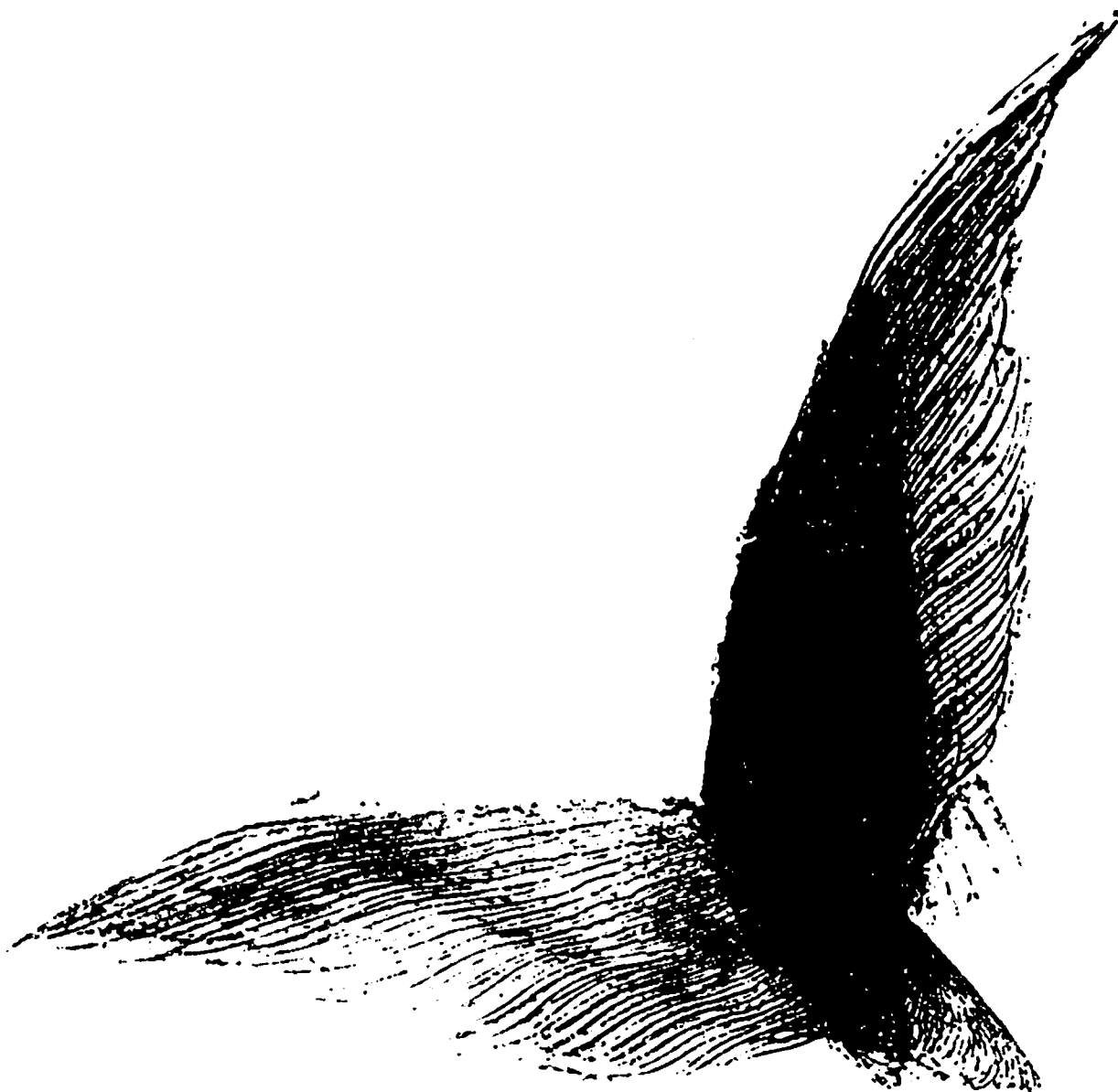


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The Messenger

January 1991



"Wings of the Morning"
Etching by Helen L. Lee, Pittsburgh

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Moving Toward the Light

New Beginnings

"Seek ye first. . ."

One of the many interesting aspects of any editor's job is that we work in a perpetual time warp, due to the need to finish preparation of an issue long before you see it. So as I sit at dawn in my living room watching the frosted woods and grass turning a burnished pink, the Christmas season, the Advent, is just beginning to unfold.

Some events of the past weeks have moved me to pay even closer attention than I might otherwise: to John Billings' message of exploring our feelings and penetrating our defenses about prayer and praying; to the Cabinet's reordered priorities regarding the church's spiritual directions in the New Year; Paul Martin-Grumman's guest editorial last month about reshaping Christmas to be a true reflection of our values, opening not our pocketbooks, but our hearts and minds to Love and Wisdom.

On a Christmas afternoon 25 years ago, when the younger of my two daughters was about three, the children were opening their huge stacks of presents at their grandparents' house, following a similar Santa Claus ritual in our home that morning. When my small daughter had finished opening her last package, she began crying bitterly, setting up a howl for still more presents. We were stunned. She had received everything she asked for and far more. We were disgusted at what seemed to be her spoiled, greedy behavior, and her dad finally spanked her. Looking back, I wonder if she wasn't reacting to the emptiness. A quarter-century ago we hadn't a clue as to how we might nourish our own and each others' inner selves, and I think surely her soul was crying out for something more than a pile of presents. Didn't the Peggy Lee song, "Is That All There Is?" touch on similar feelings in many of us? Perhaps a child was once again trying to tell us something about ourselves that we couldn't hear.

Obligatory habits of holidays past cling tenaciously for many of us. The spirit within, as Van Dusen observes in "The Identity of the Dream Maker," is telling us to take time for quiet reflection, yet we repeatedly feel ourselves pulled along into others' expectations of holiday ritual, often pounding ourselves to "get ready" for Christmas, with "shoulds" lurking around every corner.

The quality of the New Year, new beginnings, new directions, strengths we will call upon in 1991, are to a great extent forged out of choices we are presently making. After Thanksgiving I began to say no to some things, with a renewed determination this year to spend time on nothing that does not truly nourish me or someone else. Frequent periods of quiet and listening for guidance are a requisite, gently discarding things that no longer serve. Cleaning out the closets of the mind.

Orel Hershisier, pitcher for the Los Angeles Dodgers, said, in a *Life* magazine interview, "Prayer, to me is just thinking: *God, what would you have me do in this situation?*" (Yes, there's more to prayer, but that's surely a good beginning.)

In the early 80s, a wise and spiritual professor in my alcohol-drug studies course, by way of shedding light on 12-Step principles, said, "This is the order of priorities: First comes *God*. Then *sobriety*. Then *self*. Then *everything else*. If these are allowed to fall out of that order in your life, they will rearrange themselves back into that order—*painfully*." Sobriety in a generic sense meaning sanity, balance, serenity—and self meaning not the small self, but the nourishment of the Christ self. And then everything else will fall into place—love to the neighbor and right action (uses) will flow out of the fullness. Another way of saying, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you".¹

A Happy and Blessed New Year to you all!

