

THE MESSENGER

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December 1994

Encountering Saint Emanuel



Horand Gutfeldt

A vision of a Divine Humanity in Christ, fully human and fully divine, is able to bridge painfully disagreeing positions that are as old as our faith.

In a room of worship in the sunny city of Santa Cruz, California, my wife and I stood behind a venerable archbishop arrayed in ceremonial robes and a mitre. As he led us in a formal observance, a strange, mysterious feeling touched me, for on the altar before me, surrounded by beautiful icons, I recognized a picture of—Emanuel Swedenborg. We participated in a memorable event that I would never have imagined to be possible: sharing in a "Litany in Honor of Saint Emanuel Swedenborg."

As I followed the words of the ceremony, I tuned in with the history and customs of the time-honored Eastern Orthodox Church: A great tradition of almost two thousand years in the development of a branch of Christianity that is traced back to the apostle Thomas. His work expanded first into India and is now represented in several continents, although it is not well known nor one of the large mainline denominations. It had taken me a while to understand that they acknowledge that revelation is an ongoing process through all ages, and that their church recognizes and has canonized¹ a number of individuals in history as saints and teachers, but they do not pray to them.

The concept of "saint" caused me originally some hesitation, because in my mind I transferred it from

Catholicism, where the saints play a special role in worship, while in all my life I have strived to connect holiness or sanctity with God alone. But later I came to understand that it is conforming with Scripture to acknowledge as saints also proven followers of Christ and leaders in His direction. Also, in the case of Swedenborg, I have always set the message into the foreground and resisted any elevation of the person, but here was a challenge to discover a new approach that meets our age with an unbroken sacramental tradition in their ceremonies, bridging the old and the new.

So it took me a little while to become used to the idea, the setting, and the words that I read with almost unbelieving eyes while my lips were voicing the lines in the litany before me.

"Behold, I make all things new . . . By St. Emanuel's work the Church is made new . . . Blessed are the great words of the Arcana Coelestia . . . Great wisdom flows from this heavenly book."

Not long ago, I had read in the "Studia Swedenborgiana" a concentrated but very learned article by the patriarchal bishop and leader of the church, Dr. Vredenburg. In this small essay, it was recognized as a unique contribution by Swedenborg that his teachings reconcile conflicting traditions from the great first fathers of Christianity of long ago. A

vision of a Divine Humanity in Christ, fully human and fully divine, is able to bridge painfully disagreeing positions that are as old as our faith.

I had always believed that there would be only a very few individuals in my time who could recognize the importance of the teachings of the Scandinavian visionary.

Yet here before me was an archbishop—celebrating the greatness of Swedenborg's contribution towards a deeper understanding of Christianity. Still almost incredulous, my glance tried to take in the sentences of the printed liturgy in my hands:

"Saint Emanuel, you have opened the Book of the Ages. . . you have dreamed great wonders . . . You have shown us the Mind of Christ . . ."

How often have I felt that the image of the other world among Christians was so vague and pale that it took a great leap of faith to accept any of it in an age of science. While other religions that I studied, like the Ancient Egyptian, had clear descriptions of various heavens, many sincere Christians today even deny survival. Only a few have had their eyes opened in reading Swedenborg's convincing and rational explanations to understand in which way life after death ordained by Divine Justice and love could and must appear.

The words of the liturgy went on:
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Moving Toward the Light

Guest Editorial by Paul Zacharias

Let's Not Pretend Christmas

More than any other time of year, Christmas brings back memories of childhood—memories often exaggerated and overly sentimental—but always cherished. We think fondly of the wonderful Christmas programs in the old church; of family gatherings and visits with the grandparents; those endless days of waiting and the charged atmosphere of expectancy. It was sheer magic. And as we reflect on those days now, it seems like a different world altogether: a wonder world of long ago; a world full of bright, shiny surprises; a world in which we could really believe the angel's message: "Good tidings of great joy to all people . . . peace on earth . . . good will toward everyone." At least I, for one, when walking home from the church service on Christmas Eve, under snapping cold, star-filled skies, was quite convinced that angels were very close indeed. You could reach up and touch them. All of which brings us to a fork in the road—there is paradox here. In one sense, the scene just described is hopelessly outdated. And yet, in another way, it represents a very true picture of Christmas.

For those of us who are grown up, this wonder-world is a lost world. We can never return to it, and yet we somehow want to keep hold of it. At some level we continue to search for that lost world of childhood and innocence, even though we know the quest is a lost cause. Perhaps this is why we love to hold a baby and why we enjoy watching children at play—a responsive chord is being struck way back in our early memories. And so it is that Christmas brings out our wanderlust, our yearning for a long-lost childhood, and for the clear, pure taste of perfect trust and belief that only a child can have. Perhaps it is this search for the magical past that brings people out in goodly numbers for Christmas Eve services—people who have become sophisticated and worldly-wise pause for a brief hour, trying to recapture that world of long ago, a world in which we could believe in good tidings of great joy and peace on earth.

But we have to live in the real world, don't we! And so we are pulled back sharply to the last weeks of 1994, a turbulent year which has had its share of ups and downs. And doesn't that describe most years? I wonder if it's possible to reconcile this kind of a world—the world in which we live now—with the world of angels and shepherds and the birth of a Child almost 2000 years ago. When you come right down to it, maybe this is the basic question: Is Christmas, essentially, an escape from reality, where we pretend that life is better than it is and where we lose ourselves in childhood memories, or, does Christmas show us the best way to deal with the real world? Could it be that Christmas is the only reality, and that everything else is make believe! What do you think?

Well, our faith reminds us that this world, with all its pain and suffering, is the world into which our Lord Jesus was (is) born, and it is this world that he came (comes) to redeem, to salvage, if you will. Certainly the Lord was (is) well aware of all the hard facts of life. He saw grinding poverty, wasted lives, corruption and intrigue; his world was more frightening than ours is today. And yet, in the midst of this darkness, his life shone (shines) like a blazing star—the bright and morning star.

I am basically hopeful about humanity's future prospects. Granted we have not grown a great deal in the ways of achieving peace and security in these 2000 years, but we have made some progress. 1994 has seen giant steps forward for peace in Northern Ireland, the Middle East and South Africa. There are other encouraging signs. And fortunately, the entire burden does not rest on our shoulders alone. God will never abandon this world which he has claimed for his own. His promise was, and is, "Lo, I am with you always." As long as God is with us, lives can be redeemed and history can be transformed. So we journey on in trust.

The Rev. Paul Zacharias is a retired Swedenborgian minister living in Kitchener, Ontario.

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Opinion

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

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

People of the Book

(Editor's Note: The following letter was written to the Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence in response to his article, "Do We Want to be People of the Book?" which was featured in the October 1994 Messenger).

Dear Brother-in-Christ:

Your most welcome lead article in the October 1994 *Messenger* resonates with what has been happening in the St. Thomas Christian churches. We also can benefit from your very inspiring message. Thank you.

