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# THE MESSENGER

Monthly Publication, Swedenborgian Church of North America

February 1995

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## Representing our Church in Moscow

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*Horand Gutfeldt, Vasily Maliavin, Michael Stanley, Erik Sandstrom  
outside the Kremlin, Moscow, November 1994*

I was honored and grateful to receive support from our church, through a special contribution from the Rotch fund, to participate in an international conference in Moscow this past November. The meeting was organized by the Russian Academy of the Science of Man in cooperation with the International Organization of Swedenborg Publishers, and combined with a developing Russian Swedenborg Society.

I left San Francisco November 7, arriving in London November 8. I was invited by the Rev. Ian Arnold, president of the New Church College in Manchester, to address a group of ministers of the British Conference there on the topic, "Regeneration and Meditation." This was followed by a conference with the students, with whom I demonstrated a guided

meditation and discussed techniques as well as mutual experiences.

I proceeded by ship and train to Berlin, where there is a remarkable Swedenborg Center with a library that has gained new importance through the unification of the country. I met with many old friends, since I had been their minister forty years ago. After my address, they showed a German version of the

American movie "Ghost," which dramatizes the interaction between the spiritual and natural world, leading to the realization of justice.

Following my week in Moscow (described on the following page), I returned to Berlin again to address a faithful group of New Church friends. After spending some time with relatives in Germany, I visited with Dr. Friedemann Horn, our outstanding pioneer in Zurich, Switzerland, and former president of the Swedenborg School of Religion, who has again made Swedenborg available for all the German-speaking areas. His publishing house brings out thousands of reprints of old and new translations and introductory books.

The last days I stayed with relatives of my brother in the Swiss capital, Bern, not far from the impressive mountain ranges that are named after that city.

Words can't convey how profoundly grateful I am to have been given this opportunity to attend the Moscow conference and to visit my old society. The teachings of our church are finding new and unexpected ways in a changing world.

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*To this place, now, of all places, we had come from  
many parts of the world to proclaim the reality of the  
spirit and of God.*

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## Moving Toward the Light

### Design for Growth

*Guest Editorial by Perry Martin*

**E**manuel Swedenborg has offered us guidelines for our growth as individuals and in groups we call churches. As we explore these principles and make them our own, we move toward the vision of a life of love and action which we call "the Lord's New Church."

**Freedom:** We have choices. Our freedom of choice, our ability to be aware of our choices and their consequences, is one of the chief characteristics of our humanness.

**Growth:** We are here on the earth to grow to become more conscious and aware of the choices that we make, to become more loving, wiser, more useful into eternity.

**Spirituality:** The spiritual life is here and now. We make our own heaven and our own hell. Swedenborg learned to tune into the reality of the spirit so that he could live in the spirit world as well as in the life of matter. As we learn to listen to the whisperings of the Spirit, in our dreams, prayers, meditation and readings, we connect with the Divine within our hearts. At death, we leave the material world behind and become more fully conscious of the spiritual life. We do not go anywhere—we are already there.

**Unity:** There is an unbroken connection between the spiritual and the natural. Ultimately we are one with each other and with the earth and everything that lives on this home planet, and with the divine energy that gives us life. The world of nature reflects the spiritual, corresponding to Divine love and wisdom.

**Creativity:** We are created, not in sin, but in the image of God the creator. Our journey is to learn to express our creativity as an offering of worship.

Temenos Conference and Retreat Center, because it is a service of the Swedenborgian Church, offers programs designed to help participants realize their freedom, expand their growth and enhance their creative expression of the spiritual life. We do this by offering experiences which enable people to recognize their freedom of choice. When we are growing up, we find ways to respond to the world to survive in the environment of our families, neighborhoods, and schools. These familiar ways become habits, which we can learn to question: are there ways that we continue to act which no longer fit our present lives? Anger, fear, shame, timidity, self-consciousness, helplessness of control may no longer serve us and the people we live and work with.

As we see new possibilities and learn to be aware of our choices and their consequences, we choose life in its fullest sense. We discover that we can work through the barriers we encounter because we are imperfect human beings born into less than perfect families and a culture shaped by materialistic thinking and goals.

Temenos offers programs for participation in experiences which offer new possibilities, new choices, new insights about who we are. We learn to listen to the inner wisdom of our bodies; our bodies are our only instrument to live life on this earth. By caring for them we can be of greater service in this world. They are miraculously wrought and have much to tell us.

In this sacred space we move into the quiet center of our being, coming into sacred time away from the busy-ness and business of our everyday lives, allowing ourselves to be touched by the beauty and power of nature, where also we recognize our need to care for God's creation, earth, as she sustains our life.

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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.

### **Lawson's Assertion Questioned re Church Growth**

To the Editor:

As president of the denomination, I feel I must call into question an unsubstantiated assertion made by Carol Lawson in her article on the last page of the January *Messenger*, an assertion which must be rather disturbing to those of us who care for and believe in the local church. Mrs. Lawson says she believes that the decline in our denomination's membership "can *only* be turned around by major visions like the Stone House, the Wayfarers Chapel, and the Temenos Retreat Center." But no evidence is given for her belief. There is evidence, however, that brings into serious question her statement.

*(Continued on page 21)*

## The International Conference "Swedenborg and the Russian Tradition" Moscow, November 13-18, 1994

In preparing for this trip, memories kept coming back to me of my many past visits behind the Iron Curtain after the war, where I had often conducted secret communion services for isolated Swedenborgian groups in the Eastern bloc. I always felt a connection and obligation toward Eastern Europe, for my parents grew up in St. Petersburg, Russia, although they were not Russians, but members of a Baltic German minority there. During most of my life, Moscow had been the center of a doctrine that had been designed to conquer the world. Then, with feelings of intense involvement, I had observed a phase of the twilight of the idols of Communism in Berlin shortly after the breakdown of the Wall. What would I find now in the center of this huge empire?

During the week that I was there, I struggled with feelings of unreality, beginning with a near-sleepless first night in the hotel near Red Square. Tears of joy welled up as I contemplated the details of the program to come.

We walked through the snow toward the tall building in the center of the city where our meetings were to be held. The freezing weather wasn't altogether responsible for my trembling as I looked up at the large inscriptions on big red signs in cyrillic letters at the entrance: *Academy of Sciences* and below, *Institute of Philosophy* and underneath that, *Department for the Science of Man*. A short time ago this place had been the very brain center of the ideology with the scholarly name of "Dialectical Materialism," that, combined with a militant atheism, had promised to bring a new epoch of justice and prosperity for all.

To this place, now, of all places, we had come from many parts of the world to proclaim the reality of the spirit and of God. Who could forget that the previous conviction emanating from here was that humans were nothing but upright walking animals, and material causes were supposed to be the only energies moving all human life and history? Who could not feel the longing of souls here aspiring to be free of all the cruel external and internal controls of the past? Now finally a chance was offered them to enter into a dialogue with people from the West, who had taken a great many of these freedoms for granted for a long time. Perhaps the past suppression had served to increase the thirst for opening new wells of information and truth—the craving to welcome a new age.

The International Organization of Swedenborg



*Horand on steps of Academy of Sciences, Moscow.*

Publishers, headed by Dr. Erland Brock, had worked together with a group of outstanding friends from Russia to put a conference together that will remain unforgettable in the minds of all who attended it.

The Russian men and women participants who had invited us included a number of professors, some representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church, a physician, a mathematician, a number of psychologists, and students. The main organizer was Dr. Vasily Maliavin, a professor at that Institute, who worked incredibly hard during that week to have everything right. This was primarily an academic, not a church-sponsored event, which seemed to engender more openness.

