
THE MESSENGER

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January 1994

A Very Singular Fellow

Len Harding

As most of you know, John Chapman, aka Johnny Appleseed, was a Swedenborgian. He was never ordained to my knowledge, but he did discuss Swedenborg's views with all whom he met, and he passed "the word straight from Heaven" (Swedenborg's writings) among his hosts when he traveled. I have often wondered why we don't make a bigger deal out of him, but one must admit that the image of a quaint fellow who walked around with a pot on his head might give educated folks pause. Since, however, I have little or no meaningful education, I am fascinated by him.

He was a very different sort of American "hero," one we Swedenborgians should be proud to have among our spiritual progenitors. First, he is the only early American hero I can think of whose exploits are only slightly exaggerated. Second, he is the only hero who is known and considered heroic despite the fact that there is not one scintilla of violence connected with the man. He harmed no one, defeated no enemies through force of arms, nor did he extract land from the Indians. Indeed, he had no enemies; he got on well with the Indians despite the intermittent warfare that plagued the frontier. That may not sound like much, but when you stop and think, there are precious few "hero" figures who are revered solely for their gentle spirit, charity and relentless optimism.

John Chapman was the first Euro-American conservationist. While



His trees were a sign of permanence; his gifts were not immediately useful but needed to be tended and cared for to be of ultimate worth.

everyone else was tearing out the trees to make room for civilization, John Chapman was aware that trees were required to balance nature. His focus on fruit trees is no accident. The apple was a staple in early America, it's found in everything from condiments to wine. It took anywhere from 5 to 7 years for the apple trees he sold (and gave away to those too poor to afford his price) to bear fruit. His trees were a sign of permanence; his gifts were not immediately useful but needed to be tended and cared for to be of ultimate worth (he encouraged stewardship via his gifts). In short, he contributed not to the operating expenses of the frontier, but invested in its capital base. In fact, when the Congress began adopting Homestead Laws, one of the conditions to gain title to the free land was that the settlers had to plant fruit trees—as they implied a long-term commit-

ment. Thus we could also argue that John Chapman's "ideology" became part of our national land policy.

It is significant that John Chapman found Swedenborg's message valid for life conditions on the Ohio frontier. Swedenborg himself did not suffer much by way of hardship, and I am not sure that many others who followed his teachings did either. (Swedenborg's writings were quite popular among Anglican clergy). Most religious "commandments" are pretty easy to follow under gentle conditions; that is, when life is not harsh, one can focus one's mind on the law of God. But what of harsh conditions that require survival skills where the absence of social/legal structures make personality the law of the land? What of conditions that cause one to feel that perhaps compassion could be fatal?

Many things uttered in a scholarly environment have little relevance to real world conditions—as any recent college graduate can tell you. I cannot speak universally, but John Chapman's life suggests that the theological/philosophical outlook Swedenborg generated in his book-lined study was eminently suitable to the wilds of frontier Cincinnati a century or so later. Many lived according to the law of sin, as it were;

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Moving Toward the Light

From the Editor:

When Laura Lawson Tucker phoned me sometime in October to sadly point out the omission of any mention of the Children's Program in the September *Messenger*, I felt both remorse for my lapse, and gratitude that she had brought it to my attention—not in a blaming way, but with the genuine concern and dismay that such an omission deserved.

Yes, it was true that the budget cuts had resulted in elimination of a July *Messenger*, the convention issue was limited to 16 pages instead of the usual 20, material that needed to be included got backlogged and was spread out over subsequent issues. Then the developers lost a packet of film, and I discovered I lacked photos of the event. And, for the first time since I'd become editor, I missed seeing the children's presentation because I was attending my stepdaughter's wedding in New Hampshire. It all added up to a hastily made editorial decision to leave it out this year, hope it wouldn't be missed too much, and better luck next year.

As Laura and I talked, it occurred to me that I could have called her after convention, explained the situation and asked her if she could supply an article and photos for a subsequent issue. But I believe I was guilty of the kind of preoccupied "adultism" we adults often slip into, especially those of us who don't have children in our lives on a regular basis anymore.

Laura writes, "We need (children) to remind us about the soul of our church: giving hugs, holding hands, asking for and giving help, running through sprinklers, discovering treasures on the beach, listening to the nighttime quiet, and looking at the stars." When I read that, scenes from the past year flashed through my mind. Ironically, a highlight of the wedding I attended was our nine-year-old grandson Jeff asking me to dance. He was enthusiastically "dipping" his partners at the end of each number with great glee and surprising strength. It was exhilarating to discover I could still be dipped back without falling down. I was also honored that he asked me, considering all the little girls who were vying for his attention. Few adult interchanges could match the lightness and joy I felt after that dance.

The next scene that appeared in my memory was the first-grade class I took over one morning as a substitute teacher in Indiana. The children tramped through the door issuing a range of greetings, from perfunctory and merely curious to warm and approving. But one little boy beamed up a most beautiful smile of welcome and threw his arms around me in a hug that bestowed unconditional trust, love and acceptance on a virtual stranger. The gesture was so deeply touching it changed the quality of my energy for the rest of the day.

And there was the little second-grader in another class who came up to my desk and burst into agonized sobs, gulping out a story of lost lunch money. It took me a few moments to help her understand that she wasn't to worry about it at all, that her lunch money would be replaced, by me if necessary, if it couldn't be found. We were discussing the huge sum of, I think, 60 cents. When I finally managed to get through to her that lost lunch money was far less important than her peace of mind, her look of reprieve, profound relief, gratitude, the easing of terror, was a gift that will live in my memory for a long time.

How could I have forgotten, even for a little while, that so many of my most alive, deeply rewarding, joyful moments have been in communion with children, reading good children's books, and times when I allowed my inner child to go out and play. (My grown children and I did just that this past Thanksgiving. We had a grand, challenging walk up Volcan Mountain—yes, we're all into adult exercise, aware of the importance of trimming the fat from our thighs—but the joy of this walk was in spontaneous play, as my 38-year-old son hid behind trees on the path and jumped out to scare us, and we shrieked with delight, happy to abandon our little adult dramas for a while).

Thank you, Laura, for reminding us how much we need our children and they us. Forgive me, and Lord help me not to make that mistake again.

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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.

Responses to Harding and Dale To the Editor:

I write for a number of reasons. First, thanks to Paul Zacharias for his response to the "wheat" found in Len Harding's letter (December 1993 *Messenger*). Secondly, I am concerned that a letter with so much "chaff" found its way into *The Messenger*. With limited space in our magazine and increasing needs in our church, it seems highly unwise to me to fill a whole page with such ramblings. As one who has served in the NCC for over nine years, I am also aware that *The Messenger* is read by a number of folks outside the denomination, and for many of them it serves as the primary window into our life. I am very concerned that our image is greatly and unnecessarily tarnished by giving credence to such uninformed material.