The Church of the East has been known as the People of the Book in a very special way. The Moslems were better able to accept our ethnic groups in the Middle East because

(Continued on page 157)

Encountering Saint Emanuel

(from front cover)

"You have traversed the heavens, the bells and the caves. You are a Lion of Divine Love and Wisdom."

Before my mind appeared memories of a synod of the St. Thomas church a few years ago, when Swedenborg was debated, where I had been invited as a guest. In this setting, I had been approached by a number of delegates, who asked most fascinating questions in their attempt to understand and to relate this new message to their holy beliefs and impressions of their background. What a privilege it had been to participate in this, walking in glowing sunshine in the cool shade among the evergreen trees in their center in Santa Cruz.

A bishop of the St. Thomas Church, Michael Zaharakis, had come across Swedenborg some ten years or so before, and spread his discovery among his friends, many of whom were open enough to recognize the truth and importance of what they were reading, while yet having hesitations and questions.

Bishop Zaharakis has passed away, but his legacy was to have helped his church to recognize the contribution of Emanuel Swedenborg's writings and to stimulate the study of Swedenborg's books so that he is now officially canonized by the Eastern Orthodox church.

The liturgy continued in proclaiming: *"St. Emanuel, great expositor of the Word of God ... You were ever faithful to the Word ... Angel of Light."*

My heart was still wavering between this (for me) completely unusual approach, and, having long lived in a Catholic country, my old reservations against any saints. But here I saw a perception that was close to my own sacred convictions, and something in me just wanted to throw my arms around the wise and friendly archbishop, who had opened his hospitable dwelling to me,

to share on short notice this moment that still wavered for me between strangeness and familiarity, between rejoicing and remnants of an inner hesitation.

Where do we go from here? I am in the dark, where Providence will lead us, and where channels of communication may now open in entirely new and unexpected ways. There are new chances of dialogue in openness and mutual respect, and as my own powers are waning, I hope and pray that our churches will find the wisdom to develop ways of searching together for the Eternal Truths, which God is unfolding before us, and which we all grasp only in such imperfect ways. It takes work to make our eyes free for that, which the Lord wants us to follow, to go ahead in trust and yet with reflective caution, and what would I want more than to see fires burning of new devotion to Christ, fanned by new and growing insights that combine new ideas with age-old wisdom and traditions that continue to meet us in this new age. How far are we ready to join in the quest, searching for new ways of crossing the barriers of old stereotypes, and meeting the challenges of unexplored roads before us?

I suggest that our Council of Ministers appoint a committee to study the questions and possibilities involved in these developments. As possible actions I also envisage inviting Archbishop Dr. Vredenburg for a lecture at the Swedenborg School of Religion, and perhaps inviting a representative to our next convention to tell more about their church.

The Rev. Dr. Horand Gutfeldt is a retired Swedenborgian minister living in Berkeley, California. Dr. Gutfeldt ministered for many years in Europe and the U.S., and currently serves on the Board of Trustees for the Swedenborg School of Religion. He is also a New Church delegate for the National Council of Churches.

'In the Catholic church, canonization is an official proclamation by the pope that a person is declared as a saint and to be venerated. Special conditions are miracles and previous beatification.

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Stamp Program Alive and Uncanceled

Some months ago, *The Messenger* reported that Philip Alden was retiring as chair of the Stamp Program. At that time a request for a volunteer to fill that vacancy was published. We are happy to report that Trevor Woofenden has taken over this task, and you may send your canceled stamps (preferably trimmed to ¼" around the borders) to:

Trevor Woofenden
2 Linseed Rd.
West Hatfield, MA 01088

When a quantity of canceled stamps has been accumulated by Mr. Woofenden, he is able to sell them once a year to a stamp collectors' organization. The money received is used for missionary purposes.



Saint Emanuel Swedenborg

Wilson Van Dusen

On March 22nd, 1983, the St. Thomas Christians elevated Emanuel Swedenborg to the status of a saint in an elaborate ceremony. When I heard of it my first thought was, "What a brilliant idea. He deserves it!" But it also comes as a shock to realize this occurred over ten years ago and very few in the Swedenborg realm even know of it.

I can hear a few Swedenborgians saying, "But he was opposed to sainthood." This is not entirely true and it is our first order of business to address this. The idea of a saint appears widely in both the Old Testament and in the New. My concordance shows 67 references. A synonym for saint is holy; that is, a saint is one who is holy. Even in Pott's concordance most of the references to saint are under *holy*. My favorite quote on saints is from Ephesians 2:19-22:

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you are also built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

I believe all who "act by the good they know" are part of the Temple of God. But the saints are, so to speak, major supporting beams of the temple. By the way, those who think the idea of saint is only Christian should look at saints in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Saints, or equivalent terms, (i.e., in Islam, friends of God) are almost a universal religious idea. The only religion I know of in which saints are missing is in Protestantism!

Very simply a saint is one in whom the holy shines through. They become examplars of what religion is referring to. But the holy manifests in many ways. One is given to helping the poor; another, like St. George, stood up to persecution even unto death. Some were ascetics. Others such as St. Seraphin of Sarov were noted for countless miraculous healings. The saint becomes the representative of whatever holy aspect had shown through. They are turned to not as individuals but as examples of the holy. For this reason saints lose their given name and are denominated by a religious name. St. Emanuel is fitting because Emanuel

*A saint
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means "the Lord with us." Those who would pay respect to St. Emanuel are not thinking of the person of Swedenborg, an 18th century engineer, etc. They are thinking of the holy that showed through in his theology which to many is "the Lord with us." It is the holy in his writings which is respected in St. Emanuel.

The word saint is derived from *sanctus*, the past participle of the Latin verb *sancire*, to be consecrated. In the early Church it was a synonym for Christian, as when St. Paul addressed the saints at Phillipi and Ephesus. Later it was applied to individuals of great holiness. Early martyrs were called saints because it was thought no one could voluntarily go to their death for their belief in Christianity except that God was present and helping them. How did Swedenborg himself conceive of saints?

A CHURCH OF ANCIENT LINEAGE

It is striking how different in origin is this church compared to Swedenborgian churches. The St. Thomas Christians have a lineage which literally goes back through the apostle Thomas to Christ.

The main force introducing Swedenborg into this group is their leader and the head of the church, Patriarch Maran Mar Joseph Warsai. He is a man of great vigor and intellect. Talking with him is like having a chance to consult with ancient tradition. I was particularly charmed to hear him speak Aramaic, Jesus' own language. His worldly name is Dr. Joseph Vredenburg. He says about half his congregation of 2000 has fully accepted St. Emanuel and about half have partly accepted him. They have discussion groups devoted to the writings of St. Emanuel, but they need more of his books. St. Emanuel stands with other modern saints created by them, such as Martin Luther King and father Damien of Molokai. I have visited the leper colony at Molokai and read Damien's biography at the same time. The Hawaiians who know of Father Damien still speak respectfully of this great man. Damien was not made a saint by his own Roman Catholic Church since he did not meet their

standards for miracles. I would say that what he did for the colony of lepers was a great miracle in itself. Both Damien and Martin Luther King are worthy saints alongside St. Emanuel. But these relatively modern figures are honored by this church alongside some ancient figures: St. Theodopre of Mopsuestia and St. John Nestorius, both about 400 A.D.

