

THE MESSENGER

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Lent:

THE INNER PASSAGE TO EASTER

James Lawrence

We've all done it: enraged or insulted, frightened or confused at someone or some situation, we have stood there sputtering and fuming or have fled in tears and tatters. Then, anywhere from five minutes to five days later, the positively perfect response, the slickest sarcasm, or—much better—the truly healing message floats effortlessly into our heads. There, in the privacy of our cars, homes, or offices, we conduct a flawlessly executed, logically organized, stunningly articulated conversation with no one but ourselves to appreciate it.

"I coulda said . . .," "I shoulda said . . .," "I woulda said . . ." can be among the most rueful phrases ever spoken. What prevents us from doing what we would, could and should do; and secondly, how do we deal with "woulda, coulda, shoulda" feelings of guilt and despair?

Even more painfully, who among us doesn't know what Paul is talking about when he moans, "I do the things I know not to do, and don't do the things I know I should!" The trap most of us must learn to avoid is letting past could's, would's, and should's so overwhelm us that it becomes impossible to act with an eye toward a future full of "cans," "wills," and "shalls." Fears and frustrations from past failures often impair us from taking new growth risks, from making new choices in our present for our future. And some of our most painful failures have been moral ones: situations in

which, like Paul, we knew exactly what we needed to do or not do, and did the opposite. If we do not spiritually digest the essence of our past episodes in which we feel we failed in some sort of way, if we aren't consciously working on these, we can bet they are subconsciously working on us—confining us in the proverbial rut of habits and patterns that keep us from our true potential.

And this is what Lent is all about. Lent is a special season of potentially enormous value for anyone seizing the opportunity. Dating to the fourth century, the idea underlying Lent is to provide a conscious approach to Easter, a conscious turning inward to focus on inner foes. The spiritual correspondence of 40 signifies an appropriate duration of a given temptation or inner battle—quite literally "enough for now" or "enough for this passage." Recurring in the Bible story at certain junctures for its spiritual rather than literal meaning, 40 always signifies the completion of such a process. So with Noah's ark, it rained 40 days and 40 nights. So the children of Israel sojourned for 40 years in the wilderness. And so also with Jesus' 40-day process in the desert; it culminates in his temptation scene with the Evil One. After Lent's similar 40 days of inward wrestling, we are to taste of Easter's sweet joy.

Satan: An Inner Adversary

What is there for us in this account given by three of the Gospels? What are the stakes and what are the

issues? In the first place, the theology of the Swedenborgian Church does not entail belief in a Being called the Devil. In Hebrew, the word "satan" means simply "an adversary," and the word "devil" comes from the Greek word "diabolos," which means essentially the same thing. In God's wondrously designed creation, we have free will, and this free will makes for virtually endless possible directions—many of them false, unhealthy, and even anti-God. What Jesus faced down in the wilderness were intense adversarial tendencies within his human nature. The temptations were within him.

He emerged with a growing power that fueled an earthly ministry of continuous victory over evil, over failure, over all the drags and pulls on our souls that would capture and enslave us. Meeting and overcoming the Inner Adversary did not cease with those 40 days and nights at the

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From the Editor

I've commented here before on the strangeness of the time lag. You'll read this in March; I'm writing it in January, ten days after the L.A. earthquake. My mind moves into Lent, Easter, Convention '94; my emotions are still in the aftermath of a disaster that I experienced only vicariously, since we did not even feel it in our area. No family members experienced tragedy, only terror, discomfort, inconvenience, psychological trauma, and in at least one case, the ordeal was transformative.

The Santa Monica apartment building in which my daughter's friend Steve lived semi-collapsed, not killing anybody, but five people were trapped in their apartments, unable to get out of jammed doors and windows.

Steve, a CNN cameraman, appeared on my daughter's doorstep a few hours after daylight, barefooted, with his camera equipment and some clothes. His feet were cut to shreds, and he needed to store a few things and get some rest. It was only later, when they returned to view the shambles that had been his apartment, that my daughter realized the full horror of what he'd been through. Then the people started coming up to Steve and thanking him for saving their lives. "This guy was like Superman," one woman informed her. "He kicked down doors and broke windows and dragged everybody out of here, then ran five blocks to the fire department to get them to turn off the gas—gas was pouring through the building. We would have been blown up before we knew what hit us."

Steve remembered very little of what he had actually done. Something had told him to get moving at the first noise, and he knew immediately that a gas main had broken. He did recall screaming at a woman to blow out the candles he saw gleaming in her window.

He acted almost on reflex, the adrenaline was pumping, he did what needed to be done automatically. The people he saved weren't loved ones; in fact, he had just recently moved into the complex and barely knew them. What is it that moves some to selflessness and others to save their own skins? In many cases of heroism, it isn't a decision that is weighed in the moment of crisis. It is more like an accumulation of a lifetime of choices that translates into right action when the crisis comes.

There were, as there always are, countless acts of courage, love, many heroes; some noted by the media, many known only to the people involved. There seemed to be a consensus through this that the acts and attitudes of kindness far outweighed the selfishness and greed that is also called forth in times of disaster.

Paul Zacharias writes, in "The Golden Age Regained," (p. 36) that it seems logical that "masses of people all around the world will wake up, spiritually speaking, and with the Lord's help and guidance, put this house in order."

I have come to believe that every act of love is recorded in the collective unconscious, becoming part of a bank account of positive energy—the only bank account that we can add to by drawing on it. But in this time of transition and seemingly endless supply of disasters and impending disasters, I see it as vitally important that we become informed about as many of the positive actions going on around us as we can, and spread the good news. Bad news sells, but good news heals and strengthens. A columnist in the current *Newsweek* put together a page of Good News—culled from the latest edition of the "Statistical Abstract of the United States." Fine, but in their disaster coverage and analysis, *Newsweek* missed a lot of what was under their noses. I would have liked to see a spread solely devoted to people rising to their spiritual finest under the worst of circumstances.

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Opinion

Parliament of the World's Religions—a Critical Mass?

To the Editor:

The December *Messenger* featured three articles on The Parliament of the World's Religions, giving readers a flavor of what took place. As a participant—representing the St. Louis Church—I would like to add my impressions.

Although at this writing the Parliament met nearly six months ago, I am still filled with a sense of awe and deep gratitude that I was privileged to attend this monumental event. One cannot imagine a gathering of people of greater racial, cultural, religious, or ideological diversity. Looking around, at times, I felt as if I were on the Starship Enterprise and we had journeyed through the galaxies picking up delegates from different planets. Yet, in spite of the diversity, there was a common motivation: A yearning for better interaction with one another. There were wondrous moments when thousands of people were attuned in harmony and acted in concert.

Even if the first Parliament in 1893 didn't produce a cure for religious intolerance (and the Centennial Celebration of it apparently didn't have the

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Lent

(Continued from front page)

beginning of his ministry; Jesus experienced ferocious episodes all the way to and *through* the cross. The reason we have the Christian faith is due to Christ's perfect record. Only Christ was never in a position of regret and self-recrimination. Woulda, coulda, shoulda playbacks were not a part of his journey, and this is the very process that led to the Redemption. But this should not weaken in any sense the intensity of the Lord's battles with temptation. Our process and His are inextricably bound. Together, we go through both Lent and Easter—struggle and glory.

Effort characterizes Lent—a meaningful effort chosen because it represents something significant for the pilgrim on the way to Easter. It is the custom to give up something for Lent, but that is only the window dressing. It must signify to the pilgrim some inward engagement that speaks to current struggles. Often a favorite food or drink is given up for Lent. It may be that the choice is a good one, healthwise, but if left as a surface behavioral accomplishment without the inner work, the effort will take on only the palest spiritual coloring. It must be connected to something concrete within, some temptation of spirit, some part of oneself that the pilgrim knows needs changing. Then, every time one feels the urge for the forsaken item, the urge serves as both a reminder of and a connector to that deeper aim.