In response to Eli Dale's concerns

(Continued on page 7)

LOOSE THE HANDS

Thomas Elwood

How they persuaded the old woman to ride the Big Pines ski lift I'll never know, but there she was, coming down to the place where the guard stood ready to help her off.

"Loose the hands," he said.

Her grandson's hands let go the steel post that suspended his chair from the big rope above. He tried to help her, but he was only a little fellow and as his chair turned and left him standing on the platform, the guard failed to pry the old lady loose.

She was trembling, perhaps thinking of the long 20-minute trip up and 20 minutes back that might be endlessly repeated—suspended by that rope high above the cold snowy slope where the skiers sped.

Well worth the first ride—more than 2000 feet up above the 6000-foot elevation, to the mountaintop, where one might see, on an unusually clear day, Catalina out in the Pacific, and beyond the mountains on the other side, the desert.

But a second ride, hands and feet cold, teeth chattering, and the fear that she might not ever be able to unbuckle the strap around her waist and get off that endless ride . . . Her lips compressed and she seemed to stifle a sob.

The guard, a young man from Switzerland, walked with her around the turntable the rope made in its shed where part of the power was generated to make the rope move. He patted the old woman's hand reassuringly and unbuckled the strap that her hands had been too frozen, with chill and fright, to do for herself.

"Now loose the hands," he said, as he walked beside her chair to the takeoff platform. He helped her disengage her hand, and lifted her to the ground. She was safe!

And I thought: We go up and down and around, hanging desperately on to things. We hold so hard

that we cannot progress to better things, nor even for sure to safety.

My father held on to a Navajo rug for fifty years, a treasured souvenir of his Army days in Oklahoma. We were not to use it. There it hung on the wall, a rug to look at. Other floor coverings wore out and we needed that one, but the moths got it.

Mother kept her finest china in a glass closet all those years. When father died and she moved, the bric-a-brac went for a song—to people who would be giving the stuff its first use in half a century.

An example of tight fists was provided in France, as you will no doubt remember, where for many years governments tried to get the peasants to use their hidden gold. While more forward-looking, looser national economies grew stronger, the French hid their gold. It was not until the Maginot Line had been overwhelmed by WWII invaders that Charles De Gaulle, who had opposed the frozen uselessness, was able to bring a loosening of the hands, and confidence in the future.

Question: Do we use our hands to cling so tightly to what we have that we aren't able to reach for something better? Do we sit on our hands, to avoid helping others—or even to avoid encouraging with generous applause? Do we allow selfishness or blind fear to freeze our hold on what we have, prejudice and blind unreasoning opinions to keep us clinging to the past?

On life's ski lift, we can rise to the heights, to observe heavenly infinity and reach out to God's eternity.

—If only we can "loose the hands."

Thomas Elwood, a Presbyterian elder born in 1903, writes that he is an admirer of Swedenborg, and has done editing, writing, and public relations work for many years. He lives in Van Nuys, California.

*We hold
so hard
that we
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Where Have All the Children Gone?



Laura
Lawson
Tucker

Field Trip to Plum Island: Benji Tucker, Christopher Lawson,
Grace Nowakoski, Emily Turley, Rachel Poole.



Whale Watch: Greenough Nowakoski and Laura Tucker with
children Rachel Poole, Benji Tucker, Emily Turley, Kelly
Woblgemuth, Grace Nowakoski.

After reading the convention (September) *Messenger*, I was dismayed that there was no mention of the Children's Programs. How could that be? In previous years there were always, at least, some photos depicting children "alive and well" at convention.

I phoned Patte LeVan to ask her about the omission. She apologized, and urged me to write and express my thoughts about the children of our church:

*Convention, 1993—
Wenham, Massachusetts*

I was there. I was with the children ages 5–10, along with my co-teacher, Greenough Nowakoski. I also spent a little time with the childcare program (children up to age five) and the program's head teacher, Elly Majonen. And I spent some time with the children ages 11–13, led by Jerry Poole and David Fitzgerald.

What did I witness? I had the honor of seeing "our" children get to know one another, demonstrate their caring for one another, take risks in their learning, have fun, solve conflicts, explore new environments, and be creative. Each group had its own projects and activities during the week. Except for the childcare group, all of the children

spent the week working toward a performance given on Saturday morning during the Sunday School Association meeting. Did you have the pleasure of seeing *our* children share their creative work? Unfortunately, many people couldn't attend because of other commitments. And—this leads me to a fundamental question: Does our church truly value *our* children and keep their needs and spirits a high priority?

The fact that our church funds children's programs demonstrates one level of commitment toward *our* children. I think all children (and their families) appreciate the opportunities provided to them because of this funding.

However, I believe we need to go further than that. And, it is not a question of money. It is a question of personal and spiritual priorities. I know that it is very seductive for adults to get "caught up" in their adult concerns/worries and missions (myself included). When children are being provided for with programs, in a sense, they become "out of sight/out of mind." But aren't *our* children the life blood, the future, of our church? Isn't it vital that we show our concern to *our* children daily in small and big ways? Isn't it crucial that *our* children feel

an investment in our church today and that investment remain intact as they grow? To children, the definition of a church is the people whom they know in that church, either by face or by name. Each of us, as an adult, needs to make an effort to know, to appreciate, and to care about the children of *our* church so that the children may care about *us*. Isn't this what church is all about?

So, when the children's programs are not visible in the convention *Messenger*, or when adults "forget" about our children, either during convention, or back home in our own churches, a powerful message is being conveyed. It is a message that implies a lack of interest or concern for *our* children. And in small or large ways, I believe, this message filters down to our children.

Our children need us and we need *them*! We need them to remind us about the soul of our church: giving hugs, holding hands, asking for and giving help, running through sprinklers, discovering treasures on the beach, listening to the nighttime quiet, and looking at the stars. Thank God for our kids!

Laura Lawson Tucker is an early childhood teacher and volunteers on several boards in her community of Guilford, Vermont. She grew up in the Cincinnati Swedenborgian church.

A Prayer for Children

We pray for children who put chocolate fingers everywhere,
who like to be tickled,
who stomp in puddles and ruin their new pants,
who sneak popsicles before supper,
who erase holes in math workbooks,
who can never find their shoes.

And we pray for those
who stare at photographers from behind barbed wire,
who can't bound down the street in a new pair of sneakers,
who never "counted potatoes,"
who are born in places we wouldn't be caught dead in,
who never go to the circus,
who live in an X-rated world.

We pray for children
who bring us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions,
who sleep with the dog and bury goldfish,
who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch money,
who cover themselves with Band-Aids and sing off key,
who squeeze toothpaste all over the sink,
who slurp their soup.

