heal a human heart."¹¹

Healing ourselves so that we can live in peace is the essence of the inward journey. The first time I met Justice, he was leading a three day non-violence workshop at Norfolk Prison in Massachusetts where he was an inmate. On the final morning of the workshop, Justice told us a story about a father who had care of his young son on a morning when he was working at home and needed some quiet time to do his paperwork. The son announced early in the day that he was tired of his toys and wanted to play with something new. The father, who was frustrated and worried about getting his work done on time, found a detailed picture of the earth in a magazine, tore it into pieces, and gave it to his son as a puzzle. The father was pleased with himself for making the pieces very small, because he thought that it would take his son a long time to put the puzzle together and give him the quiet time he needed.

The boy reappeared in the father's study a short time later and announced that he had finished the puzzle. The surprised father asked: "How can that be? You just started it a little while ago." The boy explained that there was a picture of a person on the other side of the page and informed his father: "When you put the person together, you put the world together."¹² The inner journey is important in the practice of peace, because anytime we allow God's healing energy to enter our lives the world becomes a little more whole.

I believe that prayer is an important preliminary, both in healing our hearts and in the practice of peace. When we pray, we open ourselves to friendship with God. As that friendship deepens, and we become closer, God invites us to view ourselves and the world as God sees it, and so our prayer becomes a way of seeing ourselves and the world from God's perspective.¹³ In prayer, we are able to see that we live on this planet as an interconnected people who draw every breath together in concert with the One who created us. This God's-eye view makes us more compassionate towards the pain of

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others and helps us to see that oppressive poverty, violence, and war are willful human decisions and not God's choices for the world.

The practice of peace, like the practice of prayer, is a spiritual journey of discovery, a path to be followed rather than a formula or a goal to be achieved. We have to keep doing it, even when we wonder whether or not it is making a difference. However, in prayer and in practicing peace, the world does change, because through our practice we are changed.

Culture of Peace

What does it mean to envision a culture of peace? In Proverbs 29:18 we are told, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." So, envisioning peace may be our highest calling.

Walter Wink says, "History belongs to intercessors who believe the future into being."¹⁴ Therefore, we must individually and collectively visualize a culture of peace, because we cannot work for something we can't imagine.

Elise Boulding, Nobel Peace Prize nominee and co-founder of the academic discipline of peace studies in this country, defines a culture of peace as one "that includes appreciation of difference, stewardship, and equitable sharing of the earth's resources among its members and with all living beings. It offers mutual security for humankind in all its diversity through a profound sense of species identity as well as kinship with the living earth. There is no need for violence..."¹⁵

In her research on cultures of peace Elise Boulding found that each of the major world religions has in its sacred texts images of a peaceable garden.¹⁶ Sometimes this Peaceable Garden is envisioned as a desert oasis, a green meadow, or secluded garden—but always, it is a place where people lay aside weapons and live together in peace. For Muslims and the desert Bedouin, the image is the hospitable garden in the middle of a desert with a tent where all are welcome, where weapons are not allowed, and where

peace prevails. In the Judeo-Christian traditions it is the Garden of Eden, with its peaceful vision of shared abundance. We are well aware that images of violence and warfare also exist in these traditions. However, when we look for the core teaching in each of world's major religions, the primary message in each of them is compassion, and compassion is the cornerstone on which a culture of peace can be built.¹⁷

In our efforts to envision cultures of peace, we are not trying to imagine an unattainable ideal. Cultures of peace of

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various kinds have existed for thousands of years. In southeastern Europe seven thousand years ago there were evolved societies that did not live behind walls or secluded on hilltops, but in cities without walls or forts "where it appears from examination of their worked metal, they sailed the Mediterranean Sea, and had many highly developed art forms."¹⁸ The ancient cities of Catal Huyuk and Hacilar on the Anatolian Plain in Turkey each experienced 800 years without warfare between 6500 to about 5700 BCE. The Pre-Minoan culture on the Island of Crete is thought to have had no wars for over 1,000 years.¹⁹

An example of an early culture of peace in this country began 1681 when William Penn, who was a Quaker, received a land grant from the King of England. Penn wrote to the native people already living there offering to pay them for their land, and he said that it was his intention to treat them fairly, and that it was his hope that they would "live together as neighbors and as

friends."²⁰ Neighboring colonists warned that the Native Americans were violent and not to be trusted, but Penn and his followers chose to live unarmed. The Pennsylvanians and the native peoples became friends and often visited one another's houses and wigwams. There are records of Quaker children being lost in the woods and being returned by the natives, and of families in the country leaving their children with their native neighbors while they went to Quaker gatherings in Philadelphia. For seventy years, while sporadic wars and massacres occurred to the North and the South of Pennsylvania, Penn's people and the Native Americans lived in peace and mutual security. No forts secured the boundaries, and no warships defended the harbors. This experiment sadly ended, however, when Penn's children left Quakerism and abandoned their father's values of peace and justice. One of the lessons of Pennsylvania is that peace can exist as long as justice prevails.²¹

Peace researchers cite the Mennonite, Brethren, and Quaker communities as contemporary examples of cultures of peace in this country.²² Today there are the sub-cultures of peace that exist all over the world even in the midst of violence, such as the fifty self-designated peace communities in Columbia and the Sarvodaya communities in Sri Lanka.²³

And the truth is, most of us also live our daily lives in peace. Every morning, I sniff the salty air of the Maine coast while I fill the birdfeeder, then I walk through the pine trees to pick up our newspaper and wave to early-rising neighbors across the way. As I walk back to the house to join my husband for a short time of meditation, I listen to hear if the ocean is up. My simple morning rituals remind me every day that I am blessed to be living much of my life in peace. Kenneth Boulding said "what is, is possible."²⁴ Since peace exists in our lives, a culture of peace is possible.

My guess is that most of us lived peacefully into this day. We probably settled our disagreements without

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coming to blows, trusted that others would obey the traffic laws that protect us all, nurtured children, and looked out for members of the community who needed help. Cultures of peace are defined not only by an absence of violence and warfare, but by the presence of love, trust, faith, compassion, forgiveness, and hope.²⁵

When I was younger I thought that building a culture of peace meant going to an exotic location to be an international witness, or going to jail for my principles, and I have deep respect for all who take those paths. However, I have come to realize that building a culture of peace, begins with me trying to live a peaceful and just life in my own community. The Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh expresses this well:

"If a tree is not a tree, then life is not life. The fact that a tree is a tree is very important. We benefit a lot from a tree's being a tree. In the same way, a person should be a person. If one person is a real living person, living happily, smiling, then all of us, all the world, will benefit from that person. A person doesn't have to do a lot in order to save the world. A person has to be a person. That is the basis of peace."²⁶

