

GOULD DISCOURSE, APRIL 23, 2004, SAINT LAWRENCE  
DISTRICT.

GOOD EVENING, IT IS VERY GOOD TO BE HERE AMONG  
YOU. I HOPE YOU WILL APPRECIATE THAT THERE ARE  
AT LEAST TWENTY PEOPLE STANDING UP HERE WITH  
ME TO TELL YOU THE STORY OF JOSEPHINE GOULD.  
SHE INFLUENCED SO MANY, IN SO MANY WAYS, THAT I  
HAD TO STOP MAKING INTERVIEW PHONE CALLS –  
WE'D BE HERE ALL WEEKEND. THE IDEA OF TELLING  
YOU HER HISTORY CAME TO ME AS I HEARD SOME  
FORMER DISCOURSE SPEAKERS SAY, WHEN ASKED,  
THAT THEY HAD LITTLE KNOWLEDGE OF HER STORY,  
NOR KNEW WHY THIS EVENING IS IN HER HONOR EACH  
YEAR, AT THE BEGINNING OF OUR ANNUAL DISTRICT  
MEETING.

I AM AWARE, ALSO, THAT A PRIMARY TASK THIS

EVENING IS TO KEEP YOU AWAKE. MANY OF YOU HAVE BEEN WORKING, AND THEN DRIVING A LONG DISTANCE. WE RELIGIOUS EDUCATORS AND MINISTERS HAVE BEEN AT A RETREAT WHICH CENTERED AROUND OUR FAMILY HISTORIES....EXHAUSTING, INDEED. SO, WAKE UP, AND LET US BEGIN WITH A CHALICE LIGHTING IN HONOR OF JO GOULD. WOULD SIX PEOPLE, FROM SIX DIFFERENT CONGREGATIONS, PLEASE COME FORWARD TO LIGHT THE SIX CANDLES IN THIS CHALICE, WHICH WAS PRESENTED TO ME BY OUR ROCHESTER YOUTH GROUP. AND, AS THEY LIGHT THESE CANDLES, PLEASE REPEAT AFTER ME :

“LIFE IS A GIFT, FOR WHICH WE ARE GRATEFUL. WE GATHER IN COMMUNITY TO CELEBRATE THE GLORIES AND MYSTERIES OF THIS GREAT GIFT.” (Montgomery)

THANK YOU. THESE WORDS ARE PRINTED AROUND THE EDGE OF THIS CHALICE, AS THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN

ROCHESTER HAVE GROWN UP RECITING THEM AND IDENTIFY WITH THEM AS PART OF THEIR FAITH. AS OFTEN AS OUR RELIGION HAS RESISTED RITUALS, BEFORE THE DAYS OF "THE PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES" AND A CHALICE IN EVERY CHURCH, JO GOULD HAD INSTITUTED RITUALS INTO THE LIVES OF THE CHILDREN IN THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN SYRACUSE. HER DAUGHTER, JANET, WROTE TO DAVID BLANCHARD'S MOTHER, THAT: "SHE ESTABLISHED RITUALS FOR THE CHILDREN IN THE CHURCH. THE PUSSY WILLOWS, THE PETUNIAS, THE CANDLES, THE CHRISTMAS SERVICE FOR FAMILIES."

AS AN ASIDE, YOU NEVER KNOW WHERE OR WHEN YOUR RITUALS WILL CATCH UP WITH YOU: I HAD BEEN SITTING IN THE SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE FOR HOURS, AND, FINALLY, A MAN WITH A CREW CUT CALLED ME BACK TO HIS CUBICLE, REPEATED MY NAME AND

BEGAN: "LIFE IS A GIFT FOR WHICH WE ARE GRATEFUL"...I WAS EMBARRASSED, AND HE SAID NOT TO WORRY, HE HADN'T BEEN IN CHURCH FOR YEARS AND HE HAD HAD LONG HAIR AND A BEARD WHEN HE WAS THERE. BUT, HE SAID, "MY FAMILY AND I RECITE 'LIFE IS A GIFT' ALL THE TIME."

