

# THE MESSENGER

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## Feature Article

# What Is Honoring Diversity, Anyway?

Eli Dale

From time to time, our personal or community decisions are directly guided by the theme "Honoring Diversity," an idea which is trickier to understand than many I have encountered. I've been in two high-energy discussions recently where adhering to "honoring diversity" has been the major focus. I have to confess that I am wrestling with what this really means and how to apply it.

I'm not too confused by the word "diversity." I like Scott Peck's image of salad vs. mush. But when I make a salad, I expect that the ingredients will be complementary, will react with each other to enhance the overall experience. There is an enormous variety of things that you'd just as soon leave out. I'd rather eat the Oreo cookies separately, thank you. And I will leave the nightshade and hemlock out all together because they are deadly.

Here are a bunch of words that relate to "honor": high regard, appreciation, tribute, exalt, praise, confer distinction, recognize, respect, live up to, fulfill, carry out, comply. A working definition we've used in the past seems to be: "let it be."

So why should "honoring diversity" be hard to put into practice? My questions are: Is all diversity worth honoring? What is honoring?

For me, the word "protect" has a lot to do with putting "honor" into action in this context. How better might we honor something than by making sure it has the soil, rain, and sunshine required for growth?

*Frankly, there are some diversities which I'd rather not protect.* At the risk of using value-laden words, the diversity I want to honor is that which is "good," or at least, that which doesn't cause unjust harm. I don't mean that every experience needs to be a happy one. I am as interested in honoring experiences that hold fear or sorrow when they are necessary ingredients of the salad.

But what about diversities that actively contradict values that I hold dear? What about a diverse value that itself is the enemy of honoring diversity?

I have a fear that blind allegiance to the idea of "honoring diversity" is like blind allegiance to any other idea. Why be blind? My worst nightmare about this goes like this:

"It's OK you're a Jew, because I honor diversity. You can believe any way that you like."

"It's OK you're a Nazi because I honor diversity. You can believe any way that you like."

We've seen this play. It wasn't pretty. It didn't have a happy ending. It wasn't OK to be a Nazi. There are lines. There are lines that should not be crossed. There are lines that a person should be stopped from crossing. There are lines that, when crossed, invite evil.

The line for me becomes clearer when one person begins forcing another person to accept and live by her/his point of view and when there are consequences to the coerced party.

I'm not a biblical scholar, Lord knows; but I recall something about Jesus' saying and doing some very rude things to folks. Was he failing to

"honor their diversity?" Or was he protecting the world from evil? And Ecclesiastes tells us there is "... a time to kill and a time to heal; a time to pull down and a time to build up ..." Could it be that honoring diversity will sometimes require us to take action that appears destructive?

Closer to home, I hear tell that we'd rather have a more diverse collection of parishioners. We could live our honoring of diversity. We can say "All are welcome," but can all *feel* welcome? Is it really possible not to have a personality/identity of the collective that defines the likely personalities of the individuals? Doesn't the personality of the collective screen people out, restricting our ability to be diverse?

Let's take a look at one of our Articles of Faith, based on the teachings of Uncle Manny: We believe that Heaven and Hell are states of being, not places. ... through our freely made choices we come to the state of being and community of like-minded

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## Let's Hear It for Silence

Much is written in these pages and elsewhere about spiritual growth. Workshops, books and tapes on various aspects of regeneration, recovery, renewal and healing, abound. Seekers are presented with an often bewildering banquet of growth choices; even the determinedly unregenerate can hardly avoid the windfall. The how-to's are available for every level of understanding, every religious persuasion. We can have at our fingertips richly described experiences and detailed instruction on becoming more aware, awake, fully alive, soul-centered, creative, loving human beings.

At the core of all of these methods, without exception, is the acknowledged need for some form of meditation. It is generally conceded that to rekindle that connection with the Godforce that is our birthright, we must go within, become still, relaxing our body/mind, going to alpha level, developing right-brain capacities, entering the silence. There are many terms, but it seems the key is cultivating silence on a daily basis. We know that Swedenborg spent hours, days, in deep communion with Spirit, in a day when a preference for solitude and silence outside monastery walls was seldom honored and might be regarded as suspect. That day is not as far behind us as we might like to think.

It has been a tradition in our spouses group that meets each year at convention to have a spiritual growth leader who guides us through three days of deepening and spiritual renewal before the actual convention begins. We gather when the ministers are having their pre-convention sessions. One guide, Jane Leifer, has been with us for three years, and has become so finely attuned to our group energy that she moves intuitively to the very thing we are needing, often before we realize we need it. This year it was a silent retreat on the beach. One afternoon committed to complete silence. What a relief!

After we caravanned to the shore and completed the necessary donning of sunscreen, we were granted our respite from talk, with no instruction other than to do what spirit led us to do, engage all our senses to become more deeply aware of the elements that surrounded us, to express and create if we felt so inclined, or to just be. The feel of wind and sun and sand and water, the sound of gulls, small insects, the whisper of grass on dunes, the taste of salt on our lips, the textures of driftwood and shells. Senses and perception sharpened, undiluted by the usual obligation to converse. What I discovered was that my appreciation of all life forms, especially fellow humans, seemed enhanced because I was permitted to regard them in silence, and to honor their being in silence. We were to continue the silence until supper, not an easy task once out of the sequestered milieu.

Ironically, I had been voicing my need for a silent retreat, but the quality of the silence is important. The time and place and gently imparted guidelines were presented to us as a gift that we could receive if we chose, pass on if we chose. We were fortunate in that the setting was one where we could quietly interact with the natural environment without the jarring distraction of loud machines or screaming crowds. I became more aware not only of the need to practice the habit of silence and to honor the value of silence, but to do what I can to help eliminate the noise pollution that increasingly prevents our ability to allow this precious gift.

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## What Is Diversity . . . ?

*(Continued from front cover)*

souls within which we are most at home. We may want to honor diversity, but it really is quite difficult to *contain* diversity. As in Heaven (or Hell), here in incarnation, like-minded souls like to hang out together. We might have very different work, skin color, ages, political affiliations, and hobbies, but at base, in the mind, we are extremely similar: . . . on earth as it is in Heaven. How about that?

One of the heated discussions I was involved in revolved around the ethics of non-natives adopting the rituals of natives. Does it honor diversity to use rituals that aren't ours or does it honor diversity to leave them to their creators? The other centered on whether or not it's OK to knock an organization such as the Christian Civic League, whose political agenda seems to be the *elimination* of diversity. Does it honor diversity to "protect" the League, ignore it, or attack it? What is the honorable path?

I'd love to see some continued discussion on this issue.

*Eli Dale is a member and current president of the Portland Swedenborgian Church in Maine. Reprinted from the July-August Portland church newsletter.*

**November 13, 1921 . . . Why did he quietly walk out of his apartment Sunday morning and leave town?**

# A New-Church Mystery

*Louise Woofenden*

"I will never forget that Sunday morning," says Wilfred Locke, member of the Detroit Society. He is one of several who remember that electrifying day.

"That Sunday morning," November 13, 1921, the church people gathered for worship as usual. They were not expecting the experience that awaited them. For their minister was not there.

