
THE MESSENGER

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November 1993



Moving Toward the Light

Memorial for Richard M. Baxter

July 4, 1937 — September 19, 1993

Ron Brugler

I have just finished watching the videotape of Dick's sermon at last summer's convention. It was such a relief to at last have tears flow over the loss of one of my closest and dearest friends. But they weren't just tears of sadness, for I must also share with you the feeling of honor that was within me. Yes, I felt honored, even blessed, by having shared so many years and meaningful moments with this wonderful man.

I know that many people have been touched by the closing sentences of Dick's sermon: "We are the people of the Book and we are on a journey from the Garden of Eden to the Holy City. I'll see you there!" But in watching and listening to his sermon, I found myself experiencing a much more inward reaction to a question that Dick posed in his opening remarks. For Dick shared with us his response to a woman's question about the scriptural foundation of our church, and then asked, "How did I do?" This is a question that with love and joy I want to answer as a memorial statement.

"Dick, you done good!" And I mean that as a response to your life, to the many ways that you cared, that you loved, that you shared joy and happiness with us. It made no difference if it was in St. Paul, or Washington, D.C., or even at Almont. It mattered not if it was in leading worship, or making pastoral calls, or in taking part in a committee meeting. I am referring to the innumerable ways that you willingly answered God's call to serve.

As we remember you, Dick, we all sense the truth in my response. Even now I can hear your laughter. I listen again to the many late-night conversations we shared. I travel once more the inner dimensions that you called us to journey as we sought answers to life's many perplexing situations. I feel the real basic love that was, and is still, present within your being.

Shortly before you died, one of your hospice caregivers suggested that you slow down, that perhaps the time had come for you to end your ministry. This would, as the caregiver suggested, improve your quality of life in the days you had left. You told that person that your quality of life came from doing what you loved best, and with those words you tried your hardest to keep on living, and doing, your love. Your love was ministry in the truest sense of the word. It was ministry to your church, to your family, to your friends.

Yes, Dick, you done good. I am glad that you were with us as long as you were. I am glad, too, that your illness ended with little suffering and pain. You deserved that. So enter now into the joy of the Lord, my friend. And yes, it will be wonderful to see you there!

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Deadline for material: Six weeks before the first day of the month of issue.

Our Cover: Swedenborgian Church Youth League's West Coast Retreat (see report by Jenn Tafel, p. 141). SCYL President Jenn Tafel created this collage depicting participants' activities during the Memorial Day West Coast Retreat held in San Pedro, California. Upper left corner: Banning House in Wilmington, Rev. Carl Yenetchi launching a kite, Korean Friendship Bell next to youth hostel, Allison Emmerick breaking up—(is it something she ate?), Dan Conger with helmet at half-mast. Upper right, Jono Pults seated on motorcycle under spreading palm tree; standing, from left: Andy Scordato, Carl Hamilton, Scott Mills, Dan Conger. Lower Left: Jono Pults overlooking Pacific Ocean, Jenn Tafel being sketched at the wharf. In the chill of November, we can thankfully recall the balmy breezes of spring!

Opinion

Convention Sermon Goosebumps

Dear Editor:

I have read the September issue of *The Messenger* with much interest. I enjoyed all the pictures and writeups on our Boston Convention. Thanks very much for printing Rev. Dick Baxter's most inspiring sermon—it still gives me goosebumps and a lump in my throat when I read it.

Marjorie Runka

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Video Tape Available

A video tape of the Sunday service at the 1993 convention, including the sermon by the Reverend Richard M. Baxter, is available from the Central Office for \$15.00. Please send your request to 48 Sargent St., Newton, MA 02158.

IN THIS ISSUE

A Thanksgiving Blessing 137

SCYL Retreat ... 141

The Future of Technology . 131

Sermon by Dick Baxter .. 133

Who Are We ...?
(2 Viewpoints) 134-135

Why Did We Stop
Giving Thanks? 136

The

Steve Koke

Future

Swedenborg's spiritual experiences led him to believe that there are no technological civilizations elsewhere in the universe. Furthermore, we are told that the greatest cultures in human history were built by non-technological people. And it appears that even the spiritual world has little or no technology, although it contains everything else. Why would one of our most vital interests be so rare?

At least in the West, we define an advanced culture as a technological one; cultures that are not "advanced" are regarded as "backward." We have produced what is virtually a doctrine that humanity is born to be technological and must build a technological culture sooner or later.

In his small book *Earths in the Universe*, Swedenborg tells us that all who have ever lived on a particular planet continue to live together in the same region of the spiritual world (n. 86). Our planetary region is one of a group of such regions (n. 128). We would expect any other technological civilizations to be somewhere nearby, for in the spiritual world similarity of character brings people and groups close to each other.

But surprisingly, no other planetary region in this group has developed any of the sciences. Our technology stands apart, and we must consider the possibility that it is only a temporary preoccupation not rooted deeply enough to determine who our spiritual neighbors will be. We may be involved with it for superficial reasons that aren't giving expression to our deeper selves.

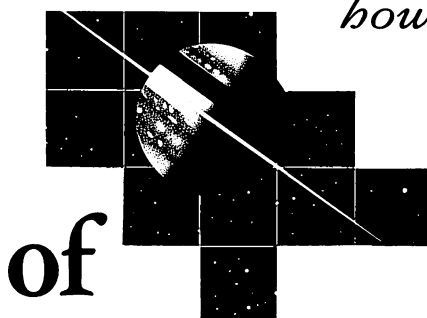
The Most Ancient Church was a celestial culture, and with only its mind and heart to work with, it explored the relationship between spirit

and nature, building its awareness of correspondences with enormous fascination and delight. That created a great and soul-satisfying wisdom, and it looks, interestingly enough, as though it may be the real root of our later interests in science. Something of that ancient thirst for exploring nature and its invisible causes is probably still in our bones, driving the exploration of the atom, our theories about the origin and nature of the universe, and many other things. If so, then science has a somewhat mystical core.

Swedenborg's spiritual world also has minimal technology. Could that be due to the relatively underdeveloped technology of his time? It is sometimes suggested that Swedenborg saw the heavens as interpreted by his own character; an eighteenth century man may see an eighteenth century spiritual world. But a problem here is that as we look higher, the heavens become more timeless and more symbolic of the values that continue—sometimes unconsciously—through all historical periods. Period imagery and predilections should disappear. In fact, the highest heaven contains people from all inhabited planets without the boundaries that define different planetary regions. Whatever defines the essence of humanity anywhere and in any time would apparently define that level of consciousness.

In either of these more transcendent cases, technology is edged out by the deeper urges of spirit—it is apparently not vital to what actually makes us happy. Our culture may

*The issue has to do with
how we allocate
spiritual
energy*



Technology

have an outer crust of material inventiveness, and we are genuinely enthralled by what we have been able to do with nature and physics. That fascination fuels the doctrine of eternally technological man. But Swedenborg—ironically an accomplished technologist himself—continually reverses all this and shows us a reality that everyone seems to have discovered except ourselves.

In the spiritual world, people can fly. They can even stand in midair. They can also communicate at very long distances, instantly be in another person's presence despite these distances, see what is happening far off without using a telescope, and move objects at a distance. Angels can throw mountains down with a look. Similar things are reported by people who have had near-death experiences.

