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# The Messenger

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May 1992



*The World Mother*  
by Kathleen Fleming

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Our Cover: *The World Mother*, an oil painting by the late Kathleen Fleming, symbolizes the universal force of divine love that binds together all the children, mothers and people as citizens of the kingdom of God. A widely loved world citizen, the artist/poet, as a member of the Universal Link Group, lived and traveled extensively in the British Isles, India, France, Switzerland and the United States. In 1967 she gave *The World Mother* painting to New Church member Mark Roser of Beverly Shores, Indiana. It is currently displayed in the Planned Parenthood Association in Merrillville, Indiana.

## The Messenger

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## Moving Toward the Light

### Peace: A Look Within

*Guest Editorial by Carl E. Yenetchi*

It is now over a year since the Persian Gulf War "ended." The Soviet Union, which was for so long our "eternal" antagonist, no longer exists. In some senses we are now at peace as a nation but in many other ways we are as much at war as we were in 1991.

Several days ago gay and Lesbian marchers in Boston's St. Patrick's Day parade were pelted with cans and bottles; six people were arrested. I saw signs on the television news, carried by the attackers which read, "God Hates Fags." I wonder to what "god" they refer.

We are not a people at peace. We have always been able to find enemies to hate and to attack. I think that this will continue until we are able to find peace within ourselves. I believe we attack others when we see in them our own sins, or when we see in them virtues that we would like to be part of us but have not yet received.

In Isaiah 53:3-5 we read,

He was despised and forsaken of people. A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom people hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by his scourging we are healed.

The crucifixion of our Lord is to my mind the best example of the human tendency to attack what we want for ourselves. In Jesus, humanity was shown what could be accomplished by a person who had made himself fully forgiving and accepting of the beauty of humanity. We attacked because we saw within Jesus all that we knew we could be and were not. The only way to approach someone who demonstrates who we want to be and are not, without attacking them, is in humility. Those who approach Jesus in humility become disciples, those who approach Jesus without humility become crucifiers.

The "gay bashing" is a form of crucifixion. When people who are uncomfortable in their own sexuality are confronted by people who are comfortable declaring themselves, they attack because of their lack of humility, their lack of a willingness to learn and be taught.

Peace is basically an internal struggle. To find peace with others we need first to find it within ourselves. I believe the first purpose of religion is to help us to define ourselves so that we can be comfortable with others. Humility is a cornerstone of Christianity, a willingness to follow our Savior and to be taught by Jesus in our lives. In this practice we find peace by becoming disciples. When humility is lacking, when we are not comfortable being taught, we become crucifiers because we have no peace within ourselves. Jesus said from the cross, "Father, forgive

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(The following interview is a reprinted excerpt, slightly abridged, from *Expressions*, September/October 1990, St. Benedict Center, Madison, Wisconsin. Full text of the interview appeared in *U.S. Catholic*, September, 1988. Reprinted with permission.)

# Peace is Worth Getting Riled About

*Joan Chittister, OSB*

**If you had a choice between working for world peace or peace in your neighborhood, which would you choose?**

There's no such thing as a choice anymore—if there ever was. Perhaps when I was a child in the early '40s I could have made a better case for ignoring the world outside of my neighborhood. My parents and I drove from Pittsburgh to Du Bois, Pennsylvania for our annual vacation, and I thought of the trip as a major undertaking. As for flying across the country or jetting across the ocean or even phoning overseas—well, no one I knew had ever done it. In those days I looked at my neighborhood as the center of the universe.

In the early '40s we didn't have television yet, either. Even during World War II people learned about the war mostly from reading newspapers and listening to the radio. It was only in the 1950s that I could sit in the living room and watch war victims being killed during the 6 o'clock news.

We Americans live in a new world today. You didn't create it, nor did I; yet we're trying to act as if we lived in another, more innocent period of time. At the same time, the whole Christian tradition opposes this isolationist attitude.

Look at the Psalms, for instance.

Whenever you pray the Psalms, you are praying for local, national and global peace. That's because the psalmist wasn't just concerned about the neighbors or the king; the psalmist prayed for the world at large. As a Benedictine, I pray and study the Psalms every day and, in fact, use them as a model for prayers for peace. If you steep yourself in the Psalms every day you won't be satisfied with a view of peace that excludes the world outside your neighborhood.

**What could I—as only one person—do for world peace today?**

Do you own a postcard? You could send it to your legislator and ask about his or her voting record. Ask a question or two—that's one of the most subversive actions you can take. You might want to ask, "Why are you voting this way? Why with my tax money? Why are you putting my children and yours in danger? Why are you threatening our planet?" And don't disregard the power of conversation, of one honest question or statement in any social gathering.

The most current, in-depth research available indicates that there is a great social power when even one person says, "No, I object."

We Americans talk very eloquently

about personal freedom and rugged individualism, yet when was the last time you heard someone speak the truth at great personal risk?

**Isn't part of peacemaking just keeping the conversation open?**

That depends on the conversation. When bureaucrats discussed the best way to transport Jews to Germany so they could be gassed, it didn't matter whether they came up with the "right" solution or not. Just to discuss the situation made it conceivable as a normal, everyday activity . . . when I point out, clearly and simply, that a particular conversation or activity is wrong, I may not be invited back to the next party. But who knows who else I might have influenced to speak out the next time?

**Does peacemaking need to begin in your own home?**

God's peace must begin in your heart—and in your home. But you can do many things locally for national and world peace, too. Ten years ago when my community pledged to adopt nuclear disarmament as our community goal, we agreed to write each year the specific actions we would take to bring about nuclear disarmament. As the prioress

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## Peace . . . (from page 67)

of the Erie Benedictine Sisters, I had the great privilege of reading every sister's response. One nun committed herself to participate in the prayer vigils every month at the Federal Building . . . another nun—a teacher—produced a year's worth of peace-making materials for her classroom. Still another sister, who is a nurse, chose to conduct workshops on the effects of radiation.

I'm not saying that everybody should march in the streets; though if we did, I think this country would make faster social progress. That's how Americans ended slavery and the Vietnam War, and that is how we built up the labor movement. But God doesn't call everybody to make public demonstrations, just as not everyone in medicine is called to do brain surgery. Once I decided to learn how to see the world with the eyes and mind of Christ, I found that working for world peace came surprisingly easy.

### Why?

I began to see how much Christ loves everyone, and then slowly I started to feel the same way. I couldn't stand it when I saw or read about anyone's life being threatened or destroyed, and it didn't matter where in the world that person lived.

### How does someone learn to see as Christ sees?

It is a continual process. Benedictines read the Scriptures every day and reflect on how to relate them to the modern world. That has been a very, very important part of learning to see through Christ's eyes for me. I read the Gospels and notice how Christ treats the outcasts and listen to how he responds to the social questions of his day.

Some of the questions are variations of those we humans face today. Is AIDS a curse from God? Well, a man asked Jesus about a blind man, "Rabbi, who sinned? The man or his parents?" And Jesus said, "Neither. This man was born blind so that God's glory could shine forth in healing him." Those words tell me that Christ looks at sickness as

something to heal, not to use against a person. Then I ask myself, "Well, who are the outcasts of my day, and what is my attitude toward them? What are the major social concerns of my world, and how might Jesus respond to them?"

At that point I begin to study the questions in my world and then try to see them as I believe Jesus would. Many of the issues today are different, of course, because modern technology gives people options that were unthinkable 2000 years ago. Who could have conceived of nuclear weapons or the need for nuclear disarmament in Jesus' time?