It soon became obvious that something unusual had happened—this was not just a matter of oversleeping or a missed bus—Henry Reynolds had disappeared. The society swung into action. Reward posters were sent to all postmasters in the region, to most of the churches, and to sheriffs in all counties in Michigan and targeted sections of Ohio and Canada.

Detroit Police Department

## REWARD

MISSING CLERGYMAN



REV. HENRY F. REYNOLDS

\$100.00

\$100.00

. . . for information leading to the whereabouts of the Rev. Henry F. Reynolds, Pastor of the Church of the New Jerusalem, located at 92 Forest Avenue East . . . Description: Age 27 years, 5 feet 11 inches tall, 150 pounds, deep-set brown eyes, ruddy complexion, black hair, heavy black eyebrows meeting over the nose, even white and somewhat prominent teeth, full lips; the left fore-arm in fleshy part bears a round scar on both sides of arm. When last seen he wore a grey black knee length, double breasted ulster overcoat, with storm collar and belt

going around coat. Brown soft felt hat, dark business suit and a black bow tie.

The society retained a private detective, who discovered that Reynolds had boarded a bus for Bay City and had been seen in Bay City and Jackson, Michigan, from November 13th to 18th. Then all trace of him was lost. The original reward of \$100 offered by the Society, was then increased to \$500, under the sponsorship of the denomination convention, and every major city in the U.S. was supplied with posters. It was discovered that he had withdrawn a large sum of money from the bank the day before his disappearance. The departure was premeditated; the mystery deepened. Mr. Reynolds was an almost angelic person, beloved of all. Though this was his first parish, and he had ministered to the society only a few months, he was admired and loved by all the people, and especially by the younger ones. One member said, "We appreciated him for his loving care of us and for the uplifting and inspiring teaching we received from him. Our church prospered under his leadership as never before." There had been no evidence of mental derangement. Why did he quietly walk out of his apartment Sunday morning and leave town?

The posters suggested amnesia or shell shock. Mr. Reynolds had been in the Tank Corps in France and in the army of occupation in Germany. However, one member recently reports one stated opinion that Mr. Reynolds had been intimidated by some of the older parishioners who were steeped in the doctrines and asked questions that he did not feel adequate to answer. He was a man

of very sensitive nature. Did he believe that these confrontive people were "against" him? Could this kind of stress have been enough to cause depression or a nervous breakdown? Was he seriously ill? In a memorial printed in *The Messenger* for May 31, 1922, it was stated, "Indeed, some of us felt in his last sermon that he was closer to the world beyond than the one wherein he dwelt." Had he been contemplating suicide?

Five months later, the following appeared in a small box in *The Messenger* (April 19, 1922):

The mystery surrounding the disappearance of Rev. Henry Reynolds on Sunday, November 13, last, was cleared up on Sunday, April 9, by the finding of his body in the Saginaw River, Bay City, Mich. Interment was at Preston, Md.

Do you agree that the mystery was *not* solved, and that in fact is still as deep as ever? Why did Henry Reynolds disappear so suddenly? What did he do for those five months? Was anyone else involved? Did he drown? Was he murdered, or did he commit suicide? We can find no report that a motive for his actions was discovered.

The only thing that the Detroit members seemed sure of was that he had now found his home in heaven, where he would continue his ministry in a greater field.

\* \* \*

Special thanks go to Barbara Penabaker for help in researching this article.

*Louise Woofenden is a former archivist in the library of the Swedenborg School of Religion in Newton, Mass. She retired in June, 1993.*



# Who Are We and Where Are We Going?

David Rienstra

“Who are We?” I think I will step out on a limb on this one and say we are the New Church, or at least a part of it. I fully recognize that the Lord’s Kingdom on Earth, His Church, is made up of people from all walks of life, from all cultures, from all religions who acknowledge God and live their lives according to the Goods of Charity. That, I understand as the church universal. However, we wouldn’t even know that except for the unique doctrines that have come to us from Emanuel Swedenborg as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who first accepted these new doctrines recognized that Swedenborg wrote about the descent of the Holy City New Jerusalem and that through these wonderful teachings a new age or dispensation was beginning in the world. From that small beginning and ever since, followers of Swedenborg saw that what he was given to describe was the beginning fulfillment of the Book of Revelation. It has been long recognized that Revelation is the charter of the New Church. Concerning the descent of the Holy City New Jerusalem it is stated in the *Doctrine of the Lord*, “By the Holy City Jerusalem is meant this New Church as to doctrine, and therefore it was seen coming down from God out of heaven, for the doctrine of genuine truth comes to us from the Lord through heaven, and from no other source. Also, the *Arcana* states, “That by a new Temple and the New Jerusalem in the universal sense is signified the Lord’s Kingdom; in particular the New Church.”

To some, these statements may suggest that if we say we are the New Church, then we are saying that only we who embrace the doctrines of Swedenborg have genuine truth, or we exclude any who do not see things the way we do.

I believe the opposite is true. I find that the study of the doctrines

 **If we  
embrace the present,  
our consciousness and  
sense of freedom  
grow.** 

has provided for me many sensible answers about life in this world and the spiritual world. Therefore, I have found a theology that is not only rational, but is also quite practical. I have found that I have become much more tolerant of people who believe differently. It is from Swedenborg’s writings that I have learned to appreciate the immense Love of the Lord in leading people into spirituality by their own understanding and perception of what godly life is.

Tolerance or respect for others does not mean that all beliefs are valid. In writing about the Ancient Church, Swedenborg emphasized that people had many diverse opinions and understandings, but what united them was love to the neighbor. That teaching has come to mean a great deal to me, for I have found that the more I can develop that attitude, the more I am freed to work on my own regeneration, as feeble as that may seem to me at times. I have found that I can more readily share what the New Church means to me without becoming judgmental even when our beliefs are not accepted.

Concerning our image of ourselves: A long time ago, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale wrote and talked about positive imaging. He said that when we have an image of who we are and what we want to become, the powers within us begin working consciously and unconsciously toward that image. What this says to me is that when I image myself as being New Church, I begin inwardly and outwardly to open myself to the divine influences and thereby seek more and more to do my part in my regeneration with

the confidence then that God will do His part in bringing me back into His image and likeness. This brings about His Church on earth, the New Church, the Holy City New Jerusalem descending from heaven into the hearts and minds of people especially as they become open and receptive to Him. I know that we don’t always do that adequately. I know at least that I don’t. Nevertheless, this should not hold us back from striving to do our best in cooperating with the Lord in expanding His kingdom within us. Isn’t that what our regeneration is all about? In saying that we are the New Church, it is not saying that we have arrived, but that we are seeking to become. I am New Church because I have found a system of beliefs that challenge me to do the work of regeneration and at the same time nurtures my spirit, my inner self.

Finally, on this question of who we are—in the call to Abram, God said to him, “And I will make your name great.” Of this Swedenborg writes, “That this signifies glory . . . In the external sense, by making a name and by glory there is signified something worldly, but in the internal sense, something celestial. This celestial is not to strive to be the greatest, but to be the least, by serving all; as the Lord said in Matthew: It shall not be so among you but whoever will be great among you shall be minister, and whoever will be first will be servant.” (*Arcana Coelestia*, 1419). When our mission is to serve the Lord, through serving the neighbor, we can feel good about saying that we are the New Church.