And we pray for those
who never get dessert,
who have no safe blanket to drag behind them,
who watch their parents watch them die,
who can't find any bread to steal,
who don't have any rooms to clean up,
whose pictures aren't on anybody's dresser,
whose monsters are real.

We pray for children
who spend all their allowance before Tuesday,
who throw temper tantrums in the grocery store and pick at their food,
who like ghost stories,
who shove dirty clothes under the bed, and never rinse out the tub,
who get visits from the tooth fairy,
who don't like to be kissed in front of the carpool,
who squirm in church and scream in the phone,
whose tears we sometimes laugh at and whose smiles can make us cry,

And we pray for those
whose nightmares come in the daytime,
who will eat anything,
who have never seen a dentist,
who aren't spoiled by anybody,
who go to bed hungry and cry themselves to sleep,
who live and move, but have no being,

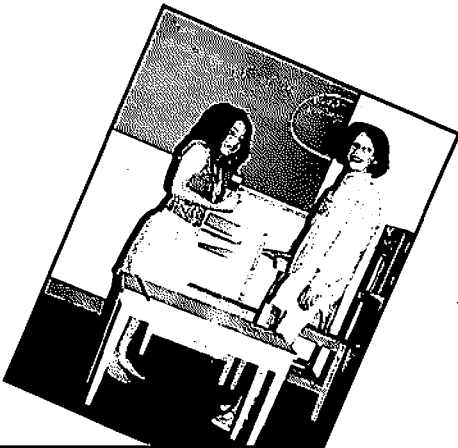
We pray for children who want to be carried and for those
who must,
for those we never give up on and for those who don't get a second chance,
for those we smother . . . and for those
who will grab the hand of anybody kind enough to offer it.

Ina J. Hughes
Children's Defense Fund

1993 CONVENTION CHILDREN'S PROGRAM



ABOVE: Emma Majoner, daughter of teacher Elly Majoner.



Two photos above and upper right: Magic show and evening program put on by kids.

How I Found the New Church

Louise Woofenden

Scattered through the archival collection at the Swedenborg School of Religion are many fascinating accounts of how Providence has led people all over the world to the writings of Swedenborg. This month's Heritage page will be a tour of four continents.

1. In 1939 a man, Dr. T. David, was passing through Hornby Road, Bombay, and came across some old books being sold on the side of the footpath. He bought, for a very small price, a shabby book that had no cover. He began studying it carefully, page by page, "as greedily as a hungry man with his favorite dish." From reading this one book, though he did not know the author or title, change took place in his life. He called it a "New Birth."

Later that year he found *Divine Providence* in a library, and discovered the title and author of the first book, which (you have probably guessed) was *Heaven and Hell*. He also found the address of the Swedenborg Society in London, and later became a missionary for the New Church.

2. About 1943 Jack Hardstedt, a Swedish Pentecostal minister in Port Said, Egypt, had a very frustrating and discouraging discussion with a Moslem on the subject of the Trinity. He set aside a day for prayer to ask the Lord to reveal this mystery to him. In his meditation he was somehow moved to look in an encyclopedia for the ancient history of his native land. He was finishing the section under "Sweden" when the next article, on Swedenborg and his teachings, caught his eye. Hardstedt read this with tremendous interest, and searching in a local library, found three works from Swedenborg's writings. These led to his joining the New Church and starting the group in Egypt.

3. A letter dated 1922 addressed to the old Board of Missions from a salesman, says: "I never had even a common school education, not even the First Reader. I had been an orphan in childhood and practically raised myself. I followed mining about twenty years, and as I had a strong desire for knowledge, I robbed my stomach to buy books. Internally I might say I was inclined to be religious. However, I developed into a Free Thinker. I studied all phases of the Great Labor Problem, Darwin, Huxley, Ingersoll, Tom Paine, New Thought, Mental Science, Christian Science. Four years ago a friend, knowing me intellectually, suggested I read Swedenborg. I went to the Public Library in San Francisco. I read for ten weeks about eight hours a day. I hadn't gone through very far until I bitterly wept when I reflected that I had belittled God's Word, and I sincerely prayed for forgiveness. I didn't need anyone to persuade me that this was the True Religion. During the last four years I've read everything of the theological works, except the *Arcana*. I have read only the first two volumes of it, but the other works averaged reading three times from cover to cover. I continually thank the Lord that He led me to a religion in my declining years that I love, and which my internal self recognizes to be the absolute truth."

4. Perhaps the most touching story will have to be recounted from memory, since the notation for its source in the archives has been lost,

and many attempts to find it have failed. In concerns a man in Germany in the first half of this century who became deeply despondent over many difficulties and disappointments. One night he felt that he simply could not endure life any longer. He wandered alone through the streets, heading for the river, where he intended to jump from a bridge and drown himself. Passing through a dark and dismal alley barely wide enough to accommodate a man, he brushed against an object lying on a grimy window sill. For some reason he picked it up. It proved to be a book with pages curled and tattered from who knows how many months of exposure to rain, snow and wind-blown dirt. He emerged onto the lighted street and as he proceeded towards the river he looked at the volume in his hands. The front pages were illegible, but he opened the book and began reading at a random page. As he read, it seemed as if a monstrous load of pain, guilt and sorrow had suddenly been lifted from his mind and a peace had enveloped him such as he had never thought possible. The book, again *Heaven and Hell*, one of the church's busiest counselor/missionaries, caused him to return home and start a truly new life.

There are many more such accounts, which will appear later, and *Messenger* readers may wish to share their own stories.

Louise Woofenden is the former archivist for the Swedenborg School of Religion in Newton, Massachusetts.

Opinion

(Continued from page 2)

about honoring diversity (October 1993 *Messenger*), I would like to offer the following thoughts. First of all, her opening statements seem to contain the answers to her later questions. Some things belong in the salad and some don't; the key here is in how you define or understand "salad" to begin with, because it is this which will determine what belongs or not. In terms of the church (whether personal or corporate), the things that don't belong are exactly those things which cause "unjust harm."

A helpful device to us in honoring diversity is Swedenborg's concept of order: unity can only arise from a diversity that is ordered, in which different qualities serve the whole in their own unique and appropriate way. It is only when each part serves the whole that unity can endure. In other words, unity with diversity is not indifferent to the specific qualities of its separate elements, nor is it content to evaluate its diversity according to merely external and legalistic standards; rather it is constantly inquiring and examining its individual parts to insure that they are not leading to the disorder of the whole.

One of the problems liberal religion has had is that the path of diversity and inclusion is ambiguous, growing, changing; the path of uniformity and exclusion is clear and simple. While exclusivity allows us to establish rigid, external standards, inclusivity calls us to be continually sensitive to the real but fragile unity that is possible with diversity. Because we are responsible for defining what the church is all about to begin with, we must be vigilant in assessing its identity and purpose, for it is this that will determine who will find a home there or not. Ultimately, we can only be true to the values we believe in, and expect that the Christian Civic League will do the same.

