

# THE MESSENGER

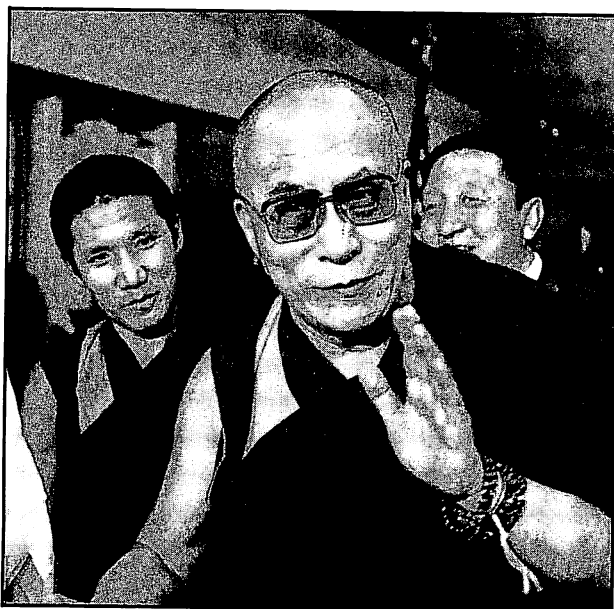
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Feature Article

December 1993

## The Parliament of the World's Religions

*Chicago, August 28–September 5, 1993*



*Nobel Peace Prize-winning Buddhist leader, the Dalai Lama of Tibet at O'Hare International Airport. (Photo courtesy Chicago Tribune)*

George F. Dole

If the hallmark of the 1893 Parliament of Religions was the stunning impact of Eastern thought, symbolized especially by the charismatic Swami Vivekananda, the hallmark of the recent centennial Parliament may have been decentralization. No single individual or single vision caught the imagination or dominated the week's events. A century ago, Charles Bonney welcomed the crowds to a "more than imperial feast," very much in the style of the era. At the close of the twentieth century, we seem to prefer a buffet—or perhaps a cafeteria.

The planning council had hoped for as many as 3500 registrants. As it

turned out, they had to close registration at 5000 before the Parliament even opened, and people who came expecting to register on site were disappointed. The first plenary session filled two large ballrooms on one floor and another on the next, thanks to large-screen television. Between sessions the eleven main elevators were jammed, and as the week went on, the staircase was busy as well. By and large, people accepted the inconveniences with good grace.

It was a little startling to hear speakers refer to the Parliament as an historic event, one that would work a significant change in the relationships between religions and nations. This kind of optimism was universal in 1893, and in view of the course of

history since that time, strikes us as naive. Twice during one session on August 30, there were noisy confrontations when Hindus in defense of India tried to shout down first a Kashmiri and then a Sikh speaker who were protesting India's policies toward their populations. It should have been abundantly clear from then on that we were not simply a gathering of peace-lovers who could serve as a shining light to the conflicted world outside. We brought our problems with us, and all indications were that we would rather deplore them than face them.

The shining exceptions to this, for me, were the Dalai Lama and the MIT Dialogue Project. The Dalai Lama gave the closing address, and stressed the need of everyday faithfulness to the best in our traditions, especially faithfulness through the inevitable times of conflict and discouragement. When he insisted that no one religion could possibly meet the needs of all the varied peoples of the globe, he sounded as though he had read *Divine Providence* 326<sup>10</sup>, where Swedenborg insists that there is no way heaven could be composed of the people of one religion only. It was also heartening to have someone with such compassion exhibit a sense of humor as well—his proposal for  
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## Moving Toward the Light

### Guest Editorial by David Sonmor

*I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.*

(Rev. 22:16)

The theme of *The Messenger* for some time now has been, "Moving Toward the Light." Readers have followed, with interest, the journey of many contributors as they have submitted accounts of how they are moving in that direction. December is a time in which we traditionally move toward the light in concert with Christians throughout the world by observing Christmas or the birth of Jesus with a reenactment of the gift-giving of the wise men from the east, who followed the star of Jesus to Bethlehem where the Christ child lay, and they rejoiced and worshiped him and gave him gifts.

As professed members of the Lord's New Church on earth we try to understand the significance of the coming of the Lord into the world. But have we become so caught up in the tradition and the material aspects of celebration that our "movement toward the light" has been somewhat hindered? It is interesting what can happen when we sometimes break with tradition. At Camp Paulhaven, in Alberta, Canada, we have for some years celebrated Christmas in July. It began one year when part of our Bible study program for the children included the story of the birth of Jesus. As part of an expression of the love and sharing that is demonstrated in that story we had all the staff and campers exchange gifts and even had Santa Claus there to hand them out. Each person had to make a gift for one other person, not buy a gift, but make a gift. We find that a lot of loving energy and thoughtfulness goes into figuring out what the person would like, and what we have the resources and skill to make. We all must give a bit of ourselves to someone else and often to someone we hardly know or may not like very much. Both the children and the staff got a very meaningful feeling for the significance of giving and receiving and its association with the birth of Christ in our lives. It is also interesting to note how quickly we have made this new practice our own tradition.

I wonder what it would be like if we used the statement of our Lord, quoted above, from the Book of Revelation, as the basis of our annual celebration of the Lord coming into the world, rather than the traditional story from the Gospel of Matthew. We were clearly shown this past summer that we are "The people of the Book." But do we know what responsibilities that happy condition brings to us? In the Book of Revelation, chapter 22, the Lord tells John, "Do not seal up the words of the prophesy of this book, for the time is near . . . Behold I am coming soon . . . I, Jesus, have sent My angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root of the offspring of David, the bright and morning star."

The bright and morning star, like Jesus' star of the east, signifies that He will come with new light to herald His new church, which, in the present age, is the holy Jerusalem. Should our Christmas gift to the world possibly be the sharing of the treasure we have been given? We have the new light. Are we going to continue to hide it under a bushel, in the trappings of the old Christian church? Or can we find ways to package this gift in a new form, and present it so that it will be received and appreciated by those who thirst for the water of truth. Perhaps we need to break with the traditions that stifle the Word and try to open it up to the world. Perhaps this can be our challenge for the coming year. "To spread the good news fresh from heaven."

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen and Merry Christmas!

*The Rev. David Sonmor is minister of the Rosthern Saskatchewan Swedenborgian Church and also serves other Swedenborgian groups in the Western Canada region.*

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## 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 agree or disagree, please send your own views to the Editor so that *The Messenger* can be a forum for individual viewpoints. We welcome letters of all pertinent topics.

### Responses to Len Harding

To the Editor:

This is indeed the Information Age. Daily, from all sides we are bombarded with more information than we really need or want. Words, words, and more words. The challenge is to sift the wheat from the chaff. Which brings me to Leonard Harding's letter in the October *Messenger* . . . some wheat there, but a considerable amount of chaff. Inasmuch as portions of it are aimed at the Pastoral Ministries Support Unit, I'd like to speak to it.

Harding decries the fact that we have some ordained ministers in Convention who are not serving parishes. True enough, but this is their choice. They have chosen alternate forms of ministry, or secular "ministries," for their own good reasons. We can't very well force them to serve a congregation against

(Continued on page 156)

## Parliament of Religions

(continued from cover)

non-violent population control was "More monks! More monks!"