“Where are we going?” This too is a tough question. When we think of our denomination and what we are trying to achieve, we—of course—would like to think that we are moving in the direction of growth

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and prosperity. By prosperity, I am not referring to financial gain, but prosperity in wisdom and understanding in doing our part for the Kingdom of God. I often think of the prayer of Solomon when he was becoming king. The Lord said to ask what he would and He would grant it. Solomon prayed and asked that he be given a wise and understanding heart that he might be a good ruler.

I don't know where we are going as a denomination. Hopefully in each of our spiritual journeys we all are on the road to regeneration. Maybe it is enough to say, "Lord, give to us understanding hearts that we may be good stewards of your goods," and then leave the rest to God.

Swedenborg in writing about the state of the church after the judgment in the spiritual world said, "It will be similar to the external appearance, but it will be different in the internal." He said that there will still be divided churches, different theologies, but "the person of the church will be in a more free state of thinking on matters of faith thus on the spiritual things which relate to heaven, because spiritual freedom has been restored."

At the end of that section he wrote that he had conversations with angels on the state of the church in the future. Their reply was that "they did not know things to come, for the knowledge of things to come belongs to the Lord alone; but they know that the slavery and captivity in which the person of the church was formerly, has been taken away, and that now from restored freedom, people can better perceive interior truths, if they will to perceive them and thus be made internal people if they will to become so." (*Last Judgement*, 73-74).

There is no way we can know what lies ahead tomorrow, but we can be in the present. It seems providential that while working on this presentation, the latest issue of the Swedenborg Foundation Newsletter arrived with an article on this topic by the

Rev. Stephen Cole. I quote the last few paragraphs:

*This relationship between time and consciousness can also be seen in thinking about the "arrow of time." Why does the film of life run forward and not backward? Again, this may seem like a silly question, but it's a little like what St. Augustine said about time: "When nobody asks what it is, I know, but when asked to explain it, I can't." (Confessions XI.17)*

*One way of defining time's arrow, of distinguishing past from future, is to look into our minds. We remember the past; we do not remember the future. The past is where we have been on our journey, the future is where we are going, and the present is where we are now. To be conscious is to be aware of now. Insofar as our minds are concerned with the past and the future, our consciousness becomes confined. Swedenborg writes in the Arcana Coelestia:*

*The more interior and more perfect the angels are, the less do they care for past things, and the less do they think of things to come; and also from this comes their happiness. They say that the Lord gives them every moment what to think, and this with blessedness and happiness; and that they are thus free from cares and anxieties. (AC 2493)*

*The more that one succeeds in living in the present, the happier one is. Feelings of wistfulness or guilt about the past crowd us on one side. Fears or illusory hopes about the future crowd us on the other. The consciousness of the present gets squeezed between them. If we succumb to the pressure, we live more and more mechanically, less and less consciously. If we resist, if we embrace the present, our consciousness and sense of freedom grow; the present swells and presses back the encroaching past and future.*

*Does this mean living only for the present moment? Living*

*in the present does not mean living for the present. Those who live life to the fullest direct themselves to long-range, or even eternal goals, but they begin today; they start right now.*

Where are we going? I don't know. However, let us do our best today to help others and ourselves in developing spirituality, to bring people to the realization of a loving God who is ever striving to bring about the one grand purpose of creation, a heaven from the human race.

*The Rev. David Rienstra is minister to the St. Louis Swedenborgian Church, and was one of the three theme speakers at the 1993 Convention. The Messenger will publish George Dole's presentation in November. Readers are also invited to participate with articles or letters responding to the theme, "Who Are We and Where Are We Going?"*

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## Indian Summer

These are the days when birds come back,

A very few, a bird or two,  
To take a backward look.

These are the days when skies put on  
The old, old sophistries of June,  
A blue and gold mistake.

Oh, fraud that cannot cheat the bee,  
Almost thy plausibility  
Induces my belief,

Till ranks of seeds their witness bear,  
And softly through the altered air  
Hurries a timid leaf!

Oh, sacrament of summer days,  
Oh, last communion in the haze,  
Permit a child to join,

Thy sacred emblems to partake,  
Thy consecrated bread to break,  
Taste thine immortal wine!

Emily Dickinson

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# Her-story: A Legacy for New-Church Women

[Edited text of Alliance luncheon speech  
given June 24, Gordon College, Wenham, Mass.]

Alice Skinner

*As a child  
I took these women  
for granted.  
As an adult  
I realize that  
it is important to  
find out more  
about them and  
make the  
Swedenborgian  
her-story available  
to coming  
generations.*

My awareness of the importance of our New Church foremothers began when my old friends Betty and Ruth, sisters whom I have known for many years, were bemoaning their lack of role models for lives of involvement and participation in affairs beyond the home and family. Betty and Ruth remembered their mother and her friends as bridge-playing, garden-clubbing homemakers. As we talked about our girlhoods and the women who surrounded us, I realized that growing up as a minister's daughter in the midst of New Church women meant that my experience was very different from theirs. Many of the women I knew as a child worked or were involved in other activities outside of the home sphere, often due to financial necessity. Among them were teachers and librarians, nurses and secretaries, artisans and artists, a doctor, an architect. In addition to their jobs and their own homemaking, these women found time to teach in Sunday schools and write for church publications and put on Christmas pageants. As a child, I took these women for granted. As an adult, I realize that it is important to find out more about them and make the Swedenborgian her-story available to coming generations.

Louise Woofenden's "Archival Gold" in the May *Messenger* celebrates nine of our foremothers who, a century ago spoke on the topic of "Woman in the Church" at the New Church Congress held in 1893 during the Chicago Parliament of the World's Religions. Their talks make a good starting place for our her-story, for they indicate how alert Swedenborgian women were to the feminist movement, which had been working toward political equality for women since the Seneca Falls

gathering in 1848. What, they asked, did the new opportunities mean for women in the church? As Carrie Rowe posed the question:

"The question for the New Church to consider, therefore, is whether the new movement is in the direction of completer womanhood, whether the new avenues open up for women the most perfect use?"

Edna C. Silver's paper, "The Ministry of Gentleness," summarized women's initiatives toward better circumstances for girls and women, advocating that a maternal attitude extend beyond the home toward the "young, the tempted or the friendless." While the "best vitality should of course be given to those nearest and dearest," a woman's own family, "the heart may be larger than the home . . . The ear of home must be more finely trained to detect the cry of need beyond the threshold, the eye of home must be keener to see the way hither, the heart of home must be warmer to respond with sympathy, the mind of home must be better educated to decide wisely, the hand of home must be more skillful to fulfill the need."

And women in the New Church have tuned themselves to uses outside of the home. We need to know much more about them than the present materials our archives tell us.

Mary A. Lathbury, who spoke at the 1893 Congress, wrote poetry and hymns, one of which, "Break Thou the Bread of Life," is our familiar communion hymn. She also wrote a "Benediction Hymn" which begins:

The Lord be with thee in the flush of morn,  
When life springs new, and holiest thoughts  
are born,  
When earth would draw thee, may the  
heavenly way  
Shine more and more unto the perfect day.

