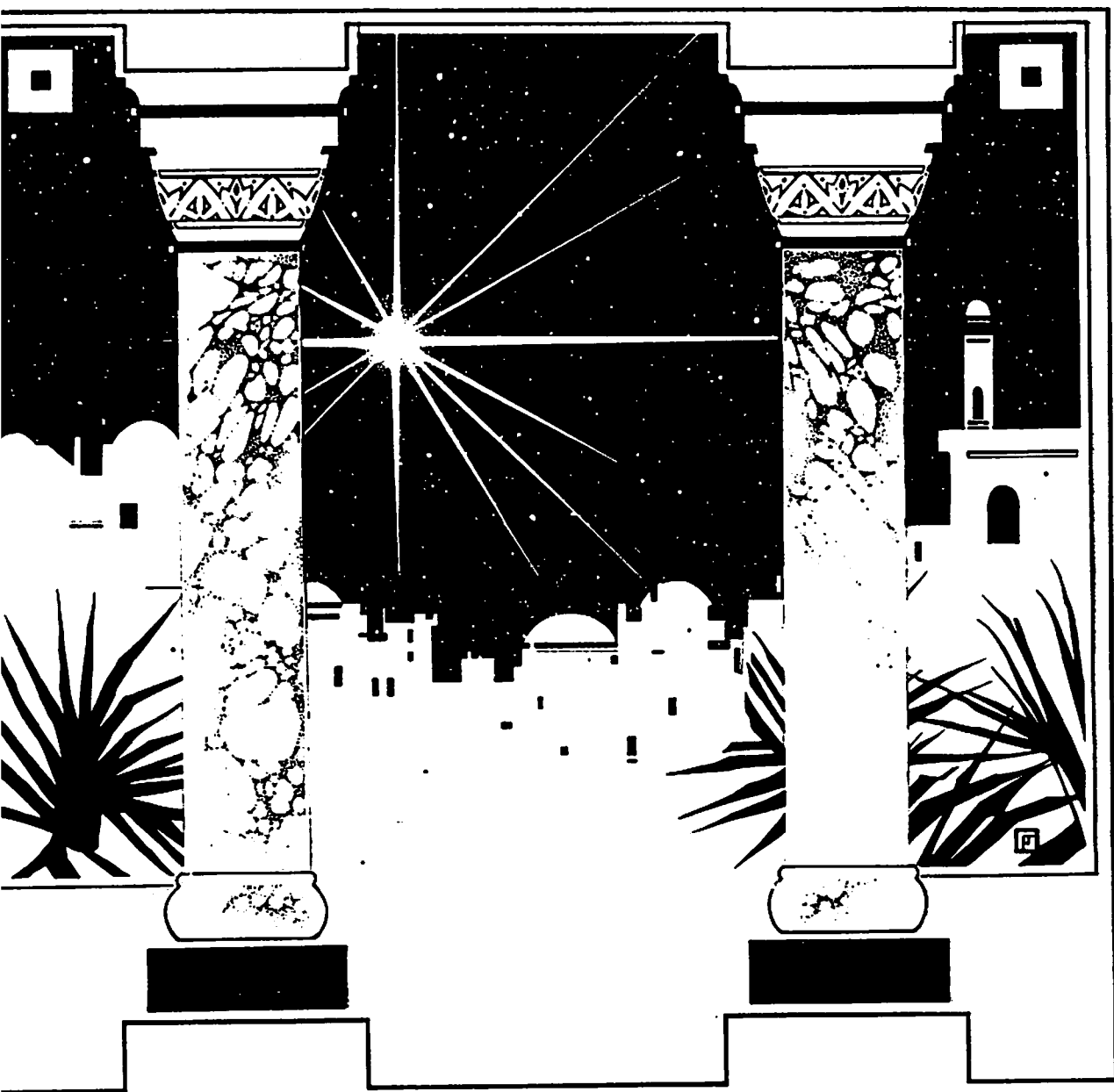


The Messenger

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
GENERAL CONVENTION OF SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCHES

December 1984



Merry Christmas, Swedenborgians!

As Ed Swiger of Pittsburgh reminds us in this issue, Christmas bells ring during the frosty reign of winter, presenting us with the paradoxical experience of high festivities at a time when days are short, nights long, and temperatures low. Whether or not Jesus' natural birth was on or near the 25th of December, Christmas is now a fixture of winter. His warmth all a'glow in the heart of winter, the baby Jesus brightens our spirits at this time each year.

Our rituals and traditions help make our celebration of Jesus' birthday a cheery affair - something to take the nip off winter's grip. Beginning in either Germany or Scandinavia (historians disagree), we now like to bring evergreen trees into our houses and workplaces of work to remind us of the gift of life Christ Jesus came to give us. This life never dies or withers: it is as perennial as the green of our Christmas trees.

We also have built into our national Christmas season the practice of exchanging gifts. It is true what many of the cynics say: half of corporate America makes its bottom line off of Christmas sales. But therein lies the testimony to an inner truth of the baby Jesus. Our giving to each other counts. We might be caught up all too often in the pressure of social custom to give at Christmas time, feeling the "commercial Christmas" is insincere. This, however, is only part of the picture. Nothing better symbolizes the gist of Christ's mission than the spirit of giving, which stands in utter opposition to the sort of self-centeredness that has so often dominated the human drama. To look around at Christmas and to see people everywhere thinking of what little gift they might give to loved ones is a marked contrast to the rest of the year. It, too, warms our winter.

Sending Christmas cards has also crept its way into being a national pastime. Once a year, millions of epistles crisscross the world as we seek to inform each other, inspire each other, send love to each other. We choose representations of marvelous works of art to accompany our messages, or sometimes we devise our own, putting our family pictures on them. (These, too, let me hasten to say, might be works of art!) Again, in the depths of winter, we are moved to reach beyond our comfortable little niches to communicate to each other, and wish each other Godspeed. We touch those who have filled our lives with importance. We are connected again, even if ever so briefly.

For what other reason does the baby Jesus come, except to rescue us from the chilly isolation of the human condition?

THE MESSENGER
December 1984



Vol. 204, No.11

Whole Number 5090

Published monthly, except for the one double issue in July-August, by the Swedenborgian Church (founded 1817, incorporated 1861 as the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America.) Central Office: 48 Sargent St., Newton, MA 02158

Jim Lawrence, Editor

Margret Gustavsen, Typesetter

The opinions of contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or the Department of Communication, or represent the position of the church.

EDITORIAL, BUSINESS & SUBSCRIPTION ADDRESS:

THE MESSENGER

1040 Dautel Road

Creve Coeur, MO 63146

Deadline for material: 1st day of the Month.

Subscription free to members of the Swedenborgian Church; non-members, \$8.00 a year; foreign \$15.00 a year; gift subscriptions from a member, \$5.00; single copies \$1.00.



A Green Christmas

By Edmund Swiger

"I'm dreaming of a green Christmas." This statement conjures up all sorts of ideas for me: there is the person who hopes it won't snow so that it will be easier to get Christmas shopping done, to get back and forth to work or even to get out to visit relatives and friends. Others may think of it as a good idea, if they don't like cold weather and snow. Shopkeepers think of the business profits they may or may not get during the holiday season, hoping their profit picture will be very green. Others may think of it as stupid, silly or an awful idea, if they enjoy skiing or other winter sports. Some may be green with envy of others whose holiday decorations or plans are much more grand than their own. My idea of a green Christmas differs from all of these.

To me, a green Christmas is one full of life. The color green means life. In the spring the hills turn green as grass and trees welcome the coming of spring with new life. We bring green trees and plants into our homes as decorations for Christmas; if we let them, these green things can help to remind us of the new life this season is supposed to bring. Such green might turn our thoughts to developing greener relationships with other people.