These powers are already known to us under other names. The ability to fly is called *levitation*; the ability to instantly be in another place is *teleportation*; the ability to communicate at a distance is *telepathy*; the ability to see what is hidden or at a long distance is *clairvoyance*, and the ability to move objects at a distance is *telekinesis*.

We can add other powers to this list, but there is a suggestive pattern behind them all: each parallels at

(Continued on page 132)

The Future of Technology

(from page 131)

least one major technological effort. For example, levitation and teleportation are reflected in the airplane and lesser ways of shortening distance, such as the automobile. Telepathy is reflected in radio and the telephone. Clairvoyance is reflected in television, radar, and X-ray technology. Telekinesis is tougher to find a parallel for, but it is probably best reflected so far in the ability of the military to destroy massive objects (including mountains) at enormous distances and do it invisibly—the carrier of destruction is typically moving too fast and too high to be seen.

In the spiritual world, these abilities all have one explanation: the spiritual world is the world of the Mind. Mind is actually the universal medium; we live within Mind, and in spite of appearances, we are not isolated minds living within material space. Distances and objects in the spiritual world, Swedenborg tells us, are only mere appearances. Its time and space have unusual properties, and some of his explanations of them have yet to be thoroughly understood. At least one explanation for the lack of technology in the spiritual world follows from this: technology would be superfluous there. It would not be able to compete with people using comparable properties of their own minds.

Technology therefore looks like a useful but awkward approximation to the powers of Mind. We emulate our inner powers with it. It can be seen as a set of clever interfaces with nature that allow us to do things in nature that in the realm of Mind we would do just by willing them. In constructing these things we show our spiritual nature but also a need to somehow recreate outwardly the spiritual mobility and effectiveness that we should be looking for inside.

We think we are only trying to make life more convenient, easier. We do need to do that, but the issue has to do with how we allocate spiritual energy. Where our need has been for more inner development, a basically spiritual inventiveness has been deflected outside. We will mistake the problem as an outer one and try for more power in the outer world to deal with it. For example, if we are frustrated by certain feelings and thoughts, we blame them on people around us and try to move these people away or escape them physically. At its worst, this becomes violence, and the technology of

*The technology of violence has become
an extremely efficient substitute
for the powers of inner cleansing.*

violence has become an extremely efficient substitute for the powers of inner cleansing. If the mind is empty, we fill it with fantasies broadcast for the purpose instead of ideas or new dreams. If the problem is survival, we may try for the survival of mere lifestyle at the expense of other life around us instead of trying for the survival of the best that is in us.

Other societies have apparently not projected inner values as massively onto the outer world as we have. It has meant less technological development for them, but more humanness and spiritual power. I doubt that they would envy our accomplishments; they might be properly amazed, but they would see in them a different set of values.

In science-fiction, advanced alien

civilizations are usually but inadvertently depicted as societies much like our own, with extensions of our own problems; they merely have more machinery around. Even in most of the more imaginative stories, they would actually be only a century or so ahead of us. Our writers usually underestimate the increasing pace of technological progress and the speed of revolutionary change.

It has been pointed out that it is very unlikely that the next technological civilization we encounter in space will have started at all closely to ours in time. Our technological era is only about three hundred years old; we are still very new to all this. But in cosmic history, there are millions of years to play with. Since we are so fresh from the cradle of science and invention, the age of the first technological civilization we encounter in space will probably be at least a million years in advance of ours.

We can't imagine what that would be like. But we may find our future reflected in it. Any such civilization may long ago have worked itself out of much of its technological drive and have become more deeply inward, more wise about what actually makes people happy, and able to astound us with what they have learned to do. I once heard a Tibetan Buddhist say in a lecture that in the far future, after we have learned how to fully use our minds, we will regard our fabulous inventions as merely our toys.

Steve Koke is a member of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, chair of IMSU and an assistant editor with J. Appleseed. He lives in Rough 'n Ready, California.

General Council Establishes Travel Stipulations

Convention President Edwin Capon reports that, to reduce meeting expenses as much as possible, General Council has established strict conditions for travel to denomination-sponsored meetings. These require that, whenever possible, meetings be scheduled over a weekend. The least expensive airfares usually require a stay over Saturday night. Though this may take a minister away from his pulpit, it is hoped that churches will understand and consider it a contribution to the larger church. Reimbursement of travel expenses will be limited to the lesser of the cost of the least expensive airline ticket available or the actual cost of travel by car, train or bus.

Recognizing the Spiritual Part of Ourselves

Richard Baxter

What do you answer when someone says "What book should I read if I want to find out something about your religion?" When I am asked, I try not to answer too quickly. I try to talk to them a little to find out where they are coming from—what areas of interest they might have. If they seem to be questioning, "Why is this happening to me?" I steer them to *Divine Providence*. If they have an interest in the nature of God, I point to *Divine Love and Wisdom*. If they have a general theological interest, I would suggest *Warren's Compendium*, where Swedenborg's ideas are all laid out in a systematic way and they can look up the topics that interest them. For a general interest I could heartily recommend Helen Keller's *My Religion*.

My Religion shows Swedenborg's approach to religion and spirituality in the life of a particular person. People always want to see religion related to life. It is a heartwarming story that leaves us richer than before we read it. It is a colorful story. How someone who could neither see nor hear could write with such beautiful word pictures. Other sense impressions are always a wonder to me. Helen Keller is a particularly interesting example of recognizing the spiritual part of ourselves, because she was a clean slate as far as religion was concerned.

Even though Helen's father was active in the Presbyterian Church and her mother was a devout Episcopalian, Helen had absolutely no input on religion because they couldn't communicate with her. Annie Sullivan had personally rejected her own religious upbringing, so religion was not on the list of subjects she taught to Helen.

When religion was finally intro-

duced to Helen, she was old enough to later remember it and her reaction to it. She was also conscious of the questions that arose spontaneously within her. As we read *My Religion*, it is interesting to compare Helen Keller's recognizing the spiritual part of herself, recognizing the development of her spirituality with our own recognition of the development of our own spirituality, something most of us don't pay much attention to.

*"I perceived the
realness of my soul
and its sheer
independence of all
conditions of
place and body."*

—Helen Keller

Helen Keller tells us that a sudden flash of intuition revealed an infinite wonder to her. Sitting quietly in the library for half an hour, she said to her teacher: "A strange thing has happened! I have been far away all this time, and I haven't left the room."

"What do you mean, Helen?" asked the teacher.

"I have been to Athens," said Helen.

Continuing her story, Helen observes, "Scarcely were the words out of my mouth when a bright, amazing realization seemed to catch my mind and set it ablaze. I perceived the realness of my soul and its sheer independence of all conditions of place and body. It was clear to me

that it was because I was a spirit that I had so vividly seen and felt a place thousands of miles away. Space was nothing to spirit!"

Now we have all had a similar experience time and time again, haven't we? We look at travel posters and imagine ourselves there. We anticipate visiting our relatives for Thanksgiving or Christmas. We go there once or twice in our minds and run through whole conversations. Yet when this happens to us, do we perceive and acknowledge the realness of the soul and its independence of all conditions of place and body? Does it occur to us that it is the spiritual side of ourselves that has so vividly seen and felt a place hundreds or thousands of miles away?