MY MAIN SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT JO GOULD'S LIFE AND PHILOSOPHY, IS HER ODYSSEY, GIVEN ON OCTOBER 16, 1978, IN CAZENOVIA, NEW YORK, BEFORE THE IROQUOIS CHAPTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST MINISTERS AND THE LIBERAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DIRECTORS ASSOCIATIONS. GOULD WRITES:

"PERHAPS ONLY BECAUSE IT HAS HAPPENED, IT SEEMS A NATURAL OUTCOME OF MY BEGINNINGS THAT I CHOSE TO DEVOTE SO MUCH OF MY LIFE TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION. ONE OF MY EARLIEST RECOLLECTIONS IS

5. OF STANDING ON THE PLATFORM OF A LITTLE  
VILLAGE CHURCH SINGING A CHRISTMAS SONG WHILE  
MY PARENTS TOOK THEIR TURN AT SATURDAY  
CLEANING CHORES. MY FATHER'S PARENTS WERE  
FOUNDERS OF THIS LITTLE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
AND IT WAS AN IMPORTANT PART OF FAMILY LIFE.  
SINCE MY MOTHER TAUGHT THE YOUNGEST CHILDREN  
IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL, I CONSIDERED MYSELF IN THE  
SPECIAL POSITION OF TEACHER'S HELPER.  
SUNDAY SCHOOL WAS SITTING IN LITTLE CHAIRS  
SINGING SONGS ABOUT JESUS, DROPPING PENNIES IN A  
BANK AND LISTENING TO STORIES FROM THE BIBLE. AT  
HOME, I WAS TAUGHT TO BE OBEDIENT, TRUTHFUL,  
KIND, RESPECTFUL AND QUIET. I LEARNED TO RECITE  
THE LISTS OF BOOKS IN THE BIBLE, THE TEN  
COMMANDMENTS, THE BEATTITUDES, THE GOLDEN RULE  
AND SOME OF THE PSALMS. MY USUAL BEDTIME

PRAYER I HAVE FORGOTTEN, BUT I REMEMBER THAT WHEN WE WERE SPENDING THE NIGHT ON THE TRAIN, I WAS TO PRAY THAT GOD WOULD HELP THE ENGINEER KEEP OUR JOURNEY SAFE. I FELT VAGUELY THAT THIS WAS NOT A VERY EFFECTIVE WAY OF ACHIEVING THE DESIRED RESULT, BUT I DID AS I WAS TOLD.”

JO CONTINUES: “MY FATHER DIED WHEN I WAS QUITE YOUNG AND I KNEW A DEEP HURT THAT I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND. I ALSO KNEW THAT MY MOTHER WAS VERY SAD, AND I DARED NOT TALK WITH HER ABOUT HIM. A FEW YEARS LATER CAME THE DEATH OF THE GRANDFATHER WHO HAD BEEN LIKE A FATHER TO ME; AGAIN I KNEW A LONELINESS THAT I COULD NOT MANAGE BY MYSELF, EXCEPT TO COVER IT UP WITH THE FAMILIAR PURSUITS OF EVERY DAY. WHEN ONE DAY I CAME UPON MY CAT GIVING BIRTH TO KITTENS, I

7. WAS FRIGHTENED AT HER STRANGE BEHAVIOR AND RAN INTO THE HOUSE FOR AN EXPLANATION. MOTHER GAVE ME THE BARE FACTS IN WHISPERS, WITH THE WARNING THAT I WAS NOT TO TALK WITH ANY OF MY FRIENDS ABOUT WHAT I HAD SEEN. WE MADE SURE THAT THE CAT HAD A GOOD PLACE TO KEEP HER BABIES SAFE. BUT, THE WONDERINGS ABOUT THE BEGINNINGS OF LIFE AND THE ENDINGS WERE HUSHED UP.”

BUT, JO GOULD SEEMS TO HAVE PULLED HERSELF OUT OF THIS “HUSHED UP” LIVING – WELL, MOSTLY. GENE NAVIAS REMEMBERS WHEN HE WAS WORKING AT THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, IN THE NINETEEN SIXTIES, THAT HE RECEIVED JO’S DRAFT OF SENSORY EXPERIENCES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN. SHE WANTED GENE’S OPINION, AND HE FELT THAT HE HAD TO REMIND HER THAT SHE

8. HAD LEFT OUT THE SENSE OF SMELL. SHE  
RESPONDED THAT SHE WASN'T SURE HOW TO  
APPROACH THE SENSE OF SMELL. SO, GENE WROTE JO  
A POEM TO INCLUDE IN THE CURRICULUM:

Down by the waterside,

Down by the sea

There is the place

I like to be.