Culture of Violence

One of the ways we build a culture of peace is by the daily choices we make around violence. Every day I decide whether or not to curse someone who steals my parking space, make hurtful remarks to people I love, employ threats in my business and personal life, or endorse my country's use of nuclear weapons. Most of our elected officials, movies, books, and music encourage making violent choices by presenting violence as exciting, pleasurable, entertaining, patriotic, and even redemptive.²⁷ It is frightening to live in the midst of such pervasive violence, and in our fear "we may become numbed to it, turn to increasingly brutal and ruthless means to protect ourselves, or accept violence as a way of life, because we cannot imagine any better alternatives."²⁸

One of the myths perpetuated by

our culture is that violence is necessary and unavoidable. Walter Wink differentiates between force and violence. He says, "Force signifies a legitimate, socially authorized and morally defensible use of restraint to prevent harm being done to innocent people. Violence would be a morally illegitimate or excessive use of force."²⁹ There are alternatives to violence, but we live in a culture that does not teach us those options and instead assures us that violence is normal and inevitable. The reality is that violence is self-perpetuating and "forges a never-ending chain of action and reaction."³⁰

Since the central message of the world's major religious traditions is compassion, that makes the use of violence spiritually and morally illegitimate. Religious wisdom passed on to us through the Bible, the Torah, and the Koran is clear. We are to avoid violence, but we are given a choice: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live." (Deuteronomy 30: 19)

Living in Spiritual Preparedness

We never know when or how violence may suddenly enter our lives. A number of years ago I took my son on one of those whirlwind college tours where you see six colleges in five days. The last day of that trip I drove from Philadelphia home to Cambridge, Mass., dropped my son who was going to a Quaker retreat off at the bus station and headed home, planning to stop along the way and get milk for breakfast. I was exhausted, and all I wanted to do was get home and put my feet up. I stopped at a corner market near my home in Central Square, and when I pulled in front of the store I noticed there was a group of ten or so young men hanging on the corner by the store engaged in a loud conversation. As I started to park, I remembered that there had been a shooting on this corner a few weeks before. But, I had lived in this economically and culturally diverse part of Cambridge long enough to know that a gang of kids yelling at one another doesn't necessarily mean there's a problem, so I took note and

listened for signs of trouble, but didn't pay them a lot of attention as I went about parallel parking my car in front of the market.

After I finished parking and was reaching for my purse I suddenly realized that the tenor of the voices outside my car had changed, the group had moved up the sidewalk until they were directly beside my car, one of the kids was now on the ground and the others were kicking him in the stomach and in the head. I was less than three feet away. I opened the car door quickly and stepped directly into the center of the circle. They were so surprised to see a middle-aged white woman suddenly appear in their midst that they took a few steps back, and I moved in between them and the young man on the ground. I never lost eye contact with them as I stood with my arms open. Every time they started towards me, I took a step towards them and opened my arms wider. My intervention gave the young man on the ground an opportunity to limp to a nearby house for help, and the others dispersed.

To this day, I have no idea exactly what I said, but I am not sure that it mattered. It's been said that 85% of all communication is nonverbal anyway. What I was feeling was deep concern and love, not only for the young man on the ground, but for the other young men who felt desperate enough about their lives to resort to this kind of violence. We bring all of who we are wherever we are. And I brought with me to those few moments on the street corner the power of all the prayers I had ever said, every worship service I had attended, and of all the acts of compassion I had ever received. Living in peace means trying to live in a state of spiritual preparedness, because we never know when or how violence, our own or that of others, emerges in our lives.

It is impossible to isolate ourselves from violence, but we can learn from it. The deaths of the innocent people in the World Trade Center and aboard the airplanes were tragic. We have experienced monstrous losses,

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and I believe that we owe those who died not vengeance, but a willingness to try to understand some of the factors that created the violence that cut their lives short. Only those who are naive refuse to think about the origins of violence.³¹

Structural Violence

Structural violence is as deadly as physical violence, but it is harder to see when you are not a victim. Among the other members of our human family who also died on September 11th, according to the World Health Organization and UNESCO, were the 35,600 children who die every day from conditions of starvation. How do we extend our hearts and our grief to those parents, families, and friends as well?³²

We belong to the 20 percent of the world that uses 67 percent of the planet's resources, and an average American uses the goods each year that would support thirty citizens of India.³³ Our government's spending on foreign aid has plummeted over the last twenty years. In the year 2000, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the United States allocated just one percent of its gross national product to foreign aid—about one dime for every hundred dollars in its treasury—whereas Canada, Japan, Austria, Australia, and Germany each contributed two to three times that much.³⁴ Other countries gave even more, some as much as ten times the amount we do proportionally; they view this as a contribution to the world's stability and their own peace.³⁵ Too often we have tended to forgive debt only in exchange for strategic military bases, or mineral rights, not as a moral act. Our constitution says that this country was formed to establish justice.³⁶ The world is looking to us for truth, justice, and compassion. However, today too many countries are coming to view us as mighty, but not as merciful.³⁷

A.J. Muste once wrote that "War is not an accident. It is the logical outcome of a certain way of life."³⁸ When one person suffers from economic

injustice, we are all diminished, and so a culture of peace will not be possible until there is right sharing of the world's resources. When I take more money than I need and turn away from those who do not have enough, I perpetrate an injustice that helps create the conditions for war.

Fear

In my own life, I have discovered that the emotion that makes me most inclined to violence is fear. When I am afraid, my soul contracts, I lose perspective, my imagination fails, and my sense of alternative possibilities vanishes. We have all been hurt by life, which is why the words, "Fear not!" are often the first words uttered by God and compassionate angels, who understand that we are a vulnerable and fearful people. However, our wariness makes us susceptible to the temptation to try to protect ourselves from further injury by seeking ultimate safety. So, we install additional locks, buy extra insurance, and support the building of more prisons, but God's compassion is ultimately our only protection from life's vagaries and disappointments.

Wanting safety is a healthy reaction in certain situations, and some of my fears are legitimate, helpful, and informative. It is when I *become* my fears that I lose perspective, like the person who, once bitten by a snake, has come to fear every rope.³⁹ Learning to engage our individual and collective fears constructively is an important part of building a culture of peace.

A Quaker family who lived on the American frontier is still remembered by many for their willingness to live with open and trusting hearts. They kept their hearts open to God even when they heard a rumor that a Native American war party planned to attack their small settlement that night. The other homesteaders barricaded themselves in their houses, loaded their guns and prepared to do battle.

As pacifists the Quaker family refused to use arms, but they decided to protect themselves by pulling in their latchstring. When the latchstring was drawn in, there was no way for someone from the outside to

open their door. The family went to bed, but could not sleep. They felt restless and troubled by doubts that by pulling in their latchstring, they were closing their hearts and putting their faith in their locked door rather than in God's love. Finally they got up, put the latchstring back out the way it usually was and slept through the rest of the night.