Would we be so philosophical—would we be so religious as to say: "This is because I am a spirit and space is nothing to spirit"?

Helen Keller took this realization about her "trip" to Athens one step deeper. She said, "The fact that my little soul could reach out over continents and seas to Greece, despite a blind, deaf, and stumbling body, sent another exulting emotion rushing over me. If I had the power to direct my mind to any one particular place in the world, then what would be the possibilities and powers of my Maker?"

She also said, "In that new consciousness I was shown the Presence of God, Himself a Spirit everywhere at once, the Creator, dwelling in all the universe simultaneously. If I can dwell here and some other place of my choosing, then He really can dwell everywhere at once."

If the energy of God's love is like the sun—we can easily observe that it can cover half the world at one time. We can all stand outside

(Continued on page 137)

Who Are We and — A Response from a Lay Person —

Lorraine Sando

This new
birth of spirit
is strong
but fragile.
It must be
nurtured as
a newborn child
into this new age
of hope, promise,
chaos, violence,
love and
wisdom.

I've often heard the question, "Where are we going as a church? Our numbers are shrinking, are we dying?" St. Francis said, "I am wounded but not slain. I need to lie down and bleed. I shall rise again." Perhaps this reflects what has been going on in our church and in other churches as well. The journey inward to fewer members has reshaped and refined us and called us to redefine ourselves as persons, as churches, as nations, as co-creators with God of a new twenty-first century world.

I view these chaotic, changing times with fear and anxiety and with *great hope and anticipation*. I

believe, no I *know* from that God place at my very center that *all is well*. I want to share with you the rationale for my optimism.

I have been blessed to be a part of the work of the church locally since 1964 and nationally since 1973. During this time, I have served on the General Council, led pre- and post-convention conferences, taught mini-courses, served on the Wayfarers Chapel Board, the Board of Education, the board of what is now the Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound, led workshops at Temenos and now I'm serving on the Education Support Unit. I have had many opportunities to see our ministers and parishioners at work and at play and I have attended many conventions.

Our Education Support Unit is addressing the issue of improved religious education for our youth. We are expanding our Youth League activities for 12-to-18-year olds and we are developing seminars to help our Sunday school teachers learn how to reach our children better in this time of great challenge. We must continue to develop ways to make our Swedenborgian philosophy relevant to our present and future. We are fiercely independent as persons and churches. Our churches have different forms and shapes. All of us have not always liked these differing forms. But our acceptance of diversity, though sometimes begrudged, can help us to keep current. Our church can have many forms. Our philosophy of service and use for all humankind—for our children, our youth, our adults, singles, gays, married, divorced, sick, disabled, seniors—challenges us to develop new forms of ministry. Our Sunday school teachers and League leaders need help in responding with clarity

and openness to issues of life, sexuality, morality, relationship, violence and chaos. The Education Support Unit is currently addressing the need as we seek ways to help our talented teachers to help our youth and children. One thing we know is, *our youth are well equipped as Swedenborgians because they have the ability to question everything*.

The seeds of acceptance and love of diversity have already been planted and are germinating and growing into healthy plants. An example of this is Temenos—a spiritual growth center and a church that has regular Sunday services. I have watched Temenos grow since 1987 when the Board of Education had its final meeting in the Temenos farmhouse on a blizzard weekend in January. The old form of the Board of Education died as Temenos was born with great hopes, struggle, pain, hard work and ambivalence. Temenos was a relatively new concept for our church and during the ensuing years, has had significant opposition, as well as equal, perhaps less vociferous support. After all, putting all that money in an upstart youth was very risky. Our church was getting smaller, membership was declining, fear for the continued existence of the church was haunting us. Our numbers have continued to decline, but a new quality seems to be emerging—the quality of refinement, of distilling and gathering our essence of use, love and wisdom, and most importantly action and concern into a malleable unity. Probably because of our shrinking numbers, we've had to be willing to let go and trust God. I feel a renewed spirit as we've begun to let God take our hand as we co-create our New Church.

(Continued on page 139)

Where Are We Going?

— 1993 Convention Message —

George Dole

I begin this with three “m”’s in mind—our moods, our models, and our muddle. I begin also with three temporal points of reference—the 1890s, the 1950s, and the present. These stand out for me because the first stands near our zenith as an organization, the second is the time I began to be actively involved in training for ministry, and the third is as far as I have gotten.

In the 1890s, our mood was definitely upbeat, and in this respect we were not alone. Americans in general were immensely impressed with the progress of technology, and the fact that a new century was on the horizon lent emotional force to expectations that a new era of global peace and prosperity lay ahead. This mood came to a focus in the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. The novelist Hamlin Garland visited it and wrote to his parents, “Sell the cookstove if necessary and come. You must see the Fair.” In the words of a contemporary writer,

No world's fair before or since has captured the national imagination quite as completely . . . The Exposition was one of the epochal events of its time. It is hard for us today to grasp the impact a simple world's fair could have on the nation—an impact combining the appeal of a moon launch and the Bicentennial celebration. In its half-year existence, it drew 27 million visitors—a number approaching half the American population . . . Nothing says more about the power of the White City than that it inspired the Emerald City. L. Frank Baum never forgot the fair and transmuted it into Oz, there at the end of the Yellow Brick

Road.

“The White City” was the extraordinary complex of neoclassical buildings erected, it seemed overnight, under the supervision of Daniel Hudson Burnham, a Swedeborgian. It was another Swedeborgian, Charles Bonney, who was the originator and the guiding spirit of a series of “congresses” celebrating progress in less material fields, culminating in what Richard Seager has called “the dawn of religious pluralism,” the Parliament of the World’s Religions.

Bonney was no romantic dreamer. He was acutely aware of serious social problems. He campaigned vigorously against a corrupt jury system, against the open sale of liquor to minors, and against the exploitation of natural resources. He advocated education and increased legal rights for immigrant workers to counter what he saw as their unprincipled exploitation by profiteering monopolies. Yet he could honestly believe that solutions to these problems were within reach. He could say in his opening address at the Parliament, “This day the sun of a new era of religious peace and progress rises over the world, dispelling the dark clouds of sectarian strife.”

That is how things looked a century ago. The world stood on the threshold of a new era, and Swedeborgians were in fact standing at the prow of this progress.

When I began training for ministry in 1957, the mood had changed completely. The world had seen two massive wars, the second including the holocaust and the use of atomic weaponry. Expectations of a new era of peace and prosperity had been displaced by fears of total

(Continued on page 138)

“In this church I was taught the fundamental truths which made a World’s Parliament of Religion possible; upon which rested the whole plan of the religious congresses of 1893, and which guided the execution of that plan to a success so great and far-reaching that only the coming generations can fully comprehend and estimate its influence.”

—Charles Bonney

Why Did We Stop Giving Thanks?