¹Matthew 6:33

New Directions

Editor's Note: Following the October 1990 Cabinet meeting in Newton, Mass., Carol Lawson, chair of the Communication Support Unit, wrote about the Cabinet's reordering of priorities regarding the direction and vision for our church (See "Cabinet Reports a Breakthrough," December 1990 Messenger). It was written with input from all Cabinet members, whose names appeared at the end of the article. Those who wished to do so were asked to write about their thoughts and feeling responses to the new vision, to keep the spirit and momentum going into our New Year. General Council will build on the Cabinet's dreaming and planning, and the results will be reported in a later issue of The Messenger.

First Things First

Robert H. Kirven

The priorities adopted by the Cabinet at its October meeting do not represent a retreat from the recognition of our church's urgent need to grow if it is to survive. In my view at least, they are acknowledgements of a couple of necessary preconditions for the growth we need and want.

Some proportion of the people attracted by growth-oriented programs will join us in what we are doing to live out our theology by helping people—if we are doing something. If we are doing nothing, they either will drift away in ennui, or they will find something to do together. Attracting people to join us in our efforts requires that we be making some efforts for them to join.

Some proportion of the people attracted by growth-oriented programs will stay to enrich and strengthen the interconnectedness which characterizes our community as a church, if our connections are current, living, and mutually supporting. If our rela-

tions with each other are fossilized or embittered, our new friends will drift away, attracted by other, more vital communities; or they will create their own. Attracting people to our community requires that our community be alive and attractive.

The first two goals are indeed worthy in themselves, and would be appropriate in their priority even if numerical growth were not immediately necessary to our survival as an institution. But they also are necessary components of a realistic and long range strategy of growth.

Swedenborg teaches us that love to the Lord, love for the neighbor, and love for ourselves, are all good when they are arranged in that order of priority. Assuming that by gathering and worshipping as a church, we have put love to the Lord in first place, our next two priorities are clear. Express that love to the Lord by *doing* something loving for our neighbors, and take care of our common connectedness which enables us to do that effectively.

With that much underway, we will be a church that people will want to join and support.

The Rev. Dr. Robert Kirven is chair of the Information Management Support Unit and a professor at the Swedenborg School of Religion.

What Will We Tell the New Neighbor?

David Rienstra

When the Cabinet met at the Swedenborg School of Religion in mid-October, perhaps most of the Support Unit chairpersons came armed with their various programs and rationales behind them, probably prepared to defend their budgets for the next two years.

I think some of us were a little

surprised when our denomination's president, the Rev. Richard Tafel, Jr., announced that we were going to spend very little of our efforts at this time with budgetary concerns. Instead, we were going to do some visioning for the future of our beloved church. But hadn't this been completed when much energy was expended a few years ago in revising our constitution so that we would have a more workable model for our church?

In many ways that has been true. But, there have been some aspects of our model that haven't worked and some aspects that showed weaknesses.

Were we then going to re-invent the wheel? NO!

Each year the automotive industry has what they call a "re-tooling" program. This doesn't mean that the end product is going to be completely different or changed. The purpose is to eliminate some things, add some new ones, strengthen some of the weakness in design, and in the end come up with a more marketable automobile.

As I perceived it, this is what the Cabinet was trying to do. We looked at our strong points and we expressed some of our fears. We kept in the forefront the purpose of being facilitators for the spiritual well-being of people. As Dick Tafel said, "What do you want to tell the new neighbor who moves in next door to you? Our church is—?"

We are, of course, concerned with our numerical growth. We are concerned with our financial resources (not being recognized as a rich church, but for pursuing the spiritual *uses* which our existence as a church of the Lord depends upon), and we are concerned with our on-going programs which provide the tools for our individual and collective spiritual journeys. Swedenborg tells us that the very purpose of creation is a heaven evolved from the human
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New Directions

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race. Our job as servants of the Lord, as I see it, is to work in cooperation with Him to facilitate that process.

As a denomination we have been blessed with knowledges that are vital to the world. They really do serve as a means to facilitate the spiritual well-being of people. While we are known for our tolerance of people of all faiths and religions, we do not have to become them to get our message out. As we continually strive to put "Swedenborgianese" as it is called, into modern ideas, concepts, and workable models for people, we truly will be messengers and guides for the Lord, directing people to the various paths that lead to the gates of the Holy City New Jerusalem.

We do hope as you re-read what the Cabinet article stated in the December *Messenger* you will respond and help us to make your church a part of the growing church of the Lord.

The Rev. David Rienstra is chair of the Council of Ministers and pastor of the St. Louis Swedenborgian Church.

Vision of Our Church

Patricia Lyons Basu

I have been asked to write of EdSU's dream and how it coincides with the Cabinet's new set of priorities, even though EdSU has not met to work out this new vision. And since a dream cannot be forced, I must make it clear that I speak only for myself. The final vision, the shared dream, will be owned by all of us in the church body.

Two facts about our church seem especially significant to me. First, ours is not a sacramental church. We do not derive our spiritual energy primarily from liturgy and sacrament. Second, a church exists independently of its physical location. Just as a home derives its life from the people who form it, and not from the physical surroundings, so a church may exist even without a building containing an organ and topped by a steeple. Some of our

greatest success stories (Detroit being a shining example) have come about in settings without a traditional church building.

Two facts about American society which seem significant are: One, there is a deep need for a religious experience which is not merely a once-a-week pray-and-sing gathering. Spiritual direction on a personal and daily basis is generally lacking. And two, there is a renewed emphasis on the importance of the family and the seriousness of the marital commitment.

Combining these two sets of observations resulted in the following vision: Our Church will focus more and more of its resources—human and material—on developing retreat centers, family camps and special places (such as Wayfarers Chapel), to emphasize the fact that we are concerned with personal growth and the development of a genuine spiritually connected with daily life, not with weekly liturgy. EdSU will play an important role through its family ministry programs, under the Rev. Ted Klein, and its youth ministry programs, under the Rev. Steve Pults.

Group worship, sometimes but not always in a traditional church building, will certainly continue to be important, as it is to most Christians. But too often worship has come to replace a commitment to spiritual growth and to social action in the community and the world.

In summary, the Swedenborgian Church is uniquely suited to developing a new concept of "church" focused not on ritual, not on church buildings, not on Sunday school programs and fun raisers, but on prayer, meditation, reconciliation with family, and a charity which involves working to transform, not merely tossing money into a collection plate.

We can become a church which is too big—in spirit, if not in physical numbers—to be confined to a steepled building.

Dr. Patricia Basu is chair of the Education Support Unit and a member of the Royal Oak (Detroit) Swedenborgian Church.

And from Christine Laitner, (Michigan), chair of the Growth and Outreach Support Unit:

The Cabinet meeting . . . provided an unusual opportunity for representatives of each arm of our denomination to pause and reflect on the principles, practices and mission of the Swedenborgian Church in today's world . . . as chair of the Growth and Outreach Support Unit, I am pleased to have been a part of this time of dreaming and futuring for our church with each of these other representatives. This is the kind of vibrant, life-renewing activity which should be engaged in by members at regular intervals to keep the purpose of our church vital.

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The Identity of the Dream Maker

Wilson Van Dusen

I've worked with my own and clients' dreams for some decades and even did a commentary in Swedenborg's *Journal of Dreams*.¹ For some time I have remained suspended from any formulation of who or what The Dream Maker is, because neither I nor anyone else seemed to know. I've had a sudden illumination that is both simple and quite helpful in understanding dreams. Dreams are simply the Spirit of God within the person commenting on the present quality of their life together. A little background will help.