### How important is prayer?

Without it I would burn out. I pray to find the will of God and then to do it. I pray to be converted, to be changed—so that I can know God's will and do it. Without daily prayer my struggle for peace would be very short, and I'd soon have very little reason to take another step because often what I set out to do simply doesn't work . . . at least not on my terms. I may have expected to persuade thousands of people to march in the streets for peace, for instance; but maybe God intended for me to influence only one other person. So without prayer I quickly lose my perspective. Prayer helps me remember that God doesn't necessarily ask me to succeed in my efforts, just to make them.

### Is prayer by itself ever enough?

Maybe if I'm on my deathbed and that's all I can do, prayer by itself is enough; but otherwise, prayer without action leads to spiritual complacency or quiet despair. To assume, for instance, that God would never allow nuclear weapons to be used is to completely ignore God's wonderful sense of humor. God let a lot of things happen in history that you or I would have given even God a D-minus grade for. To rest upon the assumption that God will save us from ourselves is, in my opinion, to sin against our free will.

### Is there a danger for a Christian in getting too involved in politics?

Our American concept of the separation between church and state

is debased to the point of the ridiculous. The writers of the Constitution were merely trying to ensure that the United States never has a state-subsidized or state-organized religion. Now, many Americans have stretched the concept of church-and-state separation to mean that nearly every moral issue outside of the family or the parish is solely a "political" question. Is the fact, for instance, that the United States now spends 64 percent of its entire national budget—and our tax money—on national defense not an issue for moral scrutiny? In the Old Testament God often tells the prophets to confront the kings of Israel and Judah with their sins. In our day and age many Americans would ask our prophets to keep their mouths shut and focus on "spiritual" issues. What needs more moral scrutiny than the military-industrial complex?

I would argue that Christians need to speak out on moral issues. A country without a conscience is no country at all. And I believe that all the people of the earth who believe in God—whatever their religion is—share a common concern for the earth and see it as a creation of God. No religion denies this fact. I think it's a Buddhist monk who said, "If I knew that the world would be destroyed tomorrow, I would plant an apple tree today." There's nothing morose or despairing about reality because it can give me a sense of who I must be, how I must act at that period of life. That's our task; that's our spiritual responsibility.

*Joan Chittister, OSB is a member of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, Pennsylvania. From 1978 to 1990, she served as prioress of her community while continuing her work as author, international lecturer and peacemaker. Her most recent book is Wisdom Distilled from the Daily.*

Laurie Turley

I watched Emily hop and fly onto the school bus. As they drove off on this clear sunny cold morning, I could still see her little hat bobbing up and down in the front of the bus, far down the road. She is so seldom still. Five years old. As I turned and looked down, I saw two footprints in the frozen mud, a story told of yesterday's early spring warming. One large print, one very, very small. Ethan, no doubt holding Daddy's hand and chattering away about the cars, the birds, the mud. I looked around at the trees, the river, the sunshine which grows warmer each day. Spring is coming.

Spring is coming. I look ahead to planting the garden. This year, I may be able to tend it better than the last. Ethan will no longer need to ride on my back. He'll be off playing with Emily in the sandbox, or maybe he'll even be able to help. Maybe he'll understand when I tell him where to walk, how to avoid the fragile seedlings pushing up toward the sun. He is growing so fast. Sometimes I wish I could stop the action, like in the movies, just make everything still, and absorb every detail. Remember the smell of their wet hair, remember the feel of those silken plump hands, hear the high voices mispronouncing words with such authority. See that baby child smile forever. Never forget. I've already forgotten so much.

How did this happen so fast? Where did these children come from? I remember being pregnant, I remember giving birth. Why is it that I often stop and look with such wonder, such incredulity, as if I can't imagine how these two come to be, who they are, how I was so blessed to be the one they call Mommy?

There was a time, not so long ago, when I would grow easily frustrated with them. Children can be confining for a mother. Day after day at home alone. Envy friends who can't comprehend what it's like to go for nearly three years without one full night's sleep. I often feel like I'm in a daze; I can't speak a com-

## SLOW-DANCING WITH TIME



*Mothering is  
such a constant  
balancing act  
between holding close  
and letting go.*

plete sentence without hesitating, groping for the words. (I used to be so articulate!) Now Emily sometimes finishes my sentences for me. I'm tired. I put the children to bed at night, and no matter how firm my resolve to accomplish something later, I often fall asleep with them. I look forward to their growing older, to having more freedom.

Freedom? I remember freedom. I remember being twenty-five, on a walk outdoors with my friend Natasha. I had to walk ahead of her so she wouldn't see my tears as she

held her baby in her arms. I remember freedom. Nights alone, wondering if I would ever become a mother, if I would ever hold a baby that wasn't someone else's in my arms. Now my baby is two years old, off and running. My five-year-old would already prefer playing with a friend than staying at home with mom. Freedom is coming soon. I can see it ahead, and I regard it with mixed emotions.

Mothering is such a constant balancing act between holding close and letting go. I'm not sure I've got it down yet. I still struggle with myself when I wish for more time alone, to have three hours to practice the piano uninterrupted, to just be able to take a bath by myself. Occasionally, when he is able, Ken will take the children and tell me to do something I want to do. Strangely

*(Continued on page 70)*



## A Wish For You My Child

If there could be only one thing in life for me to teach you, I would teach you to love . . .

To respect others so that you may find respect in yourself,

To learn the value of giving, so that if ever there comes a time in your life that someone really needs, you will give,

To act in a manner that you would wish to be treated, to be proud of yourself,

To laugh and smile as much as you can, in order to bring you back into this world,

To have faith in others, to be understanding . . .

To stand tall in this world and to learn to depend on yourself,

To only take from this earth those things which you really need, so there will enough for others,

To not depend on money or material things for your happiness, but,

To learn to appreciate people who love you, the simple beauty that God gave you and to find peace and security within yourself . . .

To you, my child, I hope I have taught all these things, for they are love.

*Reprinted from the Western Canada Conference Journal via The Plains Banner, November, 1990.*

## Echo of April

Summoned by the clapping of hands  
I enter Mother's room to ask,  
"What is that I hear?"

"It's a sad echo of April,"  
she replies  
summarizing Aprils  
of ninety-two years . . .

What is it like, I wonder,  
to be ninety-two in April  
and not to see its glory?

I bring her pink hyacinths  
to fill her room with fragrance.  
I describe the blanket of purple violets  
carpeting the corner of the lawn  
and her smile tells me she sees.  
I remember her kneeling  
among them, years past,  
counting at least a hundred picked  
for a tiny vase.

Today it is John gathering enough  
to float the surface  
of a blue and white china bowl  
surrounded by pale, violet candles.

I describe them  
for her smile of imagery  
making April's echo less sad for her,  
brighter still for me.

*Robert A. Waitches  
Knox, Indiana*

## Moving Toward the Light

*(Continued from page 66)*

them; for they do not know what they are doing."<sup>1</sup> Jesus realized that those who were crucifying him were not able, then and there, to humble themselves so that they could receive the teaching that was necessary for them to become disciples.

When we look at someone and feel anger, we can then look within ourselves and asks, "Am I guilty of what they are doing?" or "Do they have within them something good that I want to be part of me?" Either way the person or people toward whom we feel the anger become our teachers, if we will approach them with humble hearts.

*The Rev. Carl Yenetchi is a minister at the Wayfarers Chapel in Palos Verdes, California.*

<sup>1</sup>Luke 23:34

## Slow-Dancing with Time

*(Continued from page 69)*

enough, when the house is quiet, I find myself longing for their return far sooner than they are expected to arrive. And when they do come, I want both to hold them close and to have just a little more time alone.

