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(See "Exploring Our Spirituality", p. 28)

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Moving Toward the Light

Black History Month and Spiritual Chaology

Guest Editorial
Gladys Wheaton

Black History/African-American History is a study in "things being brought first into a kind of confusion, a virtual chaos ... then the Lord arranges them in order." (Arcana Coelestia 842³.)

Black History Month is a time to reflect on the chaos and the order, the changes that Black people are experiencing. We would ordinarily reflect on these changes on a natural level by looking at historical trends, or economic progress, or cultural changes, and perhaps notice within ourselves what aspects of all of this we identify with.

Reflecting on these things at the spiritual level can bring us to other insights about ourselves, particularly as part of the larger human family. For instance, we can reflect on who we are in the Divine Human, individually, racially, nationally, and then notice how the history or economics or culture reflects the way we see ourselves as spiritual beings—or doesn't, or informs us about ourselves as spiritual beings—or doesn't.

To me, it seems that the struggles Black people go through in this country provide a mirror for the struggles of the larger community. In other words, everyone's struggles are brought into focus by those of the Black people. Rights won by African-Americans, for example, tend to facilitate a more universal exercise of those particular rights, and the methods used for obtaining those rights is studied and used by other segments of our population.

I see these struggles as not only political but spiritual. I believe we are becoming regenerate as individuals and as groups. It is thus not only useful to study our political and sociological history but our spiritual history as well, as it pertains to African-Americans nationwide and eventually, hopefully, to this denomination. In doing so we gain insight into our own personal spiritual histories as well.

The Lord is regenerating the whole human race—person by person, people by people, nation by nation, race by race, so that as a whole we will more precisely reflect the Divine Human. This process involves group as well as individual chaos, and also the reordering of group and individual life—the Book of Revelation describes the development of a sharper, clearer reflection of the Divine Human among us with each group having a unique reflection to offer with all of its nuances.

When we can each see, and cherish each group's part in this divine reflection as well as seeing and cherishing our own individual parts, it will be easier to bless the chaos as well as the reordering. We will also cherish each one's part as we receive new vision, new insights into the Divine Human—new ways to be more human, more wise, and more loving.

Each group has its own special ways of being wise and loving, and its own special tools (its culture) for exercising wisdom and love. Individual support for each other along the way according to one's family traditions and special personal practices, especially during the chaotic times, is a part of this, as is appreciation during the rebuilding times, the time of development of the new order. Learning not to be part of the problem but to be part of the solution can go a long way toward making it easier for us all. Then we "won't study war no more" but we will study spiritual chaology and try to taste the sweetness as the cookie crumbles. Praise the Lord!

The Rev. Gladys Wheaton is developing an African-American outreach ministry in Berkeley, California. (See "I Have a Dream: An African-American Fellowship of the New Jerusalem," p. 21).

Lunch-Counter Culture

Joy Henderson

One doesn't have to leave a country to be in exile from it. A person may live an entire life as an exile in the midst of those who have decreed her nonexistence. And although my grandmother was a teacher of teachers and an active community worker, it was the teachers of exiles she taught and the community of exiles she served.

She was a charming woman with a welcoming smile, a professor of history, the possessor of great depth, gentleness and grace under pressure. She was the most beautiful person in our family, the first who had ever even entered college, let alone graduating, and she was gifted with a lilting soprano voice that everyone at church admired. But she believed that all the education and character in the world could not free her from her exile . . . that she had to wait on the slow march of time and progress, the unfolding of events and, ultimately, the consent of those who had created the exile to lift it. She was a woman of color in America in the first half of the twentieth century.

By the time I was born in 1947, all four of my biological grandparents were dead, but my late grandfather's second wife remained and was the only grandparent I ever knew. My grandparents on my father's side had divorced in 1900, only five years after my father was born, and after years of travels, old granddad had married a woman about fifteen years younger than himself who was of mixed parentage. Grandfather's name was Absalom, like King David's son, and old Ab Hughes must have been some talker to sweep Eva off her feet because she was extraordinarily lovely, intelligent and gracious, a professor at a southern all-black college. She could have had her pick of beaux. Even into her

70s she was still growing more beautiful, her shoulders never slumping, her manner never rushed. She always had time for every chore, every service others needed and every problem that wanted a listening to.

Such a woman inspires men to poetry, preachers to praise and children to adoration, so there were many moments in our short time together that are deserving of telling and retelling. But one stands out. It turned my life upside-down, inward and around . . . in that order.

◆
*All the
education
in the world
could not free her
from her exile.*
◆

It was Indianapolis, 1952. I was five and I know now that Grandma Eva was well into her 70s, although in my mind she was always both young and ageless. It had been our habit that about once a month she would come over from Haughville to our side of town and take me shopping. We had done it many times and that day nothing was really very different. Events were the same but something in me would change. Life would suddenly be frightening because I would see it as if I had someone else's eyes and would come to know that I'd never have my own innocent vision again.

Shopping with Grandma included a narrower range of stores than shopping with my mother. Grandma seldom went into Kresge's dime store,

and into Woolworth's only if something very essential was needed and couldn't be purchased elsewhere. L.S. Ayres was a favorite, plus it had public toilets, and there was a five & dime called McCrory's which was always frequented. She gave me the money to pay store clerks, bus drivers and cashiers and this, in fact, was the way I learned to count change, how much things cost and the value of money before I even began first grade. And that day I would get a glimpse into how these and other mysterious choices were connected. As young, stubborn children are prone to do, I was begging for a treat . . . that day it was a fancy-style hot dog, the sort served in a bun made just for hot dogs, something only just then becoming commonplace. And I wanted it served with all those trimmings that taste so good when eaten away from home.

We had often gotten Cokes at the downtown stores and I liked sitting on the high stools, paying the waitress all by myself and being quite grown up. Grandma always stood behind me to "make sure I didn't tip backward and fall." That was the day I would discover her excuse to be a benevolent lie, one among so many, the worst being that my mother could ride in the front of streetcars if she liked but that the back was the safest place to be in an accident and Grandma would be "hanged" if she took that risk herself or with me. The irony of her choice of words came to me later in life along with the wonder of her passiveness in this area of her life when she was so courageous in others. But such was the strength of those invisible chains and so thorough was her exile that she made so many choices, and offered

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Lunch-Counter Culture

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up so many excuses for those choices, that up to that day I had not seen through to the pain behind the smiles.

It was into Kresge's where I had more or less pulled her, cajoling and using all my puerile wiles. I ascended the lunch-counter stool with an air not unlike a monarch who believed in the divine right of kings . . . the last time I was to take for granted the simple pleasure of eating out. There were so many empty stools, and I had decided that from that day on I was grown enough to do without Grandma behind me for safekeeping. As always, I ordered for us both and put the money on the counter so the waitress could see we could pay, as Grandma liked me to do. All the while I was asking her to sit beside me like a friend does, so I could feel grownup. Somewhere along the way she turned serious and firm in her insistence to drink her Coca-Cola standing up. Something was wrong and I remember looking to a man behind the counter suggesting he help me win the point, confident that he could not refuse me.