There appears to be a reason for having Christmas at this time of year. No definite historical evidence exists indicating that Christ was born in the winter. The reasons the early Church put Christmas at this time of year may have been based on some knowledge which has since been lost. Nevertheless, it is easy to see that the holiday season brightens up what is otherwise the most dreary time of the year with its short hours of daylight and cloudy inclement weather.

When the storm clouds clear and the light of the sun hits the snow, the light gives us a promise that spring will follow with the springing forth of green leaves and grass. We should thus let the light of understanding banish any storm clouds of depression and despair and lead to greener relationships of love between human beings on this earth.

Mr. Swiger resides in Pittsburgh, and is a member of the Pittsburgh New Church Society.



JASPIS KOLONIE and the NEW CHURCH in Lenox Township, Iowa County, Iowa

By Theodore J. LeVan

German pioneers formed the Jasper Colony in August, 1851 on 40 acres of land, just a 15 minute drive north of the Amana Colonies. It was rich, valuable land—a “paradise on earth,” with plenty of clean, flowing water. It cost them \$60 (\$1.50/acre).

They chose the name “Jasper Colony” because they were all readers of Emanuel Swedenborg, a theologian of the mid 1700s who put special emphasis on the New Jerusalem described in chapters 21 and 22 of the Book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible. John, the beloved disciple, is having a vision; an angel says to him:

“Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a *jasper*, clear as crystal.”(NIV)

When we are trying to understand something, at first we find things confusing—obscure—and we are likely to say “that is as clear as mud!” But when we are finally able to fit things together so that they make sense, then we say “now that is as clear as crystal.” And this is exactly the meaning of this passage of scripture: those who are part of the New Jerusalem are those who have a clear understanding of the Holy Scriptures. (Swedenborg takes 30 volumes of theological writings to make it clear.) More was required than just a clear understanding, however. Living a life of love to the Lord and love to the neighbor is equally necessary.

Twenty families of German pioneers decided that they could best live this life of love if they were to stay together and form their own colony. The second article of their constitution states:

On this place there shall be in time immemorial but one religion—that of the New Jerusalem Church set forth according to the tenets of God’s revelation and made known to the world by His servant Emanuel Swedenborg. Only those can be accepted into the Parish who will submit to the confession of this way of life. A deviation from this holy precept shall never occur; for this the elders of the Parish, who at all times are to display love and wisdom are responsible.

They had come from Westfalen, Germany, sailing from the port of Bremerhaven in northern Germany, to the port of New Orleans, Louisiana. It was about a three month passage. The document granting these people permission to leave Germany is dated September 24, 1846.

They felt moved to become pioneers of the New World, not only for religious considerations, but for economic considerations as well. Farmers in Germany eked out a living by making cloth in the off-season, but by 1832 the English were making cloth by using water power, gears, shafts and leather belts to power their spinning wheels and looms. This new technology was devastating the home-spun fabric market.

The "heuerling," or "hired hand" contracted with the farm owner—or "kolon"—to plant and harvest the crop. This was a task that required only 60 to 90 days a year. The rest of the time he worked for other farmers or made linen cloth. Due to the limited planting and harvesting seasons, his time working for other farmers was limited, and he was vulnerable to these new developments in cloth-making.

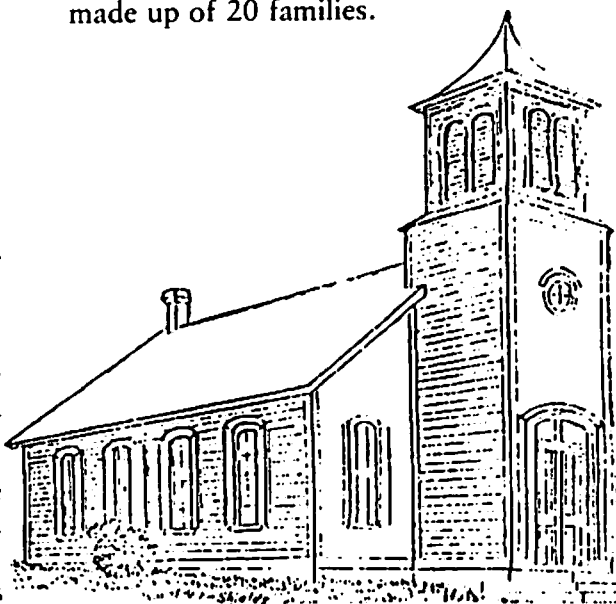
The home-spinning industry could not compete and thousands of German farmers set their hopes on the "New World." One Swedenborgian contingent landed in New York City and formed a church group in Orange, New Jersey. Another group made their way to Manchester, New Hampshire. Repeated vandalism to their church building forced them to sell their church property just five years ago. For their final worship service, Dr. Friedemann Horn, then President of the Swedenborg School of Religion, preached in High German. After the service I heard several of the descendents of the original group say that they didn't understand a word of that "foreign language." Fortunately, Dr. Horn had translated into English as he spoke.

But the real pioneers were the Swedenborgians who sailed to New Orleans and then took the steamboat up the Mississippi to the bustling town of St. Louis. It was there, at a meeting in the cobbler shop of H.H. Diehoner that they formed themselves into a New Church Society in the winter of 1850. Mr. Diehoner, serving as lay leader of the group, urged that they leave St. Louis for the rich farmland of Iowa; an outbreak of cholera convinced them to leave. One family of seven lost five members in two days. In April of 1851 a group of ten families packed up their belongings, said goodbye to their friends who were still alive and took the boat up

the Mississippi to Muscatine, Iowa. From there they traveled by oxcart to Iowa City. They took temporary quarters there while one member of their group, J.F. Schlueter, rented a horse and went on ahead to survey the land before staking out a claim.

Above Homestead he found the Iowa River too swollen with rain to be able to cross on horse-back. So he tied the horse to a tree, bundled up his clothes on top of his head and swam across the river. Twelve miles beyond the river he found the ideal spot—timber for buildings and fuel, fields for crops and plentiful water feeding the Price and Willow Creeks. He walked back to the Iowa River and discovered that his horse had been stolen, requiring a further walk to Iowa City. For the day he had hiked more than 36 miles and paid the purchase price of a horse he had hardly gotten acquainted with. But he had found the ideal spot.

The group bought the 40 acres and proceeded to build a 40-foot log community house with beds that folded up to the wall to provide the maximum amount of living space. They also built two-room cabins for the married couples. Word was sent to the folks left behind in St. Louis that all was going splendidly and in August those folks arrived and helped with the fall planting. They also arrived with a deed for 40 acres more. The little group was spreading out. They now numbered about 100 people made up of 20 families.



The Lenox Township Church

That first winter they subsisted on frozen turnips and the wild game they could catch. This consisted mainly of rabbit, squirrel and deer.

Besides farmers and hunters, they were blessed to have in their number a weaver, a carpenter and cabinet maker, two shoemakers and Mr. Groth the blacksmith.

Mr. Groth was not a happy man. After listening to him complain for almost two years about how much harder he had to work than did the farmers in the commune, the group decided to return to the capitalistic form of government that they had known in Germany and so the property was divided up. This was in the spring of 1853—one year before the Amana Colonies were settled just to the south.

The Jasper Colony continued to worship together, meeting in the Community House, in homes and later in the Excelsior Public School which they helped build in 1859. Sometime in those first eight years, someone must have built a sawmill—perhaps in Amana—for the Excelsior School was not built of logs like the other buildings, but of sawn lumber.