Florence Murdoch of Cincinnati was an artist who specialized in



detailed large-scale drawings of flowers. She was active in the efforts to give Johnny "Appleseed" Chapman his rightful place in history as a Swedenborgian missionary in the Midwest. Among her projects were research on the location of Chapman's grave (which aided in showing that he was a real person and not a folk myth) and an anthology of poems and ballads published in *Johnny Appleseed, A Voice in the Wilderness* (Swedenborg Press, 1945). Miss Murdoch drew others into involvement with Johnny by forming a Johnny Appleseed Nature Club at Fryeburg and a special collection of materials about him as part of the library in the Cincinnati church.

Mildred Calby, whose parents discovered Swedenborg when she was in her teens and helped to establish a church in Vineland, New Jersey, used her secretarial skills to aid New Church ministers in New Jersey and Philadelphia and, later, at such centers as the Massachusetts New Church Union bookroom in Boston and the New Church Theological School in Cambridge. In addition to her work as secretary and librarian, she is remembered for the warmth of her caring for those in special need, foreign students new to this country, such as Horand Gutfeldt, and Everett Bray, faculty member and minister to the Cambridge Society, who lost his eyesight.

Three of the five daughters of the Reverend Frank Sewall (President of Urbana University and, later, minister in Washington, D.C.) made notable contributions. The eldest, Alice Archer Sewall James of Urbana, Ohio, an artist, poet, and playwright, founded the Urbana Movement, an adult education program based on Swedenborgian principles, which offered instruction in art and the liberal arts at modest fees. Maud Sewall, in addition to aiding with the publication of the *Magnificat* hymnal, was for many years the organist in the Washington church. Elizabeth Schellenberg, mother of Betsy Young and Mary Poole, envisioned the Wayfarers Chapel on the California coast. Writing about

her mother's vision, Mary recounts,

*Today it is hard to even imagine those sparkling blue days of the late 1920s, when the Palos Verdes Peninsula was largely open farm land . . . Toyon berries, Mariposa Lilies, Wild Lilac, California Poppies, Lupine and Mustard spread nature over the hills in lavish style. The blue sea and Catalina Island, some twenty-five miles offshore, joined to create a truly lovely California landscape.*

*Naturally, in the midst of such beauty, dreams are born and you feel especially close to your God. Such were the feelings of Elizabeth Schellenberg who dreamed of a special chapel. In keeping with the Spanish tradition of the early*



Dr. Alice Skinner

*California Missions, the chapel, she believed, would provide a place for wayfarers to rest, and, in quiet surroundings, return thanks to their maker for a truly beautiful world. Coupled with Mrs. Schellenberg's dream was the determination to work and bring this vision to fulfillment.*

It took more than twenty years to make this vision a reality, but Elizabeth Schellenberg persisted and the Wayfarers Chapel was dedicated in 1951.\*

Another trio of women worked together in their commitment to produce new materials for Sunday schools during the 1930s. Elizabeth Jacobson of the St. Paul Society (mother of Alice Mason of St. Louis,

and grandmother of Jean and Marty) described the contrast between her childhood and the 1930s as she explained the need for new lesson materials in an article in the *Messenger*:

Compare yourself at the tender age of five years with the average modern child who enters kindergarten now. You were supposed to be seen and not heard. It is difficult to get the child of today to listen to anyone besides himself.

I can attest to the compelling effort required to produce a three-year cycle of age-graded Sunday school lessons, for in my grade school years I often came home to find my mother, Carolyn Blackmer, surrounded by the Bible and volumes of Swedenborg, immersed in studying and writing the lessons for the juniors. Mrs. Jacobson prepared lessons for beginners and their teachers, and Anita Dole, (mother of Gertrude Tremblay, Louise Woofenden, and George Dole) for the intermediate age level. Later Mrs. Dole prepared the still-useful *Dole Notes*.

Mrs. Jacobson was one of the team who recruited neighborhood children for the Sunday school in St. Paul. *Messengers* of the 1930s contain articles about their experiences. For example, she told a Sunday School Association audience that teachers should be prepared to abandon lesson plans when a more immediate need is presented by a child:

*I have in mind a certain Sunday this past year when Jimmie Berry, a boy in my class, broke into the discussion of the lesson with the information that some of the boys in his neighborhood had been talking about dying—there had probably been a death in one of the families. Jimmie told how the boys had said that when people die they are put in the ground and that is the end of it. When I asked Jimmie what he said, his answer was that he told them that he guessed that when he died he would be some kind of an angel flying around somewhere. This vagueness in Jimmie's idea of the*

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## Her-story (from page 119)

*the continuance of life after death made me realize that I had failed in some measure to give definite information on this subject since Jimmie had entered my class. So the lesson of the day was put aside for the time being and a very interesting and profitable discussion followed; so much so, that on leaving the class Jimmie made this remark: "Gee! It wouldn't be so bad to die!"*

(September 11, 1935)

Anita Dole is a good example of a New Church woman who was involved in many and varied activities. Trained as a singer, she gave up thoughts of an operatic career when she married, although she continued to sing as a soloist in the church. She was president of the Alliance, served on Convention committees and the board of the Theological School; but she was also a leader in the PTA, the Girl Scouts, the Council of Churches, and, during World War II, the Red Cross war relief program.

Elsie Hobart Carter of Cincinnati and Newtonville published *Christmas Candles*, a collection of plays for small Sunday schools which included minor parts "in response to the frequent pleading 'May I be in the show this year?'" Among her suggestions about producing plays is this:

*Don't let the rehearsals at any time descend to the level of mere drill. The director must enjoy them with the children, establishing a happy co-operation which makes the whole work a joy from beginning to end. They will share the spirit of adventure in the matter of obtaining or contriving the most difficult things in the way of costumes, scenery, and properties. Their inventiveness will be quickened, their hands will grow skillful, and their triumphant enjoyment of success in these preliminary labors will stimulate them to greater success in the acting of the story.*

## Leaf

October blown against my sweated chest  
splotchy red like grandmother's hand  
it, too, glorious in swan song reverie  
with a roadmap of veins showing long journey's life  
this holographic sliver revealing itself,  
and her, and me, and Thee.

—Jim Lawrence  
San Francisco, California

Another writer of children's plays, Rosamund Kimball from the New York-New Jersey area, concentrated on dramatic presentations of Bible stories. She describes the changes observed in children as they stretched to create a Biblical character:

*While taking part in these Bible plays, a girl or a boy puts on, for the time being, another character; and insofar as he feels the depth and beauty of it, is his own character molded and strengthened and the eyes of his spirit opened. No boy can stand before the Giant Goliath as the boy David and cry, "thou cometh to me with a sword and with a spear and with a shield, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts" without building a little of David's unconquerable courage and trust into his own life.*

I have mentioned only a few of the women who provided inspiration and education for young and old as they wrote poetry and Sunday school lessons, taught, produced plays, made music and paintings. There is no information in the archives about

others, such as the indomitable director of Almont, Dora Pfister of Cleveland. There are undoubtedly many women known to you but not to me. We have touched briefly on the contributions of women from Maine to California, from the 1890s to a few years ago (omitting women who are still active). Now it's your turn to fill in some of the gaps, to identify some of the foremothers who should be included in New Church her-story.