These early figures point to the origin of the St. Thomas Christians. The Apostle St. Thomas (the doubting Thomas) drew as part of his missionary territory western India, the Malabar Coast. He was later martyred there. This church pays respect to both Thomas' Gospel and the Acts of Thomas which are considered non-canonical by most Christian churches. If you read these gospels, they are surprisingly oriented toward looking for the Divine within. And it was Swedenborg's grand spiritual adventure and discovery that impresses St. Thomas Christians. I almost wonder if the books of Thomas were rejected by the early church because of their depth.

I'll be brief on the lineage of this church. It was clearly founded by St. Thomas and the church's literature says directly it is not wrong to doubt or question.

Swedenborg's References to Saints

I found Swedenborg referred to saints at least some 40 times in his theology and in the *Spiritual Diary*. These follow a very clear pattern. When he is showing the internal sense of a Bible reference to saints it means the people of the Lord's church and the holy truths of the church (i.e., *Apocalypse Revealed* 801). His use follows closely the way saints are used in the Bible—not to represent persons in themselves, but rather persons in whom the holy has shown through (AR 815). The "camp of the saints" (Rev. 20:9) "stands for heaven or the Lord's kingdom on earth, which is the Church" (*Arcana Coelestia* 4236).

In contrast to this are a number of passages in which Swedenborg meets saints in the spiritual world, or people who supposed themselves to be saints, or wished to be seen as saints, (AC 951, AR 752, *True Christian Religion* 560, TCR 824, *Heaven and Hell* 535-6, *Spiritual Diary* 1300, etc.). In all of these the person's real nature was of hell. It is easy to understand this both negative and positive view of saints. To wish to be adored, respected, venerated, etc. is a dangerous vanity. Those who are really saints, in the ancient sense, have lived in such a way that

That is how we learn. The church on the Malabar Coast was in some isolation and under local persecution. They parted with the main branch of Christianity at the 4th Ecumenical Council (451 A.D.). It was an age in which church leaders were attempting to put what had been given them into a form for all the ages. They came to bitter disputes over theological points which now seem of little moment. This is an early period, even before the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches had divided (about 1000 A.D.). The entire Christian Church was represented in these councils through their bishops. The division that effected the St. Thomas Christians came over two doctrines. The Council voted that Mary be called Theotokis (literally the bearer of God). Nestorius felt this tended to overlook the human aspect of Christ. He was expelled and exiled for this, and his followers, Nestorians, were persecuted for this. Another group were persecuted because they were monophysites (Christ is one nature out of two natures, Divine and human). These were called Jacobites. The St. Thomas Christians unite these two ancient groups, Nestorians and Jacobites. One reason Swedenborg is venerated by them is that his doctrine that the human of Christ was glorified into the Divine/Human (one nature) solved through revelation these ancient points of controversy.

I believe that to most of us it would seem sad that the church could split over such matters. As a bishop at the Council I would be inclined to say, "Our interpretations differ, but

it is not given to us to know all things. Let us remain friends in Christ nevertheless." Religious encyclopedias now indicate that all major branches of Christianity no longer feel this is a legitimate reason to separate, that they are simply a part of Christianity. Their church was long associated with the Patriarch of Antioch so they have also been called Antiochian. The branch they represent was allied to Rome in 1599 and in 1635 they split from Rome and joined the Syrian Orthodox Monophysite Patriarch of Antioch. The Syrian Church of the Malabar rite came to the United States to avoid persecution, and the St. Thomas Christians have separated from that group. They also call themselves Catholic, but by that they mean *universal*. They are not part of the Roman Catholic Church.

This is primarily a liturgical church recognizing liturgy that goes back through the Apostle Thomas to Christ. They have seven sacraments. I believe in many ways this church would resemble a very liberal Eastern Orthodox Church. They use icons. They have apostolic succession. Women are admitted to the priesthood and episcopacy in equal status with men. They have a Matriarch to match the Patriarch. They are not dogmatic, being ready to accept people of divergent views. The church seems to combine an ancient liturgical tradition with a modern liberality and a personal search. They canonized Swedenborg because he so well enunciated their own position. □

the holy shows through them. Respect paid to these people is not to the person but to the spiritual they represent. There is a nice passage in the *Spiritual Diary* that explains why it is permitted to respect saints.

...that it is from permission that certain ones in the Church worship the saints as gods, to the end that the idea of a visible God may not perish; and that they thus retain some notion from nature, that the Divine proceeding from the Lord is human in every form (SD 4775).

Saints are uniformly people who do not want to be worshipped (as was undoubtedly true in St. Emanuel's case). But when the holy shows through a person, then we may pay respect to their image because it helps us to get closer to the Divine human. So this matter turns on a subtle point. It is wrong to give the reverence to a person that is due to God alone, but it is permitted to look to the spiritual that came to represent. Picture yourself praying to a picture of Swedenborg. Ask yourself, what do you look to? Is it to an engineer who lived in the 18th century, of such and such characteristics, or do you pay

respect to the wonder of the theology that came through him? I'll warrant most will feel it is the latter. I'd be unable to adore an engineer I never met, a man whose faults I could easily discuss. But I could easily pay reverence to the holy that came through him. This is true for any religious symbol. Say a man prays to a simple wooden cross. He knows quite well it is of wood and perhaps even who fashioned it and its cost. But the symbol of the cross in prayer becomes a representative of all that a cross could stand for. It is literally a representation. The saints, too, represent the holy come to earth, having spent a time with us. And then, their having lived different kinds of lives, we come to use them as representations of a particular aspect of the holy. St. Emanuel represents that it is possible for a person to enter into a deep dialogue with God and to show forth the holy as a result. This is the aspect of the holy that St. Emanuel represents. This is something quite different from the person of Emanuel Swedenborg.

(Continued on page 150)

Wilson Van Dusen

We particularly need reminders
that this is a potential for all people—
that the Holy can come to earth
and walk among us.

(continued from page 149)

The Lord's kingdom is the neighbor that ought to be loved in the highest degree, because by the Lord's kingdom is meant both the church throughout the whole earth, known as the *Communion of Saints*, and also Heaven (TCR 416).

He who in faith acknowledges, and in heart worships, one God is in the *communion of saints on earth*, and in the communion of angels in heaven. These are called communions and in reality they are so; because they are in one God, and One God is in them (TCR 15).

I am quite certain Emanuel Swedenborg would have voted against his own canonization, as is characteristic of all true saints. Actually the saints don't need us, having found their way to the temple. It is simply we who need saints and symbols. As long as we look to the Holy Itself that showed through them, the Holy will help us. We particularly need reminders that this is a *potential for all people*—that the Holy can come to earth and walk among us.