I am quite aware that unless one studies dreams they just seem to be a jumble of odd elements. Swedenborg took his dreams quite seriously and for a while they were his main way of learning from God. This alone should have given me the key. I long ago came to the same conclusion as the eminent Carl Jung that dreams are objective. A translation is that they can only tell the truth. But their truth is couched in a language so symbolic and unlike our usual thought processes that this natural wonder is concealed beneath this difficult language. It has also been clear now for decades that regardless of the gifts or lack of them in the individual, we all dream. Research has shown a national average near eight per night. Experiments in recent decades have also proved that it is essential that the individual dream. It is possible to stop all dreaming, but it leads in a matter of days to actively dreaming when awake, a process closely resembling psychosis. So we must dream, but we do not have to understand them. So here we all go through a natural wonder

whenever we sleep, a wonder during which we think in a rich symbolic language we do not understand, and a language that tells the truth of our lives. One of the things that puzzled me about the source of this wonder was its very richness. A single dream element often has multiple and even possibly infinite meanings. Another thing that left me puzzled was the apparently different viewpoints in the dream. We easily identify ourselves in a dream, but I was aware

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The language of dreams operates from a realm in which all things are related.
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that all other things in the dream are also the dreamer. Confusing. Even Swedenborg, working at the very dawn of understanding dreams, knew everything in the dream was of him. I knew enough to be puzzled as to how this natural wonder takes place. But now, after looking a long while, it is perfectly clear to me. Dreams are the Spirit within commenting on the present shared life of the individual and the Spirit. I need to elaborate on this formulation because of its startling ramifications.

Who is the Spirit within? By whatever terms it is the God within. One might call this Christ or the Holy Spirit, or the Higher Self. It is quite other than what we would normally call our ego or self. This God within more than shares our life, it is also the source of our life and Life itself. This Christ self not only looks at and comments on one's present life, but is also involved in it, suffering through it with the dreamer.

Why the mysterious language of dreams? That is simple. This is the language of the God within. More than that, it reflects something of the nature of the God within. The language of dreams operates from a realm in which all things are related. So a hand is not simply a hand. It also can represent all a person does. Its expressive qualities can represent all the longings and desires of a person. Or it can equal handy, nearby, at hand, one's helpmate, etc. The Spirit within operates from a realm in which all elements are known in each thing. Hence its fantastic capacity to represent. And, a single dream element can have multiple and even an infinite number of meanings. Its capacity to represent is that great.

There are a number of corollary implications in this. The process of the God within responding appears to be profoundly natural and universal. All humans dream, and evidence suggests that animals do too. If we could ever find the biochemical or electrical equivalence to dreaming in plants, I would not be surprised to find that plants also dream. The God within is within all life. Is this God within trying to communicate

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Dream Maker

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with us? Well, yes and no. No matter how dense we are about dreams, spirit won't come down to our level, but will continue to produce eight or so dreams nightly in its own language, most of which are casually forgotten. There is powerful evidence that we must dream, but there is no requirement that we understand dreams. That's why I said the Spirit within reacts in dreams without implying this was necessarily a message for our benefit. It becomes a message to us only when we see its import. It seems like nonsense until then.

We've known now for decades that the dream is a somewhat gifted and lofty view of our own life. Each dream is like a daily paper devoted to us. Each is the current response of the Life within to our life. What is reacting must be intimately participating in our life, hence it easily makes references that we have to puzzle out to even recognize. Last night I dreamed I was carrying around a little turtle that I wanted to feed. According to the widely accepted principal, which even Swedenborg followed, I am also the little turtle. We are all aspects of the dream. I sleep all covered up, with an eyeshade on and a towel over my head, and lie there puzzled how am I a turtle! Compared to the Spirit of man that carries me around I feel small, helpless and turtle slow. Spirit participates in our life, hence the language is full of personal references. I believe Swedenborg's language of correspondences is of the same nature as dream language except that it is a deeper archetypal language whereas our dreams have more personal elements.

I was puzzled for a long while over the different points of view in a dream. Now it is clear. There are essentially two points of view in the dream. One is the dreamer's own. This is easily recognized. It feels familiar to the dreamer. The other viewpoint is that of the Spirit within. It is often loftier; it leads, teaches, comments. If you simply look for the higher point of view you've found the Spirit within, while the lower is one's own. It is like a comment from an expert who really

knows us. He reflects subtly and intimately where we are and then tries to lead to something higher or better.

Let me illustrate with a dream. I am in a school. I have difficulty finding out what is required of me. I have difficulty reaching the head teacher but I find a secretary who is in the know. The requirements boil down to one paper that is required. How long, what kind? As I inquire, I find out that essentially if I demonstrate understanding I will pass. The two aspects are the worried student and the person who has the answers. The higher aspect is easy to spot. It has to be the person in the know. What is occurring in the dialogue? The worried student (me) is concerned to do it right and pass. The person in the know leads the student to see that basically there are no

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*Each dream
is like
a daily paper
devoted to us.*
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"Mickey Mouse" requirements. If I demonstrate understanding of the material I will be accepted. I can easily recognize the fretful student who wants to get the requirements right as myself. I am relieved when I learn what the person in the know has to say. It is the kind of ultimate challenge I prefer. Why am I not speaking to the teacher? I consider the real teacher as God the Father, who is elsewhere. The person in the know is the Spirit within, the one at a lower level, close to my life. But they are the same. The one elsewhere is also the one in the know close to my life. Swedenborg often refers to this one as an angel, but if you look closely at angels, they are messengers from God and are representative of God. Identifying the Dream Maker and what he is up to has made the process of understanding dreams far easier. Look at the dream as a dialogue of a higher aspect and a lower one. The higher is the Spirit within

and you are the lower.

Either the self or the Spirit within can appear as one's own self in the dream or be projected out as some other. In the turtle dream I appear to be the one carrying the turtle and worrying about feeding it. But the higher aspect in the dream is the one carrying the turtle and concerned to feed it. The part I could recognize as really me was the little turtle. The real me was projected as the turtle. In the second dream the lower aspect of the dream was me the student worrying. The higher aspect was projected out as the person who had the answers. The hardest thing for people to recognize is themselves projected out as other people or things. Look for elements that feel familiar. It was a kind of spiritual joke that I lay in bed with my head all covered up trying to recognize the turtle.

Also get used to the idea that the comments on you by the Spirit can range all the way from sharply critical, to kind and gentle and even humorous. It is very like meeting a real person, but one who knows you better than you know yourself.

The theology of the dream is very human. If someone asked what aspect of theology does the dream best exemplify, I would have to say incarnation. It is very much of Someone in our life, who participates in it, who remembers subtle aspects better than we do, and yet reflects a higher realm. This is the implication of Spirit within. Of our life and yet from beyond it. I should have seen this long ago. All people who have worked seriously with dreams come to see them as objective or true. So why had it not occurred to me that there is only one possible source of infallible truth? But you see, I am turtle slow.

The Spirit within is expressing how it feels about this life that it is embedded in. For instance, I had a day in which I got countless things done and felt very successful. That night I dreamt I was caught in an endless maze of circumstances and problems and never reached the essential. Though I felt successful, the Spirit within felt held back from essentials. Knowing now it is the Spirit's response, I take the message quite

(Continued on page 189)

A Farewell Memoir



Edwin G. Capon

I began my life as a minister in February 1948, when I moved from my family home in Newton, Massachusetts, to Bridgewater, Massachusetts, to serve as student minister to the Swedenborgian Church there. As a student I had already preached in Providence, Rhode Island, Roxbury and Mansfield, Massachusetts, and in Kitchener, Ontario, but not as acting minister in charge. Now I had the full responsibility of a parish, even though I was still going to school several days a week. I remember vividly my feelings of elation as I walked the streets of Bridgewater that first winter; my 1931 Pontiac would never start in cold weather.