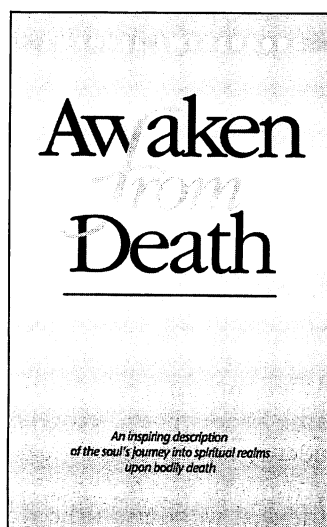
And may we each find and pursue our own pathways, so they become a legacy for future Swedenborgian women.

\*Editor's Note: It was Narcissa Cox Vanderlip's generous donation of land that also helped make Wayfarers Chapel a reality. She inspired her son, the late Frank Arthur Vanderlip, philanthropist and a former board of trustees chair of the New York Swedenborgian Church, with a lifelong love of the church.

Readers who would like to send information about foremothers may send it to the Swedenborg School of Religion Archives, 48 Sargent St., Newton, MA 02158. Please include information about the source (i.e., your name, address, and relationship to the foremother) and give as many biographical facts as possible.

Dr. Alice B. Skinner is on the Board of Trustees of the Swedenborg School of Religion and the Swedenborg Foundation.





### *Awaken from Death*

James F. Lawrence, editor.

J. Appleseed & Co., San Francisco,  
1993.

ISBN 0-9626795-0x

\$7.95 paperback

reviewed by Penelope Pietras

I was introduced to the first edition of *Awaken from Death* (J. Appleseed & Co., 1990) three years ago when, as a newcomer to Swedenborg's teachings, I was searching for answers after my mother's death. The book's account of the soul's experiences upon entering the spiritual world was certainly a comfort, but more than that, it was a quiet enticement to read and learn more of Swedenborg.

Where the first edition succeeded in making concepts from *Heaven and Hell* accessible to the novice; the second edition excels. Perhaps the slight change in wording on the front covers of the two volumes is the clue. The first edition was presented as "a *detailed* description of the soul's journey into the spiritual realm upon bodily death." The newer volume reads, "an *inspiring* description of the soul's journey . . ."

All of the details that were provided in the first edition are in the new book as well. But the second edition goes beyond answering the reader's

curiosity about the afterlife. Three new chapters invite more reflection on the conduct of our earthly existence with an eye to our spiritual future. Chapters entitled, "A Person Leaves Nothing Behind Except an Earthly Body," "A Person's Quality After Death," and "The Change of Pleasures After Death" explore the concepts of ruling love and correspondences in a manner that is indeed inspirational, and sometimes sobering.

There is motivation in these additional extractions from *Heaven and Hell*. Motivation to examine ourselves; motivation to act. A favorite quote from the new Chapter 3: "Thinking and intending without doing when doing is possible, are like something on fire which is sealed into a container and extinguished."

A new introduction by Kenneth Ring on the parallels between Swe-

## SOUL REFLECTION

Ceaseless moving waters break  
upon the face of sand-graced shore.

Silver sparkles in gentle lapping waves  
silver sparkles in tiny grains of sand  
placed there by One Great Radiating  
Yellow Globe highlighting these  
special treasures.

Sparkles — treasures which reflect  
each human soul born within  
Earth's great nurturing womb.

Each soul a sparkling cherished gift  
which ultimately rests upon the  
breast of its Heavenly Creator.

I am a sparkle, you are a sparkle  
tossed about by wind and wave.

The deft hand of time and circumstance  
rendering us sometimes spent  
and broken — yet wisened from  
creative interaction with brother  
sister, and Heavenly Creator.

Each and all, a sparkle reflected  
in breaking wave — a speck of sand.

Sharon Billings  
Cleveland, Ohio

denborg and the findings of Near Death Experience researchers adds a fascinating contemporary confirmation of the teachings.\* The book also includes an excerpt from Helen Keller's *My Religion*, verses from the Old and New Testaments, and quotations from famous authors' writings about Swedenborg. Together, these are ribbons that tie together an attractive package—one that beckons the reader to thoughtfully and joyously look inside.

\*Dr. Ring is the acknowledged international leader in near-death studies. His enthusiasm for Swedenborg is heartwarming.

*Awaken from Death is still available to Messenger readers at the special introductory price of \$5 (postpaid). Orders of 10 or more are only \$3, postpaid. Write to: J. Appleseed & Co., 3200 Washington St., San Francisco, CA 94115.*

*Penelope Pietras is a member of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, now living in Denver, Colorado.*

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# SWEDENBORG CENTER EXPERIENCE

*Pavel Heger*

I would like to share with the readers of *The Messenger* my experiences from SCE (Swedenborg Center Experience) which is a several-weeks stay in the USA or Canada where there is a Swedenborgian church. Every second-and-third-year student at SSR, in the spring of these academic years, is given the opportunity to stay with ministers of our church to learn as much as possible.

Last year I spent my SCE with Rev. David Sonmor and his wife, Shirley, in Canada. I came to Saskatoon in Saskatchewan, where the Sonmors live, with my whole family [we have four children]. We stayed in their house, and I travelled with David to the various places where his congregations are. We very much enjoyed staying with Dave and his nice family. I learned a lot about a traveling ministry from Dave which I expect to use during my future ministry. I especially loved discussions we had with Dave during our long drives. My wife, Alice, and also my children, who are very enthusiastic Swedenborgians, learned a great deal too.

This year I went to Seattle to learn something about the church there and its relationship to the bookstore called "Stone House." One of my plans for the future is to be involved in distributing Swedenborgian books and the main purpose of my stay in Seattle was to learn a little bit about how to do it.

I drove to Seattle with my family, and we decided to stop on the way to visit the famous Mormon center in Salt Lake City. We were amazed to see their visitor center, with a huge church and several other buildings which we could visit. Astonishing for us was to see many Mormon guides, who were everywhere—inside and outside of buildings, talking all the time with visitors. We asked one

lady about these guides and she explained to us proudly that she and the other 44 persons are missionaries. We were told that Mormons have always had many missionaries. They work 18 months for free for their Mormon church and are very happy to have the opportunity to spread the Lord's Gospel. She said they had to save money toward that time or maybe get some help from their relatives. The lady added that her sister is now a missionary too—in Hong Kong. We were impressed.

We arrived in Seattle, where I was supposed to work with two ministers—Rev. David Johnson and Rev. Paul Grumman. David helped me to understand the development of the church there. We discussed many issues and I learned from his experiences much that will be useful for me.

With Paul I worked in the Stone House, which is not only a bookstore but also a center of spiritual growth. When I came to the store for the first time, I was amazed at how many interesting books were there. We can find there various sections like World Religions, Recovery, Health & Healing, Men, Women, Children, Parenting, Native American, Earth Stewardship, Relationships, Mythology, Mysticism, and, of course, Swedenborg. There are also several interesting magazines and many video and audio tapes. There are many gift items—most made by Native Americans. People can also buy beautiful crystals, which are often used for healing purposes.