Indians would sometimes camp on a hill nearby, but there is no indication that the Jasper Colony had any trouble with them. Art Uthoff, Sr., says that when his father was a boy—about 1860—several Indian braves, decked out with paint, came into his cabin. They just walked right in and sat down. His mother offered them some apples and they each took one. That relieved the tension, for the acceptance of a gift was a sign of friendship. The Indian braves just grunted and left.

In 1863 an ordained Swedenborgian minister came out to the Jasper Colony to serve them. The following year, as the Lenox Township Society, they were accepted as a member of the Illinois Association of the New Jerusalem and recorded as "the first German Parish of the New Jerusalem in Lenox," according to the form of The General Convention of The New Jerusalem in the United States. I am now serving as president of the Illinois Association and we have accepted an invitation from the Lenox Township Society to have our Association meeting at the site of the the Jasper Colony two years hence.

Have any of you tried, lately, to get permission to put up a building? The planning, the red tape, the questionnaires—the paperwork is appalling! Listen to what this little group of pioneers was able to do: in May 1880, the building committee of the Lenox Society (consisting of three men) requested to ascertain the cost of erecting a building 28' X 40'. Plans were made at the May 23rd meeting 1880. Dedicatory services were to be on December 5th, but since Rev. Woods couldn't be present on that date, it was postponed to December 12, 1880.

Imagine that! Only six months from the time it was suggested that they look into the cost of building the church until it was completed and dedicated. Of course, everyone pitched in to help—even the eight-year-old boy from across the street, who carried bricks for the chimney.

In the sanctuary, high above the tabernacle containing the Bible, is the chancel arch. And printed on the arch are the words: "Ich und der Vater sind Eins."—"I and the Father are One." It is one of the strongest doctrinal points that Swedenborgians make: we are not worshipping three Gods, but one: for Christ is the human manifestation of God and the Holy Spirit is God's Spirit which is with us for guidance, comfort and strength. These are three aspects of one God: my parents look upon me as "son." My wife looked upon me as "husband," and my children look upon me as "father." This does not make me three persons, even though they each see me very differently—it only demonstrates three aspects of my personality. So too with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—these are three aspects—persona, if you will, of one God. Swedenborg emphasized this quite strongly, for he felt that people had become quite confused about it and in an effort to worship three gods, the people had wound up worshipping none.

Rev. LeVan ministers to the LaPorte, Indiana New Church, and as President of the Illinois Association makes occasional visits to the Lenox Township New Church, which still gathers for worship at least once a year.

THOUGHTS ON THE INCARNATION

By Rosalie Griesse

Incarnation. There is something awesome about looking it in the face. We can deal with the easy things like nerve gas, cancer, Martin Luther's 500th, the Beirut Airport, child abuse, nuclear missiles, potholes in New York, Karl Marx's 100th, invasions in Grenada, earthquakes, unemployment and stress. But incarnation? That's hard. It just lies there; mysterious, unsettling, penetrating the world's din by its silence. It doesn't go away. It is a fact to be dealt with and we don't know how. So we look the other way and concentrate very hard on a crowded inn with its adjacent manger. Shepherds in a field. Three wise men. A baby in swaddling clothes. We can even handle angels in a starry sky without losing our composure. Then, with hurried relief, we cover it all up with hit tunes, presents, egg nog punch, parties and handfuls of tinsel. The "season" grinds on, awash in our poignant, nostalgic trappings. The incarnation is carefully wrapped in tissue paper with a golden bow and left, still wrapped, under the tree.

At the end of it all, when the tree ornaments are packed away, the candles burned down, and the presents almost forgotten, our sadness reminds us that we have circumvented the main event again. It is as if we had hoped that all the hype would somehow explain away this gift from God that is so disquieting, so inexplicable, so full of love that we simply cannot handle it.

But who said we had to handle it? God doesn't ask us to handle it. Not even to face it. Certainly not to understand it. It is a mystery. He merely asks us to accept it. That's all. Acceptance. Just accept the gift. And then, watch out! Be prepared! Miracles will happen!

Isolated, lonely Marines in a war-torn, devastated airport will know they are not alone. Curfewed Namibians will know they are truly free. Husbands and wives at war with each other will learn the power of forgiveness. Palestinians and Jews alike will realize that each is looking for the same peace and justice as the other. And behind that invisible boundary which divides mankind into East and West and seems to terrorize the world, men and women will reach out to one another with a cup of cold water, to show their love.

Incarnation. Awesome? Unsettling? Frightening? Mysterious? All of the above. But what a gift!

Rosalie Griesse resides in Newton, Mass.

The New Jerusalem: Image of a Healing Center

By David Garrett

From earliest times, the temple or sacred precinct has been the dwelling place of the god. Its modern equivalent is the church and synagogue. To the sacred precinct came those who sought healing and oracles; to give thanks, pay homage and offer sacrifice. It is said that in the new Jerusalem there is no temple, "for its temple is the Lord God" (Revelation 21:22). It would appear there is no sacred precinct in the new Jerusalem in the usual sense. On more careful examination, we see it is the holy city itself which is the "dwelling of God." The whole city is a sacred precinct.

The new Jerusalem is described as having four walls, twelve gates and a street of gold. It has the form of a mandala, an ancient symbolic representation of wholeness found in both the East and West. The people of Tibet and Mongolia have believed in a similar city-kingdom, which they call Shambhala. There in a paradisaal state a line of enlightened kings guards the highest Buddhist teachings until the time when all spiritual values will be lost to the outside world. Then a divine king will emerge to defeat evil and establish a golden age. In the meantime, those who seek enlightenment must take an arduous journey across deserts and mountains to find this hidden repository of wisdom.

The new Jerusalem has been a shining image for Christians down through the ages

and especially for Swedenborgians during the previous 200 years. It is an ideal to which people look and gain inspiration for daily living. Is it possible to bring it closer? Can we enter it, explore it and share in its treasure? Though it is described as solely for the "elect," can that seemingly exalted rank be freed of its "Calvinist" constraints to be widened to include every person who seeks wholeness with passion and integrity?

In ancient Greece, there were sacred precincts of the god Asklepios. He was in many ways like the later Christ. Asklepios was a god of healing, of compassion for the psychic and somatic ills that are part of being human. Today we might call these wounds the perplexities, hurts, inner conflicts and hunger of the soul.

The way to healing in the Asklepiian healing centers is instructive for seeing the image of the new Jerusalem as a healing precinct. No one came to the Asklepieia who had not been summoned—awakened to the possibility of and desirous of the reality of transformation. Presumably, the call came from the god in a dream, a vision, a life crisis, and illness or a more than accidental hearing about the healing centers. The summons was inner verification of the passion for healing. Those who were accepted also had to be in good standing in the community; that is, they had to have proven themselves worthy in a personal and social

sense. This indicated their integrity of purpose.

The Asklepan healing was effected by an encounter with the god. It was not a coping/management treatment of the problem. There were no self-help, how-to manuals; no group therapy or one-to-one counseling in the usual sense. Though human agents assisted the treatment, their part was to take initiates through the healing mysteries by way of preparatory rituals and the final ritual in which the god appeared. It was the encounter with the god that brought the actual healing. Typically, this came in a dream or vision, a psychic religious experience. Later, directors of the sacred precinct helped the initiate understand and assimilate the inner event. This suggests an effort to gain some objectivity from the subjective experience and prepare the person for return to the world.