It is a paradox to think that I no longer get so frustrated with them. I am far better able now to redirect the temper tantrums before they begin, far better able to laugh and turn a childish frown into a smile, far better able to cope with the constant noise and clutter. I am far more willing to spend time at home with my little ones, now that they're not so little, now that their demands on my time are changing, now that (dare I say?) they don't need me as much. I suppose this is all very normal. I suppose that we're all just growing with and around each other and finding our places in our home and in each other's lives, and that it naturally gets easier with time.

I am thankful that I've discovered now, before they are totally grown, how quickly they do grow. I don't really want to stop the action. It is a delight beyond any words, this business of watching them grow and being an intimate part of that process. I couldn't anyway of course; I know that. What I can stop sometimes, is how quickly I myself move around them. I can stop and look, stop and wonder. Rest awhile, take the time to see, to touch, to listen, to hold. To feel the soft breath of one sleeping on my shoulder, to spy on their play and see their sibling friendship develop. To know that no matter how independent they become, they'll still look for me when they're hurt, they'll still want me to watch when they perform. I revel in their successes, I take pride in their security, in their confidence around their peers. I hold them close, I let them go. I hold them close, I let them go.

*Laurie Turley is musician, artist, mother, student, and wife of Rev. Ken Turley, minister of the Swedenborgian Church in Portland, Maine.*

# What is Home? And Who is Family?

These are questions we have all asked ourselves from time to time. So let's take a few moments together to look at some possible answers. After all, what really *is* "Home"? ... and where is it in this natural world? And who *is* our "Family"? Webster states home is an environment or haven of shelter, of happiness and love. However, we know that for some, home is definitely not happy nor is it a haven, and there are many that are homeless. Webster also states that *family* is spouse, children or a person related by blood or marriage. But we know that external pressures can stretch and sometimes tear the very fabric of our family life, causing emotional pain and loss. And so many of us wonder seriously about the very meaning of "home" and "family."

Is *home* only shelter from the elements? Is *family* only spouse, children and persons related by blood? Or, on a deeper level do we find our true home to be within the mind and spirit; and, again on a deeper level do we find our true family to be kindred spirits—relationships and friendships based on love and faith? This could include (as Webster says) "a particular world of something—kingdom, fellowship, the family of humankind." Almost every Sunday at the Garden Chapel here in St. Louis we ask if "we can dwell in the House of the Lord all the days of our life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple." We invite you to come to convention and inquire with us. Let us see if together we can discover further answers to these far-reaching questions. With like minds and spirits pondering the issues, perhaps we can bring back some new ideas to use in our workaday world; ideas that help us to connect with each other in greater understanding and trust, on our seemingly separate journeys throughout this beautiful

but fragile planet, Earth.

On Saturday, when the business sessions are over, you'll have the opportunity to spend time with your church family, exploring your home away from home. We have several outings for you to choose from, led by friendly and knowledgeable guides from the St. Louis church. These are:

- The St. Louis Zoo, renowned for its diversity of animal life, and its facilities for children, close to the campus.
- The Science Center (opened just last year), displaying life-size working models of prehistoric creatures (with sound); lots of fun experiments to try out, and a giant OMNIMAX screen showing movies on the hour.
- The Art Museum, a beautiful building that survived from the 1904 World's Fair, housing some wonderful art treasures from around the world.
- Union Station and/or The Gateway Arch. Union Station for those who like to shop, and want to see real steam locomotives. The Arch (if you're not afraid of heights), renowned as one of the most impressive feats of engineering in the world—well worth a trip to the top.
- The Missouri Botanical Garden, acclaimed as one of the finest gardens in the world, and home to intensive study of endangered species from the rain forests of South America and elsewhere.
- The Belle of St. Louis! To end the day we'll all climb aboard, and cruise down the Mississippi ...

*"On a Riverboat we'll cruise, and  
sing the St. Louis Blues,  
If you will meet us in St. Louis,  
Louis - '92's the Year!"*

Carole Rienstra, Carolyn Bower, Brenda  
and David Hollweg

## The Family Connection

### *Families, Relationships, and Stress*

Ted Klein

What are some healthy ways of responding to normal stresses in families and in relationships? Close relationships, such as those of parent and child, partners, friends, or siblings, naturally bring stress, and responding creatively to this stress is important for developing healthy, growing, nurturing relationships.

We can begin by seeing stress as helpful, rather than negative. Stress can be thought of as demands or stimuli. We need some stress, some demands or stimuli, to be energized, to care, or to make efforts.

Important relationships bring demands and stimuli, challenging other persons and ourselves to grow. Such challenges can be energizing and nurturing. Yet stress in relationships, when it goes beyond our capacities to respond well, can be overwhelming and harmful. We need to learn how to protect ourselves from situations that cause us to feel overwhelmed and how to respond well when great stresses do occur.

The following examples illustrate stresses in relationships that can feel overwhelming for people.

- A two-year-old child finds it difficult to go to sleep at night. This often produces much stress for everyone involved—the child, the parent or parents, and siblings.
- A parent or parents feel intense anxieties about a child doing well at school. The child becoming sick or not performing up to expectations brings worried reactions that cause great stress for all in the family.
- One spouse, when tired, sometimes complains or becomes critical of the other spouse. This sets up defensiveness and resentment in the other. Both feel upset and inadequate, and are vulnerable to

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# Nominees Selected

The Swedenborgian Church's Nominating Committee has selected the following nominees to fill national offices.

## President (3-year term)

Rev. Richard Tafel, Jr.  
*Florida*

As full-time president for nearly two years, I have focused on two primary goals: improved communications and financial accountability.

I have worked for better communications to the "grassroots"—most visibly through a monthly column in *The Messenger*, and through periodic updates on different program areas enclosed with Annual Appeal mailings. We have also improved the timeliness of reports—most notably with the 1991 *Journal*, which with the help of outgoing Secretary Dorothy Young and of Krystyna McGivern in the Central Office, was in distribution by the end of September.

At the governing board level, I have worked with General Council and Cabinet to ensure that there is complete information available about issues before them, and that agendas are structured to provide plenty of opportunity to discuss major issues before taking action. I have then tried hard to follow their intentions. If unexpected important issues arise between meetings, I consult with the Executive Committee before taking any major steps. The result of all of this is a team-based operation and a good working relationship with General Council, the Executive Committee, the Cabinet, and the various support units, boards, and committees.

In the financial arena, our treasurer John Perry has worked many overtime hours to get the financial data necessary to make informed decisions. General Council and Cabinet have worked to set goals and priorities, so that limited funds will be put where we most want them to go. We are currently developing a 5-year plan to help decide where money should go in the coming years. I have made a point to attend all meetings of the Investment Committee, the Retirement Committee, and the Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit, as well as the Board of Trustees of Urbana University, where we have a considerable financial stake.

Another aspect of financial responsibility is to find ways of increasing the church's actual income. To that end, I have paid special attention to the capital funds drive and the annual appeal. The capital funds drive is moving ahead. Annual Appeal contributions in 1991 were up substantially over previous years, and we are making good progress toward this year's goal of \$25,000.

One of the church's financial constraints has been that we have too many dollars "in the ground"—assets in the form of real estate that, while it has value "on the books," does not bring us any spendable income. In the past two years we have concluded the sale of some property, and thus have converted those assets into dollars for our income-generating funds. Some other transactions are in the works.

We have also striven to make more efficient use of our funds administratively. While one might think that a full-time presidency would

balloon administrative budgets, this has not been the case. Because I do not have to return home for local church activities, for example, efficiencies are possible in my travel schedule by combining several meetings into fewer, but longer, trips. Because I do not have to fit in church services, weddings, etc., on weekends, I can schedule trips over Saturday nights, thus qualifying for lower airfares.