The atmosphere in the store is very friendly—Paul and the other employees, Linda Bryant and Keven Fjellman, like to talk with customers. Nice music is playing almost all the time, and people can drink herbal tea if they like. Everybody can stay as long as he or she likes without being bothered by many questions by

staff—they just offer their help and if a person does not need anything, that is OK. If somebody comes in with children, there is a place for them to play.

Almost every evening, the Stone House offers some kind of program—meditation, spiritual healing, Native American spirituality, life after death, Swedenborg, recovery, co-dependency and spiritual growth groups.

I experienced working in the store and talking with people. Some of the customers became members of the church, which has its worship services in the same building. About 2000 people are on the mailing list and are informed about the programs of the Stone House. Most of them never become members of the church, but they have the opportunity to learn something about Swedenborg's theology, which I see as very important. Swedenborg did something similar—he wrote his books and spread them, hoping that people would like his ideas and accept them into their belief system, using them for their spiritual growth. I could see this process happening here in the Stone House. Several times I heard Paul talking with somebody about Swedenborg teachings or about the Swedenborgian Church. Paul can explain these issues in a very simple and accessible way. People apparently enjoy talking with him about ideas which are new for them.

I am proud that our Swedenborgian church has similar missionaries as the Mormons have.

*Pavel Heger is a fourth-year Czechoslovakian student at the Swedenborg School of Religion. See page 127 for expanded biographical sketch and photos.*

# Temenos Program Calendar

## Fall Season 1993



### Proprioceptive Writing

Mary Bok  
September 17 to 19

### Women's Group

Perry Martin  
September 22, ongoing

### Creative Arts

Perry Martin  
September 24, October 22  
November 19, December 10

### Reshaping Our Family Mythology

Kathy Gajdos, Perry Martin  
September 25

### Coming Alive, the Safe Awakening of Emotions

Andrew Seubert  
October 2

### Breathwork

Laurie Weaver  
October 9, January 22

### Ritual for Healing Grief

Kathy Gajdos  
October 10

### Father's Curse and Father's Blessing

Men's Workshop  
Phillip Bennett  
October 16

### Understanding and Creatively Using My Anger

Workshop for Women  
Joy Mills, Betsy Friend  
October 30

### Sacred Space Retreat

for Clergy and Professionals Working with People  
Howard and Betsy Friend  
October 17 to 18

### Living Sacred Life

October 22 to 24

### Our Guardian Angels

Ernest Martin  
October 31

### Contemplative Prayer Group

Betsy Friend  
September 30, October 7, 14 & 28, November 4

### Health, Healing & Spiritual Emergence

Don Kauber and Perry Martin  
November 6

### Intimacy & the Spiritual Life

Howard and Betsy Friend  
November 12 to 13

### Women Who Run with the Wolves

Kathy Gajdos, Jean Olson  
November 20

### A Gift of Dreams

Alice Adelman, Perry Martin  
December 4

### Dances of Universal Peace

Jeanne Ayesha Lauenborg  
December 5, January 29

### Psyche as Hologram

George Dole  
January 9

For further information, call 215/696-8145, or write to Rev. Ernest Martin, Director, Temenos, 685 Broad Run Rd., West Chester, PA 19382.

Dear Ernest Martin,

Never let anything go unsaid. I whispered these words in a prayer at a sweatlodge to my friend—he died three weeks later. I was making a point that it is so vital to let people know what they mean to you whenever you think of it. I told him how special he was and how much he had influenced our lives. He said "I'm not special, I'm just like anybody else." Of course, I didn't let up on him until he understood just how exceptional he was. Now those words mean more to me than I could have ever thought. I am glad I spoke them when I had the chance.

He never would have been my friend if it weren't for Temenos—the Sacred Space. Since March my husband and I have been going to the Native American Sweatlodge located there, and since March, our lives have changed in ways which no simple utterance could possibly reveal. The beauty, harmony, and fellowship we have now were inconceivable just hours before we were led to Temenos. I am truly at a loss for the words to extol the blessings we have received since then. It seems our entire lives have led us to the point where we would finally attain that vital link between our desolate earthly existence and the glory of our Creator. Our hearts celebrate that gladness every day, and I want you to know how special all of you responsible for Temenos and the Swedenborgian Church have become to myself and all of us at the lodge. Thank you!

My thoughts about Temenos can be summed up from a weekend stay during which my good friends and new family shared in what the Lakota call "Vision Quest." The communion that occurred that weekend was truly blessed by God. All weekend long people walked and sat peacefully in the woods, and stayed in the cool relief of the Gate House. Some slept, some talked, we all prayed; and we all worshipped in our own special way, be it praising the magnificent beauty of the morning sunrise or the unpretentiousness of a

tiny hard-working ant grappling with a monstrous load to take home to feed his family and friends. Community, peace, harmony, beauty, love, conviction, caring—I have never known the full meaning of these words until I had the opportunity to come to Temenos.

At Temenos many different people with as many unique and individual ways of worship come together and learn and share and respect. If only our society as a whole could witness this honor and accept just a trace of this love—what a beautiful place this world could be. But, for now, we are part of the blessed few who are a part of it. Thank God for that. And, when Temenos seems so far away, may we recapture that peaceful feeling our Sacred Space has given us and share it with those we are able to touch . . . Temenos is truly a Sacred Space, guarded over and cared for by the Creator of All That Is. It is beloved to all those who have the gracious opportunity of knowing it.

I am grateful to you, and will pray for your mission. In the Lakota ceremonies we complete everything by saying "Mitakuye Oyasin," which is literally translated "To All My Relations." It means that we are all related—the winged creatures, the four-legged, the two-legged, the creepy crawlers, the sea creatures, the stone people, the tree people, Mother Earth and Father Sky—all these things are so inter-related that none can exist without the other. When man realizes that he cannot survive unless we all survive then our mission will be successful.

I can not say it enough—thank you, thank you!

Mitakuye Oyasin,

Cyndi McCarthy, West Chester, Pennsylvania

P.S. Soon after we began coming to Temenos I came across this quote which I have found very apropos (although I do not know who said it):

*I searched for my Self, but my Self I did not see.  
I searched for my God, but my God eluded me.  
I searched for my Brother, and I found all three.*

# Sunday School Association Annual Meeting

The American New Church Sunday School Association held its 121st annual meeting June 26, 1993, during the sessions of the General Convention at Gordon College, Wenham, Massachusetts. The attendance was well above expectations, with 61 members and visitors present. New by-laws were passed unanimously, returning the board to its full capacity of nine members, and restructuring the standing committees. Appreciation in the form of applause was accorded to Adrienne Frank on her retirement after many years of outstanding service to the Association.

Special thanks to the Rev. Edwin Capon and Central Office Manager Martha Bauer for making the arrangements that gave us more time for our annual meeting, and to the Rev. Jerry Poole who organized a convoy to get everyone quickly from the SSR meeting to the SSA meeting at the other end of the building. Without this assistance, there would not have been time for the brief discussion which followed the business meeting. Under the leadership of Louise Woofenden, the discussion centered around two recently published books: *Love in Marriage* (the Gladish translation of Swedenborg's book on marriage published by the Swedenborg Foundation) and *Why Johnny Can't Tell Right from Wrong* by William Kilpatrick (Simon & Schuster).