One final point: unlike most other human endeavors, Christians recognize the existence of one greater than themselves; a "Salad Maker"

who knows exactly where everything goes, including the nightshade and hemlock! All we have to do is prayerfully place our order, and be ready to receive when it comes.

*Robert McCluskey
New York, New York*

Mystery of Henry Reynolds

Dear Ms. LeVan,

Regarding the "Swedenborgian Heritage" article in the October *Messenger* about Henry Reynolds, I wish to add my knowledge of his thoughts as confidante to me just one year prior to his disappearance in Detroit.

The background for my friendship with Henry began in 1914, the second year of my high school studies in Urbana University. At the time, Henry was enrolled in their college curriculum and completed his BA degree with plans to go on to the Theological School in Cambridge. The college was very small in those days and all the students became close friends. Henry was a very special young man and was beloved by us all. I was in school there just two years after which I returned home to Columbus to finish high school and then college. During those years Henry came occasionally to Columbus to conduct services for a group of New Church families and often stayed overnight at our home. He was five years my senior and our relationship was one of big brother-younger sister.

When World War I came, Henry's life changed drastically. He enlisted in the Tank Corps, one of the most dangerous places to be, and I heard nothing from him for several years. I graduated in Architecture in 1920 and went to Columbia University for a post-graduate year in New York where I lived in Brooklyn with an uncle and attended the Brooklyn New Church. Henry in the meantime had returned from the war and was enrolled in the New Church Theological School (Cambridge). One weekend, he was sent to Brooklyn to substitute for the minister and, to my great surprise, he called

me on a Saturday before his first assignment and asked me to meet him for dinner in New York.

We met in the Times Square subway station, had dinner and began a long walk up Broadway pouring out our hearts and bringing each other up to date. I had become engaged and was looking forward to a happy life when my fiancé regained his health after his war experiences. Henry, on the other hand, seemed very shaken and unsure of himself. He spoke of his obligation to the Church for all the financial aid he had been given at Urbana and Cambridge and how uncertain he was about being a minister. He said that each time he was in the pulpit he felt terribly nervous and that it took him hours to pull himself together for a service.

The next time he came to Brooklyn, we talked on the phone and he said that as much as he would like to spend the evening with me again, he just had to rest and get ready for the "ordeal" before him. I never heard from him again. However, I knew that he had accepted the Detroit church position and then learned the sad news of his disappearance and death which was about a year after our meeting. I secretly felt that I knew why, but it was too late to do or say anything about it.

Perhaps, this account provides the missing link in your story about Henry Reynolds, a dear friend. It is good to be able to provide this information from my 94-year storehouse of memories.

*Louise A. Orth
Columbus, Ohio*

Correction

Dear Editor,

In Lorraine Sando's article (November *Messenger*), there is an error that should be corrected. Though it was expected that work would begin this past summer on the new residence building at Temenos, such was not the case. First, all the necessary permits had not been received.

(Continued on page 11)

Back in the Saddle Again

Eric Allison

Although the nineteenth-century metaphor of eating trail dust all day while riding the circuit does not apply anymore, I have, so to speak, "been on the trail." My fall 1993 visits to Cleveland, Portland, Maine; Detroit, Wilmington, Philadelphia, LaPorte, Edmonton, and Saskatoon gave me some idea of what is happening in our churches. There have also been many telephone contacts, and I learned some very useful things at a four-day Alban Institute workshop, "Nourishing Spirituality in Congregations."

There are some encouraging things happening, some positive changes, and still much to do.

Cleveland has made numerous improvements on the building and added a parking lot. After an initial spurt of growth which more than doubled the congregation, attendance has dropped off and we are not sure why. New people continue to be attracted to the church and adjustments are being made. Folks are expecting a good year as we have set in place a new plan for the coming year and beyond.

Detroit sponsored a program on life after death at Almont. Advertising was done in the local papers with the hope of bringing in some people from the Almont area. However, only a few phone calls were received and no locals showed up. Maybe it was too close to Halloween for a talk on life after death. In October Steve Pults hosted the annual Transitions Retreat. Thirty-four young adults gathered at Almont for this dynamic weekend program.

Edmonton has put up a new sign and has accepted three new members during the past year. Members delivered pamphlets to two thousand homes near the church, which resulted in bringing five new children into the Sunday school.

Rev. Hank Korsten is leading a group on "therapeutic touch" which is open to the public. Several lay people have stepped forward to lead new small groups. This could be the beginning of something very promising.

LaPorte has a vibrant Sunday school with ten teens actively involved in the League and Sunday school. A "Lock In" was held at the church November 12 when 16 teens spent the night there and stayed on until noon Saturday. After the opening worship the teens managed to keep Rev. Eric Hoffman awake all night by having lots of fun and by asking questions about the church and life in general. This year LaPorte will take its first steps toward planned growth. Encouraging things are happening in LaPorte.

The Philadelphia church meets three times each month at the Temenos Retreat Center. Steps are being taken to invite people attending Temenos' programs into the life of the church fellowship. The many spiritual growth programs going on at Temenos provide the church with an ideal situation for attracting people who are looking for a church home. They are just beginning the process of planning for growth. This church year should be a very exciting time.

Portland, Maine has been one of our dramatic success stories. Going from an average attendance of 8 to 38 or more is quite an accomplishment. Attendance was often over 50 adults last year and an extra service is being planned to accommodate the additional people. This gratifying growth symbolizes the high quality of ministry that is being offered in Portland. The music on Sunday mornings is simply terrific. It is also our only church that has implemented the small-group program in a

systematic way.

The core group in Saskatoon continues to meet regularly. Dave Sonmor has given lectures on "Life After Death" and "AIDS" at the public library. He is also leading a ten-week "Suddenly Single" group. In addition to his duties in Saskatoon, he travels to Winnipeg, Rosthern, and Meadow Lake to lead worship services and adult classes.

The Wilmington church has what must be the most attractive sign in the denomination. The sign is surrounded by a handsome garden that has received an award three years in a row. While the membership has not shown a dramatic increase, four new members have been accepted during this year, and a steady stream of visitors is being welcomed. They are working on improving their visitor follow-up program. Rev. Randy Laakko plans to offer healing services for the public and has introduced prayer as a more regular feature of church life.

It is discouraging that most churches still do not make visitor follow-up phone calls, but more churches are starting to do this. Those who have made these phone calls describe it as a very positive experience. It is extremely fulfilling to offer good news to people that can change their lives. It seems to me that we are becoming more and more receptive to how the Lord can lead us in building a stronger religious community based on spiritual enlightenment, not just numerical growth. When we do this and invite others to share in our joyful experience of the Lord, numerical growth follows.