"Your nanny can't sit at the counter," he blurted out.

"She's my Grandma, not my nanny," I shot back . . . my bullets as good as his.

"We don't serve her kind at the counter." His last shot hit home. I turned and looked at her, this beautiful, beautiful woman, and too many realizations flooded my head to ever remember what I actually grasped then and how many came in the following hours and days. We left the store silently and went home.

On the streetcar she gave her usual loving counsel . . . "There will always be people who are unkind and unwise. That means they need more love, not less. There are rules that make no sense, but following them shows even more respect for law than obeying just the ones easy to understand. Unloving attitudes from others can only hurt us if we

give up our own loving attitude." But they were only words that day and took years to fathom.

Although it sometimes does take years to understand events and decades to gain insight from experience, that day in 1952 was my Road to Damascus. The blinding light that changed my perspective wasn't one of joy and hope, but rather more like the flash of a bullet to the heart. I began to notice that white people of that time didn't look people of color in the eye, speaking instead to a spot somewhere just behind the right shoulder. That white women automatically clutched their purses close to their bodies in the presence of black men. That it was the fashion to speak patronizingly to Negroes.

I had been expected by "my side" and by the "other side" too, to learn and follow proper lunch-counter etiquette . . . to adopt the rules of my culture. But exposure to this lunch-counter culture only served to generate a rebel, a budding member of the counterculture, as many in the 60s would become. I was on my way to being a "counter" revolutionary although I sensed I might be on my own, never again really trusted by either "side." I learned from observation that an oppressed person must know more than the oppressor to survive intact . . . understand that bullies are really weak, prejudice a form of ignorance, arrogance something to fight with tolerance and violence something that can only be truly subdued by non-violence. I learned that an oppressed people are the stronger, often choosing to "protect" the oppressor from facing inconvenient concepts of fairness, unwelcome honesty, embarrassing truths.

Grandma had, in subtle ways, taught me that nationalism could lead to dark and harmful ways but that patriotism was a wonderful thing, and she taught me the difference between the two. She was deeply in love with America and was as full of patriotism as anyone in the Land of the Free and Home of the Brave. Well, she was brave, but she wasn't free . . . not as I, untutored, willful white child, was free.

In my late 30s, circumstances

literally forced me into beauty college, and after graduating, I occupied my time for four years as the only hairdresser in an institution that housed 250 women. When I clicked on the pressing oven, I could see her smiling, even laughing at how, as a child, I had always gotten the combs stuck in her hair and had never gotten the hang of pressing. Thoughts of her grace and ease mixed with the sweet scent of Royal Crown and pressed hair, and I determined to reject the lunch-counter culture mentality, in whatever modern packages it appears . . . and to hope for a time when the world is free of exiles.

Joy Henderson first appeared in the pages of The Messenger in January and February 1989, with "Joy's Journey."

Alliance of New Church Women

The Alliance of New Church Women wishes to thank all of you who have contributed to our causes, both within the church and other bodies. After our annual meeting at the Olds, Alberta, convention, the Alliance voted funds for continuing support of Kei Torita's ministry in Japan, support for our five church camps, the Youth League, *The Messenger*, and convention babysitters. We sent money to Urbana University for the use of their library. Mite Box money '89, under the direction of EDSU-SACC, was used for information to help prevent child abuse. When it is appropriate Mite Box '90 will provide a meditation center along the nature trail at Temenos. The Alliance also contributed to Church World Services (CROP), and Church Women United, an organization with whom we have active representatives.

The Alliance needs your support for our ongoing programs more than ever to be able to increase our level of giving. Our appeal letter will be out this month, but contributions from anyone, any time, may be sent to: Nancy C. Perry, Treasurer, Box 156, Jackson, NH 03846.

I Have a Dream: An African-American Fellowship of the New Jerusalem

Gladys Wheaton

I dream of a fellowship of persons who are discovering the connection between the revelation of the Second Coming of the Lord given by Emanuel Swedenborg, African-American cultural roots, the needs of African-Americans today, and the relationship of cultural heritage to spiritual journey. The earlier Black Swedenborgian churches were Black churches of necessity because of the segregated nature of American society at that time. This fellowship will provide *opportunity* for persons with this kind of interest, whether African-American or not.

Could our denomination establish an outreach ministry to the Black Community that will:

- Advance the general readership of Swedenborg's writings,
- Increase Black church acquaintance with Emanuel Swedenborg, and
- Result in the formation of new Swedenborgian groups.

I want to reach out especially to the Black Community because I believe there are remnants of our Black history and heritage that relate to the New Church teachings. I would like to present these teachings to the Black population for those who would recognize them and be attracted to these common bonds.

Some of these similarities are from African heritage:

- A view of the world as a sacred cosmos in which each thing has its own special relationship to

every other thing and in which these things and relationships are sacred (i.e. to be respected):

- Knowledge that the spiritual world has a definite relationship to the natural world and that those who have gone there before us continue to be in connection with us in some way; and
- Knowledge that God is our common ancestor—therefore, all people are brothers and sisters derived from a common ancestor.
- Some of these things from our history here in the United States are:
- An understanding that Jesus Christ is God without the divided trinitarian view: (Notice the words of many spirituals.)
- The belief that the life of charity is of paramount importance; and
- An understanding of the symbolic nature of the Bible narrative. (Note again the spirituals).

Implementing this proposal would involve, in part, a process of acquainting through literature distribution, connecting with Black groups for participation and service, connecting with Black clergy and various ministries, developing new

pamphlets and introductory lectures; eventually, offering classes and other group experiences, individual counseling, and rites and sacraments in the traditional Black church mode; and finally the formation of an ongoing group.

Since April 1990, I have concentrated on networking contacts who could assist me in presenting lectures and/or workshops, connect me with the churches and social service agencies, and the social political scene in the Black community. I am in committed connection with two groups, in one as advisor to the youth advisor, and in the other as a member of the library committee. I am also in regular ongoing connection with four other groups.

Contacts with individuals include eight clergy and ten business and professional lay persons. Six of these have begun to function as support persons for me in this work. Among this group I have distributed eleven books and eight pamphlets (as of November 1990). I can see the experiment is working.

I know from this experience that my dream is an appropriate program for the Swedenborgian denomination. I know the program should be national in scope—perhaps taking place in a number of cities where we have strong churches. I know that our efforts in making such a fellowship a reality will help us in our regeneration as individuals and as a group.

Spiritual Chaology

George Dole

Understandably, I often hear people express anxiety about the direction in which our world is heading. There are times when I feel like a lonely optimist, but when I look a little deeper, I think this is an oversimplification. I'm an optimist only in regard to the future. Get me talking about the past, and I'm a pessimist.