The invited guests were a university professor from Japan, Dr. Tatsuya Nagashima; Dr. Michael Stanley, former president of the New Church College in Manchester; the Rev. Alfred Acton, former president of the Academy of the General Church in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, who still holds a leading position there; the Rev. Erik Sandstrom, Jr., also a professor at that Academy, and the Rev. Kurt Nemitz from Maine. From Stockholm, Sweden, came the Rev. Olle Hjern, president of the Nova Hierosolyma movement and the Rev. Göran Appelgren of the General Church.

*(Continued on page 20)*



*Speaking in the Assembly Room with interpreter.*

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Full participation in the conference was assured by the help of an outstanding interpreter, a woman who was completely fluent in Russian and English and who had read much of Swedenborg herself. Too many presentations were made to list them all here, so I offer a small selection of those items which impressed me most. The keynote address, given by Dr. Stanley, was "The Mystical Body of Christ," expanding the idea of the Divine embodiment through the ages. He showed all history as the projection of the Divine Wisdom, the Logos, and God as the soul of the Grand Man, pointing to parallels in mystical visions of other religions. The entire Creation was declared to be the objectivation of the Divine potential present in the spiritual as well as the material world.

A Russian Orthodox priest, V. Nikitin, followed with "Swedenborg and the Variety of Religious Experience." He developed the idea of Divine Wisdom—Sophia—through the ages in many phases, showing parallels to Swedenborg, among a number of others. He pointed to examples in the history of Russia when this was present, or obscured, as in the Soviet times.

Dr. Nagashima spoke about Swedenborg in Japan, stressing among others the famous Dr. Suzuki, who translated a number of Swedenborg's works into Japanese. He also became a pioneer in propagating and explaining Zen Buddhism to the West, offering a profound perspective of its meaning, enriched by his study of Swedenborg.

Dr. Maliavin's topic was "Swedenborg's Heritage and Symbolic Thinking in the Modern World." He observed that never before was the fertility of symbolic images felt as today—we see it around us in art, literature and films—with Swedenborg offering a new dimension.

A Russian professor of psychology, Dr. Nosov, showed a vision of "The Angelic Prototype of Man." The angel is the ideal of the person, and the male and female principles are united there, as explained in Swedenborg's "Conjugal Love." In touching words, he referred to marriage in heaven as well as on earth as establishing the fullness of being for humanity.

Another professor from Moscow, Dr. Roshchin, spoke about Swedenborg and Russia, especially about its spiritual and mystical tradition, naming a great many names and details, and noting also that there has never been a church organization or denomination of Swedenborgians in Russia.

In my own presentation, I referred to what has been until now the most comprehensive research about the impact of Swedenborg in the Slavic world, made by one of the leading Western slavist experts, professor D. Chizhevski,

*We heard people who were ready to make  
a contribution for a more humane future,  
rising above the dust of material substance,  
opening their eyes to truth and love.*

whom I had met personally. Vostoevski, Pushkin, and Soloviev were spiritually influenced by Swedenborg, as were a number of other outstanding minds in the last century. My lecture pointed to Swedenborg's great vision of a spiritual dynamic reality behind all earthy things, also emphasizing that this is fully compatible with modern science. It is still little acknowledged that there are non-material energies involved in all life, especially in human consciousness.

The American newspapers reporting on Russia generally stress the economical problems, and there is no doubt that Russia is caught in a raging inflation. There are political and other crises everywhere around, and the country is involved in profound and shattering changes. Nobody knows where it will lead. But all this seems to disappear behind the experience that there is a small, passionate group full of devotion to truth, permeated with openness, great universality and depth. After seventy years of suppression, the questions asked at this conference and the intensity of the searching seemed absolutely remarkable to me. Parallels were recognized to centuries of mystical traditions with deep roots in this great country, many of them hardly known in the West. Here we saw a wide range of spiritual orientation, unbroken by the darkness of the past, and we heard people who were ready to make a contribution for a more human future, rising above the dust of material substance, opening their eyes to Truth and Love.

I am tremendously grateful to have been given the opportunity to participate here in the birth phase of a new movement. In full awareness that my days on this planet are numbered, I felt almost unworthy to see the door opening towards new thinking and acting, combined with a thirst for spiritual renewal, sparked by a reaction to the oppression of the past ideology, whose representatives contributed to a reorientation without ever considering for what they were preparing their country.

Something in me felt like the aging Simeon in the Biblical story, who held the Christchild in his arms and said: *Now, O God, let your servant depart in peace, for my eyes have seen thy salvation, which you have prepared for all people.*

I ask all to pray for a spiritual renewal in the world and especially there, and to lend support wherever this might be called for.

(Continued on page 21)



Foreign Visitors—(from left) Michael Stanley, Kurt Nemitz, Horand Gutfeldt, Alfred Acton, Tatsuya Nagashima, Erik Sandstrom, Olle Hjern.



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## Opinion

(continued from page 18)

I served the San Francisco church from 1979 to 1990. During that period more than 50 people joined the San Francisco church and Sunday attendance increased noticeably. In the four years since I left, new members continue to be added to that church and Sunday attendance is higher than ever. But San Francisco is not the only example of increasing membership through the local church.

Another example is the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener. That church has been adding new members regularly and Sunday attendance is high. And the same is true for the Swedenborgian Church in Portland, Maine.

Whether "major visions like Stone House, the Wayfarers Chapel, and the Temenos Retreat Center" will be a principle, let alone *only*, way in which our membership decline can be reversed is very much open to question. Wayfarers, for example, has been in operation for more than forty years and while it has without question made the name of Swedenborg known to a number of people, I know of no influx of new members due to Wayfarers. The Los Angeles church, which is the church closest to Wayfarers, is down to 12 members. While it is true that in the last two or three years a local church is being established in Palos Verdes, we cannot afford to wait 40 years for new visions to bring in new members.

Like Wayfarers, Temenos is certainly making Swedenborg and the Swedenborgian Church known to a number of new people. But that is not the same thing as turning around "the dimishment of our denomination's membership." Though I am on the Temenos Board, I have yet to hear of new members flocking to the church because of Temenos. Stonehouse on the other hand has brought in enough new members to join with a few older members in forming the Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound. But there is not enough

history there to guarantee an influx of new members in the future.

It is not my purpose to argue that these three projects are without merit. Rather I am concerned with the thought that we might be convinced into putting all our eggs into one basket, as it were. We have an expanding program for our youth, but plans for expanded work with them have been postponed for lack of funds. Our Sunday schools ask for more help with materials and training, but things our Education Support Unit would like to do cannot be funded. We expect to have enough graduates from SSR in the next two years to fill most of our vacant pulpits, but will we have the money available to help where help is needed?

Mrs. Lawson quotes Gus Ebel as saying, "We are going to run out of people before we run out of money." The late Rev. William Wunsch said something very much like this forty years ago. And it hasn't happened. So let us not short-change the many local churches that are showing promise.

*Edwin G. Capon*  
*Newton, Mass.*

### Can We Envision a Growing Church?

To the Editor:

Mr. Capon points to three growing churches in our denomination and we can rejoice in the ministries they provide. But, unfortunately, they are, by and large, the exception. My views are substantiated by the fact that since 1945, twenty-five of our churches have died or have become inactive.

What I believe is needed—if we are to turn around this downslide—is not only the promising new ministers being graduated from SSR, but also a system that creates nationwide name recognition for Swedenborg and equates the term "Swedenborgian" with spiritual growth and transformation. This is what strong spiritual growth centers will do for us. If we develop and strengthen our retreat centers at places like Almont, Blairhaven, the Stone House, Fryeburg, Temenos, and DeLand, this

will impact our local churches.

My article on the Temenos campaign was empowered by my own vision of spiritual growth centers as beacons in attracting spiritual seekers toward the Swedenborgian community. Of course, our local churches will be the ultimate winners, if they can make their services and programs relevant to those people searching for purpose and meaning, and a deeper relationship with the Divine.

*Carol S. Lawson*  
*Dillwyn, Virginia*

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## Moscow

(Continued from page 20)

May this country now find the way to freedom and to God, ushered in by the contributions of the Swedish visionary, whose eyes the Lord opened to see a new destination for mankind, to bring a growing piece of heaven into this world and the next.