A major part of administrative efficiency has been streamlined operations in the Central Office, which we have achieved with the cooperation and dedicated work of the staff there under office manager Martha Bauer. These efforts, combined with the travel efficiencies I mentioned above, mean that total administrative costs are actually far less than they had been in previous years.

We are also evaluating how the new structure of the denomination, implemented in 1986, is functioning, to look for opportunities for more efficiency and cost savings in the way the organization beyond the Central Office operates.

The credit for these accomplishments belongs to the Executive Committee, General Council, the Cabinet, the staff of the Central Office, the support units, boards, committees, and the Council of Ministers. I feel fortunate to have had the support and encouragement of all of these groups.

If I am reelected for a second three-year term, I pledge to continue this work in communication and financial accountability, and to extend the team-building approach beyond the governing board level to community-building in the church as a whole. Specific programs are already in the planning stages for this. They include training for local churches in being effective as church boards, and workshops on stewardship and fund raising at the local level. I invite your suggestions for other such programs, as well as any questions you might have about the church's operation.

## Vice-President (1-year term)

Betsy Young  
*California*

It would be a privilege to be elected to serve for another year as Vice President of the denomination. One of the principal duties of the office is membership on the executive committee of general council. When necessary, the office also includes the chairmanship of the Board of Intervention.

In January, 1992, the General Council met jointly with the Cabinet in Florida. The varieties of both perspectives and skills represented there bode well for the future of our denomination!

I would be delighted to have the opportunity to continue to contribute my time and talent to the ongoing work of our beloved Swedenborgian Church!

## Recording Secretary (1-year term)

Gloria Toot  
*Ohio*

As a member of Kemper Road Swedenborgian Church for the past 23 years, I have become

deeply involved in the life of the church, serving on the Board of Directors and on various committees many times over the years. I was the office manager at the church for over 12 years before my "retirement" last fall. I am now assistant treasurer/bookkeeper at Kemper Road.

Having served as the denomination's recording secretary for almost a year now, I have found the job interesting and stimulating. I've attempted to get the minutes to the appropriate persons as quickly as possible and have facilitated this by purchasing a notebook computer on which I can take minutes during the meetings. I am eager to continue my role as Recording Secretary and to implement some of the ideas I have and that have been suggested to me about improving the minutes and helping to facilitate the goals and priorities of the church.

## Treasurer (1-year term)

John Perry  
*Maine*

Serving as the denomination's treasurer this past year has been gratifying. Changes made over the last two years in the coordination of the computer programs used for the budgetary process and year-end calculations have come together in a way that I had envisioned several years ago. My goal of automation of the denomination's books has been achieved. I hope this coming year to have the treasurer's report written directly from the computer program.

I am looking forward with continued enthusiasm to furthering the progress begun these past years in working as the treasurer of our denomination for another year.

## General Council (3-year term)

Rev. Dr. Robert E. Bossdorf  
*Massachusetts*

Robert E. Bossdorf: Age 51  
Current Employment:

- Private Practice, Pastoral Psychotherapist, Bay Counseling Associates, Newton, Mass.
- Pastor, 2nd Congregational Church, Ossipee, New Hampshire
- Part-time position.
- Part time Computer Consultant.

Spouse: Eleanor A. Bossdorf

Children: 5 Grandchildren: 4

Past Service:

- Pastor, United Methodist Church, 20 years. Four Parishes.
- Part-time Instructor: SSR, Pastoral Counseling, 2 years.
- Fulltime Instructor: SSR, Pastoral Care/Psychology 1 year.
- Associate Professor of Pastoral Counseling and Psychology: SSR 4 years.
- Served on original Communications Unit 3 years.
- Served on founding Board of Managers for Temenos 4 years.
- Local Church Consultant for the original Convention Consultation Service Group 4 years.

(Continued on page 73)



**Nominees** (continued from page 72)

Betsy Ledingham  
Ohio

I am a lifelong member of the Swedenborgian Church, having grown up in Kitchener, Ontario. For the past 20 years I have been active in the Urbana, Ohio, church where I was formerly a trustee and have been serving as secretary for the past ten years.

I am in the beginning process of the church Lay Leader Program and served on the national church's Board of Education for six years (under the old structure).

I am a clinical social worker by profession, having spent 12 years in community mental health work, followed by the past five years in the addiction field. I am presently clinical supervisor of Halterman Center of Madison County Hospital in London, Ohio.

I have greatly enjoyed serving on General Council for the past three years and would consider it a privilege to serve another term.

Dr. Perry Skinner Martin  
Pennsylvania

I grew up in the Cincinnati church, received an A.B. in economics from Radcliffe and Harvard colleges, an M.A. in community counseling at Northeastern University, and a Ph.D. in psychology at International College in Los Angeles. I am married to the Reverend Ernest Martin and am the mother of six grown children, including two Swedenborgian ministers. I was elected to the Board of Education, served as its chairman and Adult Education chairman, and directed a number of post-convention conferences. I developed the counseling center at the Wayfarers Chapel, and I am now a psychotherapist and the program director at Temenos. I conduct workshops for Swedenborgian churches across the country and have facilitated retreats and conflict resolution for Methodist and Episcopal churches in the mid-Atlantic area.

(1-year unexpired term)  
Sharon Reddekopp Slough  
Alberta, Canada

I am currently secretary to the Calgary New Church Society as well as Western Canada Conference. Two years ago I became secretary for the Sunday School Association, and last year was elected to the Nominating Committee. Much of my time is spent in church activities—enrolled in the lay leadership course, teaching Sunday school, and leading several church services a year.

I grew up in the denomination as a minister's daughter so I feel that I can see our particular concerns through both the layman's eyes and the clergy. Western Canada has members living great distances apart and therefore, while sharing a common theology with General Convention, has unique needs and concerns. Through my participation in the activities of the denomination I hope to bring my people closer to our fellow Swedenborgians in other parts of Canada and the United States. I have lived in the two greatest counties in the world and consider the U.S. my second home.

**Communications Support Unit [COMSU]**  
(3-year term)  
Rev. Dr. William Ross Woofenden  
Massachusetts

I have been on the faculty of the Swedenborg School of Religion (SSR) since 1971, and hold

the title of Professor of Theology and Philosophy, although I am now halfway through a three-year retirement track, presently serving part time, and scheduled for full retirement after the 1992-1993 school year. I hold a Ph.D. in Philosophy and an M.A. (Research) in Philosophy from St. Louis University. Prior to entering the ministry of the Swedenborgian church, I served a six-year apprenticeship (interrupted by 3½ years military service in WW II) in the International Typographical Union and served for some years as a journeyman proofreader and compositor. Over the years I have served on several national church boards and committees. I am the founder and editor of *Studia Swedenborgiana*, the occasional journal of SSR. In 1988 I published *Swedenborg Researcher's Manual*, a reference manual for writers of academic dissertations, and for other scholars. My M.A. thesis, *Swedenborg's Concept of Love in Action*, a study of the ethics of Swedenborg, was published in 1971, and my Australian university lectures (given in 1979 and 1980) were published in 1981 under the title *Swedenborg and 20th Century Thought*. I look forward to continuing to serve the denomination on COMSU.

**Education Support Unit [EDSU]**  
(3-year term)  
Lorraine Sando  
Washington

I am a marriage and family therapist, artist, and hold a master's degree in Psychology. I teach a psychoeducational course for couples called PAIRS, and am on the faculty of the Northwest Satir Institute where I am completing my term as president. I believe that change is possible through education and have devoted my career to helping people make changes and improve their lives.