I want to discuss this in regard to the state of our society in general, and then move to ways in which this relates to our own individual processes of regeneration. The whole thing will be a commentary on *Arcana Coelestia* Paragraph 842³:

Before anything is brought back into order, it is quite normal for it to be brought first into a kind of confusion, a virtual chaos. In this way, things that fit together badly are severed from each other; and when they have been severed, then the Lord arranges them in order.

Some of you may have seen my article, "The Good Old Days" in *The Messenger* (May, 1990). It represents one specific application of an attitude toward history that I find necessary as soon as we start to look beneath the surface. Until we do, we seem to have a tendency to romanticize the past. "There were giants on the earth in those days."

What Were the Good Old Days?

Focusing on our own country, where do we look for "the good old days," when high moral standards were taken for granted? When was the solid era before the permissiveness which is often lamented?

Well, things really started to fall apart in the sixties, with the hippie culture. But the fifties were the rock and roll era—surely not the golden age. The forties saw World War II, which was hardly idyllic. The thirties included the depression years, and I doubt that we would want to turn the clock back to that time. This brings us to the roaring twenties, with prohibition and speakeasies—almost a symbol of decadence. They were preceded by the decade of the First World War.

It was in the first decade of this century that child labor reached its peak. To quote the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, "In 1832, two-fifths of the factory workers in New England had been children; and by 1870 the census had reported that 750,000 children between ten and fifteen years of age were working throughout the country. Their number increased steadily from 1870 to 1910." We might reflect on what this says about family values. These weren't high school kids working at MacDonalds after school. There was a turn-of-the-century photograph in *The New York Times Magazine* last winter. It was a picture of a miner, a grimy figure complete with hard hat, pick, and briar pipe. He looked to be about seven or eight years old.

So now we're back to the 1890s; and here, because of an interest in the 1893 Parliament of World Religions, I have been doing some reading lately. Surely this was the time when solid Victorian morality reached its zenith. The guiding genius of the Parliament was Charles Bonney, a Swedenborgian lawyer from Chicago. He felt that the golden age was just around the cor-

ner, and that the world—and especially America—had made tremendous progress on all fronts, including the religious.

As a lawyer, he was working diligently to clear up a few problems. He thought that juries should not be appointed on the basis of political patronage. He thought we ought to start educational programs for immigrant laborers, and work them less than 80 hours a week. He thought that saloons should be regulated in order to address the problem of widespread teenage drunkenness. If we look at the Parliament itself, we find accepted as a matter of course assumptions of white American superiority that are today profoundly embarrassing. And it went without saying that the serious affairs of politics and economics needed to be in male hands.

Breakdown of Old Values or Surfacing of Old Evils?

We have 20-20 hindsight, if we want to use it. We can look at the 1890s and see the seeds of the troubles of the twentieth century. I would suggest that the optimism represented in the Parliament rested firmly on a remarkable ignorance of the depths of human self-centeredness, and that in good Swedenborgian terms, what we have been seeing and still see is not the breakdown of old values but the surfacing of evils that have been there all along.

Before anything is brought back into order, it is quite normal for it to be brought first into a kind of confusion, a virtual chaos. In this way, things that fit together badly

are severed from each other; and when they have been severed, then the Lord arranges them in order. The morality of the Victorian era was all bound up with assumptions of superiority. These things "fit badly together." When they are severed, one prop, one crutch of morality is removed, and the result is confusion. The confusion gives us a chance to rearrange things, to find better reasons for morality.

All the evidence says that we will not do this as long as we are comfortable. We have an astounding capacity to ignore anything that does not directly affect us. We may wonder at Bonney's optimism, knowing what we know, and I may criticize him for not recognizing the deep roots of the problems he identified, but he remains an admirable figure. There were not many people in the comfortable classes who took such initiatives for reform. As a man of his own times, not ours, he was pointing toward steps that could be taken then, steps that in fact were taken.

I could obviously develop this in far greater detail, but our focus is not societal so much as personal. We are far closer to that focus than it may seem. I think the point can be made by asking how many of you, if you really reflect on the issues you have faced and the difficulties you have had to deal with, would like to turn the clock back. Or I might ask how many of you feel that you used to be better people than you are now. I suspect that every one of us can look back on particular incidents and be embarrassed at characteristics we can see with such painful clarity that we wonder how we could have failed to see them at the time.

Evil," according to *Divine Providence* 183², "could not be taken away from anyone unless it appeared" (cf. also *Divine Providence* 278). It is axiomatic with us that one of the signs of progress in the process of regeneration is that we find ourselves facing deeper evils. I recall talking with an elderly lady some years ago, one of those people we

would hold up as examples of the beauties of old age. She had just discovered that she really didn't like people very much.

That feeling is part of every one of us. My mind goes back to my first term as president of the Fryeburg Assembly, when I was managing the opening and closing of the facilities. I would really enjoy myself getting tents up, getting the waterfront ready, and especially battling the old galvanized plumbing. I had a personal affection for the marvelous variety of toilet tank mechanisms—the one in the Murdoch cabin especially is a work of art. It ought to be part of a guided tour of the premises, and if it is ever replaced, I want it. But as opening Saturday drew near, I would begin feeling tense. People are much harder to deal with than plumbing. You can't take a wrench to personal problems. There are very few times when you can say, "Well, that's fixed." There would be a sense of relief when

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everybody had left, and I was faced with straightforward tasks that allowed me to enjoy a sense of competence.

That, I would suggest, is the "normal" way of describing my attitude, of putting it in the most understandable, the least distasteful light. What it overlooks is that galvanized pipes can't give you a smile or a hug. (Even the Murdoch toilet can't ask a question or make a comment that gives a fresh glimpse of life). What it overlooks, is if I had appreciated and liked people as much as I assumed I did, there would have been a mounting sense of anticipation as that Saturday drew nearer. There would have been affirmative images coming spontaneously to mind, images of those dear folk who were packing their bags and arranging to have their

mail forwarded. Of course, there are more strenuous responsibilities involved in dealing with people than there are in dealing with plumbing. There are also far deeper rewards.

As a number of you know, there came a time when my particular style of leadership became inappropriate. That was one of those inescapable facts that was not at all easy to accept. This situation was characteristic of the way things were going for me overall, including life at home and work for the church. I was discovering myself to be "inappropriate" in a good many ways, and I was resisting the discovery.

Before anything is brought back into order, it is quite normal for it to be brought first into a kind of confusion, a virtual chaos. In this way, things that fit together badly are severed from each other; and when they have been severed, then the Lord arranges them in order. In adolescence, we move toward a measure of independence from our

parents. Previous to this, good behavior has been bound up with parental control. In the larger scheme of things, these elements "fit badly together." They have to be severed, and this brings us into a state of confusion, a virtual chaos. We are obliged to find

more appropriate reasons for behaving constructively. The reasons we find are largely egocentric, but at least they are "our own." In the early teens, we are hypersensitive to what other people think of us.