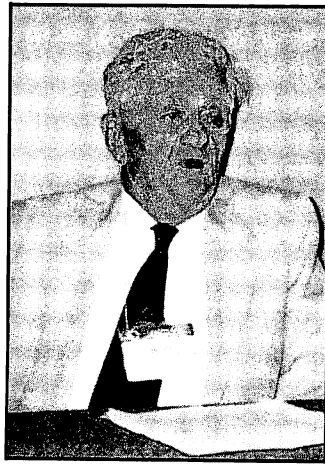
Personnel from the MIT Dialogue Project acted as facilitators for two central features of the program. One was an Assembly of Church Leaders, whose task was to draft a statement on global ethics, and the other was an ongoing "parliament of the People," in which registrants met in circles of anywhere from eight to twenty to brainstorm about our



Rev. Dr. George Dole

hopes, problems, and proposals. This met for two hours each day, preceded by various two-hour training sessions. I attended the training sessions led by the Dialogue Project, and found them to be very thoughtful and realistic. Their emphasis is on listening with total attention, and they prefer to work with groups of between twenty and thirty, because it is at this size that complexity begins to be a major factor. This will to face difficulty constructively had far more integrity than the "Impossible Dream" mentality that kept cropping up in the plenaries.

At the first session of the Parliament of the People, which was the best-attended, I saw only one individual in non-Western dress. On the basis of some discussion and reflection, I suspect that the guru-disciple pattern does not produce a readiness to engage in essentially egalitarian exchanges. In a recent book on American Buddhism<sup>1</sup>, Rick Fields is



Leon Rhodes, General Church, spoke on "Beyond Death Experiences" from a Swedenborgian perspective.

outspoken about instances in which Eastern Buddhism has shown itself vulnerable to Western "temptations," and tells of instances in which Buddhist leaders have found it necessary to resort to Western practices. We have a lot to learn, and it will indeed require total attentiveness to learn it.

The mainline churches were just about invisible. I was vaguely aware than an Assembly of Church Leaders was meeting, but heard only one brief suggestion of what that gathering was dealing with. The "public" aspects of the Parliament were dominated by the "independents." Our Swedenborgian representative in the opening ceremonies, David Roth of the General Church, was seated on the platform next to a priestess of Isis, for example. Native Americans had conspicuous roles on several occasions. I had several very worthwhile discussions with a spiritualist minister. Perhaps most interesting, the reaction of all the Swedenborgians I checked with was that they had never been to an occasion where so many people recognized and respected the name Swedenborg.

The Assembly of Church Leaders did come up with a statement on global ethics. The introduction to it was read at the closing ceremony, right after the Dalai Lama's speech, and for me was a distinct anticlimax. It sounded very much like every other statement I've read for the past twenty years, and I think the leaders

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discouragement.**

and the world would have benefited more if the leaders had simply participated with everyone else. I'm drafting some first impressions to send to the planners that I have met, and will include my feeling that we ended with some rhetoric whose signal virtue was the status of the people who signed it.

All of this adds up to a heartfelt tribute to the organizers of the Parliament. Their planning and administration were light-handed and responsive enough to allow the event to be what it wanted to be, a little microcosm of our strengths and weaknesses. It sends a mixed message, which I believe is precisely what we need to hear.

<sup>1</sup>Rick Fields, *How the Swans Came to the Lake: A Narrative History of Buddhism in America* (Boston: Shambhala, 1992). Cf. especially pp. 359-380.

## Parliament of the — Two Student

*The parliament's  
goal is an  
attainable one: to  
provide the  
means whereby  
all interested  
religious groups  
can come  
together and pool  
their unique and  
special resources  
for doing  
constructive,  
seriously needed  
social actions  
where major  
social injustices  
persist through-  
out the world.*



*Rastafarian Musicians*

### *Kit Billings*

On September fifth, 1993, amidst the fervent bustle of the exhibition section on the fourth floor of the Palmer House Hilton Hotel in Chicago, I was asked by Dr. David Eller, Executive Director of the Swedenborg Foundation, if I was interested in writing a brief report on the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions. Immediately I said, "Yes." He wanted the perspective of a seminary student coming from the perspective of Swedenborgian theology.

The Chicago setting was apropos since it was the birthplace of the original parliament held in conjunction with the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. As a third-year seminary student at the Swedenborg School of Religion, I felt deeply honored and blessed to have been given the opportunity to attend such a history-making event. My sister, Renee Billings-Morris (also a third-year student at the Swedenborgian seminary), and I both expressed to our colleagues back in school that many

other more deserving people should have been there to experience this besides ourselves. The parliament felt like home to anyone who feels the internal or spiritual oneness within all people, and yet is wise enough still to acknowledge the distinctions and variations among the many peoples of our world.

This parliament had a number of important features worth mentioning. It did a better job of representing all of the world's religions than its predecessor in 1893. It had a worthwhile, attainable goal as its vision or purpose. It functioned extremely well under stressful circumstances, with one thousand five hundred more participants than originally planned for. It gave people an introductory understanding of the challenges the world still faces in trying to bring all the world's religions together as a unified, yet diversified, body.

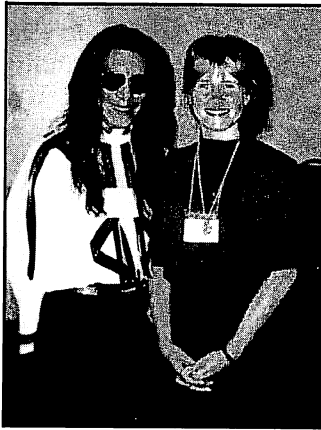
There were two significant groups in attendance this time around—the Native Americans and African-Americans—who were not asked to attend

*(Continued on page 151)*

# World's Religions

## Perspectives —

Renee Morris



*Renee with Native American Chief at Powwow*

Each night I fell on the bed in my hotel room exhausted, and I thanked the Lord for the opportunity to attend the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions. The Swedenborg School of Religion had the vision to fund two ordination-track students to attend the parliament, and so as student representatives of the Swedenborgian Church, my brother, Kit, and I, were selected to attend this gathering of hearts, minds, and voices from virtually every part of the world and from every major faith.

Each day began with a sunrise prayer/meditation service. Then there were morning plenary presentations held during the weekdays in the Palmer House Hilton grand ballroom. I was deeply affected by one presentation in particular that focused on "Voices of the Dispossessed." Chosen members of different communities stood up in front of hundreds of religious leaders to tell their stories of dispossession. The purpose was not to confront and wage political dispute, but to affirm and to communicate this massive human experience of profound loss and hope.

The number of international refugees in the last several years has increased seven-fold. We were asked, "Is there a refugee story in our own religious tradition?" and "Do you welcome the stranger that is different from your way of life?" "Dispossession can be a loss of land, personal

identity, community, freedom to practice religion, or loss of sacred books, objects, and writings. The losses expressed evoked deep emotions in the crowd. Not all were empathetic. Several outbursts from conservative groups against speakers necessitated security restraints.

