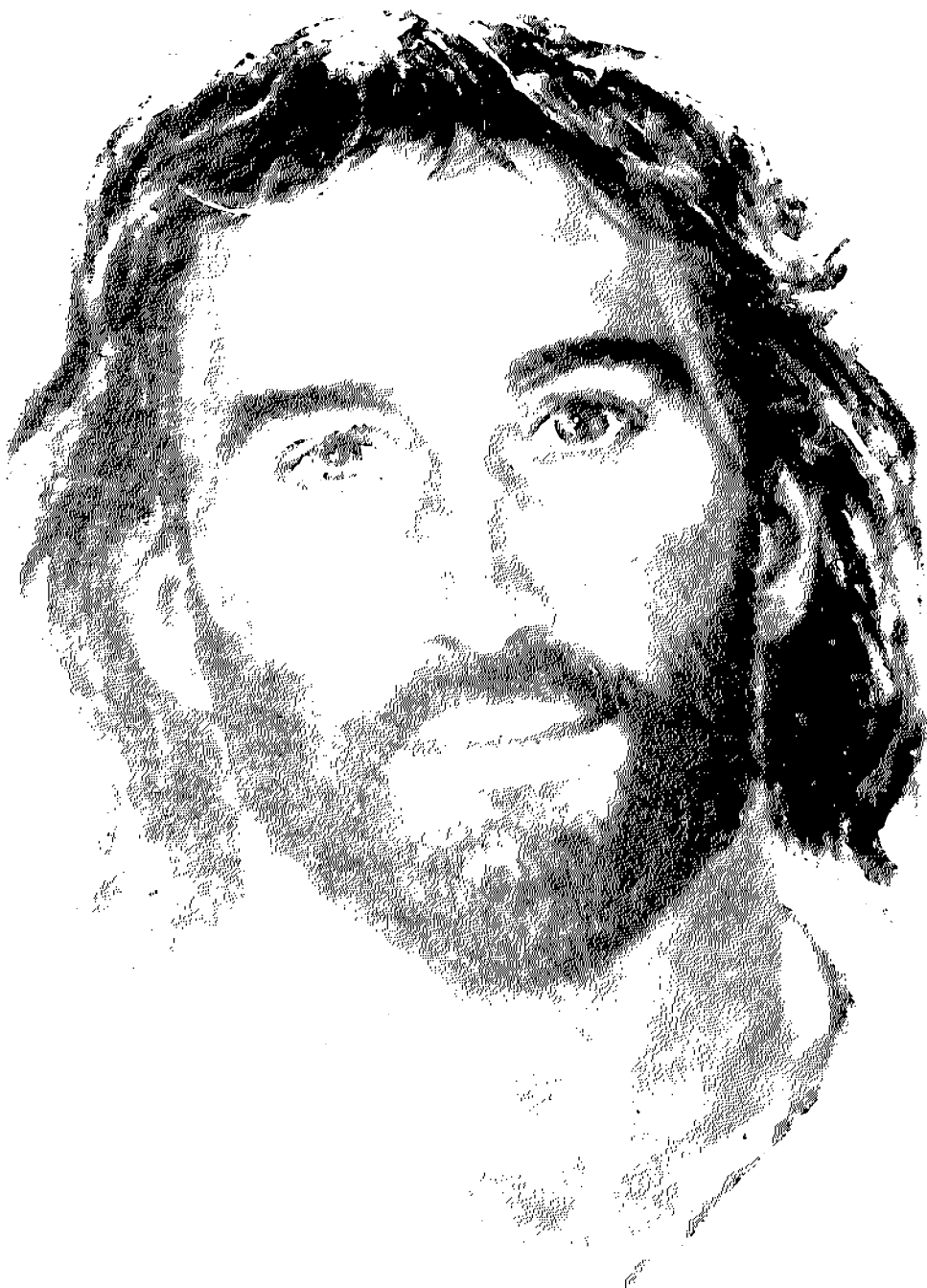


Official  
Publication  
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Swedenborgian Church

# The Messenger

April 1990



## Guest Editorial

# Moving Toward the Light

by Rev. Kathleen Easton  
Virginia Street Church,  
St. Paul, Minnesota

I recently read an interesting and different view of the story of the Bartimaeus (Mk. 10:46-52). The writer's perspective was that of stewardship. It certainly gave me a fresh view of this well-worn story of faith. I'd like to use the concept of stewardship and

look at the story of Bartimaeus from a different slant.

The story tells us that Bartimaeus was a blind beggar, without much hope in life, ragged and dishevelled and probably in a rather sorry state; not unlike many of our homeless people today. When I see them waiting for their daily hot meal down at the Dorothy Day Center here in St. Paul, there's a look of emptiness and aim-

lessness about them as well as the obvious signs of poverty.

Somehow, I don't think of poor, blind, homeless people as being high risk-takers. Also, their disappointments in life would preclude a high level of initiative, it seems to me. Yet, hear what the gospel writer tells us about Bartimaeus . . . he (Bartimaeus) began to call out . . . people were scolding him, but **he** shouted all the louder . . . he threw aside his cloak . . . he jumped up and came to Jesus—"I want to see." As I read this, I clearly see someone using initiative, taking risks and identifying a specific need. Somewhere in Bartimaeus, a spark of purpose, the life of the Spirit, must still have been present.

We are steward of the Lord's goods and the Lord's work, when it comes to both our individual gifts and talents and also the larger corporate structure, our church. It is at the same time both an awesome and humbling responsibility. We are stewards of a unique set of gifts, both our own and the writings of Swedenborg; yet at the same time, we are merely stewards. The gifts and skills we've been given are GREAT gifts ONLY when used in the work of the

Lord. "I want to see," said Bartimaeus . . . he then followed the Lord.

Stewardship/ministry is an all-encompassing responsibility for each individual, regardless of our role in life. As well as having the required compassion, good stewardship also calls for the qualities shown in the Bartimaeus story, i.e., initiative, risk-taking, and identified needs. Effective stewardship/ministry then requires an organized, intentional, structure and plan. This is true of both our individual life and our corporate church. Do you have personal goals for the next one, five and ten years? Or are you floating along on an airbed of feelings without any vision? What about the church you're part of? It won't blossom and grow for the corporate structure if it doesn't blossom and grow for you personally—as it is in the microcosm, so it is in the macrocosm. Let us then turn our minds and our hearts to the task of effective, blossoming stewardship with intentionality and vision.