I served the Bridgewater Church until September 1951 and was ordained there in October of 1949. But I began serving the Elmwood Church also in the fall of '49, preaching there until 1955. For two years I had a Sunday service at Elmwood at 9:45 and another at Bridgewater at 11:15. Fortunately the two churches were only three or four miles apart and I could use the same sermon.

From 1955 to 1977 I spent most of my time as president of the Swedenborg School of Religion, serving as interim minister in Brockton two years, in Boston one year, and at some point in Elmwood again. I became part-time minister in Manchester, New Hampshire in 1971 and preached there twice a month until the Spring of '77. Then two years full time in the Detroit Swedenborgian Church before coming to San Francisco in 1979. During 11 of these years I was Chairman of Convention's Council of Ministers.

Each of my churches was different.

Bridgewater was a small semi-rural New England college town with a well-established Swedenborgian Church, a bit on the conservative side. I did a lot of calling and got to know some wonderful people. I will never forget, when I announced my resignation at a church committee meeting, Hermon Wheeler saying, "You know, Edwin, we love you."

Elmwood was smaller than Bridgewater, one of several villages in the town of East Bridgewater. Mine was the only church in the village and I thought of the whole village as my parish. I was no longer preaching to a congregation where everyone had a background in our doctrines, but I continued to make Swedenborg's understanding of the Christian religion central to what I had to say, though trying to do so in terms anyone could understand. It was thrilling to have over 160 in church my last Easter Sunday.

Filling in in Brockton and Boston kept me in practice, but I did not again develop a real pastoral relationship with a congregation until my Manchester, New Hampshire days. A small former German-speaking church of mostly mill workers welcomed me as warmly as I could have hoped for and made it difficult for me to think of myself as either part-time or interim. Esther and I still visit as often as we can. It was in their little church that we were married.

I fear I was not in Detroit long enough to have strong memories of it, though again we got to know some great people. I had hesitated to go there because the Detroit church was considered one of our more conservative churches and I believe I was

thought of as a liberal. But I think we got along fine together. I left after two years only because the pulpit of this San Francisco church looked so attractive. And now—after 11 years—I am retiring from the full-time ministry.

I heard a story once about another minister and his farewell sermon. He had been serving a small country church where the salary hardly afforded him a living. Now he was going as a chaplain to the state penitentiary, where the state would pay him. His text—for that farewell sermon—was John 14:2: "I go to prepare a place for you."

In all my years in the ministry I have always been grateful that I am a Swedenborgian minister. Our denomination may be small and our problems many, but in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg we have a treasure beyond measure. Though we share with other denominations the Word of God, it sometimes seems as if the Word of God has created as many problems as it has solved. I will not suggest that there are no others who have plumbed its depths; for me at least there is no one else who has pointed to the truth in God's Word as he has. We are a church with a difference and that difference is that we approach the Word of God with the help of Swedenborg.

When I was a theological student, I chose to attend a seminary sponsored by two denominations, the Congregational and the Baptist, in addition to our own seminary. I am very grateful for what I learned there. But I remember being struck by the fact that most of my fellow

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Farewell Memoir

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students did not have the firm foundation in Christian faith that my Swedenborgian upbringing had given me.

I know there are others who believe they have been given the inside track on what the Bible means or says, so I'd like to share with you what in Swedenborg's interpretation of the Bible's message means the most to me.

What comes most quickly to mind is Swedenborg's insistence that truth is its own authority and that we must be free to recognize its authority for ourselves, freely applying our own understanding to the task. We are never asked to believe blindly. We are never asked to believe because someone else says so—or the church says so—or even Swedenborg says so.

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*God's love
is unlimited
and will
do for us
whatever
we will
permit Him
to do.*

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Probably more important than Swedenborg's teaching about a kind

of spiritual academic freedom is his emphasis on the nature of God as love. Of course, any of us can read in the Bible that God is love, but many Christians seem to find ways to substantially qualify this love so as to virtually eliminate it. God may love us, but He can't afford to forgive us. God may love us, but evil cannot go unpunished. God may love us, but He cannot allow himself to be slighted or treated with disrespect. His love is really quite limited. At least that's what some Christians seem to believe. But for Swedenborg, God's love is unlimited and will do for us whatever we will permit Him to do and whatever will be for our true prospering. We need never fear Him, but only our own lack of receptiveness.

That God is thus loving leads inevitably to another teaching that means much to me, the teaching that all people are to be loved and that the Lord does not limit the path to Him to one way or even to a few ways. There is no one mold for the making of persons fitted to live with God in heaven. Light in varying degrees has been made available to people of all races and colors everywhere. Those who do not come to know Christ in this life are not automatically without hope in the next. The everlasting arms are not only beneath us; they are open wide for all.

I am glad that the teachings I cherish are directed not primarily to my behavior but to my growth as a person. Becoming is more important than doing. Character is what counts, not exemplary behavior. In fact, mistakes may contribute to my growth as much as right actions, though that would never justify intentional mistakes.

And lastly, I am glad to be presented with a picture of heaven that is realistic and at the same time appealing. And open to all who would enjoy it. So many concepts of heaven look to external rewards, to happiness that comes from without. Swedenborg sees the true source of happiness and heavenly joy as the development of an inner capacity to find reward in loving service and relationship. We all know that people with everything can be unhappy

and may even envy people who seem to know how to be happy with very little. Heaven is for people who have learned to be happy the right way, whether they have been rich or poor in this life.

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*The
everlasting
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not only
beneath us;
they are
open wide
for all.*

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The rewards I have had in my life as a minister have been in large part the result of being able to set forth Swedenborg's teachings in my sermons, in classes, in informal conversation, and in working with people at such significant times in their lives as marriage, death, broken relationships and uncertainty of direction. I am grateful to have been able to work among you in this parish these 11 years. I appreciate the good words many of you have said to me. I will miss much when I leave, but I think I have made the right choice.

The Rev. Edwin G. Capon, senior minister of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church for 11 years, retired in June 1990. The above was his farewell sermon to the San Francisco congregation.

Dynamics in Prayer

John Billings

I'd like to talk about prayer. And I'd also like to talk about our *feelings* about prayer. Specifically, all the feelings each one of us might have around the act of praying. At this very moment, if you were in a good discussion group where you felt safe and secure and were asked to talk about those feelings, what would they be? Shyness? Comfort? Unpleasantness of some kind? Joy? Shame? Relief? Intimidation? Warmth? In other words, I am *not* talking about what we think about prayer, or the act of prayer when we do it. Thinking is very different from feelings. I want to talk about our feelings, some of which may be uncomfortable for us to admit to ourselves, let alone actually feel.

And I am especially not concerned with what we think we *ought* to feel about it, whether that be a good feeling, a humble feeling, or whatever. I'm talking about all the feelings we in fact actually have—no matter what they might be. My thesis is that many, if not most, of us sit on top of a veritable mountain of feelings around this subject of prayer and praying, whether we are aware of it or not. And a secondary notion is that investigating those feelings can be a very worthwhile thing to do, assuming we have the right kind of community-friends to do that with.