In view of current interest in spiritual growth centers, it is interesting to cite a few more facts about the Asklepia. They were situated away from urban areas in the country. Containment and introversion were vitally important. Illness, psychic or somatic, was treated with reverence as a divine affliction. Its purpose was seen to be to turn people to the god, to let something larger than the human ego do the healing,

thy. He was accompanied by feminine companions, his wife and daughters, a serpent and dog who, with the god, effected the healings. A final, provocative fact is that Asklepios was more interested in wholeness than cures. A person's affliction might not be cured: it might be necessary to retain as a lifetime catalyst for personal transformation. Acceptance of this was often the healing.

The new Jerusalem has within it the tree of life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. The Spirit and the Bride of it say "Come," reminiscent of the Asklepan summons. It is also said of the new Jerusalem precinct, "Let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires take the water of life without price," stressing there must be a felt need. The healing intent of the new Jerusalem precinct is clear. Mixed in with the invitation to healing is much apocalyptic and judgmental material that seems to have an opposite intent.

Has this prevented the new Jerusalem image from coming closer to actual life? Has it kept the image an ideal rather than a reality? Must we separate the image from its injurious constraints? Is the apocalyptic strain in the book of Revelation and in other portions of the New Testament consistent with the picture of God the healer

The new Jerusalem is described as having four walls, twelve gates and a street of gold. It has the form of a mandala, an ancient symbolic representation of wholeness found in both the East and the West.

though with the ego's active participation. Incubation was a dominant feature: the process of preparing, waiting, letting go, letting the healing come in its own way and time. The rituals had the effect of shifting a person's preoccupation with his or her ills (egocentric fixation) to getting help and cooperating with a healing process. Contact with Mother Earth was a central element. The precinct's site in the country, running streams in the precinct, the use of water and honey cakes in rituals, lying on the ground to receive the healing dream were vital to the therapy. Asklepios himself was divine and human, spiritual and ear-

throughout the Old and New Testaments? Is the apocalyptic note from an alien source (e.g. millennialist Jewish and early Christian)?

Other healing mysteries of ancient Greece and other cultures not gone into here may help reenvision the new Jerusalem as a healing symbol—a realization and not merely a hope.

Rev. David Garrett has had pastorates in Swedenborgian Churches in St. Louis, Wilmington, Delaware and El Cerrito, California. He is currently a Jungian therapist in Berkeley, California.

TAKING OVER

By Gwynne Dresser Mack

Sam and Susan were settling down for the first night in their very own home which, on their fourth wedding anniversary, they had just moved into. They felt immensely fortunate to have found this charming colonial house at a low, low price - in a quiet rural town surrounded by meadows and forests. No one had lived on this property for a long time, and there was work to be done: painting, repairs, clearing away thick growth of grass and bushes. But Susan and Sam were young and strong and delighted to have found such a lovely place.

That night Susan awoke suddenly. The bed was shaking. It stopped, began again, then became more vigorous. Sam sat up saying: "What are you doing?" Susan was frightened, but Sam said: "Oh, I know what it is. A man at the bank in town asked the clerk about the earthquake-fault that runs near here."

The shaking occurred again the next night, and lasted longer. On the third night a blanket slid off the bed. At the grocery store in the morning the couple asked if earthquakes happened often, and were told there had been none for years. When Susan described the shaking of the bed, the store clerk replied: "Didn't you know? That's a haunted house! We all wondered why you bought it."

Haunted houses are the most spectacular in the varied assortment of psychic phenomena. The strangest aspect of hauntings is that people are astonished by them, puzzled or afraid, without bothering to learn their basic explanation. Those who never witnessed any think that those who do are mentally ill. Someone has wisely said: "We never fully understand what we

ourselves have not experienced."

Many who have been in haunted houses do not understand them, yet firmly know that they exist. Much of the phenomena is gentle and harmless: footsteps on the stairs, doors opening or shutting, curtains blowing where there is no breeze, lights going on and off, pictures falling from the walls, things disappearing and reappearing. But big commotions can be terrifying: thumpings and voices, moans and groans or a child crying, sudden wind blowing through or extreme coldness in a room, destruction of objects in the house. When the happenings are quiet, the residents may get used to the phenomena and not bother to move away. One family occasionally saw a shadowy presence, and assumed it was the lady who had spent her life and died in this house - and often was seen thereafter walking in her beloved garden. The family became fond of her. Yet the average person leaves a haunted house as quickly as possible. And so did Sam and Susan.

Anyone involved with such occurrences has to believe finally that they are carried on by human beings. But why, and how?

The explanation requires knowledge in depth of what human beings actually are. Very few people think about the meaning of human individuality and its abilities. When we look at people we do not think of them as what we are seeing: hands and feet, fingers and ears, hair and teeth, but as an invisible presence with which we communicate and find distinct from all other physical combinations coming and going around us. What we connect with is a *soul*, an innermost-controlling center of the temporary external machinery which is all we

can see. Human beings are these souls, created by God to develop into His "image and likeness." Thus they can become His affinitive and everlasting family by harmonizing their will and understanding with the Divine Love and Wisdom which make a family - and Heaven.

Souls are not robots, programmed to behave thus and so, but gifted with freedom of will to make their own decisions and build their own habits. Many human beings teach themselves to use physical existence for maturing into truly spiritual persons; but there are multitudes who never do this. Instead, they consider their bodies to be themselves, so that bodily concerns become their lives.

Humans are intended to develop from the physical to the spiritual plane, as children do from play to study. Using external experience for understanding internal reality relates emotion to thought. When this inner activity becomes controlled and applied to communication with and empathy for people beyond one's self,

ignorance of exactly what a "right" is, and in relation to life and death there is great lack of comprehension as to their true significance. There is no sense in talking about such ideas unless we understand the words we are using. Death is still generally felt to be a tragic final ending of a person.

Old automobiles die when their equipment breaks down, sometimes on a road. What happens then? The driver gets out of the car, sends for someone to haul it away and continues with his plans. This is exactly what happens when a human body dies: it ceases to function: then the soul within separates from the covering of flesh and bones and continues existence. There is no change in appearance, but it is now visible only at the spiritual level (except in instances of psychic phenomena). Swedenborg tells us that the external body is created in the same form as the soul within. If the soul knows where it is going and what it wants to do, the spiritual level is fully entered; and the soul (also called "a spirit"), the same person as before, can now

Humans are intended to develop from the physical to the spiritual plane, as children do from play to study. Using external experience for understanding internal reality relates emotion to thought. When this inner activity becomes controlled and applied to communication with and empathy for people beyond one's self, one is functioning at the spiritual level.

one is functioning at the spiritual level. This area, Swedenborg explains, surrounds us all the time—filled with souls busy with their established interests. Usually those on the physical plane are not aware of them, due to differences in vibration and sensitivity—like babies having no perception of the human community beyond the immediate family and home.

Modern medical procedures, having learned in various ways to prolong physical functioning do not help people to get ready for continuing life at the higher level. Controversy over "the right to die" is far more relevant than is that of the misunderstood "right to live." Arguments about "rights" too often are ignited by emotional ig-

start to move onward into greater understanding and usefulness.

Those who know nothing except that death is "the end," find themselves still alive, but lost. They must somehow return home; they must find their usual companions.

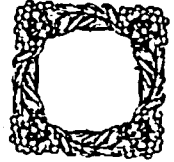
Since in the spiritual world thought and desire can be immediately realized, the lost humans do find themselves back in their former environment with their families and friends. But those dear people completely ignore them! Frustrated, a spirit thus snubbed may gradually drift away or will just stay there and devote energy to repeated efforts for attracting attention.

Continued on page 279

Anticipating Christmas



By Paul Martin Grumman



What is Christmas to us? How do we feel about its coming? Most of us probably feel excitement, expectation and anticipation; excited about getting together with friends and family; expecting to get specific presents; anticipating the joyful surprise of those we love when they open certain gifts.