May the fresh winds of a renewed spirit of God within you blow through the recesses of your heart as the Glorified Lord becomes real and present for you at this time of the Resurrection. God Bless You!

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## The Messenger

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### Deadline for material:

Six weeks before the first day of the month of issue.

# THEY HAVE TAKEN AWAY MY LORD

Paul Zacharias

*"They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'Because they have taken away my lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.'" (John 20:13)*

As you know, the principle theme of Easter is: Jesus Christ died on a cross, he was buried in a sealed tomb, and on the third day rose again. The New Church believes that the indwelling power of God actually transformed the physical body of Christ into wholly spiritual substance . . . and that the risen, glorified Christ is as much of God as we can possibly know. The Risen Lord is perfect God and perfect Man. (Or Person, for God is beyond gender.)

We read that Mary came to the empty tomb and said, "They have taken away my Lord," and I must confess that in recent years I have experienced something of this same feeling. This comes from the fact that in recent years I have read a number of books and articles on the nature of Jesus Christ; these have been written by reputable, highly regarded theologians—both Protestant and Roman Catholic, even Mennonite—and they are all saying essentially the same thing: that Jesus Christ was not divine . . . that he did not think of himself as God . . . that he lived a blameless, pure life, but that he was not God. These Bible scholars go on to say that the verses: *I and the Father are one*, and *He that sees me sees the Father*, which Swedenborgians are fond of quoting, were added later; they were not actually said by Christ. Or if he did say them, they need not be

◆  
*Have we put our  
emphasis in the  
wrong place for  
2000 years?*  
◆

taken literally. They add that many of the miracles ascribed to Jesus were added later, for specific purposes the gospel writers needed to address. And they tell us that the virgin birth stories and the resurrection account probably did not actually happen as told in the Bible. They say that all of these stories are true symbolically, they represent spiritual events and changes in people's lives, then and now, and they are true in that sense—but they need not be taken as historically, factually true. And these Bible scholars and theologians can marshal a great deal of evidence that their point of view is valid.

Can you see why I've chosen the title, "They have taken away my Lord"? All my life I've been taught, and believed, and accepted as a basic premise, that the risen Jesus Christ was and is Lord and God. My heart still believes this, but I must confess that a few mental reservations and doubts have crept into my mind. Isn't it amazing how we

can hold different, almost opposite thoughts in our heart and mind? (We're told that confession is good for the soul, so I'll go a bit further. It could be that this is a form of temptation I'm passing through; this is entirely possible. Usually we think of temptation as the strong urge or desire to steal, to lust, to lie, or whatever, and these are temptations on the natural, external level. But the much more dangerous, insidious and painful temptations are when that which you hold most precious, that which is most important to you, is being assailed, attacked, threatened—and you have nagging doubts and dark nights of the soul. That, dear friends, is real temptation. So it could be, that, in all of this, my faith is being tested.)

My main wonderment with the traditional view that the Lord Jesus Christ is fully God is this: there are trillions of suns/stars in the total universe. Swedenborg, as well as many present scientists, tell us that there must be untold millions of inhabited planets. If this is true, and I believe it, does it make logical sense that God would *completely* express/manifest Himself on our tiny piece of turf? Certainly it is possible, but it does stretch the imagination. (I am aware, by the way, of Swedenborg's reasons as to why the Lord was born on planet Earth.) And then there is Swedenborg's teaching on appearances—that nothing in this world is absolutely, 100% real.

Personally, I have no problem with the virgin birth story. It would be no big deal for God's Spirit to infill Mary in a

*(continued on next page)*



## They Have Taken Away My Lord

(continued)

special way, resulting in the birth of Jesus. And certainly Christ is a unique figure, not to be compared to any mortal man. We can never attain his stature, as some of the above mentioned Bible scholars imply. *But it may be that in the past 2000 years we have put our emphasis in the wrong place.*

◆  
***Not once did Christ  
ask his followers to  
establish a church  
in his name.***  
◆

The Christian Church has focused almost entirely on the person and personality of Jesus Christ, and in so doing, have we neglected or minimized his message? His spirit? For example, not once did Christ ask his followers to establish a church in his name. And yet, in these 2000 years, many, if not most, wars have been fought in his name . . . which is not a sign of authentic religion. And in our world today, a lot of so-called religious activity is a travesty, a mockery, of the real thing. And when we look at the track record of the Swedenborgian Church in the world over the past 200 years, the picture is not at all impressive. Are these examples perhaps warning flags that we have taken a wrong turn! Have we missed the forest for the trees? In all of this I am not detracting from the authority and power of Jesus Christ. I am suggesting that possibly we have been putting our emphasis in the wrong

place—in his person instead of in his message—and in so doing we have not been very helpful or effective in furthering his cause in the world. Four things to think about:

- I would like to suggest that all of our names for, and ideas about, God, are interpretations, appearances . . . they are masks. God is beyond all our words, rituals and concepts. God is real; God is the one source of all life; and God made himself known to us in the face of Christ . . . but anyone who claims to know God fully is fooling himself. There is mystery.

- Christ's main message was that the Kingdom of God is within you and among you. He said that our main task is simply to trust God, open the door, and let Him in, for the Kingdom of God has begun. It is here, now. My sense is that we have not really understood or acted upon this message.

- What is real or important is our present day-by-day journey. Of course there is heaven and hell, but the essential part is to live life fully, where we are, now. Then we begin to understand what eternal life is all about.

- In the puzzling, glorious Bible lesson, John 17, we are called upon to be one, even as Jesus and God are one. **What does it mean to be one . . . with ourselves . . . with other people . . . with God?** Something to think about . . . and work on.

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*Rev. Paul Zacharias is past president of the Council of Ministers, currently on the Committee on Admission to the Ministry (CAM) and is the former (retired) minister of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada.*

## God

*God is beauty.*

*God is love.*

*God is understanding.*

*God is quietness and rest.*

*God is peace.*

*God is faith that comes where*

*there is no reason for faith.*

*God is timeless, spaceless.*

*God is all heights and all*

*depths.*

*God is law and the maker of*

*law.*

*God is beyond all and in all.*

*God is simplicity, enveloped*

*by us in complexity.*

*God is perfection among im-*

*perfections.*

*God is God.*

*Catherine Coblentz*

## An Easter Reflection

# Paul's Use of "Joy" in Philippians

L. Milton Hankins

The Greek work "charas," from which we indirectly get our word "charm," is translated "joy" in Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. "Charas" and its derivations appear sixteen times in the letter, more times than in any other single New Testament book or any other combination of Paul's letters. It appears so often that, in fact, the letter is sometimes called "the Epistle of Joy."