Sometimes for the sandy beach

Sometimes for the shells,

Sometimes for the special kin

Of seaside smells.



9. I like the foggy flavor  
Of the seaside air  
Rising from the sand  
When the seaweed's there.

But sometimes I'd rather,  
If I had a wish,  
Have a big whiff  
Of a nice dead fish!

Oh, it's down by the waterside,  
It's down by the sea,  
Oh, it's down by the ocean  
That a rose should be.

**AND, JO PUBLISHED THIS IN HER CURRICULUM!**

LET'S RETURN TO THE GOULD ODYSSEY: "WHEN I ATTENDED SWARTHMORE, PEOPLE WERE ASKING QUESTIONS, DISCUSSING IDEAS AND VALUES, PROBING AND SEARCHING, OFTEN UNCERTAIN ABOUT ANSWERS. MY FRIENDS WERE OF MANY DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS AND WE HAD COME TOGETHER IN THE FREE-THINKING WORLD OF QUAKER TRADITION, WHERE WE WERE ENJOINED TO SEEK AND FOLLOW THE INNER LIGHT. WE LEARNED THAT THE AIM OF LIBERAL EDUCATION SHOULD BE TO PRODUCE REASONABLE MINDS. THIS, I THINK, IS WHAT MY YEARS AT SWARTHMORE DID FOR ME. I WAS COMING OF AGE.

A FEW YEARS LATER, AFTER LARRY AND I MARRIED, WE SIGNED OUR NAMES TO THE MEMBERSHIP BOOK OF THE MAY MEMORIAL CHURCH, IN SYRACUSE, NEW YORK. WE ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITIES IN VARIOUS ASPECTS

11. OF THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH, PRIMARILY AS ADVISORS OF THE YOUTH GROUP FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS. WE BECAME MEMBERS OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COMMITTEE NEAR THE BEGINNING OF ELIZABETH'S MANWELL'S TENURE AS DIRECTOR OF THE CHURCH SCHOOL. LIVING NEXT DOOR TO THE MANWELLS, AS WE DID, MADE IT HARD FOR US TO ESCAPE FROM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, EVEN IF WE HAD WANTED TO!

AFTER TEN YEARS OF WORKING CLOSELY WITH ELIZABETH, I BECAME DIRECTOR, IN 1949. I WANTED THE ADMINISTRATION TO BE CAREFULLY ORGANIZED"... NOW IS THE TIME FOR A STORY: THE OTHER DAY, WHEN I CALLED ELIZABETH'S MANWELL'S SON, HANK, HE SPOKE OF WORKING WITH JO GOULD AS ONE OF HER CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHERS. HE SAID THAT SHE WAS SO ORGANIZED THAT THERE WOULD BE

NOTES FROM HER, IN THE CLASSROOMS, ABOUT WHAT HAD NOT BEEN PROPERLY CLEANED UP THE PREVIOUS SUNDAY. ALSO, JO INSISTED THAT THE TEACHERS TEACH EVERY SUNDAY -- FOR TWO HOURS -- THE ENTIRE CHURCH YEAR. ( NO TEAMS TO PROVIDE SUNDAYS OFF)

IN ANOTHER INTERVIEW, ANNE HIBBERT, WHO HAD BEEN A CHURCH SCHOOL STUDENT AT MAY MEMORIAL, REMINISCED ABOUT HOW MRS. GOULD WANTED THE CHILDREN TO BE INVOLVED IN THEIR SUNDAY MORNING EXPERIENCES, SUCH AS DELIVERING THE SNACKS TO ONE ANOTHER. IT SEEMS TO ME, AND YOU'LL HEAR THIS IN OTHERS' COMMENTS, THAT ELEMENTS OF JO GOULD'S PERSONALITY WERE A CONTRAST BETWEEN NEEDING STRICT ORGANIZATION AND HAVING A WARMHEARTED UNDERSTANDING OF, AND APPRECIATION FOR, CHILDREN AND THEIR NEEDS.