As a student of religion and minister-in-training, this experience was valuable because I *experienced* not only the broken hearts and the love shared, but also the tensions still existing that block progress. As the mission statement of the council for the parliament clearly states, its goals are to promote understanding and cooperation among religious communities and institutions, and to encourage the spirit of harmony with openness and mutual respect for differences. This will be quite difficult to do, perhaps impossible, if our

*(Continued on page 150)*

*Most of the work  
to be done . . . is  
with ourselves.*

*When we begin  
to change, others  
around us will  
respond and  
move closer to  
the compassion  
within waiting to  
be expressed and  
received.*



*Expressing the joy we all felt in unity*

## Renee Morris' Report

(Continued from page 149)

leaders continue to harbor in themselves pockets of hatred and intolerance.

The afternoon scheduling included workshops, seminars, lectures and presentations, exhibits, performances, interfaith dialogues, children's programs and meetings of specialized groups. Some of the workshops I attended include "An Introduction to Joseph Campbell," "World Scriptures: Learning from Other Traditions" (hosted by the International Religious Federation for World Peace), "Native American Scriptures of Creation," "Wisdom of the Elders, The Sacred Circle of Life," "Buddhist and Taoist Exercise for

and I can still recall the wonderfully unique smells and majestic garments stimulating my senses and imagination. I asked a lot of questions while standing around waiting for the elevators, and I tried to listen carefully for the love present in each person's message and life.

I experienced the tender humility of Tibetan monks, the warmth and dignity in the eyes of women from India, the holiness and humor of the Dalai Lama, the peace that emanated from Swami Chidananda and the quiet strength of Native American chiefs. I offered myself and rarely put forth my doctrine to others. Usually, eye contact communicated the most important messages, and once this established a feeling of

understood intellectually that there is good in all religions. Now, my heart *feels* the good in all of the people who make up all of the religions.

The Dalai Lama said in a press conference in Chicago, "All religions carry the same message: compassion, forgiveness, love . . . and each philosophy, each tradition has a powerful mechanism to do good." During the closing session of the parliament at Grant Park, the Dalai Lama affirmed the good in all of the religions coming together, learning from one another and committing to change. But he then challenged each one of us present to take what we have felt and what we have learned back into our individual communities.

We need to communicate with our people back home the message of peace and tolerance, and we need to treat those around us who are different than we are with respect. Most of the work to be done, though, is with ourselves. When we begin to change, others around us will respond, ask questions and move closer to the compassion within waiting to be expressed and received.

Appropriately, the final program at the closing session was given by children. A large children's gospel choir put the entire crowd on their feet dancing and singing and holding hands. Children have simple vision to guide us toward love and to stir in us unshakable inclinations toward self sacrifice and caring. They are our future. Let's listen to them:

Hold hands until dawn.  
Hold hands until the bell rings.  
Hold hands until the stars come out.  
Be friends, hold hands.

Until the sun is high, hold hands.  
Holding hands makes you feel warm and safe.

Hold hands forever.

—Zoe Ward (3rd grade)  
(A Sourcebook for the  
Community of Religions)

Renee Morris is a third-year theological student at the Swedenborg School of Religion. Parliament photos appearing in this issue were taken by Renee and Kit.



Hindu delegates

Longevity and Health—Meditation and Qigong Healing," "Absolute Respect: The Swedenborgian Theology of Charles Bonney" and "Native Women, the Faithkeepers, Telling our Stories."

Many programs were offered each day. For each program that I chose to attend, there were about five others that I would have equally enjoyed. There was so much to learn and so little time. I learned not only from lectures, presentations and performances, but also while interacting with guests in the elevators. The elevators were usually quite crowded,

connectedness, sharing of backgrounds and perspectives emerged.

By the end of the week, I caught myself feeling so much a part of everyone else and, in that, I lost significant awareness of my separateness. When a small Muslim man was trying to squeeze into an elevator and a large American brute elbowed him in the ribs and laughed, I felt deeply hurt and concerned for the confused foreigner. My mind kept returning to this incident all day long and I realized that I had changed inside. Before my exposure to the people at the parliament, I



the first parliament in 1893. Each group had representatives from many of their respective backgrounds. The Native Americans and African-Americans had leadership roles during two of the large plenary sessions held during our one-week stay. Both groups were asked to participate in the worship experiences and the performing arts aspects of the parliament. I was in attendance for each of them and was impressed by their presentations and in both areas.

The parliament's goal is an attainable one. Its hope is to provide the means whereby all interested religious groups can come together and pool their unique and special resources for doing constructive, seriously needed social actions where major social injustices persist throughout the world. Thus, its purpose is not to construe a world-wide religious doctrine that everyone can agree upon. It is to acknowledge the beauty and usefulness of diversity and give the world what it now lacks: a massive, unified force to combat large-scale greed, destruction, and manipulation. Governments and science have not been the saving grace for humanity as yet. If the world's religions do truly contain goodness and truth on a spiritual level, then they will help bring world peace and harmony in the post-modern world in the near future.

A black and white photograph of five people standing behind a table at a book fair. The table is covered with numerous books, including a large stack of 'SWEDEN BOOKS' and various pamphlets. The background features a large banner with the text 'SWEDEN BOOKS' and 'SWEDISH FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS'. The people are dressed in casual to semi-formal attire. The overall scene is a promotional display for the Swedish Foundation for Human Rights.

**World Parliament,  
Swedenborg Foundation  
Exhibit. Left to Right:  
Estelle Giamboi, Cus-  
tomer Service Representa-  
tive; (back) Sam  
McBride, Regional  
Associate Distributor from  
Salt Lake City; (front)  
Jane Burton, Member,  
Board of Directors; David  
Eller, Executive Director;  
Kit Billings, SSR Student.**

Anyone interested in becoming educated in a plethora of religious beliefs and ethics would have been well satisfied. This experience was priceless for me because of the combination of scholarly education with real human contact! As a Swedenborgian, I would express the effect within myself as many internal "marriages" between spiritual goods and spiritual truths. I was led to experience real understanding conjoined with accompanying feelings of love or spiritual affections.

other, many feel that theirs is the only truth and path toward spiritual salvation. Most of the parliament participants seemed to lie somewhere in between; many were near the middle.

Much more work is needed to facilitate further awareness of who we all are respectively, identifying the unique theological positions and differences, in addition to our reality as a unified, deeply connected spiritual family whose internal conjunction lives in Love. Humanity's interfaith connectedness mirrors the paradox of love and truth existing metaphysically and substantially distinctly as one. The two can really never be separated, as the theologian and mystic Emanuel Swedenborg knew so well. Within my theological perspective, it makes sense that all people can be feeling their oneness in love manifesting itself in many variations reflecting an infinite diversity of intellectual understandings on the nature of God, people, and reality. Obviously, however, one often finds parallels within the many traditions as to the truth side of the paradox.

It is hoped that the next parliament can plan its coalition somewhere within twenty years' time. The most important task now, however, is to take one's inspiration about this movement and put it into action now! If nothing else, share these important ideas with others for the health and life of this planet and its people depend on it.

We ended the parliament with a blessing on the twenty-first century soon to come.

*Kit Billings is a third-year theological student at the Swedenborg School of Religion in Newton, Massachusetts.*

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# My Freeway Angel

Lester J. Martin

Let's face it, not many of us really believe in angels, and there was a time when I too had my doubts, but back in June of 1987, I had a close encounter of the miracle kind that made me a believer.