The Rev. Eric Allison is back on the job with the Pastoral Ministries Support Unit as church growth consultant, after a year as minister in Mauritius. He resides in Kitchener, Ontario.

New Students Bring SSR Enrollment to 16

Mary Kay Klein

The Swedenborg School of Religion is blessed to have seven new students this year, five of whom are fulltime, and two parttime. The full-time ordination track students are Nadine Cotton, Quint Billings, Fred Jameson, Jonathan Mitchell, and Lee Woofenden. The part-time students are Leif Nordberg and Jeanne Jameson.

Nadine Cotton brings a background in computer graphics. She has been involved in the Cleveland church. Her nine-year-old daughter Kelly lives with her at SSR. Her warmth and supportiveness have been a joy to us all.

Quint Billings joins twin Kit and sister Renee Morris. His undergraduate background is in psychology. He has completed a year of theological study at Boston University. We are enjoying learning how to tell one twin from the other!

Fred Jameson moved to the Boston area from California, where he was a member of the San Francisco church. Last summer he finished his bachelor's degree at Lesley College in Cambridge. He and his wife Jeanne are the parents of three grown sons, two of whom recently visited SSR.

Jonathan Mitchell, active member of the Elmwood Church, is working hard as Archivist, replacing Louise Woofenden, who recently retired. Jonathan is a member of the Massachusetts Association Executive Committee. He has a Ph.D. in linguistics.

Lee Woofenden, who recently completed a degree at Fairhaven College, has moved to Sharon, Massachusetts with his wife Patty and daughter Heidi. He had been an active member of the Puget Sound Church. His computer expertise has

already been helpful to the community.

Part-time student Leif Nordberg commutes weekly from Portland, Maine. He has been involved in organic farming. A native of Sweden, Leif brings us valuable cultural insight.

Jeanne Jameson is a part-time student; she is taking a course in Introduction to Swedenborgian Concepts so that she can better support Fred's ministry.

These seven students join four other full-time students, three part-time students, and two lay leader candidates, for a total enrollment of sixteen. The enthusiasm and commitment of this group of students has been wonderful!

Dr. Mary Kay Klein is president of the Swedenborg School of Religion.



ABOVE—Opening-of-school retreat, held at St. Stephen Priory in Dover, Massachusetts. From left: Kimichi Kuniyeda, Jonathan Mitchell, Lee Woofenden, Fred Jameson, Quint Billings, Kit Billings, Pavel Heger, and Leif Nordberg.

◀ From left: Jeanne Jameson, Renee Morris, Nadine Cotton, and Susanne Lorraine.

Johnny Appleseed

(Continued from page 1)

John Chapman lived by the interpretations of Emanuel Swedenborg.

Perhaps the law of sin is a bit more blatant today, but that is a judgment call; the absence of others on the frontier made personal moral codes supreme. Johnny Appleseed lived as a vagabond "circuit riding" Swedenborgian whose presence was treasured by those he met. He paid for his keep with either a return gift or money. The spiritual enrichment and gentility were free. He asked for nothing in return other than the people take care of the trees.

Swedenborg's message about God, love, religion, good and evil fit the early Northwest Territory; one might say that Swedenborg's thoughts were made real by Johnny Appleseed's actions. The Ohio Valley was a more civilized place thanks to John Chapman's life of religious passion. Whether he was driven to his quest because of his exposure to Swedenborg or drawn to Swedenborg's writings because they expressed his concept of religion is immaterial. The point is, Swedenborg's theology and Chapman's "use" fit together perfectly. Rugged times call for a ruggedly durable religious faith.

Times are rugged for those in the world who are less well fixed than we in the U.S.—and for most who are not well fixed here. And into this mix there is a rising tide of bigotry directed against those who are different. By the lights of some, God calls for intolerance and harsh repression of those who are different. By the lights of Swedenborg, God calls for us to respect all, regardless, and to practice compassion. On the Ohio frontier, cultural diversity was played out with bows and arrows, guns and knives. Johnny Appleseed lived amongst harshly antagonistic groups, being kind to all—he was harmed by none. We can take heart that today our conditions are no more difficult in their own way, than were those that faced the Appleseedster.

And finally, being the materialist I

am, I must point out that Johnny Appleseed was not the head of some national endowment handing out grants, he was not the head of a government agency with tax dollars to spend. He was a small businessman who gave his "product" to those who could not pay, rather than see them go without. Johnny Appleseed's gifts came out of his own pocket.

It worked for him, it will work for us. We should all be proud that such a "hero" found our religion the perfect expression for a life that has no equal in American history. He was truly a singular man. We do well to honor him prominently. Precious few of us could ever emulate him.

We need to grow as a church and get our message, including this message, to more people. To me, Swedenborg's philosophy is the most sensible approach to life that has come about since Christ commanded that we love one another as we do ourselves.

Love thy neighbor as thyself and practice compassion. These things aren't hard to say or believe, they are just *hard to do*. Therein lies spiritual growth.

Len Harding is a member of the Kemper Road Center Swedenborgian Church in greater Cincinnati and editor of their newsletter, Salmagundi.

Capons and Doyle Elected to Urbana Board of Trustees

At the October meeting of the Trustees of Urbana University the Rev. Edwin Capon and Esther Capon of the St. Paul church and Frank Doyle of the Kemper Road church were elected to the Board of Trustees in the church class. Other church members currently serving on the board are the Rev. Ronald Brugler, Bobby Buchanan, Elizabeth Coffman, Captain August Ebel, John W. Keller, Dr. Thomas Peebles, the Rev. Richard H. Tafel, Jr., and Lawrence C. Young, Sr. Mr. Capon had been an ex officio member without vote as president of the Swedenborgian Church. By his election to the board he becomes a voting member.

Cabinet Meeting Report

The Cabinet met at the Central Office in Newton November 20 and 21 to consider the 1994 budget. Many hours were spent looking at each support unit's prioritized budget as well as administrative, Council of Ministers, Wayfarers Chapel and Temenos budgets. The Cabinet worked diligently to get to the bare bones of the budget, to reduce the deficit as far as possible. Many difficult cuts were made in the budget which will be recommended to General Council at their January meeting.

There was lengthy discussion regarding what many felt was a "welfare" mentality prevalent in the denomination. There was a general feeling that many, though by no means all, members of the denomination seem to ask "What can my church do for me?" rather than "What can I do for my church?" Especially in these tough financial times, everyone appreciates how difficult it is for many to "pay their own way," but the denomination cannot continue to underwrite as much as they do and still remain fiscally responsible. The Cabinet looked particularly hard at travel costs and annual convention child care costs among many other issues.