Serving my church is very meaningful to me. I have served on my local church board (The Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound), the Board of Education, General Council and am currently serving on the Wayfarers Chapel Board. I have led numerous programs at pre- and post-convention conferences.

**Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit [FPRSU]**  
(3-year term)  
Rev. Harvey A. Tafel  
California

I am seeking another term on the Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit to continue the work begun five years ago with the implementation of our denomination's new constitution. I believe my experience over the past five years on this committee and 25 years as a minister are of great value to our national church.

In addition to my ministerial duties at the Wayfarers Chapel as senior Chapel minister, I am instrumental in managing a staff of 30, an operating budget of over \$700,000, three-and-a-half acres of buildings and gardens, and our office complex, Wayfarers Center West.

I have also served as secretary of the Council of Ministers, two terms on General Council and am currently a member of the Committee on Worship.

**Growth & Outreach Support Unit [GOSU]**  
(3-year term)  
Lon Elmer  
California

In 1984, I discovered Swedenborg and the Swedenborgian Church. His writings and the church's teachings continually validate my person-

al beliefs. I support our church as a member of:  
Board of Directors - Pacific Coast Association  
Board of Managers - Wayfarers Chapel  
Board of Directors - Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound (past president for two terms)

The Growth and Outreach Support Unit  
I want to continue with GOSU for another term.

**Information Management Support Unit [IMSU]**  
(3-year term)  
Steve Koke  
California

I have served on IMSU since its inception and enjoyed the experience very much. I have a degree in Computer Science, and I am interested in promoting a deeper sharing of knowledge and communication between our churches. I'm currently working with a design for a database that will be used by our Central Office as a repository of information for all churches to draw from. That is a long-term project, and I would of course love to be able to continue working with it. Other information-gathering and processing work will be brought to bear on the needs of our churches in the next few years as IMSU continues to build channels through which we may learn from each other. This will be my last consecutive term, under support unit rules.

Fay Roberts-Frechette  
Massachusetts

I have been a member of the Boston Swedenborgian church for twenty years, and have served on various boards and committees both there and within the Massachusetts Union, taught school for 15 years, was in residential construction seven years, am currently with a Boston law firm in the administrative section, and am a mother of three.

I am grateful for our denomination's interest in allowing me to be of use in this way. My thanks.

**Pastoral Ministries Support Unit [PMSU]**  
(3-year term)  
Rev. John Billings  
Ohio

I was ordained in 1972, and have been the pastor of the Swedenborgian Church in Cleveland, Ohio, since October of 1989. It has been exciting and a lot of hard work to be part of a Swedenborgian church that is actually growing numerically as well as spiritually. I continue to believe that our denomination, with its distinctive teaching and orientation, is relevant to people's lives because it is an accurate map of both psychological and spiritual reality. Assuming we have skilled, trained and competent pastors—women and men psychologically sophisticated, spiritually alive and theologically sound—I have no doubt our church can grow and prosper. It will not be easy. It will be painful at times.

It seems clear to me that our primary need is to grow with people who understand and are committed to what we are all about. We can no longer ignore this issue and still hope to survive as a denomination. That is why I want to serve on PMSU. I think I have something to contribute.

Pat Zacharias  
Ontario, Canada

I have now served almost four years on Pastoral Ministries Support Unit (PMSU), filling  
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## The Family Connection

### Families . . . and Stress

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further stress overloads.

- Someone has become heavily dependent on one friend, often needing more time than the friend has to give. The one person feels "I need more," and the other feels "I can't give any more," and both feel great stress.

There are actions people can take in these situations. The beleaguered parent or parents can seek to patiently help the child become less resistant to falling asleep. Calming stories, relaxation tapes or back and neck massages are only a few of the ways parents can seek to bring more tranquility and peace to everyone involved. The parent or parents of the child in school can take steps to confront the origin of their anxieties and learn to let go and not be so demanding. The spouses can become aware of what they do that provokes heavy stress in the other, and can begin to change what they do. The friend who is heavily dependent can seek ways of becoming less dependent, possibly becoming involved in new relationships or activities, while the other friend can encourage such changes. There are many sources of support available for helping people to move into healthy change.

Sometimes, it may not be clear what is contributing to heavy stresses you feel, or it may be clear but you're still unsure how to respond. There are many supports available to you. If you are a member of a church community, there are supports available both within and outside that community. Support groups of many kinds, workshops, classes, various kinds of counseling, and much more is "out there" if you need it.

Along with drawing on supports, you might consider these approaches:

- **Be attentive.** Be attentive to others and yourself. Be attentive to what each of you is experiencing and feeling. If you pay attention to another person, you may hear or see clues that stress is building and the person is moving

toward being overloaded.

Recognizing that, you can avoid adding to the other's stress and may even find ways of easing it. If you are attentive to yourself, you can realize when you are becoming vulnerable to stress. You can let go of some of the pressure on yourself, and you may be able to ask the other person or someone else to help.

- **Do not put down people or feelings.** Do not discount, deny, or put down others or yourself or any feelings of others or yourself. If you and another person are both feeling fear, and that is contributing to stress in your relating, the fears can be recognized. Then you and the other person are in a better position to respond to your fears. If you downgrade the other person or yourself, or what either of you are feeling, that easily intensifies stress.
- **Diffuse.** Where stress is escalating or could escalate, finding a way to bring calmness, without denying or suppressing feelings, can bring great relief. This can create room for things to be confronted in ways that do not threaten and can aid healing.
- **Find safe releases.** You can find ways of expressing or releasing feelings, such as anger, without unleashing these feelings on people and hurting them. Expressing and releasing feelings in a healthy way can put you in a better position for facing stress that is building with you and another person. You can also encourage the other person to find safe releases.
- **Hear each part of yourself.** You can practice, and encourage others to practice, hearing each part of oneself. Perhaps you feel a need to confront a friend or partner but feel an angry or rejecting reaction. With a nurturing attitude you can let each part speak fully, and fully hear and accept each part. You can accept the part of you that feels afraid and the part of you that is frustrated and wants to confront. Through hearing each part of yourself, you can move toward a decision and be in a bet-

ter position to respond to the reaction if you do act.

These suggestions put into practice can be helpful in your spiritual growth. They emphasize a positive nurturing community, devotional reading, and other activities that can be spiritually nourishing. God can be approached as nurturing and supporting, a source of healing for us and our relationships and families. As you begin to work with these tools, you will begin to develop others that work well for you in stressful situations. It is important to remember that you are not alone!

*The Rev. Dr. Theodore Klein is director of the Swedenborgian Church's Children and Family Ministry and is professor of Philosophy and Theology at the Swedenborg School of Religion. He is currently teaching a Moral Education course at the University of Massachusetts in Boston.*

## Reviews of Resources

**Judith Viorst. *Necessary Losses*** (Random House, Inc., 1986). This book confronts loss as a dominant theme in life and relationships. Many losses are described as difficult and yet necessary, as ways of letting go are explored. The book is realistic and hopeful in sharing how, along with responding to losses as part of life, we can become responsible and connected individuals.

**Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish. *Siblings without Rivalry*** (Avon Books, Dept. FP, 105 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016; (212) 481-5653). This book provides perspectives and suggestions that could assist parents in finding ways to ease tension and encourage cooperation among children. Stories from parents are included, along with sharing from the experiences of the authors. The book is especially important for parents of siblings, but could also benefit anyone who has been a sibling or seeks to understand sibling relationships.

**Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish. *Liberated Parents, Liberated Children, Your Guide for a Happier Family***. Book available from Avon Books, 105 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016. Shares from struggles and gains of parents gradually learning new skills and attitudes for parenting

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# Advance Convention '92 Registration

CHURCH OF THE OPEN WORD, THE GARDEN CHAPEL

St. Louis, Missouri

at Washington University, St. Louis

June 20-June 28, 1992

(Convention Sessions: June 24-June 28, 1992)

“WHAT IS HOME ... AND WHO IS FAMILY?”

<p><b>Please complete in full—one application per family</b></p>	<p>Last Name _____ First Name _____          Last Name _____ First Name _____          Address _____          City, State/Prov. _____ Zip _____          Phone _____          Accompanied by _____          Children:              1. Name _____ Age _____              2. Name _____ Age _____              3. Name _____ Age _____</p>
<p><b>Arrivals and departures</b></p>	<p>I/we will arrive on the campus of Washington University on:          Date: _____ Time: _____          My/our first meal on campus will be: Date _____          (Breakfast _____ Lunch _____ Dinner _____)          My/our last meal on campus will be: Date _____          (Breakfast _____ Lunch _____ Dinner _____)          (Last meal served will be lunch on Sunday, June 28)          Mode of arrival: Car _____ Plane _____ Passenger in someone else's car _____ Other _____</p>
<p><b>Special Needs</b>  <b>All Buildings are Non-Smoking</b></p>	<p>I am a vegetarian with these exceptions _____          I have these dietary restrictions _____          I am not able to climb stairs or walk very far _____          I have these medical requirements _____          I am _____diabetic _____a heart patient          Other health problem _____          Other physical/dietary/special needs: _____</p>
<p><b>Children</b></p>	<p>My child/children will be participating in the Children's Program for ages 5-12 beginning on: _____          Names: _____ Ages: _____          I will need child care for age 2 and under beginning: _____          Names: _____ Ages: _____          I will need child care for ages 3 and 4 beginning: _____          Names: _____ Ages: _____          Special needs: _____          Have your children attended pre-school? _____</p>

<b>Rates for 1992 Convention Rooms</b> <i>All rooms are air-conditioned</i>	<p><i>Good news for families and others who are willing to share accommodations:</i>          Suites are available at considerable cost savings. Suites have two single rooms, two double rooms (total six beds), a bath and a living room. Room rates are:          Single in a Suite: \$14.00 daily          Double in a Suite: \$10.00 daily per person</p> <p>Double rooms will be assigned on a first come, first served basis; when only a single room is available, the single rate will apply.</p> <p>Families and groups may reserve an entire suite for \$65.00 per day.</p> <p>Regular dormitory rooms are:          Single (dorm): \$25.00 daily          Double (dorm): \$17.50 daily per person          Children 12 years and under staying in same room with parents (not using a bed) no charge.</p> <p>All prices in US Dollars: Adjustments will be made for payments in Canadian funds.</p>
<b>Accommodation</b>	<p>_____ I would like a single room in a          (check one) Suite_____ or Dorm_____</p> <p>_____ I would like a double room in a          (check one) Suite_____ or Dorm_____</p> <p>_____ I would like a double with _____ in a          (check one) Suite_____ or Dorm_____</p> <p>_____ We would like to reserve a Suite with _____</p> <p>_____ I/we would like a room near _____</p>
<b>Meals</b>	<p>Meal Charges:</p> <p>Under 3: FREE</p> <p>age 3-9: \$14.00 per day</p> <p>age 10-adult: \$17.50 per day</p>
<b>Registration Fees</b>	<p>_____ Children under 3: NO CHARGE</p> <p>_____ Children 4-12: \$20 US, \$25 CD if mailed before 5/15/92.          After: \$30 US, \$35 CD.</p> <p>_____ Teen League (NCYL) participant (13-19): \$25 US, \$30 CD if mailed before 5/15/92. After: \$35 US, \$40 CD.</p> <p>_____ Adult and other teens: \$35 US, \$40 CD if mailed before 5/15/92.          After that, \$45 US, \$50 CD.</p> <p>Registration is per person and covers some special costs and events. No refunds after June 1. Please mail this form with your check, made out to The Swedenborgian Church to:</p> <p>Central Office          The Swedenborgian Church          48 Sargent Street          Newton, MA 02158-2399</p>
<b>Financial Assistance</b>	<p>For children and young people, please contact the Central Office.</p>

## Nominees (continued from page 73)

a partial term the first year. We have moved from "what is this new structure and how do we function in it?" to a real vision for our parish churches—and how we can assist them to function better as a healthy congregation, church board and minister working together. We are trying to provide opportunities for growth of our churches. This is our priority! By lending them administrative, material and spiritual support we are showing our parish churches that we care! PMSU is excited about the help that Eric Allison, our Pastoral Ministries Consultant, is giving to our local congregations. My work on this Support Unit has been stimulating and encouraging. I am enthusiastic about the future of our parish churches and would like to continue this important office for a second term.

### Nominating Committee (5-year term) Duane Beougher Missouri

As a member of the St. Louis Swedenborgian church for 14 years, and its president for eight years, I have seen both the local and national church struggle to come to grips with the problems and opportunities facing us.

At times, the challenge seems almost overwhelming. But I feel a sincere desire, as a Swedenborgian, to assist in the positive efforts being made to revitalize the spirit of the Swedenborgian denomination. A critical ingredient to this is getting the best possible people serving in positions of leadership.

My past experience includes nine years as an executive with the Boy Scouts of America. Responsibilities included: youth, recruiting, volunteer management, leadership training, fund raising, and directing special events. For the last year, I have operated my own business as a remodeling contractor.

I am currently serving as co-director of the Swedenborgian Church's fund drive.

### Leone Dyer New Hampshire

I live in Conway, New Hampshire, and attend the Fryeburg Swedenborgian church with my husband, Dan, and our 14-month-old son, Alexander. I grew up in Fryeburg, Maine, where I held various offices in the Fryeburg Youth League, was the first east coast regional NCYL officer, taught Sunday school and was the treasurer of the Fryeburg Women's Alliance. I assisted six years with the registration desk at national convention, and three years in the Central Office.

I have become aware of the importance of the various support units, officers and committees and what their function in the future will be. My goal is to provide my son with the same enriched Christian life I am fortunate to have.

### Rev. Marlene Laughlin Massachusetts

During the past six years since my ordination, I have been pastor of the Bridgewater church. I have originated and led "Sunrise Spirit" retreats and counseled hospitalized patients suffering from mental illness, abuse, and addiction.

With degrees in education, science, theology and psychology and experience in teaching and business, I have a broad background that aids in understanding the varied needs of our church, theological school, and students for ministry. My

greatest concern for the Swedenborgian Church is the continuation of the theology and doctrines derived from the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. My experience as a student, a trustee of the Swedenborg School of Religion, and graduate of Andover Newton Theological School aid my understanding of the many facets of knowledge and experience to which students need exposure. I believe the ability of future ministers to teach and model a spiritual, ethical, and moral life in whatever type ministry they choose can only be sustained by a strong conviction of call to the Lord's work and nourished by a strong relationship with God.

### Committee on Admission to the Ministry (1-year term) Elizabeth Johnson Washington

I am requesting that I be elected to serve another term. As a minister's wife I have for many years been closely associated with the ministry, in traditional and innovative settings. I believe I have acquired some understanding of the many roles and responsibilities required of a minister, and the qualities needed within an individual to adequately fulfill them.

I would like to be able to contribute the fruits of my experience to this vital committee work.