St. Thomas Christians

Who are the St. Thomas Christians who have thus surprised us? I have had some contact with this group and find their understanding and respect for Swedenborg's theology is much like our own. I do not find that they are putting any special interpretation on his theology. They simply found that Swedenborg's theology is an enlightened statement of their own.

I wanted to introduce lovers of Swedenborg to 2000 new lovers of Swedenborg who have wisely and rightly made him a saint. This group has journeyed from the earliest days of Christianity and found in St. Emanuel's writings a most illuminated statement of their own position. They desire a dialogue with Swedenborgians everywhere. In a way it is a marvelous affirmation of Swedenborg that this group who has come down from Christ through Thomas should affirm Swedenborg's writings. Let us generously welcome our brethren after such a long journey. We have a chance to learn from this Church of ancient lineage.

Contact them through Dr. Joseph Vredenburg, 134 Dakota St. #308, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, telephone 408-423-4952.

Wilson Van Dusen is a retired clinical psychologist, author and Swedenborgian scholar living in Ukiah, California. He is currently working on a book on the nature of religious experience.

New Fryeburg Lecture Tapes Available

Readers of *The Messenger* are invited to order the set of audio taped lectures from the 1994 Fryeburg New Church Assembly summer session. Our themes this year were *The Family in our Swedenborgian Doctrines*, and *Bible as Parable*. A full order is for both weeks at \$24.00; the minimum order is for one week at \$12.00. Shipping and postage are included. Canadian currency will be accepted at par. Send your order with payment to: The Fryeburg New Church, 4 Oxford Street, Fryeburg, ME 04037.

The Family in our Swedenborgian Doctrines

Hereditary Evil: Respond, Don't React—

Rev. Dr. Gard Perry

The Purpose of Creation—Rev. Dr.

William Woofenden

Parental Love and Mutual Love—Rev.

Dr. Ted Klein

Models of the Family—Rev.

Dr. Dorothea Harvey

Leaving Father and Mother—Rev. Dr.

George Dole

Our Swedenborgian Family: Functional or Dysfunctional?—Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake

Swedenborg, the New Age and Family Violence—Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake

The Family as a Human System—Lee Woofenden

Family Values—Rev. Dr. William Woofenden

Family in Societal Context—Rev. Dr. George Dole

Bible as Parable

Two Classics: Mitchell and Worcester—Rev. Dr. Gard Perry

Biblical Parables: A Survey—Rev. Dr. George Dole

The Kingdom Parables in Matthew 13—Rev. Dr. Robert Kirven

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The Kingdom Parables and St. Theresa's Interior Castle—Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake

Nathan's Parable to David—Rev. Dr. William Woofenden

The Legend of the Sunflowers

[Editor's Note: We are happy to present "The Legend of the Sunflowers," the first prize winner of the Sunday School Association's story-writing contest. Other top stories submitted will be published in subsequent issues of The Messenger, and will also be collected in an anthology to be presented at the annual convention in July.]

Long ago, in the wide open plains of our continent, before roads and cars and even trains stretched across the land, there lived two small Indian tribes, one Lakota and one Pawnee, who shared a broad valley beneath the majestic peaks of the Rocky Mountains. Many years ago, they had lived in peace, hunting side by side in Beartooth Valley. At the end of long, cold winters the tribes would meet and exchange gifts in the blooming alpine meadows, expressing wonder at the jagged, snow-capped towers above them that produced cold, clear streams each spring. They gave thanks for life, and the warmth of the sun, and for each other. They hunted deer and buffalo, just enough to keep them fed and clothed. They prayed for the spirit of the animals they killed, and thanked the Great Spirit, God, for providing them with meat to keep them alive.

In later years, though, the tribes began losing respect for the marvelous nature around them. As their tribes grew and prospered, they began to talk only of their own power. . . the speed and cunning of their hunters, the ability of their jewelry makers and artists. They took pride in their clothing, and their headdresses, and their weapons. They no longer looked in wonder at the silent, soaring flight of an eagle, or the colors of a rainbow after a sudden spring storm. . . the beauty of a spotted, newborn fawn suckling from its mother, or a butterfly darting across a dew-covered field on a summer morning. The two tribes stopped giving thanks for everything that nature gave them each day.

While they admired their own power, each tribe began to dislike the other. The Lakotas began to believe that the Pawnees were an inferior tribe. They wore odd clothes and painted their faces strangely. The Pawnees thought badly of the Lakotas. They thought the Lakotas were liars who cheated the Pawnee traders. Eventually, the two tribes became very angry toward each other. They began to attack each other, and shoot arrows at each other for no other reason than one was Pawnee and the other Lakota. They no longer met each spring during the snowmelt, but rather each planned ways to hurt the other tribe, by stealing their horses and food.

As the two tribes became more and more angry with each other, so the seasons passed with more and more harshness. The winters became colder and colder, and lasted longer and longer.



When springtime approached, the rivers were still frozen, and the world around them seemed lifeless. Each summer they found fewer and fewer animals left in the valley to hunt for food. Berries, nuts, roots and other food became hard to find, and the food they did find in the dry ground tasted bitter.

Each tribe began to blame the other for the lack of food, until one spring, after a particularly cold, harsh winter, the two tribes made plans to drive the other out of Beartooth Valley. The Lakota and Pawnee tribal leaders told their warriors that there was not enough food for both tribes to survive in the valley anymore.

One spring night, an unusually warm night, the chief of the Lakotas, Iyotaka, had a vivid dream. In the dream he was standing along the bank of a rocky stream just before sunrise. The rushing water sounded like muffled voices to him; then the gurgling became a clear, quiet voice.

"Send your bravest, wisest scout to search for the Pawnee camp," said the voice.

"We are preparing to send a war party," answered Iyotaka.

"No," came the reply from the brook. "First you must just send your greatest scout."

The very same night, Luta, chief of the Pawnees, had a similar dream. He was standing alone in a tall pine forest, near sunset. The sky was dark red against the shadowy trees, which were swaying and rustling in a steady breeze. Luta thought he could hear the murmuring of voices in the trees. Then a calm, clear voice spoke to him.

"Send your brightest, most courageous scout to find the Lakota camp."

"What can one man do to our enemy?" Luta replied.

"All will be well with your tribe if you send your best scout," replied the voice.

When Luta and Iyotaka awoke the next morning, they told their war parties to wait, and that they would instead send a scout ahead to find the enemy camp. The Pawnee chief sent Grey Wolf, the tribe's craftiest hunter and smartest scout, while the Lakota chief sent Two Feathers, his tribe's craftiest hunter and smartest scout.

The two set out on their journey to find the other's camp. As night fell on the first day, Two Feathers found a thick stand of trees in the

(continued on page 152)

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"The message of the arrow is that you must remove it to make your hearts whole again."

Legend of the Sunflowers

(Continued from page 151)

middle of Beartooth Valley, and decided he would be safe there for the night. As he entered the small pine forest he saw a strange sign, written in his native Lakota language, that said, "Within these woods the boy Sungazer died one winter. He was a gentle boy, whose life was devoted to following the path of the sun. Where he is buried, a sunflower grows every spring and gives wisdom to those who approach." Two Feathers had never heard this tale before, but he thought these special woods would keep him safe. So he quietly moved through the trees and bed down near the middle of the woods, at the edge of a small clearing.