Beauty Born of Pain and Struggle

The effort on the spiritual level is the key thing, because when we're really in the thick of it with our worst inner battles, two beautiful things are happening. The first is that as the resistance we feel in the struggle intensifies, the dimension of freedom to create a new reality becomes more profound. As we hang in there, keeping that fertile field of

freedom operative, we are offering the Lord tremendous access to our souls, and He is able to cleanse and strengthen us more profoundly. The Lord is always trying to heal us and strengthen us, but we have a great deal to do with the conditions under which the Lord works. He will never force himself on us, but will always respect our free will. Swedenborg comforts us with the suggestion that the more intense the struggle is, the more far-reaching is the victory.

The second beautiful occurrence with fierce inner confrontation stems from the sense of aloneness that accompanies those spiritually rich moments of temptation. Most of us have probably heard the story of those "Footprints in the Sand." It is too long to fully recount here, but the upshot is the realization of the speaker that during the worst of times, the reason there was only one set of footprints in the sand is because the Lord was carrying her—though at the time it felt as if she had been abandoned by God and was walking alone.

There is a beautiful reason for that sense of aloneness when confronting the inner adversary. In *True Christian Religion*, #126, Swedenborg writes:

"... In temptations the person is, to appearances, left to himself alone; and yet he is not left alone, for God is then the most present in his inmost parts, and supports him. When therefore anyone conquers in temptation, he is in inmost union with God the Father. That in the passion of the cross the Lord [seemed] left to Himself is evident from his exclamation upon the cross: 'O God, why hast Thou forsaken me?'" But it was through the Lord's successful progress through this last and final temptation that an inmost and finally complete union with God the Father was effected."

Without the sense of self making the effort on the surface, there would be no partnership involved. We are full partners in our destiny; that is why it is imperative that it

feel as if we are *alone* at crucial passages in our temptation battles. We have to go into those frightening, frustrating, even failure-feeling places, knowing that when it is worst we will feel alone, and even foreknowledge of this will not diminish one iota the intensity of the sense of aloneness, just as it did not for the Lord himself.

But the rewards far, far outweigh the pain; we create a field of freedom in which the Lord happily plants Easter lilies throughout, and we forge a union with God in the deepest places of our being.

Such a glorious Easter permits no shortcuts. The way lies through Lent. A heightened engagement with our personal temptations is the way—a way of both courage and grace.

The Rev. Dr. James F. Lawrence is co-minister of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church.

Reprinted from the San Francisco church's March 1992 newsletter.

Moving Toward the Light (continued from page 34)

I heard a while back that a newspaper existed that printed only good news. I wonder if it's still around. I don't know, but this experience has fostered a determination to begin a Good News column in the pages of *The Messenger*. I'm in the process of gathering stories and incidents, and I invite, in fact urge, *Messenger* readers to send in your Good News items, global, local, personal. Let's spread it!



The Golden Age Regained

A fascinating book I thought you might like to hear about is *Dawn Behind the Dawn—a Search for the Earthly Paradise* by Geoffrey Ashe, published by Henry Holt in 1992. The book deals with a subject dear to the hearts of Swedenborgians—the unfolding history of the human race.

Virtually all religions, and all cultures, claim that many, many thousands of years ago, in the early dawn of human history, there was a Golden Age with its accompanying Ancient Wisdom. Swedenborg writes about the Most Ancient people who enjoyed living in harmony with their surroundings; they were free from want, pain and suffering; there was open communication with spiritual beings; people just knew what was right and acted accordingly; they lived to a ripe old age, perhaps hundreds of years old (as carried over in some of the early Genesis stories), then died peacefully and entered the spiritual world. There was no fear of death; it was easily understood as a doorway into the continuation of their Golden Age.

Swedenborg tells us that the Most Ancient Church continued for many thousands of years. It was located in what is now southern China, central and southern Russia, and northern India. This is also Ashe's thesis. (I should add at this point that a lot of information in this book is tentative and suggestive, simply because there is so little hard data to go by. There was no written language; no records. Much of this material is based on cave wall paintings, artifacts that have been discovered, and most importantly, the common myths and legends that have been orally transmitted in all human groupings. The experts put all of this information together and come up with plausible theories.)

In brief, Ashe, and many colleagues, believe that countless thousands of years ago there existed a primitive but highly spiritual society of human beings in central and southern Asia. "They lived carefree lives, feeding on nature's gifts, such as fruit and honey, without disease or decrepitude. All beings were wise, righteous, prosperous, and healthy, and fulfilled the laws of their nature and status." We've all been fascinated by the stories of Shangra-La, and Atlantis: There is something within us that wants to believe that there is some factual basis for these romantic legends. And, according to Ashe, the evidence is in: there really was a Shangra-La.

On p. 7: "In his *Purgatorio* Dante airs the conjecture that the golden age is a dim reminiscence of life in the real lost Eden, the earthly paradise of unfallen, undegenerate, and innocent humankind. Speaking to him as a visitor, its resident lady says,

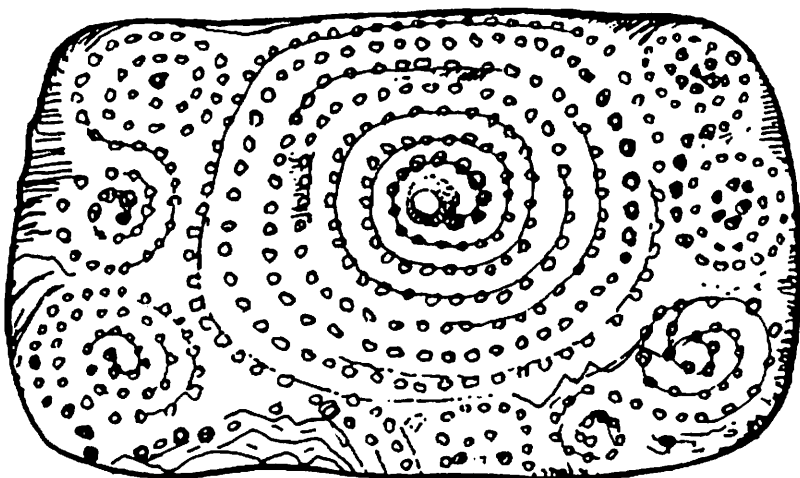
Those men of yore who sang
the golden time
And all its happy state—maybe
indeed
They on Parnassus dreamed of
this fair clime."

There is a great deal of goddess material (Paleolithic figurines) going back to about 24,000 B.C., found especially in southern Russia. Ashe contends that this beautiful art reflects not only a society that was nonviolent but one in which women were respected, influential, and equal with men. Then, around 4000

B.C., a slow process of change began which was completed by roughly 1500 B.C. This resulted in a male-dominated culture, tracing inheritance through the father; warlike, and culturally inferior. Humanity has never recovered. Ashe writes: "One result was a change in attitudes to death. In the time of the Great Mother, death led to rebirth and was not feared. The horror of mortality came into the world with the male takeover, because the male is not the life giver."

Does Swedenborg have anything to say about goddess religion in the Most Ancient times? Not to my knowledge, but I would love to have Dorothea Harvey or George Dole respond to this wonderment.