Due to budget constraints the *Journal* is unable to include most of the material we submitted, and it has been decided to publish our own journal despite budget problems of our own. We are now in process of setting up our procedure, and hope to have the journal in print this fall. It will include our new by-laws, and both the present constitution and the proposed amendments to be voted upon at the 1994 annual meeting, as well as the 1993 Reports package.

## Election Results

Gertrude Tremblay, President  
Eric Hoffman, Vice-President  
Lorrie Lipski, Secretary  
Jonathan Mitchell, Treasurer  
Joyce Fekete, Chair, Teaching Aids Committee  
Wilma Wake, Chair, Teacher Training Committee.  
James Lawrence, Chair, Publications Committee.  
Eric Allison, Chair, Outreach Committee  
Louise Woofenden, Member, Nominating Committee (*three-year term*)  
Nominating Committee members previously elected: Martha Richardson (Chair, term expires 1994) and Margaret Kraus (term expires 1995).

## Standing Committee Appointments

Betty Hill and Joy Fleming, Teaching Aids Committee  
Ted Klein, Laurie Turley, and Nancy McBride, Teacher Training Committee  
Rafael Guiu and Paul Martin Grumman, Publications Committee  
Steve Pults and Wendy Forler, Outreach Committee.

—Gertrude Tremblay, President  
Box 2448, St. Paul, AB  
Canada TOA 3A0



## Honk if You Agree

Some months ago, the Rev. Eric Zacharias of Pretty Prairie, Kansas, was quoting Sunday School notes wherein it was reported that a book by Browne Barr compared the flying of geese to the life of the church. It drew several interesting parallels about leadership, direction and community of the church and migrating geese, but what the writer found most absorbing was the discussion of the honking. Honking, at least as humans can interpret it, serves several purposes: encouragement, instruction, and identification. Geese that get separated from the gaggle (herd) find the others again by their distinctive voices.

The book's author suggests that the church functions in a similar way. Children who have been brought up attending Sunday school and church, who have heard the songs and stories, the "honking" of the faith, can recognize to whom they belong if later in life they become separated from the church and even feel separated from God. Sometime later in life they will hear a hymn or a Bible story and remember what they heard years before in the "honking" of their parents, youth leader or pastor: God is love, God forgives, you CAN come home again.

"Bring your children to church," he urges. "They need to hear the 'honking' even if you doubt they understand or are even paying attention to what is being said or sung. Someday the 'honking' will echo in their memory. They will remember they are children of God and return to the flock."

*Excerpted from The Plains Banner, April 1992, with special thanks to Jean Graber of Pretty Prairie.*

## The Sense of a Goose

These days when you see geese heading south for the winter . . . flying along in V-formation, you might consider what science has discovered as to why they fly that way.

As each bird flaps its wings it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in V-formation the whole flock adds at least 71 percent greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own.

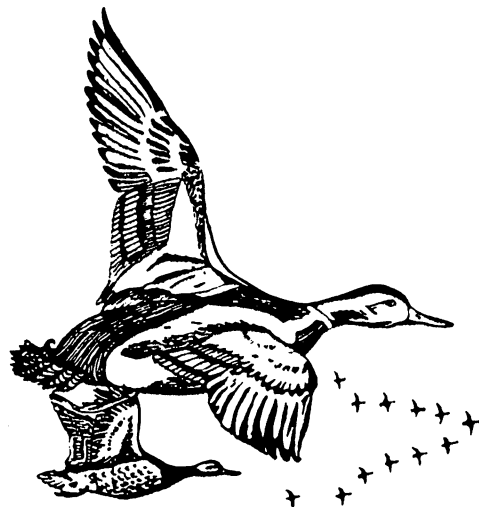
People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going more quickly and easily because they are traveling on the thrust of one another. When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the power of the bird in front.

If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are headed the same way we are. When the head goose gets tired it rotates back in the wing and another goose flies point. It is sensible to take turns doing demanding jobs . . . with people or with geese flying south. Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. What do we say when we honk from behind?

Finally, and this is important, when a goose gets sick or is wounded by gunshot and falls out of formation, two other geese fall out with that goose and follow it down to lend help and protection. They stay with the fallen goose until it is ready to fly or until it dies, and only then do they launch out on their own or with another formation to catch up with their group. If we have the sense of a goose, we will stand by each other like that.

—Source unknown

*Reprinted from In Touch, the Swedenborg Chapel Spiritual Growth Center newsletter, June 1993.*



## 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 on all pertinent topics.

### Less Talk, More Ministering

To the Editor,

To recap, my letter of last month was a belated response to a letter in an earlier edition from the Rev. Susan Turley-Moore criticizing the Rev. Dick Tafel over eliminating what I perceived to be a committee of hers.

While some may read my missive as an *ad hominem* attack on these two persons, it isn't. Each of these people is important to the national church as a minister, but each is also representative of a problem we have: they are ministers, but they do not serve a congregation.

Do we intend to be a church of ministers, or will we be a church of churches? Seems like a silly question, but from my vantage of 9 years of pretty regular attendance in Cincinnati, it is not clear what the answer is. Every year there seem to be fewer Swedenborgians, every summer we have convention—and meetings for the special committees and representatives in the winter. Every year we talk about things, but that is all it seems to be: talk.

When the national church does try to “grow” itself, it tries gimmicks and borrowed stuff rather than examining what makes this church tick. Swedenborg Central had a special ministry, staffed by a special minister, that was dedicated to growth. What all you other churches got is unknown to me; what we got was a seminar on how the Baptists grow. One supposes that telephone calls are telephone calls, but when the script for the calls is lifted from a Baptist manual, one can hardly

suppose that we would draw a crowd that was inclined towards a Swedenborgian approach to religion and spirituality.

Meanwhile, Swedenborg Central goes along spending money and doling it out to some, but not to others, for things deemed worthy, and saving the rest to cover expenses—and the expenses are myriad. The church foots the bill for much of the meeting expense, and the only result is that our ministers spend more time together than many families. Are we a stronger and better church from all this self-referenced support activity? Depends on how you measure it. If you ask those who talk to each other every year, the answer is YES. If you look at the number of members and the health of the individual churches, the answer is NO.

As I noted in my first letter: let us not forget that the very people who led us into this decline are the ones who have appointed themselves as the leadership to “grow the church” and become vital again. I have no confidence that they have found the way. They just keep on doing the same things over and over, and talk to a smaller bunch each year. This is nuts. So I present my suggestions to get the ball rolling.

For starters, forget all the meetings and use the money saved to get ministers out to the unpastored churches. There has been a revolution in communications. Businesses use fax machines, conference calls, and even mail to cut travel and meeting costs. Let us do the same. Without imposing undue burdens on any one minister, a rotation could be worked out whereby each minister got to preach at each church within a three-year period. While I do not know the *minutiae* involved with arranging such a schedule, I am sure that the time/travel requirements on the ministers would be no greater than current meetings require. Since the denomination pitches in to augment most of the ministerial salaries, why cannot the denomination insist that each minister visit at least three other churches during the year? The

ministers would be doing what they are supposed to do: minister to the flock.