Eric Zacharias

"Thanksgiving was begun by people giving thanks for what they had to eat," says Canadian writer and retired farmer Gord Hunsberger. "But as fewer and fewer people depend upon the land, they forget we're all dependent on it. Great affluence makes people take what they have for granted. And so they don't give thanks . . . Young people think food comes out of a can they buy at the supermarket. They have no idea how it got there. Perhaps the decline of the institutionalized church and the rise of a secular Canada has also hobbled Thanksgiving. . . ."

"Maybe we need our symbols changed to find new meaning," says Rev. Brock Saunders of the Olivet United Church. "I think our symbols of pumpkins and sheaves of wheat are cute, but off the mark . . . It's not just one day you set aside . . . It's every morning you get up and thank God."

These observations of the Canadian Thanksgiving must surely strike a sensitive response within us. Is the Thanksgiving holiday an expression of gratitude to our Creator for the many blessings that bring richness to life or is it a kind of last fling before winter sets in, a great day for watching football and making another round past the skeletonized turkey?

We have to acknowledge, I think, that it's somewhat difficult to nurture and to sustain a deep, pervasive feeling of thanks to God—from one perspective, at least. In our part of the world we enjoy good food in ample supply, we have warm and comfortable homes, our libraries are filled with fine books, there is gasoline for the car—and none of these, for now, are in jeopardy. Yes, we thank the Lord for his bounty—but, still, all of these will be readily available to us even if we utter not a single word of gratitude.



Here is something else. There is much unhappiness in our world—both close at hand and in distant lands. The news reminds us daily of child abuse, of hunger, of folks suffering from serious illnesses, of jobs being lost. Can we give thanks to the Lord for sparing us these burden-

some afflictions? It was John Wesley, I believe, who on observing the suffering of a fellow human being responded, "There but for the grace of God go I." This was said not so much in the spirit of thanks as it was an acknowledgement that we all are vulnerable to a variety of afflictions—and that it is our responsibility as companions along the road to be supportive and caring.

In the teachings of our church, we read, "The Lord does indeed demand adoration and thanksgiving . . . but not for his own sake . . . but they are for the sake of man himself; for when a person is in the spirit of thanksgiving he can receive good from the Lord, because he has then been separated from the love of self and, then, the Lord can flow in with heavenly good." (*Arcana Coelestia*, #5957)

The most worthy spirit of thanksgiving must be of the life, the whole of life—not the occasional or periodic response to an event or happening that pleases us although experiences such as these may well be part of it. I wonder sometimes if the most refined experience of thanksgiving is withheld, delayed until we reach that place in our years when the pressures of the world lessen, when we have grown more appreciative of riches not material, when we have more fully opened ourselves to the beauty of the world around us and, indeed, of the human spirit, when we have found and come to know an inner peace that only an abiding presence of the Lord offers.

"Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing . . . Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise." (Psalm 100).

Reprinted from The Plains Banner, November 1992, published by the Kansas Association New Jerusalem Church.

A Thanksgiving Blessing

Eldon Smith

Every morning before breakfast and every evening before dinner, Annella and I repeat the first and second verses of Psalm 103 as our table blessing. We also use this as our blessing at church before we join in our salad lunches which we have prior to our quarterly meetings. On special occasions, we may even sing the blessing.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

There are some powerful words and thoughts in this Bible quote. I believe this is a fulfillment of the commandment given in Deuteronomy, Chapter 6, Verse 5, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." The same commandment is also given to us in Matthew, Chapter 22, Verse 37: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."

"Forget not all his benefits" should be a major part of our thanksgiving prayers and in Deuteronomy, Chapter 8, Verse 10, we are reminded not to forget the Lord and all the good things He gives us. "And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God." Psalm 100, Verse 4, has a good Thanksgiving thought. "Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name."

If we are to be truly grateful to the Lord for his blessings, then we should always think before we thank. We need to realize that gratefulness is not a planned affair regulated by a calendar. We need to realize that no one can have a genuine experience of gratitude in this way. Gratitude does not grow out of a sense of duty or

tabulation. To be real, gratitude has to be a spontaneous and continuing attitude. We must always be ready at any time to express our gratitude in order for it to be genuine.

True thanksgiving is the constant recognition of our dependence on the Lord for all things. It is rooted in our realization that life is, in reality, a partnership with him. And in that partnership, we always find ourselves on the receiving end. Our part is to contribute to the furthering of his divine purpose by making the right use of the blessings bestowed on us.

Prayer

Our Heavenly Father, we thank You for a special day of prayer and thanksgiving. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit and let our ears and our hearts be open and receptive to Your Holy Word. Let our words and voices be sincere in praising You for Your great glory.

O gracious God, by whom our nation has been established in freedom and preserved in union, on Thanksgiving Day, 1993, we thank You for all the blessings shown to our fathers, to us and to our children. We thank You for our country in which we have so much freedom and where we can choose our path and way of life. Amen

Eldon Smith is the lay minister of the San Diego Swedenborgian Church.



Recognizing Spiritual . . .

(Continued from page 133)

and be warmed in the sun's rays without detracting from the heat available to anyone else.

In our energy-conscious society it looks as though we will be learning a lot more about that principle, doesn't it? Are light and heat material or spiritual? They certainly travel through billions of miles of empty space before they reach us, with even more intensity than the light and heat of our fireplace logs just a few feet away! So we can dimly perceive how God's spirit could touch everyone at once. But it is not just us. There is a *oneness of things* that we are surrounded with.

The basic energy becomes the electrons, and then the atoms, and then the molecules, of not only ourselves but of all the different looking things around us, so that surely, the Creator is dwelling in all the universe simultaneously.

If we look with eyes and mind and heart that "see" that the essence of nature is spiritual, that the essence of us is spiritual, that the essence of God is spiritual—then we will see a transformed world. In the words of the poet Browning, "every common bush is aflame with God"—not just for Moses, but for us, too!

The Rev. Richard Baxter was minister of the Washington, D.C. Swedenborgian Church until his death from cancer September 19, 1993. (See Passages, p. 143, and Memorial, p. 130). The above sermon was given January 24, 1993.

HANK YOU, LORD

George Dole's
Convention Message
(Continued from page 135)

annihilation. The church had been declining in both membership and prestige for most of the century. We were polarized as an organization, suffering the division Scott Swank over-simplified as being between "doctrinalists" and "personalists." Our annual conventions were political battles, and when anger was not overt, it seemed as though it was just under the surface.

What had happened? In retrospect, I would point to three factors. I suspect, first of all, that at our zenith we were riding the wave of American optimism far more than we realized. When that wave spent itself in World War I, we did not have enough *internal* dynamism to sustain our momentum against the receding tide. This was in part because of the second factor, that we were running out of Bonneys and Burnhams and Barrons and Bigelows and Carters and Cutlers and Scammons. Again more than we realized, our morale (as well as our treasury) had been sustained by the presence among us of persons of widely recognized competence and importance. Third, we were (and are) still a "Convention"—an occasional gathering of relatively autonomous bodies, rather than an organization starting from a single defined purpose and growing from the center outward.

Our mood today is again quite different. We are not polarized. There is some anger, but it is not the dominant theme that it was thirty-five years ago. In a sense, it seems as though the polarization has been replaced by fragmentation. In the fifties, a Swedenborgian from one church would walk into most others and know more or less what to expect. Now the difference between Portland and San Diego, Seattle and Wilmington, West Chester and San Francisco, or for that matter Boston and Bridgewater, can be quite startling.