These early people were hunters and gatherers, using stone implements, dressing in skins and furs, living in caves or crude shelters. They did not use metals, they were not literate; yet in some respects they were artistic and creative. For example, "Among the earliest artifacts of all, retrieved from a cave burial, is an oblong panel of mammoth ivory dated about 24,000 B.C. On one side of it, three snakes establish its place in the Goddess network. On the other side is a design composed of lines of dots. They curve around to form seven spirals, six little ones framing a seventh much larger. In the large spiral the line goes around seven times, circling inward to a hole in the center. It is the first instance



Design on ivory panel from Malta, Siberia.

anywhere in the world of something destined to emerge far and wide as very strong magic indeed—the peculiar mystique of the number seven.” So the significance of the number seven in Swedenborg’s writings had an early beginning! A major theme of the book deals with the importance of the number seven; it plays a major role in the rituals and systems of all the major world religions.

Ancient legends tell of shamans in that early time and place who attained superhuman knowledge and power, who communed openly with spirits, had learned techniques of ecstasy, engaged in astral flight, and practiced magical healing.

Much later, in the Hellenistic world created by Alexander, the seven vowels of the Greek alphabet (short and long *e* and *o*) were matched with (their) seven planets, like the notes of the scale. Vowels and planets were regarded as “cosmic elements,” and magical formulae combining vowels were supposed to exert control over planetary influences. One thinks immediately of Swedenborg’s references to the special significance of vowels in the spiritual world, and somehow it all seems to fit together.

There has been an enormous amount of material written on this subject. The bibliography lists about 160 books, including works by Dante, St. Augustine, Blavatsky,

Joseph Campbell, Homer, Carl Jung, Mircea Eliade, Marco Polo and Bertrand Russell. So it’s a fertile field.

But the most intriguing thought of all, for me, is that virtually nothing is written about the golden age of the future! I’ve combed the library shelves and drawn a blank. If readers out there know of such books I would appreciate hearing from them. It seems that Swedenborg stands pretty much alone in this field. He is convinced that one day the golden age will be restored on planet Earth, all of which is symbolized and pictured for us in the final chapters of Revelation. Indeed he claims that this New Golden Era will be an improvement over the original version because it will be more intentional, more consciously entered into. Its wisdom and love will be of a higher quality because of the many and varied experiences that humanity has passed through in the intervening period of time. It’s like the spiritual state of saintly older persons, contrasted with their childhood spiritual condition: it is more profound, personal and authentic because they have consciously made the heavenly life their own.

Practically speaking, it would seem that the New Golden Age will be established fairly quickly, and in the relative near future—say, in the next 500 years, which is hardly a blink of the Divine eyelid. We’ve read articles by people who study

this sort of thing, saying that if the present trends continue in the areas of the population increase; pollution of land, water and air; depletion of energy resources; and the escalation of new diseases; plus other possible calamities, that life will cease to exist as we know it. Obviously God is not going to let that happen—otherwise His whole plan for creation would be thwarted—so it follows logically (at least it seems perfectly logical to me) that in the next few centuries, masses of people all around the world will wake up, spiritually speaking, and, with the Lord’s help and guidance, put this house in order. (The best book I’ve read on this particular subject is *Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn, now in paperback.

It may well be that the most important message we have . . . is the message of HOPE . . . because of the God who IS.

The Rev. Paul Zacharias is a retired minister and executive secretary of the Pastoral Ministries Support Unit. He resides in Kitchener, Ontario.

**In the time
of the
Great Mother,
death led to
rebirth and
was not
feared.**

HUMBLE HEROES

Louise Woofenden

In the January *Messenger*, Len Harding pointed out that Johnny Appleseed may be the only non-violent American hero. *New Church Worthies* (by Jonathan Bayley, 1884), has a chapter on Johnny, and also sketches of two equally odd characters who made the history books.

When New Church teachings were beginning to be spread in England, John Saxon, an aged man, wandered about North Lancashire. Known as John the Beggar, he was welcomed by many poor cottagers for a night's rest. He paid for their hospitality by holding a meeting where the neighbors could assemble. He would preach a little sermon and tell them to live for heaven. The days of the week are states of the regenerate life, he would say. God formed the week into seven days so we won't forget these heavenly things. He would explain the meaning of sun, moon, and stars. These also represented higher things. Many a humble old man told Mr. Bayley that he had first heard of the new religion from John the Beggar.

Some people are natural evangelizers; others practice their religion quietly. Among the latter was Job Abbott, born in England's midlands in 1790. A stocking maker, he was so nervous and sickly he could not earn even an average wage. He was something of a prude, crotchety and short-tempered with those of rough language and behavior. He was almost entirely without schooling, though after he became an adult he learned to write. This does not mean that he was dull, however. Mr. Bayley remarks, "Job Abbott had a soul too active, and a mind too large, for his body."

Too poor to buy books, he borrowed them whenever he could, and read late at night. He copied page

after page for reference, almost all of which he memorized. Included in his copies were astronomy books, from which he became quite competent in that science; music, which he learned to read and transcribe; and many other subjects. After his death piles of manuscript were found: reading notes, meditations, poems, prayers and much theological speculation.

For Job was a searcher. First Anglican, then Baptist, Unitarian, and finally a Free-Thinker, he was forever studying the Bible—which he wanted to believe—and the writings of the various churches. The idea of three persons in the God-head disturbed him. How could he believe in the Bible as God's revelation without a reasonable explanation of the Trinity? He penned an imaginary conversation, embodying the prevailing belief: The First Person says, "I promised that if people disobeyed my commands I would torment them forever. I'm very sorry for them, but I have to keep my word. Can I get out of this is some way? If you, the Second Person, will allow yourself to be punished in their place, I'll cancel my decree." The Second Person replies, "Neither I nor the Third Person make any such demand. We are willing to forgive them without any punishment. But I am willing to become a man and be sacrificed if you will revoke the decree of eternal punishment." Was this an all-wise God of love?

Job Abbott had a logical mind. In his comments on *Genesis* he says, "After Moses turned all the water in Egypt into blood, it is said that the magicians *did the same*. How could this be? Where could they find water to practice upon? Nothing is said of the blood being turned back again into water." And so on

through many discrepancies in the Bible narrative.

One day when he was complaining about his fruitless search for answers, his brother said, "One sect you have not tried—the Swedenborgians." Job went to a house meeting and found a rational religion that asserted the divinity of Christ without mystery and without the injustice of a vicarious sacrifice. He became an ardent member of the New Church. Though never delivered from poverty and sickness, his demeanor became gentle and forgiving. He became a living manifestation of the truths he believed.

In 1839 on his deathbed in a wretched room, he spoke of the many blessings which the Lord had given him. Asked whether he still held to his new faith, he pleasantly replied, "Do you doubt it?"

Alphabet of Some of the Divine Characters of the Lord Jesus Christ
by Job Abbott

My *All* in all, below, above,
My *Benefactor* filled with love;
My *Captain*, all my foes to quell,
My great *Deliverer* from hell;
The *End* of all I have in view,
My *Friend* unchangeable and true.
To realms of heavenly bliss my *Guide*,
My *Haven* when by sorrows tried.
Immanuel, the great I Am,
Jesus the sin-removing Lamb.
Keeper of Israel, night and day,
The *Light*, the Life, the Truth, the Way.
The *Mighty God*, the only Lord,
The *Name* by heaven and earth adored,
My *One* thing needful thou shalt be,
The *Prince* of Peace thou art to me.
Quickener art thou of all within,
Refiner from the dregs of sin;
My *Shepherd*, Savior, Sun and Shield,
The *Tree* of Life which fruit doth yield;
The *Vine* from which the branches grow,
The *Well* whose waters overflow;
My *Yea*, Amen, both sure and fast,
In *Zion* thou art First and Last.

Louise Woofenden is the former archivist for the Swedenborg School of Religion. She resides in Sharon, Mass.