13, SHE CONTINUES IN HER ODYSSEY: "A SPLENDID OPPORTUNITY FOR LEARNING CAME AT THE END OF MY FIRST YEAR AS DIRECTOR (1950). I WAS INVITED TO ATTEND A WEEK-LONG MEETING AT CHAUTAUQUA, LED BY SOPHIA FAHS, FOR A GROUP OF PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORS. IT WAS DURING THIS WEEK THAT THE UNITARIAN EDUCATION DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION WAS FORMED, LATER TO BECOME LREDA."

I ASKED PEOPLE WHO HAD BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH JO GOULD: "HOW DID KNOWING HER INFLUENCE YOUR RELIGIOUS LIFE – IN THE PAST, IN THE PRESENT? THERE ARE AN AMAZING NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS, LAY AND PROFESSIONAL, WHO HAVE REMAINED STRONGLY INVOLVED IN OUR CHURCHES BECAUSE OF HER CONTAGIOUS DEVOTION TO OUR RELIGION.

DAVID BLANCHARD WRITES, IN MARCH, 2004:

"JOSEPHINE WAS CLEARLY AN INFLUENCE ON MY LIFE

14. AND, EVENTUALLY, MY MINISTRY. IT WAS HER AESTHETIC SENSIBILITY THAT HAS ME TROOPING THROUGH THE WOODS IN SEARCH OF PUSSY WILLOW BRANCHES, CRAB-APPLES BLOSSOMS, AND SPRAYS OF FORSYTHIA TO ADORN A WORSHIP SPACE. SHE HAD A DIGNIFIED BEARING THAT ALSO CONVEYED A LOT TO ME...IT GAVE ME THE MESSAGE THAT 'THIS IS SOMETHING SPECIAL, SOMETHING OF WONDER, SOMETHING TO PAY ATTENTION TO.'

BUT ANOTHER STORY IS PERHAPS MOST TELLING. I MIGHT HAVE BEEN 5 OR 6. I WOULD GO TO THE 'FARMERS MARKET' ON SATURDAY MORNINGS WITH MY MOTHER, WHERE WE'D BUY THINGS LIKE APPLES, CHEESE, EGGS, ETC, AND AT HOLIDAY TIME, ADMIRE THE HANDICRAFTS THAT SOME FARM WOMEN MADE TO SELL. ONE TIME IN DECEMBER, I SAW A LITTLE CROCHETED WREATH FOR FIFTY CENTS. I WANTED TO

15. BUY IT AND GIVE IT TO 'MRS. GOULD'. I GAVE IT TO HER, AND REMEMBER NOTHING OF THAT EXCHANGE. I'M SURE SHE THANKED ME PROPERLY. THE REAL STORY CAME LATER.

EVERY DECEMBER AFTER THAT, FOR AT LEAST A DECADE, UNTIL SHE MOVED TO PENNSYLVANIA, THAT SIMPLE LITTLE PIN WOULD APPEAR ON HER NAVY BLUE SUIT AT CHRISTMAS TIME. SHE DID NOT MAKE A FUSS ABOUT IT. SHE DID NOT SAY 'SEE WHAT I HAVE ON?' SHE JUST WORE IT. AND I WOULD SEE IT, AND FEEL LIKE I MATTERED IN WAYS THAT DID NOT HAVE TO BE ARTICULATED. I THINK IT WAS ONE OF THOSE CHANCE EVENTS THAT CHANGE A LIFE. I'M SURE WHEN HER CHILDREN WERE SORTING OUT HER THINGS AFTER SHE DIED, THE PIN WENT STRAIGHT INTO THE TRASH WITHOUT A CLUE AS TO WHY IT HAD BEEN KEPT. BUT EVERY CHRISTMAS I LOOK OVER SIMILAR TABLES AT