What was the first Christmas like for those waiting for the Messiah's birth? They were probably also full of excitement, expectation and anticipation; excited that their savior was finally coming; expecting to be freed from bondage; anticipating a political or military leader to overthrow the Romans and lead them to freedom.

I do think it's important to look forward to Christmas; to anticipate what we would like to have happen; to expect to have a good day; to be excited about giving and receiving; sharing gifts, food and love with our friends and family.

But I also think there is a danger to all this expectation. Most of those looking forward to the Messiah's coming thought they knew what to expect from Jesus. Then, when Jesus was more interested in freeing their minds than overthrowing the Romans, more interested in raising their consciousness than in raising an army and more interested in conquering one's own hate, fear and selfishness than he was in conquering enemies, many felt betrayed, disappointed, let down and angry at Jesus.

Jesus did not betray them. They were betrayed by their own expectations, which closed their minds to the reality of the situation, cutting them off from the possibilities of the moment. They were so sure that they knew what to expect from Jesus, or at least what they wanted from him, that they totally missed what He did offer them.

It can be the same way with us if we become too attached to expecting specific things at Christmas. We can be angry if we don't receive the present we expected. We can be hurt if someone doesn't seem to appreciate our gift as much as we anticipated. We are naturally disappointed if a family member doesn't make it home for Christmas, the pie burns or a new toy breaks. We can let any of these things, that is, anything that wasn't in *our* plan for Christmas, ruin the whole holiday for us. Then, we too totally miss what does happen. We can keep ourselves from experiencing the love which the gifts represent and the joy of sharing this special time together if we focus on what went wrong.

It's one thing to plan for the future, but quite another to be unable to abandon ourselves to the present when the time comes. We eagerly look forward to the Christmas season as a time for love and joy, so let's not miss it. Let us open ourselves to experiencing the beauty all around us; open ourselves to appreciating the gifts that we do receive and recognizing the love which motivated them; open ourselves to the presence of friends and family, some of whom we don't see nearly enough, others whom we see daily but have come to take for granted. Let us open ourselves to the reality of God's day, God's season, God's coming and God's presence with us; joyfully and gratefully experiencing and accepting what it has to offer us.

Rev. Grumman ministers to the Seattle Society and to other groups in the Northwest.

NEW SWEDENBORGIAN MAGAZINE

The Swedenborgian tradition in this country and abroad contains a real treasure trove of fascinating biographical materials, architectural and educational histories, drawings, photographs, personal correspondence and other written materials. These often vividly reflect the activities and interests of families and groups influential throughout several generations and of other notable Swedenborgians with all sorts of interesting connections to their own times and ours.

Many Swedenborgians in the various New-Church sects have been and are today, scholars, artists, writers and teachers. Energized at least in part by their faith, these people have not only helped to mold, build and maintain Swedenborgian organizations and institutions, because of their insights and energies, they have also actively helped to shape the mainstream of 19th and 20th century arts and letters.

Grand traces of this tradition have found their way into our various archives—the libraries at Bryn Athyn, Urbana University, the Swedenborg School of Religion, various bookrooms, Society members' attics, the files of the Swedenborg Foundation and so on. By and large, however, this rich Swedenborgian lode of research material is virtually out of reach and publicly unavailable. Often this is because the materials are neither particularly sectarian nor theological and therefore inappropriate for *New Church Life*, *The Messenger*, *Studia Swedenborgiana* or the British journals; or it is because the materials are graphic rather than verbal.

The Swedenborgian archives also contain a variety of excellent philosophical, theological and critical works not out of print, but which, with translation or summary, would be relevant and useful to the contemporary scholar.

In 1985, the trustees of the Swedenborg Foundation will begin publication of *Chrysalis*, their own scholarly, well-illustrated journal. *Chrysalis* will provide a

visible, tangible, contemporary, non-sectarian and permanent demonstration of the reasons for the existence of the Foundation, of what it stands for and of the richness of the Swedenborgian tradition. As envisioned by the trustees, *Chrysalis* will be a vehicle for: (1) publishing sound Swedenborgian material not published to date; (2) republishing good material from the past, sometimes in new translations, sometimes in summary with citation to the original. But, more than this, *Chrysalis* will also include newly researched and freshly-written feature articles on timeless and contemporary topics of interest to Swedenborgians and non-Swedenborgians.

The new magazine is seen by the Foundation as containing many graphics and photographs, as "...lively, rich, appealing and intellectually responsible..." "A magazine with beautiful imagery, appropriate for the coffee table, with a cover that invites you in..." "A journal that would present Swedenborgian thought as alive and colorful, not merely coherent and logical."

Chrysalis will give Swedenborgians of all persuasions a fresh opportunity to reexamine their heritage. At the same time it will aid other readers with an explanation of Swedenborgian thought in everyday terms. Many of these non-Swedenborgians will be people who respond to the Swedenborg Foundation films, so that *Chrysalis* is intended to be a journal of ideas presented to communicate both intellectually and emotionally with thoughtful people everywhere who are concerned about the realm of the spirit.

If you are interested in receiving the Foundation's new magazine, write to Darrell Ruhl, Executive Director, at 139 East 23rd St., New York, NY 10010 or wait for the next issue of *The Messenger*, which will tell you how you can obtain *Chrysalis* and in what month actual publication will begin.

Women Communicating

Edited by Annella Smith and Bertha Berran

*If every day were Christmas,
How different life would be,
If not one day but all the year
Were ruled by charity.*

*Had we the faith in miracles
A child has Christmas morn.
Each day would be love's manger
And Christ would be reborn.*

*In us again to change and heal
Our outworn wars and ways—
Had we a child's or shepherd's gift
For wonderment and praise!*

*Yet every day is Christmas
When we have learned to live
By love's law, learned not how to get
But only how to give.*

*And like a child can wonder
And like a child can pray,
But have the grown-up wisdom
To give ourselves away.*

James Dillet Freeman



THINK ON THESE THINGS

"Except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 18:3

CHERISH CHRISTMAS

Perhaps a sad and rude awakening between being a child and a "grown-up" is that there is never enough time left to wait and look forward to the holidays. "Grown-ups" are too busy! Think back to your childhood; remember the great anticipation; the wonder of "what's in the packages;" the countdown of the days and hours; the thrill of "looking forward" is lost to the fear of "will there be enough time?"

Why do we get caught up in so many other "things" that we miss out on the greater part? Can't we slow down enough to make *real* memories? Memories as lasting and lovely as lace; patiently put together with pure and holy thoughts; woven with wonder and waiting to whisper back to us like the wind?

Let's make moments memorable this year. Let's cherish Christmas like a child; like a fine, fragile piece of china. Let's sort through our priorities; sift through the artificial; plan our time well; think things through; be receptive and kind—quiet and ordered; ready to receive—ready to wait and wonder. For

*Silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given,
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in.*

Phillips Brooks
O Little Town of Bethlehem



COMMENTARY BY HARRY REASONER

Presented on the ABC Evening News on December 23, 1971

On the previous Christmastides I have talked about the peculiar nature of Christmas; for Christmas, excuse me if you've heard it before, is such a unique idea that most non-Christians accept it and I think sometimes envy it. If Christmas is the anniversary of the appearance of the Lord of the Universe in the form of a helpless baby, it's quite a day. It's a startling idea, and the theologians, who sometimes love logic more than they love God, find it uncomfortable. But, if God did it, he had a tremendous insight. People are afraid of God and his very bright light. But everyone has seen babies and almost everyone likes them—so if God wanted to be loved as well as feared, he moved correctly here. And if he wanted to know people as well as rule them he moved correctly, because a baby, growing up, learns all there is to know about people. If God wanted to be intimately a part of humanity, he moved correctly—for the experience of birth and familyhood is our most intimate and precious experience.