There is also a tendency for things to fall apart as the process of aging becomes evident. The seeds are clear if we look back to the issues of adolescence. A major motivation for all our efforts has been the desire for independence, a resolve to stand on our own two feet. At our best, we want to be worthwhile members of the human community. Mixed in with this is a desire for recognition, a desire to make our mark.

This does not "fit well together" with a truly angelic life for the simple reason that we are not independent. Our selfhood is an "appear-

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Spiritual Chaology

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ance," in many ways an illusion. Throughout our early adult years, it is a particularly precious illusion. We matter to ourselves a great deal, and we spend a *lot* of time thinking about ourselves. Somewhere down inside, we are aware that we need to keep a close watch on ourselves, that we cannot afford to let ourselves get out of control.

It is not easy to let go of an illusion that is dear to us and that has helped keep us on the straight and narrow. It is scary to think that we may not be in control. We do not want to admit that we are inadequate. We like to feel good about ourselves. What this means is that we will not face the issues involved unless we become profoundly uncomfortable. Or in doctrinal terms, when these motivations are separated from the decisions involved in leading a heavenly life, the confusion seems total, and the chaos engulfing.

As some of you know, in the overall scheme of the spiritual story of Scripture, I would identify this life passage with the prophets. If we think for a moment about those extraordinary books in their Biblical context, they clearly represent a major change. We move almost entirely out of the narrative mode. There is message after message, forceful and overwhelmingly negative, with little sense of connectedness or progress.

Our theology tells us that there is a beautiful coherence and connectedness to this part of the Bible under the surface, but it does not show us that coherence and connectedness.

Process of Fermentation

Swedenborg draws an analogy with the process of fermentation, a process which seems entirely random, but which is actually following a very precise procedure that will result in a quite predictable chemical arrangement. One might think also of meteorology. On the scale of personal observation, it is only roughly predictable; but with the aid of

satellites, we see larger patterns that begin to make sense. The more we understand the many factors involved, the more we perceive the underlying order.

But to return to the prophets, I think it is important that we recognize and accept the appearance of disconnectedness, of chaos. For now, it is enough simply to acknowledge that there must be an underlying order. In our own life processes, we really need to experience the confusion. Or to put it another way, there is a necessary correspondence of the literal disconnectedness.

I have a mild little example from my own life that might help at this point. When I chose the topic for my doctoral thesis, it was in a field where I was a relative beginner. I spent the first year amassing piles and piles of information, without any clear sense of direction. I learned a good deal about the vocabulary and syntax of the texts I was working with, but had no idea what I was

out consciously; my conscious mind would have been more likely to impose the order I preferred than to discover the order that was there. There was a real risk of being misled by superficial similarities, of putting things together that did not belong together, and then becoming unwilling to separate them again.

There is the same risk, I am sure, in trying to make order out of the chaotic periods of regeneration. The very reason for the chaos is that we want to hang on to inappropriate connections. If we try to follow a program, then the order we are most likely to impose is precisely the order that needs to be broken up if a better order is to ensue. We need to trust the Lord's leading more than that. We need to trust that there is a reason for the chaos, a sense that we cannot perceive.

Relinquishing Control

The times of chaos are times when we need to relinquish a certain

measure of our control. We need to be active in regard to coping with the problems that arise, true, but we need a kind of intellectual passivity, a willingness to let the natural order of the process emerge. It is not so much an order that we can figure out with our own

mental powers as it is an order that we will be able to perceive if we meet each situation as faithfully as we can. This perception will come in the Lord's good time, not necessarily—or even probably—when we think it should.

The church could be a real help at such times, and will be if we do not fall into the trap of thinking that we have to provide answers. If the order that I may try to impose on the confusion is likely to be inappropriate, if the true order is subtly working away in my spiritual depths, it would take a remarkable person indeed who could see that order from the outside in any but the most rudimentary outlines.

What is needed more than the answers themselves is the assurance that the answers are there, and that

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*Our selfhood
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an illusion.*

going to do with it all.

When summer came, I filled a briefcase with notes, and headed for Maine knowing that I had to sort through all this to see how everything fit together. When I got back to Harvard in the fall, I wiped the dust off the briefcase with a dismaying sense of guilt, opened it, and took out a folder of notes. I looked at the first page in it, and knew exactly where it belonged. That second year was a very productive one, and brought the thesis into a clearly defined, well organized, and well documented state.

The simplest way to explain what happened during that first summer was that my subconscious mind found the order that was actually there, under the surface confusion. I suspect it was a much more valid order than any I might have worked

Spiritual Chaology

(Continued from page 24)

they will become clear in the Lord's good time if we persist in doing the best we can with the issues of daily life. It is helpful to be told that this is, or can be, a healthy process, that others have experienced it in their own way and have found themselves bettered by it. It is helpful to have our attention turned to what we can do about the chaos, away from the futile effort to organize it.

Perhaps it will help to be a little more specific. One of the necessary major themes of early adulthood is being in control, taking charge of our own lives. As part of this process, we learn a good deal about causes and their effects. We learn what it takes to succeed in our enterprises, what attitudes and habits are productive, and what ones get us into trouble. This creates and nourishes the illusion that we can control the future, that we can "make happen" the things we want, and prevent the things we do not want.

Now our theology tells us that we can see the Lord's providence only after the fact. If we could see it in advance, we would interfere with it. We think we know what is best for us, and we are willing to work to attain it. If we were totally honest with ourselves, we would admit that we think we know better than the Lord does what we really need. In fact, when the sixth thing goes wrong on a particularly uncooperative day, one of the statements that is most likely to come out is, "I don't need this." Perhaps, just perhaps, the Lord is telling us that we do need it.

Willingness to Ask the Questions

I can't recall anyone telling me before the fact about needing chaos and confusion. "I'm getting the feeling that I'm on the right track, and have things pretty well in hand. I think it's time I had the props knocked out from under me." I have heard people say things like this after the fact. We can look back and see what it was in us, what it was in our attitudes, that brought the crisis on.

We may not be able to see how the chaos worked. Maybe if we had kept a journal throughout the period

of chaos, and then went back and analyzed it, we would be able to get a reasonably clear picture of the underlying order. That would take more time than I, for one, would be willing to spend, but it might be a task that someone else would find valuable; and if someone else did the work, I'd certainly be interested in reading the results.

Specifically, what can we do in times of chaos? I think it is best to begin by emphasizing the absolute necessity of "hanging in there" in our everyday life. Our usual motives for the faithful performance of our tasks have been badly undermined, but the tasks still have to be done. Our usual reasons for being considerate of other people have largely vanished, but we still have to go through the motions even though we don't know why. It is to be hoped that much of our constructive behavior has become habitual enough that it has a kind of momentum of its own. For example, if we have consistently resisted impulses toward physical or verbal violence, we are not likely to resort to such unfamiliar means even when things fall apart.