Swedenborgians Answer the Call to Service

Eric Allison

The February 1994 *Messenger* article "It Ain't So" revealed that our churches are much more committed to serving their communities than many of us thought. You may be even more surprised to learn that some of our churches are not only involved in social action, but are creative in the way they do it. Our churches in Boston, Kitchener (Ontario), Portland (Maine), and the Swedenborgian Church of Living Waters in San Francisco are featured this month.



Boston church

The **Boston church** likely has more groups using its facility than any other church in the denomination. When I phoned the Rev. Steve Ellis, he reeled off a long list. The church regularly provides meeting space for *The National Association of Christians and Jews* (young peoples' group), *The Massachusetts Teachers' Association*, *The Boston Interfaith Clergy* (and its numerous associated committees), *Social Action Ministry of Boston*, and *The Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless*.

Five days each week *Adult Children of Alcoholics* meet at the church. *The Massachusetts Association for Battered Women* had an office there for six months while they raised money for the *Jane Doe Walkathon*. Last year the church was also used by a group that was concerned with the issues of Haitian refugees. Several times each year

Janus Opera Productions performs theatrical productions there.

Our church in Boston has not just given its space for free use. Financial assistance, food, and other aid has been given to the homeless and hungry by helping *Social Actions Ministries*, *Neighborhood Action*, *Food not Bombs*, *the Pine Street Inn*, *The Paulist Center* and *St. Francis House*. Each year a financial contribution is offered to *Action for Boston Community Development* (heating fuel assistance for the elderly).

Once each month the church is host to a seniors' luncheon of fifty or more which includes programs that range from lectures to dances. This year dinners were made and delivered to private residences for Thanksgiving. Some years the church has hosted Thanksgiving dinners for as many as three hundred people. Recently the church offered its facility to aid in the preparation of a special luncheon for the poor. This luncheon with the governor also fed over three hundred people.

This long list of generous gifts to the community is impressive. The Boston church has also given financial assistance to the Swedenborg School of Religion, the camps in Fryeburg and Blairhaven, and to Urbana University. Clearly, the Boston church is reaching out to help others.

In **Portland**, our church helped three families (19 people) have a better Thanksgiving and Christmas. Knowing that these people are often given canned food, JoAnne Dowd arranged to have church members bake pies, bread, cakes and cookies. Each family also received fresh vegetables, meat and gift certificates that could

be used in the supermarket. One family said that they were given enough food to feed sixteen people a wonderful Thanksgiving dinner. They were given so much that they invited homeless teens to share in the bountiful meal they had received. The children showed their thanks by making ornaments for the church Christmas tree. Food for another large meal was provided at Christmas and each of the 19 people received four gifts. A local shoe factory donated a pair of shoes for everyone in the three families.



Portland church

Each month church members help in the operation of a soup kitchen.

Contributing to a food basket kept at the church is an ongoing project. When people in need call for help, Ken Turley delivers the basket.

They have also been active in the Portland Ministerial Association. The Rev. Ken Turley was president of this association. This year church members participated in the *Ecumenical Martin Luther King Service* and breakfast.

Ken Turley made arrangements to have either the game warden or sheriff notify him when a deer, killed on the highway, is unclaimed. Ken picks up the deer, dresses out, and quarters it. He then takes it to a taxidermist who grinds it into hamburger. In just the first six weeks of this arrangement, one hundred and ten pounds of ground venison have

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Call to Service

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been given to a local soup kitchen as the result of these efforts.

There are numerous groups open to church members and the public free of charge or for a small donation. Some of these groups meeting regularly at the church are: *A Women's Group, Designing Your Life*, (A Spiritual Regeneration Group using the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg as the resource) *Moving Through Grief, Support Group for Fathers, Giving and Receiving Massage, Yoga, Drumming, The Passionate Life* (The book by Sam Keene is used as a resource for this spiritual growth group), *Spiritual Growth For Humans, The Mutant Message* (group study of this book by Australian aboriginals about environmental responsibility). Once each month the leaders of all these groups gather in a *Leaders' Forum* for support and guidance.

In 1993 a financial contribution was given by the Portland church to the *Native American Relief Fund*.



Kitchener church

Our church in Kitchener had another good year of serving the local and larger community.

As part of its Thanksgiving observance, three hundred pounds of food and \$700 were donated to the *Waterloo Regional Food Bank*. Additional food is collected as "admission" for other special programs. The Easter offering of \$1,000 was given to *St. John's Kitchen* which serves free meals in the community. The Christmas Eve collection of \$600 was donated to *Mary's Place*, a center for abused women. The church also donates clothing to this center. A special offering in June went to

support the *Jimmy Carter Work Project* sponsored by *Habitat for Humanity*. Seven homes were built for families who could not otherwise afford adequate shelter. A local puppet troupe, *Kids on the Block*, who perform puppet shows with disabled puppets, received assistance from the church as part of our Helen Keller Sunday.

Sometimes giving to the community means getting your hands dirty. A dozen church members helped with the spring cleanup of *Lakeside Park*. This year the congregation will again be "adopting" a local park.

During 1993 our church hosted meetings of: *Habitat for Humanity, the annual meeting of the Regional AIDS Committee, regional meeting of the Coordinating Committee for the Unicef Drive, The Kitchener Waterloo Sexual Assault Committee and The Grand River Conservation Association*.

The Kitchener church has also been active in the *Core Area Ministry*. This ministry supports measures which have helped to create a safer downtown and to open a supermarket so seniors will have a market within walking distance. The Core area also supports *Saint John's Kitchen* and *The House of Friendship* (a shelter for homeless men).

The public is regularly invited to participate in many of the groups at the church. Some of the groups ask for a donation, others are free. They cover a wide range of areas which include: a dream study group, therapeutic touch, the little league, angels, circle dancing, craft club, adult choir, children's choir, Tibetan drums, reflexology, spiritual growth and support groups, and TOPS.

In addition, causes outside the local community included clothing collected for *Bosnia Relief* and \$3,000 for our churches in *Mauritius*.

In some countries, the people don't even have containers to use for carrying the food or medicine that they are given. Some organizations have been collecting plastic bags to send along with the food. Isabelle and Alf Chivers collected about 6,000 plastic bags from the church

and another 17,000 bags from other sources to send along with Canadian relief to third world countries.

Living Waters HIV Ministry serves those affected by AIDS. Those who have AIDS may be the modern-day equivalent of the lepers to whom Jesus ministered. These people are from every walk of life and need the compassion and the prayers of us all. We will be living with this disease and its impact for many years to come. It is heartening to see one of our own devoting herself to comforting the afflicted.

The Growth and Outreach Support Unit and the Los Angeles church have both given generous contributions to help make possible in San Francisco the Swedenborgian Church of Living Waters aka Living Waters HIV Ministry. The Rev. Sue Turley-Moore is the founder and only paid employee of this ministry. She leads or participates in myriad activities to serve those with HIV or the families of those with HIV.

Sue offers pastoral counseling and rites and sacraments to individuals, couples and families whose lives have been affected by HIV. She makes visits to private residences and to hospitals. This includes crisis intervention and networking with social agencies who provide HIV services. She co-leads an AIDS Support Group and a supportive group called *Worship, Spirituality and AIDS*.

Sue works with many other clergy. Each week she serves on the volunteer clergy staff at *Trinity Episcopal Church*. At Trinity she participates in the weekly leadership of worship and memorial services and hosts weekly organ concerts. The inspiring music of these concerts offers sanctuary from stress, and provides hope and strength.

A regular part of her involvement with the other denominations is her work with *Interfaith AIDS Healing Services* where she leads worship, memorial services and supervises volunteers. The volunteers do visitations, raise money, and bring food and clothing to those with HIV.

(Continued on page 47)

Justin and Peter

Bert Minkin



When I first met Justin Vail and Peter Glickert on that snowy Saturday morning in January, they towered over me. I'm over 6'4" tall. I had never looked up and seen a pair of seven-year-old boys and a dog standing over me before. Now I had a different point of view. No sight could have been more welcome than the concerned faces of Justin, Peter, and Justin's chocolate Labrador retriever named "Boo."