Just because someone prays a lot, either privately or aloud in public, doesn't necessarily mean anything either. Ministers, for example, may have especially lost touch with their

feelings about prayer and praying simply because they—unfortunately—have become their congregation's official pray-er. It has always mystified me somewhat how this part of our institutionalized religion got going (it's probably a leftover from the representative-church days!) and even more so why it continues. This practice alone suggests to me that people have feelings that make them resistant to prayer and praying. At any rate it seems very un-Swedenborgian to me, given our understanding of the Lord's availability to all of us without any kind of intervening hierarchy. Personally it suggests to me a general problem with our spirituality as a denomination; a kind of spiritual dysfunction. And I think the source of the dysfunction is our inability to explore compassionately and wisely our own feelings about prayer and praying. If anyone intends to explore their feelings I would recommend that they get ready to experience some discomfort—if that's what is there to experience. And that is not too big a price to pay for gaining (regaining?) a wonderful resource for enhancing and enriching our life.

Let me emphasize again that just because someone might not demonstrate their feelings about prayer and praying, this does not mean they don't have any. Many people are out of touch with their feelings around many subjects and prayer is certainly no exception. The deeper the subject, the more likely we are to be out of touch with it, generally, and it

will be the first casualty if we're shut down emotionally. The people most out of touch with their feelings that I have worked with in counseling almost invariably say they know little or nothing about God, let alone prayer which has been long gone for decades in their life, if it ever existed at all! Interestingly enough, love is also gone! All kinds of love, but especially love in their families and within their marriages. Sad to say, this lack is also often the case with ministers and their families and marriages. They should really be the most deeply sexual of all where more spiritual love and sex come together, warming and brightening with its afterglow and deepened sense of humanity. Or at least heading in that direction. Have I touched a nerve here? At any rate, all these matters are fundamentally issues of feeling or affection and therefore of central relevance to spirituality.

One of the implications here is that there are very good reasons, indeed, why we would have a lot of feelings around this subject. I think we all know, especially with our idea of God as Divine Love and *Wisdom*, that you just don't get past God—at any time, under any circumstances, for any reason—period. When we pray, therefore, to that Source, we in effect are penetrating our own defenses to one degree or another, and that has a tendency to liberate our feelings. This, I believe, is the fundamental source of *resistance* to more authentic kinds of praying—

(Continued on page 188)

Opinion

Here's How They Run

To the Editor:

In the October *Messenger Rev.* Steve Pults did a great service for the nominating committee which I would like to publicly thank him for and underscore its importance for our membership. As chair of the nominating committee, I agree with his statement that it is beneficial for our church to have an ever-widening representation in our elected positions. This is exactly what this committee tries to do every year. We also urge those who wish to seek office and are not selected to be on our slate to place their names in nomination on the floor of convention. This is what elections are all about!

The nominating committee is currently at work determining a slate of names for presentation at next summer's convention. I urge anyone in our church who is interested in serving our church to let me know. We are extending the deadline for suggestions to January 20, 1991. As I am currently in transition to my new pastorate in Kitchener, please forward suggestions for the nominating committee to: Attention Nominating Committee, Swedenborgian Church Central Office, 48 Sargent St., Newton, MA 02158.

I also wish to address several errors in Mr. Pults' statements concerning elected offices within the national body and offer a bit of statistical information for the benefit of our members.

First, the only offices in our denomination that do not have limits on the number of terms an individual may serve are those of recording secretary, treasurer, vice-president, CAM members and the two nominees to the SSR board of trustees. All other positions are limited to two consecutive three-year terms. If a member of our church sees the need to limit the length of service in these other offices, then that individual should propose an amendment to our constitution.

Secondly, the nominating committee is charged with the responsibility of presenting a slate of candidates for consideration by the delegates at con-

vention. Only one office, that of the nominating committee member, must have two candidates. Our responsibility is to offer this slate, not to offer a choice. This responsibility lies with our membership. Nominations from the floor are welcome, encouraged, and good for the church. Our slate is published in *The Messenger* prior to convention so that local churches may discuss it and offer to their delegates other names to be nominated from the floor. Perhaps more churches need to do this. But with five years' experience on the nominating committee, I would oppose any effort to require us to provide additional nominees. It is already a very difficult task!

Thirdly, the nominating committee places a very high priority on balancing our representation to keep that "inner circle" from forming. Our membership might be interested in learning the following information:

In terms of representation from our associations, elected positions currently break down as follows. This is based upon where individuals now live and includes two people who are ineligible for reelection (Fran McIntosh for General Council and myself on the nominating committee).

Pacific Coast (PC)	8 elected offices
Mid Atlantic (MAAt)	5 elected offices
Massachusetts (MA)	5 elected offices
Ohio (OH)	4 elected offices
Michigan (MI)	4 elected offices
Canada (CA)	3 elected offices
Kansas (KA)	3 elected offices
Southeast (SE)	2 elected offices
Maine (ME)	2 elected offices
Illinois (IL)	2 elected offices
New York (NY)	1 elected office
Western Canada (WC)	1 elected office

A current breakdown by Support Units and other bodies is as follows:

General Council (including officers)		
MA-3	SE-1	PC-2
OH-2	WC-1	CA-1
NY-1	MAAt-1	ME-1

(Support Units have three elected members)

COMSU—	MAAt, PC, IL
EDSU—	ME, MI, IL
FPRSU—	KS, PC, MAAt
GOSU—	MI, PC, MI
IMSU—	MA, PC, MA
PMSU—	MAAt, CA, OH (Canada as of 1/91)

Nom Com	OH (off 91),
	PC, KS, MAAt, SE
CAM—	CA, PC
SSR BOT—	KS, MS (two nominated from Convention)

Of these 40 elected positions, one will definitely be going off (Fran), and three are incumbents eligible for re-election (Howard Torpey, Lorene Lederer and Martha Richardson). I also urge our members to remember that Support Units have only three elected members! This does not leave much latitude in balancing expertise in the field, experience on the unit, and geographical representation. But the nominating committee tries its best to achieve this in our slate, and the high number of first-timers indicates to me that we have succeeded.

It is also good to know some other information about our elected office holders. In these positions we have exactly a 20-20 male—female ratio. Also, 11 ministers currently serve in elected positions. The breakdown is as follows:

General Council:	6 women, 7 men, (4 ministers)
COMSU:	2 women, 1 man
EDSU:	3 women, (1 minister)
FPRSU:	3 men (a minister)
GOSU:	1 woman, 2 men (1 minister)
IMSU:	1 woman, 2 men (1 minister)
PMSU:	1 woman, 2 men (1 minister)
Nom Com:	2 men, 3 women (2 ministers, 1 going off)
CAM:	1 male minister, 1 woman
SSR BOT:	2 women, other members elected by the corporation

Our members will benefit for knowing this information so that opinions about those in office can be based on fact rather than on assumptions. Also, in considering our slate, we are aware of and follow the constitutional limit on terms. Currently, all elected members to our Support Units are eligible for reelection since no one has served two consecutive three-year terms. This does not mean that they will be nominated, but addresses only their eligibility.

I hope that this information will assist our members in offering suggestions for people to serve and in evaluating our proposed slate out there who is willing to serve in an elected capacity, let the nominating committee know! Please!

Ronald Brugler,
1990 Nominating Committee Chair

Opinion

Should Role of SACC be Debated?