If we can assume, then, that we do persist in responsible outward behavior, then we may look at our deeper attitudes. I would first repeat that it helps to be reassured that there is a constructive reason for all this, that there really is a light at the end of the tunnel. Then I would suggest that we need to be asking a great many questions, and even to be asking questions about our questions. What is going on, and why? What have I done to deserve this? Why is this getting to me the way it is? Just what is it in me that feels so threatened? Why am I incapable of putting all this behind me and getting on with the business of living the way I used to? Those are very general questions, which will take much more specific forms in the minds of particular individuals.

Patience to Wait for Answers

Given the willingness to ask the questions, we then need the patience to wait for the answers. As I've implied above, the most valid answers will be gifts rather than achievements. That is, they will not be

answers that we figure out by the skillful application of our theology. They will be insights that come to us, insights that carry conviction, that ring true.

They will have a definite relationship to our theology, though. While we will not find them by looking them up in the books, we will find that once they are granted, the books take on new meanings. We understand in a fresh and quite compelling way, for example, what it means to resist evils "as if of ourselves." Such familiar terms as "good" and "truth" become less abstract. Different things will jump out of the pages and seize our attention.

At first, this is likely to be an occasional experience, and more like a glimmer or a hint than a flash of light or an answer. I am reminded of the little glimpses of hope that come up from time to time in the midst of masses of prophetic denunciation. This means that we would do well to be attentive to such moments. We may not be able to prolong them, but we can at least notice and remember them so that they can be a source of encouragement.

Ultimately, if we do our part, the Lord will arrange things in a better order—a better order than the previous one, and a better order than we could devise. It is absolutely necessary that we allow the Lord to do this. That is why I have insisted that it is not our task to find answers or to impose order. Chaos is profoundly distressing; and the quickest way through it is to do our part and our part only, truly letting the Lord do what only the Lord can do.

The Rev. Dr. George F. Dole is a professor at the Swedenborg School of Religion and a member of the board of directors of the Swedenborg Foundation. "Spiritual Chaology" is part of the summer 1990 Fryeburg New Church Assembly Lecture Series and is available on audio tape as part of a ten-tape series, covering the two weeks of the Assembly. See September 1990 Messenger for ordering details and titles, or send a check for \$24 for the series to: Church of the New Jerusalem, 4 Oxford Street, Fryeburg, ME 04037. You may also purchase only one week of the series for \$12. (Price includes shipping and handling).

Swedenborgian NCCC Delegation Leads Opening Worship

The Swedenborgian Church's involvement in the National Council of the Churches of Christ is growing. On November 14, 1990, our delegation consisting of the Rev. Robert McCluskey, Linda Baker, the Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey and the Rev. Richard Tafel, Jr., led the opening worship for 300 delegates at the November Governing Board meeting in Portland, Oregon. We thought the "Introduction to the Swedenborgian Church" given by Dick Tafel, and the sermonette given by Dorothea Harvey would be of interest to *Messenger* readers.

Introduction to the Swedenborgian Church

The Swedenborgian Church began formally in England in the early 1770s. It was founded on the theological perspectives of Emanuel Swedenborg, 18th century Swedish scientist and theologian. Swedenborg, who published most of his theological writings in England, was a contemporary of John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church. Much of our liturgy comes from the Episcopal heritage of England. Our first hymn this morning, "Jesus Thou Shepherd of Us All" comes from our English Swedenborgian tradition.

The Swedenborgian movement first reached the East Coast of North America in 1784. From there it

spread westward. While a number of Swedenborgian churches were incorporated in the United States quite early, the national denomination was not incorporated until 1861. Our second hymn this morning, "Roll on O Song to God" comes from the American Swedenborgian tradition.

Although the Swedenborgian church is small in numbers, its presence is worldwide. Perhaps its smallness is a result of our theology. Emanuel Swedenborg was probably the first true ecumenist. His theology consistently states that the Lord is the God of all people. We may call God by different names and worship in different liturgies, but we are all children of the one and same God; spiritually we are brothers and sisters of one another. Swedenborg's theology is also very clear that God's truth is universal, and that there is good in all churches. Remember that this theology was first promulgated over 230 years ago. We still believe its validity today.

Twenty-five years ago, my father stood before this assembly as the head of my communion as the Swedenborgian Church was admitted into membership of the National Council of the Churches of Christ. I understand that on this date forty years ago, November 14, 1950, the NCCC was founded. We celebrate our togetherness.

In God's Image: Life Out of Chaos

Scripture: Genesis 1:15, 26-31;
Matthew 11:28-30

The creation story in our Bible begins with "a wind from God," God's Spirit moving over the chaos and darkness, not to destroy the chaos, not to fight against it, but to bring life out of it. We know the story: the power of life in seas, in earth, in plants, in living creatures of all kinds. The power and goodness are in all; we are part of the power and the goodness; we share with sea, land, plants, and all animals the blessing of power to bring life. And we, the human species, know a second blessing, to "have dominion" in the whole—not, obviously, to dictate to it, but to take conscious

responsibility, to see the whole in a conscious way, to share in knowing its goodness.

We know also the ambiguities of human relationships. No one of us could avoid the combination of a Veterans Day observance with the announcements of the buildup of U.S. armed forces in the Persian Gulf. We know many other ambiguities. We could not grow up without knowing this side of human experience, with its prophetic sense of choice. This is also in our Bible, in Genesis 2-3. We thank God that it is there. It is our experience.

But we thank God that right beside it is the word of the goodness. We are in God's image, and this is God's doing, not ours. It is not in our power to change or to give away our creation in the image of God. That Word is there to be heard, when we need it. "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good." In God's seeing of us, God sees us as good.

We have a saying in our church that to love is to enjoy the joy of the other. This is not to decide what we think the other should enjoy, and then approve so far as the other lives up to our concept. It is to see the joy of the other and to share that joy ourselves. God's love for us sees our goodness, our joy. God's love is not just constant, forgiving, patient, and kind. (Though we thank God for this too; we need it.) But God's love is also a specific, positive joy in our existence, in our joy, a seeing of us as good.

There is nothing we have to do to gain approval, nobody we have to beat up to be OK. The goodness is a given, God-given. In that setting we have a freedom to do our best, to live in ways that work for justice and for peace. For that freedom, we thank God.

The Rev. Richard Tafel, Jr., is president of the national Swedenborgian church, and the Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey is former chaplain and professor of religion at Urbana University.

Chrysalis Update

Carol S. Lawson



Carol Lawson (R) greets local member Lillian How, who helped with the *Chrysalis* exhibit at Common Boundary conference.

Just before Thanksgiving, from November 16 to 18, in Washington, D.C., alongside a dozen or so other publishers who were displaying their own publications and tapes, the Swedenborg Foundation mounted a colorful exhibit of *Chrysalis* and some of the Foundation's other wares.