16. THE FARMERS MARKET, AND PROBABLY AS IT SHOULD BE, I HAVE NEVER SEEN ANOTHER PIN QUITE LIKE IT."

MORE FROM HER ODYSSEY: " I WANTED TO HELP CHILDREN FEEL THAT THEIR RELIGION WAS NOT JUST SOMETHING TO TAKE OUT OF A BOX AT CHURCH AND PUT BACK AGAIN, BUT AN ATTITUDE OF MIND AND HEART WHICH WOULD AFFECT THEIR EVERY DAY LIVING, AND THAT THE CHURCH WAS A PLACE FOR STRENGTHENING THAT ATTITUDE, IN THE COMPANY OF FRIENDS. THE SCHOOL, AT MAY MEMORIAL, GREW IN NUMBERS. WE USED EVERY SQUARE FOOT OF SPACE, ADDED TWO ROOMS, TRIED A WAITING LIST AND FINALLY MOVED FOUR CLASSES TO THE MUSEUM OF ART, A BLOCK AWAY. WHAT A JOYFUL RELIEF IT WAS SOME YEARS LATER (1964) WHEN WE MOVED INTO THE NEW BUILDING ON GENESEE STREET.



17. IT WAS A TIME, TOO, OF RAPID SOCIAL CHANGE. FAMILIES MOVED MORE OFTEN, FEWER CHILDREN GREW UP IN OUR CHURCH SCHOOL. THERE WERE MORE WEEKEND FAMILY TRIPS, WITH RESULTING IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE AND DECREASING INTEREST; MORE ONE-PARENT HOMES, MORE MOTHERS GOING BACK TO SCHOOL AND TAKING JOBS OUTSIDE THE HOME. TELEVISION BROUGHT A NEW WORLD TO CHILDREN, OFFERING SO-CALLED RIGHT ANSWERS, AND PAT SOLUTIONS, WITH LITTLE TIME TO PONDER OR RESPOND. WE HAD TO ADAPT TO THESE CHANGES AND YET WE OFTEN DID NOT KNOW HOW BEST TO HELP CHILDREN TO LIVE IN THIS FAST CHANGING WORLD.”

TODAY, IN 2004, I WONDER HOW THE TECHNOLOGICAL FLOOD, ABOUT FORTY YEARS AFTER HER DILEMMA, WOULD IMPRESS MRS.GOULD?

18. SALLY LEMAR, ANNE HIBBERT'S MOTHER, WHO NOW LIVES IN KEENE, NEW HAMPSHIRE, WAS ON THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COMMITTEE AT MAY MEMORIAL IN THE 1960S. MRS. LEMAR DESCRIBED A HUGE CHURCH SCHOOL, NON-CHURCH MEMBERS IN SYRACUSE DROPPING OFF THEIR CHILDREN, EVEN REQUESTING TO PAY TUITION, THEY HAD SUCH RESPECT FOR THE SCHOOL. THEN, SHE SAID, IT ALL FELL APART. EVIDENTLY, AND JAN EVANS-TILLER REPORTS THIS, TOO, PEOPLE AT MAY MEMORIAL DECIDED THAT THERE SHOULD BE LITTLE STRUCTURED CURRICULUM AND MORE FREEDOM IN THE CHURCH SCHOOL. DISCIPLINE BECAME LAX – SALLY LEMAR SAID THAT SHE WOULD NOT HAVE TAKEN LITTLE CHILDREN INTO THAT LATE 60S CHAOS. JO GOULD COULD NOT TOLERATE THIS ATMOSPHERE AND SHE WROTE: "I KNEW THAT I WAS COMING TO THE END OF MY CAREER