Just before dawn, a war party did attack the settlement. Houses were burned and people were killed, but the homestead with the latchstring out was left untouched. The community later heard from the Native Americans that the exposed latchstring was interpreted as a sign that the Great Spirit must be protecting that house and it was left alone.⁴⁰

Opening our hearts is never easy. Many of us have known so little love in life that could be trusted, that it is hard for us to believe in God's promise of covenantal love. So we, too, have pulled in the latchstrings on our heart and wait inside, afraid that God's promise will not extend to us. That promise is not that life will always be easy and that we will only walk beside still waters. Rather, when we walk by faith, we will never walk alone, and our path will be illumined by an Inward Light. It is not easy, but if we open our heart we can trust that our Inner Guide will be there to lead us along the path to peaceful living.⁴¹

Fear can cause us to react defensively, sometimes creating the very situations we dread most. In this way fear can undermine peace, initiate violence, and begin wars.⁴² Sometimes when I feel afraid, hurt, or misused, my heart begins to pound, and the temptation to respond with vengeance rises up in me, contracting my ability to imagine peaceful solutions. I may be able to modulate my voice politely, but my brain feels hot, my stomach clenches, and every word from my antagonist(s) grates on my ears. It is a kind of possession.⁴³ When I allow vengeance to overtake me, it distorts my vision, twists my understanding of what is true, and

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diminishes my compassion. I view my adversaries through a lens of suspicion, their words are screened through the barrier of my distrust, and true communication becomes impossible, because I am no longer seeing God in them or listening for their truth. At that point, avenging my pain is more important to me than resolving the problem.

Vengeance

Vengeance often lies at the root of familial strife, tribal feuds, and nationalistic vendettas that lead us into war. To act on revenge is to initiate a self-perpetuating cycle of violence. "For whatever a person sows, that they will also reap." (Galatians 6:7) The Bible repeatedly says that vengeance belongs to God: " 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay,' says the Lord." We do not see what God sees, or know what God knows, so we can never totally understand why others act as they do, hence we lack the spiritual wisdom to undertake vengeance. Scripture tells that humanity is not wise enough to undertake vengeance and that we should "overcome evil with good." I believe that the central question for the 21st Century is: How can we resist evil without becoming evil ourselves?

Nationalism

We are a religiously, racially, and ethnically diverse nation of immigrants who share a land of extraordinary beauty. I am grateful for our differences, because I appreciate Italian food, enjoy African drumming, attend operas sung in German, am inspired by Buddhist meditation books, and admire the long, colorful dresses worn by my Somali neighbors.

The majesty of our oceans, mountains, and forests lifts my soul. My heart soars when I watch eagles gliding over the cool waters of Puget sound in Washington, watch the mist rising over the Smokey Mountains of North Carolina, or listen to loons calling across a moonlit pond in Maine. Every nation is uniquely beautiful, and God does not favor one country over

another, but calls us all to live by the universal values of compassion, and justice for all, regardless of nationality.

These values are not easy for nation states to live up to, and so countries depend on faithful citizens to challenge them when they fail to embody these ideals. Margarethe Lachmund once organized Quakers in various parts of Nazi Germany who were willing to risk assisting Jews in any way they could. A Nazi official assigned to watch the Lachmunds confronted her with evidence that she had helped a particular Jewish family. She later said, "I merely asked him what he found to wonder at. Where were these poor people to find help? I knew a way, I said, to insure that no more Jewish people would come to me: 'Make your laws humane. . .'"⁴⁴

Nationalism is defined as "devotion to the interests of one's own nation,"⁴⁵ but national devotion has sometimes been manipulated and corrupted by fear, pride, and greed to support policies that violate a country's moral integrity. Charles Schurz, in 1899, said "Our country, right or wrong." What is not as well known is the sentence that follows, "When right to be kept right; when wrong, to be put right."⁴⁶ Our challenge is always to pray for the faithfulness to help our country "to be put right," and live up to its ideals of compassion and justice for all.

Hope

There has been an exponential increase in the 20th century in the number of wars and deaths by violence, and this has been a source of despair for many. But during this same century humankind has gained knowledge and expertise in the use of non-violence, which is a source of great hope. In the last twenty years, 14 nations have liberated themselves without going to war. Walter Wink believes that our understanding of the power of nonviolence is analogous to the discoveries of Edison and Marconi—we know we have a power, but we don't know how to use it.⁴⁷

I live with a lot of hope, and I believe more than ever that nonviolence is a way out of the culture of violence. Earlier this month I was at

the Fellowship of Reconciliation Conference in New York. I met Israeli draft resisters who talked about their witness, listened to members of the Christian Peace Teams share what it was like to act as observers and human shields in the Middle East, and I heard Jeremy Milgrim of the Rabbis for Peace talk about his experience of being jailed for protesting the demolition of Palestinian homes. Sami Awad from the Palestinian Holy Land Trust shared with us that six months ago very quietly young leaders of the Infitada started coming to him and saying that they had come to the realization that throwing stones at helicopters was not going to bring them closer to freedom and they wanted to learn about nonviolence. Two weeks ago, the first group of Palestinian youth leaders finished their nonviolence training, and they are out recruiting others. Nonviolence takes time and is not without risks, but being willing to die for something is spiritually different than being willing to kill for something. There are reasons for hope.

We don't know enough to despair, no matter how bad things look. God's perspective is different from ours; we cannot know what is going to happen. My plaintive prayer in the midst of my worry about the world is to know that I am not alone—that I have Divine accompaniment. God knows that we have always struggled to keep faith through life's difficult passages, so the Israelites were guided through the desert with a pillar of fire, and Noah was given the rainbow sign at the end of the great flood.

Today we are again looking for signs of divine accompaniment. We need to know that we have not been left alone in the midst of these liminal and troubled times, an age dominated by terminal despair: when our environment is endangered, our civic and religious institutions are in flux, violence is rising, and the moral foundations beneath our feet seem to be crumbling.

Faith has been defined as "the courage to act as if we were not

(Continued on page 145)

SHS: YEAR TWO BEGINS— Settling in and Reaching out

Jim Lawrence

The House Keeps Growing

We were delighted to welcome this fall two new Swedenborgian students beginning their seminary journey at the Swedenborgian House of Studies. Jenn Tafel, of Los Angeles, and Carla Friedrich, of Georgia, both lifelong members of Convention, have moved into campus housing and are enrolled in a full course-load this fall. In addition, a second-year PSR student, Doug Moss, who has been in conversation and study with us for more than half a year, has made the decision and begun the process to change his denominational affiliation from Presbyterian to Swedenborgian. They join continuing Swedenborgian “middlers” Alison Baxter, Kevin Baxter, Kathy Speas, and Sage Currie, giving us seven full time ordination-track students.