I had slipped and fallen on an icy path along the bank of a frozen river near the Vail's home. I'd just returned to my hometown of University City, Missouri after twenty years as a teacher and storyteller in New England and California. The path was a seldom-used short cut through a secluded area. I remembered it from my days as a child in the neighborhood.

I struggled to lift myself up on the iron guard rail. The pain was too much. I nearly passed out. My back pack became my bed on the ice. I found out later that my right hip was broken. I could hear cars whizzing past in the distance. My cries for help went unheard for over an hour. I prayed for help. That's when Justin, Peter, and Boo came along.

The boys were walking Boo on the path when his barking alerted them. These two cub scouts saw I was badly

injured and needed help. I was a stranger. They acted with wise caution as well as concern. They knew I was a responsible adult when I asked them to alert their parents and the police. Peter stayed with me while Justin hurried home to tell his father. They called "911." Justin quickly returned with blankets to keep me warm until the police and paramedics arrived. As the ambulance carried me to the hospital, I said a prayer of thanks. I knew I would never forget my young rescuers.

I was facing surgery and the task of learning to walk again. Remembering their act of compassion encouraged my recovery. I wanted to regain my health so the spirit of their neighborly good deed could live on through me.

I remembered the parable of the Samaritan who aided an injured traveler on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. He treated a needy stranger as if he were his closest neighbor. He never asked for thanks. He just wanted to do what was right. His example inspires good deeds and faith in the goodness of people.

Soon, I was walking and storytelling again. I wanted to thank my good Samaritans. I wanted their unselfish act to inspire others as it inspired me. I was delighted to

volunteer to tell stories of neighborly good deeds at a meeting of Justin and Peter's Cub Scout Pack 596.

I told the scouts the ancient fable of a boy named Androcles who pulled a troublesome thorn from a lion's paw, and the story of a youngster named Abraham Lincoln who shared his treasured gingerbread with a hungry child. Then, I told the story of meeting two especially good neighbors named Justin and Peter.

I asked my two rescuers to stand with me in front of the group. I wanted the scouts to see that kindness brings people together, that people who receive good deeds are inspired to do the same, and that nothing is more special than being a good neighbor.

All 6'4" of me towered over my two small friends as I thanked them. The members of Pack 596 applauded. I was thrilled when Justin said, "I feel kind of glad," and Peter said, "I feel like a hero."

As they looked up into my eyes I remembered how I first saw those two young men. As tall as I am, I will always look up to them.

Bert Minkin is a professional storyteller and devoted friend of the St. Louis Swedenborgian Church. He has given many programs there, and Messenger readers who attended the 1992 convention in St. Louis will undoubtedly recall his delightful and inspiring presentations.

*I wanted their unselfish act to inspire others
as it had inspired me.*

General Council Report

General Council held their mid-winter meeting January 14 to 16 at the Central Office.

Among other items of business, Rev. David Rienstra was appointed to fill the vacancy on the Growth and Outreach Support Unit. It was decided to leave the vacancy on General Council open until the election at the 1994 convention.

It was voted to suspend our resolution calling for investment sanctions against South Africa in light of the changes in that country and in agreement with the resolution of the National Council of Churches.

A Charitable Gift Annuity Policy Statement was adopted, which states, in part, that the denomination can accept gift annuities of \$10,000 or more, in cash or securities only, and if there is more than one beneficiary the denomination must be named as a minimum of 25% beneficiary of the annuity.

It was agreed that President Edwin Capon's time spent on presidential duties will increase in the fall of 1994, as he is retiring from the Virginia Street Church in St. Paul and he and Esther are moving to the Boston area.

A committee was formed to study the idea of a biennial convention and another committee will be appointed to further study organizational changes.

The Boston Church Fund, which was set to help the Swedenborg School of Religion's ordination track students obtain advanced degrees, was broadened to include aid to the denomination's ministers in their work toward advanced degrees.

MacIntyre and Associates, professional fund raisers working on fund raising for Temenos, made a report to General Council and Council moved to recommend to the Temenos Board that their recommendations and time line be adopted.

And finally, after much hard work, a balanced budget was adopted. This will require increased giving to the annual appeal, but General Council felt the increase was not unrealistic and this issue was addressed.

Gloria Toot, Recording Secretary

Writing Contest

First Prize \$250.00

Second Prize \$150.00

Third Prize \$100.00

This year the American New Church Sunday School Association Outreach Committee and the Riverside Church Fund are sponsoring a writers' contest. The executive committee of the Riverside Church Fund has generously offered cash prizes to the winners of the contest.

The purpose of this contest is to help build up new resource material for our Sunday schools. We know that there are many creative people out there. So, put on your thinking caps and start writing.

Rules:

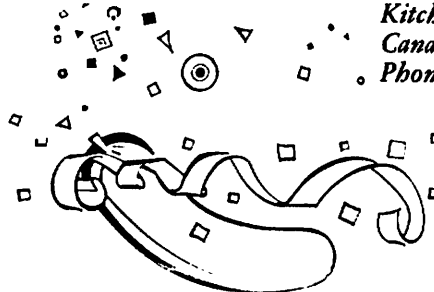
- The story must be mailed to Eric Allison at 12-180 Highland Crescent, Kitchener, Ontario N2M 5K5 no later than May 25th, 1994.
- Although the contest is not limited to members of the Swedenborgian Church, the story should have a lesson or moral value that is consistent with the teachings of the New Church or helps to explain in story form a particular New Church teaching.
- The story will be no longer than six double-spaced typewritten pages and no shorter than three double-spaced typewritten pages.
- The story will be written so that children ranging from ages 5-10 will be able to understand it.
- The Sunday School Association reserves the right to edit all stories submitted.

The winners will be announced at the 1994 convention.

Let's Make This a BANNER YEAR!

The Sunday School Association is inviting all Sunday schools to make a banner for the 1994 convention. For years the floor of convention has been brightly decorated by the church banners. Now it is time for our Sunday schools to show their colors and add our banners to the others. The subject of the banners need not be limited to the theme of convention. They may depict some aspect of Sunday school life. The banners should be made by the children. Adults may only assist and encourage them. Banners should be no larger than 40 inches by 40 inches. Each Sunday school will receive a mystery prize.

*Please write or phone the Rev. Eric Allison to let him know by JUNE 1 if you are bringing a banner: 180 Highland Crescent, # 12
Kitchener, ON
Canada N2M 5K5
Phone: 519-578-2433*



Notice of Proposed Amendments to the Constitution of the American New Church Sunday School Association

As required under the present Constitution, notice of proposed amendments to the Constitution was given in writing at the 1993 Annual Meeting of the Association. Both the current and the proposed forms were published in the 1993 *Journal of the American New Church Sunday School Association* which was mailed to all known members for whom we had addresses. Any member who did not receive a copy may have one by writing to Rev. Gertrude Tremblay, Box 2448, St. Paul, Alberta, Canada TOA 3A0.

As further required under the present Constitution, the substance of the proposed amendments is given below:

Article I. Name. [No change proposed.]

Article II. Purpose [New wording, changes in italics]—The purpose of this Association shall be to encourage and assist Sunday schools of the General Convention of the *New Jerusalem in the United States of America, Inc.*, in maintaining effective programs of religious education based on the Word interpreted in the light of the doctrines given for the New Jerusalem by the Lord through Emanuel Swedenborg.