Perhaps this is why I find it difficult to identify a single mood,

other than perhaps one of general muddle. There is periodic alarm at our continuing statistical decline and alarm wherever there is knowledge concerning our financial position, but these concerns seem to lose force as they travel the highways and byways of our decentralization. It is as though one or another of us pushes the panic button every year, but the bell doesn't ring.

So much for mood. As to model, a century ago this was apparently fairly clear and widely accepted. I am not talking simply about church buildings and Sunday worship. I have in mind the image of the church as a kind of lifelong companion, there at birth, throughout childhood, at marriage, at the birth of a new generation, during one's declining years, and at death. Individual ministers might come and go (and in Boston they did even this as rarely as possible), but the church, in a kind of low-key and non-intrusive way, would be there for you whenever you needed it.

This is the relatively traditional image of the parish church. As Swedenborgians, we gave it a distinctive flavor with our strong stress on the teaching aspect of ministry. What we had in common was a highly distinctive theology, and an understanding of that theology was vital to our sense of who we were. Methodists were not expected to read Wesley, or Lutherans Luther, or Presbyterians Calvin, the way Swedenborgians expected each other to read Swedenborg.

This was not arid intellectualism. The same Charles Bonney first encountered our church when he moved from Hamilton, New York to Peoria, Illinois. He wrote, "My previous information on the system of Swedenborg had given me the impression that it was a religion for literary and scientific persons, and I was therefore surprised to find that this congregation had no member eminent in scholastic attainments, excepting the pastor." He also wrote, "In this church I was taught the fundamental truths which made a World's Parliament of Religions

possible; upon which rested the whole plan of the religious congresses of 1893, and which guided the execution of that plan to a success so great and far-reaching that only the coming generations can fully comprehend and estimate its influence."² The teaching ministry grew out of a sense of discovery and excitement, part and parcel of the pervasive sense that a new age was dawning.

In the fifties, much of the polarization came to a focus on this model. In part because of the fact of increasing mobility, a model, or models, of the church developed that adopted features from the counseling professions. These assume more intense involvement focused on clearly defined issues. The counselor and client agree on the goals of their work together, and expect to terminate that work when these goals are reached. Explicit teaching is usually seen as inappropriate.

I would note that these models can rest on the same theological base, contrary to the assumptions of the fifties. The same theology can be used in a long-term, broad spectrum, low-key model and in a short-term, focused spectrum, intense model. What is generally not possible is for the same individuals to be involved in both models at the same time. One does not enter into a counseling relationship with a person with whom one has a lifelong relationship.

In 1993, it seems clear that we have a plurality of models. To the two already mentioned we can add the growth center, offering sometimes a wide assortment of programs, including some that are distinctly instructional. We can add wedding ministries; and I would be remiss indeed if I did not mention the societal services undertaken in Boston.

As a Convention, then, I find us holding a variety of opinions as to who we are, and it certainly appears that we are going in a number of different directions. The efforts of the Ad Hoc Committee of the eighties were to define the common purpose of these efforts, and to use our decentralization as an asset rather than as a liability. We certainly can-

not claim success. Perhaps "Convention" is trying to be something it cannot be—a year-round organization.

So there is one person's view of the moods and the models. They reflect, I think, an underlying muddle, resting in the fact that from our point of view, our theology does not authorize us to be an organized church or tell us how to go about it in any businesslike sense. Faced with the discovery that we are not "the New Church" described in the writings, we are not sure who we are. We cohere partly from force of habit, I'm sure, but also and much more significantly because we do share some convictions that differ, sometimes subtly, from those that surround us.

It is not easy for us to define that difference. I'm fond of the saying, "I don't know who discovered water, but I'll bet it wasn't a fish." But as one scholar at the Moscow conference said about Russian philosophy's effort to define itself, "The search is not for distinctiveness, but for truth."

The Rev. Dr. George Dole is a professor of Bible, Language, and Theology at the Swedenborg School of Religion. Dr. Dole was one of three theme speakers at the 1993 Convention held at Gordon College in Wenham, Mass. Readers /members are invited to participate with articles or letters responding to the theme "Who Are We and Where Are We Going?"

Lay Person's Response

(Continued from page 134)

This new birth of spirit is strong but fragile. It must be nurtured as a newborn child into this new age of hope, promise, chaos, violence, love and wisdom. It requires us to be skilled and loving midwives and husbands to shepherd our new church. Again using the example of Temenos, over the last four years, I've watched the program offerings grow and become more varied. The Sunday church service structure remains the same. I have conducted Family Reconstruction workshops for the past four years at Temenos. These are sacred workshops. Participants have had opportunities to heal and let go of past behaviors, thoughts, and feelings that no longer fit for

them. Conducting them at Temenos has been very important. *Temenos means sacred place, and indeed it is.* It rests on 58 acres of beautiful Pennsylvania countryside where deer, fox, rabbits and birds share their land with spiritual questors.

**I believe that
it is important
to honor and
acclaim our
ministers while
they are living.**

In April of this year at Temenos, I experienced new hope and energy for our church. This summer, the work on the new residence building began, providing eight double bedrooms and a large meeting room. This is a good start and will facilitate the growth of programs. However, Temenos cannot become self-supporting until its center building with a wedding chapel is constructed. Funds are beginning to be raised. But there is a long way to go. I have no doubt that when the building is built, Temenos will move quickly to being grown up and self-supporting.

I was on the Wayfarers Chapel Board of Managers for several years. I was on the board when the Rev. Ernest Martin was a part of a team ministry with the Rev. Harvey Tafel. The Chapel is a beautiful memorial to Emanuel Swedenborg and it is self-supporting. About half a million people per year visit this sacred place. The Wayfarers Chapel was born with great struggle. Elizabeth Schellenberg had the dream and persistently fought to get the denomination to build the Chapel. Elizabeth was Betsy Young's mother. Many inspiring ministers have nurtured this glass-walled sanctuary. Here worshipers may feast on the beauty of the gardens and ocean landscape and renew their spirits. The Chapel grew slowly and steadily at first, then had a spurt of growth when it became a team ministry. Erni Martin joined

Harvey Tafel. Erni has a talent for quality in publications, outreach, displays and business. Harvey's talent added the exquisite attention to architecture design, beauty of inner and outer landscape. The combination of these two people took the Chapel to a larger vision.

It's been Harvey's interest and talent to continue to enhance, nurture and shepherd the Chapel environment. Currently Carl Yenetchi and Harvey are the team ministry. Carl brings a special spirituality to all aspects of the Chapel with his flowing, unassuming quiet strength. This team is another illustration of a continuous expansion of the Chapel as a living memorial to Emanuel Swedenborg.

It has been Erni's journey to develop new concepts, to bring them into useful form, and then, when the concept takes off, to leave and meet the next challenge. Temenos is Erni's last ministerial challenge before he retires. *I believe that it is important to honor and acclaim our ministers while they are living.* To notice the small and the large things that they do and the resulting impact on the larger church. It is for this reason that I recognize Ernest Martin for his contributions to the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches. He has brought dreams into fruition. He has led the church into new directions. Some of these directions have been new and thus controversial. Yet he has withstood the criticism that creative innovators often get, and provided new directions for the church that were not popular with all of our members.