The current student body (l-r: Kathy Speas, Kevin Baxter, Doug Moss, Alison Baxter, Sage Currie, Carla Friedrich, Jenn Tafel, and Kim Hinrichs, Program Director).

The Door Is Open and the Denomination Is Invited

In moving the school to the West Coast and into a collaborative model of theological education, the trustees wanted to plan as many ways as possible for our church to learn about the new situation. One goal, written into the Teagle Grant request, is to sponsor an Open House weekend in Berkeley for denominational representatives throughout North America. Entitled “Through the Open Door: Swedenborgian Studies Move into the Twenty-First Century” and scheduled for November 8-10, invitations have gone out to church leaders throughout the denomination, seeking representatives, as our guests, to participate in an engagement with theological education and our church’s future. The weekend will include educational, dialogical, informational, and recreational opportunities. There will be a panel discussion involving SHS faculty and PSR faculty in an

interactive dialog with the attendees. Wilson Van Dusen will lead a session on important issues for the future of working with Swedenborg’s writings. And there will be an opportunity to tour the SHS library and offices, student housing, the PSR campus, and the GTU neighborhood. We not only want our church to be as informed as possible on its seminary, we also invite participation in helping us plan for an empowered church of the future.

New Adjunct Faculty Member Eric Allison’s New Course

The Rev. Eric Allison, longtime leadership training and church growth specialist, has joined the adjunct faculty ranks of SHS and will be offering an Intersession course in January on “Contemporary Principles of Church Transformation.” This one-week course is open to the church-at-large for lay leader training or ministerial continuing education. Campus housing is available, and we encourage attendees from around the church. Contact SHS program director Kim Hinrichs for more information (khinrichs@shs.psr.edu).

SHS Goes Online with Accredited Coursework

This fall PSR offered its first two fully online courses, both under the auspices of the SHS faculty. Adjunct biblical studies professor George Dole is teaching “A Spiritual Sense of the Bible,” with six ordination-track students enrolled—four are campus-based and two are out-of-state at other graduate schools. The other online course is my “Introduction to Swedenborgian Thought.” Greg Johnson, our Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Swedenborgian Studies, is sitting in with me this fall. This class is being taught in two separate formats: a classroom group of eight on campus and an online group of four who are all out-of-state. Both classes are using a popular online platform in higher education called Blackboard. In the spring semester we will again be offering online course-work, a course taught by Greg Johnson on Swedenborg’s books *Divine Providence* and *Divine Love and Wisdom* and a course taught by me entitled “Christology and Pluralism.”

If It’s Year Two, It Must Be Field Ed. Time

SHS students typically undertake their required nine-month field education work in the second (and middle) year of seminary. This fall three students have begun field education: Kevin Baxter, who has a strong interest in chaplaincy ministry, is working in a program at San Francisco General Hospital; and Alison Baxter and Kathy Speas are student ministers at the San Francisco church.

Faculty Search Underway

Announcements have gone out for a faculty position search in Swedenborgian Studies at SHS-PSR. Swedenborgian scholars who also have an accredited doctorate in a field relevant to theological education are welcome to apply. Inquiries should be directed to Dr. Delwin

(Continued on page 141)



ON FAITH

*John Hill
Rogers*

We seem to want to look outside of ourselves to find faith, and as Emerson says, "yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his." It is truly the most difficult thing in our lives to determine which path to take at any given time. I think those of us who have an easier time in

this navigation have developed the ability to listen to their inner voice and know that it is the voice of the universal spirit, the voice of God, whatever that means to you.

We ask for God's help, we pray, we meditate; and the paradoxical element of all this prayer to God is that he simply gives it all back to us to act upon. Faith alone doesn't get us all the way there. We must be listening for the answers, the message, the guiding inner voice and we must act.

In order to make these concepts more easily accessible, I came to organize the meaning of faith, for me, into three basic tenets:

1. At any moment, that which we

most need is right there for us.


2. The universe expresses itself apart from our desire, but according to our need. What we need may not be pleasant but it is what we need.

3. The energy of faith is knowing and leading, but not directing, pushing, coercing, or deflecting. It is absolutely in need of our free will to see and act. It learns from our experience and evolves with our evolution and it is dynamic.

I have faith that we create our world in the smallest detail and include that which we experience from outside forces.

When we pray, asking our questions, meditating on the spirit, the answers we need to receive can come from anywhere and everywhere, anyone and everyone. They can be moments of light, crystallizing moments that shock us with their beauty; and they can also be horrifying moments, moments of total darkness, from which we will hide, if we lack faith. They can also be moments of any kind between these two extremes, as I think most of them are. I like to think that the universe uses extremes only when we have ignored the gentle inner voice of the spirit within too many times.

John Rogers is a member of the Portland, Maine Swedenborgian Church.

Reprinted from the May 2002 *Appleseed*, the newsletter of the Portland church. 

SHS: YEAR TWO BEGINS— *(Continued from page 140)*

Brown, Dean, Pacific School of Religion, 1798 Scenic Ave., Berkeley, CA 94709.

Library Team at Work on Diverse Projects

Imagine our library having two full-time librarians, a half-time expert volunteer, and a seminary work-study student! Under the able direction of Library Director Michael Yockey and fellow library team members Lissa Dirrim, Alan Thomsen, and Carla Friedrich, an impressive number of projects are unfolding in our Swedenborgian Collection. With the retrospective conversion project now well underway, you can walk through the collection and notice handsome new Library of Congress labels on numerous rows of volumes, and searches on the Graduate Theological Union library's Grace online cataloging system turn up SHS titles regularly. Students and faculty within the GTU have begun requesting volumes. (Trivia fact: Swedenborg now owns second place in the Grace system of tens of thousands of authors for quantity of editions and translations of an author's work. ES's 550 record still trails Augustine by nearly 100 entries.)

Another priority project is the physical care of the collection, of which more than half is antique. Many rare

and fragile books have been removed from the circulating collection to the rare books section in the archives; many antique items originally produced with a paper cover, including numerous shorter works, have been bound. And hundreds upon hundreds of books are being individually cleaned with special preservation sponges.

To help show off the library and to introduce the PSR and GTU communities to our collection and staff, we held an Open House for the library on September 12 at the end of the workday. About 35 students, staff and faculty from PSR and the GTU dropped by for refreshments, conversation, and a tour of the stacks.

We would like to thank the Pretty Prairie and Kitchener congregations and Val and Ron Brugler for dedicated gifts to the library project.

SHS Website up and Running

And for those who have not had the opportunity to see our program through our website, we invite you to take a look! www.shs.psr.edu

The Rev. Dr. James F. Lawrence is dean of the Swedenborgian House of Studies.