Article III. Membership. [Changes made to include the elected officers and chairpersons of the Association, and to restrict the various categories of membership to individuals recognized as members of the Swedenborgian Church—The members of this Association shall be:

- A. The elected officers and chairpersons of the Association, and the officers, superintendents and teachers of the denomination's Sunday schools;
- B. Ministers listed as such on the roll of ministers of the Swedenborgian Church.
- C. Authorized candidates and students in

a program leading to ordination which has been approved by the Committee on Admission to the Ministry of the Council of Ministers;

- D. Authorized lay leaders, listed as such on the roll of lay leaders;
- E. Other individuals who may from time to time, on their written application, be elected by the Annual Meeting. The written application shall certify that the applicant is a member of the constituent or affiliated body of the denomination and that the applicant subscribes to Article II of this Constitution.

Article IV. Officers. [Change in Section 3 of wording from "successive" to "consecutive"].

Article V. Annual Meeting. [Changes deal with recent problems in scheduling the Annual Meeting]:

Section 1. The Annual Meeting of the Association shall be held during the convention sessions on the earliest day that sufficient time can be obtained.

Section 2. In the event that insufficient time is made available on the convention program, the executive board shall make suitable arrangements for the conduct of the Association's business meeting and program.

Section 3. The details of the hour and place of the Annual Meeting shall be decided by the president in consultation with the convention committee in charge of arrangements; and in the event that advance notice has not been given in the convention program, the president shall provide that a notice be posted in the registration area.

Article VI. Amendments. [No change].

Convention 1994: Living as People of The Book

Although the National Swedenborgian Church was originally built as a site for the convention sessions and many were held there in the past, it has been many years since convention has been held in the Washington, D.C. area. We hope that many people will take advantage of the location to have a patriotic vacation in the nation's capital as well as an inspirational experience at the 1994 convention session where we will be exploring our spirituality and what it means to live our lives as "the people of The Book on a journey from the Garden of Eden to the Holy City" (see Convention '93 sermon in the September *Messenger*).

The ministers and their spouses will arrive at Marymount University in Arlington, Virginia on Sunday, July 2 and begin their meetings that evening with a reception after dinner. Convention 1994 sessions will open after dinner on Wednesday, July 6. The convention Sunday service on July 9 will be held at the National Church, which is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the current building.

You should plan to fly into Washington National Airport. The college is a short taxi or Metro ride from there. Marymount University runs a shuttle from the Metro Station.

There is a very nice indoor swimming pool at Marymount that we will be able to use. Because we have access to Metro through Marymount's shuttle bus, all of the cultural and recreational opportunities in Washington, D.C. will be easily reached by convention-goers on public transportation. Of course, there will still be planned outings for Saturday afternoon.

All rooms and meeting areas at Marymount are air-conditioned.

The Washington, D.C. Society looks forward to welcoming you back in July, 1994!

*See you in Washington, D.C.
July 6 - 10, 1994*

What Is a Swedenborgian?

Edwin G. Capon

An answer to this question is not only important as something we can give in response to others who ask it; it is also important because how we answer has something to do with our sense of religious identity and how we relate to people with other religious identities. A name can be a source of pride or a clue to the nature of a thing, a barrier between ourselves and others, or a bridge.

I come from a city where it was said, "... the Cabots speak only to the Lowells, and the Lowells speak only to God." Certain names are a big help in Boston; others mean nothing. Names can be mighty important—in spite of Shakespeare's disclaimer. The sweetness of a rose is often enhanced by the name with which it is called.

I'm not sure who first used the word "Swedenborgian" or the term "Swedenborgianism," but it was coined even before the end of Swedenborg's life. The earliest example I know of is in a document dated March 22, 1769, containing charges against Swedenborg and against his teachings; it was written by Dr. Ekebom, Dean of Gottenburg. In the next two years it appears a number of times in a series of documents and letters which form part of the controversy over the suppression of Swedenborg's books. Swedenborg himself uses the word at least twice in writing during the course of this controversy. I'll come later to what he has to say on the term.

What is a Swedenborgian?

On one level the answer is simple. A Swedenborgian is an adherent of the theology set forth in the religious writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, a Swedish scientist, philosopher, and mystic. He or she may be a member of a Christian church calling itself Swedenborgian or New Jerusalem or New Church, but not necessarily.

The Rev. Forster Freeman, an ordained Presbyterian minister presently serving a Congregational Church in Berkeley, has called himself a Swedenborgian Presbyterian. But he was not the first. For 58 years the Rev. John Clowes, Rector of an Anglican Church in Manchester, England, preached Christianity as presented by Swedenborg in the established Church of England, spending much of his time translating Swedenborg's writings from Latin into English and seeing them through the press. In San Francisco, there was a black minister who came by at least five times a year to buy Swedenborgian books. He must be a Swedenborgian—at least to some extent.

Such non-organizational Swedenborgians are not confined to the clergy, however. From time to time we discover readers and believers who are unaware that there is a Swedenborgian denomination or are content to remain within the churches in which they were born or to which they have become accustomed. One of our own associate members has been an ardent reader of Swedenborg for many, many years, but maintains full membership in the Methodist Church.

What is a Swedenborgian?

Though Swedenborg speaks of a new church and though Swedenborgians in the past often referred to themselves as newchurchmen, we are first and foremost Christians. As I often say, Swedenborg never intended to start a new denomination or church, believing and expecting that the new church of which he wrote would be a renewed and revitalized Christianity transforming the churches of his day. So he writes of a "New Christian Church," "a Church truly Christian," and "the Christian Church itself," not referring to outward forms but to inner

spirit and outlook. With the benefit of hindsight we can see his expectation to have been unrealistic and somewhat naive. Even before his death, his adherents within the Lutheran Church of Sweden were suffering persecution. In Canada my own great, great grandfather was publicly expelled from the Presbyterian Church for holding Swedenborgian views.

In a letter to the King of Sweden written on May 10, 1770, Swedenborg stated what I'm sure he considered to be the central truth of the New Christianity. "Swedenborgianism" he wrote, "is the worship of the Lord our Savior." In his crowning work, *True Christian Religion*, published the next year, he referred to "true Christianity, which is the worship of the Lord." A true Swedenborgian, therefore, worships "the one God, the Lord, the Savior Jesus Christ, in whom is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." He does not worship a remote, austere, even savage God, whose wrath must be appeased or whose sense of justice must be satisfied. He worships one whose love protects and inspires him, seeking to be led in all he or she thinks and says and does by that one Lord. He may not have a theologically accurate understanding of that one God, but his faith is centered on God-in-Christ, and his life is governed by His teachings. As Swedenborg says in his *Arcana Coelestia* at #1799, "he is truly a Christian who lives as a Christian or as the Lord teaches." Not a particular faith, but life—that is the essential thing.

There are actually quite a few passages where Swedenborg presents the essentials of a renewed Christianity. One of the most cogent states three:

1. The acknowledgment of the Divine of the Lord.

(Continued on page 45)

2. The acknowledgment of the holiness of the Word.

3. The life that is called charity.

The first two lay stress on where we look for guidance and inspiration. The third emphasizes what must result from that inspiration and guidance.

While Swedenborg's religious books occupy a shelf or more in the average library, I want to state that it is not necessary to be familiar with all of their contents, or even with most of them, to be a Swedenborgian. Swedenborgianism is based on the Bible and rightly understood, the Bible is a sufficient guide to the true Christian life. If we recognize that the purpose of the Bible is to bring about faith in God, love for our fellow human beings, and a useful life, we're on the right track.

I myself am very happy to be a Swedenborgian, an adherent of Swedenborg's teachings, but I hope I am also a member of that new Christian Church his writings seek to promote. Because one can be intrigued with the new doctrines without becoming a real participant in the renewed Christianity they are intended to bring about. And one can also be a participant in that new church without ever having heard the name Swedenborg. Swedenborgians are not the only New Church people.