The ten-foot booth was borrowed from the *Swedenborg, Scientist* Exhibit and dressed in a different outfit of messages. The exhibit header announced the booth as the "*Chrysalis* Bookshop." Against the royal-blue background we displayed all the back issues of *Chrysalis*, which made a bright splash.

The occasion was the tenth annual conference of the Common Boundary association. The meetings were attended by 15- to 18-hundred conferees—psychologists, M.D.s, therapists, various other members of the helping professions, researchers, and other people seeking knowledge to light the way on their own personal spiritual journeys. For the entire two-and-a-half days the Foundation's display attracted a steady stream of visitors. Literally hundreds of conferees were intellectually curious about Swedenborg and the Swedenborgian movement and what we have

to contribute to their own spiritual quests.

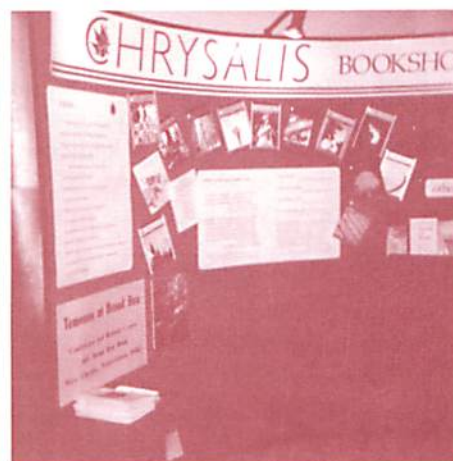
Many of the visitors came back several times. At least 300 of them were interested in writing articles for *Chrysalis* and took home with them our list of upcoming themes and copy deadlines. After buying one of the back issues, some purchasers would come to the booth the next day to say that the Foundation's mode of presentation was appealing. It was useful to learn that readers like the low-key approach of *Chrysalis*. One man came by to tell us about the carving on a beam in his home that says: "Time is a chrysalis between the past and eternity." Another person came back to say that he liked *Chrysalis* because it did not try to impress and overwhelm him as a reader but rather encouraged him to *think* and *feel* about the theme. The Foundation's video cassette *Images of Knowing* was in demand, for perhaps the same reasons.

Several members of the Washington Swedenborgian Society, which is considering starting up a bookshop in its parish house, came to help staff the exhibit. I believe the Washington Swedenborgians were delightfully surprised to find themselves in the midst of an obviously successful enterprise with great appeal to the conference attendees.

I would like also to report to you that the *Chrysalis* direct-mail marketing campaign, which went to thirty-five thousand addressees in October, brought in a 3.8 percent return and doubled the number of subscribers to *Chrysalis*! We now have about 250 Swedenborgian subscribers and about 1,750 non-Swedenborgian subscribers.

Conclusions

These two recent *Chrysalis* outreach success stories may point up for our denomination important cues about attracting interest in Sweden-



Chrysalis exhibit.

borg today, at the end of the twentieth century.

1. People are drawn to Swedenborg when he and the Writings are placed in context (a context that presents Swedenborg among other great teachers and Swedenborg's revelations as significant but not as the only truth). This approach seems to draw in truth-seekers so that they pause to examine what Swedenborg has to say.
2. If we can visualize the Common Boundary conference attendees and *Chrysalis* subscribers as parallel to the eager church-goers of the end of the nineteenth century, we will recognize that there are as many people seeking truth today as were seeking it a century ago. But they are seeking it in a new mode. Much as we would like to draw these people into our churches, their direction is often toward seeking truth in a different way.

Perhaps the *Chrysalis* successes are one more evidence of what we have been discovering recently through the positive experiences of the Wayfarers Chapel (Los Angeles area), Stone House Bookstore (Seattle area), the Temenos Conference and Retreat Center (Philadelphia area), and some of our other innovative projects: *We*

(continued on page 29)

Exploring Our Spirituality: Created in the Image of...

Robert McCluskey

Did you hear the story about the Jewish rabbi, the Catholic nun, the Unitarian minister, and the Swedenborgian pastor? It seems they found themselves one night in midtown Manhattan, playing to an audience of about sixty. There was also a Baptist, a Monsignor, and another couple of rabbis on hand, just in case! The place was the parish hall of the Epiphany Church Catholic, on Second Avenue. The date was May 5, 1990, and the event was the second "Clergy Dialogue," sponsored by the East Midtown Clergy Association, an informal interfaith group which meets monthly at member churches. The topic for the evening was "Exploring Our Spirituality: Created in the Image of..." The four major players listed above each talked for a few minutes on their understanding of spirituality, especially within the framework of their own faith traditions. The audience was made up of members of a variety of churches and synagogues, and small group discussion followed the presentations.

The topic was chosen in light of people's increasing interest in spirituality and inner experience, and the need for religious institutions to clearly present their understanding of these issues. Rabbi Deborah Hirsch spoke on the moral and ethical dimension of spirituality as interpreted in the Jewish tradition. Sister Margaret Byrne talked about her own spiritual journey in the Catholic tradition, and the liberating and challenging effects of Vatican II on her understanding of her spiritual role in the church. Rev. Tracey Robinson-Harris spoke of her upbringing in the Southern Baptist Church, and her meaningful discovery of the Unitarian-Universalist tradition. She also shared with us her emerging interest in feminist and environmental theology.

I have included an edited version of my remarks, which were prefaced by a brief description of the New Church, stressing our focus on Jesus

Christ as Lord, and the inner meaning of Scripture. However, in the spirit of interfaith dialogue, I wanted to offer a less sectarian view of spirituality, so that those present might find a new way to look at their own traditions.

Spirituality:

That which "distinguishes" us from the rest of nature. Of course, we have a great deal in common; not just externally, or physically (eating, sleeping, sex, etc.), but internally, or psychologically as well (instinctual behavior, self-preservation, etc.). But still, we are in countless ways unique on the planet. We can think abstractly, we can empathize with the suffering of people 10,000 miles away, we can observe and change our own behavior (self-consciousness), we can inflict a great deal of unnecessary suffering and violence on others, and even engage in behavior that is not good for us (only the lemming can claim this ability in the natural world!). We "create" art, language, history, music, and more, all to express those dimensions of our lives that involve us in a world that is not the natural one; it is the spiritual dimension.

Created in the Image of God:

It is precisely to our relationship and commonality with the world of nature that this imagery does not and cannot apply. It is, rather, in our distinction from the world of nature that the image of God can exist within us. Our ability to love and our inclination to learn; not that we get hungry, but that we can be filled with compassion for others who are hungry; not that we get tired, but that we can give up our sleep for the needs of others; not that we know how to survive, but that we care about making a useful contribution to society.