May we join them, united in spirit, in our search for a new consciousness and realization, in many different paths, of Wisdom, Love and Usefulness, though we may be led in creative freedom in unique and wonderful ways.

This gives me an opportunity to make an appeal to all readers for cooperation. Several times, I was asked if an exchange of young people between Russia and the West could be arranged. They offer many welcoming homes and tours for any young person who wants to explore their changing country.

I hope we can find homes in America that will welcome guests and allow them to experience what a land of freedom can be like.

Please contact me; I will try to convey this to our friends who look at our country with great expectations and admiring trust. Dates and time periods are still flexible and can be arranged to suit different interests and situations.

*Rev. Dr. Horand Gutfeldt*  
*579 Vincenete Ave.*  
*Berkeley, CA 94707*  
*Telephone (510) 525-1462*

# Making the Extraordinary Effort

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**H**ow would you like to have Jesus for a quality control expert following you around every day for, say, a month? A minister might be a little more prone to this fantasy than the average person, but it's a bracing thought for just about anyone. Talk about pressure! Imagine being in the unremitting presence of One who loves and understands you totally, who knows what you are capable of, and who watches every move you make.

Jesus conducted His ministry as a spiritual quality-control manager. He intervened in people's lives and thinking constantly. A straight read through the Gospels provides a striking overall picture of the extraordinary way the Lord dealt with people—the way he both encouraged and the way he chastised. They were often turned inside out and knew their life wasn't going to be about the same humdrum stuff anymore.

When he gave positive strokes, he could evoke extraordinary responses. When faced with wrongheadedness, or worse, evil, his fierceness could reach hurricane force in less time than it takes to think it. And he didn't indulge mediocrity, either. The non-riskers he stripped of what little had been in their care; the lazy and unprepared he banished from banquets; the lukewarm he spewed from his mouth. C.S. Lewis describes the Lord's call in this way: "Christ says, 'Give me all. I don't want so much of your money and so much of your work—I want you. I have not come to torment your natural self, but to kill it. No half-measures are any good. I don't want to cut off a branch here and a branch there. I want to have the whole tree down. I don't want to drill the tooth, or crown it, but to have it out. Hand over the whole self . . . I will give you a new self instead. In fact, I will give you myself, my own will shall become yours.'"

Lutz Long's courageously creative  
action in Berlin's stadium  
in the face of Hitler's hatred  
continues to reverberate and echo  
a half-century later.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus calls us to extraordinary living. Yes, it is good and necessary civil law to refrain from murder, he says, but how much finer it is to live according to spiritual law, which means that one refrains from nursing grievances against others so as to not murder them in one's heart. He said, "If you greet only your own kind, what is there extraordinary about that? Everybody does that. There must be no limit to your goodness." Do not approach your life with ordinary standards, Christ tells us: Make the extraordinary effort and allow the spirit of God to lift you to new heights.

**A**n athlete named Albritton died recently at the age of 81. He apparently won the high-jump in the 1936 Olympics, and it made me think of Jesse Owens and Lutz Long in connection with this sermon message, and so I dug out their story. Nearly everybody knows about Jesse Owens. One of the great Olympians of modern history, he won four gold medals in those 1936 games held in Berlin, Germany. But how many of you have heard of Lutz Long? Lutz Long was Germany's top athlete in the 1936 games. In fact, he was a great favorite of Adolph Hitler. In the long-jump qualifying round, Lutz broke the existing record. Only one man had any chance of beating him in the real games—Jesse Owens.

Just as Jesse's turn came to qualify, Hitler stood up in the highly visible premier's box and stalked out. It was a dramatic statement: it was Hitler's public snub of the black athlete, who didn't figure in the madman's scheme for a future world. Jesse recalls how the incident made him feel: "It made me mad, hate-mad. I fouled my first try. On my second, I didn't jump far enough to qualify. With just one try left, panic hit me."

It was right then that Jesse felt a hand on his shoulder, and he turned around to see Lutz Long. Lutz suggested that Jesse scratch a line a few inches short of the takeoff board and try to jump from there. It worked: Jesse didn't foul, and he qualified by a foot. If you know much about German history and how far things had progressed by 1936, you can imagine the danger in which Lutz Long placed himself by displaying solidarity with one publicly marked by Hitler.

Their episode in the final qualifying round began a brief but intense friendship between Jesse and Lutz. The next couple of nights they sat up together talking late into the morning. They

talked about the world situation and their own young lives. In the days ahead, Jesse won three gold medals—the 100-meter and 200-meter dashes and the relay—with Lutz cheering him on at each event. Then came the long-jump event. As everybody expected, it came down to the final jump, pitting Jesse and Lutz against each other for the gold. Jesse won. He recalls what happened next:

“While Hitler glared, Lutz held up my hands and shouted to the enormous crowd, ‘Jes-se Ow-ens! Jes-se Ow-ens!’ The stadium picked it up: ‘Cha-zee Oh-wenz! Cha-zee Oh-wenz!’ My hair stood on end.”

The Lord came not to perpetuate the ordinary mindset of the *status quo*, or to make soothing excuses for the self-centeredness that is so commonplace. Ordinary and mediocre actions are usually forgotten almost overnight. But Lutz Long’s courageously creative action in Berlin’s stadium in the face of Hitler’s hatred continues to reverberate and echo a half-century later, because every four years at Olympic time, the old black-and-white film clip of Lutz chanting “Jes-se Ow-ens!” is shown worldwide on television.

We cannot be extraordinary in everything we do, for after all, seeing the divine in the ordinary is one of the most fundamental delights of spiritual living. But that does not deny the spiritual magic of making extraordinary efforts. In fact, becoming fully aware of the divine life in the ordinary itself comes through extraordinary commitment to spiritual life. Making the extraordinary effort is at the heart of Jesus’ teaching: to walk the extra mile; to die as to one’s self; to heal the sick; to be salt to the world; to believe that the Kingdom is at hand.

In the construct of Swedenborgian thought, we have a need to be reborn and remade—not just once, but continually throughout our journey. Christ’s call to make extraordinary efforts is based on the necessity for us to make paradigm leaps in order to grow. Swedenborg takes the six days of creation as symbolic of six successive stages of spiritual growth, with the seventh day as a kind of realized heavenly consciousness. Likewise, Swedenborg traces seven major

Covenants in the narrative of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation that track the same journey of successively higher and wiser spiritual planes. Each level embodies a discrete spiritual transcendence over previous modes of thinking and qualitative levels of affection.

But only the first stage is a guarantee. Even the second stage, pictured by the Mosaic covenant and characterized chiefly by a fixation on rules in middle childhood, requires a certain volitional openness to goodness. It should go without saying that many people do not continue to grow spiritually throughout their lives. In some, growth is arrested as early as adolescence. A great many others never mature beyond the issues of young adulthood, and a majority never grow beyond worldly business-as-usual, which contains a certain measure of spiritual maturity to be sure, but is nevertheless as far removed from the seventh level of spiritual transcendence as Elvis is from Bach.

As I understand Swedenborg, each stage of spiritual life contains within it the seeds and foundational insights preparatory to and necessary for the next level, but the catalyst to actual transcendence into the next level is an inspiration to rise above what has been comfortable, that is extraordinary compared to the level on which the person has been living. We can certainly see it in the very young. One mother told me of watching her aggressive hyperactive four-year-old son from across a park playground. He had been given a small bag of crackers as his afternoon treat. After eating a couple, he paused and looked over at another young boy sitting forlornly by himself. Her son had always been totally selfish when it came to sharing his toys or his snacks, but on that afternoon the mother observed with joy as he went over to the sad little boy whom he did not know and offered him a cracker. It was a paradigm shift for her son.