Unknown to Two Feathers, Grey Wolf had also entered the same woods, near a rocky stream on the other side, thinking it would keep him safe from harm until morning approached. As he entered, he too saw a sign, written in his native Pawnee language, that said, "Long ago one winter, the young girl Sunwarmer died. Her life was devoted to warming her face from the sun's rays. Where she is buried in these woods, a sunflower grows every spring which shares feelings of love to those who approach." Grey Wolf thought the woods were blessed, so he quietly entered and bed down at the edge of a clearing, not far from Two Feathers.

As the sun began to rise the next morning, Two Feathers and Grey Wolf rose to continue their search. Each of them stepped into the clearing and saw the other. They both drew their bows, and fit them with their best arrow. They aimed their bows, ready to fire, but they both suddenly stopped when they heard the sound of a boy and girl's voice from the middle of the clearing. They dropped their bows in disbelief as a sunflower sprouted up from the soft earth. It quickly grew to a height as tall as the warriors, swaying gently, with its head drooped downward, for the sun had not yet risen full into the sky.

Both approached the sunflower, and as they came closer, the single sunflower began to appear as two sunflowers side by side. Both warriors fell to their knees. Two Feathers bade the sunflowers to share their wisdom. From one sunflower, head bowed, came the sharp voice of a young boy.

"Think not that we grow from this fertile earth in order to give peace to your worlds. We send the message of the arrow."

At once, Two Feathers stood up and again drew his bow. He pointed his arrow at Grey Wolf, saying, "The earth and nature have spoken that we are to use our weapons upon one another."

Grey Wolf pulled another arrow out of his quiver and reached down for his bow. But the soft voice of a young girl drifted out from the

other sunflower in both directions. It tickled the ears of both warriors with the words, "Stop... and listen." The warriors lowered their bows and gazed toward the sunflowers, which began to blend together again into one, just as they had appeared from afar. Then the sunflower spoke, with its head still bowed downward, and in the words could be heard the sharp voice of the young boy, and the soft whisper of the young girl:

"By the arrow we do not mean the weapon that you hold in your hand, but the weapon that is slicing your heart into two pieces. With half of your heart you love your family and your tribe, but with the other half you hate your neighbor; you desire to kill him when you do not even know him."

The message of the arrow is that you must remove it to make your hearts whole again, for to love your family and your tribe isn't enough; if you do not love your neighbor, even your enemy, you love no one."

At that moment, the sun peeked over the forest clearing, and the drooped head of the sunflower slowly reached upward, its golden petals shimmering in the sunlight against the deep blue sky. The two warriors dropped all of their weapons to the ground and approached each other. Grey Wolf spoke.

"Brother, I know now that I must not hurt you, and our tribes must stop being enemies," he said. "But clearly there is a problem. Our tribes will not believe what we have seen and heard today. They will want to make war."

"Trust the wisdom and love that has come forth today," replied Two Feathers. "We are respected in our tribes. Our chiefs have sent us as leaders. Our tribes will believe our message of peace." Two Feathers continued to speak. "But we have another problem. There is too little food to keep both our great tribes alive. Will one of our tribes have to leave Beartooth Valley?"

"No, my friend," answered Grey Wolf. "It is our pride and anger that has made the ground hard and dry. It is our anger toward each other that has driven the animals away. When we begin to love, then God, the Great Spirit, will provide for us once again, and the animals will return, and the berries will grow sweeter."

The two warriors parted and returned to their tribes.

That summer, the two tribes felt the joy of a new age. They respected the words of their two brave warriors. They began to trust each other, to hunt and trade together, until Beartooth Valley became fertile and full of life once more.

Tracy Morris is a teacher, former newspaper sportswriter and photographer, currently director of the Academic Success Center at Mt. Ida College and works parttime at the Sylvan Learning Center in Newton, Mass. He is also the husband of Renee Morris, a third-year SSR student.

Christmas Gatherings

Don't Let the Christmas Crush Spoil it for You

Con irony of modern Christmas lies in its ubiquity. Being bombarded with Christmas sentiment and trimmings almost naturally dulls our spiritual senses; it becomes easy to take the season for granted—even, perhaps, to shield ourselves from its onslaught.

In his acclaimed book, the *Seven Story Mountain*, Thomas Merton chronicled his spiritual wanderings from a life empty of God to a life lived only for God as a monk in one of the austere monasteries, the Trappist Our Lady of Gethsemane in Kentucky:

"Christ always seeks the straw of the most desolate cribs to make his Bethlehem. In all the other Christmases of my life, I had got a lot of presents and a big dinner. This Christmas I was to get no presents, and not much of a dinner; but I would have, indeed, Christ, God, the Savior of the world.

"You who live in the world: let me tell you that there is no comparing these two kinds of Christmases . . . The emptiness that had opened up within me, that had been prepared during Advent and laid open by my own silence and darkness, now became filled. And suddenly I was in a new world."

Though it is possible to take spiritual retreats at Merton's old monastery (no, you don't have to be Catholic), we don't need to go to quite that length in order to find the meaning of the Christmas event.

Swedenborg actually felt that a life of vital and useful interaction in and with the world provided a much superior spiritual opportunity to the seclusion of a monastery. But we need to create a balanced life of

engaged activity and spiritual retreat and reflection. This is harder to do during the holiday season than at any other time of year, which is why we have this rich irony in the first place: all the hubbub is ostensibly related to the cultural high point of the Christian year.

What to do? No simple gimmick will likely work (or else someone would've already made a fortune—another irony!) Only by a deliberate inner choice that this year we will give the spiritual aspect of Christmas the highest priority are we likely to pull off the challenging feat of Christmas, American-style: namely, actually *grokking* it.

Jim Lawrence, co-minister, San Francisco Swedenborgian Church. Reprinted from December 1993 newsletter.



One Size Fits All

How would you like to give a multitude of perfect gifts this Christmas season?

Where one size fits all, no colors to be concerned with, and at no cost? Here's how: During December, practice this simple act of giving. Participate in the glorious act of giving the gift of peace to each person you come in contact with this season. How can you do this?

First, as part of your daily prayer time, affirm: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Luke 2:8-14.

This was the message the angel brought to the shepherds as they watched their flock on that night long ago.

What else can you do with this message? You can affirm: "Peace on

earth, good will toward men," or "Peace on earth, good will to you."

Use this often throughout your day, saying it silently. Use it for any sort of encounter.

In traffic when someone cuts you off. When shopping, and the clerk is not satisfying your needs. At home when people are tired and tempers are frayed. When there is not enough money for your wants. At work when your boss has higher expectations than you can achieve.

Anytime, anywhere, you can silently affirm to yourself this message that the angel brought the shepherds.