Contemporary use of the word "joy" nearly always carries the connotation of "happiness." The primary definition, according to Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, suggests that "joy" is always a response to personal well-being and success. Secondarily, it is the state of happiness. In Paul's letter, however, his joy seems not to have been dependent upon circumstances which would ordinarily contribute to a state of happiness. For example, Paul wrote his letter while awaiting possible execution in a Roman prison. Further, he was writing to a church which appeared to be embroiled in controversy. Neither situation, it seems to the modern mind, is conducive to joy and happiness!

These observations raise important questions about Paul's concept of joy. What did "charas" mean to Paul? Are there significant differences in the modern connotation? If joy has always been understood to be an emotional response to personal well-being, how can we resolve the obvious paradox?

For background purposes, it is essential to understand that three separate word groups are translated "joy" in the New Testament—*agalliaomai/agallia-*

*sis*, which specifically describes physical responses of joy, i.e. singing and clapping of hands; *euphraino/euphrosyne*, which identifies "the inner, subjective feelings of merriment and good cheer" and "also describes the outward expressions of that cheer, such as banqueting, eating, drinking, and making merry"; and *chairō/chara/synchairō*, which "becomes 'the' religious word-group for joy in the New Testament, used a total of 140 times."<sup>1</sup> Only rarely did Paul employ the second group, and never the first group. The original meaning of the third group may have been quite similar to our modern definition, but joy as a product of physical well-being, was scarcely what Paul had in mind. He used the words for joy in an entirely different context. Joy, for Paul, was dependent upon, and could only be experienced through, acceptance of God's work of reconciliation in Jesus Christ. It was an emotional response quite unrelated to and apart from personal well-being and comfort. When Paul prayed for "charas" for his Philippian friends, he knew it was only possible for them insofar as they were reconciled to God in Christ.

In the Old Testament, references to joy nearly always have eternal implications. Joy is "bound up with the fullness of salvation." It flows out of the believers' anticipation of the Kingdom of God. It consistently and specifically refers "to the whole life of Israel."<sup>2</sup> When Paul thought of joy, he automatically understood it in this context. Since the source of joy is God, man's joy is not only a gift

of God, it can only be fully experienced when one, utterly removed from adverse, external circumstances, stands in the presence of God. To enjoy God forever, underscores this idea.



Hence, the paradox. Joy, as Paul appears to understand it on the one hand, is something inside a person that cannot be altered by external circumstances; on the other hand, it is something inside a person that is affected by external circumstances. In Philippians 1:1-7, in spite of his adverse circumstances, Paul expresses his personal joyful prayers and remembrance of his friends. Further, his personal joy seems unaffected by his knowledge of the problems within the Philippian church. In Philippians 4:1, however, Paul's joy seems dependent upon his comrades' continued faithfulness in the Lord. He implies that any deviation from or disloyalty to Christ will diminish his joy.

In order to resolve the paradox, it is imperative to realize that when Paul uses the term "joy," he is describing an emotion that can only grow out of complete trust in God's providential care. For Paul, joy was much more than a temporary emotional response or a

(continued on next page)

## Book Review

# Returning: A Spiritual Journey

by Dan Wakefield

In his recent article in the New York Times Book Review, Dan Wakefield calls attention to the growing number of literary works written today in which God "has returned as a force or a 'character' in the action . . . sometimes (He) has a 'speaking part'," Wakefield writes. He cites a spate of writers Christian concerns: Flannery O'Connor, J.F. Powers, Frederick Buechner, Isaac Bashevis Singer, James Baldwin, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, John Updike, Walker Percy, Reynolds Price, Robertson Davies, all still alive and writing with the exception of O'Connor. Wakefield's new book is unashamedly God-centered; it is an account of his return to the Christian faith after some thirty years post college as a wandering atheist.

Wakefield studied at Columbia University under Mark Van Doren, whose lectures on the New Testament, he says, "marked the first time I ever heard

someone other than a Christian minister speak to an audience about Jesus. I don't know what I expected—perhaps a debunking—but what I heard was a description and appreciation of Jesus as given in the text, without regard to theological or historical speculation or interpretations . . . Van Doren honored the story, took it on its own terms, and helped us absorb and understand it . . . with our own vision."

From college on, Wakefield's dream was to write a novel. Before this was accomplished, he worked for *The Nation* and *The Atlantic* and was a successful, hard-drinking film-writer—until the morning he woke up screaming, and became painfully aware that some major life changes must be made. His emotionally courageous and moving journey brings us to Christmas Eve in a Boston bar where he overhears a man say he is going to midnight mass, and Wakefield suddenly but rather casually

decides he'd like to go to church himself. He wanders into King's Chapel, a Boston Unitarian church. After a time he joins a small group in a course taught by the minister on "religious autobiography" and out of that experience comes this remarkable book.

He writes, "It came as a relief to me to understand that my religion was as real in times of anguish as it was in the fullness of joy . . . the presence of Christ in pain as in joy reminded me again of the words of Psalm 129, 'the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.'"

Wakefield's story is great reading, after the manner of Thomas Merton's *Seven Storey Mountain*. And perhaps even after the manner of the astounding account of Saul becoming the Apostle Paul.

Reviewed by  
Barbara Moorman  
Fairfield, Virginia

## Paul's Use of "Joy"

(continued)

fleeting state of mind. It was the evidence of, and the result of, a continual, implacable faith that God is, through good times and bad, delivering His people into His kingdom. Thus, he says, "rejoice in the Lord!" Joy allows the believer to see beyond present, outward circumstances. It focuses on the sovereign Lord who stands above the external events which affect the faithful. It constantly reminds us that He is still in control.<sup>3</sup>

Joy, to be sure, "includes within itself readiness for martyrdom," but also an eagerness to live and serve Jesus Christ, even under the most trying and perilous circumstances.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 1st ed., 1 vol. Word Biblical Themes (Waco,

Texas: Word Books, 1987), p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> R. Gregor Smith, "Joy", *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, Ed(s) Alan Richardson, Paperback ed., 1 vol. (New York, New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), p. 117.

<sup>3</sup> Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 1st ed., 1 vol. Word Biblical Themes (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1987), p. 107.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

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*Rev. Dr. L. Milton Hankins, whose religious and secular articles have appeared in many national publications, has written this original piece for The Messenger. Winner of several literary awards, Dr. Hankins is celebrating 26 years in ministry this year and currently pastors in Mineral, Virginia.*

## Reminder to Ministers and Church Secretaries!

Please don't forget to send in your yearly updated membership list to the Central Office, and remember to send in names of your new members/confirmees throughout the year so that they may be put on *The Messenger* mailing list!