Another accomplishment of Erni Martin is the establishment of the Central Office of our church. Convention voted in 1959 to set up the Central Office. However, it wasn't until Erni took office as president of the denomination in 1968 that the Central Office was established. Erni has a talent for giving "legs" to an idea. In the mid-1950s, the Revs. Robert Kirven and Ernest Martin met with the National Council of Churches' leaders and paved the way for

(Continued on page 140)

Lay Response (from page 139)

our admission into the Council.

We are blessed to have a diversity in our ministries—some who stay a lifetime at one church and make significant contributions in this way, others who move on and try the new. This is truly the manifestation of “uses.”

Our church is filled with inspiring people—ministers and laity. In my new position on the Education Support Unit, I have been interviewing a few ministers who have particular skills in working with youth. In April, I learned something of Carl Yenetchi's work with youth. From 1983 to 1986, Carl worked in a small residential program, the Massasoit School for Behaviorally Disordered Adolescents. The residents were thirty court-ordered youths carrying knives and guns. Attendance was an alternative to the juvenile detention program. Carl almost didn't get the job. The director was an ex-Marine and Carl, he said, was “too soft-spoken.” But they were desperate for help, so they hired Carl and he was put in charge of the “time out” room. Within three months, the management noticed that there was 35% less “acting out” on the part of the youth. A staff meeting was called and Carl was asked to reshape the program because what he was doing with the kids was working. The major change was that whenever a youth returned from the “time out room” (keep in mind that many of the young people were so out of control that they had to be tied down) to his class room, the classroom teacher would welcome him back genuinely and warmly and not mention any past bad behaviors. For many of the youth, this was unbelievable. Some said, “What do I have to do to get kicked out?” Fifteen percent of these youth returned to high school and graduated with their classmates. Many of the others surely were affected in ways that might later manifest. As Carl told me this story, he gave full credit to the teachers for the successes because they were able and willing to follow his instructions about welcoming them back.

It seems to me that these teachers became like the welcoming father in the story of the prodigal son. And Carl began the process with the manifestation of the Lord's presence.

My eyes were damp as I heard Carl's story. I know that each of our ministers has stories to tell and, as lay persons, we have stories to tell also. Sharing stories is part of our spiritual renewal. I know that I have so many unwritten stories of healing from my practice of marriage and family therapy. I suggest that we all find ways of sharing these stories. Talk to each other, send them to *The Messenger*, put them in your local newsletters. These stories are like yeast and fruit that grow and become the bread and the wine of our communion with our Lord. We can get so busy trying to fix things that we neglect to appreciate ourselves, our families, our churches, our ministers.

We take risks. To take risks requires us as a church to have high self-esteem and hope and faith.

I've mentioned briefly the stories of Erni, of Carl, of Elizabeth Schellenberg. There's the story of the Revs. David Johnson, Calvin and Owen Turley and Project Link in Bellevue, Washington, which began back in the 1960s. (This is the program that brought my entry into the church). Project Link was another extremely controversial program that produced seeds of new growth through the church and has now produced a new offspring in the form of the Stone House Book Room and the Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound.

In the 1970s, we ordained women into the ministry. The Rev. Dorothea Harvey was the courageous woman who broke down that barrier. She has been followed by numerous fine women ministers. One of these, the Rev. Susan Turley-Moore in the San Francisco area, has developed an AIDS ministry to serve AIDS patients and their families.

Our church is alive and well. We take risks. To take risks requires us as a church to have high self-esteem and

hope and faith. Our beloved Swedenborgian philosophy and our trust in our Lord has brought us this far and will not abandon us as we enter the twenty-first century. The seeds are planted. We don't need to keep digging them up and looking at them.

It seems fitting to begin closure with a selection that has meant a great deal to me:

The Five Freedoms

by Virginia Satir

The freedom to see and hear what is here, instead of what should be, was, or will be.

The freedom to say what you feel and think, instead of what you should.

The freedom to feel what you feel, instead of what you ought.

The freedom to ask for what you want, instead of always waiting for permission.

The freedom to take risks on your own behalf, instead of choosing to be only “secure” and not rocking the boat.

We know where we're going. We are moving from adolescence into adulthood as a church. We're not there yet. We are not alone, however. We are a part of that same growing-up process that is going on all over the world. What this transition requires is the acceptance of responsibility for ourselves as individuals and as churches. We can no longer expect the denomination, as our symbolic mother and father, to support our local churches forever. Mom and Dad can help out on occasion in an emergency, but we must discontinue taking from them if our cups are already full. And we as individuals and churches can begin giving back with appreciation to our parent, the Swedenborgian Church, for all of the gifts and heritage and resources that have been given. We can give back in many ways through useful and dedicated service, contributing and putting into action new ideas, contributing money in many forms—cash, annuities, endowments, and many other ways. Some of this has been happening. As we continue to do this, we will fully experience freedom and pride in being Swedenborgians. We will know who we are—responsible co-creators with God of this incredibly wonderful universe.

Lorraine Sando is a marriage and family therapist practicing in the Seattle area, and is a member of the Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound.

SCYL West Coast Retreat 1993

Jenn Tafel

The mood of the Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL) West Coast Memorial Day Retreat was set once again by pepperoni pizza. It was May 28, 1993, as we watched the sun setting into the Pacific Ocean, from the Youth Hostel in San Pedro, California, where we stayed. After dinner, each teen and staff member attended a "Rule Meeting." The staff consisted of: Rev. Carl Yenetchi, Rev. Sue Turley-Moore, Betty Yenetchi, Jono Pults, Steve Ondreck, Carl Hamilton, and myself. The teens came from all over, some from northern California, central California, Washington, and a few local people. For the rest of the night, we all were free to do what we wanted. There was a TV room, for those who wanted to watch a video. Some just sat and talked and talked and talked.

Saturday began with breakfast, then a drive to Wayfarers Center West (WCW) for my session. Since the theme was "Current Issues," I had everyone make a collage about themselves. The left side of each collage was about their current lives, and on the right were things they wanted to bring into their lives. When everyone finished, those who wanted, shared their collage. All in all, it was a pretty fun session, and we all learned a little about ourselves and each other.

Upon returning to the Youth Hostel, we broke into groups to go to the Banning House and then to Ports O'Call.

After a barbecue, we went back to WCW for a session led by Steve Ondreck and Rev. Carl Yenetchi. Steve was a convincing "cult leader." He proved how easy it could be to use the Bible to sway people's decisions. However, since there were such strong personalities at the session, no one joined the "Ondreckian Movement." Carl observed that David Koresh took people's freedom away without them noticing, then proceeded to teach us what we need to do so that

won't happen to us. Hmm, a very thought-provoking discussion.

Sunday began again with breakfast and a trip to Wayfarers Chapel for a worship service. Since it was Rev. Carl Yenetchi's turn to do the service, he had some of the teens participate.