### Board of Trustees of the Swedenborgian School of Religion [SSR] (3-year term) Dr. Edward Bohlander Kentucky

I was originally associated with the Cincinnati Society. After attending L.E.I., I graduated from Urbana College and Ohio State University. I was a member and chair of the then Board of Publications, a trustee of Urbana College, and a member of the Board of Managers of SSR. Since the boards have been joined, I have served as a trustee of the Swedenborg School of Religion. I am seeking reelection for my second full term on the board.

### Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey Massachusetts

I have great concern for theological education for the ministers of our church. My experience in the teaching of religion has been at Wellesley College, Milwaukee-Downer College, Lawrence University, and Urbana University. My Master's in Divinity is from Union Theological Seminary and my Ph.D. from Columbia University.

I was ordained as a Swedenborgian minister in 1975 and have had parish experience in Urbana for many years.

I have concern for spiritual growth, both for the individual involved and for the best ways of helping theological students to learn to facilitate this growth for others. I am one of those who worked closely with the process of gaining degree-granting authority for SSR, and I would like the opportunity to continue working with the school in the next stage of its growth.

*(Persons eligible and willing to run for these offices may also be nominated from the floor of convention. Eligibility is determined by the denomination's by-laws, to be found on p. 174 of the Journal of the Swedenborgian Church).*

## Resources

(continued from page 74)

and communication with children. It addresses many important areas, such as attending to children's feelings, learning to let go as children need to be more on their own, moving beyond negative images and roles (such as "whiner") that limit how children are seen and see themselves, and learning to better attend to one's own feelings, such as anger, that naturally arise in some situations. Highly recommended for parents!

**Harriet G. Lerner. *The Dance of Intimacy*.** Book available from Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., 10 E. 53rd Street, New York, NY 10022. Speaks to what is involved in healthy close relationships that support each person's growth, and how to move toward more of this kind of relating. Among areas explored are how to gradually make changes when changes are needed, how to take responsibility for our part in relationships, how to best respond to differences that affect relationships, and how to set limits in relationships. The book is written specifically from a woman's point of view, but it could be helpful for men also.

**Sidney B. and Suzanne Simon. *Forgiveness, How to Make Peace With Your Past and Get On With Your Life*.** Book available from Warner Books, Inc., 666 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10103. Describes how we can choose to align ourselves with a healing process that can naturally bring forgiveness for persons who have hurt us. Ways are presented for moving beyond denying, blaming ourselves, adopting a victim-like attitude, and being driven by anger. Ways to bring our lives more into connection with a healing dream or vision are explored. The book is especially sensitive to experiences of incest and other abuse survivors, and it could be very helpful to others as well.

From *Family Ministry Newsletter*, Rev. Dr. Ted Klein, 273 Perham Street, W. Roxbury, MA 02132

## Opinion

In this section of the *Messenger* we are pleased to present the varied views of our readers. Letters published here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Editor, the Communications Support Unit or the General Council of the Swedenborgian Church. Published letters may be edited for brevity and clarity.

When you see an opinion with which you disagree please send your own views to the Editor so that *The Messenger* can be a forum for individual viewpoints. We welcome letters on all pertinent topics.

### Can't We Help?

Dear Editor,

Early this Sunday morning I sat with a cup of tea and read the Sunday paper. There were several painful articles: homeless families, a young man died of AIDS, a crippling drought in Nairobi, Kenya, with children starving. And there were more.

Then I picked up *The Messenger*, which reported that our church will spend over a million dollars on a retreat center, a sermon on how to love oneself, a call to attend convention, and a discussion on the differences between males and females. The contrast between the two publications was startling, and it came with the realization that pain comes not from what is done, but what is not done.

Just think what \$100,000 could do. Ten percent of a portion of our spending could feed many starving children, give comfort to the dying and their families, provide beds for those sleeping in the streets. And more.

How sad our church continues to walk this narrow path, with closed eyes and ears, and avoids putting love into action and becoming a part of the world.

Marilyn Turley  
Tumwater, Washington

### Spiritual Bargain

I would like to recommend to your readers the 1991 Fryeburg Lecture Series. I found much in these tapes that was valuable and pertinent, such as Rev. George Dole's "Checking Results" and Rev. Bill Woofenden's "Ways of Dealing with Evil." But the one lecture I know I will never forget is Rev. Robert

Kirven's "What's the Use?" Every struggling church in our denomination will take heart from the message he offers in this talk.

All in all, I would call this the best spiritual bargain to be had in a recession year (and the jokes are good too). For those who missed it, would you run the ad again? Thank you.

Mona Conner  
Brooklyn, New York

*Here is the ad, as it appeared in the December 1991 Messenger. [The Editor]*

## New 1991 Fryeburg Lectures

### The Leading Edge In Swedenborgian Theology

For years the Fryeburg New Church Assembly Annual Lecture Series has been noted as the place where some of the best current thinking in Swedenborgian themes happens.

Once again, these sessions have been put on cassette tapes for general distribution. Now you can listen to the leading edge in contemporary Swedenborgian theology while driving to work, relaxing at home, or as part of a discussion group. Donate a new 1991 set to your church's library as a future resource!

#### The Story of David

- David and Goliath* (Ken Turley)
- Courage, Fear and Jealousy* (Ted Klein)
- Our Church in Czechoslovakia* (Pavel Heger)
- Loss and New Life* (Ted Klein)
- War Between the Houses of David and Saul* (Bill Woofenden)
- Bringing the Ark to Jerusalem* (Dorothea Harvey)
- Who Wants a King?* (George Dole)
- Nathan's Parable to David* (Bill Woofenden)
- David and Absalom* (George Dole)

#### Growth Through Service

- Twelve-Step Programs and Spiritual Growth* (Wilma Wake)
- For Instance?* (George Dole)
- Martha and Mary—A Parable for Growth* (Robert McCluskey)
- Ways of Dealing with Evil* (Bill Woofenden)
- Checking Results* (George Dole)
- Use is Good* (Bob Kirven)
- Doctrine of Charity on 'Service'* (Bill Woofenden)
- What's the Use?* (Bob Kirven)
- When a Little Evil is a Good Thing* (Gard Perry)
- Is Growing Through Service an Impossible Ideal?* (Bill Woofenden)

The two weeks are \$20, only one dollar per 45-minute presentation! If you wish, you may order only one week.

Make your check out to: Church of the New Jerusalem, 4 Oxford Street, Fryeburg, MI 04037 (Add \$2 per week for shipping and handling: total \$12 for one week, \$24 for two weeks.)

## SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE

The Swedenborg Church in Chicago is offering a \$2500 scholarship for a first-year ordination track student at the Swedenborg School of Religion who comes from one of the states encompassed by Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota and Missouri. The Chicago church is interested in supporting an individual who is new to the Swedenborgian denomination, as a way of helping the church grow. This scholarship is renewable provided the student makes satisfactory progress.

If you are interested, or know of anyone who might be, please contact: President Mary Kay Klein, Swedenborg School of Religion, 48 Sargent Street, Newton, MA 02158. Phone: (617) 244-0504.

## Men's Workshop on Grief

A Men's Workshop is scheduled for June 12-14 at the Swedenborg Chapel in Cleveland, beginning early Friday evening and ending Sunday noon.

The workshop leader will be Dr. John Franklin of Philadelphia. He is trained in psychosynthesis, and Jungian psychology. The experiential work will focus on men's grief and healing, with special emphasis on men's relationships with their fathers.

The fee is \$65.00, which must be paid by May 14. Lodging is free. Bring an inflatable mattress or futon. Meals will be on a "chip in and group cook" basis. There will be a limit of 25 participants. Reserve your space by calling or writing to Rev. John Billings, Swedenborg Chapel, 4815 Broadview Rd., Cleveland, OH 44109. (216) 351-8093.