You can change your reality. Feel worthy of living in peace. Do it believing you can make a difference. Let the Christ express through you. In giving the gift of peace to those you interact with each day, may you have the most peaceful holiday season you have ever known.

*Donalyn Martin and Marilyn Waumans
Reprinted from Unity Church of Peace Newsletter, South Bend, Indiana, December, 1993.*



Some More Special "Freebies" You Can Give Throughout the Holiday Season:

The Gift of a Cheerful Disposition:

Be cheerful around your loved ones. No complaining, no feeling sorry for yourself, no nasty comments, no pessimistic predictions. Your gift of cheerfulness will be great for all of your loved ones—and yourself.

The Gift of a Compliment:

Give your loved ones a compli-

ment. A simple "I like the way you smile" or "Great supper, honey" can be of inestimable value to persons who may feel they are taken for granted.

The Gift of Laughter:

Just clip a cartoon, a joke, a riddle or save a clever article. Your gift will say, "I love to laugh with you."

The Gift of Prayer:

Don't forget how valuable a prayer can be. Praying for someone is saying, "You are so special to me that I often talk to God about you."

The Gift of Listening:

One of the greatest things we can do for one another is to *listen* to him or her. Why not give this gift to someone on your list? Really listen.

The Gift of a Note:

Write a note to a loved one. It can be as short as "I love you" or as long as a sonnet. Surprise your loved one, put the note in a lunch box, or a purse, maybe in the sock drawer. Though the note may be a surprise, the message will not.

Father Val Peter, Executive Director
Boys Town, Nebraska



"The Season of Love" ... A Family Time

*When winter winds blow cold
A warm home and loving family
Take on deeper meaning and we
Are grateful for this blessing.*

*Some with no immediate family
Waiting at home
For whatever reason
Find comfort knowing
The whole human family
Is one.*

*Children of the same Creator,
Inhabitants of the same planet,
Sustained by the same air and water,
Nourished by the same earth,*

*We are a family then
Different though we may be
In appearance, actions, talents
As children of one family are.*

*We share the same Eternal Parent
Who keeps a loving eye
On our sometimes dangerous games
Allowing us to learn by doing
Yet ever in control.*

*As children of that Divine Parent,
We share the same loving nature
Though some may not yet realize it.*

*As we grow in wisdom, we grow in
Love, becoming more like
Our Eternal Parent.*

*Reaching out to those around us we
Create a family of love
Unlimited by blood ties
A family circle so large
It takes in all of humanity.*

*That's the message of this holiday,
This season of love,
Whose messenger was one who
"Grew up" to become like
Our Eternal Parent.*

*And so, during this
"Season of Love"
We celebrate the oneness of
Our human family.*

Meri Lattak
Merrillville, Indiana



This Christmas, Give a Gift for the Spirit!



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



RAINBOW COLORS IN THE WORD

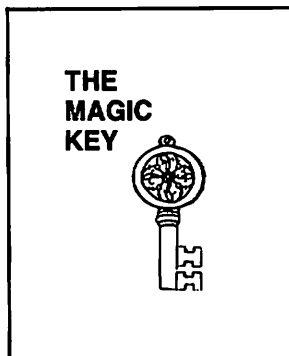
is a book for juniors. Children who like to know 'Why?' will enjoy this introduction to color. Colors are part of their natural world. Colors are found in their Bibles. Colors relate to their feelings. Here is a basic correspondence of colors with pictures and puzzles and a thoroughly readable text.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

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

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

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

26 pages, paperback, ISBN 0-917426-08-0 \$2.50



THE MAGIC KEY

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

24 pages, paperback \$2.50



COME UNTO ME

A Child's First
Book about God

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

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

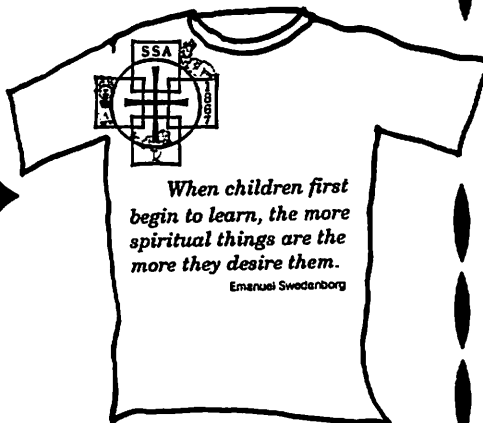
24 pages, paperback \$2.50

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

Buy a Christmas Present
and
Support the S.S.A.

T-shirts only \$11.00

Price includes mailing cost. All sizes available. Made from thick 100% cotton. Colors include navy, ash, forest green, purple, and jade. To order call Eric Allison at 519-578-2433 or FAX 519-578-2665 or write to 12-180 Highland Cres., Kitchener, Ontario N2M 5K5. Make checks payable to the American New Church Sunday School Association.



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

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

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

Opinion (continued from page 146)
many chapters in *The Koran* are derived from the Old Testament. Toleration was given to Nestorians and Jacobites because they sought the inner sense of the Word.

St. Emanuel Swedenborg guided by the Lord was able to provide our present St. Thomas Christians with the inner sense of the Word. We are discovering a new foundation for the future of the Word.

You have presented a well-thought discourse. You are quite correct about contemporary biblical illiteracy. Our culture may be pulling away from our richest resource but I personally believe that scholars and clerics like you, Dr. Jim, will bring us around to new ways of rediscovering both the salvific enlightenment of the Word and the genius of St. Emanuel. You are doing it.

Sincerely in Christ,
Catholicos Mar Joseph Warsai
The Federation of
St. Thomas Christians

Dear Editor,

In response to Jim Lawrence's article "Do We Want to be the People of the Book?" in the October 1994 *Messenger*, I would have to agree that "baby boomer folks of my generation are precisely the ones who are most at sea with scripture." But that is not necessarily because we dropped out of church in adolescence. I think it is more a result of the lack of learning about the Bible and ourselves that has taken place through our churches.

In my childhood, our Swedenborgian church taught me some knowledge of the Bible, but there was always a lingering mystery in my religious background as to what it meant to be Swedenborgian, especially when I was asked to explain my religion. My mother instilled the Swedenborgian ideas of angels and usefulness to me, but certainly there was no knowledge passed down from my church as to what this word "Swedenborgian" was all about. What was more memorable as far as

biblical study were the days when our church's Reverend Johansson came to our home. His cigar smoke and heavy accent filled the room, as I curiously watched my older brother bury his face in the Bible study books Reverend Johansson brought. I surely felt that I was missing out on something special, but I "was too young" to take up such serious endeavors.

After adolescence, I attended a discussion group with Dick Baxter and others after the Sunday's sermon. I hoped that I would become more enlightened about Swedenborgian concepts and about my own Swedenborgian roots, but the few times I attended, I became filled with even more questions than answers, and eventually these groups dissipated.