So it comes beyond logic. It is what a bishop I used to know called a kind of "divine insanity." It is either all falsehood or it is the truest thing in the world. It is the story of the great innocence of God, the baby, God in the power of humanity and it is such a dramatic shot toward the heart that if it is not true, for Christians nothing is true.

So even if you have not got your shopping all done and you are swamped with the commercialism and the frenzy, be at peace; and even if you are the deacon having to arrange the extra seating for all the Christmas-Christians that you won't see again until Easter, be at peace. The story stands.

It is all right that so many Christians are touched only once a year, by this incomparable story; because, some final quiet Christmas morning, the touch will *take*.

*Ring out, wild bells, to the wide sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light;
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.*

*Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.*



Tennyson



SWEDENBORGIAN WELLNESS

Dorothy Travers-Davies

In our culture we propagate myths and beliefs that are not predicated on truth. They are deep-seated beliefs that are passed down from generation to generation and our common patterns of speech on the every day level reflect these opinions. Have you ever caught a cold, for example? Do you also "catch" cancer? or arthritis? or a heart attack? Are you subject to the "victim psychoses?" Or are you an insightful Swedenborgian who realizes that the body reacts to those attitudes of the spirit and mind before disease is manifested in the physical?

Just this week three articles crossed my path illustrating that emotions and attitudes influence not only the onset of disease, but the course of disease. One article, headlined "Experts doubt cancer will ever be eradicated," said that cancer-causing genes and the processes that can make them dangerous appear so important in normal life that the disease will always be with us. Cancer seems to stem from mutations in special genes and "there's no way we're going to abolish mutations," said a spokesman for the Sloan-Kettering Center in New York City.

The holistic model, then, is based on 1) nutrition and what enters the body in air, water and food; on 2) the activity of the body and the care and relationship we have with it; on 3) attitudes and emotions with which we handle our everyday affairs; and on 4) our creative spiritual nature with a developing inner knowing that facilitates a steady regeneration process in our lives.

We are in the middle of a period of spiritual revolution and nowhere is this more evident than in the medical field today. Recent studies show that people are avoiding doctors, their tests and their prescriptions. Doctors are much concerned about this trend. They are confused by it and don't understand it. Being trained in another direction they find it hard to accept that, even in crisis intervention, other forms such as homeopathy and herbs are gaining ground.

For the last 50 years I have been listening to the experts say that there is a cure for cancer just around the corner. What is going on? About two dozen cancer genes have been found already and some researchers say that they will uncover only a few more, while yet others say that whole classes of these genes have eluded them. Can I place my trust in this current medical model? Or, more importantly, can I believe that my reality can be controlled by something or somebody outside of myself?

Consider the study Caroline B. Thomas, M. D., professor emeritus, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, started in 1946. She gave medical students a number of psychological tests and has been following up ever since to see what kinds of illnesses they get. In the cancer group, 30% described themselves "neither admiring nor comfortable" with their fathers or mothers. This was five times the rate of the healthy group.

Another study of 2,000 men at the Western Electric plant in Chicago, conducted by Richard B. Shekelle, Ph.D., professor of epidemiology, U. of Texas School of Public Health, Houston, found that men who scored highest on depression went on to have more than twice the rate of cancer deaths.

Many studies have shown that depression is associated with a weakened immune response. Bernard Linn and Margaret Linn, the former a professor of surgery and the latter a professor of psychiatry, U. of Miami, found that people who had experienced a recent death or severe illness of a family member had white blood cells in the body's "cancer surveillance system" that weren't working efficiently.

Feeling hopeless and helpless under stress and thinking you are responsible for the crisis seems to increase the chances of developing cancer, writes Lawrence LeShan, Ph.D., in *You Can Fight for Your Life*. LeShan contends that the significant common denominator among the majority of cancer victims is their loss of a major outlet for creative energy. He reminds people of the purpose in life.

This is the fourth concept of the holistic approach to health. It is spiritual because it asks of us an answer to the question of usage. Do we as Swedenborgians have some teachings that help us relate to ourselves and our place in this world and the next?

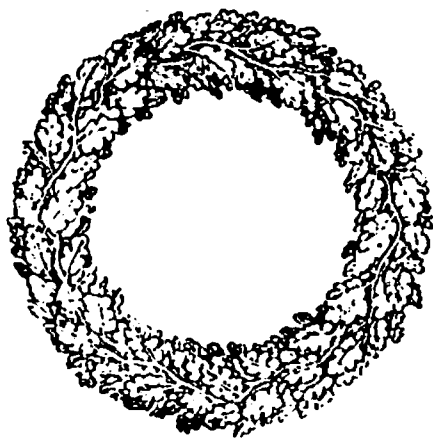
The holistic model, then, is based on nutrition and what enters the body in air, water and food, on (2) the activity of the body and the care and relationship we have with it, on (3) attitudes and emotions with which we handle our everyday affairs, and on (4) our creative spiritual nature with a

developing inner knowing that facilitates a constant regeneration process throughout our lives.

Dr. Timothy Johnson, in an article headed "Is personality a risk factor?" and published early in October, addressed the question of the Type-A personality. Johnson wrote, "Many physicians and scientists have an intuitive feeling that some connection exists between personality or behavior patterns and the risk of heart disease. Indeed more and more research appears in the medical literature each year to support this instinct."

An August article from the New England Journal of Medicine says that socially-isolated individuals who have a high degree of stress show a marked increased risk of recurrent heart attacks.

Swedenborg wrote his treatise on "Tremulations" more than 260 years ago. It is part of the spiritual revolution of today and it relates to the patterns of thought in each one of us every day.



NOTICE

The accused murderer of Paul Giunta, who was slain in his Back Bay apartment in Boston just before his senior year at the Swedenborg School of Religion, was sentenced to two life terms in a Suffolk Superior Court ruling on October 15, 1984. The jury deliberated for three hours before finding Daniel R. Roberts guilty of first-degree murder and armed robbery in the death of Paul Giunta three years ago.

In Memoriam

Rev. Andre Diaconoff

By David P. Johnson

Shortly after the Rev. Andre Diaconoff died, President Randall Laakko asked me if I would write a memorial for Andre. I was somewhat reluctant because I did not know much of his historical background. On the other hand, I considered it an honor to be asked, for Andre had become a dear friend.

Born in Russia to a Russian father and Swedish mother, the family moved first to France, I am told, and later to Switzerland. Though I do not know where or when he first became acquainted with Swedenborg, he studied at a Swiss gymnasium in Lausanne. There he became acquainted with the Regamey brothers and perhaps it was through them that he became acquainted with the work of Swedenborg, in which he became interested enough to attend and graduate from the New Church Theological School in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

To the best of my knowledge, after ordination Andre served one of our churches in Chicago, the Contoocook, N.H. church and from there sailed by ship to Los Angeles where he served, I believe, his longest pastorate. He was pastor of the St. Paul Church where he was instrumental in establishing a program for community young people later taken over by the city. Subsequently he served short terms and part time in Portland, Riverside and perhaps others I do not have knowledge of.

Andre Diaconoff's knowledge of Swedenborg was thorough. He had a prodigious memory and could share extensively his knowledge and thought about our Church's teachings. His interests were widespread and he could talk with authority on many subjects. It seemed strange that with his scholarship he did not become one of our leading writers.