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WRITER'S SCHOLARSHIP OFFERED BY COMSU

The Communications Support Unit is continuing to sponsor a unique, twice-yearly (we hope!) scholarship opportunity for a writer 18 years or older who is interested in writing for the Swedenborgian Church to attend "WRITING FROM WITHIN," workshops offered in various retreat centers throughout the U.S. by Linda Metcalf and Tobin Simon, who developed this writing method for finding your authentic voice. Travel expenses are provided, with workshop locations and location of scholarship recipients matched to be cost effective. This year the workshop took place October 20-25, 2002, at the Esalen institute in Big Sur, California. Tom McEntee, a member of the San Francisco church, is the winner of the

fall scholarship. The spring location will be announced at a later date.

If you are interested in writing for our denomination in any capacity—*Messenger* articles, pamphlets, books, sermons, we encourage you to apply for this intensive experience to learn the Metcalf-Simon Method of Proprioceptive Writing in a peaceful, inspirational setting.

Simply write to COMSU,
c/o Patte LeVan, Editor,
THE MESSENGER
P.O. Box 985
Julian, CA 92036.

Or send email to Patte LeVan:
messenger@jinet.com

In several brief paragraphs tell us:

A. why you want to take the workshop

B. what you are interested in writing for our denomination

C. what specific subjects, if any, you feel you may have useful expertise or background in (psychology, health, creativity, experiential subjects, mystical subjects, etc.) that you can relate to Swedenborgian spirituality

D. what topics or themes you would most like to see *J. Appleseed* and *The Messenger* address in future publications.

E. Feel free to send us a sample of your writing, but this is not a requisite.

The deadline for our receipt of your entry is March 1, 2003.

We thank you in advance for your interest in writing, and we invite your input and suggestions about publication in our Church.

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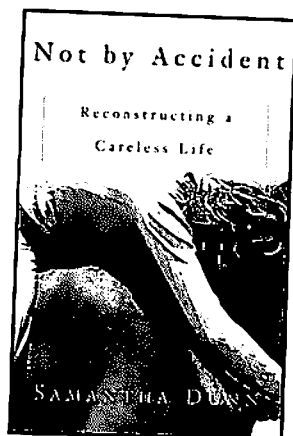
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Not by Accident: Reconstructing a Careless Life

by
Samantha
Dunn

Henry Holt
and Co.,
2002

Reviewed by
Kelly
Mahan
Jaramillo

Two years ago my aunt was diagnosed with colon cancer. We have had an interesting relationship, not always in sync, but during the months she struggled through chemotherapy, we spent time together. We got to know and, I think, understand each other a little better, and it is my aunt who sent me Samantha Dunn's *Not By Accident*.

This 38-year-old woman's memoir has touched a part of my life that has been buried, forgotten, kicked away when it had the nerve to raise its dangerous head, ignored, until it finally mutated to the point where I thought it was lost for good. From the front cover, to the accolades on the back, I had a feeling about this book, and naturally, I set it aside. It had arrived along with a book I had loaned my aunt that I needed back for research. I pulled the second book out of the envelope, pleased that she had sent me something else. A short note was attached, informing me that, in spite of the raves on the back jacket about how humorous the book is, it is not—she underlined *not*—funny. I finally start reading it, and the first thing I gravitate toward is Dunn's humor, and I think that perhaps my aunt, being of an older generation, just didn't get it.

Wrong.

Samantha Dunn's book starts where most books would be at their arc—a climax, a turning point. It is quite simple, really. It is 1997, she is thirty-two years old. She is riding her horse, Harley, in the hills of Malibu, Southern California. She is taking him along a new trail that day, one that they have

heard about from other riders at the stable, but somehow never taken before, even though it is less than five miles round trip from the stable. As they go, she feels the goldenrod brush along her horse's belly. When they reach a creek, a little waterfall, unheard of in the dry Southern California landscape, Harley stops. He stops, shaking his head back and forth, bits of froth flying from his mouth. He has a reason to stop, he is saying, but Dunn does not listen to him. Dunn is not in the mood; as she herself says: *Thoroughbreds are by definition nervous horses.*

She jumps off of the saddle, better to lead him across the shallow creek than try and coax him across. A small skipping motion, so she won't get her new boots wet. A sense of being flung, lost footing.

She is almost detached as she tells of watching, helpless, as her two thousand pound horse rears up. Hearing a crack as loud as gunfire, she realizes he has landed on the middle of her left shin, cutting, to use her words, like a dull shovel straight through bones, muscles, ligaments and veins, leaving a hinge of calf muscle and sinew. Dirt in her mouth, a funny swelling, only thoughts: I must get my boot off...Is Harley okay? He is grazing with the reins around his feet, he could trip...*they shoot horses with broken legs.*

From this moment in time, page two, where Dunn realizes she must scream, scream for help—it is not her own thought, but her grandmother, Evelyn, inside her head, shouting in her ear, *What the hell's the matter with you, Sam?* Her grandmother is dead ten years. Still the voice. *Get up you're not dead yet for chrissake Sam, scream. Scream.*

Dunn raises her head and screams. She has never heard herself scream. It is primordial, ugly, loud.

She lies there, as her own blood pools around her, when faces appear. The first face registers a look that indicates a desire to vomit. The second face belongs to an actor. She has a funny thought about God. It is all

about angels, people when viewed from a prone angle seem like angels, faces large, looming down, saying comforting words, disappearing out of frame to fly for help.

We travel with her into her thoughts, the thoughts of a woman lying on sacred Chumash Indian ground, bleeding out. The actor knows some Chumash; they still believe this is very sacred ground. He is holding her hand and talking to her until the paramedics come, his voice is resonant, reassuring: *Your life will change because of this, in ways you can't imagine now.*

Her thoughts are jumbled during the cacophony of rescue, paramedics, helicopter, pain, I.V. drugs. But when she is finally home she slowly begins the timorous, uncertain healing process, and Dunn realizes she can no longer count on thought, because, before the accident, when thought became too close to things she couldn't handle, she utilized movement as her escape.

Now she is immobilized, and her thoughts roam freely through her past, her present, the shaky ground her marriage is tottering on, the memory of her last words to her grandmother, her anger and fear at her own helplessness. Her uneasiness as she hears her mother and many friends inform her that she is just accident prone, she has always been that way.

There is only one friend who does not buy it, the friend informs her that, "God touches us with a feather to get our attention. Then, if we don't listen, he starts throwing bricks."

As she can begin to sit up and hobble around, she realizes she must start earning her share of income again. She calls an old editor friend at *Shape* magazine and proposes an article on people who are accident prone. She has cleverly gotten away from the persistent thoughts that are pressing on her soul and moves to the safer pasture—intellect, curiosity, reasonable questions that most certainly will have reasonable answers. When she goes

(Continued on page 144)

Cabinet Report

Cabinet met September 19th through 22nd in Cincinnati. The meeting began Thursday evening with dinner at the home of Pete and Gloria Toot, where the meeting was also held.