We all began at the beginning, and we all need to transcend our spiritual selves many times along a journey of genuine regeneration. Maybe some of you saw the article in *People* magazine about the bald

eagles of Oceanside, California. Those would be the adolescent friends of schoolboy Ian Gorman, whose hair fell out due to the chemotherapy treatments for lymphoma. Ian’s best friend, a boy named Taylor Heber, knew how traumatizing being bald in the fifth grade would be. At first he said jokingly that he would shave his head too, but then he had an idea and talked to some other friends. Thirteen boys from their class stormed a hair salon and had their own heads buzzed so that Ian wouldn’t feel alone in his ordeal. A creative and extraordinary effort that may end up playing a pivotal spiritual growth role for some of them.

I will reiterate that perhaps a majority of people do not transcend the basic worldly attainment of conventional adult responsibilities. One of my parishioners, however, has gotten involved with a group started twenty years ago by a plastic surgeon who felt inspired to give more creatively to the world. He began appealing to the higher conscience of his colleagues and today Interplast is a not-for-profit outfit with a two million dollar budget that sends volunteer surgeons from all over the United States to countries around the globe to perform benefit reconstructive plastic surgery on children, who would otherwise be deformed for life and in many cases simply be abandoned.

Even and especially in old age, there is the rich spiritual challenge to fend off despair and become instead an integrated beacon of light and wisdom for others, which may involve a certain transcendence over the way an individual lived the bulk of his or her life. Socrates gives us this observation: “If you think the way you always thought, you will feel the way you always felt. If you feel the way you always felt, you will do what you’ve always done. If you do what you’ve always done, you will get what you’ve always gotten.”

Each of us is somewhere on the spiritual developmental path. Each of us has in our current life experience the very seeds we each need for making our own next extraordinary and transforming effort. □

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

# Wow, Pow

Eric Allison

This article shares my reflections concerning the subject of how North Americans, and especially Christians, need to own up to what the settling of this continent has done to its original inhabitants. It is time we establish a new relationship defined by mutual respect.

During one of my near-catatonic episodes of TV viewing, my "channel-surfing" stopped when I saw Native North Americans dancing on a morning news program. It was a promotion for the **1994 International Powwow** (held last April). The first day of the powwow would be on Good Friday. Perhaps my thinking was a bit grandiose, but I felt called to this event as though attending it might be my first payment in a kind of spiritual recompense to atone for at least some of the brutality which my ancestors had inflicted upon the natives. My thoughts surged back to years ago when I tried to read *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (the Native American version of the white conquest of North America). I could not finish the book because I found it too heartrending. I did manage to read other books about Native American rituals, beliefs, and history and made several trips to the American Southwest to explore ruins. But, I had yet to do a thing to help any of the native people on this continent other than sending in the occasional check or buying a trendy Indian craft. I saw the powwow as perhaps a beginning of a sincere effort to do something more.

As I sat there in our Kitchener kitchen I thought of my many travels across North America and how I frequently looked upon the passing landscape with sorrowful acknowledgment that almost all of it is stolen property. Stolen in the name of Jesus, or country or destiny, or simple greed. I had never been to a powwow and I thought of Carl Jung's words, "Every-one born in North America has some Indian within him." When I visit my "native" northeastern Ohio, my usual custom is to take the country roads because it's more adventurous and I feel the contour of the land. I always gaze out at the farms, the forested valleys and the towns as I drive by and think how much more beautiful it must have been just two hundred years ago. I imagine "the great forest" which stretched from the Appalachians to where LaPorte, Indiana now stands. One true account that virtually haunts me is one I read in a diary of explorers who had come up from Virginia to Lake Erie in

the 1700s. They wrote of how they had traveled for two weeks without seeing the sun because of the thick forest of giant trees. When they reached the pure waters of Lake Erie, which they called a fresh water ocean, carrier pigeons (now extinct) flew over and blocked out the sun for three days. Wow, and now look at it.

Sometimes I stop by a stream and it seems that I even hear the voices of native children playing nearby. These thoughts, visions and feelings rumble around inside me while I drive along conjuring images of those ancient noble people walking up every hill that I conquer by only a slight forward motion of my foot on the accelerator. Music from a tape or news on the radio can insulate me from hearing even the chattering of birds not yet extinct. It is hard to imagine that people could have actually lived off the land. It was lush and beautiful. Now, there is not even one tiny Indian reserve wedged between subdivisions, shopping centers or farms on the Ohio side of Lake Erie. The earth that was honored as sacred is now treasured as an investment. For years I have felt a haunting sense of loss for the natives' way of life. For over two thousand years this was their land. "From California to the New York Island from Bonavista to Vancouver Island, from the Arctic Circle to the Gulf stream waters this land—" wasn't made for you and me. We took it.

On some unexplainable inner level I feel connected to that part of the earth where I grew up. But, where I grew up all that is left of the original inhabitants are archeological sites.

At first it struck me as a bit odd that the Powwow was not to be held on a reserve, nor in a natural setting, but in Toronto's Sky Dome. Then, I thought, why not? The sacred lands along that part of Lake Ontario are now either parking lots or high rise buildings.

And isn't a sacred space so designated because the worshipper sees it as such? Could not the dome also be sacred? It would be *that* day!

We arrived about two hours before the opening ceremony. The artificial turf was laid out for the Toronto Blue Jays' season opener. In the center of the field a speakers' platform flanked by lawn chairs on each side formed a circle around the empty dancing area. Adjacent to the field were rows of booths,







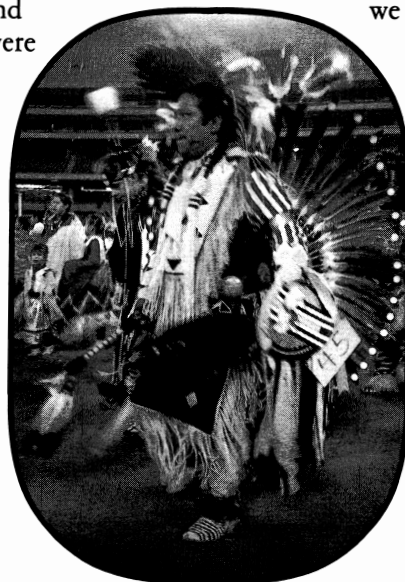
displaying beautiful aboriginal crafts for sale. At one booth I asked a dignified native man, "What is a powwow?" With sincere pride he explained, "This is a place for all tribes to gather in friendship and celebrate the life the Creator has given us. There are no alcohol and no drugs here. This is like coming to church for us." We moved on from booth to booth, including a stop for a tasty portion of buffalo stew to go along with the venison burgers. Occasionally someone's mere passing would command our attention as they strode by clad in brightly colored ceremonial attire, bedecked with bells and symbolic drawings. More quietly, but somehow more intensely, others would walk past dressed in the more traditional buckskin that was festooned with feathers, bones, teeth and horns. Sometimes I uttered a quiet "wow" in response to this unusual sight.

It didn't seem in the least strange to pay for a dream catcher with our Visa card.

But, the *non sequitur* of the day for me was watching aboriginal people in full ceremonial garb munching down McDonalds' burgers and fries. This was truly a mind-boggling juxtaposition of cultures.

The drums began to echo through the stadium and the opening ceremony began. It was thrilling to hear the ancient sound of the drum-beating and chanting resounding through the dome. I stood in line with dozens of others whose faces were obscured by video cameras capturing the inspiring grand entrance of dancers. The very old, the very young, and all ages in between danced forward in a line of celebration which eventually filled the center of the dome with a circular flow that was a joyous—yet reverent—explosion of color, movement and sound. Following the opening ceremony were dancing competitions for different age groups. Then came pleas for prayers and more tangible assistance to overcome the problems of drugs, drinking and suicide which plague many reserves. It was a depressing litany of serious troubles punctuated by ghostly descriptions. For the moment the joy of the day abated.