To The Editor:

The following is an excerpt from the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held at The Central Office in October:

5. Pat (Basu) reported an Education Support Unit proposal for substantial expansion in work of Children and Family Ministries. New Church Youth League (NCYL) reports continued growth in participation by teenagers. She described difficulties in communicating with Social Action Concerns Committee (SACC), and sought cabinet direction—either reassignment of SACC to another support unit, granting it support unit status of its own, or authority to regulate it. Discussion centered on the *inappropriateness (Italics mine)* of a unit of the national church undertaking active advocacy of a position which is not shared (or known to be shared) by a significant majority of the members. Education is more appropriate than advocacy.

It was moved, seconded and voted: Cabinet reaffirms its earlier decision to deny the request to establish SACC as a Support Unit, at least until after completion of the review of the new organization of Convention.

Further discussion concerned the proper role of SACC in the life of the church.

It was moved, seconded and voted: Recognizing the Swedenborgian Church's vital concern with social issues, the cabinet affirms EDSU's position that the Social Action Concerns Committee is an educational arm of the church to inform us on social action issues, not an advocacy group for one position. As such, it belongs under the jurisdiction of EDSU.

I strongly protest these actions of the cabinet, for the following reasons:

1. This action was taken at a time when SACC was going through a change of leadership. SACC's founder

and chairperson, Rev. Susan Turley-Moore, had resigned and I had been asked to become the new chairperson. I was, at the time of the cabinet meeting, awaiting confirmation of my appointment from EDSU. (I received confirmation of my appointment in the same phone call that informed me of the unfortunate actions of the cabinet, and after much thought declined to chair SACC as I felt I could better protest the cabinet action as a private member of the Swedenborgian Church.)

Clearly the Cabinet and EDSU acted at a time and in a fashion that did not permit the importance of the advocacy role of SACC to be debated. If SACC has no advocacy role, how can it encourage the Swedenborgian Church to take a stand, either for or against the SACC advocated position? If we do not take stands on the controversial issues of our times how can we be stewards of the kingdom? We are slated to vote at the next convention on the issue of the death penalty. SACC's advocacy against the death penalty has been debated in the church now for over two years, I know of no damage to the church from this debate. I think that the debate has been helpful to all of us who wish to investigate the underlying theology structure of our beliefs, whatever our position may be. I wonder how many people have changed their opinions as a result of the debate and have therefore found it useful in their own spiritual growth process.

A. Does this action of the Cabinet also mean that it objects to our delegation to the National Council of Churches of Christ voting on controversial issues, because in so doing they would be advocating positions as a unit within the Swedenborgian Church, positions that were not known to be shared by a *significant majority* of the

members?

B. Does the cabinet intend to define *significant majority*? Does it mean 51, 66, 75, or 100 percent? How does it propose that this be determined, by vote of the delegates at convention, or by letter vote of the whole membership?

2. The action taken by the Cabinet regarding Support Unit status for SACC was high handed to say the very least. I had intended to make a strong case for Support Unit status as chairperson of SACC. As I was not given the opportunity before the cabinet reaffirmed their past position, I will briefly state my case here.

A. I think that it is vitally important to make SACC an elected committee rather than a self-perpetuating committee if it is to function within the constitution and tradition of the Swedenborgian Church. This also makes SACC accountable to the membership of the Swedenborgian Church through its delegates each year at our convention.

B. If the Swedenborgian Church really has a vital concern with social issues, then the committee concerned with this aspect of church life should have direct access to the Cabinet so that it can have equal representation with other lobbying groups within the church.

C. I believe that SACC could function more effectively, if it had access to the budget process, so that it could assist local and regional organizations in their efforts to become active in the social action and concerns arena.

I ask that the Swedenborgian Church debate this issue openly and decide what the future of SACC is to be.

*Carl Yenetchi
Rancho Palos Verdes, California*

The Family Connection

Family Ministry Newsletter and Resources

The Rev. Dr. Ted Klein, director of the children and family ministry under our Education Support Unit, sent out the first issue of the *Family Ministry Newsletter* in November 1990. It is intended to encourage exploring, sharing and networking in the areas of family communication, parenting, partner relationships, dysfunctional families, and recovery. Two or three per year are planned, with a current mailing list of 50 to 60 persons. The following family resource suggestions are reprinted from the November newsletter:

How To Find Resources

Many good resources are paperback books that can be found in, or ordered from, local bookstores. One excellent center for family ministry resources is the Stone House Book Room, 16244 Cleveland Street, Redmond, WA 98052, 206-882-0272. Another is Life Cycle Learning, 1320 Centre Street, Suite 305, Newton, MA 02159, 800-962-9992. I am building a collection of lending resources and am also learning about individuals and centers willing to lend resources (for example, some churches will lend or rent the Bradshaw videotape series on the family). Please contact me if you have resources to lend, or a wish to borrow.

Reviews Of Resources

Stephanie Marston. *Parenting for High Self Esteem*. 3 Audiotapes. Available from: Miracles Educational Services, Attn.: Stephanie Marston, 870 Galloway Street, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272-3847. These tapes present ways to build loving and nurturing relationships with children, encouraging children to develop their unique talents. Suggestions are given for helping children to accept feelings and ex-

press feelings in a healthy way. Steps are outlined for how to "discipline with love." The approach is warm, clear, and specific in its outlining of learning steps for parents. In responding to these suggestions parents can learn to be patient both with their children and with themselves.

Carl Metzger. *The Good Parenting Guide*. Book. Available from: MAC Publishing, 5005 E. 39th St., Denver, Colorado 60207, 909-331-0149. This book presents brief sections on a wide variety of parenting issues. A few of the many sections are *Anger in Children, Alcohol Use, Adolescents, Bullying, Death Questions, Sex Questions, and Teasing*. Each section has a brief discussion of the issue, and suggestions on what to do and what not to do.

John Bradshaw. *Bradshaw on: The Family*. 10 Videotapes. Available from: Bradshaw Cassettes, P.O. Box 980547, Houston, TX 77098, 713-529-9437.

John Bradshaw. *Bradshaw on: The Family*. Book. Available from: Health Communications, Inc., Enterprise Center, 3201 Southwest 15th Street, Deerfield Beach, FL 33442. Both tapes and book illustrate or explain how a person is shaped by a family system. Healthy family relationships are contrasted with dysfunctional family interactions. Different kinds of dysfunctions, their impact, and how people can heal from their impact is presented. Bradshaw effectively illustrates the need to break the family system chains in order to begin healing.

Claudia Black. *It Will Never Happen to Me*. Book. Available from: Ballantine Books, Dept. 7A, 201 E. 50th St., New York, NY 10022.

Claudia Black. *Don't Talk, Don't Trust, Don't Feel*. 4 Audiotapes. Available from: Hazelden, Pleasant

Valley Road, Box 176, Center City, MN 55012-0176. These resources describe what it is like to grow up in an alcoholic home: how children grow up in denial of their needs to talk, trust, and feel, and how "adult children" continue as adults to follow patterns learned as children. Suggestions for healing and recovery are offered. Especially recommended for adult children of alcoholics.

Charles Whitfield *Healing the Child Within*. Book. Available from: Health Communications, Inc., Enterprise Center, 3201 Southwest 15th Street, Deerfield Beach, FL 33442. Describes how a defensive or false self is dominant when people grow up in dysfunctional families, and presents a recovery program which involves discovering and healing the true self or Child Within. *The Child Within* is loving, giving, compassionate, and expressive.