Immanuel Kant, the influential German philosopher, framed the ultimate three issues or concepts which make human beings unique: the questions of God, Freedom and Immortality. Questions which have no

answers, only responses, and which each of us asks at some point in our lives. Questions which, in a way, *make* us human when we consider them. Questions which have been central to the religious quest, and questions that can be seen, if you look very carefully, at the heart of the current New Age movement. Is there a God or not (is there a cosmic force or consciousness that I can "relate" to)? Am I free or determined? Will I live forever (does consciousness survive the death of the body)?

Recent efforts of New Age movements to reframe the spiritual questions of our day indicate both a thirst for this type of insight and an inability of the traditional religious institutions to meet that need. I believe, though, that continued dialogue between these two groups can only strengthen both, and will lead eventually to a greater understanding and expression of spirituality. The more legitimate and useful forms of New Age thinking will survive and benefit from closer examination in the light of traditional wisdom; and the great religious doctrines, symbols, and traditions will continue to endure and nourish the spirit, as long as we continue to remain open to new forms by which the spirit seeks to respond to them.

Church, Synagogue, Religion, and Theology:

All are intended to point to, or image, or explain, or present, the inner, living spirituality that enlivens and enlightens each of us. They are useful tools to that end, but fail miserably when taken as a substitute for the challenge of real spiritual growth. It is then that spirituality takes on the marks of fantasy, fluffiness, and escapism. Spiritual inquiry makes no sense, and has little relevance, if it is cut off from the actual, day-to-day events and issues of our real lives; spiritual inquiry becomes meaningful and important when we accept it as the joyous challenge to unite our inner and outer lives together, to live with integrity, and to be united in love to God and our neighbor.

The Reverend Robert McCluskey is pastor of the New York Swedenborgian Church.

The Family Connection

New NCC Policy on Family Violence and Abuse Adopted by General Board

A new policy that names family violence as sin and calls churches to an array of actions to address family violence and abuse was approved overwhelmingly by the National Council of Churches General Board in their November 1990 meeting, Portland, Oregon.

The NCC policy statement on family violence and abuse reviews and social, legal, psychological, pastoral and ecclesial contexts of domestic violence and offers a scriptural basis for addressing the problem. It also touches on the related problems of "date rape" and sexual victimization of clients by such therapeutic "mentors" as pastors, physicians and counselors. The statement's purpose is to be a vehicle of education about family violence and abuse in church and society.

"Our churches have healed the wound lightly, saying peace, peace in families where there is no peace," said Marie Fortune, a member of the NCC's commission on family ministries and human sexuality.

"If you pass this policy today it will be good news, profoundly felt, by many women and children in this country, good news that the church stands with the powerless and oppressed," said Fortune, director of the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence in Seattle. "This policy commits the NCC to seek to make justice at home."

"It also will open a can of worms," she said of the policy, which charges that inaction by church leadership has sustained the injustice of family violence." The statement calls the churches to "acknowledge the ways in which the interpretations of the faith have been misused" to excuse family violence.

"There has been profound silence throughout the centuries in the face of men's injustice toward women, and unconcern about abusive treatment of children within the family setting," according to the policy. "Some moral theologies have excused or ignored wife and child abuse."

Board members, in debate, struggled to perfect wording concerning their pastoral concern that "adult female victims who have believed the promise of the church that Christian marriage is 'til death do us part,' and that God would protect them from all harm, may well experience a severe crisis of faith. This can be compounded by a pastor who counsels them to remain in abusive relationships, 'be a better wife,' and simply 'turn to God in prayer' or accept their circumstances as part of God's will," stated the policy.

Fortune said the NCC Commission on Family Ministries and Human Sexuality will go to work next on a statement on professional ethics and sexual abuse by clergy.

Chrysalis Update

(continued from page 27)

are finding that we can reach today's truth-seekers if we present Swedenborgian thought in a non-exclusive context.

Here is my wish to our church at large: in 1991, may the entire Swedenborgian community have the courage to continue to reach out to serve our fellow wayfarers—on their own terms.

Carol Lawson is Editor-in-Chief of Chrysalis, chair of the Swedenborgian Church Communication Support Unit, and a board member of the Swedenborg Foundation.

Welcome to Convention In Canada! June 26-30, 1991

So, you're thinking of coming to convention in Kitchener. Welcome! And so many of you will be able to drive this year! It's a one-day trip from Boston, seven or eight hours from Urbana, and if you plan for an extra day you'll be able to see some very interesting parts of Ontario.

Probably more people come to see Niagara Falls than any other spot, but Toronto has some interesting features—a wonderful hands-on Science Museum for the kids, Ontario Place with its magic I-Max screen and fantastic children's village, the new SkyDome for sports and the CN Tower for fabulous views across Lake Ontario.

Or you could stop for a day or two on the white sandy beaches of Lake Huron, or head north for some summer cool in the forests of Muskoka and Haliburton.

Wherever you stop you'll find a Canadian welcome—but hurry on to Kitchener-Waterloo because we'll be waiting for you!

Time to plan your convention banner!

The theme is

**HEALING OURSELVES—
HEALING OUR WORLD.**

Opinion

12 Steps Lifesaver

Dear Editor:

What a wonderful surprise to receive October's issue of *The Messenger*. I started to read it while I still had my coat on and after a while I was crying—tears of joy. My church understands and supports my recovery! I've been attending 12-Step programs (NA, AA, CODA, ISA, ACOA and Alanon) for five years. They literally are saving my life. I "work" my program daily because this is medicine for my disease.

The spiritual part of my program is enhanced and nurtured by my Swedenborgian Church affiliation. Knowing that Swedenborgians are in 12-Step recovery feels very good. I treasure those times when there are other Swedenborgians at meetings in my hometown, when I travel and at convention.

Thank you for sharing how 12-Step recovery programs relate to our church doctrine. I have shared the articles with several recovering friends. I look forward to a continuing dialogue about living in 12-Step recovery through *The Messenger*, convention programs and other programs at our local churches.

Regenerating in 12-Step Recovery
Ohio

Dear Editor:

I read Rev. Wilma Wake's article on AA in the October *Messenger* and thought I could add a bit to it:

I am the former president of the New York Association of the New Church. Both Lois Burnham Wilson and Bill Wilson were members of the Church of the Neighbor, the Brooklyn Society of the New Church, during the ministry of Arthur Mercer, Paul Dresser, E.M.L. Gould and William Wunsch. Lois, who passed away about a year ago in her late nineties, lived close to my summer home in Northern Westchester County, New York. The Wilsons lived in Bedford Hills, my wife and I in Bedford Village. Lois kept

repeating to me that Swedenborg's "Doctrine of Remains" added much to her understanding of her work with AA and Alanon.

Lois' mother was a great lady and a student of Swedenborg. Her father was a respected M.D. in Brooklyn.

C. Corey Mills
Ellenton, Florida

Here's How:

To Integrate New People Into the Congregation

- Appoint greeters for each Sunday to welcome people as they enter the church. The minister should also extend a welcome during the service.