While the Cabinet discussed using a priority-setting worksheet, time constraints seemed to preclude using this tool at this point. They also thought it would be good to first hear the priority survey results that are expected to be gathered from the "grass roots" in order to evaluate the programs. President Capon tentatively set the next cabinet meeting for July to explore and envision using the published priorities as well as any information from the survey and the 1994 convention sessions, to set five-year plans.

President Capon also received approval to change the dates of convention to July 6 through July 10.

Gloria Toot, Recording Secretary

New Beginnings

Ted LeVan

It's the evening of October 21st—the World Series is coming to an exciting climax—we don't expect many men to attend an organizational meeting for a new Swedenborgian congregation, but we do expect their wives to attend. Surprise! Only one woman makes it. The wives are home sick, and a dozen husbands come out to show their enthusiasm for the church they have come to love—the Wayfarers Chapel—and a desire for a fellowship there centered around our Lord.

Martha Maimone put her thoughts on paper and had her husband Mike bring them to the meeting. She expressed herself this way:

"For centuries church has been an important place of worship for men, women, and children. I'm interested in the church, as some of my most pleasant earliest childhood memories were in a church environment. As a child I attended many social events which were centered around the church. Everyone at these events was friendly and happy and had a unique uplifting and positive effect on my spirit. As I grew older, I noticed that these special feelings could not be found in school or in the work place. I later realized that those events were so uplifting because they were centered around the church where the presence of God exists. Everyone who attends church seeks God in their own special way, and I believe that a group of people seeking God makes His presence stronger. The church offers a stronger presence of God than anywhere else I know."

Rev. Carl Yenetchi asks for ideas from the group—things they want in their fellowship and things they don't want. He has no trouble getting a response. Carl is scarcely able to write fast enough on the blackboard:

- We want a loving community that is positive, nurturing and empowering.

- We don't want too much structure, too many laws.
- We want to study Swedenborg's writings and the Bible.
- We don't want committees that have outlived their usefulness—when they have completed their task they should dissolve.
- We want sermons that are uplifting and current—and speak to us plainly.
- We don't want to be pressured to serve on committees.
- We want our preacher to talk with us and not at us.
- We want young people to have full membership, and to be officers and trustees, and to help set up our congregation, including the making of our constitution and by-laws, and to be ministered to as fully as the adults are.
- When someone misses a service or meeting, we want to find out if they are ok. We want to put them on a prayer list—not a guilt trip.
- We want to take an active part in community building—being good neighbors and having a social outreach.
- We'd like to have a choir, and we'd like to have a Sunday school that is active—not passive—that uses innovative teaching techniques.
- And let's let everybody know what we stand for as a congregation—let's share it as part of Sunday service about once a month.

We all feel good about what we are sharing. Some more of Martha's words strike a responsive chord:

"A church is a place where I can feel comfortable and come as I am and not be judged. I'm interested in a church where I can worship the Lord freely and unconditionally. I'm interested in a church where I can lose myself in the sermon. On occasion, the sermon moves my spirit,

rendering me emotional. I can cry tears of joy or pain and not feel ashamed."

Imagine! A church where we can be ourselves!

It's coming soon. Three days later a meeting was held to go over a constitution and some by-laws. They were thinking of appointing a young man as chair of the committee—but the meeting went so smoothly there was no need for anyone to "take charge."

Stay tuned for further developments.

The Rev. Ted LeVan is a retired Swedenborgian minister living in Julian, California.

Opinion

(Continued from page 7)

Second, an agreement between the Philadelphia church and the denomination regarding Temenos had not been signed.

The first situation has been or is about to be corrected. A meeting of denomination representatives with the Philadelphia Church Council in the near future will hopefully resolve the second problem. In the meantime the Temenos Board has employed professional fund raisers to determine whether a substantial sum toward the cost of this building can be raised both within and without the denomination. So far the national body has expended almost \$2,000,000 on Temenos and can only expend a further large sum with serious harm both to programs and its own operations.

*Edwin Capon, President
The Swedenborgian Church
St. Paul, Minnesota*

New Year Thoughts



New Power

The Advent Season culminates in the hope that life is made new in all of us by the coming of a new kind of King to rule for us. His rule is in our hearts and minds, and is by one no less than the Lord Jesus.

What follows now is a process. I believe that it is one of letting the newborn Lord establish His rule. While the Lord initiates His rule, we need to take steps to cooperate.

There are three steps, in particular, that lead toward a spiritual way of life. The first is to admit that I can't rule my life effectively on my own. The second is to believe that God can, and the third is to decide to let Him. There is new power in the life of the person who takes these steps.

In the language of our theology, these three steps are a summary of repentance, reformation, and regeneration. Swedenborg reports at length about this process, with a nice summary in *True Christian Religion*. Here's an example for your consideration at this time of new hope for a new kind of power.

"Repentance begins with the recognition of sin [separation from self, another, and God], and the examination of some particular sin [an interaction in which the separation is recognized] in oneself . . . Until this is done, one's knowledge of oneself is purely theoretical; . . . If we abstain from one or more sins of which we become aware at any time—perhaps during preparation for the Holy

Supper—we have made a definite start upon the road of actual repentance. Then, we are on the road to heaven, for we begin to become spiritual, and be born anew from the Lord."

(This passage was taken from *True Christian Religion Digest*, published by the Swedenborg Foundation, pp. 64-65).

The Rev. Gardiner Perry, minister to the Fryeburg, Maine Swedenborgian Church. Reprinted from the Church of the New Jerusalem Bulletin, January 1993.



Today

The start of a New Year is a fitting time to contemplate the ideal of daily living which the Lord offered to His disciples and all of us. What He would teach us is that we regard each day as a separate gift from God, and meant to stand by itself. It was His method of living while on earth. What we call worry never made a line on His face. Each day for Him bore its own burden and that only.

Let us think of this as we take the yoke of the Master upon us, and learn to live each day by itself. Ruskin wrote of this ideal in memorable words.

"Let every dawn of morning be to you as the beginning of life, and every setting sun as its close. Let every one of these short lives have its sure record of some kindly thing done for others. Regard every day as if it were a whole life in miniature.

So fill the hours with thought and speech and action that you may come to the day's close with the memory of some good work done, some kindly things said, and with a simple trust in God's mercy for all its failures."

It is said that a famous writer had an edition of his works printed with a watermark of his own in the paper, and when a reader held a page up to the light they would see the word "Today." So should it be with the book of our life. Its pages should carry the watermark of the eternal present. Yesterday is with God, Tomorrow is with God, Today is with us. With this New Year let us make more of the present hours, and in their short compass put thought and energy into them as we forget the past and the fear for tomorrow.

God asks us to do our best by bidding us to forget the years and think of life only as a day, and make that as full of work and happiness in His service as we can. Whatever our calling may be, it will consist of one day's work at a time, a work to be done in an honest and honorable way, and dedicated as in the sight of God. Nothing should be left undone that could be finished today.