Erika J. Chopich and Margaret Paul. *Healing Your Aloneness*. Book. Available from: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 10 East 53rd Street, New York, NY 10022. Describes an Inner Child and Inner Adult as parts of us, and shows how important it is for the Inner Adult to love the Inner Child. When the Inner Child is abandoned, a person may fall into addictions and efforts to control others. When the Inner Adult loves the Inner Child, the person is in wholeness. Illustrates how persons can strengthen the connection between their Inner Adult and Inner Child, and how this is vital for connecting with others.

Suggestions, reviews, and comments, ideas and contributions are welcome! Write to: The Rev. Dr. Ted Klein, Children's and Family Ministry, 48 Sargent Street, Newton, MA 02158, 617-244-0504.

Movie Review

The Wizard of Oz Revisited

Susanne Lorraine

I would like to share a few observations about a movie I watched recently to give an example of the kinds of inner meaning that can be observed and analyzed in a Hollywood version of life. In a movie familiar to all, "The Wizard of Oz", I was struck by the correspondences of the physical attributes of the characters to their inner state. The scarecrow, who longs for a brain (rationally), is flexible, clumsy but caring, "feeling" his way through the world. Yet even while complaining of his lack of intellect, he comes up with most of the ideas and leads them on to Oz. The Tin Man, who longs for a heart (emotion) is stiff and solid in his tightly contained tin shell which rusts when it rains or he cries. He cares for and watches over Dorothy, protecting her unflinchingly. These two characters seem to be acting with exactly the attributes they feel to be missing because they are not physically apparent. The lion, who at first appears with the natural ferocity of his species, is exposed by Dorothy to be a coward underneath. The need to integrate the inner and outer self, dominant and recessive characteristics, is operative in all of them. Therein lies the universal spiritual quest, to bring feeling and thinking into balance in action so that we are truly ourselves. The enduring appeal of this movie lies in its representation of the regenerative process as each of the characters finds inner balance by developing what was already within them. Any other insights? Dorothy? Toto? Wicked Witch? Anyone?

Susanne Lorraine is a member of the Portland, Maine, Swedenborgian Church. This review is reprinted from the church's newsletter.

In Memory of Rev. Yuzo Noda

(September 21, 1942 - October 26, 1990)

Ivan Franklin

On October 29, 1990 early in the morning Akiko Noda called me from Tokyo to tell me that her husband and my most beloved friend and colleague Yuzo passed away October 26. In the rainbow of my tears these grateful memories began to sparkle:

In April 1969 we met for the first time in the Swedenborg School of Religion where he and Akiko lived on the same floor. Yuzo's study was beside mine in the library. One late evening he joined me and, with his charming smile, said: "I am very happy that you are here because I do not feel so lonely." I am still ashamed that I did not understand what 'lonely' meant. My 'Japanese English' was even worse than American English. Yes, he was glad that he had not to *feel lonely*. With him on this planet I never had to 'fear loneliness': Akiko, Yuzo, Kinuka and Kaori with their radiant hospitality and musical love 'made all my days.'

One Sunday in May 1969, when Yuzo generously and very willingly was taking us to the Newtonville Church, an old lady, a retired teacher, was riding with us. In the church, she almost knocked me down with her cane and these very hostile words: "I don't want to hear you speaking about your native country! I wouldn't believe a word. I have a friend who is a professor at a university who visits Russia almost every year and I trust in what he has to say: there is freedom and good life in the Soviet Union!" I was stunned. This was a real "culture" shock. Yuzo put his finger to his lips behind her back and winked at me. Later he whispered, "Don't take her seriously. She doesn't know that her professor couldn't go there so often if he told the truth, especially to such talkative ladies." The same day he learned from me a new word—*empathy*. He loved the sound of it and what it meant. Because this is exactly what he was able to enjoy until the last minutes of his life. We spent some precious time with his family in Tokyo and at Mount Fuji;

once he visited us on Okinawa where I was a U.S. Navy Commander in charge of psychiatric and alcohol care on the island. To watch him running like a little boy on the beach gathering shells, and then his awe when he contemplated the unbelievable variety of colors and shapes of these fruits of the sea, was a feast for our eyes and hearts. He introduced us to a Buddhist bishop in Kyoto, to his professor-friend in Tokyo, and visited a psychiatric clinic with us where we met my Japanese colleagues and their clients. Yuzo's Horizon Center was a real haven of peace with love and wisdom. I spoke with many of his clients and friends; their sorrow is deep and I empathize with much grief.

In May, 1990, Yuzo wrote to me: "Dear Ivan! I feel very much empathy and sympathy with your situation and I have no words to soothe your pain and sorrow. But this suffering might be the new leap in God's grace for your process of growth and regeneration in the realm of 'Beyond our perception' for I got so precious things from my suffering and pain, which is still going on . . . right now only my right eye functions. In dealing with my situation, I believe strongly, there must be the divine will (Providence) in any sorrow, since God governs us in all. My words might sound cold and insensitive to you, but this has been the only way I could overcome my suffering . . . with daily pain since last September . . . My situation is still somewhat serious and it might take more time than we think. I hope your situation will be better when I hear you next time . . . I am writing at my hospital room in Tokyo. God be with us together. Yuzo."

Now I have all the reasons to call him an angel of empathy. I believe all his spiritual children and an endless line of grieving friends agree with me.

The Rev. Dr. Ivan Franklin has a Czech-Russian Outreach ministry in Santa Barbara, California.

Swedenborg Foundation Director Bids Farewell



Dear Friends,

Since 1988 I have been affiliated with the Swedenborg Foundation. Through my work as executive director, it has been a pleasure to meet and toil alongside many of you in projects related both to the Swedenborgian Church and the Foundation.

Recently I was appointed manager of assembly arrangements for the Presbyterian Church (USA), which will require a move to Louisville, Kentucky, and bring an end to our daily working relationship. While it is difficult to say farewell, I am grateful for the opportunities we were afforded to become acquainted and participate in one another's lives.

My tenure proved to be a productive era in which together we sought ways to promote Swedenborg and his thought. With a cooperative spirit we have been able to place *A Continuing Vision* and *Chrysalis* in many U.S. seminary and university libraries. Ties have been forged which will enhance both the Foundation's outreach efforts and the Communication Support Unit's work in the future. These and other initiatives offer much promise.

I wish you well in your endeavors to introduce Swedenborg to others. The affection I hold for you is genuine and will serve as a bond between us in the family of God.

Shalom,

Kerry Clements, Executive Director
Swedenborg Foundation

Opinion

Who is the Neighbor?

To the Editor:

If our church is to grow and become a vital force in the last decade of the twentieth century, it must complement the intellectual elitism that proved so effective in the nineteenth and first decade of the twentieth centuries with a greater concern for the hopes, fears and desires of the great mass of common people—the unchurched and only nominally church-affiliated.

Every Swedenborgian Society can reach out to its immediate neighbors in a unique way of understanding, compassion, spiritual health and support.

If located in a business district, the sanctuary can be kept open for meditation and prayer during the noon hour every weekday.

It can maintain contact with social service agencies and be prepared to refer.

It can visit and comfort the neighborhood sick and bereaved.

It can cordially welcome the casual visitor, no matter how unattractive or poorly clad.