Somehow it didn't seem right for me to be so close to the dancing, so I took my place in the stands and looked down on the spectacle below. I began to murmur a quiet prayer for forgiveness. I was aware of how my anger at my Christian ancestors for their actions in the last century



## ***My anger at my Christian ancestors for their actions in the last century never included the question, "What would I have done if I had lived back then?"***

never included the question of what I would have done if I had lived back then. Would my actions have been any different from the bystander who allowed the onslaught of subjugation free rein? God forbid, would I have been one of the idiots who screamed, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian"? Why would I have been different then than I am now? Why would I have lifted a finger to help Chief Joseph or any of the great chiefs? Would I have lodged a protest with the government?

As I surveyed the dancing, it brought back memories of watching Zulus dance in South Africa. I realized that all my white, liberal, righteous indignation about what ought to be or should have been in South Africa had ignored the reality of what is in North America. If aboriginal people here outnumbered the whites, we would likely have had a very similar situation.

Looking around the Sky Dome that day at other white faces, I could see that my conscience was not the only one that got stung. Even more important was the realization that I wasn't doing anything but paying lip service to my own regrets. Most non-native Americans and Canadians feel guilty about the condition of the native people but very few do anything. Isn't it time that we do something to atone for this collective sin? Shouldn't we at least write a check?

A tip I picked up from the Rev. Paul Zacharias is to always end a sermon or an address with a charge to do something specific. I'm not sure what to write here because I guess all I am saying is that we ought to take stock of what has been done for centuries in the name of God and progress. If nothing else, let us follow a prime directive to not allow any more cultural imperialism anywhere.

What I learned at the powwow and have had confirmed since then is that most tribes want only our prayers and financial support and sometimes not even that. Sending a check and good wishes is usually

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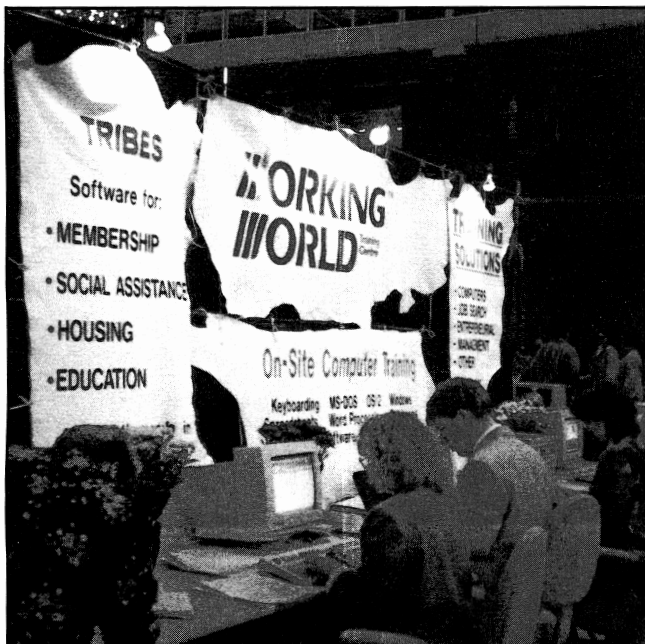
## Wow, Pow

(Continued from page 25)



enough. Our "help" in the past has been on our own terms and they have had enough of that. It is true that some reserves are in desperate shape. But, many other tribes are working at solving their own problems all by themselves and that really is the way they want to do it. If we leave them alone on the parcels of land we have "given" them, they may become content nations in their own right. Making a genuine effort to learn about their way of life and showing appreciation and respect for it is always welcome. That's all they ever wanted from us. □

*The Rev. Eric Allison is Pastoral Ministries church growth consultant. "Wow, Pow" is one of a series of reflective articles Eric has written during his travels in various parts of the world.*



## Legend of the Dream Catcher

Long ago when the world was young, an old Lakota spiritual leader was on a high mountain and had a vision.

In his vision, Iktomi, the great trickster and teacher of wisdom, appeared in the form of a spider.

Iktomi spoke to him in a sacred language that only the spiritual leaders of the Lakota could understand.

As he spoke Iktomi, the spider, took the elder's willow hoop which had feathers, horse hair, beads and offerings on it and began to spin a web.

He spoke to the elder about the cycles of life . . . and how we begin our lives as infants and we move on to childhood, and then to adulthood. Finally, we go to old age where we must be taken care of as infants, completing the cycle.

"But," Iktomi said as he continued to spin his web, "in each time of life there are many forces—some good and some bad. If you listen to the good forces, they will steer you in the right direction. But if you listen to the bad forces, they will hurt you and steer you in the wrong direction."

He continued, "There are many forces and different directions that can help or interfere with the harmony of nature, and also with the Great Spirit and all of His wonderful teachings."

All the while the spider spoke, he continued to weave his web starting from the outside and working towards the center.

When Iktomi finished speaking, he gave the Lakota elder the web and said . . . "See, the web is a perfect circle but there is a hole in the center of the circle."

He said, "Use the web to help yourself and your people to reach your goals and make good use of your people's ideas, dreams and visions.

If you believe in the Great Spirit, the web will catch your good ideas—and the bad ones will go through the hole."

The Lakota elder passed on his vision to his people and now the Sioux Indians use the dream catcher as the web of their life.

It is hung above their beds or in their homes to sift their dreams and visions.

The good in their dreams is captured in the web of life and carried with them . . . but the evil in their dreams escapes through the hole in the center of the web and is no longer a part of them.

They believe that the dream catcher holds the destiny of their future.

# The National Council: The Churches Together

Robert McCluskey

The annual meeting of the General Board of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. was held in New Orleans, Louisiana November 10-12, 1994. Attending as delegates for the Swedenborgian Church were the Revs. Dorothea Harvey and Robert McCluskey, and Nancy Hawley. A central focus of the meetings was on the work over the past year of the Transformation Committee, a Council-wide effort to respond to the radical changes in society and the profound challenges that face the church in the coming century. Last year, after an in-depth consultation process, the Transformation Committee was appointed to help the Council revise its vision and mission, as well as its administrative methods, and to allow a new structure to flow from a renewed vision.

At its meetings in 1995, the Board will vote final approval of the transformation process, and begin implementation. The new structure will reflect the Council's efforts to insure connections between the various aspects of its works. The office of the *General Secretariat* will provide oversight to all Council activities (including budget), implement resolutions, and represent the Council to the larger community. The *Church World Service and Witness Unit* will house Church World Service, as well as the Council's overseas and international ministries. The *National Missions Unit* will address issues of social justice, education, communication, and ecumenical relations.

## Resolutions

The **Resolution on The Anti-Immigrant Backlash** deplores a widespread increase in racism and xenophobia threatening refugees and immigrants who come to the United

States, and a host of U.S. government policies that make it "more difficult for refugees and immigrants to arrive and live in the United States in safety and dignity." The resolution notes that this is part of a worldwide trend to close doors to refugees and immigrants. NCC member churches are called to continue to support and befriend refugees and immigrants in their communities, to press the U.S. government to uphold the right of persons fleeing persecution and civil unrest to have access to fair asylum procedures and "to confront openly the racism which is apparent in much of the anti-immigrant backlash."

The Board approved an amendment calling on the NCC and its member communions "to join with people and groups of people in California to challenge the constitutionality of Proposition 187." In a related action, the Board asked the NCC General Secretary to write California Governor Pete Wilson, urging him not to implement Proposition 187 immediately.

## Policy Statements

In **An Invitation to Evangelism: Jesus Christ and God's Reign**, "Justice, ecumenism, respect for others' differences, and discipleship are declared integral evangelization." The statement, which was adopted unanimously, will be distributed widely as the base for ecumenical activity and for developing programs in evangelism. It says, "We look for an evangelism that is centered in Christ, biblically and theologically sound and respectful of our various histories and traditions. Such an evangelism respects and responds to the uniqueness of persons, the diversity within people groups, and the traditions of cultures both in our nation and in

the world." "God works to convert and remove all aspects of our divisions," it says. "In our increasingly diverse nation, the Church continues to struggle with the differences of gender, race, sexual orientation, age, class and physical ability. We believe that God is calling each communion to invite and to incorporate those people outside its particular historic, socioeconomic and ethnic membership."