Cabinet consists of the chairs of the support units or their representatives, along with the president and secretary of Convention and the chair of the Council of Ministers. Those present were the Rev. Ron Bugler, Gloria Toot, Larry Conant

(Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit—FPRSU); Barb Halle (Ministries Support Unit—MINSU); Susan Hemmerich (Education Support Unit—EDSU); Susan Poole (Communications Support Unit—COMSU); and the Rev. Paul Martin (COM). Martha Bauer, Central Office manager, was also in attendance. (The Rev. Lee Woofenden, chair of the Information Management Support Unit (IMSU) was planning to attend but his car broke down. He had written a report and was available by phone.)

Cabinet spent time reviewing the past year's activities, exploring goals and discussing priorities. A

considerable amount of time was spent looking for ways to reduce costs and many ideas were generated. A budget was arrived at for proposal to General Council, along with a recommendation that General Council explore the ramifications of selling/keeping/ changing the use of the National Church property. Themes for Convention were discussed. Mary Ann Fischer, delegate to the National Council of Churches, spoke to Cabinet about the activities of the NCC.

Gloria Toot, secretary



Not by Accident: Reconstructing a Careless Life (Continued from page 143)

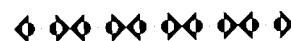
into a page of facts, it never seems dry—her factual rendition of the operations, hospitals, titanium steel rods, and the history of left-handedness and accident-prone people is so fascinating that for a moment the reader almost forgets the front-burner questions—will her leg mend? Will her marriage stay intact? Will she ride Harley again?

I have cried long and often during this read, understanding the need for rational explanations to my own often self-destructive behavior—must be money stress, must be hormones, must be anything except that as I get older the past is catching up, it is spare and stark, and the possibility of finding a grain of faith is getting smaller and harder as the odds are piling up faster and meaner, and they are not in your favor, and they do not care.

She has the dawning realization that all of her life she has been running when things get tough, that she jumps on the back of her horse and rides until she and nature are one, until she feels her strength and her freedom return, this is her life. Quietly and eloquently she tells us why having this ability is important, no, absolutely vital for her to live any kind of meaningful happy life, all the while in the background the incessant drone of surgeons discussing the benefits of amputating her leg, and why it is the best, the only choice, really.

She gets the assignment to write the article; six months into her recovery the calls start coming in from the magazines that know her work, the word is out—Dunn may not be back on her feet, but she is back on the computer, and will she take this assignment, that one? *In Style* magazine simply wants a list of “Fitness Trends of the Stars”—a piece on yoga and martial arts teachers who have celebrity clients. She takes the assignment but is mentally rolling her eyes, keeping the interviews limited to the phone; it is still way too laborious to get around, and for each phone call politely turns down an invitation to “come and attend a class.”

A yogi named Gurmukh Kaur Khalsa changes this. A teacher of Kundalini yoga, she invites Dunn to a class. Dunn declines, yet again. Gurmukh persists, and Dunn is finally forced to explain that she is injured, she can barely walk, much less writhe around in yoga poses. Gurmukh merrily asks, “You can breathe, can’t you?” Dunn is trapped, and reluctantly attends. Having been a student of Kundalini yoga for over a year, I talk quietly to her as I read, because I know what she is in for. For the first time in her young life, without having to move a muscle, she is going to experience God within, and remembering that first time, I cry.



I carry *Not By Accident* with me everywhere. I am a nuisance to my family and friends, nagging them to go out and buy it. I call them and read passages, I shake my roommate awake the moment I am finished and demand that he read it this minute. Not only has Dunn touched me personally, but as a writer her work broke my own paralyzing writer’s block, her language both sturdy and poetic. This former no-nonsense, somewhat cynical rock-and-roll woman nearly dying on sacred Chumash ground, leading her on a tough road to spirituality is, in this humble reader’s opinion, an experience not to be missed.

One day during Kundalini class, where the exercise is to lie on your back and breathe, Gurmukh says to Dunn as she gently takes Samantha’s closed hands, opening them and turning them palms up, “If you keep your hands closed, how will you receive your blessings from God?”

For me, opening this book has been a blessing from God.

Thank you Samantha Dunn.

Thank you, my Aunt Colleen.

Kelly Mahan Jaramillo has worked in the film industry as an assistant music editor for a number of years; her credits include *Saving Private Ryan*, *A.I.*, and *Harry Potter*. She lives in Venice, California, with a friend and four cats, and writes in her spare time. She hopes to begin teaching English as a second language in 2003.



Living for Peace

(Continued from page 139)

cosmically alone," and it takes faith to live through this turbulent portal in history, when so much around us is dying and what is being born is too new to be easily seen.⁴⁸ Faith in these times is remembering that God never promised that we would only walk beside still waters, but God did promise that we would never walk alone.

Things We Can Do

In summary, there are things we can do to build a culture of peace, many of which I would assume are already a part of the lives of many in the Swedenborgian Church. To name a few:

1. We can spend time envisioning a culture of peace by using our gifts and talents to enhance and beautify human life. That may mean nurturing children, volunteering in our community, or speaking out for peace and justice.
2. We can open ourselves to new ways of resolving conflicts. Albert Einstein said that, "Since the atom bomb everything about the world has changed except the way we think about it."⁴⁹
3. We can learn about those who live around us in order to live more peacefully in this interdependent world. There is rich diversity in this country, Pete Seeger claims that there is a newsstand in Queens that sells magazines in 182 different languages.⁵⁰
4. We can engage our own inclinations to violence, vengeance, greed, and fear, because we can only guide others through territory we have already explored. Families, communities, churches, and governments, are called to this inward path to peace, because restoring the earth begins with the emotional and spiritual restoration of our individual and collective hearts and souls.
5. We can work to build institutions that reflect the goodness of human nature.
6. We can learn the history of peace and nonviolence and look for peace potentials in current events.