It was about one o'clock in the morning, and I was heading north out of San Diego on the 5 freeway on my way home to LA with my 10-year-old son David sleeping peacefully in the back seat of my 1983 Plymouth Sapporo. I was returning from a class reunion in Mississippi and David had been staying with my sister. The road was relatively free of traffic, so I had a chance to relax and reflect on the events of the previous week while the old car hummed along, moving steadily towards home. I stole a glance at David sleeping in the back seat and decided to speed up just a notch as we were both feeling very tired.

We were about thirty minutes into our journey when I heard it, a loud screeching noise, like metal grinding against metal. I quickly checked out the cars around me, hoping and praying that the awful sound was coming from any vehicle but mine, but it became louder and more ominous with every minute. I searched the dashboard for some indication of the source of the problem. The temperature needle was hovering in the red area. The car was dangerously overheating. I watched the needle for a moment, willing it to drop back to normal, but it was locked and the noise became almost unbearable.

Reluctant to have the car stall and leave me stranded on the freeway, I decided to exit. I didn't notice the name of the town on the exit sign. I only knew that I needed to find a service station as soon as possible, despite the fact that I was broke. I was only too aware that I didn't have the kind of money to spend on repairing what sounded like a major

undertaking. The trip had left me with twenty-three dollars and a few cents in my pocket and I had no credit cards or money in the bank. I felt totally hopeless and helpless, eighty miles from home.

David was still asleep in the back seat, oblivious to my concern as I looked for an open service station. Actually, I passed two, but somehow I was destined to end up at the Chevron station which was closing as I drove up. Desperate, I tried to get the attendant to at least look at the car and tell me what was wrong, but he was insistent on closing and told me someone would be in at eight o'clock in the morning to help me. I was welcome to stay on the property until then.

◆  
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own sensibility that  
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circumstances, have  
doubted the whole  
situation.*  
◆

Focused on my frustration, I had been unaware of anyone else in the station forecourt, but as the attendant pulled out onto the street and disappeared into the night, I looked around and noticed a shadowy figure sitting in an old beat-up Ford truck parked a few yards away. He was a youngish man, shaggily dressed with a long unkempt beard and he seemed to be watching me. As I looked closer, I noticed a huge dog sprawled on piles of junk in the cab bed. A little uneasy with the strange man's gaze upon me, and afraid to turn the engine off, I sat in the car watching billows of steam rise from

under the hood and listening to the screeching engine as it coughed a few times, and then finally died.

Just at that moment, the stranger approached me and offered to help try and restart the car. Somewhat surprised, but thankful for his help, I agreed to let him try, but after a few feeble attempts, we realized that it was pointless. He then suggested we move the car out of the gas lane and alongside his truck where he had his tools. As he opened the hood, more steam rushed out to warm the cool air around us and after a few moments, the man lifted his head out of the depths of my car's engine and told me the water pump had seized up and that I would either have to get it rebuilt or buy a new one. Hah! I had no money, I had no tools, I didn't even know what town I was in and I was all but out of my head with frustration.

Seeming to realize my dilemma, the man came to my side and said in a soft whisper, "You and your son need rest." Pausing for a moment, he continued, "I will watch over you both and we will fix the car in the morning." I thought to myself. "Who is this man, this welcome Stranger who appeared out of nowhere to help me?" It was almost as if he had been waiting there for me, but the trip and the anguish from the car had taken their toll, and I gave way to his suggestion without another thought. In retrospect, I never felt uneasy about his urging me to rest and sleep. It was as if I were being guided by a power greater than my own sensibility that would, under normal circumstances, have doubted the whole situation.

As I awoke, it was morning, and remembering the events of the night before, I looked around for the stranger. His dog was still asleep in the cab bed of his truck, but he was nowhere in sight. I got out of the car to check the state of the engine and saw that the water pump had



been removed. A strange feeling came over me, a mixture of amazement and confusion when the man suddenly walked up behind me, new water pump in hand. "I trust you had a restful night," he said, and promptly started to install the pump in my car. A few minutes later, the morning manager of the service station came over wanting to know why we were fixing my car on *his* property. He was about to open the station and told us we would have to move on. I tried to persuade him to let us finish, but he insisted that we move on or he would call the police. The stranger suggested that we push the car into the bank parking lot across the street and assured me that he would have it fixed by the time the bank opened.

Once we had both vehicles in place, David, who had slept through the whole thing, was just waking up. I explained to him what had happened and, attempting to introduce him to the stranger, I realized that I didn't even know his name. To this date, I don't recall his name exactly; I believe he called himself Paul. After the introductions, Paul suggested that David and I go across the street to MacDonald's for breakfast while he continued to work on my car. I offered to bring him something back and he said he would just have a cup of coffee. As we ate our breakfast, David was full of questions, but I didn't have any answers about this man who had taken it upon himself to rescue us from our ordeal.

When we got back to the car, two police cars were in pursuit of a group of men running across the parking lot of the service station we had just left. If we hadn't been forced to leave the service station, we would have been caught in the middle of the chase. Even so, one of the policemen slowed down, approached us, and asked what we were doing. We were a conspicuous sight—a black man and his boy and this bum-like character hanging out in a parking lot in an all-white neighborhood! Paul told him we were just leaving, but the policeman was ob-

viously suspicious. He started to reach for his pad to take our names when one of the other officers called for him to resume the chase. We both sighed as he left.

Paul had already finished fixing the car and he told me to get in and turn the engine on. Sure enough, it purred like a kitten. For the first time since we had met, we looked at each other, eye to eye. He had a gentle, reassuring smile on his face and I felt a peace within my soul unlike anything I had ever known.

He seemed eager to leave and told me he must be on his way. Still somewhat bewildered by the man, I thanked him and asked how much I owed him for the pump and his time, but he looked at me and said, "You don't owe me anything, just get your son home safe." Then he turned and started toward his own Ford truck, where his dog waited patiently in the back. Realizing I didn't have any way of contacting him, I asked him for his address and phone number. He paused a moment, then accepted my scratch pad and pencil and scribbled a few words. I asked him where he lived. He looked at me and said, "Up there," pointing vaguely toward the hills to the east. Then, just as mysteriously as he had come into my journey, he left.

David's urging that we leave brought me back to focus and we got in the car to continue our journey home. As we headed north, I reflected over the events of the previous night. I just couldn't get the man out of my mind. Who was he? What was he? Why and how had he been at that service station that night? Questions I kept asking myself, questions with no answers.

Once home, I mailed a money order for the cost of the new water pump and labor to the address given me by the stranger, but it came back a few weeks later stamped "Return to sender, address unknown." I also attempted to call the phone number he had given me and discovered it was a non-working number. A warm feeling came over me at that moment as I realized that I had been

sent someone very special at a time in my life when I felt alone and was in need. I have traveled to and from San Diego many times since that fateful night, and I always get a comforting surge when I pass that stretch of the 5 freeway just about thirty miles north of San Diego, for that is where I met my "Freeway Angel."