# How to Support a Church

The treasurer of a church resigned. Another man, the manager of a local grain elevator, was asked to take the position. He agreed to do so if, for one full year, the church would require no report from him and no one would ask him any questions about the church's finances.

The church members were puzzled at this strange request, but they finally granted it. Most of them had him process their grain, so they knew he was an honest man.

At the end of the year the new treasurer gave a glowing report. The church's indebtedness of \$25,000 on the building had been paid in full. The pastor's salary had been increased. There were no outstanding bills, and there was even a cash balance of \$12,000.

The pleasantly surprised congregation wanted an explanation. "Most of you bring your grain to my elevator," the man replied. "When I paid you, I simply withheld ten percent on your behalf and gave it to the church in your name. You never missed it. Do you see what we could do for the Lord if we were willing to give the first tithe to God, who really owns it?"

*Steve Casey*

*From: Clergy Talk*

*Submitted by Rev. Eric Allison*

# Another Banner Year!

A banner procession will open Convention again this year, sponsored by the Education Support Unit (EdSU). This year we WILL process! A well-organized and enthusiastic local planning committee is in place and busy choreographing this event.

Last year—the first in a long while—there were over 50 banners displayed around the meeting area, as well as the Cambridge Society's four beautiful gospel banners hanging in back of the podium. This year we hope to double that. If you wish to create a theme banner, the theme this year is: NEW HEAVEN—NEW EARTH: WALKING TOWARD THE LIGHT.

Banners can be any size, but a means of support (such as a dowel threaded through the top with string attached) is necessary so that the banner can be hooked onto a pole/stand or hung up. Material can be any type of fabric—felt, satin, cotton—and either sewn or glued. Have fun with it.

Please let me know if your group is planning to bring a banner(s) as soon as possible so that the committee has some idea of how many to expect. Drop me a postcard: Jacqui Skinner Light, EdSU, 167 Prairie Street, Concord, MA 01742-2925. Tell me the name of the group, a contact person and how many banners are coming. If no one from the group is coming, send a banner anyway. Someone will march your banner proudly in. If you have any questions, my home business number is (508) 369-0605 or house number (508) 369-1966. Call collect if necessary.

Jacqui Skinner Light  
Secretary, EdSU

## An Opportunity

There is a golden opportunity awaiting a New Church minister in the summer of 1990. This unusual opportunity will enable someone to spend his or her vacation, or part of it, on Cape Cod enjoying the beauty of the Cape while conducting worship services in the beautiful 1870 landmark church.

The New Church in YarmouthPort is open only during the summer, July 1–September 16. There is a commodious parsonage which is offered in exchange for assuming responsibility for the Sunday services.

A period of two or three weeks might be arranged. Applicants should write promptly to (stating the dates when they are available): Walter Chapin, c/o The New Church, Box 205, YarmouthPort, MA 02675.

(Editor's Note: This schedule is tentative and is still being revised.)

# Convention '90 Program

Olds College, Olds, Alberta

**Theme: A New Heaven and New Earth: Walking Toward the Light**

## Saturday, June 23:

- Housed in motel(s)
- Arrivals ONLY of those who must come in on Saturday to help set up, or to get cheaper travel rates

## Sunday, June 24:

- Child Care and Children's Program beginning Sunday evening and continuing through next Saturday morning (children's program) and Sunday afternoon (child care)
- Arrivals of Council of Ministers and Spouses
- Registration and housing on campus
- 5:30-6:30 DINNER
- 6:30 • Meeting of parents of child care and children's program participants and staff
- 8:00 • Council of Ministers and Spouses gathering (place to be arranged [lba])

## Monday, June 25

- 7:00-8:00 BREAKFAST in Cafeteria
- 8:45 • Worship Service in Chapel
- 9:00 • Council of Ministers Meeting, place tba
- Ministers' Spouses Meeting, place tba
- 12:00-1:00 LUNCH
- 1:30-4:30 • Council of Ministers Meeting
- Ministers' Spouses Meeting
- 5:30-6:30 DINNER
- 7:00-9:30 • Council of Ministers Meeting
- Ministers' Spouses Meeting

## Tuesday, June 26:

- 7:00-8:00 BREAKFAST
- 8:45 • Worship Service in Chapel
- 9:00-11:30 • Council of Ministers Meeting
- Ministers' Spouses Meeting
- 12:00-1:00 LUNCH
- 1:30-4:30 • Council of Ministers Meeting
- Ministers' Spouses Meeting
- 5:30-6:30 DINNER
- 7:00-9:30 • Council of Ministers Meeting
- Ministers' Spouses Meeting

## Wednesday, June 27

- 7:00-8:00 BREAKFAST
- 8:45 • Worship Service in Chapel
- 9:00- • Council of Ministers Meeting
- Ministers' Spouses Meeting
- Executive Committee of General Council
- NCYL Officers Meeting
- Augmentation Fund Committee Meeting
- 10:00
- 11:30-12:30 LUNCH
- 1:30-4:30 • General Council Meeting
- Registration for New Arrivals
- 2:00 • Women's Alliance Officers Meeting
- 4:30-5:30 • Convention Choir Practice
- 5:30-6:30 DINNER
- 7:30 • Opening of Convention in Alumni Center Auditorium
- Procession of Banners
- President's Address
- President's Reception
- 9:00

## Thursday, June 28

- 7:00-8:00 BREAKFAST
- 8:15-8:45 • Meeting of Parents of Child Care and Children's Program participants & staff
- 8:45 • Worship Service in Alumni Center Auditorium (Alliance)
- 9:00-10:30 • Business Session #1, Alumni Center Auditorium
- Reading of pertinent Constitution portions
- Greetings
- 9:30 am-Order of the Day
- Nominating Committee Report
- 10:30-11:30 • Joint Stewardship Program
- 12:00-1:00 LUNCH
- 1:30-3:00 • Minicourses #1
- 3:30-5:00 • Minicourses #2
- 5:30-6:30 DINNER
- 5:30-7:00 • Women's Alliance Dinner
- 7:30 • Swedenborg School of Religion Graduation and Reception
- 10:00 • NCYL-led Vesper Service (open to all)

## Friday, June 29:

- 7:00-8:00 BREAKFAST
- 8:15 • Memorial Communion Service, Alumni Center Auditorium