This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. (*Psalms 118:24*)

The Rev. John Bennett, former (retired) pastor of the Pawnee Rock Swedenborgian Church in Pawnee Rock, Kansas. Reprinted from the New Jerusalem News, January 1993.

TOWARD A RENEWED CHURCH

Gustave Bischof

Our church, known as the New Church, proclaims the newness of its rational doctrines as opposed to the often contradictory, confusing beliefs of what we term the Old Church. Our name derives from the apocalyptic vision of the City of God which is the New Jerusalem. Our charter is a new heaven, a new earth and the holy city New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven.

This is a large claim for any church to make. What entitles us to this stupendous assertion? What have we done to deserve, preserve, enhance the pearl of great price? True, we have published and distributed the writings of Swedenborg, but have we really accepted or helped inaugurate the New Age, ordained by the Second Coming and made so evident by the vastly changing world of the past 200 years—changes which require not merely adjustments, but revolutions in thinking and doing, changes in customs, values, priorities, and loyalties.

It is universally accepted that truth endures without change. That applies to the truth and not to any man's version of truth at a particular moment in time and space. As our tools for acquiring knowledge become more refined, old hypotheses are shown to be either false or at best approximations of truth. The scientist knows that his discoveries and formulations are mere steps in paths leading to new truths which in turn will yield to still newer ones.

All our thinking and formulating likewise, whether of social values, methods of governance, national priorities, or even religious attitudes must, to be viable, undergo constant destruction (or vastation), rebirth, mutation, and evolution. Why should a church enshrine the attitudes appropriate a century ago or even of a generation past with the expectation of their propriety today? To be fully new, to lay claim to

newness demands continual rebirth. To meet the challenge of the times requires continuing renewal, strange as that term may sound to a New Church person!

I think we Swedenborgians are faced with a particularly severe temptation to delude ourselves with the belief that since we know a superior revelation—a new dispensation—we can sit back comfortably, secure in the feeling that the last words have been spoken, that contemporary thought is but a passing phase full of sound and fury. Need we not examine and re-examine what we hold to be true? Have our questioning voices been silenced?

Many of our youngest and keenest minds have drifted away. Our numbers diminish while our average age increases. Too often creativity is stifled in the name of a deceptive harmony. We seem unaware of the dictate that renewal comes not from harmony, but flourishes with the clash of ideas and confrontations, tempered by mutual trust, respect, and understanding. When a church is spared the travail of rebirth it is at the very cost of survival.

Churches throughout Christendom, whether it be the tradition-laden Church of Rome, or members of the National Council of Churches, are today facing an agonizing period of soul searching. All suffer a decline in membership relative to population growth. The impact is most severe among the inner city churches. With few exceptions, vast edifices built to house hundreds attract pitifully few. Financial support on local and national levels declines. Population shifts account for much of the malaise in the cities, but not for that in growth areas. The cause seems far more fundamental. The Church, and I speak of no particular denomination, has lost its position of authority and moral leadership. The young, the idealistic, the vigorous, the ar-

ticulate, the molders of our future no longer even challenge it. They regard it as irrelevant and impotent if not hypocritical. They simply ignore it, assured that it will wither away along with other anachronisms. One mentions the Church; they reply, "Who cares?"

The period of our Church's greatest growth occurred in the United States in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It was a time of great invention, industrial expansion, massive immigration, the opening of the west; a time of civic corruption, of great wealth, ostentatiously displayed for the few and the bitter degradation of poverty for the many. It was a time of astonishing advances in the arts and science, yet of disease and high infant mortality. Scientists explained the universe in mechanistic terms, confident in their materialistic concept and derisive of all that could not be measured. Many believed in inevitable, automatic progress toward the good and beautiful and others lived in dread of predestined hellfire.

In these pews sat people of influence, of consequence, of culture and of wealth. The latter paid the piper and called the tune. The New Church was infected by the general optimism. We have merely to publish and distribute and general acceptance must follow. Collateral literature flourished along with numerous tracts and periodicals. New Churchmen were also known for their devotion to reform and social movements.

How all this has changed! Old methods fail to stem the tide of erosion. Nowhere else has the failure been more manifest than in the widening gap between young and old. The young are impatient idealists (those who still care). More than anything they are appalled by the abyss separating our beliefs and practices. They have little patience

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Toward a Renewed Church

(Continued from page 13)

with abstract theology, and traditional forms. All this leaves them cold and they want out if that is what the church is.

Forty years ago the emphasis in college Christian associations was on Bible study, inspirational talks, socials, and on regional and national conferences. Twenty years ago study commissions on areas of Christian responsibility predominated. Now they go into the ghetto, tutoring youngsters, steering them toward college, leading others in crafts and games. This is *action*, giving of oneself—becoming involved.

To delineate what has happened is comparatively easy. What should and can be done to revitalize and renew the Church is vastly more difficult and must be limited to the tentative and suggestive often in the form of questioning. In all this I speak in a spirit of profound humility.

Foremost in any renewal is the question: Have we the *will* to change, to discard some of the past? Have we the receptive mind and the vitality to test, reject, and experiment in new and untried areas? Do we really *want* to change? Daily we pray, "Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven." Are these mere incantations or are they part of our life expressed in justice, compassion, and loving service one to another in our troubled world? New Churchmen often repeat, all too glibly I fear, "All religion has relation to life and the life of religion is to do good." Has this become a hackneyed catchword rather than a start in thinking through all that it might imply?

Renewal begins with an awareness of the inadequacy of past endeavors, even though these forms of churchmanship have become our emotional ties to the Church. May we not become more hospitable to change and better listeners? *Living faith*, like regeneration and unlike wealth, can not be inherited. Each life and each generation must struggle to meet its own peculiar temptations forging a faith relevant to the contemporary human condition, so that religion

truly has relation to life.

Worship of our Lord and Saviour consists not merely in church services, but in every aspect and act of Christian life. A form of church service touching our hearts in the past is not necessarily effective with a new generation. Rather than taking offense at new expressions of worship, should we not rejoice in the vitality generating such renewal? Let us welcome and encourage new ways of drawing closer to the Lord in love and peace one with another.

Have we the WILL to change, to discard some of the past?

I would suggest that our reliance has been too heavily placed on dogma and too little on love. Doctrine is the necessary skeleton on which hangs the flesh of religion—but who warms to a skeleton? People by and large are not attracted, initially at least by doctrine as such, but by the *quality* of our life. We may learn something from the lovely advice Abe Lincoln gave his law partner, "Don't shoot too high—aim lower and the common people will understand you. They are the ones you want to reach. The educated and refined people will understand you anyway. If you aim too high your ideas will go over the heads of the masses and only hit those who need no hitting."