*Lester Martin is a regular worshiper at Wayfarers Chapel in Palos Verdes, California.*

## Nominating Committee Seeks Candidates

The Nominating Committee of the Swedenborgian Church is seeking qualified, interested people to fill the following positions in our offices and Support Units:

Vice President  
Recording Secretary  
Treasurer  
General Council (1 minister, 2 lay persons)  
Communications Support Unit  
Education Support Unit  
Financial Planning & Resource Support Unit  
Growth and Outreach Support Unit  
Information Management Support Unit  
Pastoral Ministries Support Unit  
Nominating Committee  
Committee on Admission to the Ministry (1 minister, 1 lay person)  
Convention nominees for SSR  
Board of Trustees

If you are interested in having your name considered for nomination or wish to suggest a potential candidate, please notify the chairperson of the Nominating Committee at the following address:

The Nominating Committee  
Attn: Polly Baxter  
4720 Bel Pre Road  
Rockville, MD 20853

# The Hope of Peace

by the Rev. Arthur Wilde

The Rev. Arthur Wilde was ordained by the British Conference in 1902, and served churches in England for 21 years. In 1923 he accepted a call to our New York society, where he ministered until his death in 1952. He was editor of *The Messenger* from 1932 to 1944. During this time he wrote many imaginative stories for the children's pages, as well as articles and editorials. The piece printed here appeared in the issue of December 18, 1935.

Louise Woofenden

It is a tradition of the Christian Church that at the time of the Savior's birth the civilized world was at peace. Rome had no war on hand, her legions were at rest, and the Roman eagles were not flaunted before the eyes of men. The tradition may be founded on fact, but though there may have been no actual conflict at that time, the peace was not of a very positive character. The whole civilized world was seething with unrest. External peace was maintained only by the threat of the mailed fist. It would be interesting to learn from some erudite historian the number of Christmas Days since the Savior's birth on which the world has been at peace.

Between the Norman conquest [1066] and the year 1860 Great Britain waged fifty major wars. These did not include wars with India, China, Persia, Abyssinia, Afghanistan and Zululand, nor did they include the long civil wars of the Roses and the struggle between Charles I and the Parliament.

Those wars ranged in duration anywhere from two to twenty-eight years. Taking a low average of five years per war, during eight centuries England was at war on at least three hundred Christmas Days. For the greatest part of those eight centuries England was only an obscure nation. There were mightier countries in Europe waging war quite as incessantly.

The probability is that never since the birthday of the Savior has the Feast of the Incarnation been celebrated by a world entirely at peace. There is something pathetic in the fact that despite its worship of the Prince of Peace, the world has never entirely ceased from war.

Yet the record of history is distinctly encouraging. Despite our present-day difficulties, despite huge armies and navies and the actual conflicts now being waged, we realize that the spirit of peace grows steadily and surely. More than fifty countries are seeking, through the League of Nations, for some method of banishing war from the earth. Allegiance to the Prince of Peace grows steadily in earnestness and sincerity. War was formerly regarded as the natural condition of mankind. Today it is widely recognized as a curse, a bloody and violent interruption of man's normal activities.

The road to universal peace may be long and steep, but mankind is on its way. The day will come

When the new heaven and earth  
shall own  
The Prince of Peace their King,  
And the whole world give back the  
song  
Which now the angels sing.

*Louise Woofenden is the recently retired archivist at the Swedenborg School of Religion Library.*

You are invited to order tapes of lectures delivered at the Fryeburg New Church Assembly during the 1993 Summer Session. The theme of lectures given during the first week is *Education in Our Theology*. The theme of the second week's lectures is *Creation Throughout Scripture*.

## EDUCATION IN OUR THEOLOGY

*How and Why We Learn: Developing Constructive Relationships*—Rev. Dr.

Gard Perry

*Enlightenment and Resulting Renewal*—

Rev. Dr. William R. Woofenden

*Education and Freedom*—Rev. Robert

McCluskey

*Swedenborg and Childhood Education*—

Rev. Dr. William R. Woofenden

*Instruction: The Third Stage*—Rev. Dr.

George F. Dole

*Theology and Teaching Attentively*—Rev.

Dr. Theodore J. Klein

*Swedenborg and Child Rearing*—Lee S.

Woofenden

*Swedenborg, Krishnamurti, and Culture*—

Rev. Robert McCluskey

*The Unique Role of Remains in Education*

—Rev. Dr. William R. Woofenden

*What Goes On in There?—A Look at Heaven and Hell 356e*—Rev. Dr. George

F. Dole

## CREATION THROUGHOUT SCRIPTURE

*Creation and Re-Creation in Scripture*—

Rev. Dr. Gard Perry

*Creation—The Seven Days*—Lee S.

Woofenden

*Creation of the Universe*—Rev. Dr.

William R. Woofenden

*A Visit to the British Conference*—Rev.

Edwin G. Capon

*The Creation of Freedom*—Rev. Dr.

Wilma Wake

*Man's Eternal Exile*—Dr. Stephen Larson

*Christ as Creator*—Rev. Dr. William R.

Woofenden

*Creation as Conclusion*—Rev. Dr. George

F. Dole

*Nothing New Under the Sun*—Rev. Dr.

George F. Dole

*Creation of the Heavens*—Rev. Dr.

William R. Woofenden

Cost of the twenty-lecture set is \$24.00, which includes postage. To order, make your check payable to The Fryeburg New Church, and send it to The Fryeburg New Church, 4 Oxford Street, Fryeburg, ME 04037.

# Christmas Thoughts

The shepherds heard the angels  
while they sat in silence  
on that Judean hillside.

*"While they sat in silence on the  
hillside an angel appeared to them  
..."*  
Luke 2:8

Most of us tend to overburden  
ourselves during this time of year.  
From every corner of our minds  
come hectic messages: do this, hurry  
up, get things done!

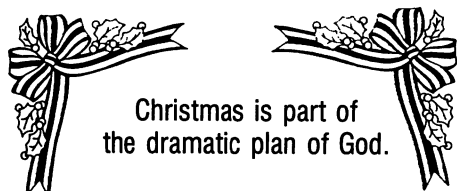
That is why we need to begin this  
Advent season realizing something  
especially important about getting  
ready for Christmas: *The shepherds  
heard the angels while they sat in  
silence* on that Judean hillside.

Likewise, the Magi saw the star while  
contemplating the heavens. Even  
Mary, while Joseph frantically  
searched for a place to stay, sat  
peacefully, almost laughing at her  
husband's nervous energy.

To really enjoy Christmas, and to  
receive the Lord's birth anew within  
our lives, we must heed these calls to  
serenity. We must evaluate what is  
truly important, and set aside things  
that don't really matter in the long  
run.

This year, let us commit ourselves  
to following the examples that scrip-  
ture gives us. Let's listen to the  
angels sing while viewing star-filled  
December skies. Let's take time to  
look to the heavens, and receive  
guidance. And let's cherish the si-  
lence through which the Child comes  
into the world.

*The Rev. Ron Brugler, pastor of the Sweden-  
borgian Church of the Good Shepherd, Kit-  
chener, Ontario, Canada. Condensed from The  
Tender, December, 1992.*



Christmas is part of  
the dramatic plan of God.

It is easy to be sentimental about  
Christmas, but for those who believe

that it has a significance for the  
whole world, Christmas is part of the  
dramatic plan of God. Centuries  
before the birth of Jesus, God had  
seen His world being organized with  
little thought for its Creator and His  
purpose of love, and because of this  
He was determined to save it and  
bring it to a living relationship with  
Him.