- 9:00 • Business Session #2
- 9:15- • Nominations from the Floor
- SSR Voting procedures, explanation
- 10:30-11:00 • Sunday School Association Meeting (open to all)
- 12:00-1:00 LUNCH
- 1:30-3:00 • Minicourses #3
- 3:30-5:00 • Business Session #3
- Old Business: Resolution on the Death Penalty
- 5:30-6:30 DINNER
- 7:30-9:30 • Business Session #4
- 7:45-Order of the Day
- Credentials Committee Report
- Elections
- Children's Presentation (possibly with SACC)

## Saturday, June 30:

- 7:00-8:00 BREAKFAST
- 8:45 • Worship Service in Alumni Center Auditorium
- 9:00 • Corporation of the New Church Theological School Meeting (all welcome)
- 10:00-11:00 • Worship Service led by SACC and Children's Program (possibly here or Friday evening) OR Children's Program Presentation
- 11:00-12:00 • Final business completed
- 12:00-1:00 LUNCH
- 1:30 pm • General Council Meeting (till about 4:30)
- Excursions
- 7:00 • Banquet or Barbecue, etc.

## Sunday, July 1

- 8:00-9:00 BREAKFAST
- 9:00-10:00 • Convention Choir Practice
- 10:00 • Convention Worship Service
- Rev. Jerome Poole, Convention Preacher Ordination, Installation of New President, Communion
- 12:00-1:00 LUNCH
- 1:30-4:30 • Stewardship Workshop
- Departure

## Monday, July 2:

- Departures of any "remnants"

NOTE: Calgary Stampede is July 6-15, in Calgary.



# Advance Convention Registration

Convention '90 • Olds, Alberta, Canada

Olds College

June 24 - July 1, 1990

(Convention Sessions: June 27 - July 1, 1990)

*please fill out front  
and back of form*

*NCYL members between the ages of  
13 and 19 please fill this in*

## Registration Fee

## Transport

*(please fill in thoroughly)*

*Please also complete  
the reverse side*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City State/Prov. \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Accompanied by \_\_\_\_\_

Children:

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

☐ My parents will be at Convention. They are \_\_\_\_\_

☐ My Guardian at Convention (if no parent is present) will be \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I have enclosed a check for \$45.00 US (\$40.00 if mailed before May 1, 1990) made out to the **Swedenborgian Church** to cover registration. Teenagers pay \$35.00 US (ages 13-19). Registration is *per person* and covers some special costs and events. Mail this form and your fee to:

**Central Office  
48 Sargent Street  
Newton, MA 02158**

☐ I will arrive at CALGARY Airport on: Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Airline \_\_\_\_\_ Flight # \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I am driving to Convention on: Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
My first meal will be: Date \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ breakfast ☐ lunch ☐ dinner

☐ I am a passenger in the car of \_\_\_\_\_  
Arriving at Convention on: Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I need directions to Calgary from \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Other mode of transport \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of arrival \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

## Housing

- ☐ I would like a single room.
- ☐ I would like a double room with \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I would like to have a roommate assigned to share my room.
- ☐ I/We would like (if possible) to have a room near \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I/We are non-smokers (pardon the grammar!)

## Special Needs

- ☐ I am a vegetarian, with these exceptions \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I have these dietary restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I am not able to climb stairs or hills.
- ☐ I need wheelchair access.
- ☐ I am not able to walk very far without discomfort.
- ☐ I have these medical requirements: \_\_\_\_\_
- I am ☐ diabetic ☐ a heart patient ☐ other: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Other physical/special/dietary needs: \_\_\_\_\_

## Special Requirements for Children

*(Children's program will run during Pre-Convention days beginning Sunday, and continue through the week until after worship on July 2)*

My child/children: (circle one)

- ☐ will be participating in the Children's Program for ages 5-12 beginning on: Date \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ will need the Child Care program for ages 2 and under beginning on: Date \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ will need the Children's Program for ages 3-5 beginning on: Date \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ special needs are: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ has/have ☐ has/have not attended a pre-school program

## Other Programs

*(We will be in touch with you to give you more information on your choice.)*

I wish to co-register for the following programs:

- ☐ New Church Youth League Officers
- ☐ Council of Ministers (June 24-27; ministers and SSR students)
- ☐ Ministers' Spouses (June 24-27; ministers' spouses only)
- ☐ Women's Alliance Dinner (Thurs. June 28)

## Rates for 1990 Convention Room & Board

- ☐ Motel accommodations for June 23 night at your expense.
- ☐ Adult: \$35 daily; on campus June 24 to end.
- ☐ Teen (13-19 years): \$25 daily
- ☐ Youth (4-12 years): Double: \$20 daily
- ☐ Child (3 and under): No charge if occupying same room as parents, and no charge for food when fed from parent's plate.

## Financial Assistance

For financial assistance for Convention attendance for young people and children, please write to: Rev. Dr. Ted Klein, 273 Perham Street, West Roxbury, MA 02132

# Affirmations in Parenting

Ted Klein

It is often easy to blame and be harshly critical of another. A parent, feeling pain or discomfort, shifts that pain and discomfort to the child by blaming. The effect of this, if not counteracted, can be devastating. Children can come to feel that they are bad, and their sense of what they are capable of being and doing can shrink.

In churches, Sunday schools, and homes we seek ways of teaching children "to be good," "to do right," and "not to do wrong." We need to be careful that these efforts are not linked with harshly judgmental attitudes that undermine and destroy a child's confidence and self-esteem. An alternative is to affirm and nurture the child as a person and support the child's growth directions. When confrontation is needed, this can be done with a background of trust, caring, and love.

The message that needs to come through is: "I don't love this thing you are doing, but I do love you." For example, a child may need to be confronted and restrained because of bullying a younger sibling. The parent, while pointing to the behavior as hurting, can seek to draw out from the child what feelings went with the behavior. Perhaps the child was frustrated or angry, and the younger sibling was the target for releasing these feelings. The parent, while not accepting the behavior, can accept the child and the child's feelings. The parent can aid the child in learning positive, not harmful, ways of expressing the feelings.

The use of affirmations can do

much to nurture a child's self-esteem, confidence, and trust. With self esteem, a child will feel capable of loving, learning, and growing. It is important to look for opportunities to express affirmations through sincere compliments. A child could be complimented, for example, when bringing home a beautifully made card or picture. Sincere appreciation can be expressed when a child brings something to a tired parent, or comforts a younger sibling or friend who is upset. These affirmations, done sincerely and responsively, convey an underlying acceptance and recognition of the child's inner being. The child is affirmed as a person. You are acting as a positive "mirror" for the child.