7. We can live faithfully, love one another, and pray for peace.⁵²

Conclusion

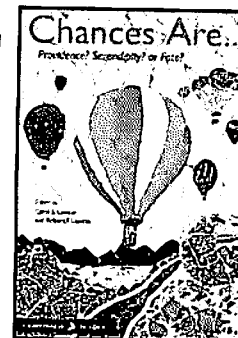
I want to thank you for what you do as members of the Swedenborgian tradition every day to build a culture of peace, in your families, in your churches, in your communities. Now, in conclusion I would like to share with you a Quaker story about the power of love that comes from the 1700's. A gang of roving bandits was terrorizing the backcountry of North Carolina at the end of the American Revolutionary War, and they captured a seventeen year old Quaker named Joseph Cook and threatened to murder him if he did not join their band. After Joseph explained that his conscience would not allow him to kill, they began making plans to shoot him. While the bandits were discussing his execution, Mary Herbert, a young woman about Joseph's age, suddenly appeared in their midst. She demanded that they let Joseph go and boldly stated that they could not have him because Joseph belonged to her. When the startled bandits refused her, she surprised them by grabbing Joseph and carrying him away in her arms. The captain of the bandits, presumably amused and certain that she could not carry him very far, shouted after her: "When you put him down we will start shooting." Mary, empowered by love, found the strength to carry Joseph well beyond the range of their guns. Quaker journals from that period reveal that "two years later Mary established a legal claim to Joseph by marrying him."⁵¹

The power to overcome violence by witnessing to love is within us all, waiting to be released. Yet most of us keep this transforming power locked away, and we die having never dared to use it. This is the time to unlock our love—the world is waiting. Hope is whispering to us from the future, calling us each by name, beseeching us to open our hearts because only then will the world be transformed by what Love is waiting to do.⁵²




BOOK REVIEW

Chances Are...



Sixty attendees enjoyed the first of the 2002-2003 Swedenborg Foundation lecture series on September 20, 2002, in West Chester, Pennsylvania. The event celebrated publication of the ninth annual Chrysalis Reader anthology, titled *Chances Are... Providence? Serendipity? Or Fate?* with readings of several mid-Atlantic authors who had contributed essays, stories, or poems to the issue, which concerns divine providence. The Chrysalis Reader is one of the few annual literary anthologies focused on spiritual topics.

West Coast authors appearing in *Chances Are...* will have a similar opportunity when the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church hosts a reading on November 7, 2002. A reception will be held following the reading so that the audience can mix and mingle with the writers, including Wilson Van Dusen, and with the Readers' editor, Carol Lawson, and art editor, Alice Skinner. SHS Dean James Lawrence, who is also a director of the Swedenborg Foundation, is hosting the event.

New England writers appearing in *Chances Are...* will read their contributions in Brattleboro, Vermont, on December 6. The Swedenborg Foundation is committed to facilitating publication of writing on spiritual topics by promising writers. 

CORRECTION

"The New Church in Ohio, A Brief History of the Swedenborgian Presence" published in the October 2002 *Messenger* (p. 123), contains a number of factual errors due to an earlier draft being mistakenly printed instead of the final draft. We are sorry for any problems this may have caused. The corrected version of the article will be published in the December 2002 issue.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Nominating Committee is seeking qualified candidates for the offices listed below. If you have any suggestions or questions, please notify your minister or any member of the Nominating Committee immediately. Please know that the Nominating Committee encourages you to consider individuals who have talent and abilities in particular areas, but have not yet served within Convention. Thank you for your prayerful involvement in this process!

President-elect: three-year term; elected in 2003 to take office in 2004

Vice-president: elected for one-year term.

Recording Secretary: elected for one-year term.

Treasurer: elected for one-year term.

General Council: three persons elected for three-year terms, one minister and two lay people.

Communications Support Unit (COMSU): one elected for three-year term.

Education Support Unit (EDSU): one elected for three-year term.

Information Support Unit (IMSU): one elected for three-year term.

Ministries Support Unit (MINSU): two elected for three-year terms

Financial & Physical Resources Support Unit (FPRSU): one elected for three-year term.

Nominating Committee: two nominations for one elected five-year term.

Committee on Admission to the Ministry (CAM): one minister and one layperson, each elected to one-year terms.

Board of Trustees, Swedenborg School of Religion (SSR): two elected for three-year terms.

The Nominating Committee submits names for vacated unfulfilled term on any/all of the above positions. Occasionally a person in a current position may be nominated for another position. In such event the Nominating Committee should have a "back-up" nominee to account for any such position vacated by election to another support unit, board, or office.

Rev. F. Robert Tafel, Chair
29 Fisher Street, Needham, MA 02492
(781)444-3334 FAX: (781)449-1331
Email: rtafel@earthlink.net

Nominating Committee:
Rev. F. Robert Tafel, Mass.
Linda Kraus, Kansas
Steve Thomas, Ontario, Canada
Mary Crenshaw, Michigan
Laurie Turley, Maine



Fryeburg New Church Assembly Lectures 2002 Tapes Available

THEME: Responding to 9/11 WEEK ONE (AUGUST 5-10)

MONDAY, 5

- #1 Lee Woofenden - *The Spiritual Roots of War*
- #2 George Dole - *Some Spiritual Issues*

TUESDAY, 6

- Ted Klein - *Alternative to War*
- Bill Woofenden - *Ways of Dealing with Evil*

THURSDAY, 8

- George Dole - *Islam: A Fork in the Road?*
- Lee Woofenden - *War, the Bible, and Swedenborg*

FRIDAY, 9

- #1 Dorothea Harvey - *Peace: Inner and Outer*
- #2 Bill Woofenden - *Temptation, Struggle, Combat*

SATURDAY, 10

- Ken Turley - *Crusaders and Martyrs*
- George Dole - *Positive Peace*

WEEK TWO (AUGUST 12-17)

MONDAY, 12

- #1 Robert McCluskey - *Pastor/Prophet: Shepherd/Judge*
- #2 Bill Woofenden - *The Process of Regeneration and the New Church*

TUESDAY, 13

- Susannah Currie - *Response and Responsibility*
- Ken Turley - *The War Within*

THURSDAY, 15

- Bill Woofenden - *The Lord's Second Coming*
- Wilma Wake - *The Peace Movement*

FRIDAY, 16

- #1 Gladys Wheaton - *Victim and Perpetrator*
- #2 George Dole - *A New Jerusalem?*

SATURDAY, 17

- Lee Woofenden - *The War to End All Wars: Regeneration*
- Robert McCluskey - *Debate or Argument: Talking about 9/11*

Tapes of lectures are available at a cost of \$4.00 a piece or \$20.00 per week. Please add \$2.00 per tape or \$6.00 per week for mailing costs. Send order and make checks payable to:

Fryeburg New Church
4 Oxford Street
Fryeburg, ME 04037



Baptisms

Sonmor—Jenna Ann Sonmor, age 10 months, daughter of Eric Sonmor and Teresa Boone, was baptized at the home of her grandparents, David and Shirley Sonmor, in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, July 29, 2002, the Rev. David L. Sonmor officiating.

Confirmations

Dunlevy, Johnson, Whaley - Karin Dunlevy, Bette and Dave Johnson, and Diana Whaley were confirmed into the life and faith of the Swedenborgian Church August 25, 2002, at the Swedenborgian Church at Temenos in West Chester, Pennsylvania, the Rev. Susannah Currie officiating.

Marriages

Darbyshire and Wiens—Kimberly Darbyshire and Robert Wiens were united in marriage June 21, 2002, the Rev. Erwin D. Reddekopp, pastor of the Okanagan, B.C. Society in Kelowna, officiating. The couple will reside in Summerland.