A second suggestion: concentrate on the message Swedenborg left behind. Don't worry about trivial things such as whether or not I or someone else is current in his/her social action agenda, that is for Unitarians to worry about. The story of the Good Samaritan is easily understood; its implied directive is not subject to smarmy revisionism. Swedenborg did not address specific future needs, the assumption is that we can figure that out on our own. He told us to practice religion, not flaunt it. We should talk about the essence and meaning of a god concept in modern life. There is much to discuss that is current and relevant; it should find its way into *The Messenger*.

My third suggestion: change the structure of the church. We need to decide if it truly serves the needs of the denomination as it now is. Obviously I think it does not. I get the impression that we are actually two churches. One for the inner group, the other for the rest of us. I am not speaking out of spite/anger/hurt as one who has been excluded from inner membership. I write as one who finds much of what the inner membership focuses upon as irrelevant, and who sees their incessant running about as a pointless waste of the church's money. We do not need committees with Support Unit suffixes. We need Swedenborgian clergy to minister to our communities.

All religion is unrealistic in that it makes assumptions about life that are unknown, unknowable, and beyond knowledge on this side of death. This, however, does not lead to the conclusion that we are made stronger, better or are brought closer to God by having leadership that is unrealistic as well.

Leonard Harding  
Milford, Ohio

(Letters Continued on page 127)



## Passages

### Thanks from San Diego

Dear Editor:

WHAT A THRILL!

On June 30, we received a letter from the Council of Ministers. It said, "As we sit in the Council of Ministers meetings here at convention in Massachusetts, we are thinking of you and Annella. We hope everything is going well in San Diego, and look forward to hearing from you in the near future."

It was signed by 31 of our dear friends and it really made my day, so to each of you I say THANK YOU and GOD BLESS YOU.

*Eldon Smith*

*San Diego Swedenborgian Church*

### Baptisms

**Danz**—Eileen Marie Danz, infant daughter of Bill and Ann Danz, was baptized into the Christian faith April 1, 1993, at the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, the Rev. Dr. James Lawrence officiating.

**Gilman**—Ashley Marie Gilman, daughter of Charles and Karen (Rideout) Gilman, was baptized into the Christian faith May 2, 1993, at the Swedenborgian Church in Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Dr. Gardiner Perry officiating.

**MacTavish**—Catherine Marie MacTavish, daughter of Robert and Christina MacTavish, was baptized into the Christian faith May 30, 1993, at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, the Rev. Ron Brugler officiating.

**Rienstra**—Anna Rienstra, daughter of Tammy and John Rienstra, was baptized into the Christian faith March 21, 1993, at the Cleveland Swedenborgian Church, Cleveland, Ohio, the Rev. John Billings officiating.

### Confirmations

**Barbu, Fuller, Hargreaves, Potter, Reid, Thomas**—Tom Barbu, Richard Fuller, Lark Hargreaves, Ingrid Potter, Jeannie Reid, and Larry and Janet Thomas were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church May 30, 1993, at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, the Rev. Ron Brugler officiating.

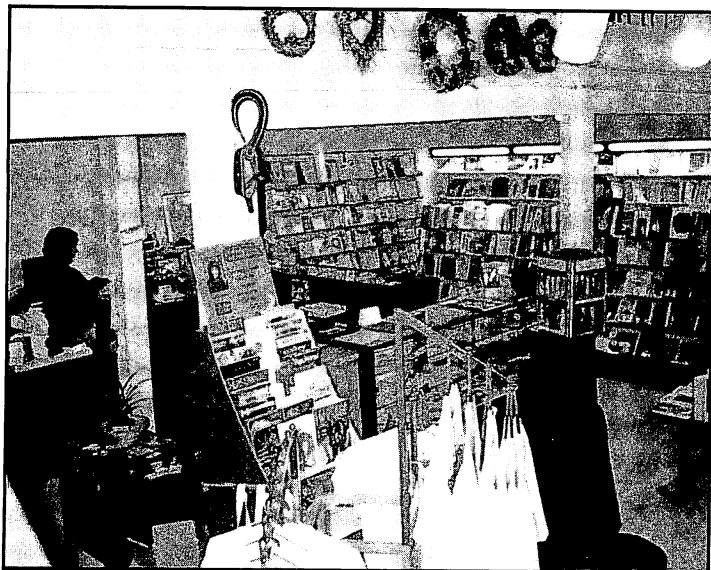
**Brown, Hammond, Nordberg**—Chandrika Brown, Nancy Hammond and Leif Nordberg were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church May 23, 1993, in Portland, Maine, the Rev. Kenneth Turley officiating.

**Dolinar**—Ellen Dolinar was confirmed into the Life of the Swedenborgian Church April 25, 1993, at the Cleveland Swedenborgian Church in Cleveland, Ohio, the Rev. John Billings officiating.

**Hutton**—David Hutton was confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church May 16, 1993 at the Cleveland Swedenborgian Church in Cleveland, Ohio, the Rev. John Billings officiating.

### Death

**Wehrhan**—Guenther Fritz Karol Wehrhan, member and a former president of the LaPorte New Church in LaPorte, Indiana, entered the spiritual world July 20, 1993. A resurrection service was conducted July 24, 1993, the Rev. Eric Hoffman officiating.



*Rev. Paul Grumman in the Stone House, Seattle. 1993*



*Heger children at the Sonmor's home in Saskatoon. 1992.*

### Pavel Heger writes:

*We are citizens of the Czech Republic. I was born and raised in the Catholic Church. Eleven years ago, when I was 25, my wife and I read Helen Keller's book, My Religion. Then, after reading some of Swedenborg's books, we became Swedenborgians without church, as there were not any around that we knew about.*

*My profession is psychology. I worked as a psychologist and psychotherapist almost six years before I came to the USA in 1990 to study for Swedenborgian ministry. My wife Alice and I have four children—Anna, David, Susana and Adam.*

The above photos were taken during Pavel's SCE travels.

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## President's Update

### Rev. and Mrs. Capon Visit Glasgow

The Rev. Edwin G. Capon and his wife, Esther, were guests of the British Conference of the New Church at the Conference's annual meeting at Jordanhill College in Glasgow, Scotland, the last week of July. Mr. Capon had been invited to be their main speaker; he spoke of the last 45 years of General Convention, with emphasis upon what has been done to further its work and the results both good and bad. Following the Conference the Capons visited the President of Conference, the Rev. Norman Ryder, in Chester, where Mr. Capon gave the sermon August 1. About 100 people were in attendance at the Conference, but unlike our conventions, there were

no children or teenagers present. The Capons were warmly received, both at the Conference and at Chester. The Capons attended the British Conference once before in 1976, when it was also in Scotland. Mr. Capon reported on this year's visit at the Fryeburg New Church Assembly in August.

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#### TO OUR READERS

Hope you like our new look. We are working on changes to make the most efficient and cost-effective use of our space and to continue enhancing *The Messenger's* readability. If you have some suggestions for us, let us know!

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*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.*

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