Affirmations are also needed when a child is feeling discouraged. A child may feel, "I have failed," and may need to be reassured. Affirmations in these situations can express an attitude which says: "You are special and you are loved regardless of what happened." It is important that affirmations be real and not phony. If a child brings home a poor paper from school, and the parent is upset, trying to hide feelings or give false praise is not helpful. Affirming can still be done, along with calmly exploring "what happened" with the paper and what might be learned from the experience.

It is important for you who are parents to develop your own personal ways of affirming your children. The following examples are suggested to aid you in discovering affirmations that work for you.



- **AFFIRMATIONS OF BEING.** I'm glad you are here—your needs are valid and you are o.k.—I like you.
- **AFFIRMATIONS FOR STARTING THINGS.** You don't have to do things to be loved—you are still loved when you do things on your own.
- **AFFIRMATIONS FOR THINKING.** I'm glad you are growing—I'm not afraid of your questions—you can grow in your thinking.
- **AFFIRMATIONS FOR IDENTITY.** You can be responsible and still have needs—you can ask to have your needs met—you can express how you feel.
- **AFFIRMATIONS FOR DOING THINGS YOUR WAY.** You can think before you make something your own—you can trust your feelings to help you know—you can do it your way.
- **AFFIRMATIONS FOR SEPARATING.** You can find out who you are—you're always welcome here—you are loved.

*These affirmations were suggested by illustrations drawn from the book Self-Esteem: A Family Affair and printed in the "Self-Esteem" issue of the Parenting for Peace and Justice Newsletter (October 1989). I have a few free-of-charge copies of the newsletter available. Please contact me if interested. Rev. Dr. Ted Klein, Children's and Family Ministry, 273 Perham Street, West Roxbury, MA 02132, (617) 325-1214.*

# Cabinet and General Council Meeting Highlights

**G**eneral Council and Cabinet members came together at Almont conference and Retreat Center in Michigan, February 7-11, 1990. The hospitality of the staff, the gourmet meals served and the amount of business accomplished made for an ultra-satisfactory visit.

The Executive Committee met prior to the Joint Meeting to plan and add to the proposed agendas. The joint meeting of Cabinet and Council began Thursday evening at 8 p.m. and ended Friday evening. Priorities of Convention were established. Support Unit chairpersons briefly stated each Unit's functions to date.



**Dorothy  
deB. Young**

- Rev. Richard Baxter, PMSU: created new position of Pastoral Consultant.
- John C. Perry, Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit (FPRSU): made recommendations to overcome the last two years' budget deficits.
- Christine Laitner, GOSU: concerned with facilitating new methods for churches to grow and being unable to fund two such programs.
- Carol Lawson, COMSU: improving internal and public information programs in the church.
- Betsy Young, EdSU: looking toward Swedenborg School of Religion (SSR) being accredited soon.
- Reverend David Rienstra, C.O.M.: concerned with the spiritual well-being of all Convention churches.
- Reverend Dr. Dorothea Harvey: Massachusetts Board of Regents has all documents required and anxiously awaiting the Board's decision on degree-granting status.
- Peter Toot, Wayfarers Chapel: has new staff, parking lots to be upgraded, Chapel Shop (Wayfarers West Center) completed and operating well.
- Reverend Ernest Martin, Director: Temenos is three years old and becoming known in the area. Good response to programs so far. Has developed an extensive mailing list.
- Lengthy and in-depth discussion on problems at and requests from Urbana University.
- Stressed the need for a dynamic Fund Drive to balance the budget.
- Annual convention planning to be done at local site instead of at Central Office.

## **Saturday, day and evening; Sunday until noon**

- General Council reviewed recommendations and decisions made at Joint Meeting.
- Considered requests needing financial support.
- Appointed a committee to evaluate the new Convention structure after three years.
- Considered absolute need for both General Council and Cabinet and some overlapping.
- Tentatively accepted invitation of Church of the Open Word (St. Louis) to hold 1992 convention there, if convention is still an annual event.
- Pondered feasibility of convention every year.
- Voted unanimously and established policy that no Convention funds be used to purchase alcoholic beverages for convention or for meetings at the Central Office.
- Ratified action taken by Executive Committee in regard to Urbana University.

## **Friday, day and evening**

- Discussed the suitability of any publishing being done at the Central Office: Review Committee to interview applicants for Central Office Manager March 12: reviewed and recommended amendments on 1990/91 Convention budget and suggested severely slashing any "fat" from budget.

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Submitted by Dorothy deB. Young  
Recording Secretary



## 100 Years Ago in *The Messenger*

April 16, 1890

WASHINGTON—Four adults united with the Church on Easter Sunday, and the attendance at communion was the largest in the history of the society. The course of evening lectures on the New Philosophy drew large audiences to the close, and on Easter Sunday evening the audience at the lecture on "The Life after Death" was larger than the hall had seats for. The children's Easter Sunday morning festival, which ushered in the sermon and the Holy Communion, was a very hearty and beautiful one. The society is greatly encouraged and rejoiced at the purchase by the National Committee of so beautiful and conspicuous a site for the New Church temple. It is on the finest avenue in the city, and what is soon to be the great drive from the Executive Mansion out to the new National Park. The site and its purchase have already called forth conspicuous comment in the city press. The privations endured in the present hall are great, and they seriously hinder the progress of the Church here; but they are cheerfully borne in the hope that an earnest and united movement will now be made to erect a beautiful and commodious national Church on the site so fortunately selected and secured.

*From the archives of SSR,  
Submitted by Louise Woofenden*

## Pacific Coast Association Retreat

*D. Carl Lundberg*

On a Friday afternoon, in early February, thirteen people from thirteen different places found their way to the little-known city of Orange, California. Located thirty miles southeast of Los Angeles, Orange is a thriving, typical Southern California 'bedroom city.' In the center of this town is the Center for Spiritual Development which is operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph. Three busy freeways intersect within a half mile of the Center but spacious lawns, hedges, trees, walls and other buildings protect it from the turmoil of the outside world. There are many spots for quiet meditation, and paths and walkways for communion with nature. The Center provides simply furnished yet comfortable rooms for sleeping and personal care and an intimate dining room where well-prepared meals are served. A large library with sofas and chairs provides a warm atmosphere for voyages of the spirit.