When the service was over, we met at WCW to break into groups and discuss what's going on in our lives. I participated in an all-female group. This was nice because all too often in groups, being the only female can be difficult. We, therefore, could discuss our issues with ease. We met back with the rest of the large group, and then we all returned to the Youth Hostel for free time. During the free time, most of us went to the neighboring park to watch many different people attempt the fine art of kite flying.

Our chicken dinner was "finger lickin' good." We then went back to WCW for a discussion of current issues. This session was led by Rev.

Sue Turley-Moore. We broke into our groups we had earlier in the day. Each group came up with topics for the "big group" to discuss. The three "big" topics were women's issues, the economy, and suicide. We also discussed how these three could be related. This proved to be a learning experience for everyone. Then we had a discussion led by Jono Pults (SCYL West Coast Regional Officer). This discussion was about things that have had a great impact on our lives. Some things that were shared were the Challenger explosion, various car and plane crashes, and so on. Facing our mortality was one common theme throughout the discussion. We went back to the Youth Hostel for games and free time.

Monday came, along with sad-filled hearts, as departure from such a fun, educational weekend was eminent. All teens and staff agreed that we would have to get together next year and do it again.

SSR STUDENTS AT PAULHAVEN



Three students from the Swedenborg School of Religion (Renee Morris, Kit Billings, and Kinichi Kuniyeda) worked with Rev. David Sonmor, Paulhaven camp pastor, to make the 1993 camp week one of the "best ever." (That quote comes from many of the campers who attended). Kinichi was not in the above picture, taken the Sunday camp ended, as he was already in Michigan for the start of another camp week at Almont. Following the close of camp, Renee and Tracey Morris spent a few days with members of the Church of the Holy City in Edmonton, Alberta, who thoroughly enjoyed their company. Marjorie Runka, church secretary, says, "They are very dedicated to their ministries, as is Kinichi. We are very lucky to have them as upcoming ministers in our denomination."

Chrysalis Themes and Copy Deadlines

Route 1, Box 184, Dillwyn, Virginia 23936
804/983-3021 Fax: 804/983-1074

Family, *Autumn 1993*

Outline/Abstract due: January 1993
First Draft due: March 1993
Final Draft due: June 1993

What or who is a "family" today? It is often more than the traditional group of persons living in one household and under one "head." Family configuration may include single parent(s), grandparents and grandchildren, substitute parents "found" by children and young people, adoptive siblings, or some other unorthodox arrangement. Today the role of "head of household" is being re-examined. One sociologist has described the family as "a transitional state," meaning a unit in existence while children are growing up and thereafter no longer relevant. So, how permanent is a family? Does it go on for generations? Is it relationships, and responsibilities? It is continued into the work place? What values do we take with us when we leave our family or form families of our own? Do people dedicated to the same principles have stronger family ties than those who happen to be born into the same clan? Social scientists often speak of a "nuclear family". Does this suggest a small unit in a dynamic or explosive condition? Emerson said, "most of the persons whom I see in my own house I see across a gulf." What are ways of crossing the gulfs that sometimes develop in families? How does the parental role change as the child matures? As our children change, how do we change? Is the family a living symbol of our relationship to God or a stepping stone to some kind of greater awareness? What is our place in "The Family of Man"? How do we mend our past and mold our future?

The Future of Religion, *Spring 1994*

Outline/Abstract due: May 1993
First Draft due: July 1993
Final Draft due: October 1993

In what ways does organized religion keep pace with one's personal spirituality? How do the two concepts interface, and how do they contrast? Can science provide the universal words and symbols needed to create a neutral language for ecumenicity? . . . Why is doctrine formulated—for institutional self-preservation or for the good of mankind? What causes iconoclasm—is it inevitable; is it part of social evolution? Are there altruistic groups or organizations that could be considered religious? What is the importance and significance of icons, symbols, ritual, and holy places? How are we led on our spiritual and religious odysseys?

Music, *Summer 1994*

Outline/Abstract due: September 1993
First Draft due: March 1994
Final Draft due: June 1994

Music can soothe the beast or evoke passion. It might instill love and appreciation, or incite

revolution, hatred and fear, i.e., the latest controversial rap lyric. Music's influence is felt and employed in religious and patriotic ceremonies, and its lyrics express cultural diversity. It is an essential expression of the human spirit. How has human kind applied music to daily life through the ages?

Did ancient man explore rhythm when he first heard the pounding of stampeding herds, or melody in the music of running water? In what ways have music and its instruments changed over time? In modern times we use music for recreation, relaxation, and communication. What happens when the creation of music is shared? Is it an effective means of therapy? How do the biochemical reactions to sound change the listener? Does sound occur when no one is present? What was the first sound of creation? Is there a relationship between the spectrum of sound and that of light?

Order, *Autumn 1994*

Outline/Abstract Due: January 1994
First Draft Due: March 1994
Final Draft Due: June 1994

What came first—order or chaos? And what is the relationship between these two seemingly diametric opposites? As we find our equilibrium, someone or something always manages to upset the apple cart, and we are challenged to again pick up all the pieces. Do some people seem to function better under the pressure of disorganization? What appears disorderly to one person may not be perceived that way to the one who created that disorder. How do individuals differ in their conformity and does conformity stifle creativity? In relationships, order plays a role in the harmony and function of a brotherhood, society, association, family, or between two people. Must there be a division of authority for order to work among people? Our bodies function autonomically, but what happens when the natural order is disturbed? And what is the interaction between our bodies and our minds? We can see the universe's order everywhere, but how do we fit into this system? Is our life predestined? If we cannot find divine order in ourselves, do we search for it outside of ourselves? Are our choices already made? And when we enter the spiritual world, will we perceive a new order?

Windows, *Spring 1995*

Outline/Abstract due: May 1994
First Draft Due: July 1994
Final Draft Due: October 1994

Windows can be large and small, clear and cloudy. They welcome or obscure light. And they require frequent washing to be at their best. Old-fashioned early glass caused distortion. We can look out and others can look in. Windows can be closed or open, conceal or reveal.

They can be broken; glass is shattered and replaced. Store windows are dressed to seduce us to buy. Large windows enrapture us with detail; small windows help us to focus. Computers can help us with windows that give us information. Many human activities resemble windows. Interconnected small events may act like a multi-panel window; suddenly there is an expansive view. Cities can act as windows, for example on the sea. Sudden illumination can occur; we seem to see through a problem as a window clears. The gray weather clears and the windows of heaven are open. Eyes have been described as windows of the soul. What have windows been in your life? What has been your view; how has it changed?

Play, *Summer 1995*

Outline/Abstract Due: September 1994
First Draft Due: November 1994
Final Draft Due: February 1995

The Good Life, *Autumn 1995*

Outline/Abstract Due: January 1995
First Draft Due: March 1995
Final Draft Due: June 1995

Everyone wants to be "good," but what constituted a "good life"? Is it a matter of integrity and purity? of purposefulness and clarity of values? Is a good life necessarily a happy life? Is it balanced, and if so, what are the ingredients of the balance? Can I make life good for someone else, or only for myself? How do I go about doing so? Does a good life depend on health? on wealth?? Does it result from faith and the practice of religion?