Personally this seems to me a special loss to us, for Andre's personal warmth and caring could have meant much in bringing life to the doctrines of the church. It was the warm, personal Andre I knew best. He enjoyed good humor and between us we shared some of that special, crazy humor that seems to grow with warm friendships. He enjoyed and treasured the world he lived in—plants, rocks, sky and mountains.

His integrity was unquestionable, his faithfulness and loyalty forever abiding. His faith in and love of the Lord were qualities to look up to and emulate. He was self-effacing to a fault.

We shall miss very much his personal friendship and love. At the same time, we rejoice with him in that new life he has entered, knowing that he will be rejoicing with old friends and will be very, very busy finding every way he can to serve.

Letters

To the Editor:

Edmund H. Sears (1810-1876) is known as a writer of hymns. Among his best known are, "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" and "Calm on the Listening Ear of Night." A biographical note says that although his hymns are famous, his other writing is "quite forgotten." We would say "not quite," because of a neologism to be mentioned in a moment.

He was ordained a Unitarian minister in 1839 and served Unitarian churches in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. But the Swedenborgians were among his most faithful admirers. He wrote a book called *Regeneration* and in his writing and preaching did not hesitate to mention heaven and hell. He might have read the Writings. In any case his Swedenborgian fans are the ones who have perpetuated his "neologism," which is defined as "a new word or a new meaning for an established word." To succeed in launching a new word one has to have some fame. (Did Dr. Wilson Van Dusen give the word "hypnogogic" to the English speaking world?)

Sears seems to have been the first person ever to use the verb "to ultimate" (which he did in 1849), and the noun "ultimation." For example, in 1858 he wrote that heaven and hell were "the complete ultimation of good and evil."

Although he is now enshrined in the Oxford English Dictionary as the originator of these two words, the world as a whole has quite forgotten them. To my knowledge they have not been used in any kind of writing in this century. The exception, of course, is the Swedenborgian world. Swedenborgian publications continue to use this word.

Swedenborgians usually think that they got the word from Swedenborg (who never used it). But the fact is: they got it from Sears.

Don Rose
Bryn Athyn, Penn.

Dear Editor:

"Peace on earth, good will to men" the angels sang so long ago to announce the advent of the Lord, when He took upon Himself our human nature in order to overcome the hells and thus deliver man that man might be able to receive that peace.

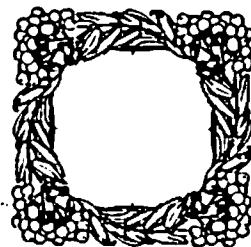
That peace, which the angels sang about, has been evading man for a long time. Since the Lord's advent men have fought wars and done all manner of evil against each other in His name. Whether He be called Allah, Buddha, Yahweh, Jehovah, or Lord He is still the One God of all mankind.

If asked, most people will say that they hate war. If we but think for a moment, we all have a darker side which has fascination for war which has been developed from our childhood when we learned to play "cowboys and Indians" and other war games. War provides moments of camaraderie, heroism, bravery, courage and glory which activities of peace seldom match.

We have to learn to replace these with brotherhood and cultural exchange. We must learn the special exhilaration that constructive accomplishment can bring.

We must cultivate understanding; with understanding comes caring and loving our fellow man; with caring and loving comes peace between peoples. With this external peace can come the internal personal peace which passeth all understanding; within this internal peace the Lord can find a place to rest.

E.G. Swiger
Pittsburgh



To the Editor:

Readers of my review of the new Paulist Press volume of Swedenborg's *Universal Human and Soul-Body Interaction* may find the following information concerning minor typographical errors and suggested alternative wordings of use. (These were omitted from the review because of lack of space.)

On p. 51, line 9, we read "warmth of filthy bathwater" which I suspect should rather read "warmth of a filthy [public] bathhouse." On p. 78, line 21, I think "age" would better translate *saeculum* than "century." Finally, on p. 109, line 13, the use of "mansions" to render either the Latin *mansiones* or the original Greek has not been used since the 1881 version of the Bible so far as I know, and seems anachronistic here. (In the only other place where the Greek word appears in the New Testament [Jn. 14:23] even the King James 1611 version translated it there as "abode.")

As we have come more or less to expect in present-day printing, a few "ordinary" typographical errors slipped through. On p. 50, line 21, for "on intentionality" read "our intentionality." On p. 58, last line, "word" should be capitalized. On p. 66, last line, read "representations *and* correspondences." On p. 105, line 17, "differ" should be "differs." On p. 121, 7th last line, change "happnes" to "happens." And on p. 128, 8th last line, add "them" after "confirmed." There are a few misplaced commas (which I won't bother you with) and probably other "typos" that have escaped my eye. But on the whole it is a quite clean job of typesetting, easy to read, and well designed over-all.

William Ross Woofenden

Editor's Note

In the November issue of *The Messenger*, in the Book Review, a paragraph got out of its proper order and may have caused confusion. On p.237, therefore, paragraph 2 in column 2 ("In the text...") should precede paragraph 3 in column 1 ("The other that I discovered..."). We hope this helps.

PUBLISHED

Incorporation of Psalms and of several additional Bible passages about women as "alternate" readings are features of "An Inclusive Language Lectionary: Readings for Year B."

This collection of Scripture readings, recast in language that includes both women and men, is the second in a three-year cycle of readings being prepared for voluntary use in public worship. It is a project of the National Council of Churches' Division of Education and Ministry.

Based on the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, the lectionary is being prepared by an 11-member committee of scholars of the Old and New Testaments, theology, English, education and worship.

It makes changes in language about people when the context clearly means to include women; about Jesus Christ, recognizing the maleness of the human Jesus and emphasizing Jesus' humanity as crucial for the work of salvation and about God, asserting that the Bible teaches God is beyond gender or any other limiting attribute.

Publication a year ago of "Year A" of the lectionary touched off a storm of reaction, including both praise and criticism. Nearly 25,000 copies of "Year A" were sold and the Division of Education and Ministry received nearly 700 letters about the project, a majority of them critical of it, said the Rev. Dr. David Ng, the division's executive director.

"It's a pioneering thing," said the Rev. Dr. Victor Gold of Berkeley, Calif., chairperson of the 11-member lectionary committee, suggesting reasons for the strong reaction. Others have done work on inclusive language in Scripture; "they've hoed here and there, but the 'Inclusive Language Lectionary' digs a pretty deep furrow."

"The language we use, language which frames our thought world, is in revision and that means the thought world also is in revision," he said. The lectionary's language changes "get to the very roots of religious thought and sensitivity."

Gold said he has noticed increasing will-

Continued on page 279

Births

Wiens—Kelsey Godfred Wiens was born to David and Colleen Wiens of Kamloops, B.C., on September 20, 1984.

Baptisms

Brachman—Kyle Jeremy Brachman, son of Reginald and Lori Brachman, was baptized into the Christian faith on October 7, 1984, at Calgary, Alberta, the Rev. Erwin D. Reddekopp, the child's great, great-uncle, officiating.

Leach—Heather Ann Leach, daughter of Scott and Darcel Leach, was baptized into the Christian faith on September 23, 1984, at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. David L. Rienstra officiating.

Murphy-Rohrer—William Lincoln Murphy-Rohrer, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Murphy-Rohrer, was baptized into the Christian faith on September 30, 1984, at the Virginia Street Church (Swedenborgian), St. Paul, MN, the Rev. Keith Tussing officiating.

Murphy-Rohrer—Susan Ellen Murphy-Rohrer was baptized into the Christian faith on September 30, 1984, at the Virginia Street Church (Swedenborgian), St. Paul, MN, the Rev. Keith Tussing officiating.