19. BUT I WANTED TO WORK ONE YEAR MORE. IN 1967  
– 1968, IT WAS A DIFFICULT TIME FOR ME, FORCING THE  
EARLY ANNOUNCEMENT OF MY RESIGNATION TO BE  
EFFECTIVE IN JUNE.” SHE INCLUDES THIS INSIGHT IN  
HER ODYSSEY: “ONCE A WISE FRIEND, FROM WHOM I  
WAS SEEKING ADVICE, SAID: ‘JO, YOU KNOW YOUR  
STANDARDS ARE AWFULLY HIGH. I’M GLAD I DON’T  
HAVE TO LIVE UP TO THEM ALL THE TIME.’ THAT WAS  
SOMETHING I HADN’T THOUGHT OF BEFORE. HAD I  
BEEN EXPECTING TOO MUCH OF PEOPLE? NOT SEEING  
CLEARLY THEIR POINT OF VIEW? I COULDN’T GIVE UP  
MY DREAM, BUT PERHAPS I COULD BE MORE  
UNDERSTANDING OF OTHERS’ PACE AND VISION?”  
(BOTH ELIZABETH STRONG AND JAN EVANS-TILLER  
SPEAK POSITIVELY ABOUT JO GOULD’S HIGH  
STANDARDS). HER VERY PUBLIC INTROSPECTION IS  
INSPIRING, TO SAY THE LEAST. SHE HAD INTEGRITY!

20. SHE CONTINUED HER RELIGIOUS EDUCATION WORK BY PROVIDING COUNSELING FOR CANDIDATES WHO WERE SEEKING PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION AND WAS HIRED TO WORK WITH THE UNIVERSALIST CHURCH IN SYRACUSE...EVIDENTLY BEING FOLLOWED BY SOME MEMBERS OF THE MAY MEMORIAL CHURCH. DAVID BLANCHARD FOUND A LETTER IN THE UNIVERSALIST CHURCH FILES – DATED FEBRUARY, 1970. I QUOTE PART OF IT: “DEAR PARENTS, AS A NEWCOMER IN YOUR MIDST, I AM EAGER TO KNOW EACH OF YOU, BUT THIS WILL TAKE A BIT OF TIME. MEANWHILE MY I SHARE WITH YOU SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE CHILDREN AND OUR CHURCH?” GOULD CLOSES HER LETTER WITH THE FOLLOWING SEVEN “THINGS” SHE HOPES CHILDREN WILL LEARN THAT THE CHUCH CAN BE.

21. A HOME FOR A LARGER FAMILY OF PEOPLE WHO  
LIKE TO SHARE SOME OF THEIR IDEAS AND FEELINGS  
ABOUT LIFE'S DEEPEST MEANINGS.

A TREASURE HOUSE WHERE GREAT IDEAS, ARTS,  
SCIENCES, POETRY AND MYTHS OF THE PAST ARE  
READY FOR THE TAKING TO ENLARGE OUR  
RELATIONSHIPS AND HELP US LIVE MORE FULLY IN THE  
PRESENT.

A WORKSHOP IN HUMAN RELATIONS WHERE SELF-  
UNDERSTANDING GROWS ALONG WITH PRACTICE IN  
UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECTING OTHERS.

A LABORATORY IN WHICH TO EXAMINE ASPECTS OF  
THE NATURAL WORLD SO THAT BY KNOWING WE  
INCREASE OUR APPRECIATIONS OF THE UNIVERSE.

A STUDIO WHERE WE EXPERIMENT WITH OUR  
THOUGHTS ABOUT BEAUTY AND ORDER AND LEARN TO

22. "KNOW OURSELVES THROUGH WHAT WE DO WITH  
HAND AND MIND.

A LIGHTHOUSE FROM WHICH THE LIGHT WE HAVE  
FOUND MAY SHINE TO LESSEN THE DARKNESS OF  
IGNORANCE AND MISERY AND INJUSTICE IN THE  
WORLD.

A PLACE OF WORSHIP FOR THE OPENING OF ALL THE  
WINDOWS OF OUR BEING TO KNOW THE GREAT  
'CONTINUING CREATIVE PROCESS' WHICH SOME HAVE  
CALLED GOD, A PLACE OF SINGING AND LAUGHTER, OF  
SYMPATHIES THAT LIE TOO DEEP FOR TEARS, OF  
ASPIRATIONS THAT LIFT OUR SPIRITS.