Now a mother of two small children I find myself at a Methodist church (there are, of course, no Swedenborgian churches in our rural setting), where for the first time I am becoming truly acquainted with the Bible. My new familiarity with the Bible is not learned from the sermons or directly from the words of others, but rather I am learning about the Bible from the Sunday school lesson books, produced by Cokesbury Press. These lessons are all based on scripture and take the student through the spiritual lessons of the scripture. Often I try to find passages from Swedenborg that will give me a Swedenborgian understanding of these lessons, but it is nearly impossible to understand Swedenborg without a basic knowledge of some of his concepts, which my family's church never taught me.

In my lifetime I have been to a few Swedenborgian churches and to a significant number of Swedenborgian meetings. But there is often something missing emotionally (except perhaps for those General Convention publication department meetings at my mother's house so many years ago). As the number of church-going Swedenborgians dwindle, I wonder what has happened to

our sense of community and our love of neighbor. You cannot build bonds and attract like-minded souls if there are few or no avenues for experiencing love with your fellow Swedenborgians. Every Sunday we need to experience the spiritual, that inner world that Swedenborg wrote about. Even if it is only on Sunday, to the degree that we experience that depth, we can bring that experience into our daily lives. But on Sunday we listen to our sermons, possibly have a little social hour, and go home. The sermon should be inspirational, but it only sets the stage for our own spiritual work that day and hopefully on subsequent days. After the sermon we should engage in our adult Bible study with other Swedenborgians (at the same time as the children's Bible study classes). Our adult Bible study can become the instrument to bring us back to the scripture, cause us to interact with each other, and hopefully inspire our own soul-searching. This spiritual depth and feeling is what is missing from my Swedenborgian church experience.

In the Methodist church I attend, we use the Cokesbury Press adult Bible study books, and the children use the children's Bible study books. I have often asked Swedenborgians why we do not buy these books for our own churches and supplement the lessons with the ideas and interpretations of Swedenborg. But my words always seem ignored, because there is never an answer. Perhaps Swedenborgians are too proud to use the ideas of other denominations and feel that they must create the materials themselves. So we wait and wait, and our numbers continue to dwindle. The most lively and healthy churches are those that have avenues for interaction and communication, especially *meaningful* and *spiritual* interaction and communication. How do we experience God's divine presence? How do we experience our own spirituality? The answer, of course, is through each other. To experience
(Continued on page 158)

Opinion (Continued from page 157)
the spiritual world and love between each other, we have to at least begin by talking to each other about meaningful subject matter. Adult Bible classes are the avenue for talking with each other about the spiritual lessons of the Bible, lessons that apply to our daily lives. Only when we deeply involve ourselves in the knowledge and lessons of the scripture, can we begin to consider ourselves "people of the book."

Susanna Lawson
Dillwyn, Virginia

[Editor's Note:] Ms. Lawson's letter was sent to the editor and to Jim Lawrence, thus enabling us to run the following response from Jim in the same issue.

Dear Susanna,

Your basic indictment is against the church, which is probably true in the main, though it may be also true that you weren't in the right space to take advantage of what was offered at that time. I think your general point about what churches are doing now for active adults is certainly true: though what they teach is often either vapid or uninspiring, most churches in the U.S. do more biblical teaching to their adults than General Convention's churches.

My own response to this is largely carried through in the *Messenger* article, which was the text of a panel talk I gave at the last convention. My biblical classes, of which I have had several over the years, have gone fairly well, but they do not go as well as topical classes and evenings, probably for the reasons I cited. Many people find the Bible rather disjointed, strange and often boring. It just isn't a good read for many!

You are now motivated because of your children, and through curricula developed for youngsters you have had a specialized opportunity to learn Bible stories (and sequences, etc.). I have had that happen, also, in the three churches where I have been minister. The parents who get involved with the Sunday school end up learning a tremendous amount,

and almost without fail they have said so to me. (One parent read the entire Dole Notes the year she taught, and she loved it!)

In your last paragraph you make an erroneous statement about what has been done regarding mainline curricula. Apparently you are unaware that from 1983-1986 Ron Brugler got a lot of churches working with a colorful curricula like the Cokesbury (the one he promoted back then and which all of my three churches have used in the Sunday school is by Abingdon.) Also, you should be apprised that in the Sunday School Association we have re-

cently gotten into a new series, also discovered by Ron, called The Whole People of God. We are already using it here in San Francisco this year, but even more excitingly we (a team led by Ted Klein and Wilma Wake) are writing our own theology that will go with the wonderfully written and illustrated Bible stories. The publishers of The Whole People of God have said they will work with us to produce our own fully integrated series. Should have done it a long time ago, right?!

Jim Lawrence
San Francisco, California

Cambridge Outreach

F. Robert Tafel

To paraphrase a well-known quote from Mark Twain, reports that the Cambridge Society has expired are greatly exaggerated! On the contrary, we are alive and well, thriving with activity and a number of new programs that we hope will benefit Swedenborgians everywhere.

In addition to the regular Sunday morning worship services during the academic program year, the Cambridge Society has maintained weekly worship through the summer, has begun a Sunday school, and has recently redesigned the worship service to include children before they adjourn for Sunday school. Also, the July "Music at Noon" concert series was so successful that the series was resumed for the month of October.

Other regular church activities include a discussion group known as "The Sunday Morning Forum." Featured is a double-sided page of quotes from the Bible and from the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg prepared by the pastor each week with an introduction and several paragraphs on the topic. This paper is a silent witness during the week, available for visitors to take with them.

The Wedding Chapel, inaugurated in 1985, is patterned after ministries begun at Kemper Road Center in Cincinnati and Church of the Holy City in Washington, D.C. This is an interfaith ministry that provides a spiritual starting point for some forty to fifty couples each year.

Plans for a Swedenborgian Chaplaincy at Harvard-Radcliffe began in the late 1980s to explore the potential appeal of Swedenborgian ideas to new audiences; namely, college and university students. The chaplaincy was inaugurated with the publication of *Life of the Spirit: Talks on Psychology and Religion from the Swedenborg Chapel*, pulpit talks delivered to the Harvard-Radcliffe community over the years by Eugene Taylor, begun during the ministry of Rev. Wilfred Gould Rice. With the official recognition of the Swedenborgian Chaplaincy by the United Ministry of Harvard-Radcliffe in May of 1991, we inaugurated the annual Wilfred Gould Rice Memorial Lecture on Psychology and Religion.

Last year, the Cambridge Society became a sponsor of the Tibetan Community Assistance Project. This organization was begun in 1990 as the Tibetan U.S. Resettlement Project, a national effort to help resettle one thousand Tibetan emigres in twenty-one cluster sites around the country. The Cambridge Society is host to the Boston cluster sites. The goal of the project

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Cambridge Society

(Continued from page 158)

is the preservation of traditional Tibetan culture which is expected to have an impact on spiritual developments in the twenty-first century.

The several different ministries of the Society have begun to interact synergistically. For example, interaction between two of its ministries, the Harvard-Radcliffe Swedenborgian Chaplaincy and the Wedding Chapel, has led to six known university students and graduates having their weddings at the chapel during this year, and many not specifically identified in past years. Also, children of three families married at the Wedding Chapel have begun to attend the Sunday school. All couples were invited but the majority of invitations were returned due to address changes. This problem is being solved by initiating a "Friends of the Chapel" campaign which will feature several mailings a year in order that we may be apprised of address changes.