**Human Rights: The Fulfillment of Life in the Social Order** deals with political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights. After much debate, the General Board unanimously adopted the "action points" as NCC policy and affirmed the basic content of the whole document while referring the introductory text back to the committee for editing to make it more useful as an educational tool. The revised text will be presented to the General Board for action in November 1995. The Policy Statement supplements the NCC's 1963 Human Rights Policy Statement, which remains in effect. The action points by the Board include:

- Reaffirmation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its various elaborations.
- A call for repentance "wherein the church by acts of omission or commission has contributed to the violations of human rights of individuals or groups."
- A call for interfaith dialogue on the nature and meaning of human rights and patterns of inter-religious intolerance and practices that lead to interfaith conflict.
- Recommitment to a series of steps to work with the NCC's member partners and worldwide ecumenical partners for the attainment and protection of human rights for all individuals and peoples.
- Support for the efforts in the

(Continued on page 28)



## NCC (Continued from page 27)

United States and worldwide "to end the practices of prejudice and discrimination and intentional violence based on religion, race, class, caste, age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and physical limitations."

- Support for development of standards and practices to assure the Church in its own life and witness "honors the integrity, humanity and rights of its members, its employees, and all with whom it comes in contact, and in so doing bears witness to its own foundational beliefs."

### The Churches' Role in Media

**Education and Communication Advocacy** focuses attention on the intrusive role of media in our society and calls our member churches to confront the challenge media pose to our faith and our values." In his presentation of this first reading, Dr. Jimmy Allen, co-author of *Bridging the Gap: Religion and the New Media*, stated: "The dynamics of religion are too important for good journalism to miss. Nearly every story has a religious root system." There is great interest by news media in doing a better job of religion coverage. "We need to train ourselves and our people in how to speak in that language that this information society demands. We need to train seminarians to understand media, and people in journalism schools how to understand religion."

## Reports, Statements and Messages

In late 1992, a *Counseling Committee* was formed to address issues of homosexuality and ecumenical relations. The Revs. Robert McCluskey and Susan Turley-Moore represent the Swedenborgian Church on the Committee. In its report to the Board, the committee noted that the inability or unwillingness of NCC member communions to talk with one another about questions related to homosexuality "will not help us preserve unity. In the long run it will lead to a diminished fellowship (*koinonia*), to alienation. Our choice

is not between dialogue and no dialogue. It is between dialogue and further confrontation and this confrontation will come from among the member communions as well as from those outside the Council."

Acknowledging that "the way forward is not clear, and that anger and confrontation characterize the present moment," the committee said that the NCC's member communions must find a way to reopen dialogue which includes churches with different beliefs on questions related to homosexuality. The following points were also made:

- Dialogue "needs to encourage each church to understand the other churches' position as being grounded in concerns both of justice and of faith and order."
- Ways must be provided "for the Member Communions and the Council itself to hear and receive the witness of gay and lesbian Christians. Silence or confrontation cannot be the only option provided Christians who are gay or lesbian."
- The right of each NCC member communion "to make judgments for itself on these issues and to make its own witness both in ecumenical and in public settings" must be affirmed. "Each member church must be assured that its participation in the life of the Council will be valued, and its voice respected, regardless of the position it takes on these particular matters."

The Board also heard a report from the **Special Committee on Roman Catholics, Evangelicals, and Pentecostals**, noting progress made and areas where further work is still needed. Three areas of interest common to the NCC and the three other traditions were highlighted: worship and liturgical renewal, cultural renewal, and the role of Christianity in an increasingly religiously plural nation.

The **Statement on the Conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina** traces the Council's efforts to press for an end to the war and to deliver humanitarian assistance to victims of the war. While supporting the establishment

of safe havens, the statement "continues to oppose the unilateral introduction of additional arms on the side of any antagonist in the conflict." This position contrasts with President Clinton's recent announcement that the U.S. is withdrawing its support from the U.N. Security Council-imposed arms embargo. The statement calls for an immediate cease-fire by all parties, noting the need for a political solution to "protect the multi-ethnic, multi-religious nature of Bosnia-Herzegovina and ensure the equal rights and legitimacy of all religious, national and ethnic groups, especially the rights of minorities."

The Board received a **Message on Urban Violence** and commended it to the member communions and to the NCC's newly forming National Ministries Unit. "As we come together under the auspices of the National Council of Churches, let us not fail to address the growing problem of inner-city crime which is rapidly spreading throughout our cities today," the message says. "Let us not forget this crisis nor forsake the pleas of our youth." In a related event, Board members heard moving and enlightening personal statements by former gang members and youth directly affected by urban violence.

The Board also heard a remarkable report on **Racism in the U.S. — A Violation of Human Rights**, a joint campaign of the NCC and the World Council of Churches. International leaders in the fight against racism spoke of their experiences as they toured the "underside" of American society: inner-city ghettos, prison systems, minority communities where poverty and crime keep pace with each other, and countless testimonies of discrimination and prejudice.

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At the Board's opening worship service, each communion was asked to present a brief statement on their "preeminent" gift to the ecumenical movement. Following is the statement submitted by the Swedenborgian Church:

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## Swedenborg's Day in Court

Louise Woofenden

August 4, 1890: "I, Mary Allen, of Glendale, Hamilton County, Ohio, of sound and disposing mind and memory . . . do hereby make and publish this my last will and testament . . ."

The widow of Charles H. Allen owned two mansions on a large property, plus a smaller house used as the parsonage of the Glendale New Church. After her marriage in 1863, Mary Allen had joined the church and had embraced the doctrines eagerly. She had amassed an extensive library, including Swedenborg's works and a large collection of New Church periodicals and collaterals. The estate was hers by inheritance from her husband. First she had provided liberally for his relatives. The will in question pertained to the residue. The two mansions were to be used for a long-desired project: in her home a free lending library and art museum, and in the other building, which had been the home of her father-in-law, a school connected loosely with the denomination, which would teach academic subjects, and also New Church doctrine.

Mrs. Allen died that December. On February 9 a day school opened with 20 students. A Miss Coffeen taught a kindergarten class, and the Rev. H.H. Grant taught telegraphy and shorthand to "young men and women." There was added a sewing class and instruction in instrumental and vocal music, German and French. By April the library was cataloged and arranged, and patrons were borrowing books.

Then in marched the relatives to contest the will on the grounds that Mrs. Allen was insane. The library at SSR has the transcripts of the court proceedings (which began in April, 1892) numbering over 1400 pages. Mary Allen had no children. Mr. Allen had children by a first wife. There were also several of his nieces, nephews and cousins. Mrs. Allen had a sister and two brothers who lived out of state. None of her siblings had apparently been in close touch with her, and they did not appear on the witness stand.

The first of the plaintiffs to testify was her husband's niece, Julia Allen, who lived nearby and had, indeed, visited her aunt regularly—that is, when Mrs. Allen had become old. Julia testified that when she first met Mary Allen, in 1863, she was eccentric but intelligent, well dressed, much travelled, and able to read in several languages. She spent a lot of money on art objects. But, Julia observed, she kept a very miserly table for her husband. She would never allow him to have a fire in the library fireplace, even though he often complained of being cold in this, his retreat. Besides treating her husband badly, she had other damaging traits. She took homeopathic remedies. Also, when she developed cataracts and was becoming blind, she travelled to Boston to be treated by a massage therapist, who taught her to massage the area around her eyes.