True Swedenborgians are one with all Christians everywhere who look to the Lord and make His teachings central in their lives. In fact, in Swedenborg's view we are also—in a real sense—one with all persons everywhere who worship God according to the teachings of their faith and seek to follow its precepts.

A true Swedenborgian is a member of that company of faithful souls who heed some call from on high and accept responsibility toward the neighbor.

The Rev. Edwin G. Capon is president of the denomination and also serves as pastor of the Virginia Sreets Church in St. Paul, Minnesota. "What is a Swedenborgian?" is reprinted from a 1990 San Francisco church newsletter. Mr. Capon served the San Francisco church for 11 years and is a former President of the Swedenborg School of Religion.

GO, SEE AND ACT: WORLD DAY OF PRAYER MARCH 4, 1994

World Day of Prayer is a worldwide movement of Christian women of many traditions who come together to observe a common day of prayer each year, and who, in many countries, have a continuing relationship of prayer and service.

- It is a movement initiated and carried out by women in more than 170 countries and regions.
- It is a movement symbolized by an annual day of celebration—the first Friday in March—to which all people are welcome.
- It is a movement which brings together women of various races, cultures and traditions in closer fellowship, understanding and action throughout the year.

Through World Day of Prayer, women around the world

- affirm their faith in Jesus Christ;
- share their hopes and fears, their joys and sorrows, their opportunities and needs.

Through World Day of Prayer, women are encouraged

- to become aware of the whole world and no longer live in isolation;
- to be enriched by the faith experience of Christians of other countries and cultures;
- to take up the burdens of other people and pray with and for them;
- to become aware of their talents and use them in the service of society.

Through World Day of Prayer, women affirm that prayer and action are inseparable and that both have an imponderable influence in the world.

World Day of Prayer Themes

The World Day of Prayer has a special annual theme which has been developed and prepared by

women of a different country each year. The theme becomes a prayer drawn from the faith, hope, joy, struggles, concerns and sufferings of women in a particular country. In this way it is possible to experience the richness of the Christian faith as it grows deeper and broader in an international, ecumenical expression.

The Holy Spirit has guided World Day of Prayer in hidden but definite ways. The theme and writers have been surprisingly timely even though they are selected years in advance in order to provide sufficient time for a country to prepare the theme and for 170 countries to do all the needed translation into scores of languages. In 1989 a small, faith-filled band of Christian women in Burma explored the meaning, purpose and power of prayer. When Eastern Europe was undergoing dramatic changes in 1990, Czechoslovakia offered a prayer of commitment to act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8).

May the Holy Spirit continue to guide World Day of Prayer National Committees who are responsible for these themes:

- 1991 Kenya — On the Journey Together
- 1992 Austria, Germany, and Switzerland — Living Wisely with Creation
- 1993 Guatemala — God's People: Instruments of Healing
- 1994 Palestine — Go, See and Act
- 1995 Ghana — The Earth is a House for All People
- 1996 Haiti — God Calls Us to Respond
- 1997 Korea — Like a Seed Which Grows into a Tree

We Thank You

The Messenger and Communications Support Unit wish to thank all of you who have sent subscriptions and donations to *The Messenger* between April 1993 and January 1994. Your gifts and those of Swedenborgians who came before us enable our church to offer this ministry of communications between church members and as outreach to the public. Contributors were also acknowledged in the May and September 1990 issues, and June 1991, 1992 and 1993. Expressing our appreciation to you is important to us.

Again our heartfelt thanks to the following:

<p>Alliance of New Church Women (National) Joseph R. Baume Santa Monica, California Frances A. Boyle Mansfield, Massachusetts Evelyn Byers Rockville, Maryland Doris Closterman Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania Josephine Cowern St. Paul, Minnesota Sylvia J. Dalrymple Benton, Louisiana William and Sally Frost Port Austin, Michigan Marjory Harper Tullahoma, Tennessee Mary Hatfield Seaview, Washington</p>	<p>Helen Jackson Brockton, Mass. Young Min Kim Brooklyn, New York Kitchener Church of the Good Shepherd, Ontario Linda Kraus Pretty Prairie, Kansas Los Angeles Swedenborgian Church Bill Mallory Kerrville, Texas Samuel McBride West Valley City, Utah Mrs. Gordon W. Miller Bridgewater, Massachusetts New York Association Thomas H. Neilson New Westminster, B.C. Ohio Association</p>	<p>Jimmy Parham Asheville, North Carolina Barbara Penabaker Warren, Michigan Stella Podmore Edmonton, Alberta William B. Radcliffe Mitchellville, Maryland Joy Risser Apple Valley, California St. Louis, Church of the Open Word Missouri Margaret Schneider Cincinnati, Ohio Elora and Hampton Schoch Roxboro, North Carolina Elizabeth Trautmann Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Jeff Wall Hockessin, Delaware</p>
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The Swedenborgian Church thanks the following individuals who made contributions in 1993:

<p>Mr. & Mrs. Phillip Alden, Jr. Philip Alden, Sr. Julia V. Anger James N. Anno Nancy Bailey Isbell Behrer Duane Beougher Mr. & Mrs. Gustave Bischoff Christine Blackmer The Rev. En Bo-Chung Phyllis Bosley Edward Bosley Barbara Boxwell John L. Boyer, M.D. Bowman Brackin Mr. & Mrs. Jack Brooker Anna Buck Sylvia Carlton Isabell Carpenter Dorothy Churchill Elizabeth Coffman Lurabel Colburn Josephine Cowern Dorothy Cutler Eli & Norris Dale Sylvia Dalrymple Greg & Sandi Degi José Delgadillo George & Lois Dole Mrs. Milton Early Capt. & Mrs. August Ebel Karen Feil Kurt Fekete Grace Fisher</p>	<p>Adrienne Frank The Rev. Ernest Frederick William Frost Benjamin Frost Mr. & Mrs. Leslie Gaboury Penelope Garver Mr. & Mrs. Richard Goff Penelope Pietras Goldstein Kenton Graber Walter Haag Daisy Halle Sarah Headsten Martha Herbert Arthur & Clema Hill Jeanette Hille Lillian How Kathleen Hull-Ryde Donna Humes Betty Imhoff Mrs. Carl Irvin Mrs. Wilbur Jennings Margery Jester Florence Kearns Young Min Kim Martha King Margaret Klein Henrietta Knutson Mr. & Mrs. Vernon Kraus Mr. & Mrs. Lee Kraus, Jr. Christine Laitner Olive Larson Howard Lawrence Carol Lawson Robert Locke</p>	<p>Patricia Loving D. Carl Lundberg Mrs. Martin Lynn Dr. Barbara Mackey William Mallory Marion McCarthy Lynne McClure Roberta McCollum Charles McCormick Karen Moore Marjorie Mucka Donna Mumm Lorna Murphy Dr. George Nash Rachel Nicol Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Pangaro Robert Peebles Barbara Penabaker Nancy Perry Marilyn Peters Stewart Poole Leon Rhodes Joy Risser Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Rockenbach Lorraine Sando Mr. & Mrs. Richard Saul H. Elaine Schmitt Margaret Schneider Hampton & Elora Schoch Hester Schwarting Karen Scott Donna Sekhon Velma Shepherd Helen Sloris</p>	<p>Dr. Alice & Wickham Skinner Laurie Steese Mr. & Mrs. Henry Swanton Mary Alice Swartz Robert W. Tafel, Jr. Mrs. Richard Thomas Kingsley Thompson Margit Tobish Elizabeth Trautmann Mrs. Charles Tucker Patricia Tukos The Rev. Susan Turley-Moore Alvena Unruh Dan Unruh Milton Unruh Andrew Watt Mr. & Mrs. J.C. Webb Mr. & Mrs. Albert Wilson Marjorie Winsor Mr. & Mrs. Charles Winter Charles Witzell Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Wong Carolyn Wright, M.D.</p>
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Thanks, too, to the following churches and associations:

Kemper Road Swedenborgian Church
New York Association
Ohio Association
Park Ridge Church
Philadelphia Society
Virginia Street Church
Western Canada Association

Opinion (from page 34)

magic potion either), I shudder to think what the world would be like today if Charles C. Bonney had NOT succeeded in bringing together "WITH ABSOLUTE RESPECT . . . peoples, nations, and tongues greater than any assemblage yet convened." (Quotes from George Dole's marvelous scholarly presentation).*

Someone had calculated that humanity was represented at the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions at a ratio of 1:1 million. Perhaps not enough for a critical mass, yet enough for a seed kernel of good will to be formed that can be planted in human consciousness to bear fruit in the future. The mere fact that there was willingness by ancient enemies to meet represents a tremendous attitudinal shift toward cooperation on a global scale.