First there were the Old Testament  
Prophets, God's agents, preparing  
the way for His coming. Then, when  
everything was ready He actually  
came into the world. He did not ap-  
pear in power and glory, but in a  
way so inconspicuous that only a few  
like the shepherds realized what was  
happening. He came in the person  
of His Son Jesus, born of the blessed  
Virgin Mary, and took the world by  
surprise.

To show that His plan was of  
more than local importance the birth  
was announced by a star, a sign  
which certain wise men from the east  
understood and followed. When they  
arrived at Jerusalem they asked where  
the new king would be born, thus  
putting the baby Jesus in jeopardy;  
and Herod fearing for his throne,  
murdered all the young children of  
Bethlehem. Fortunately, the Divine  
infant escaped with His mother and  
Joseph to Egypt to seek refuge and  
stayed there until after Herod's  
death.

Christmas is not just the delightful  
story we sometimes imagine. It is  
clouded by the lack of common hu-  
manity which drove Mary from the  
inn to have her child in a stable  
among the beasts, and the cruelty of  
a king who murdered little children.  
Nevertheless we celebrate Christmas  
with thanksgiving because when He  
was born at Bethlehem, Jesus began  
a movement of joy to which all who  
make room for Him in their hearts  
can belong.

*The Rev. John Bennett, former (retired) pastor  
of the Pawnee Rock Swedenborgian Church in*

*Pawnee Rock, Kansas. Condensed from the New  
Jerusalem News, December 1992.*



We can become fully human  
only through the pain of  
our mistakes, experiencing the joy  
and triumph of having squarely  
faced the responsibility of the  
journey through the years.



We were enjoying a fine and most  
bountiful dinner at the home of Carl  
and Eva Irwin of Harper (Kansas)  
when Carl raised the question,  
"There is so much good food  
here—while in places like Somalia,  
Africa, children are starving. It's so  
unfair. Why doesn't God put a stop  
to the hunger of the innocent?" A  
good question, indeed!

In the teachings of our church, we  
find these three words: *omnipotence*,  
*omnipresence* and *omniscience*. The  
God we worship is all of these. All  
three. "By omnipotence He operates  
all things." By omnipresence He is  
"present with the worthy and the  
unworthy." By omniscience God  
"sees and knows all things . . . even  
to the most minute." God also is in-  
finite love and mercy.

If, indeed, God is all-powerful  
and a God of Love—surely, He  
could see to the needs of the  
hungry. These children suffering the  
terrible tragedy of starvation are in-  
nocent; they deserve something bet-  
ter than this painful end. All of this  
is a most disturbing dilemma. I feel  
sure that there are those—and there  
have been those over many  
centuries—who came to a decision as  
to the very existence of a God based  
upon their response to this one  
troubling concern. If there is a God,  
surely, He would answer the plight  
of His children.

It is possible, I think, to formulate  
a doctrinal answer to this vexing  
problem. Sadly, I fear that this  
answers only the mind. The heart

*(Continued on page 156)*

## Christmas Thoughts

(continued from page 155)

still cries out and is not content. Within myself the answer is not whole—and, so, for Carl it may not be enough.

For me, Swedenborg's book, *Divine Providence*, has for a long time been one of his most helpful treatise on the relationship between God and each one of us. There we learn that there are operating in the universe, in all of His creation those laws of order which have as their sole purpose the salvation of everyone. How does this happen? Well—within every human being there are two faculties—truth and good. Life is an ongoing experience of learning (truth) and acting from that which has been learned (good) and confirmed within to build our personality. The Lord does all He can to bring these two (truth and good) into harmony within us in such a way that in their union they lead us into an ever higher, nobler and more spiritually mature relationship with other people, within ourselves and so with the Lord Himself.

Much of the growth process going on within us happens without our being aware of it. "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform . . . His purposes will ripen fast, Unfolding ev'ry hour."<sup>1</sup> There is a reason for this. We are to live, to conduct ourselves, to make our decisions as if everything depended upon us. The Lord never interferes with this. We can become truly and fully human only through the pain of our mistakes, by experiencing the joy and triumph of having squarely faced the responsibility of the journey through the years. It's not easy. If the Kingdom of God is ever to become a reality within us and in the larger world, this is the route that has to be taken.

In the Garden of Gethsemane where the disciple Peter draws his sword to protect Jesus from his captors, Jesus asks, "Do you think that I cannot now pray to my Father and he shall . . . give me twelve legions of angels."<sup>2</sup> The Lord answers his

own question, "but (if I did this) how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled . . ." *I could*, he is saying—but *I can't*. *By doing so my purpose in coming into the world would be compromised.*

Yes, the Lord could make sure that every child would go to bed at night well-satisfied—in spite of raging civil wars, in spite of all man's inhumanity to man. In the short term this would bring immense benefits. All of us would rejoice! But in the long term, would we not lose the heart and care of what we are as human beings? God shares with us His very precious gift of life and all it offers us in the promise of our freedoms, our potential, our vision of what life can become.

This is our stewardship. And we must hold on to it—even with all the pain, the suffering this demands.

1. Hymn #82, *Book of Worship*.

2. *Matthew 26:53*

*The Rev. Eric Zacharias, pastor of the Swedenborgian Church in Pretty Prairie, Kansas. Condensed from The Plains Banner, October 1992.*

## Opinion

(Continued from page 146)

their will. As you know, freedom of choice is a big thing in the Swedenborgian Church.

It is true that our PMSU consultant has borrowed some church growth techniques from other Christian denominations, and adapted them for use in our centers. Some of these methods have worked quite successfully, others have not. I wish we could tell beforehand which programs worked, and which didn't, but we can't. I just want to assure you, Leonard, that we do the best we can with the resources at our disposal. If you have some good ideas to "grow the church," we would be delighted to hear from you.

You suggest that we not hold meetings, but instead, have each minister preach in each church within a three-year period. If you look at the logistics of that scenario, you will quickly discover that it is totally unrealistic, and would not be cost-effective. Some of our support

units now meet only once a year; conference calls are being used more and more; speaking for PMSU, and I believe other support units, we are paring expenses to the bone. PMSU, because of the nature of its work, must meet twice yearly. But this is hardly spending more time together than many families!

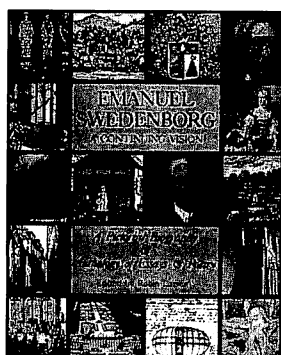
In past years, ministers serving churches receiving AFC aid have conducted worship services in churches without ministers. At our PMSU meeting in November this policy will be formalized in detail. Ministers (with one or two exceptions) serving churches which receive AFC funding will be asked to fill empty pulpits twice annually. A letter outlining the whole procedure will be in the mail by mid-November.

You suggest that we leave the social action agenda to our Unitarian friends . . . that our mission is to "talk about the essence and meaning of a (G)od concept in modern life." I would like to think that within our modest parameters we could do both. As Swedenborg tells us, one without the other is incomplete. It's a matter of balance, and making the best possible use of our limited resources—resources meaning both people and money.