Throughout days of testimony, Mr. Allen's relatives took the stand. They stated that Mrs. Allen had her servants

bring in juniper boughs to lay around her carpets as moth prevention, which they considered a useless practice. After her husband's death, they said, she became totally unreliable. She never cleaned her house, and believed that bathing was injurious to the health. She wore the same old tattered wrapper every day for years, though they counted 85 expensive dresses in her closet after she died. She hid away cash and jewelry in various bundles about the house. She had the horses moved to a stable farther from the house because of the flies. She thought that a servant was slashing the curtains, though obviously they were falling apart from age. And on and on.

After recounting all the odd things they had observed about their relative, the witnesses got into more serious accusations. In her old age, nearly blind, Mrs. Allen had become paranoid about being poisoned. One day in 1885 she suddenly became ill at the tea table, lapsed into a semi-conscious state, and was confined to her bed for two weeks. She believed that her live-in companion had put poison in her nightly glass of lemon juice. She did not actually accuse the woman, but later dismissed her.

The evidence that was most damaging, though, was that she was in the grips of the delusions of Swedenborgian ideas. She had friends who came to read them to her, and she talked of them incessantly to any visitor, though the witnesses admitted *they* hadn't listened, and couldn't say what these ideas were, precisely.

As the trial went on, her eccentricities faded into the background. The focus became her Swedenborgian obsession. Swedenborg became the defendant. Called to the stand was Dr. W.B. Richardson, a graduate of Bellevue, in New York City, director of the Athens, Ohio, insane asylum, a specialist in mental and nervous diseases. He testified as a professional who had not been acquainted with Mrs. Allen. Dr. Richardson stated that "the mere fact of holding a Swedenborgian belief as to religion, of course, is no testimony as to insanity," but the prosecuting attorney pressed him further:

Q. Have you observed, either in your studies or in your experience with the insane the results of excessive and unnatural religious contemplation?

A. One particular line of thought extensively . . . upsets balance—and predisposes to mental derangement and diseases of the brain.

Q. Is there not a similar danger in believing in communication with the spiritual world?

A. Particularly true, simply because the mystery of such a belief is greater because so few believe in it.

The prosecution kept hammering on the issue of a dominant or fixed idea as a precursor to insanity. Habits of uncleanness were said to be a prominent characteristic of the insane. Paranoia about being poisoned also pointed that way. But the real issue that evolved was that a person who held New Church doctrines must be insane.

*To be continued.*

**NEXT MONTH:** *The defense, summations and verdict.*

*Louise Woofenden is a writer and retired SSR archivist.*

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# Flag Day

Crystal Bartlick

Jessica snuggled into the soft flannel sheets and pulled her favorite comforter up under her chin.

"Are you tired, sweetie?" asked her mother Laura, as she settled on the edge of the bed.

"Well, kinda," Jessica replied, then added "but it was a great day!"

"So, what made this day so great?"

"Oh, everything, but it really started when we were all told to go out to the soccer field." Jessica raised herself up on one elbow and continued, "and we had to put on capes, either red or white, and stand in certain places and go to different places. It was all for Canada Day, and a guy way up on the roof of the school videotaped it and everything and . . ." Jessica was sitting up by now, motioning where everyone had been, including the man on the roof. "And then we went back to class and we watched it on TV and guess what?" she asked breathlessly—"We made a flag! We made the Canadian flag and didn't even know it until we saw it on TV!! Wow!" Jessica flopped back on her pillow, exhausted by her excitement.

"That must have been really fun. And you didn't even realize that you were forming a flag until afterwards, when you saw everyone together, from a distance!" Laura pulled the rumpled covers back over Jessica and smiled to herself, recalling the number of times she was too close to a situation to see the big picture.

"Oh, ya!" Jessica exclaimed, springing up again. "I even saw myself on the video. I was the tip of the maple leaf!"

"That IS really great!" Laura replied enthusiastically, feeling her daughter's excitement and responding with a big hug. "You know, Jessica, you were a very important part of that maple leaf. It just wouldn't have been complete without you. Even though you didn't know it at the time, you made a very important contribution to the big picture. You do that all the time, did you know that?"

A frown of deep thought spread across Jessica's forehead. "Well, not exactly, sort of, I guess. Do you mean that the maple leaf would have looked funny without the tip?"

Laura's eyes sparkled as she laughed and tucked Jessica in once more. "Yes, that's what I mean, but also that you are needed to complete many pictures, like a picture of your class at school, or a picture of our family. If you weren't there it would be like a jigsaw puzzle with a piece missing, and that would ruin the whole puzzle. We are, each of us, needed to form the big picture that God sees, too. Each one of us is a little different, and that's good.



Each person has his or her very own talents and they are all necessary and useful. We're like different parts of a body, each of us doing what we do best, and working together for the good health of the whole body. Or you could think of us like different dots of color making up the very colorful picture that God sees. On our own we may not seem very important, like when you were just one of many kids on the soccer field. God sees you in His big picture and loves and needs you here, right where you are and just the way you are."

Laura smiled down on her peaceful little girl, whose eyes had now closed, kissed her tenderly on the forehead, and prayed silently. "Lord, thank you for this reminder that even though our actions may seem small, we are still adding to Your big picture. Give me the strength and wisdom to do my part well. Amen." □

*Crystal Bartlick is a member of the Swedenborgian Church in Edmonton, Alberta. She is a professional musician, and a part-time organist for the church. Mrs. Bartlick is married and resides in Sherwood Park, Alberta.*

## Music Workshop a Hit at Pacific Coast Association Meeting

Hosted by the San Diego Church, the Rev. Ken Turley of Portland, Maine, shared his musical expertise at two workshops he gave at the PCA meeting held October 8-10 at Carlton Oaks in Santee, California. Both workshops were on the theme, "Music—the Expression of Praise to the Lord." The first, Musical Regeneration, covered the topics of music as a spiritual practice, the nature and spirit of music, the learning process as regeneration, and the practice of music as meditation and prayer. The second included the history of sacred music, evaluating style and taste, and traditional and creative use of music in various worship settings. Participants were enthusiastic. Lorraine Sando of Puget Sound Swedenborgian Church commented, "Singing lots of new songs was fun as well as uplifting . . . and I found learning about the correspondences of different instruments and sounds to be very meaningful. Ken demonstrated how music as a type of spiritual experience can be a bridge to new thinking . . . a way of experiencing the Lord."

Ken is glad to offer one or two workshops for any congregation or association. He charges only \$100 per workshop plus expenses. He can be reached at (207) 772-8277, or write to him at the Portland Swedenborgian Church, 302 Stevens Ave., Portland, Maine 04103.

The PCA Saturday evening program was all musical as well, with a stunning virtuoso performance by a professional flutist and vocalist with an accomplished pianist, ending in a delightful sing-along.

Jean Treash, a member of the San Diego Church and long-time practitioner of an ancient healing art called JinShin Jyutsu, a form of acupressure, gave a talk at the Alliance meeting, along with demonstrations, on dealing with stress and pain. The text of her presentation will be printed in the March *Messenger*. Watch for it!

Congratulations to the newly formed Palos Verdes Swedenborgian Church, which was unanimously voted into the PCA at the October meeting. The church has sponsored a successful Bible class and has recently instituted a children's Sunday school, with seven children enrolled. □

## Moving Toward the Light

(Continued from page 18)

Participation in the learning process engages the creative spirit that lives within each of us. As we share our own and others' learning experiences in groups and workshops, we learn to be more accepting of ourselves, recognizing our common humanness.

When we become more loving human beings, we spend less energy fighting ourselves or those around us. We can then be of greater use in the world beyond our walls.

Temenos programs are designed for growth, for meeting the yearnings for spiritual connection to ourselves, our neighbor and our God by whatever name we call the divine power.

I was asked recently, *can our little church afford such a larger vision?* I believe that we cannot afford to say no. Let's be a ten-talent church. Temenos is a new and creative expression of Swedenborgian understanding. Temenos needs your trust, courage, and support to follow the vision for growth.