For me the question ultimately becomes, "Does prayer, good will, and intentionality have an impact on the psychological atmosphere of the planet? Does it make a difference what a large group of people thinks, feels, and experiences? The last sunrise meditation I attended on Sunday morning before leaving for home was opened with a prayer to "the God of each one's understanding, the saints and sages of all religions: We pray for peace. We ask for guidance to take that which is in our hearts out into the world as we leave here today."

On the way home I saw the first newspaper I had seen in days. On the front page of the *Chicago Tribune* was depicted Yasir Arafat shaking hands with Yitzhak Rabin under the caption, "Peace breaks out in the Middle East." The synchronicity of events struck me. Had not thousands of people expressed that yearning all week? Was what had taken place on inner levels during the many discussions, worshipful gatherings, and meditations reflected externally in the political arena?

*Charles Bonney: *With Absolute Respect*. G.F. Dole. No. 3 in the *Swedenborg Studies* monograph series. 48 pp. \$5.95. Available from the Swedenborg Foundation, 1-800-355-3222.

Ann Graber Westermann
Church of the Open Word
St. Louis, Missouri

Passages

Birth

Berthold—Benjamin James Berthold was born August 27, 1993. Benjamin is the son of Jim Berthold and Maria Rella, members of the Wilmington, Delaware Swedenborgian Church.

Baptisms

deBruyn, Weins—Claire Elizabeth deBruyn, daughter of Janice Wiens and Gordon deBruyn, born November 30, 1992, and Allen David Wiens, son of Mark and Dawn Wiens, born September 23, 1992, were baptized into the Christian faith December 30, 1993, in Kelowna, B.C., the Rev. Erwin Reddekop officiating.

Lloyd—Brady Lloyd, son of Greg and Kelly (Bell) Lloyd, was baptized into the Christian faith January 2, 1994, at the Church of the New Jerusalem in Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Dr. Gardiner Perry officiating.

Confirmations

Fox—Dawn Fox was confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church October 24, 1993, at the LaPorte New Church in LaPorte, Indiana, the Rev. Eric Hoffman officiating.

At the Church of the Holy City, Wilmington, Delaware, a tradition of confirmations on the first Sunday of Advent 1993 was continued. The following persons were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church and received into membership: Phyllis Haines, Wendy Rowe, Everett L. Scholfield, Leon W. Syfrit, IV, and Joyce Talley. The Rev. Randall Laakko officiated.

Deaths

Keating—Mary F. Keating, longtime member of the Philadelphia Swedenborgian Church and the Swedenborg Foundation, entered the spiritual world January 8, 1994.

Mills—C. Corey Mills, former New York state senator, longtime member of the Brooklyn Swedenborgian Church and president of the New York Association for many years, entered the spiritual world December 20, 1993. A memorial service was conducted at the Bedford Presbyterian Church by the Rev. Thomas Hugart.

Severs—Florence Severs, longtime member of the LaPorte New Church in LaPorte, Indiana, entered the spiritual world December 8, 1993. A resurrection service was conducted at Haverstock Funeral Home December 13, 1993, the Rev. Eric Hoffman officiating. Mrs. Severs served for many years on the church board and Women's Alliance.

Change of Address

The Stone House Book Room and Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound in Redmond, Washington, has moved next door into larger quarters. The new street address is 7829 Leary Way, NE, Redmond, Washington 98052. Phone is still (206) 883-7825.

Church Family News

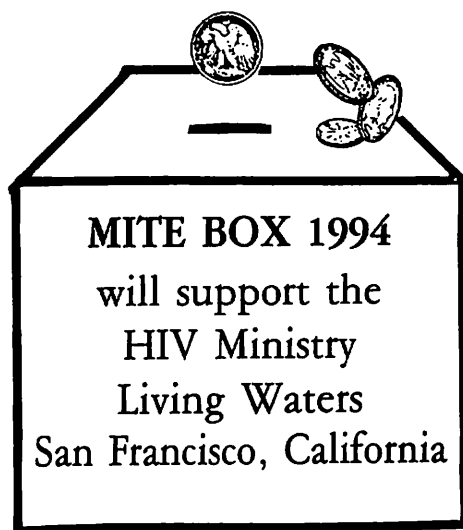
The Rev. Steve Puls and wife Kim Kearns and family have recently moved from Royal Oak, Michigan to Redmond, Washington, where Steve is ministering to the Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound. The Rev. Paul Martin Grumman is ministering full time as director of Stone House, while Steve has taken over Sunday services and other church-related duties. A full update on Stone House activities will appear in the *April Messenger*.

Call to Service

(continued from page 40)

Once each week Sue goes to the *Ambassador Hotel* to lead in worship, serve communion, and offer healing and memorial services. While there, she is available for counseling. The available funding finances one hundred hours per month for this vital ministry. We can see that Sue is certainly putting in more than one hundred hours toward what must be a labor of love.

The Rev. Eric Allison is the church growth consultant under the auspices of the Pastoral Ministries Support Unit. He resides in Kitchener, Ontario.



Swedenborg Scientific Association Annual Essay Contest



The *Swedenborg Scientific Association* is happy to announce an annual essay contest. The purpose is to

- a) Encourage use of Swedenborg's works in a relevant and substantial way on an issue of general academic interest, and
- b) Recognize and thereby promote quality scholarship among fulltime undergraduate and graduate students.

All entering authors will receive a free two-year membership in the Association and the accompanying subscription to *The New Philosophy*.

Authors of the winning essays will receive the following:

- 1) \$100 certificate to be presented at the Annual meeting of the SSA, toward the purchase of SSA publications, and
- 2) Consideration of the prize essay for publication in *The New Philosophy*. Qualified essays will be subject to the usual review and editorial procedures. If the essay is published, the author will also receive an honorarium of \$100 cash.

The contest is open to all college and university students. Undergraduate and graduate student essays will be judged *separately* with *one award* being made in each category.

The successful essay will explore some aspect of Swedenborg's work, as found in any of his scientific, philosophical and theological writings, and relate it to modern science or philosophy. The length of the essay will be not less than 2000 and not more than 4000 words (in English).

Entries must be submitted by January 1, 1995 for inclusion in the 1995 contest. All entries will be judged by a committee of SSA board members and the editor of *The New Philosophy*. All decisions of this committee are final and not subject to review. No author may win the prize more than once in each category.

All submitted essays become the property of the Association and will not be returned to authors. The Association reserves the right to not award prizes in the event that none of the contest entries are deemed to be suitable by the awarding committee.

Send entries (marked undergraduate or graduate) to:

SSA Award Essay
c/o E.E. Sandstrom
P.O. Box 717
Bryn Athyn PA 19009 USA

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

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

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

Important Church Calendar Dates in 1994

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

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