Finally, you wax eloquent re: the "inner" and "outer" circles in our denomination. Up to a point, this is quite true. Probably it was ever thus. In every social group or movement a relatively small number of people do most of the work and have most of the power. This is the way democratic institutions function. But we are always trying to involve more new people in the national life of our church. I've served five years on the Nominating Committee, and every year we intentionally looked for new qualified people to serve on the denomination's committees. Every year the Nominating Committee has a piece in *The Messenger*, urging members to submit their names or the names of others who have the interest, time and ability to fill national positions. We are trying to enlarge the circle. Everyone can have

(Continued on page 157)

# Holiday Specials from the Swedenborg Foundation



## Emanuel Swedenborg: A Continuing Vision

Edited by Robin Larsen

This large-format pictorial biography of Swedenborg is the perfect Christmas gift for all family members. Take advantage of this special discount—good only until the end of 1993. (cloth and paper, 574 pp.)

cloth: was \$75, **now \$50**      paperback: was \$50, **now \$30**

"Even at \$75, *Swedenborg: A Continuing Vision* is the richest book for the dollar we have seen in 14 years of reviewing books for *Brain/Mind Bulletin*."

—Marilyn Ferguson, author of *The Aquarian Conspiracy*

## 20% discount on these selected titles—good only until the end of 1993

### Essays on Spiritual Psychology

Carolyn Blackmer

Swedenborg's theories explained in the context of modern psychology. (paper, 68 pp)

was \$12.50, **now \$10**

### Emanuel Swedenborg: Scientist and Mystic

Signe Tokvig

Focuses on Swedenborg's spiritual experiences. (cloth, 389 pp.)

was \$7, **now \$5.50**

### A Scientist Explores Spirit: A Compact Biography of Emanuel Swedenborg, with Key Concepts of Swedenborg's Theology

G. F. Dole and Robert H. Kirven

A lively and concise biography that serves as an introduction to the life and thought of Swedenborg. (paper, 104 pp)

was \$10, **now \$8**

Order from the **Swedenborg Foundation** by calling (800) 355-3222 or sending a check to: Swedenborg Foundation, 320 North Church Street, West Chester, Pennsylvania 19380. (Include \$3 for postage and handling for first title; \$1.50 for each additional title.)

## Opinion (from page 156)

an impact on the life of our church by: attending annual meetings, writing the denomination's leadership, writing to *The Messenger*, talking about these issues at Association meetings, sharing your concerns with your local leadership, and by being involved in the life of your local congregation.

And believe me, Leonard, we really are trying to deal with the issues that face us in a realistic manner. This is no time to be hiding our heads in the sand.

*Paul Zacharias,  
PMSU Executive Secretary  
Kitchener, Ontario, Canada*

To the Editor:

It is always a good sign when people question the basic elements of an organization, and it is essential in our declining church to continue to prayerfully and honestly review our

present status.

One way is to ask those who have left why our church did not meet their needs. Presently I have heard of several who, like myself, found within (Swedenborg's) teachings a firm basis for understanding life and its conditions, but, within the organization, found a lack of putting into "hands and feet" the words spoken.

While I appreciate Mr. Harding's suggestions (Opinion, October *Messenger*), I believe that arranging ministerial visits to small groups to continue our isolation and narrow views will not change the decline of our church. What we need is to look at the basic teachings and then ask ourselves these simple, but complex, questions: Does our church follow the path as taught by Jesus? As we walk together to grow and develop our spiritual lives, do we include caring for others in need? What portion of our funds are given to provide for the hungry, homeless, and the sick in our world?

Until we rearrange our basic values in our church, we will, I believe, continue to decline.

*Marilyn Turley  
Bridgton, Maine*

## Just the Facts

To the Editor,

I am writing in response to the new format of the *Messenger* (October 1993). I am mostly concerned with the new sub-heading "Feature Article." The October feature article was more of an editorial than it was an article. The ideas expressed in the article were the author's opinions, they were not facts. An article is generally full of facts. I personally feel that it should have appeared on the "Opinions" page because that is what it contained.

*Nancy F. Hawley  
Marblehead, Massachusetts*



# This Christmas, Give a Gift for the Spirit!



Are you wondering what to give your children, grandchildren, or children of a friend or neighbour? Instead of giving them something that brings ten minutes of entertainment before being discarded, why not give something that will remain in their spirit for eternity.



## RAINBOW COLORS IN THE WORD

is a book for juniors.

Children who like to know 'Why?' will enjoy this introduction to color. Colors are part of their natural world. Colors are found in their Bibles. Colors relate to their feelings. Here is a basic correspondence of colors with pictures and puzzles and a thoroughly readable text. Adults will find it entertaining and informative.

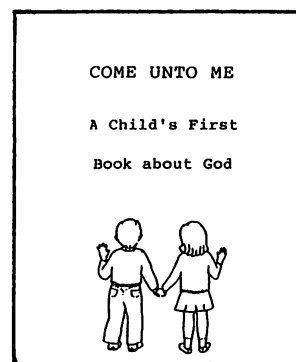
A book your eight, nine or ten-year-old will enjoy and savor.

A wonderful series of 'color lessons' for your Sunday School classes.

RAINBOW COLORS IN THE WORD is written and illustrated by Louise Woofenden.

26 pages, paperbound, ISBN 0-917426-08-0

..... \$2.50



## COME UNTO ME

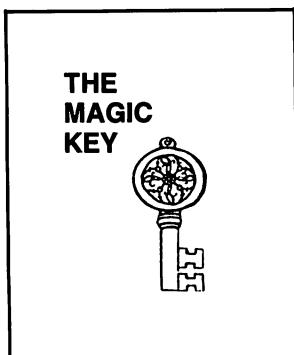
A Child's First

Book about God

COME UNTO ME is a book for little children, those who like sharing a book with mother or grandpa. It introduces, one page at a time, simple Swedenborgian philosophy about God, Heaven, the Lord's prayer, work and love. A little book to read to your little boy or girl, or use as a classroom supplement. There are twelve topics, each with a picture to color.

It is written by Joyce Fekete (your Aunt Joyce of *Five Smooth Stones*). Introduced at Convention 1991, it is in its second printing.

24 pages, paperbound ..... \$2.50



THE MAGIC KEY is a beginning book in the language of correspondences. Written by Joyce Fekete, it is geared to children from age 11 and up—or adults who are new to the concept of correspondences.

24 pages, paperbound ..... \$2.50

FIVE SMOOTH STONES is a bi-monthly paper for children, ages five to eleven. Stories, Bible lessons, puzzles, handwork, pictures to color and letters to share with Aunt Joyce.

This is a children's paper that will enrich family time. It will bring Swedenborgian teachings into your home if you are isolated members. Teachers will find it useful in their classes.

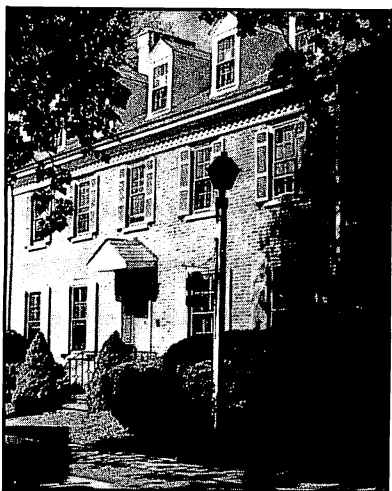
Single subscriptions are \$4.50 per year  
Special rates for Sunday Schools.