*Perry S. Martin, Ph.D., is a psychotherapist practicing at Temenos and is also program director.*

## NCC

(Continued from page 28)

*The Swedenborgian Church, also known as the New Church, offers the vision of the Holy City, New Jerusalem, an image of our life together in Jesus Christ. We offer an understanding of God's presence with us as one of process, change, recreation and journeying together—constantly leading us forward to renewal of life. In our life together, especially as churches, we are invited to participate in an evolving marriage of love and wisdom, charity and faith, life and doctrine; a heavenly marriage of good and truth in which both the clarity of our doctrine and the ambiguity of our lives together give birth to a faith that is truly alive.*

As always, detailed information on all of these actions are available by writing to: Robert McCluskey, 112 East 35th St., New York, NY 10016. □

## Passages

### Baptisms

**Burns**—Sue Burns was baptized into the Christian faith and confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church December 4, 1994, at the Church of the Open Word in St. Louis, Missouri, the Rev. David Rienstra officiating.

**Gilman**—Marcy Leigh Gilman, daughter of Charles and Karen (Rideout) Gilman, was baptized into the Christian faith November 27, 1994, at the Church of the New Jerusalem in Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Dr. Gardiner Perry officiating.

**Lutz**—Kurtis James Lutz, son of Ginene and Kelly Lutz, grandson of Dewey Moat and great-grandson of Dorothy Mowat, was baptized into the Christian faith November 13, 1994, at the Church of the Holy City in Edmonton, Alberta, the Rev. Henry Korsten officiating.

### Death

**Young**—Larry Young, lifelong member of the Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world December 2, 1994, after a two-week hospitalization for congestive heart failure. He leaves his wife Dorothy, five children and twelve grandchildren. His son, Roger, died three months ago.

Larry held office in the national church, the Fryeburg New Church Assembly, the Boston church, SSR Board of Directors, and served his church in other capacities too numerous to list. He was, at the time of his death, serving as a member of General Council, secretary-treasurer of the Trustees of the Gray Fund, chair of the Board of Trustees of the Boston Society, a trustee of Urbana University, and as a director of the Bostonview Corporation.

A memorial service was conducted at the Boston Swedenborgian Church January 8, the Rev. Steve Ellis officiating.

### Church Family News

**Carol Rienstra** (St. Louis church) sends heartfelt thanks for all our prayers and expressions of love over these past months. She reports feeling fine throughout the trip she and Dave made to England in October and is feeling good now except for some fatigue. Carol says she is tolerating chemotherapy well and has, after much prayerful consideration and research, decided against a bone marrow transplant and is vigorously exploring nutrition and other alternative therapies. She is looking forward to seeing us all at Convention '95 in San Francisco in July.

### Correction:

**Trevor Woofenden**, new chair of the Stamp Program, asks that mail and canceled stamps be sent to P.O. Box 463, Haydenville, MA 01039, rather than the address that was printed in the December *Messenger*.

### Moving on . . . and on

The Rev. John Billings and his wife Sharon have (more or less) completed their move from Cleveland and settled happily into the Kemper Road Center Swedenborgian Church in Cincinnati. Their efforts to move into their new home in Milford, however, have hit some little snags—like not being able to move their furniture in until key renovations are completed. They are still, John reports, living in a torn-up, empty house. "When I call Sharon's name," he says, "it echoes so much that it sounds like the Indian love call."

## NOTICE

The Ohio Association and Urbana University will jointly host the 1996 annual meetings of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches. It is expected that meetings of the Council of Ministers will be held in the Kemper Road church. Convention sessions will begin in Urbana June 26th with Convention Sunday being June 30th.

## Important Church Calendar Dates

January 20–21  
February 4–5  
February 11–12  
February 17–18  
March 23–26  
March 26–28  
April 1–2  
April 2–4  
April 23–24  
April 27–29  
May 5–7  
May 7  
May 18  
May 19–20  
June 4  
July 2–5  
July 5–9  
July 10–11

Temenos Board of Managers—West Chester, Pennsylvania  
Wayfarers Board Executive Committee—Palos Verdes  
Investment Committee—SSR, Newton, Mass.  
Urbana U. Board of Trustees  
PMSU/EDSU/GOSU—Temenos  
Council of Ministers ExCom—Central Office, Newton  
Augmentation Fund Committee—Central Office, Newton  
Committee on Admission to the Ministry—SSR, Newton  
Retirement Committee—Central Office, Newton  
Wayfarers Chapel Spring Board Meeting  
SSR Board of Trustees—Temenos  
Mass Association Annual Meeting  
COMSU—Temenos  
Temenos Board—Temenos  
Wayfarers Chapel Board Executive Committee  
Council of Ministers—San Francisco  
Convention '95—San Francisco State U.  
Council of Ministers ExCom

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.

## Americans believe in power of prayer, says survey

American adults are firm believers in the beneficial effects of prayer and meditation, according to results of a national survey commissioned recently by Unity School of Christianity.

The survey, conducted for Unity School by an independent research firm, polled more than 600 American adults on their attitudes and opinions concerning positive thought, prayer, God, religion, spirituality, and dealing with life's challenges.

Nearly 9 in 10 persons surveyed (88 percent) believe that prayer and meditation can have a positive effect on their emotional health, and 8 in 10 (79 percent) agree that prayer and meditation can positively influence their physical health. In addition, 85 percent of the respondents believe that praying for others has a beneficial effect on the recipient.

"Based on these findings, it's clear that Americans see prayer and meditation as positive influences in their lives," said Jim Rosemergy, executive vice president of Unity School.

Other survey results indicate that as people get older, they are more likely to "strongly agree" that prayer and meditation have a positive effect on their emotional health. Forty-two percent of those from 18 to 39 years old, 53 percent of those from 40 to 54, and 57 percent of those over age 55 share this belief. "Life has a way of teaching us lessons, and perhaps it's not surprising that, as we mature, we discover the power of the spiritual dimension of our experience," said Jim.

Beyond the physical and emotional benefits, Americans also see prayer and meditation as a way to connect with a higher power. Seventy-seven percent of those surveyed agree that "through prayer and meditation, one can have a direct experience of God."

Survey results reveal that the vast majority of Americans believe in God and in each person's ability to express divine potential. While more than half agree that formal religion helps them be touched by God, slightly less than half say they don't feel the need to attend religious services.

When asked what they consider to be "spiritual" for them personally, the majority of respondents noted that enjoying nature, spending time in thought, recognizing the worth of others, praying, reading inspirational material, and participating in religious education are all helpful.

Almost everyone believes that a positive mental attitude can help people deal with life's challenges. However, 80 percent of those asked think that professional counseling or support groups can also be beneficial.

Although meditation, the Bible, and other spiritual writings were mentioned as helpful tools, it was found that prayer is the spiritual aid that Americans are most likely to turn to when they need guidance and support.

Questionnaires were sent randomly to householders in the 48 contiguous states and Washington, D.C. Of the 1500 questionnaires mailed, 604 were returned for a response rate of 40 percent. □

*Condensed from Progress Newsletter, #11, Fall, 1994, Unity Village, MO.*

### APPLICATIONS WANTED

In 1993 the New Church Book Association of Philadelphia turned over its assets to the denomination, to be made available for three purposes: • Establishing or maintaining libraries or bookrooms in/by local Swedenborgian churches or other constituent bodies, said libraries to house books or other material written by, relating to, or having a marked interest in the theology of Emanuel Swedenborg. • Providing Swedenborgian literature for free distribution. • Funding limited advertising programs by said church libraries or bookrooms. Distribution of available monies for the current church year will be decided by FPRSU in April. Applications should be sent to Philadelphia Library Fund, 48 Sargent Street, Newton, MA 02158 by March 25th,

**The Swedenborgian Church  
of North America  
*The Messenger*  
48 Sargent Street  
Newton, MA 02158**

Forwarding Address Correction Requested

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