Other news from the Swedenborg Foundation

Boxes are being unpacked from the recent move from temporary headquarters in West Chester to the final destination. The new building is actually quite old—one of the oldest houses in the quaint borough of West Chester, Pennsylvania. The staff hopes to have all in place in time for a December open house. More details and photos in upcoming December *Messenger*.

Recent publication of interest: *The Heavenly City: A spiritual Guide-book*, translated by Lee Woofenden. This is a new translation of the 1758 Latin text by Emanuel Swedenborg. The translation puts the paragraph numbers unobtrusively in the outside margins so readability is enhanced. The language is modern and easily comprehended. A must for your Swedenborgian library, \$9.95 from the Swedenborg Foundation.

YOU CAN Make a Difference

Did you know that the total budget for the American New Church Sunday School Association is only \$2,500? For years the Sunday School Association has done its best to operate on a tiny budget. Officers and members have often paid many of the expenses out of their own pockets.

The denomination's resources are stretched to the limit and so we appeal to you, the individual, to help build a foundation for the future by helping our Sunday Schools now. Giving money is one tangible way that makes a difference. It is easy for most of us to give a small amount without making a sacrifice.

Your gift will help fund such resources as the *Sunday School Journal*, *Five Smooth Stones*, *Rainbow Colors in the Word*, *Come Unto Me*, *The Magic Key*, *The Bible House*, and *Lambs for Baptism*. These resources and other valuable work done by the Sunday School Association need your support.

Please send your contributions to Treasurer Jonathan Mitchell, Swedenborg School of Religion, 48 Sargent St., Newton, Massachusetts 02158. It will make a difference.

Passages

Birth

Rennick—MacKenzie ("Mack") George Rennick, son of Amy Hill Rennick, and grandson of Betty and Jack Hill of Saginaw, Michigan, was born July 30, 1993.

Baptisms

Dingwall—Kelsey Nicole and Carson Taylor Dingwall were baptized into the Christian faith May 23, 1993, at the Church of the Holy City in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, the Rev. Henry Korsten officiating.

Reed—Victoria Mary Katherine Reed was baptized into the Christian faith July 25, 1993, at the Church of the Holy City in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, the Rev. Henry Korsten officiating.

Confirmation

Carson and Lange—Carrie Carson of Willard, Ohio, and Kris Lange of St. Cloud, Minnesota were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church July 29, 1993, at Almont Summer School in Michigan, the Rev. Stephen Pults officiating.

Marriage

Mowat and Miller—Jacqueline Mowat and Christopher Miller were united in marriage July 31, 1993, at the Church of the Holy City in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, the Rev. Henry Korsten officiating. Jacqueline is a granddaughter of Dorothy Mowat.

Deaths

Baxter—The Rev. Richard M. Baxter, 56, pastor for 10 years of the National Swedenborgian Church in Washington, D.C., entered the spiritual world September 19, 1993, following a lengthy bout with cancer.

Memorial service was conducted October 9, 1993, at the Washington church, by the Rev. Ronald Brugler and the Rev. Richard Tafel, Jr. Mr. Baxter is survived by his wife, Polly, and his two sons, Kevin and Bill. (See Memorial, p. 130).

Jeffery—Agnes Wallace Duncan Jeffery, age 83, entered the spiritual world May 6, 1993. Memorial service was conducted at the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, by the Rev. Henry Korsten. Mrs. Jeffery is survived by a son and two grandchildren.

Leach—Clarence "Bud" Leach entered the spiritual world July 9, 1993, at home in Fryeburg, Maine. There were no services.

Reed—Virgil "Jim" Reed entered the spiritual world August 16, 1993, in Fryeburg, Maine. There were no services.

LeVan—Jane LeVan, wife of the late Rev. Leon LeVan, entered the spiritual world August 19, 1993, in DeLand, Florida. Memorial services were conducted by the Rev. Russell Clark, Alliance Retirement Center.

Church Family News

Ethelwyn (Muff) Worden, former director of the Central Office and newly elected member of the Communications Support Unit, was hospitalized in mid-September due to illness and internal bleeding. She underwent successful surgery for removal of a burst appendix and a fibroid tumor. At this writing, she is recuperating in the special care unit at Maine Medical Hospital in Portland, Maine. The Rev. Ken Turley has been visiting her daily. Cards and letters are welcome; either send to Maine Medical, 22 Bramhall St., Portland, ME 04102 or to Muff's home, R.R.1, Box 121, Limerick, ME 04148.

TEACHERS! TEACHERS! Top 10 Reasons to Teach Sunday School

1. You can teach without having to know it all. Anyway, it's fun to discover God through the eyes of a kid.
2. You'll also discover all kinds of wonderful things about yourself, because no matter how big and hairy you may be, you are still God's child.
3. An opportunity to earn kid hugs. When they're given, they're given freely and priceless in value.
4. Parents who teach get to see how proud your kids are of you and you will amaze your children at how nice you can be.
5. Non-parents who teach are great for show and tell. There is nothing more fascinating than a new grownup to discover.
6. It is perfectly acceptable to be a little goofy in kids' church.
7. You are allowed to be creative and make mistakes. Nobody will yell at you as long as you pick up after yourself.
8. Free audio tapes of the adult service. You can soak in the tub and still be in church.
9. It will improve your meditations. Hanging out with a lot of kids for an hour can make you appreciate silence even more.
10. You'll discover that modern children don't really incessantly speak in rap and store their thumbs in their armpits. In fact, they're feeling, thinking people, just like us.

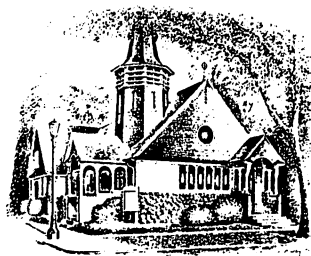
(Editor's Note: The above came across my desk from the Unity Church of Peace Newsletter in South Bend, Indiana, written by a woman named Rhonda. I found it so irresistible I had to pass it on.)

**Don't forget
Chrysalis
for your
holiday gift giving**

Chrysalis would make the perfect gift for those people you treasure. It is a luxurious plunge into the world of art and literature, in a spiritual context. It is for thoughtful, well-educated readers interested in Swedenborgian perspectives.

Support the Swedenborgian emphasis on life as a journey to the Holy City. Holiday special for *Messenger* readers only: subscribe to *Chrysalis* for yourself at the regular price of \$20 a year and gift subscriptions are \$15 each. Over three gift subscriptions, all are \$12 each. Mention this holiday special when placing your order by calling the Swedenborg Foundation: (215) 430-3222 or (800) 355-3222.

[See p. 142 for *Chrysalis* themes and deadlines.]



**VIRGINIA STREET CHURCH
PART OF HISTORIC TOUR**

The Virginia Street Church (Swedenborgian) in St. Paul, Minnesota, was included in a tour of historic houses and gardens in the Ramsey Hill section of that city on September 12. Between two and three thousand people visited the church that day from noon to five o'clock. Members of the church were kept busy greeting visitors, passing out brochures about the church, and photocopying more. The noted architect, Cass Gilbert, designed the church in 1886. He was also the architect for the Minnesota state capitol, the Supreme Court building in Washington and the Woolworth building in New York.

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.

**The Swedenborgian Church
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