We have suggested that these ministries are important for Swedenborgians generally for a number of reasons:

First, in the tradition of Samuel Worcester, Samson Reed, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William James and Helen Keller, the long history of connections between the Swedenborgian Church and Harvard continues.

Second, the chaplaincy serves as a model for the growth of other college chaplaincies elsewhere. The key, we have found, is for local congregations to co-sponsor lectures and activities with existing student groups.

Third, the Tibetan Community Assistance Project (T-CAP) is a far-reaching social action program of the future, especially appealing to younger audiences.

Finally, we are engaged in telling the world who Swedenborgians really are, primarily through church activities, but also through publications and scholarship. We are communicating the true place of the Swedenborgian Church in the history of American religion. Swedenborgianism is not a modern New Age cult, but a

Passages

Deaths

Flagg—Lucile Benson Flagg, beloved mother of Sally, David, Loren, and Susan, entered the spiritual world May 17, 1994, in Wilmington, Delaware. A resurrection service was conducted May 22 at the Elmwood New Church, Elmwood, Mass., the Rev. Jerome Poole (Lucile's son-in-law) and the Rev. Dr. Donna Keane officiating.

Larson—Olive Alden Larson made the transition into full consciousness of the spiritual world August 19, three weeks before her 98th birthday. Olive enjoyed a lifelong association with the Philadelphia Swedenborgian Church. A memorial service was conducted at the West Laurel Hill Chapel August 23, the Rev. Ernest Martin officiating.

Important Church Calendar Dates

November 19–21	General Council/Cabinet at Central Office—Newton
January 20–21	Temenos Board of Managers—West Chester, Pennsylvania
April 2–4	CAM—SSR, Newton, MA
May 5–6	SSR Board—Temenos
May 7	Mass Association Annual Meeting
May 19–20	Temenos Board—Temenos
July 2–9	1995 Convention—San Francisco

President's Report of Activities

The Rev. Edwin Capon has advised that all mail should now be sent to him at the Central Office, as he and Esther do not yet have a new home address in the Boston area and may not for several months.

Following is a list of Mr. Capon's activities since the annual convention in Washington, D.C.:

July 24—Preached in Swedenborgian Church in Yarmouthport, Mass.

July 28–30—SSR Board of Trustees at Blairhaven in Duxbury, Mass.

July 31—Preached in community church in Meredith, New Hampshire.

August 18—Spoke at the Fryeburg New Church Assembly in Maine.

August 21–23—Cabinet meeting at the Fryeburg New Church Assembly.

September 4—Preached in the Fryeburg New Church.

September 16–17—Meeting of Temenos Board in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

September 25—Installed the Rev. John Billings as Pastor of the Kemper Road Center Swedenborgian Church in Ohio.

September 26–29—Meeting of the Committee on Admission to the Ministry in Newton, Mass.

September 30–October 1—Meeting of SSR Board in Newton, Mass.

October 2—Participated in memorial service for Roger Young in the Boston church.

November 3–5—Meeting of the Board of the Wayfarers Chapel in Palos Verdes, California.

November 6—Meeting with Convention Planning Committee in San Francisco.

November 13—Consecration as Lay Leader of Steve Thomas in Kitchener, Ontario.

November 17–18—Council of Ministers Executive Committee meeting in Newton, Mass.

November 19–21—General Council in Newton, Mass.

Our thanks to Elizabeth Parker for her illustration for "The Legend of the Sunflowers," (p. 151), and belated thank you to Manon Washburn for her artwork illustrating "Ah! . . . Swedenborg!" in the October *Messenger*.

venerable Christian denomination. We believe the contributions being made in this domain are so significant that they deserve a separate

article in another issue of *The Messenger*. Stay tuned!

The Rev. F. Robert Tafel is minister to the Cambridge church in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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.

SSR Board Education Workshops Sponsored by Lilly Endowment

The Swedenborg School of Religion Board of Trustees held board education workshops at its summer and fall meetings. Sponsored by the Lilly Endowment, the workshops focused on helping new board members develop their skills, and their understanding of SSR.

The board recognized last spring that of the twelve elected members, eight of those on the board as of the summer corporation meeting would have served three years or less. Three new trustees—the Rev. Dr. Donna Keane, Esther Nicastro-Capon, J.D., and Barbara Penabaker—were elected at the corporation meeting. Over the summer, Dr. Patricia Basu resigned, and was replaced by Dr. Richard B. Hatheway. Karen Feil, Richard Stansbury, the Rev. Dr. Horand Gutfeldt, and the Rev. Ernest O. Martin had all served for three years or less at the time of the corporation meeting.

Held at Blairhaven at the end of July, the summer board meeting included a workshop in the general responsibilities of trusteeship led by Dr. William Baumgaertner, a certified board mentor for theological schools and former director of accreditation for the Association of Theological Schools. The faculty presented a panel, and students joined the group for a cookout.

The fall board meeting opened with a panel presentation, by members of three other denominations—Methodist, UCC, and American Baptist—on their processes for working with students seeking ordination. Board members, faculty, CAM, and a student representative participated in the meeting.

Michael Shone of Pierce Park Group, which evaluated the performance of the investment managers in the Common Fund, presented to the trustees a three-hour overview of the Common Fund and issues relating to SSR's endowment. The Rev. Bill Cunitz, vice president for development at Andover Newton Theological School, led a session on trustee responsibility for development.

The board was pleased to learn that recruiting ef-

forts seem to be successful; a total of nineteen students enrolled this fall. The board is working to raise \$25,000 to meet a challenge match; they have contributed \$7,500 of their own money as part of the \$25,000 to be matched. Board members will participate in a phonathon to help raise \$25,000 to SSR by December 31.

Under a new policy, four former board members—Polly Baxter, Mary Crenshaw, Margaret Kraus, and Betsy Young—were recognized as Trustees Emeritae. They will be involved in the social and ceremonial functions of SSR, but will not vote or attend board meetings. The criteria for selection are a minimum of nine years service on the board, and an outstanding record of contribution to SSR.

Newly elected board officers include the Rev. Jerome A. Poole, chair; Karen Feil, vice chair; Dr. Edward Bohlander, clerk; Dr. Alice B. Skinner, assistant clerk; Richard E. Stansbury, treasurer; Barbara Penabaker, assistant treasurer.

Mary Kay Klein, President SSR



Summer Board Meeting, Blairhaven, July 28-31, 1994

L to R: Jon Tafel, Bill Baumgaertner, Ed Bohlander, Edwin Capon, Esther Nicastro-Capon, Barb Penabaker, Jerry Poole, Donna Keane, Horand Gutfeldt, Alice Skinner, Mary Kay Klein, Karen Feil, Erni Martin.

**The Swedenborgian Church
of North America
The Messenger
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