IF THE CHURCH IS SOME OF THESE THINGS TO US  
ADULTS, THEN THE CHILDREN WILL KNOW IT BY OUR  
ATTITUDES. THEY MAY THEN DARE TO PUT DOWN  
THEIR ROOTS HERE AND TO GROW A RELIGION OF  
THEIR OWN. CORDIALLY YOURS, JO GOULD"

23. AS I SPOKE WITH PEOPLE AND/OR THEY WROTE TO ME ABOUT JO, I GREW TO APPRECIATE HER ATTENTION TO EVERYTHING AROUND HER..SHE DID NOT 'RUSH', BUT DELIGHTED IN EVERY ONE OF LIFE'S DETAILS. JAN EVANS-TILLER WRITES: " ALTHOUGH SHE LIVED IN SYRACUSE AND I LIVED IN EAST ROCHESTER, WE KEPT IN TOUCH, AT ONE POINT SERVING TOGETHER ON THE DISTRICT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE) COMMITTEE. BY THAT TIME I WAS DOING FREE LANCE RE WORK FOR THE DISTRICT AND MANY TIMES WAS JO'S HOUSE GUEST. I NEVER STAYED WITH HER WITHOUT FINDING THE NEWEST BOOKS IN THE RE FIELD ON THE COFFEE TABLE IN HER LIVING ROOM, CROWDED NEXT TO WONDERFUL CHILDREN'S BOOKS THAT SHE'D FOUND AT THE LIBRARY OR THE BOOKSTORE - 'SO I'D HAVE SOMETHING TO READ WHILE I WAS THERE.' THERE WERE ARRANGEMENTS OF SEASHELLS IN BOWLS ON

24. THE TABLES AND OTHER FLAT SURFACES OF HER ROOMS AND OFTEN FLOWERS OR AN INTERESTING HOUSEPLANT IN THE GUEST BEDROOM. THE 'ALARM CLOCK' SHE USED TO ROUSE ME OUT OF BED WAS A BRASS CHOIR RECORDING AND THE SMELL OF FRESH COFFEE. JO BELIEVED, AS DID ANGUS MCLEAN, THAT WHAT YOU DID WAS YOUR TRUE MESSAGE, RATHER THAN WHAT YOU SAID. SHE TAUGHT ME HER MESSAGE THROUGH ALL THE YEARS I KNEW HER: THAT BEING A RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR IS NOT A JOB YOU CAN SHED WHEN YOU COME HOME FROM WORK, LIKE A SUIT OF CLOTHES, BUT IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF YOU, LIKE YOUR BLOOD AND BONES. NOT ONLY A WAY OF WORKING, BUT A WAY OF LIVING. I AM GLAD TO HAVE KNOWN HER AND ESPECIALLY GLAD THAT THE SAINT LAWRENCE DISTRICT CONTINUES TO HONOR HER." JO CLOSES HER ODYSSEY WITH "THE JOURNEY" BY LILLIAN



25. SMITH, SAYING THAT THESE WORDS REASSURED HER  
DURING HER LIFELONG QUEST.

“TO BELIEVE IN SOMETHING NOT YET PROVED AND TO  
UNDERWRITE IT WITH OUR LIVES; TO FIND THE  
DELICATE EQUILIBRIUM BETWEEN DREAM AND  
REALITY; TO LAY DOWN ONE’S POWER FOR OTHERS IN  
NEED; TO QUESTION, KNOWING THAT NEVER CAN THE  
FULL ANSWER BE FOUND; TO ACCEPT UNCERTAINTIES  
QUIETLY, EVEN OUR INCOMPLETE KNOWLEDGE OF  
GOD; THIS IS WHAT THE JOURNEY IS ABOUT.” AMEN

There were over a dozen people with whom I talked about Jo Gould, and I am so appreciative. They all were influenced by her approach to life, eager to share their experiences with her. I want to name three of those people who provided the basic ingredients for this Gould Discourse:

The Reverend David Blanchard, presently Parish Minister at the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Syracuse, where he grew up in the church school with Jo Gould. David sent me her Odyssey, which, until he did, had been no where to be found.

The Reverend Jan Evans-Tiller, retired Minister of Religious Education living in Ithaca, New York. Jan took extra time to talk and write about how Jo Gould had influenced her work in ministry.

The Reverend Eugene Navias, retired Parish Minister, who worked closely with Jo Gould as she wrote curriculum

when he worked in the Department of Education at the Unitarian Universalist Association. As well as his enclosed poem, Gene shared a picture of the religious education field at the time Jo was most involved.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, ALL. Helena Chapin