It can recognize the endemic neighborhood disorders and prepare a leaflet dealing with the problem with understanding, compassion, hope and healing. The availability and distribution of the leaflet(s) is enhanced by regularly advertising the titles in a neighborhood newspaper.

While propinquity is basic in reaching out to the neighbor, even more basic are the free offerings of our own gifts of empathy, mercy, charity and love.

How long since you brought a friend or neighbor to share in our worship service or partake of our open communion?

The church is not simply a building in which a community of believers meet on Sunday to worship, be instructed and fraternize. The church ought to be a vibrant entity in which every member gives of their talent, time and energy during the week to reach out and serve the immediate neighbor, ever striving to bring the Lord's kingdom on earth.

Swedenborg's emphasis on use points the way to countless opportunities to serve our near neighbors, limited only by our ingenuity, dedication and resources. Many of our churches do this, more ought. To Doctrine teaches use is life.

One who needs and one who gives are neighbors.

Gustave Bischof
Lititz, Pennsylvania

Dynamics in Prayer

(Continued from page 183)

the kind that's personal and from the heart. And if it's not from the heart, it's not going to be heard anyway, so why even do it? And when it is from the heart, this is where our feelings get involved and threaten to show up, first to ourselves and then to others. It's always amazed me how I've hardly ever seen anyone cry in public in the act of prayer, when, in fact, nothing could be more appropriate. Who do we think we're praying to? Some nice person who may or may not have something to do with truth or love. In a moment of overstatement, but nonetheless with great truth involved, my daughter once said to me, "People would cry forever if they really knew the Lord." Read or meditate some time on just *some* of the incredible and astounding things Swedenborg has to say about the Lord. It's truly awesome. To be in even a minimum kind of dialogue with such a perceived Reality as that can stir levels of innocence and truthfulness within us we didn't even know existed! It's wonderful! But it can also sometimes be difficult. But that's ok. No one ever said regeneration was always going to be easy.

I'd like to recommend that, as a denomination, we cease all routine and expected prayer forms, and begin praying only from the heart, letting it flow out naturally and spontaneously *as it wants to come*. The Lord will probably hear more in our silences than He ever did in our other "prayers."

The Rev. John Billings is pastor of the Cleveland, Ohio, Swedenborgian Church.

Dream Maker

(continued from page 180)

seriously. I resolved to set aside time for quiet reflection. The Spirit was not satisfied with just doing things. This is a key point of the Spirit's reaction. One can feel the anguish, distress, and concerns of the Spirit and how they are almost of a whole other order than one's daily life and one's ordinary viewpoint.

I should carry the image a little further to speak of the most distressing of dreams, nightmares. Picture the person at total odds with the Spirit within. Then you get dreams in which the Spirit cries out in fear of death, spiritual death. This is extremely easy to reverse. I wish my practice was only of dreadful repetitive dreams and nightmares, for they are so easy to overcome. The repetitive dream says you are doing the same thing over and over. The slightest effort to read how you are wrong overcomes it. Similarly the nightmare is overcome by trying, even in the dumbest way, to understand the Spirit within. I'd have to say that we are free to disregard the pull of the Spirit within, but the prospects that way are quite poor. I emphasize in this that you are not required to be clever about this language of dreams, but that it is vital to try to understand it. The Spirit within knows better than we do the extent of our ignorance. The "right" or clever interpretation is not as important as the simple effort to understand. The process is profoundly human.

Like Swedenborg, when I finally see a message from God, as in the turtle dream, I am inclined to treasure the message I have received. I am not offended to be called a slow little turtle. Any message from my source is such a gift. Besides, the one carrying me was determined to feed me, and this understanding is the food I received. So this is the natural wonder of dreams we have been overlooking.

Reference

1. W. Van Dusen, *Swedenborg's Journal of Dreams*. Swedenborg Foundation, New York, 1986.

Commencements

Baptism

Malish—Arlyn Salenia Brooke Malish was baptized into the Christian faith June 24, 1990, at the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, Canada, the Rev. Henry Korsten officiating.

Confirmation

Olsen—David and Debbie Olsen were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church June 17, 1990, at the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, Canada, the Rev. Henry Korsten officiating.

Marriage

Borst and Ballantyne—Shawn Borst and Robert Ballantyne were united in marriage July 14, 1990, at the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, Canada, the Rev. Henry Korsten officiating.

Death

Mason—Eldon Mason, long-time member of the St. Louis church, entered the spiritual world October 2, 1990. A memorial service was conducted October 7, the Rev. David L. Rienstra officiating. Mr. Mason is survived by his wife, Alice, and daughters, Jean Lutz and Martha Mason.

Change of Address

The Swedenborgian Church of San Francisco has officially changed its mailing address from its entrance on Lyon Street to its offices around the corner on Washington Street. Please address all future correspondence to: The Swedenborgian Church, 3200 Washington St., San Francisco, CA 94115.

Gladys Wheaton's address in the *Mini-Journal* is incomplete. It should read: 1563 Solano Ave., #214. Berkeley, CA 94707. The Rev. Wheaton has an outreach ministry, the African-American Fellowship of the New Jerusalem, and she is no longer associated with the El Cerrito church.

Wilson Van Dusen was for many years the Chief Psychologist at Menocino State Hospital, California, where he pioneered his use of Swedenborg's dream interpretation in the presence of the spiritual world in the treatment of mentally ill patients. Van Dusen's book from that period of work, The Presence of Other Worlds, has been a best seller.

Journal of Dreams

Wilson Van Dusen provides an extensive commentary to Swedenborg's *Journal of Dreams* in an edition published in 1986 by the Swedenborg Foundation. Swedenborg was fifty-five years old when he set out in 1743 on a trip to Germany. As usual, he kept a journal of his travels. But the nature of the journal changed as he began to have dreams that affected him deeply. The commentary provided by Van Dusen helps us to understand Swedenborg's personal journey of transformation from scientist to seer.

The book is a 196-page paperback and available for \$8.95 from the Swedenborg Foundation by calling 1-800-366-7310.

The President Reports

Stone House Enters New Year Bursting at the Seams

This month I am sharing with you memories of my visit to the Stone House Bookroom and the Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound, Washington.

Here is a group that we can cheer about. New people! Growth! Bursting at the seams! Children! Enthusiasm!

The Stone House Bookroom has one large room filled with bookshelves and books. Two of the bookshelves are on wheels and can be moved out of the way for Sunday worship and for many of the programs conducted there. Other meetings and social activities are held in members' homes. The Saturday evening potluck supper and social

gathering was held in the apartment of one of the members, with 40 or more adults and children crowding in. All had a good time. I had the opportunity to meet the many recent newcomers—mostly young people, some with small children.

Church on Sunday morning was also filled to the brim. Again, about 40 adults and children crowded into the Stone House worship area and small kids' loft. Highlight of the service was a baptism of five, all from the same family. Now, 40 people may not seem like a lot, but the 40 or so at supper were not altogether the same 40 at church. Fifteen or more were different folks, since not all at the potluck were able to attend

church the next day. And this was fortunate because there would not have been enough room. Imagine that! One of our church groups not having enough room! What a challenge and opportunity.

Meeting with some of the church people after the service, I offered the help of our denomination in helping them take best advantage of the enthusiasm and vitality of this new emerging church.

We move into 1991 with the cup still, indeed, half full.

Peace,

Richard H. Tafel, Jr., President

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