In this setting, twelve participants and our leader, Dr. Perry Martin, gathered February 9-11 for a retreat with the theme of 'Touching the Spirit.' We discovered anew that touching the spirit began with physically touching the neighbor. Sharing hand massages with a partner warmed our hands and our hearts. We passed a crystal paperweight from person to person and as each of us caressed the sparkling stone we revealed the treasures that we brought with us. We began to feel each other's spirits and the presence of a greater spirit that was with us. Then, by drafting and sharing lists of factors that were keeping us from doing those things that we really wanted to do, we revealed our hurts, our fears and our anxieties. Strangely, as we talked about them the fears became less and less formidable and we felt the strength of the spirit that says, "I can." A psychodrama which focused on the events of one member's childhood brought us closer as a family. Perry, Manon, Ruth, Betsy, David, Bill, Carl, Carmela, Mary Ellen, Babby, Win, Jo and Norma became brothers and sisters instead of strangers.

We touched the spirit again in quiet solo walks around the grounds by touching the grandeur of nature in the sights and sounds of the out-of-doors. The song of a mockingbird in the trees, the sight of small butterflies flitting in and out of the shrubbery, the sight of numerous flowers and bushes, the strange angles of a limb on a tree. These impressions were shared with each other upon our return to the group. Also, each person brought back a physical object which eventually decorated our communion altar on Sunday morning—a number of different flowers, a dead sycamore leaf and a feather that had fallen off the mockingbird.

Free-lance impressionistic drawing, body massages, listening to soothing music and a period of expressive dancing rounded out our few hours together. We departed on Sunday afternoon with the feeling that in a very real way we had touched other human spirits and come closer to 'The Spirit.' Carrying our added treasures with us we all felt a strong desire to reunite in another year and touch each other again.

*D. Carl Lundberg is a long-time member of the Los Angeles church and Pacific Coast Association*



## Opinion

## "Eve" Gets Mixed Reviews

Dear Editor:

I am looking at the February issue of your magazine. It is another in a long succession of issues with the central theme of feminism, and only a perfunctory tip of the hat to the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg (The "ask uncle George" column you always include is really about all). This theme is packaged in the insipid style of vapid New Age Shirleyspeak, and its message is faithfully represented in the sophomoric theological ramblings and rabid anti-male sentiment of your feature article, entitled (what else?) *Happy Birthday, Eve*. Where did you find this girl? Is she even obliquely aware of Swedenborg's writings concerning the significance of this topic? Did you read her article, or just print it? Her premise is so lame it is an embarrassment. No intelligent student of theology would dignify it with so much as a Bronx cheer.

Other offerings in this month's issue range from a review of *Quantum Healing*, another rehash of the Vedas (please, no more!), to women nurturing themselves, to Women's Alliance updates, to Mothers and Others, to bald headed fountains of feminine peace and strength. The limited space given to men included notice of a retreat where Swedenborg gets third billing behind Joseph Campbell and Robert Bly, with activities including fairy tales, mythology and drumming (?). The only article by a male was the piece promoting *A Course in Miracles*, a theological goose-chase which is in no way compatible with the Church of the New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrines as revealed by (you-know-who), Servant of the Lord.

As you can see, I am not happy with *The Messenger*, its blatant feminist editorial bias, or its apparent policy of excluding all but those in its "inner circle" (two X chromosomes?). I am not happy with its theological content—essentially, everything is welcome *except* Swedenborgian thought. When I compare it with the *Messengers* of the past, it fades away, as I am afraid my church is doing as well.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Reuben P. Bell  
Fryeburg, Maine

To the Editor:

Marilyn Baldauf's articulate thoughts ("Happy Birthday, Eve" February) come very close to one of my own worries—that so many of us, including myself, suffer these days from a loss of old, primal visions that brightened childhood. A poet who taught at Urbana apparently was referring to heaven when he wrote the wonderful line, "the ancient spirit of childhood thunders from its bed of songs." Swedenborg describes life as a progression from the natural innocence of childhood to the state of being a "wise child." In between lies a journey through grey reality and mixed good and evil.

On that journey, though, many people fall by the wayside, permanently disillusioned. Generally, our culture seems to have been depressed and wandering and without a strong sense of direction tugging at it for at least a decade. Television and news media reflect a lot of our dourness back to us; they are full of tragic stories, many, especially on talk shows, told for the sake of some dark interest in the merely sensational. Even much of the better programming on television is covertly defensive—stories of heroic recovery from severe illness or trauma. These stories are constructive and encouraging in themselves, but without a redeeming vision of what can be fresh and new up ahead, they contribute to a defensive feeling about life and what heroics may be required just to regain the *status quo*. The reality of life is then that it gives crises, from which we can only extricate ourselves until threatened again. We seem to ourselves to be living out hard luck dramas, expecting life to be a problem but not to fulfill a vision or to transcend itself.

Ms. Baldauf's treatment of the Eden story from *Genesis* is very evocative but may be unfamiliar. It is taken from the viewpoint of the Guild for Psychological Studies in San Francisco. I was involved with the Guild for six years, during a time of personal crisis, and I often encountered its interpretation of the Eden story. It assumes that Adam is a general metaphor for any person, or for all mankind in general. Because Adam is created at the beginning of the story and placed in the garden immediately, the

story is about the untutored innocence of childhood and other beginnings. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil then becomes a necessary tree of education; but God, who forbids Adam (us) to eat of it may look a bit unprogressive and ambivalent unless He uses reverse psychology.

Swedenborg felt that Adam was not a metaphor but a deeper symbol for a fully regenerate spiritual consciousness. The story of its growth goes all the way back to the original six days of creation. In Scripture, creation is the creation of the regenerate mind which perceives spiritual truth from a highly developed feeling for good. Adam is the first human being in the sense that true humanness is achieved only in the highest states of spiritual awareness. For anything less, the older myths in Scripture do not use the human form. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil represents a retreat, always available, from such a direct perception of good and truth to a more calculated and sensual approach to life which may borrow too much from self-concern and rationalization.

Compared to the innocence of ignorance, the Tree is a step upward; but compared to the direct perception of truth, it is a step downward. That step is experienced by the higher self as a darkening of consciousness, a kind of expulsion from the Eden state. The Eden drama is therefore a story of high endings and further transitions rather than a story of beginnings.

I prefer Swedenborg's reading because it is more consistently internal and seems to reflect a deeper penetration of the religious state. But Marilyn Baldauf's use of the story illustrates her ideas very well. I think that we may need, to help our return to Eden, more contact with our original visions along the way. For me it has been useful to never let Eden out of sight. The child within us must grow in knowledge and experience, but without leaving an essential innocence behind.