- As a greeter, introduce yourself and others to visitors. Invite them to stay for coffee and talk to them about the church and what it means to you. Having a weekly coffee hour is a must.

- A guest book and/or pew cards for visitors is essential. After the cards have been filled out, a follow-up phone call by a member should be made the same day. The first ten minutes following the service is the most important time for the growth of the church.

- As soon as the service is over, it is the responsibility of all members to introduce themselves to everyone they do not know. After you introduce yourself, introduce the visitor to someone else. You or someone else should be with the visitor until they leave.

- Do not ask the visitor too many questions, but a few are necessary, such as: "Do you live around here?" ... "Is this your first visit?" etc.

- stimulating classes led by the minister should be available on an ongoing basis. Membership classes need to be offered at least twice annually.

- Determine how and if they would like to be involved in the ongoing life of the church. Find out what their interests are and include

them in that area of the church. After the second or third visit, the person should be on the pathway into the life of the church.

- At least once each year have a congregational meeting when people can volunteer for tasks needed to be performed by them for the ongoing ministry of the church. *Be sure newcomers are invited.* Have on the wall large newsprint sign-up sheets with headings: *Coffee hours, Sunday school, gardening, visiting shut-ins, ushers, greeters, communion*, etc. One person to "chair" each committee. A representative of each group will explain the function and the joy of participating.

- Establish teams of friends. Pair "seasoned" church members with newer church members or newcomers after they have come two or three Sundays. One established member will become a special friend to a new comer, introducing her/him to people and to different areas of church life. Be their friend. Invite them to your home, visit their home.

- Plan a social function three times a year with no other purpose than to have fellowship with one another. Give the newcomers a special invitation. Offer to bring them if appropriate. Use your imagination. There are lots of ways to have fun together.

- Initiate a friendship club. It is a great way to get to know everyone in the church. Groups of 10 to 12 people meet once a month just to have fun. Brunch after church, a potluck at someone's home, or who knows what kind of fun your group may want to share. After five months, the names are thrown into the hat again to form another group. If you only have enough for one group, that's OK. When a group is having fun, others will want to join. New groups can always be formed.

Be a friendly group. Be excited about your church!

Another in a series of HOW TO articles sponsored by the Pastoral Ministries Support Unit of the Swedenborgian Church.

Join the Parliament!

A Swedenborgian lawyer from Chicago, Charles Bonney, was the father of a landmark event in the history of religions, the 1893 Parliament of Religions. One consequence of this event was the founding of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society in Chicago; and it was Swami Sarveshananda of that Society who suggested a centennial Parliament. Recognizing that Bonney's role had been largely overlooked, he actively looked for Swedenborgian participation, putting us in the unfamiliar role of being sought out.

While she was in Chicago, Gladys Wheaton was a valued member of the Worship Committee, and thanks to the generosity of the Swedenborgian Church, the Swedenborg and the Swedenborg Foundation, I have been able to participate in the planning process to some extent. Currently, there is a series of preliminary conferences on critical issues, with the second, focusing on the Human Community, scheduled for next April.

I know there is a good deal of interest in the Parliament among our membership, and there is a way you can help. With the approval of General Council, the *Messenger* is reproducing the application form for individual membership. The Council planning for 1993 is applying for major grants, but it also needs an ongoing and broad-based support. I hope our church will do Charles Bonney proud, and that as you receive information about the Parliament, you will share it widely.

George F. Dole

Commencements

Birth

Simpson—Cassandra and Richard Simpson announce the birth of their son, Scott David Simpson, born November 14, 1990. Cass and Rick are members of the LaPorte New Church, LaPorte, Indiana, living in Moline, Illinois.

Baptism

Bower—Jennifer Ann Bower was baptized into the Christian faith September 9, 1990, at the Church of the Open Word, St. Louis, Missouri, the Rev. David L. Rienstra officiating.

Ruscher—Tammy Ruscher and daughters Shelly and Melissa Ruscher were baptized into the Christian faith September 16, 1990, at the Kemper Road Swedenborgian Church, Montgomery, Ohio, the Rev. Norm Haag officiating.

Sawatzky—Chad Anthony and Mitchell Brandon Sawatzky were baptized into the Christian faith October 28, 1990, at the Rosthern Church, Rostern, Saskatchewan, the Rev. David L. Sonmor officiating.

Confirmation

Dow—Joan Dow was baptized and confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church September 16, 1990, at the Church of the Open Word, St. Louis, Missouri, the Rev. David L. Rienstra officiating.

Fink—Carl, Kimberly and Nicole Fink were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church and received into the fellowship of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, Sunday, December 2, 1990, the Rev. Paul Zacharias officiating.

Marriage

Pahl and Eidse—Fay Pahl and David Jan Eidse were united in marriage October 20, 1990, at the Ramada Inn, Winnipeg, Manitoba, the Rev. David L. Sonmor officiating.

MEMBERSHIP

By becoming a member of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, you offer your active support in reaching our goals. This may take the form of participation in our activities in addition to financial contributions. Members will be kept informed by means of a newsletter and in time through a membership coordinator.

We invite our members to help us reach new population in Chicago and to take an even more active role by joining us as a volunteer. Thanks for your support!

Please enroll me as a member of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions. My check is enclosed:

☐ \$25 Individual and Family

☐ \$100 Sustaining Member

☐ \$250 - \$500 Benefactor

All contributions are tax deductible.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City / State / Zip _____

Mail this form and your check to:

Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions / 407 S. Dearborn, Suite 600 / Chicago, IL 60605 / (312) 435-2716

I am interested in working with the Council in the following areas:

The President Reports

Moving Smoothly Into 1991

Plans for Convention 1991 are going swiftly ahead. Our hosts, the Kitchener church and the Canada Association, have been busy preparing for our arrival. The convention theme is "Healing Ourselves, Healing the Earth."

The San Francisco Society has voted to become two legally separate, autonomous churches. Following the precedent of some of our other churches, the titles to the properties have been deeded to the national denomination. The cash assets likewise have been transferred and will be set up as restricted funds, 25 percent for El Cerrito and 75 percent for San Francisco. This division of

funds follows closely (80 percent - 20 percent) where these endowment funds originated. I know I speak for all of us in wishing the two societies rewarding ministries in their respective Swedenborgian approaches to facilitating the spiritual well-being of people.

Temenos is moving ahead. The five-year plan for arriving at a balanced budget is being presented to the General Council meeting the end of January. Sources for the denomination's match of the Philadelphia society's \$750,000 equity investment have been researched and identified by the Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit. General

Council is voting on this also at its mid-winter meeting.

The Cambridge Church is focusing hard on its Harvard-Radcliffe ministry, seeking official recognition of the church on the Harvard campus. Eugene Taylor and F. Bob Tafel have been working for several years on this project. They are looking to June as the time when the Swedenborgian Church will become a member of the Harvard-Radcliffe campus ministries.

Our cup is still half full.



Richard H. Tafel, Jr., President

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