Vath—Adrian Dion Vath, son of Mr. and Mrs. Brian Delbert Vath, born September 19, 1974, was baptized into the Christian faith in Dawson Creek, B.C., the Rev. William H. Clifford officiating.

Wiens—Megan Marie Wiens, daughter of Harold and Thelma Wiens, was baptized into the Christian faith on October 28, 1984, at Summerland, B.C., the Rev. Erwin D. Reddekopp officiating.

Winthrop—Joshua Paul Winthrop, son of Steven and Nancy Winthrop, was baptized into the Christian faith on June 17, 1984, at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Philadelphia, the Rev. Jaikoo E. Lee officiating.

Marriages

Heath-Charles—Rebecca Jo Heath and Scott Lee Charles were united in Christian love on September 29, 1984, at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. David L. Rienstra officiating.

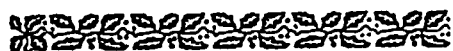
Travers-Davies—Dorothy Clayton Travers and Ronald Lloyd Davies were united in Christian love on October 19, 1984, in the Church of the Holy City, Wilmington, DE, the Rev. Randall Laakko officiating.

Deaths

Kiesman—Dorothy T. Kiesman, member of the Church of the New Jerusalem, Fryeburg, Maine, passed into the spiritual realm on October 11, 1984. Graveside services were held on October 13, the Rev. David L. Rienstra officiating.

Ulmer—George Joseph Henry Ulmer, 93, long-time member of the Swedenborgian societies in Herbert, Meadow Lake and North Battleford in Western Canada, passed into the spiritual realm on October 12, 1984. Services were held in North Battleford, the Rev. David L. Sonmor officiating.





Thank You



The Christmas season is a time when we focus a great deal on giving. *The Messenger* would like to acknowledge and thank the following people for their generous support with the extensive costs of editing, producing and mailing *The Messenger* each month: Alliance of New Church Women; Gus and Lillian Bischof, Lititz, PA; Isabel Carpenter, Naranja, FL; John and Mildred Dodd, Great Bend, KS; Fern F. Fell, Philadelphia; Gloria O. Grabin, Santa Maria, CA; P. Armitage Hutchinson, Asheville, NC; A.J. Johansson, Medford, OR; Elinor Johnson, East Tawas, MI; Deborah Mabbott, Ellensburg, WA; Martha U. McArtor, Amana, IA; Miriam Miller, Towson, MD; New York Association; Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Nielsen, Urbana, OH; Louise A. Orth, Columbus, OH; Jimmy Parham, Asheville, NC; Ola-Mae Wheaton, Center Conway, NH; Charles W. Winslow, Rumford, RI; Mrs. Martin W. Wright, Centerbrook, CT



NOTEPAD

PLAYING AROUND

The Alpha Omega Players, of the San Diego Swedenborgian Church, presented "Detective Story" by Sidney Kingsley and directed by D.J. Sullivan on November 10. First produced in New York's Hudson Theater in 1949, the large cast delivered a wide variety of characters. Full of whimsy, comedy and drama, the story revolves around a single day in a New York City Squad Room.

GREETINGS FROM ABROAD

Brian and Jill Kingslake are thinking at this season of their many American and Canadian friends and loved-ones and wish them all the blessings of Christmas. They also thank those dear people who sent them greetings on their Golden Wedding Anniversary in August last. God bless us all.

SUMMER PLANS

Convention '85 will be held at the University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada from June 26-30. Pre-convention sessions will be hosted at the Almont New Church Assembly in Almont, Michigan, June 21-26.

GENERAL COUNCIL

General Council will hold their next meeting January 24-27 at the Almont New Church Assembly.

KUDOS

Rev. Dick Tafel of the Kemper Road Center for Religious Development in Cincinnati has been named Montgomery Fireman of the Year by the Commerce Club of Blue Ash and Montgomery. Rev. Tafel has served on the Montgomery volunteer Fire Dept. for 17 years. Rev. Eric Zacharias, minister of the New Jerusalem Church in Pretty Prairie, Kansas, is also the mayor of that town.



ALMONT COOKBOOK

Do you cherish Grandma's cookie recipe, painstakingly copied for you in her own hand? Then you will enjoy the *Almont Cookbook*, all 267 pages. Here you'll find handwritten family favorites garnered from Midwestern New Church kitchens. These books are illustrated, with the story, history and traditions of the Almont New Church Assembly. Great for Christmas giving in its bright red cover. Order now and receive a special reduced postage rate: just \$7.50 postpaid. Proceeds further youth programs at Almont. Orders shipped immediately from: Marjory Shelley, 125 Reynick, Saginaw, Michigan, 48602. Make checks payable to Almont New Church Assembly.

Hence the variety of strange happenings that make a house haunted. If, following the death or soon thereafter, the dwelling is transferred to other occupants, the ignored spirit may develop a project of confused occurrences intended to dislodge the intruders. Sometimes tragic situations or crimes are connected with these lingering souls whose memories—of fear, sense of guilt, or maybe great anger—cause violent vibrations and noises in an obsession of despair. Such spirits are unable to move ahead into learning about their spiritual future, and instead may take over the physical place they are attached to, carrying on a routine of non-progression—either quiet but recurring or resentfully noisy and disturbing.

What a waste of human beings whom God created for eternal joy and usefulness! Why has this waste continued into modern times? The most obvious answer is that many souls have never been emphatically taught from infancy onward, that human existence relates directly to God—and is responsible to God for spiritual development. Whatever is thoroughly taught to young children stays with them always.

The United States government decrees that no such teaching can be given in public schools, which leaves churches as the only source, beyond the home, for religious education. Yet do they give priority to emphasizing the Divine-human relationship, with vigor and enthusiasm and an impact that keeps children (and adults) turned in the right direction? How many ministers and Sunday school teachers learn to teach in a way which achieves permanent results?

Instead of being an incomprehensible mystery, haunted houses are a message loud and clear from the Spiritual World to the undeveloped multitudes of the human race, who are so vigorously (yet so temporarily) bustling around on this planet Earth.

Gwynne Dresser Mack, author of *Talking with God* and *E.S. and ESP*, lives in Fryeburg, Maine.



ingness among people to consider seriously the issues raised by the lectionary, noting that he is "finding that people are tending to be, if not enthusiastic, at least willing to give it a sympathetic ear."

"An Inclusive-Language Lectionary, Readings for Year B," may be ordered from your local bookstore or from The Westminster Press, Order Department, P.O. Box 718, William Penn Annex, Philadelphia, PA 19105. The cost is \$9.95 plus postage, handling and applicable sales tax.

NOTICE

As *The Messenger* goes to press, the Ad Hoc Committee on Goals and Priorities for the 80s is concluding five days of meetings in Wilmington, Delaware. In view of Convention's vote in support of change, they worked on revisions suggested by Convention constituents, on implications of the plan for the constitution and by-laws and on advanced planning for an orderly transition. A full report of the meeting is scheduled for the January issue of *The Messenger*.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Faculty position in Practical Theology available at the Swedenborg School of Religion located in Newton, Massachusetts beginning September 1985. Responsibilities of the position involve teaching in the areas of pastoral counseling, psychology, interpersonal relations and supervising field education. Experience in supervision and an interest in experiential training for ministry helpful. Salary commensurate with education and experience. For initial consideration, applicants should send a letter of application and a resume to:

Dr. Jon Tafel
339 West Sixth Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43201

All materials must be received by February 22, 1985. Individuals interested in part-time instruction are also urged to apply.

General Convention of the New Jerusalem
in the United States of America
The Messenger
1040 Dautel Road
Creve Coeur, MO 63146

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