Steve Koke  
Rough and Ready, California



## A Poem for the Easter Season

*Die in me, oh earthly self, in whom may be growing weeds of want, of lack, of limitation. You have served your purpose, have taken your toll, have had your day. Be gone, as the daylight after dusk, as the darkness after dawn.*

*Arise in me, my Christ! Awaken, oh sleeping giant within, that your beauty and power may be seen by other Christs, perhaps themselves but half asleep. Arise to reach new spiritual heights, fulfill new promises, make realities of dreams.*

*In thy rising, Oh Spirit, let it be known that in this event we shall see sown new seeds. Thus as Jesus promised, we will know the Truth, and the Truth will make us free!*

Patricia McClellan  
Unity of Masillon, Ohio

## RUDOLF STEINER INSTITUTE July 1990

THE RUDOLF STEINER INSTITUTE is holding its 17th session July 7-28 in Westville, Maine, with a special focus on Waldorf education. All courses are college level and are based on the anthroposophical spiritual science of Rudolf Steiner. Included are many introductory classes: early childhood development, handwork, drawing, painting, singing, eurythmy. Courses in the humanities and sciences are also offered, e.g., architecture of mystery centers, earth science, projective geometry, contemporary events. Childcare is available, also work scholarships. For more information contact: Irene Mantel, RUDOLF STEINER INSTITUTE, P.O. Box 1925, Cathedral Station, New York, NY 10025, (212) 662-0203.

## Commencements

### Birth

**Turley**—Rev. Kenneth Turley and Laurie Turley, Portland church, announce the birth of their son, Ethan Oak Turley, February 4, 1990.

### Baptism

**Befferman**—Amanda Lynn Befferman, daughter of Edward and Lisa Befferman, was baptized into the Christian faith January 7, 1990 at the New Church, New York City, New York, the Rev. Robert McCluskey officiating.

**Caproon**—Bonnie Jean Caproon was baptized into the Christian faith December 3, 1989 at the Swedenborg Chapel in Cleveland, Ohio, the Rev. John Billings officiating.

**Murray-Batt**—Stephanie Ashley Murray-Batt, daughter of Susan Murray and Michael Batt, and granddaughter of Grace and Douglas Carr, was baptized into the Christian faith December 25, 1989 at Elmwood New Church, the Rev. Judith Dennis officiating.

### Death

**Dibb**—Harold A. Dibb, long-time member of the San Diego Society, entered the spiritual world February 7, 1990. Services were held February 14, 1990 at the Greenwood Mortuary in San Diego, Eldon D. Smith officiating with members of the Elks Lodge participating.

**Grava**—Fridrichs Rudolfs Grava entered the spiritual world January 3, 1990, at the age of 97. Mr. Grava devoted much of his life to translating the Writings into Latvian, and for many years published a Latvian quarterly, "The New Age." Memorial services were performed in Ontario by the Rev. Michael D. Gladish.

**Wilkinson**—Louise Wilkinson entered the spiritual world December 27, 1989, at the age of 97. Memorial services were conducted in Wellesley, Massachusetts, the Rev. George F. Dole officiating.

## A New Chapter in the New York Church

On Sunday, December 10th, 1989, the Rev. Robert E. McCluskey was installed as pastor of the New York Society of the New Church in New York City. Rev. Randall Laakko, President of Convention, officiated and preached the sermon entitled "Serving the Lord." The installation was incorporated into the regular morning worship service, and was attended by 75 people, including friends and family of Rev. McCluskey. Two notices of congratulations were received from Rev. Bruce Southworth, senior minister of the Unitarian-Universalist Church, and Rabbi Irving Block of the Brotherhood Synagogue; both are members of the East Mid-town Clergy Association which is chaired by Rev. McCluskey. Also attending was Fr. Robert Greco, Catholic chaplain to Bellevue Hospital in New York and Rev. McCluskey's uncle.

Following a small reception after the service, the church's annual Christmas luncheon was served in the Sunday School room upstairs, sponsored by the Ladies Aid Society. Afterward, a lovely Christmas program, arranged by Mr. Arthur James, was presented in the sanctuary, featuring selected seasonal readings delivered by friends and members

## Ask Swedenborg

by George Dole

**Q:** Could the writings be construed as anti-Semitic (e.g., TCR 843)? What is an appropriate defense if Swedenborg is accused of anti-Semitism?  
(Submitted by Melinda Jester, Chicago, Illinois)

**A:** Swedenborg both can be and has been accused of anti-Semitism, and the passage noted is by no means the only one in which there is a negative portrayal of Jews. These passages charge Jews generally

with a failure or inability to recognize internal things, and a consequent insistence on remaining in the letter.

"Defense" is less appropriate than understanding. I would suggest first of all that "anti-Semitism," like "sexism," is an issue that has been raised in our own times, and that we must be careful about retrojecting our issues into the past. A future generation may well see us as insensitive to matters obvious to them of which we are simply not aware, and we may hope that we will be evaluated by the way in which we are dealing with what we are aware of. In judging the past, it is terribly easy to fall into self-righteousness.

Second, it must be noted that Swedenborg never follows the lead of the larger church in holding the Jews responsible for the crucifixion. There is no rationale whatever in his theology for any form of punishment or persecution. We may see in this an effort to move Christian thought to a much more tolerant stance.

Lastly, it is central to Swedenborg's theology that no one is condemned for hereditary evils or for belonging to a particular religion, race, or nation. What matter are the choices we make as individuals within the circumstances providence offers us; and the general principle that all religions provide the means of salvation is so absolutely stated as to allow of no exception. There is no individual on earth whom we are not to love and to understand as best we can.

of the Society, along with special Christmas music, with the organist, Mr. John Bloomfield, and the voices of Mr. James Beal and Ms. Cheryl Laser.

The New York Society was first formed in 1818, and incorporated as the New York Society of the New Jerusalem in 1832. After meeting at several locations in lower Manhattan, the Society moved to its present site at 112 East 35th Street in 1859.

Since 1841, the church has been served by the following ministers: Revs. Benjamin F. Barrett, George Bush, Abiel Silver, Chauncey Giles, Samuel S. Seward, Julian K. Smythe, Arthur Wilde, William R. Woofenden, and Clayton S. Priestnal. Rev. McCluskey becomes the 10th ordained New Church minister of the New York Society of the New Church.

**The Swedenborgian Church**  
**The Messenger**  
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