Let us put less trust in the efficacy of imposing structure, elegant furnishings, cultivated exchange, polished sermons, and beautiful music. The Lord's earthly ministry was among the poor, the simple, the uncultured. As He trod the dusty roads of Galilee, Jesus shared the simple joys, anxieties, and sorrows of the people.

While no church should engage in politics, it can not isolate itself from political decisions for they touch every aspect of our lives. Almost every public issue vexing our locality

or nation involves a *moral* judgment. It should not and can not be ignored by a church claiming relevancy to life. That is not to say that the church can propose an easy or even a wise answer. Yet it is the duty of our spiritual leaders to arouse awareness of the moral basis, point out the moral implications, and exhort the members to act on moral principle, sacrificing self interest for the greater common good. Have we sidestepped this duty by virtue of timidity or worse by an indolent avoidance of studying the issues?

Finally, we rely too heavily on our ordained ministers and give of ourselves too little. One can not reasonably expect to find the ingredients of saint, counselor, eloquent teacher, and business manager all in one lovable extrovert! A fairly new concept in medicine is group practice, consisting of teams of specialists in fields such as internal medicine, psychiatry and social medicine. Would this not apply to the Christian ministry? This would be far beyond most congregational resources, but not beyond local interdenominational cooperation. Thus, we could reach and minister to the needs of many more. The talents of the laity could also be productively employed. Furthermore, our idealistic and activity-oriented young people might find a rewarding outlet in their *own* church.

Our doctrines proclaim the oneness of God. Swedenborg emphasizes the oneness and wholeness of love, wisdom, and power or use. Have we too long neglected love and use to the detriment of wisdom?

Renewal requires but two things—Divine Influx and human receptivity. We are assured of the former; are we ready, yes anxious, to receive? Have we the will to excise our personal, often petty, loves and hates to make room for Him who is ever standing at the door?

Editor's Note: "Toward a Renewed Church" is reprinted from the February 1981 Messenger. The Rev. Robert McCluskey sent it in recently with the comment that it deserves a rerun. We agree. Gustave Bischof is a life-long Swedenborgian residing in Lititz, Pennsylvania.

The Parting of Ways

The river tributaries part ways only in the upstream direction
and friends part company to swim upstream alone, too.

When the wishbone breaks that forces luck on one party
some change is forged where something balanced was before
When the book is torn in two along the spine and the plot forever lost
the interest for the reader disappears along with either half.

As surely as the sun will rise we all must sooner or later
squint into the dawn of our dreams and walk in life alone
Is there a song to play as the musicians leave the parade grounds?
When the guitar is placed in the case does the soul of the player
feel a coffin?

We all know our aloneness—yet life seems to want to remind us anyway
as if somehow we might forget . . .

the days' changes make us part with our ways in
small steps at every dusk and during dreaming.

As the sword parts the head and body or death pries the life from it,
will the two meet again in a different time?

When the fire is parted from the embers the flame dies—we, in spirit,
are challenged to continue our burning from new places,
in new directions, with new fuel, with new smoke,
with no loss of intensity.

—Michael Williamsen

Correction

The November *Messenger's* inside cover caption incorrectly stated that Jenn Tafel is president of the Swedenborgian Church Youth League. Reuben Bell, III, is president of SCYL. We apologize for the error.

Passages

Baptisms

The following children were baptized into the Christian faith October 10, 1993, at Airdrie, Alberta (Calgary New Church), the Rev. Erwin Reddekopp of Kelowna, British Columbia officiating:

Holden—Kaitlyn Anne Holden, born May 29, 1993, daughter of Dan and Wendy Holden of Calgary, Alberta.

Loewen—Lindsay Amanda Marie, born June 17, 1990, and Evan Connor Loewen, born January 10, 1993, children of Garth and Lisa Loewen of Calgary, Alberta.

Poissant—Shaun Braden Aime Poissant, born May 7, 1993, son of John and Myrna Poissant of Sundre, Alberta.

Marriage

Dutchak and Dzeryk—Deborah Elizabeth Dutchak and Kenneth Frederick Dzeryk were united in marriage at the family farm near Legal, Alberta, the Rev. Erwin Reddekopp officiating. Kenneth is the eldest son of Irene Dzeryk of Edmonton.

Pacific Coast Association Meeting Held at Marconi Center

The Pacific Coast Association annual meeting was held October 8-10 at the Marconi Conference Center near Point Reyes, California. The Center is built on the historical site of the old Marconi Wireless Receiving Station. The station provided a vital link in the vast plan by communications genius Guglielmo Marconi and the Marconi Wireless Company of America to establish an around-the-world wireless communication system in the early 1900s.

The theme of the meeting was—what else—Communication, Natural and Spiritual, featuring Ginnie Moore, international CFO (Camp Farthest Out) leader and speaker. Camp Farthest Out is described as an interdenominational, world-wide lay organization where people come together to learn love and prayer through practice in a spiritual classroom. Mrs. Moore provided an opportunity to experience the inspiring activities which take place at CFO meetings. She was ably assisted

in her workshop by Sue and John Calhoun and Riane Boell of the Swedenborgian Society of the East Bay (San Francisco), who hosted the meeting.

Business highlights included adopting a budget that will provide for several exciting growth and outreach programs on the west coast, approving changes to the by-laws and a Women's Alliance discussion of concerns of today's women. Jean Treash of San Diego offered to send the Alliances information on more effective ways to cope with stress, as well as present on the subject at the meeting next year, which will be hosted by the San Diego church.

Dr. Elizabeth Gutfeldt led the Sunday morning worship with the help of ministers and lay people portraying Jesus and the disciples.

The comfortable accommodations, excellent food and natural beauty of the retreat setting on Tomales Bay greatly added to the enjoyment of time spent together.

Emanuel Swedenborg was born January 29, 1688, in Stockholm, Sweden. Although he never intended a church denomination to be founded or named after him, a society was formed in London 15 years after his death. This 1787 organization eventually spawned the present General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches.

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

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

Important Church Calendar Dates in 1994

Jan. 13-16	General Council, Newton, MA	March 16-18	Committee on Admission to the Ministry SSR
Jan. 14-15	COMSU at Temenos	April 15-17	PMSU/GOSU at Almont
Feb. 14-15	SSR Workshop for Ministers	April 28-30	Wayfarers Board
Feb. 12-15	EDSU in Seattle	May 20-21	Temenos Board of Managers
Feb. 18-20	Urbana Board of Trustees	May 20-21	Illinois Association
Feb. 18-20	Temenos Board of Managers	June 3-4	Urbana Board of Trustees
March 3-6	SSR Board in Seattle	July 6-10	Annual Convention, Washington, DC
March 13-15	Council of Ministers Executive Committee SSR		

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