## New President at Urbana University

Urbana University has a new president, Dr. Francis Hazard. He assumed his new duties on March 1. Much appreciation to Dr. Harold Dickerscheid for filling in so ably as interim president.

### Are you receiving *The Messenger*?

It has come to our attention that not all of our members are receiving *The Messenger*. If you are not getting your own copy each month and want to start receiving it, please write, call or FAX your request to Central Office or Patte LeVan, Editor. Respective addresses are on the inside front page of *The Messenger*. Central Office phone number is (617) 969-4240, FAX number is (617) 964-3258. Patte LeVan's phone and FAX is (219) 325-8709. All members are entitled to a free subscription to *The Messenger*, but free-will donations are much appreciated. Subscription price to non-members has been raised to \$12.00 a year. Gift subscriptions from members are still \$5.00 a year.

## OUR DAILY BREAD

*Our Daily Bread* is a Swedenborgian monthly personal guide of devotions, meditations, and sermons. The subscription price is only \$10.00 U.S. or \$12.00 Canadian per year. Subscriptions also make wonderful gifts for birthdays or other special occasions. To subscribe, please contact:

Rev. Richard H. Tafel, Jr.  
President, the Swedenborgian Church  
8065 Lagoon Rd.  
Ft. Myers, FL 33931  
Phone: (813) 463-5030  
FAX: (813) 463-7360

## Commencements

### Birth

**Pults**—Hannah Aurora Pults was born March 9, 1992. Parents are Kim Kearns and Rev. Steve Pults, Royal Oak, Michigan. Kim, Steve, brother Jordan and baby Hannah are happy and healthy.

### Baptisms

**Bright**—Kale Lawrence Bright, son of Todd and Tamzen Bright, was baptized into the Christian faith February 23, 1992, at the church of the New Jerusalem, Pawnee Rock, Kansas, the Rev. John Bennett officiating.

**Homeniuk**—Sara Elizabeth Homeniuk, born November 25, 1991, in Kelowna, B.C., daughter of Terri and Warren Homeniuk, was baptized into the Christian faith January 2, 1992 at the home of Lisa and Erwin Reddekopp, Kelowna, the Rev. Erwin D. Reddekopp officiating.

### Confirmations

**Darden**—Jane Darden was baptized into the Christian faith and confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church November 3, 1991, at the Swedenborg Chapel in Cleveland, the Rev. John Billings officiating.

**Hutton**—Jan Hutton was confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church October 27, 1991, at the Swedenborg Chapel in Cleveland, the Rev. John Billings officiating.

**Mull**—Molly Mull was confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church November 10, 1991, at the Swedenborg Chapel in Cleveland, the Rev. John Billings officiating.

**Pyle**—John Pyle was confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church October 20, 1991, at the Swedenborg Chapel in Cleveland, the Rev. John Billings officiating.

### Marriage

**Jackson and Perry**—Marianne Jackson, M.D., and the Rev. Dr. F. Gardiner Perry were united in marriage March 14, 1992, at the Fryeburg Swedenborgian Church in Maine, the Rev. Dr. George F. Dole officiating.

### Deaths

**Flood**—Harold F. Flood, active member of the Bridgewater, Massachusetts Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world February 20, 1992. A memorial service was conducted February 23 at the Bridgewater church, the Rev. Marlene Laughlin officiating.

**Hansen**—Jocelyn Hanson of Elmwood, Massachusetts, entered the spiritual world January 27, 1992. A memorial service was conducted January 30 and burial service conducted March 4, 1992, the Rev. Dr. Donna Keane officiating.

**Nicol**—Robert J. Nicol, member of Urbana, Lakewood, St. Petersburg and Deland Swedenborgian Societies, entered the spiritual world May 22, 1991. Bob served as a trustee of Urbana University for seven years and was a life member of the Swedenborg Foundation. He is survived by his wife, Rachel; son, John; daughter, Camilla; four grandchildren and a great-grandson.

## Ask Swedenborg

By George Dole

**Q.** *Why did Swedenborg unveil the inner meaning of only Genesis, Exodus, and Revelation? It seems a commission unfinished.*

Steve Koke, Rough 'n Ready, California

**A.** The statement that Swedenborg's mission was to disclose the spiritual sense of the Word comes to us at second hand, from long after the actual call. It was reported in 1782 (ten years after Swedenborg's death) by Carl Robsahm, on the basis of his conversations with Swedenborg not long before the latter's death.

However, there is persuasive evidence that when Swedenborg began his career as revelator, he did understand his commission in this restrictive sense. First, there is his focus on reviewing the Biblical languages. Second, there is the considerable effort involved in compiling his own Bible Index. Third, there is the drafting of *The Word Explained*, going well beyond Exodus and in fact venturing into the prophets. Fourth, there are references in *Arcana Coelestia* to anticipated treatments of passages as far along as Judges. Fifth, there is the printer's advertisement for the second volume, which explicitly promises a treatment of "the whole Bible."

Stopping *Arcana Coelestia* at the end of Exodus, then, represents a

distinct change of approach. While we nowhere find Swedenborg telling us why, there are some facts which may provide a basis for responsible speculation. First, by the end of Genesis he had completed a description of the Lord's glorification, and in Exodus he had dealt extensively with the spiritual history of humanity. In the closing chapters of Exodus (where the story of the tabernacle is retold), he had in fact already shifted from Biblical exegesis to topical theology. Second, *Arcana Coelestia* was attracting virtually no attention. The significance of this may be underlined by the fact that his next publications, *Earths in the Universe* and *Heaven and Hell*, were by title and content much more attractive to popular interests. Third (and perhaps most controversial), it was a central Lutheran doctrine that the Word was the sole vehicle of revealed truth, and Swedenborg had surely approached his new career with this conviction. However, this belief had to be extensively modified by his meeting non-Christians in heaven (finding even a Muslim heaven!), by discovering that correspondence was the universal language of nature, and by recognizing that the Lord was present—and effectively present—in all religious traditions.

While Swedenborg would continue to rest his case on Scripture in many instances, he would also appeal quite frequently to reason (making rationality as important to our humanness

as freedom), to experience (cf. *Arcana Coelestia* 2411:2), and to nature (cf. *Heaven and Hell* 108). There is extensive use of Scripture in *True Christian Religion*, but practically none in *Divine Love and Wisdom*.

These considerations lead me to suspect that he first heard his commission very much in the context of his traditional belief, in relatively narrow Lutheran terms, but that both spiritual and natural experience led to a substantial broadening. I confess to being grateful that we have such works as *Heaven and Hell*, *True Christian Religion*, and *Divine Love and Wisdom* rather than some hundred volumes of the *Arcana*.

Please send your questions to the editor or to George Dole, Swedenborg School of Religion, 48 Sargent Street, Newton, MA 02158.

Emanuel Swedenborg was born January 28, 1688, in Stockholm, Sweden. Although he never intended a church denomination to be founded or named after him, a society was formed in London 15 years after his death. This 1787 organization eventually spawned the present General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches.

As a result of Swedenborg's own spiritual questionings and insights, we as a church today exist to encourage that same spirit of inquiry and personal growth, to respect differences in views, and to accept others who may have different traditions.

Swedenborg shared in his theological writings a view of God as infinitely loving and at the very center of our beings, a view of life as a spiritual birthing as we participate in our own creation, and a view of Scripture as a story of inner-life stages as we learn and grow. Swedenborg would conclude, "All religion relates to life, and the life of religion is to do good." He also felt that the sincerest form of worship is a useful life.

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