These and other publications of the American New Church Sunday School Association are available from Five Smooth Stones, 115 Graham Street, Saginaw, MI 48602. To order by phone, call (517) 791-1735.  
(Add \$1.00 postage and handling)



## Swedenborg Foundation Moves to Historic Home in Pennsylvania



*Historic new headquarters for the 154-year-old Swedenborg Foundation in West Chester, Pennsylvania*

The Swedenborg Foundation has completed its relocation from New York City to West Chester, Pennsylvania, a small university town 28 miles west of Philadelphia. Founded in 1849, the Swedenborg Foundation publishes the theological works of Swedish scientist and visionary Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), as well as books and materials related to Swedenborg and Swedenborgian thought. The Foundation also publishes *Chrysalis*, a journal of spiritual growth.

The Foundation's new home is a 2½-story brick colonial era house, built between 1760 and 1773. Located near the center of town, the building is the oldest in West Chester and predates the founding of the borough.

During the early 19th century, while a private residence, the east hall was used as a Quaker meeting place. In 1912, it became the home of the area school district, and later the community art center.

The Foundation will occupy the first two floors, providing space to accommodate the library, image archive, museum exhibit, conference rooms, and staff offices. A public open house is planned for early December.

Shepherding this transition is Foundation executive director Dr. David Eller. The staff includes Lieschen Redelin, financial secretary; Eileen

## Passages

### Baptisms

**Buzzell**—Marcus Thomas Buzzell, son of Mark and Jody (Murphy) Buzzell, was baptized into the Christian faith August 29, 1993, at the Swedenborgian Church of the New Jerusalem in Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Dr. Gardiner Perry officiating.

**Ferguson**—Ronald Connor Ferguson, son of Robert and Heidi Ferguson, born May 27, 1993, was baptized into the Christian faith October 2, 1993, at the Swedenborgian Church of the Holy City in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, the Rev. Henry Korsten officiating.

### Marriages

**Digeon and Heath**—Stephanie C. Digeon and Randy S. Heath were united in marriage August 27, 1993, at the Swedenborgian Church of the New Jerusalem in Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Dr. Gardiner Perry officiating.

**Greene and O'Rourke**—Wendy L. Green and John M. O'Rourke were united in marriage July 10, 1993, at the Swedenborgian Church of the New Jerusalem in Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Dr. Gardiner Perry officiating.

**Rienstra and Pruett**—Kathryn Joy Rienstra and Eric Andrew Pruett were united in marriage October 9, 1993, at the St. Louis Swedenborgian Church of the Open Word in Creve Coeur, Missouri, the Rev. David Rienstra officiating.

**Yurkiw and Almond**—Danielle E. Yurkiw and Roland Almond were united in marriage September 18, 1993, at the Swedenborgian Church of the Holy City in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, the Rev. Henry Korsten officiating.

### Deaths

**Cowern**—Agnes Cowern, long-time member of the Virginia Street Church (Swedenborgian) in St. Paul, Minnesota, entered the spiritual world October 11, 1993. A memorial service was conducted October 23, 1993, the Rev. Edwin Capon officiating. In addition to her many contributions to her local church, Miss Cowern served two terms on the Board of Managers of the Swedenborg School of Religion.

**Greaves**—Gertrude Ethelridge Greaves, long-time 101-year-old member of the New York Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world September 23, 1993. A funeral service was conducted at Benta's Funeral Home September 28, 1993, the Rev. Robert McCluskey officiating.

### Church Family News

Update from Muff Worden:

*Thanks everyone, for your kind thoughts, cards, phone calls and support! It's been a summer and fall I'd prefer to forget, healthwise, but at last I'm mostly healed, healthy, happy and back to work as of November 8. The bad news is, there are still pulmonary emboli to deal with—but the good news is that these will probably dissolve over time, and the current "me" is a whole lot slimmer than the last time you saw me. Thanks again for your loving care, which has truly helped in the healing process! And do keep in touch! Much love to you all.*

Cards and letters can be sent to Muff at R.R.1, Box 121, Limerick, ME 04048. New phone: 207-793-2820. (Note corrected zip. The one in the *Journal* and *November Messenger* is wrong).

## President's Meetings

Sept. 17-18  
Sept. 27-Oct. 3  
Oct. 16-17  
Oct. 28  
Oct. 29-30  
Nov. 5-6  
Nov. 7  
Nov. 20-21  
Dec. 4-5

Temenos Board in Pennsylvania  
Executive Committees of COM, CAM, and SSR Board in Massachusetts  
FPRSU in D.C.  
Meeting with Kemper Road Church in Ohio  
Urbana Trustees in Ohio  
Wayfarers Chapel Board in California  
Preacher in San Francisco, California  
Cabinet in Massachusetts  
Executive Committee of General Council in Minnesota

President Edwin Capon and his wife, Esther, were two of a number of church friends of Dick and Polly Baxter present at the memorial service for Dick in our national church October 9. Among these friends were ministers and lay people from Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Massachusetts, New York, Delaware, Florida, and Ontario, Canada.

Sullivan, administrative assistant; Estelle Giamboi, customer service representative; and Joanna Hill, newly hired marketing manager.

The Foundation welcomes inquiries and would be pleased to provide fur-

ther information on its programs, or books for review.

*For additional information, contact: Joanna Hill, Swedenborg Foundation, 320 North Church Street, West Chester, PA 19380. Phone (215) 430-3222.*



**The Heavenly City: A Spiritual Guidebook, a new translation from the Swedenborg Foundation**

Now available for the modern reader is *The Heavenly City: A Spiritual Guidebook*, a fresh translation by Lee Woofenden of Emanuel Swedenborg's 1758 Latin text *De Nova Hierosolyma*. Previous English translations have carried the title *The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine*.

As he states in his introduction, the translator's aim in this highly readable rendering "has been to put Swedenborg's simple, readable Latin into equally modern English. . . . [Swedenborg] explores the states of

spiritual growth, examines the deeper structure of the human mind, and gives new meaning to many Christian beliefs and practices. The thoughtful reader will travel beyond the apparent similarities with familiar religious ideas into a rich and rewarding world of new spiritual insights."

Amazingly timely in its outlook and wisdom for today, *The Heavenly City* summarizes Emanuel Swedenborg's major theological ideas. Beginning with an explanation of the Revelation of Saint John and a new religious philosophy, the book provides important glimpses into the nature of love, spiritual development, and life after death.

Lee Woofenden has studied sacred languages and is currently a student at the Swedenborg School of Religion in Newton, Massachusetts.

November 1993  
\$9.95

104 pages  
ISBN 0-87785-144-1

*More Swedenborg Foundation information on pages 157 & 159.*

*Emanuel Swedenborg was born January 29, 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.*

## Important Church Calendar Dates in 1993 and 1994

Dec. 4-6 Executive Committee, General Council  
Jan. 13-16 General Council, Newton, MA  
Jan. 14-15 COMSU at Temenos  
Feb. 12-15 EDSU in Seattle

Feb. 14-15 SSR workshop for Ministers  
March 13-15 Council of Ministers Executive Committee SSR  
March 16-18 Committee on Admission to the Ministry SSR  
April 15-17 PMSU at Almont

**The Swedenborgian Church  
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