Reed and Tellefson—Christian Reed and Sharleen Tellefson were united in marriage August 31 at the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, Alberta, the Rev. John Maine officiating. Christian is the son of Barry and Linda Reed.

Important Church Calendar Dates

October 14-17, 2002 — CAM, Oakland, CA
 October 24-27, 2002 — General Council, Temenos, PA
 October 25-27, 2002 — Transitions, Temenos, PA
 November 2, 2002 — Retirement Committee Meeting, Newtonville, MA
 November 8-10, 2002 — SHS Open House Weekend (PSR) Berkeley, CA
 November 16, 2002 — Investment Committee Meeting, Newtonville, MA
 January 10-11, 2003 — Wayfarers Board Meeting, Palos Verdes, CA
 March 13-16, 2003 — MINSU Meeting @ Wayfarers



Deaths

Abrams—Arthur Peter Abrams, age 88, entered the spiritual world September 13, 2002. Art was a lifelong member of the New Church. He served as president of the Rosthern Society for many years and was also treasurer of the Western Canada Conference. A resurrection Service was held at the Zoar Mennonite Church at Waldheim, Saskatchewan, September 5, 2002. Interment was at the Waldheim Cemetery, the Rev. David L. Sonmor officiating.

Andrews—Philip G. Andrews, age 88, longtime member of the Fryeburg New Church in Fryeburg, Maine, entered the spiritual world September 13, 2002, at home. A memorial service was held September 17, 2002, at the Fryeburg First Congregational Church, the Revs. Dorothy C. Francy and Pastor Norman F. Rust officiating.



SHORT TAKES

THE REV. JUN-CHOL LEE, pastor of the Swedenborg Chapel in Cleveland, Ohio, is the new **Web Liaison**. In this newly created position under MINSU, Jun-Chol will answer Web questions that come into Central Office regarding our Swedenborgian denomination, theology, and beliefs.



CONTINUING IN HIS EFFORTS to create positive connections between the white and red cultures and Christian and Native spirituality, the Rev. Ken Turley, pastor of the Fryeburg New Church in Fryeburg, Maine, submitted his poem, "Prayer for the Six Directions," adapted from a Lakhota Sioux prayer, for approval and permission to publish it. It was met with positive feedback and has been posted at the following website: www.lakhota.com It will be found under "Short Stories." Ken is still engaged in securing permission to publish and working out the rights and division of any possible profits with the Sioux tribe, so feel free to use it in worship, but please do not print it for any kind of public distribution.



How Many Christians Does it Take to Change a Light Bulb?

CHARISMATICS: Only one. Hands already in the air. **PENTACOSTALS:** Ten. One to change the bulb and nine to pray against the spirits of darkness. **PRESBYTERIANS:** None. Lights will go on and off at predestined times. **ROMAN CATHOLICS:** None. Candles only. **BAPTISTS:** At least 15. One to change the bulb and 3 committees to approve the change and decide who brings the potato salad. **EPISCOPALIANS:** Three. One to call the electrician, one to mix the drinks, and one to talk about how much better the old one was. **UNITARIANS:** We choose not to make a statement either in favor of or against the need for a new light bulb. However, if in your own journey you have found that light bulbs work for you, that's fine. You are invited to write a poem or to compose a modern dance about your light bulb for

next Sunday. **METHODISTS:** Undetermined. Whether your light is bright, dull or completely out, you are loved. You can be a light bulb, turnip bulb or tulip bulb. A church-wide lighting service is planned for Sunday. Bring a bulb of your choice and a covered dish. **NAZARENES:** Six. One woman to replace the bulb while five men review church lighting policy. **LUTHERANS:** None. Lutherans do not approve of change. **AMISH:** What light bulb??? **SWEDENBORGIANS:** 3,000. A denominational-wide study was done ten years ago on whether it was really a light bulb or just a correspondence of God's truth or, perhaps, human falsity, and after going through several committees a motion was made and, after fierce debate and several members quitting the church, passed on the floor of Convention not to take an official position on the question, but to let everyone change the light bulb or not, depending on his or her own conscience. Nothing ever came of it.

—anonymous email phantom

A Gathering of Young Adult Swedenborgians from Around the World

Location: Temenos Retreat Center
Dates: July 28 - August 3, 2003

Theme: FREEDOM: A Celebration of Diversity and Acceptance (DP: 4.4)

Keynote Speaker: Rev. Dr. George F. Dole

Staff: Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake
 Rev. Jun-chol Lee
 Rev. Lee Woofenden
 Rev. Dr. Jonathan Mitchell

The Swedenborgian Church in North America is excited about hosting this wonderful event! The success of "Camp 2000" held at Purley Chase, England, generated such enthusiasm in the young adults who attended from the Swedenborgian

Church in North America, that the concept of "Camp 2003" was a logical outcome. We are delighted to be organizing it!

Camp 2003 promises to provide some excellent and thought-provoking discussion, outstanding fun and camaraderie, and a couple of wonderful excursions. Initial information was sent out "to the world" in the spring of 2002, and the registration packets will be sent out in the early fall.

The Swedenborgian Church will sponsor two young adults (ages 18 - 24) to this gathering (see article below).

For further information, please contact Chris Laitner or Kurt Fekete, P.O. Box 1221 Manchester, VT 05255. (802) 287-2735. Email: klf@mack.com

Essay Contest for Camp 2003 What an opportunity!!

The Swedenborgian Church will select two young adult Swedenborgians between the ages of 18 and 24 to attend Camp 2003 with all expenses, including travel, paid. Camp 2003 is a worldwide gathering of young adult Swedenborgians, ages 18 - 24, that will be held at Temenos (in West Chester, outside of Philadelphia) from July 28 - August 3, 2003. The two attendees will be chosen through an essay contest which will be judged in March, 2003.

Rules: If you are interested in becoming involved in the process, please submit a one to two- page essay describing what you would have to offer to this gathering and what you hope to gain from it. You should write from both personal and spiritual points of view. Your essay should be accompanied by a letter

from a church leader that indicates from that person's viewpoint what you will bring to this gathering of young adults from around the world. The essay is due by Feb. 1, 2003.

These documents should be sent to the Church's Central Office, 11 Highland Ave., Newtonville, MA 02460, attn: Martha Bauer. Martha Bauer will then send the essays, with no names attached, to the two selected readers who will choose the two most outstanding. The readers will not communicate their choices to one another until they have been returned to the Central Office. If necessary, a third reader will be involved to make the final choice of two denominational representatives to Camp 2003.

The two winners will be contacted no later than April 1, 2003.

Questions? Please contact Chris Laitner, 10 Hannah Ct., Midland, MI 48642; (989) 636-7674; kiplingcat@juno.com



The Swedenborgian Church
 of North America
The Messenger
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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.